ALEXANDER BROADIE

A SAMARITAN PHILOSOPHY

A STUDY OF THE HELLENISTIC CULTURAL ETHOS OF THE MEMAR MARQAH

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PREFACE

The writings of the fourth century Samaritan philosopher Marqah have been totally ignored by subsequent generations of philosophers. My aim here is to argue that this fate is not his due, and that on the contrary his chief work, the *Memar* (= Teaching), contains a far-reaching philosophical system deserving our close attention. It is indeed easier to demonstrate that Marqah should be read than to explain why he is not. But it is at least not implausible to suppose that had he written in Greek or Latin, rather than in Samaritan Aramaic, and had he worked at one of the great centres of learning of his age, rather than in the town of Nablus in Roman Palestine, his writings would have reached out beyond the Samaritan community and secured for their author recognition as an important figure in post-Philonic Hellenistic philosophy.

It has been my great fortune to have as a colleague at the University of Glasgow Professor John Macdonald, whose scholarship in the field of Samaritan studies is unsurpassed. It was he who first drew my attention to Marqah. Believing the *Memar* to contain much philosophy either on, or just below, the surface, he suggested to me that I make a study of the *Memar* with a view to giving a clear formulation of its philosophical content, and to establishing its relationship to the Western philosophical tradition. This book is the outcome of that suggestion. But he did much more than this. He placed at my disposal, without stint, his knowledge of Samaritan literature, and also enabled me to gain a much surer grasp of Marqah's Aramaic than would otherwise have been possible. For all this I am deeply grateful to him.

This work was written during a period of serious illness. That the book was all the same completed is due in substantial measure to my mother, to whom my thanks could not be more plainly due nor more happily given.

By default, almost everything said here about Marqah's philosophy is new, and in the absence of the normal context of philosophical debate the book has even less claim to definitiveness than works on the history of philosophy generally have. But I

hope that through this book other philosophers will come to Marqah, and will read him for the sake of the light he sheds on some of the perennial problems.

University of Glasgow A. B.
1980

ABBREVIATIONS OF PHILO'S WORKS CITED

Abr.	De Abrahamo
Cher.	De Cherubim
Conf.	De Confusione Linguarum
Deca.	De Decalogo
Deter.	Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat
Fuga	De Fuga et Inventione
Heres	Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres
Immut.	Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit
Leg. All.	Legum Allegoria
Migr.	De Migratione Abrahami
Opif.	De Opificio Mundi
Post.	De Posteritate Caini
Praem. et Poen.	De Praemiis et Poenis
Quaest. in Gen.	Quaestiones in Genesin
Sacr.	De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini
Somn.	De Somniis
Spec.	De Specialibus Legibus
Virt.	De Virtutibus

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Our subject is the philosophy, till now totally neglected, of the Samaritan thinker Marqah. Since Marqah's very name is unknown in philosophical circles it is necessary to preface our philosophical investigation with an account, which for present purposes need only be brief, of Marqah's historical setting.

Samaritanism and Judaism spring from a common matrix in the Israelite religion. It has, indeed, been held that the Samaritans are a Jewish sect.[1] But though describing Samaritanism as a separate religion perhaps overemphasises its independence of Judaism, the identification of Samaritanism as a sect of Judaism may be held to overemphasise its dependence.[2] It is sufficient for us to note that Samaritans and Jews have shared origins. But at what point did the two groups separate? There are two conflicting answers to this question. One answer is Samaritan and the other Judaist.

According to the Samaritan account, as given in the second of the seven Samaritan Chronicles to which we must turn for the Samaritan version of their history, it was Eli who caused the schism by establishing at Shiloh a sanctuary intended to replace the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim. Eli, whose motive, according to Chronicle II, was covetousness of the high priesthood, gained supporters who formed the nucleus of that section of the House of Israel through which modern Judaism traces its descent.

The Judaist version of the origin of the schism is familiar from II *Kings* xvii. According to this source, after the Assyrian attack on the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/1 the citizens were exiled and a new, heathen, population, from other parts of the Assyrian empire, was brought in. The syncretism produced by the admixture of the heathen religions with the Yahwist religion of the remaining citizens of the northern kingdom was, according to the Judaist account, Samaritanism. The Samaritans, according to this account,

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[1] M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, p. 1.
[2] J. Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, p. 14.

are therefore not true Israelites, and their religion is not true Yahwism.

We need not be detained here by the question of the accuracy of these two accounts.[3] But whichever, if either, is correct, by the 4th century BCE the Samaritans were a firmly established religious group, distinguished (a) by the site of their Sanctuary, namely, Mount Gerizim, not Mount Zion in Jerusalem, (b) by their priesthood, for which they claimed the true Aaronic mantle of succession, and (c) by their Pentateuch, which differed at numerous points, sometimes significantly, often not, from the Judaist Pentateuch which subsequently became part of the Masoretic Bible.

Evidence of the power of the Samaritans by this period is revealed by the strength of their attempt, under Sanballat, to prevent the Jews under Nehemiah rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple. Their strength, however, was insufficient to prevent John Hyrkanus in the 2nd century BCE destroying the Samaritan Temple and capturing Shechem, the Samaritans' chief town.

During the period of Roman rule the Samaritans constituted a partially autonomous group occupying about one third of Palestine, in the area between Judaea and Galilee. Roman rule over them was sometimes benign and sometimes vicious. But the period was on the whole one of development and consolidation for the Samaritans. During it the scene was set for an upsurge, in the 4th century CE, of religious and literary activity. This upsurge, which was masterminded by the Samaritan leader Baba Rabba, brought to the fore two men. One was Amram Darah, whose work forms an important part of the Samaritan liturgy. And the other was Marqah.

The chief ground for the claim that Marqah lived in the 4th century is that the Samaritan Chronicles assign him to the period of the unquestionably 4th century Baba Rabba. But Professor J. Macdonald has adduced a number of further reasons for believing Marqah to have lived approximately during this period: "... The use of Greek words (in his writings), the Aramaized Roman names of Marqah's family [Marqah = Marcus, Nanah (his son) = Nonus], the ideological outlook, the midrashic material, the philosophical

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[3] See M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, pp. 8 ff., and J. Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, pp. 12 ff.

and scientific passages, the language and style, and . . . the long textual tradition. All this is in addition to the unmistakable fact that Marqah does not betray any definite signs of the Islamic influence so prominent in later Samaritanism. The Samaritan chronicles themselves, especially from the 11th century, place Marqah and Nanah at about that time. In addition there is the fact that of all the hundreds of Samaritan family names known to us, only Marqah, Nanah and Tota [= Titus, by which Marqah was also known] are Roman".[4] I do not wish here to defend or dispute the assignment of Marqah to the period of Baba Rabba. But since I argue in this book that Marqah developed a philosophical system that is unmistakably Hellenistic, and in particular bears a striking resemblance to the Alexandrian Hellenism of Philo Judaeus, who lived in the 1st century, my findings have a bearing on the question of Marqah's century. If Marqah's philosophy is very similar to Philo's there are fewer problems as to why this should be so if Marqah lived in the same period as Philo than there would be if he lived at a much later time. In particular, there would be fewer problems attaching to the chronicles' claim that Marqah lived in Baba Rabba's period than there would be to any attempt to assign Marqah to Islamic times.

Marqah made two main contributions to Samaritan literature. One was straightforwardly liturgical. A number of his prayers and hymns[5] appear in the *Defter* [διφθέρα], the Samaritan Book of Common Prayer. The second contribution was his *Memar* [= Teaching], which lies closer than any other work except the Pentateuch to the heart of Samaritanism.

The *Memar* is written in Samaritan Aramaic, one of the two main branches of Palestinian Aramaic. This fact causes special problems, which will surface frequently in the course of this book. For Marqah was grappling with philosophical ideas, in a language that lacked a well-established battery of philosophical jargon such as was available to contemporary philosophers writing in Greek. Perhaps, indeed, the true surprise in all this lies precisely in the fact that the affinity between Marqah's philosophical ideas and those of Philo and other Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophers is so manifest. I will be arguing that other Samaritans before

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[4] *Memar Marqah*, vol. I, p. xx.
[5] A. E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, vol. I, esp. pp. 16-33.

Marqah had trodden the path of Hellenistic philosophy, in the course of which they had solved some of the linguistic difficulties attached to expressing philosophical ideas in Samaritan Aramaic.

The *Memar* is hard to classify because of the diversity of elements that enter into its construction. It is not just a work of religious devotion, though it contains many prayers and hymns; or just biblical exegesis, though it contains extensive exegetical passages on the life of Moses; or just theology, though it has a good deal to say about the nature of God; or just philosophy, though there is philosophy on every page. The *Memar* is all of these things. Yet it manages not to present the appearance of disjointness. Its unity, though not easy to explain, is undeniable. Two features, however, that clearly have a good deal to do with the unity that the work as a whole displays are, first, the manifest religious consciousness of its author, and, secondly, the part played by the Pentateuch. As we shall see, even when Marqah seems to stray far from the Pentateuch he always brings us back to that source by finding in it warrant for the points he has been making. The presentation of Pentateuchal warrant for what he has to say constitutes the main feature of Marqah's method.

Although Marqah achieves a unity in the *Memar*, the unity is not of such a kind as to ensure that the elements must remain inextricably interwoven even under close analytical investigation. For although all the elements sit easily together, certain of them could sit equally easily apart. In particular this seems true of the philosophical element in the *Memar*. And this fact renders the topic of Marqah's philosophy a good deal more amenable to exposition than it would otherwise have been.

The presence of a philosophy in the *Memar* naturally prompts certain questions. Was this philosophy worked out by Marqah? Or was it a peculiarly Samaritan philosophy, even if Marqah was not its originator but expositor? Or was it imported into Samaritan thought—and if imported, then from where? Questions of this sort are often difficult to answer, and particularly so with regard to cases like the one before us where there is practically no documentary evidence explicitly stating sources of ideas. Nevertheless, on the basis of the clues available to us it is possible to formulate a very compelling answer to the problem of the origin of Marqah's philosophy. It is, of course, conceivable that a fully fledged philosophy sprang straight from Marqah's mind, owing nothing to

external influences. But in the face of certain important considerations this hypothesis can be seen to be untenable.

The first consideration is the shortage of examples of parallel occurrences of philosophies of the complexity and subtlety of Marqah's emerging from anything less than a fairly rich philosophical tradition. But more noteworthy than this is the extent to which Marqah's philosophical ideas are to be found in other writers of that period and in that part of the world. The coincidence of Marqah's ideas with those of other thinkers is sufficiently great to warrant the belief that Marqah was not unfamiliar with a set of ideas that were part of the common intellectual currency of the age. It would not, indeed, be surprising if someone with the intellectual liveliness of Marqah were familiar, even in Shechem, with those ideas. For Shechem, as a city on the main trading routes in central Palestine, was not in the least an isolated provincial village, and its ready accessibility would permit the carriage there of ideas as well as material goods.

Even if the method we employ, in establishing the extent to which Marqah's *Memar* is an expression of a cultural ethos in which he participated, is to display the degree to which his ideas were also those of others, this would not serve to diminish in any way Marqah's achievement in writing the *Memar*, for any great work is, of course, substantially an expression of a cultural ethos. Marqah's achievement lies not so much in the origination of the elements out of which the work is composed as in the quality of his synthesis of those elements. I will, however, be concerned, not with the overall synthesis, but with the philosophical elements that form part of the material of that synthesis.

This mode of formulation of my aim gives rise to the question of whether the philosophical material of the *Memar* is a synthetic unity or not. Now, in a sense it would be misleading to say that the philosophical ideas in the *Memar* are synthesised there. For as presented in the *Memar* the philosophy is unsystematic and unsustained. Nevertheless, I wish to argue that the fragmentariness of the presentation of the philosophical material serves merely to conceal a wide-ranging system of philosophy. As will become evident from the diversity of *Memar* passages I quote in connection with any one philosophical problem, Marqah does not in any one place have a full discussion of any one philosophical problem. The only way to deal with the material was to collect and then

assemble numerous passages scattered through the *Memar*. Only after organising the widely scattered material could his philosophy become visible. Marqah was not, after all, writing a treatise on philosophy. The location of philosophical passages in the *Memar* is determined, not in the least by the need to present the philosophy in a systematic fashion, but, rather, by the needs of the Pentateuchal exegesis which substantially structures at least the first five of the six books forming the *Memar*. That is to say, for almost the entire course of the *Memar* Marqah is engaged in interpretation of the Pentateuch. Frequently in the course of his interpretations he finds it necessary to make a philosophical point. The order of presentation of the philosophy is therefore determined by the order of presentation of the Pentateuchal exegesis. What I have done is detach the philosophy—which proved surprisingly detachable—from the exegesis, and allow the detached fragments to reshuffle themselves into a philosophically ordered whole. The original location of the fragments could not, however, be ignored in establishing the meaning and significance of the philosophical passages. Marqah philosophised as a way of illuminating Biblical verses. To a certain extent I have moved in the opposite direction, since the passages Marqah was seeking to illuminate could themselves illuminate the exegesis. Using, therefore, the clues readily available in the text, I have watched emerge from the *Memar* an extensive philosophical system. It is to the exposition of this system that most of this book will be devoted.

The account, given in the previous paragraph, of the relation between Marqah's Pentateuchal exegesis and his philosophy could also serve as an account of the relationship between the Biblical exegesis and the philosophy in the works of Philo of Alexandria. For Philo also was primarily concerned with Biblical exegesis, and wrote his philosophy in the course of illuminating the Biblical texts. Thus for Philo, no less than for Marqah, the order of the philosophical exposition was dictated by exegetical, not by philosophical, considerations.

Marqah and Philo are, however, similar not only with respect to the extent to which the order of their philosophical exposition is determined by Biblical exegetical requirements, but also, and relatedly, by the extent to which they regarded their philosophical doctrines as sanctioned by the Bible. Neither Marqah nor Philo could accept a philosophical doctrine which they believed to be

inconsistent with the Bible. What is remarkable, indeed, is the amount of Greek philosophy that is, if Marqah and Philo are right, consistent with or even contained in the Pentateuch. Some words should be said here about how Philo could countenance this measure of consonance. How Marqah could do so will be discussed at a later stage.

In a revealing passage Philo asserts that: "It is heaven which has showered philosophy upon us".[6] The metaphor of "showering" that Philo employs indicates, by its association with rain which is freely bestowed on earth by God, that philosophy is a gift from God. But since the Pentateuch is also a gift from God, and philosophy deals with matter expounded in the Pentateuch, it is inevitable that philosophy should enable men to learn by the aid of their reason something at least of what Jews are able to discover by attending to the contents of divine revelation. Since, in other words, revelation and reason are both God's gifts to men, there need be nothing worthy of surprise in the fact—as in Philo's view it was a fact—that reason and revelation are mutually consistent. Marqah's position on this matter is, as I shall argue subsequently, almost identical to Philo's.

It must, however, be admitted that Philo on occasion makes reference to an alternative, and more prosaic (though not more plausible) explanation of the mutual consistency just referred to. This latter explanation is that the Greek philosophers were familiar with the Pentateuch and gave expression to this familiarity in their writings. Thus, for example, there is in Greek philosophy a theory of opposites according to which everything has two parts that are equal and opposite. Philo himself espoused this theory, providing as his proof text *Ex.* xiv 21-2 where it is said that Moses divided the Red Sea and that the Israelites went into its midst. Having claimed that the theory of opposites is visible, to the discerning eye, in the Pentateuch, Philo then states that Heracleitus snatched the theory, thief-like, from Moses.[7]

Marqah may or may not have agreed with Philo that the theory of opposites was snatched by Heracleitus from Moses. But he would have approved fully of Philo's method, well exemplified in the above account, of giving his philosophy, as a matter of

[6] *Spec.* III xxxiii 185.
[7] *Quaest. in Gen.* IV 152.

course, a Pentateuchal underpinning. The above account of the relation between *Ex.* xiv 21-2 and the theory of opposites can also be read as an example of Philo's allegorical method. For Philo is presenting the 'inner meaning' of the assertion that Moses *divided* the Red Sea and the Israelites went into its *midst*. The allegorical method of philosophising, which involves presenting philosophy as the inner meaning of assertions whose 'outer meanings' seem wholly unphilosophical, was employed extensively by Marqah, and we shall meet with numerous instances from the *Memar*. To a considerable degree the use of the allegorical method is bound up, for both Philo and Marqah, with their reliance on Pentateuchal warrant. For the Pentateuch warrants a philosophical position to the extent that the position is present explicitly or implicitly in the text. The allegorical method, in the hands of Philo and Marqah, involves treating philosophy as if it were present in the Pentateuch as the hidden meaning of verses, and revealing the hidden meaning.

It is evident from this that, considered from the purely methodological point of view, there are wide-ranging similarities between Philo and Marqah. But, as I hope to show, the similarities are more wide-ranging still. For on numerous philosophical matters the ideas of the two thinkers coincide, and even their modes of expression often bear, despite language differences, an undeniable similarity. It is no part of my aim here to argue that Marqah had read Philo, though the proposition that he had done would not, in view of the similarities, be bizarre—particularly in view of the presence in Alexandria of a large Samaritan community, who no doubt maintained close links with Shechem. It is enough for my purposes if I give grounds for believing that the cultural ethos of the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria coincides at certain crucial points with the cultural ethos of the Samaritans of Shechem.

The two main parameters in this shared cultural ethos are the Israelite religion and Hellenism. The claim that Marqah participated in such an ethos will be defended in the following chapters, in which the Samaritan Hellenistic philosophy of the *Memar* will be expounded in detail.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Proofs for the existence of God are to be found in a number of philosophers who contributed to the cultural air Marqah breathed. And as we shall see, certain of their arguments are to be found in the *Memar* itself. The arguments in question are not beneath the surface of the *Memar*, present so to say by implication, and therefore visible only to those who are skilled at reading between the lines. The arguments are on the surface, easily recognisable for what they are. As a first step to establishing the extent of Marqah's Hellenism I shall examine his arguments for the existence of God, by setting alongside quotations from the *Memar* certain doctrines and arguments presented by Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Philo.

In the *Laws* X 886a [1] Plato presents an argument for God's existence, that is based on a consideration of "the earth and the sun and the stars and the universe and the fair order of the seasons and the division of them into years and months". According to Plato's view of the world it is not merely harmonious, it is the most beautiful artifact—ὁ μὲν γὰρ κάλλιστος τῶν γεγονότων—and consequently must be understood to have the finest cause—ὁ δ' ἄριστος τῶν αἰτίων (*Tim.* 29 C, D). The language Plato employs in the *Laws* is strikingly similar to that said by Sextus Empiricus to have been used by Aristotle. In the *De Philosophia* (1476a5-9) as quoted by Sextus (*Adversus Physicos* I 22) Aristotle claims that the idea men entertained of God is due to "celestial phenomena, for when they beheld the sun circling round in the daytime, and by night the orderly motions of the other stars, they supposed some god to be the cause of such motion and orderliness".

The design argument for God's existence reappears shortly after among the Stoics, according to Cicero's evidence in the *De Natura Deorum*. The Stoics were evidently struck, as was Plato, with the beauty of nature and spoke eloquently of the beauty of plants and trees, the magnificence of crags and mountains

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[1] Cf. XII 966e.

and the magnificent canopy of the heavens. Surely, they argued, only a supremely rational being could have been their cause. But the Stoics used logically tougher arguments than this to establish God's existence.

One argument attributed to the Stoic Chrysippus, and showing again the Greek tendency to peer into the heavens for evidence of the divine, is the following: "If there be something in the world that man's mind and human reason, strength and power are incapable of producing, that which produces it must necessarily be superior to man; now the heavely bodies and all those things that display a never-ending regularity cannot be created by man; therefore that which creates them is superior to man; yet what better name is there for this than "god"? Indeed, if gods do not exist, what can there be in the universe superior to man? For he alone possesses reason, which is the most excellent thing that can exist" (*De Nat. D.* II vi 16).

Likewise the Stoic Cleanthes, turning his eyes heaven-wards for evidence of God, speaks of: ". . . the uniform motion and revolution of the heavens, and the varied groupings and ordered beauty of the sun, moon and stars, the very sight of which was in itself enough to prove that these things are not the mere effect of chance" (*De Nat. D.* II v 15). The reason why their "mere appearance" would lead to the conclusion Cleanthes drew is that, for Cleanthes as for other Stoics, an analogy holds between human artifacts and the cosmos. For: "When a man goes into a house, a wrestling school or a public assembly and observes in all that goes on arrangement, regularity and system, he cannot possibly suppose that these things come about without a cause", and "Far more therefore with the vast movements and phases of the heavenly bodies . . . is he compelled to infer that these mighty world-motions are regulated by some Mind" (*ibid.*).

It is of importance for Marqah studies to note that the Stoics did not consider only physical nature as the basis of an argument for God's existence. The inner world of the spirit was also brought into service as the basis for such an argument. Marqah, as we shall see, also made this characteristically Stoic move. The Stoic Zeno, for example, constructed a number of arguments for God's existence, based on the fact of the existence of besouled beings (men) in the universe. Thus, he argued: "Nothing devoid of sensation can have a part of itself that is sentient; but the world has parts that

are sentient; therefore the world is not devoid of sensation" (*De Nat. D.* II vii 22). Also: "Nothing that is inanimate and irrational can give birth to an animate and rational being; but the world gives birth to animate and rational beings; therefore the world is animate and rational" (*ibid.*). To grasp the significance of these arguments it must be recalled that the Stoics in general thought of God as the soul of the cosmos. Zeno himself, for example, is reported as saying that since God, as the logos of the universe, pervades all matter, He is present even "in ditches and worms and workers of infamy".[2] The various arguments of Zeno that have just been quoted are not indisputably valid. The point being made however is that Zeno takes the manifest presence of besouled beings in the universe as grounds for saying that God exists. Herein lies the parallel, or rather identity with Marqah.

Although the Stoics and Epicureans disagreed on most matters, they were alike in holding that testimony to divine existence is to be found in the contents of the human mind. The Epicureans had a religion of a sort, and were theists of a sort, though the nature of the god or gods to whose existence they subscribed is by no means clear. This religious aspect of the Epicurean system sits uneasily with other aspects. For Epicurus, adapting as he did, with very little emendation, the atomistic doctrine of Democritus, left himself with no room to introduce into his system the idea of divine active participation in the cosmos. Yet he found it necessary to admit the existence of divine beings. His proof, as were the aforementioned proofs of the Stoics, is based on a consideration of the contents of the human mind. According to Epicurus' mental philosophy, any mental image is produced by atoms which emanate from objects and which form miniature replicas of those objects. These replicas enter the mind and there cause the occurrence of a mental image of the object from which the replicas emanate. Epicurus accepted that men have mental images of gods, and consequently had to accept that there are gods whose miniature replicas cause the mental images.

It is, indeed, part of Epicurus' theory that the replicas can become intermingled as they travel from object to person, thus leading to a distortion in the resultant mental image. Hence

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[2] Tatian, *Orat. ad Graecos*, Ch. 3; see also Sextus Emp. *Pyrrhon. Inst.* III 218.

Epicurus is willing to admit that some mental images, say of a centaur, are derived, not from centaurs, but from objects which conjointly possess qualities the admixture of whose emanating miniature replicas gives rise to the mental image. Hence, Epicurus might have tried to avoid the conclusion that gods exist, by arguing that the mental images of gods are distortions of external objects, just as are the mental images of centaurs. Why he did not take this line, and keep his cosmology god-free, is uncertain. It has been conjectured that the clarity and persistence of the mental images of gods ruled out, for Epicurus, this possibility.[3] But however we resolve this difficulty, the fact remains that for Epicurus, no less than for the Stoics, sufficient testimony to divine existence is to be found by turning, not outwards to the heavens, but inwards to the human soul.

If, as I hope to show, the Hellenic and Hellenistic ideas just expounded are philosophically closely allied to the *Memar*, then so also and perhaps to an even greater degree are the ideas of Philo of Alexandria. One argument Philo employs follows the pattern of several given earlier (and of one employed by Marqah). We read: ". . . anyone entering this world . . . and beholding the sky circling round and embracing within it all things, and planets and fixed stars without any variation moving in rhythmical harmony and with advantage to the whole, and earth with the central space assigned to it . . . will surely argue that these have not been wrought without consummate art, but that the Maker of this whole universe was and is God. Those, who thus base their reasoning on what is before their eyes, apprehend God by means of a shadow cast, discerning the artificer by means of His works".[4]

Elsewhere[5] Philo asks whether there is any deity, a question which, he tells us, is "necessitated by those who practice atheism, the worst form of wickedness", and he answers: ". . . he who comes to the truly Great City, this world, and beholds hills and plains . . . the yearly seasons passing into each other, and then the sun and moon ruling the day and night, and the other heavenly bodies fixed or planetary and the whole firmament revolving in rhythmic order, must he not naturally or rather necessarily gain the con-

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[3] A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, p. 136.
[4] *Leg. All.* III xxxii; cf. *Praem.* vii 41.
[5] *Spec.* I vi 32-5.

ception of the Maker and Father and Ruler also? For none of the works of human art is self-made, and the highest art and knowledge is shewn in this universe, so that surely it has been wrought by one of excellent knowledge and absolute perfection. In this way we have gained the conception of the existence of God".

In these two formulations of the design argument, Philo relies on an application to the cosmos of an analogy with human artifacts. Thus we are told that: "We see then that any piece of work always involves the knowledge of a workman. Who can look upon statues or paintings without thinking at once of a sculptor or painter? Who can see clothes or ships or houses without getting the idea of a weaver and a shipwright and a housebuilder?".[6] Likewise, who, on looking at the orderliness of nature, does not at once form an idea of its creator?

Although Philo attaches considerable importance to the heavenly phenomena so far as they provide data on which a persuasive design argument can be based, he is nevertheless anxious to make the point that a consideration of the heavenly bodies can be seriously misleading. For the unwise may misinterpret the evidence in such a way as to read it as testimony to the priority in the universe, not of God, but of the heavenly bodies themselves. It is with this fear in mind that he speaks of men who would observe "the circuits of sun and moon, on which depend summer and winter and the changes of spring and autumn, would suppose that the regular movements of the heavenly bodies are the causes of all things that year by year come forth and are produced out of the earth . . . [and] who owing either to shameless audacity or to overwhelming ignorance should venture to ascribe the first place to any created thing" (*Opif.* 45-6). Nevertheless, despite the fact that some men may be misled by the evidence, it is in no way part of Philo's aim to discourage men from considering the heavens. For such a consideration leads to philosophy, and philosophy leads us closer to God. Thus Philo asserts that "man's faculty of vision, led upwards by light, discerned the nature of the heavenly bodies and their harmonious movement . . . [and] went on to busy itself with questionings, asking What is the essence of these visible objects? Are they in nature unoriginate? . . .

[6] *Spec.* I vi 33.

It was out of investigation of these problems that philosophy grew" (*Opif.* 54).

Philo had further arguments for God's existence. He appears to have held that however strong may be the argument from physical nature, the one taking as its starting point the existence of mind is no less powerful. This seems the most natural way to understand the position presented in the following passage, which Philo puts into the mouth of Abraham: "How strange it is, my friends, that you have been suddenly lifted to such a height above the earth and are floating there, and, leaving the lower air beneath you, are treading the ether above, thinking to master every detail respecting the movements of the sun, and of the circuits of the moon, and of the glorious rhythmical dances of the other constellations . . . but explore yourselves only and your own nature . . . for by observing the conditions prevailing in your own individual household, the element that is master in it, and that which is in subjection, the living and the lifeless element, the rational and the irrational, the immortal and the mortal, the better and the worse, you will gain forthwith a sure knowledge of God and of His works. Your reason will show you that, as there is mind in you, so is there in the universe, and that as your mind has taken upon itself sovereign control of all that is in you, and brought every part into subjection to itself, so too He, that is endued with lordship over all, guides and controls the universe by the law and right of an absolute sway" (*Migr.* xxxiii 184-6).

The precise logical pattern of the above argument is not entirely clear. It is possible that the argument is a design argument, where the designed artifact whose existence is to be explained as God's handiwork is the human mind. This could be thought to be the import of the claim that if you attend, not to physical nature but to your self "you will gain forthwith a sure knowledge of God". Such a *res creata*, Philo seems to be saying, implies a *creator divinus*. Yet this interpretation ignores the explicit parallel being drawn between the human mind as the governor of the body and God as the governor of the cosmos. The parallel would suggest that Philo's argument is a version of the argument from analogy, in which case the argument must be understood to be to the effect that it is evident from features of nature that something must be related to nature as the human soul (or a part of it) is related to the rest of the human being. If this interpretation is correct

then Philo's argument is not quite a traditional design argument, for our soul is not being said to have *designed* the non-rational in us; nor is it being concluded that the cosmos bears marks of design. The point being made, rather, is that an insight into the nature of the human being as containing a relationship between governor and governed will draw us to the conclusion that the world itself shows signs of being governed (rather than designed), and hence a governor, namely, God, must be posited.

Thus, in the argument under examination, Philo employs the concept of man as a microcosm. Elsewhere, indeed, Philo has expressed himself more explicitly on this matter. He speaks, for example, of those who "have ventured to affirm that the tiny animal man is equal to the whole world, because each consists of body and reasonable soul, and thus they declare that man is a small world and alternatively the world a great man" (*Heres* xxxi 155). Philo's argument thus implies an injunction to investigate the microcosm (the human being) as a means to establishing the nature of the macrocosm. In that case the entire argument would seem to assume that man *is* the macrocosm writ small.

The problem of Philo's position on the question of the extent to which the microcosm (man) mirrors the macrocosm deserves careful consideration, since it will emerge that in certain fundamental respects Philo's position is a good deal closer to Marqah's than it is to the Stoics'. In particular it will reveal that Philo rejects the standard Stoic position on the relation between God and the universe and accepts a view on this matter very similar to one found in the *Memar*.

In dealing with this question concerning the relation between on the one hand a man's soul and his body, and on the other God and the cosmos, we must first identify Philo's position regarding the relation between soul and body in man. In the *De Migratione* Philo discusses the state of philosophic contemplation. In such a state, we learn, the mind is a 'migrant' from the body. Philo's employment of this metaphor arises from the consideration that if the mind is to "arrive at a proper consideration of the living God" it must, in some sense of the phrase, 'leave behind' its normally attendant body and travel—migrate—unaided by physical means, to its goal. Philo appears to mean by this that philosophical contemplation must be done, not by a physical faculty, but by a purely spiritual one. This seems the most natural way to under-

stand the following passage: "For when the mind, possessed by some philosophic principle, is drawn by it, it follows this, and needs must be oblivious of other things, of all the concerns of the cumbersome body. And if the senses are a hindrance to the exact sight of the spiritual object, those who find happiness in beholding are at pains to crush their attack; they shut their eyes, and stop up their ears, and check the impulses bred by their other senses, and deem it well to spend their days in solitude and darkness, that no object of sense-perception may bedim the eye of the soul, to which God has given the power to see things spiritual" (*Migr.* xxxiv 191).

But it might be argued that this passage serves at best to show that the mind is only relatively independent of the body. For even if it is allowed that the objects of the intellect are not known through the medium of the sensory receptors, there remains the possibility that the 'mental receptor' which Philo invokes to do the job can function only in a body. However, it will, for the present, be sufficient to recognise that Philo argues at length in favour of the thesis that part of the soul—the rational part—is incorruptible and therefore immortal. Upon the corruption of the body in which the rational soul is encased, the rational soul continues to exist yet without an attendant body, and hence must be independent of the body. But since the rational soul is in any case incorruptible, its existence could never have been dependent on the existence of the body. Thus it follows that the soul can, at any stage in its existence, get along without the body. From this position Philo believes himself entitled to draw the anti-Stoic conclusion that God cannot be embodied in the universe. His argument is as follows (*Migr.* xxxv): God is greater than the human mind in that man's mind did not create his body but God did create nature. Hence, if it is a sign of the perfection of man's mind that it is possible for it to exist unembodied, the sign of God's greater perfection is that He is necessarily, and not merely possibly, unembodied. In this respect the human microcosm fails to mirror the macrocosm.

But the failure does not undermine the argument from analogy for God's existence. All that the failure does is to make clear that the God whose existence is established is not the God of the Stoics. To what degree it is the God of the Samaritans remains to be seen. For the remainder of this chapter, however, I wish to address

myself to the narrower question of the extent to which Marqah's own arguments for God's existence reflect the Hellenic and Hellenistic arguments so far outlined.

Several of the arguments expounded above fall within the category of design arguments, for they state that there are in the world things bearing such marks of design as entitle us to conclude that without the activity of a divine designer they could not exist. Not one of the arguments in question is presented by its author in the context of a discussion involving the question of what precisely is to count as the criterion of evidence of design, and it has therefore not been necessary for me to raise that question here. But certain of the quoted authors, while not discussing the criterion of evidence of design, at least discuss design so far as it is classifiable under different headings. The Stoics and Philo discuss, as we have seen, what may be termed "inner design" (or design in the spiritual world) and "outer design" (or design in the physical world). Marqah, also, presents arguments for God's existence, and his arguments also are design arguments, and furthermore, he deals with both inner and outer design. But not only is Marqah in step with the aforementioned philosophers with respect to these schematic features of his thought. As we shall now see he is also in step with respect to the details with which he gives substance to his schema.

Marqah opens the sixth Book of the *Memar* with a command to the reader: "Magnify Him and praise His power over the manifold creations". The manifold creations stand in a dual relationship to God. First, they are related to God as effect to cause. Secondly, and precisely because they are effects of God, they bear witness to God as their cause. As artifacts the manifold creations bear the impress of their artificer. And those with appropriate insight can successfully scan the impress in created things for clues to the artificer. More basic than this, appropriate insight is necessary if the impress of the artificer is to be recognised for what it is, namely, a deliberate impress. A person lacking the appropriate intellectual qualities would entirely fail to realise that a given manufactured object is an artifact, and would instead take it to be something existing by chance or by nature, but not by design.

Marqah held that the world of the senses bears marks of design that are so obviously marks of design that the physical world must be an artifact; and such a world, if manufactured, could have

been created only by God. Thus, in Marqah's view, physical nature enjoys the status of God's witness. It provides us with testimony to God's existence. Nature itself must be thought of as a testament, and since it is a testament to God, nature is a holy testament.

Nature's testimony must first be identified. Marqah is explicit on this matter: "He created ten things that bear witness to His might, that show Him to be great and mighty: the period of light and the period of darkness—unalterable witnesses! And the four seasons which He ordered by His might, which He established as four testimonies, and thus come the four elements which make what is created to develop. Observe these things and realise that they are evidences testifying of Him that He is one in His essence. When He brought into being light, it was manifest to the whole world. He ordered it in His greatness and the light of the sun was produced from it, and also that of the moon and all the stars. So He willed a season for the light and a season for the darkness, each of these according to order".[7]

That this statement corresponds very closely indeed to previously quoted arguments is evident. As a preface to a detailed spelling out of this correspondence the following feature of Marqah's position must be brought out: it was for him no accident that the world bears marks of design. Both from the statement that God established the four seasons as four testimonies and also from the general tenor of the passage as a whole, it is clear that Marqah believed that God intended the marks of design to be seen to be such. It would perhaps be straining the overt meaning of the passage to claim that it asserts the view that the world was created with the intention of securing the didactic goal of teaching men of the existence of God. Certainly, such a view of the purpose of the existence of the universe would not be un-Samaritan. For it is found in the theological hymns of Amram Darah who, with Marqah, was the chief spokesman of Samaritan theology during the Roman period. The view is expressed in several of Amram's hymns incorporated in the *Defter*, the Samaritan Book of Common Prayer. Thus, for example, he writes: "Thou didst make new creations in time, to make known that Thou art pre-existent".[8]

[7] *Memar Marqah*, ed. and tr. Macdonald, vol. I (text) p. 131, vol. II (trans.) p. 213; hereinafter [I 131, II 213].

[8] "The Theological Hymns of Amram Darah", tr. J. Macdonald, ALUOS 2, 1961.

The various aspects of the natural world that Marqah points to as having the didactic value just referred to are (i) the period of light and the period of darkness, (ii) the four seasons, (iii) the four elements and (iv) the light of the sun, moon and stars. All these aspects of nature are referred to in the quotations of the philosophers that were given earlier. As did the earlier Hellenic and Hellenistic thinkers, Marqah found testimony to God's existence by turning his eyes heavenwards, though one significant difference is that Marqah stresses that testimony to God's existence resides in the sun, moon and stars primarily so far as they are bearers of light, whereas the earlier philosophers stressed the regularity of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies as the basis of their status as witnesses to the existence of God. Marqah's preference for stressing the significance of the light of the heavenly bodies, rather than the regularity of their movement, clearly has a Pentateuchal basis. The first words of God were: "Let there be light". And Marqah, convinced as he was that the creation bears witness to the Creator, would naturally also be convinced that the first created thing in particular would bear such witness—hence the fact that in listing the witnesses to God's existence he begins by mentioning "the period of light". And in mentioning the testimony of the heavenly bodies he introduces them by reminding us that they were made from that very primordial light with which the process of creation was begun.

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to say that the factors of uniformity and regularity in the world were not thought by Marqah to have significance as witnesses to divine existence. For in referring to the season of light and the season of darkness as God's witnesses, Marqah speaks of them as existing "according to order". The periods of light and darkness occur according to the divine arrangement of things. Of course, the only possible arrangement for the appearance of light and darkness is an alternation of the two, for if one period of light is followed without a pause by another period of light there are not in that case two periods of light but only one. Hence Marqah's reference to the order of the two periods must encompass not only the fact of their alternation, but also the length of the two alternatives. In that case the reference is to the balance that God maintains between light and darkness, the fact, that is, of their temporal equality.

Marqah further shows that he regards the orderliness of nature

to be an important witness to God's existence, by his reference to the ordering of the four seasons—a reference that is typical, as has been shown, of Hellenic and Hellenistic thinkers. Marqah does indeed say at one point that the four seasons are entirely independent of each other [I 131, II 213], but, in the first place, independent or not, Marqah stresses the fact that they make their appearance according to a regular sequence, and, in the second place, he clearly holds that the four seasons are in fact a good deal less independent of each other than he says they are. For he sees the four seasons as providing a kind of structure within which it is possible to appreciate the orderliness of the development of nature. The first season, we are told, is like a good mother giving birth to children and having compassion on them because they are weak; the second season is like a good father bringing up his children in well-being; the third season is the one in which what happens in the first two is brought to fruition; while in the fourth there occur the developments that make possible the processes of birth, nurture and fruition that characterise the other three seasons. This way of describing the four seasons implies that they are held together within an organic process of development in which the order of the seasons must be regular, for it is what occurs in each season that renders the next season possible. Nurture must be preceded by birth, and fruition must be preceded by nurture; and unless the ground is suitably prepared birth cannot take place. Thus Marqah not only insists on the regular sequential nature of the seasons, he also tells us why the sequence of seasons has the order that it does have. Not only is there regularity, there is manifest reason for the kind of regularity there is. Nature, as it presents itself to us in the order of the seasons, bears the stamp of rationality. It is easy to see how a person might move from saying that to saying that a rational being must have been responsible for the order of the seasons.

In the writings of the Stoics and Philo we found the view that testimony to divine existence is available for discovery no less in evidence acquired through introspection than in evidence acquired through sensory investigation. The inner world as well as the outer stands as a witness to the existence of God. In several places in the *Memar* Marqah makes the same point. Thus, for example, after referring to the four seasons and describing the relations between them (the organic development of each into

the next as described above), he writes: "See the order of these four and realise that you are of necessity like them. Learn from these and make your mind to acquire illumination. Observe the four which make the things to be created to develop, and realise that in yourself there are important evidences. When the created thing is perfected by the will of its Creator out of the four elements, He brings them forth by His power. He has created four divisions in you (too), so that you may exist and be developed with power" [I 131, II 214]. And some lines further on Marqah adds: "What is in the heavens is in the heart, just as what is in the earth is in the imagination. What is in the four quarters is in the reason, just as what is in any place is in every inner thought . . . From His creations is He known; from what He has made is He comprehended".

In both quotations the point is being made that the outer world and inner are in important respects parallel, or even identical. The *same* thing is in the heavens and the heart, in the four quarters and the reason, in every place and each inner thought. One implication of this view is that if the heavens and the four quarters are witnesses to God's existence then so also must be the heart and the reason. This is precisely the move that Marqah makes in the first of the two passages just quoted. Parallel to the four seasons are four divisions within us. The four seasons are witnesses to God's existence. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the four divisions within us are likewise witnesses to God's existence. The four divisions are: "desire and idea and conscience and reason hidden deep within you—יצר וענין ורז וחשבה כסין בך". This important statement will be examined in chapter VIII on the human soul. It is, however, apposite at this stage of our enquiry to note the similarity of Marqah's position to the views of earlier philosophers. Marqah sees human reason as providing testimony to God's existence; since man can reason, he is telling us, God must exist. This is exactly the view of the Stoic Zeno, for Zeno argued (see p. 11): "Nothing that is inanimate and irrational can give birth to an animate and rational being; but the world gives birth to animate and rational beings; therefore the world is animate and rational". That is to say, given the Stoic position on the relation between the universe and God, since rational beings, *viz.* men, exist so also must God. Marqah's use of the term חשבה thus links his doctrine to that of the Stoics.

His use of the term ענין may, though perhaps more tentatively, be taken to link his doctrine to that of Epicurus. The tentativeness is due to uncertainty concerning the precise meaning we should give to the term "idea" when used as a translation of ענין. Epicurus argued, as we saw, that if we consider the contents of our mind, in particular the ideas we have, we can learn about what exists outwith the mind, for the mind does not have the power to generate entirely from its own resources the ideas to be found in it. In general, if we have an idea of an X there is an X of which we have an idea. And, specifically, Epicurus regards our idea of God as evidence for the existence of God. Marqah, we now learn, regards our ענין as bearing testimony to God's existence. Whether, however, he regarded any idea whatsoever as bearing such testimony, or whether, as with Epicurus, he meant specifically that our idea of God bears such testimony, cannot be determined from the text.

Nevertheless, whatever may be Marqah's precise point in using the term ענין, it is certain that he was, at least, invoking ענין as evidence of an inward nature for God's existence. Philo instructs us to look inward in order to find testimony to God's existence: ". . . but explore yourselves only and your own nature . . . for by observing the conditions prevailing in your own individual household . . . you will gain forthwith a sure knowledge of God and of His works" (*Migr.* xxxiii). This, it is now apparent, is precisely the position that Marqah himself adopts.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ONENESS OF GOD

In the preceding chapter attention was focused upon arguments for the existence of God, and particularly upon arguments taking as their starting point certain features of the cosmos. In Book VI of the *Memar* Marqah affirms: "From His creations is He known" [I 132, II 215]. This is the guiding principle of his arguments for God's existence; but the dictum was intended to express the doctrine that from God's creation He is known, not only to exist, but also to have a certain nature. In this chapter I shall take a first step towards identifying Marqah's account of the divine nature. His concept of divine oneness will be used as a starting point for from it all Marqah's leading positions regarding the nature of God will be seen to flow.

The concept of divine oneness has, of course, scriptural warrant. But it is also to be found in the writings of Marqah's Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophical predecessors. A brief consideration of these earlier writings on this topic will be valuable both as a means of setting the general cultural scene within which Marqah played his part and also as a means of illuminating a number of important conceptual matters whose clarification will enable us to see more clearly the significance of certain of Marqah's teachings on God's oneness. The philosophers to whom I shall turn are Aristotle and Philo.

There is in Hellenic philosophy a distinction between two concepts of "one". The two are marked linguistically by the phrases τὸ ἕν and τὸ ἁπλοῦν. The concepts corresponding to these two phrases are present in Aristotle's works. In an important passage in the *Physics* 227a9 ff. Aristotle discusses the concept of "continuity". A thing is continuous if it has parts whose contiguous limits are contained in each other; it is impossible to distinguish between the boundary of one part and the boundary of another because of the union they form. A hand is in this sense continuous with the wrist, for it is not possible to distinguish between the line that marks the end of the hand closest to the arm and the

line that marks the end of the wrist at the lower extremity of the arm. The one line marks the two boundaries, which is to say that the two boundaries are really one. Thus the hand and the wrist form a continuous union. Nature is full of examples of continuity, where two things are so related as to be continuous with each other. This concept of "continuity" provides us with the basis of an account of one kind of "oneness". For consider any two things related by continuity to each other. "In whatever way that which holds them together is one", Aristotle writes, "so too will the whole be one, e.g. by a rivet or glue or contact or organic union". It is clear from this that Aristotle is willing to accept that something can be *one* even where, on account of its continuous quality, it is divisible into a multiplicity of parts. But if it is admitted that one thing may contain a multiplicity, then what point is made when that thing is said to be one? Aristotle, operating with the idea of the natural number series, points out [*Physics* 207b5 ff.] that the series has at its start something indivisible, namely, the number one, which is indivisible in the sense that there is no natural number less than one by which one can be divided. All other numbers are successors of one and derivatives of it. Thus two is derived from one by adding one to one, and three is derived from one by adding one to one, and then adding a further one to that summation. Hence, if we are thinking of one simply as the base number in the natural number series, to say that in that sense something is one, is to deny that it is two or any higher natural number. A complex object is *one* in the sense just outlined, and the attribution of oneness is in no way contradicted by the simultaneous attribution of internal multiplicity. I shall term the kind of oneness expounded above "quantitative oneness".

There is a second concept of oneness that Aristotle expounds. This second concept is indeed implicit in the above discussion of what I have termed "quantitative oneness", and for reasons which will quickly emerge I shall term the second concept the concept of "internal oneness". Let us consider again Aristotle's idea that in the natural number series every member of the series is related to one by being either identical with one (in which case it is the first member of the series) or a derivative of one (in which case it is expressible as the sum of a set of ones). In such a conceptual scheme each natural number larger than one can be thought of as complex since it is expressible as the sum of a series of ones—it

is rendered complex by the plurality of ones of which it is the sum. According to this view each natural number greater than one must be thought of as a short-hand form of a summation of ones. But the number one itself is not in this sense complex, for it is not expressible as the sum of a series of ones. One itself is after all that out of which such a series has to be constructed. Or, put otherwise, whereas any other natural number *n* is divisible by one *n* times, and hence consists of *n* elements, one is itself divisible by no natural number other than itself, and consequently it contains only itself—it consists of one one. Thus Aristotle is forced to the conclusion that the number one is indivisible.[1] Since in the respect described it lacks parts, the number one is simple. Thus we arrive at the concept of one as τὸ ἁπλοῦν. The oneness of the number one is what I shall term "internal oneness".

These two concepts of "oneness" are relevant to Aristotle's theology, for the Aristotelian god is one, both quantitatively and internally. In the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* Λ Aristotle develops the concept of a being, described by him as divine, who is the unmoved first mover of the world. The Aristotelian god is a mover in the way in which an object of desire moves the desirer, that is, by drawing the desirer towards it. But whereas other objects of desire need not move, the unmoved first mover is immovable. It cannot be moved by an external agency. And it cannot move itself. Aristotle appears to hold that nothing moves itself. When apparent self-motion occurs the true situation is better described by saying either that an unseen, or disregarded, external agency is causing motion, or that one part of the moving thing is moving another part. Certainly Aristotle did not think that one part of the unmoved first mover could move another part. For, first, all movement, according to Aristotle, involves an actualisation of what is potential. But Aristotle's god is unmarred by any potentiality; it is absolutely actual, and hence cannot move in any of its parts. Secondly, it in any case lacks parts since it is indivisible, that is, internally one (*Phys.* 267b25-6).

Further characterisations of the Aristotelian god are deducible from the foregoing. Since all corporeal things are divisible, it follows that Aristotle's god is incorporeal; and being incorporeal it is also spaceless. Furthermore, it is the doctrine of the *Physics*

[1] *Phys.* 207b5; *Meta.* 1016b18.

221b1 ff. that only what is capable of motion is in time. Aristotle's god, being, as we saw, immovable, must also be timeless. Nothing that is timeless can be subject to change, since change can occur only in time. Hence Aristotle's god is also immutable. Aristotle thus develops the idea of a god who is quantitatively and internally one, and who is, relatedly, immutable, incorporeal, spaceless and timeless.

This concept of the deity is in most respects very similar to Marqah's, for as we shall see Marqah, also, wishes to affirm that God is both quantitatively and internally one, and to deny that He is mutable, corporeal, spatial or temporal. The sharp divergence of positions occurs at the point where the suitability of God as a subject of human worship is in question, for unlike Marqah's God, Aristotle's is wholly unsuitable. This becomes clear if we consider the question of what Aristotle's god does. Since he is incorporeal he cannot do anything physical. He can engage only in mental or intellectual activity, and furthermore, only in that kind of intellectual activity which does not depend on matter. Since, according to Aristotle, imagination depends upon sensation and therefore on body, god cannot engage in imaginative activity. Also he cannot engage in the kind of thought that is discursive in nature, such as syllogistic reasoning; for discursive thought takes time, and god is not in time. Thus god's intellectual activity must consist of non-discursive, that is, intuitive thought. Now, it is a central doctrine of Aristotle's epistemology that the mind, in knowing, takes on the form of what it knows. The mind and the object it knows have the same form. Hence if god knew something marred by potentiality this knowledge would sully god's absolute actuality. Hence god can know only what is absolutely actual. But only god is absolutely actual. Hence god can know only himself. Thus we arrive at the concept of god as self-thinking thought (*Meta.* Λ 9). Since we, and the world we inhabit, are in motion and hence in a state of potentiality, and since god cannot know what is in such a state, for that knowledge would render him less than absolutely actual, we and the world cannot be known by god. Whether or not god can be an object of our thoughts we cannot be an object of his. In so far as prayer is intended, minimally, as a vehicle by which we communicate with god, prayer is bound to fail, for god cannot receive prayers. He cannot receive a prayer unless it becomes an object of his thought. But the only possible object of his thought

is himself. By the same token he cannot answer a prayer either. For any answer is a response, and god can respond only to himself—if indeed it makes sense to say he can do even that. This god is clearly very different from the God whom Marqah regards as a Being we should approach in prayer in a state of utter humility and the profoundest reverence.

What is perhaps most remarkable is that though Marqah's God and Aristotle's have so much in common when considered with respect to what may be termed their metaphysical qualities, they should be so different with respect to their religious qualities. Indeed, Aristotle's god has practically nothing to do with the God to whom the religious consciousness reaches out. He is the god of the philosopher rather than the God of the religious man. Marqah's position, as compared with Aristotle's, has the merit of approximating to a synthesis of the two conceptions of the deity, since he attributes to God many of the metaphysical qualities that Aristotle attributes, yet does so in such a manner as to give expression at the same time to a deeply religious consciousness.

One aspect of Aristotle's account of god, that is of considerable importance to Marqah studies, is the *otherness* of the deity. We are internally complex, god is internally simple; we are many, god is unique; we change, god is immutable; we are corporeal, god is incorporeal; we are spatial, god is spaceless; we are temporal, god is timeless. Given the utter otherness of Aristotle's god, there is nothing surprising in the fact that this god is not the being whom the religious man worships. Yet perhaps the most striking aspect of Marqah's position is his unshakable insistence on the absolute otherness of God. It may seem that he is being unreasonable in trying to have it both ways. He wishes to say both that God is absolutely other and also that He is accessible to man, and it is not clear that he is entitled to say both things.

I wish to turn now from a consideration of Aristotle to an examination of Philo's doctrine of the oneness of God. Philo recognised two kinds of oneness, namely, what I have termed "quantitative" and "internal" oneness. Nevertheless, despite the Aristotelianism of the doctrine that god is quantitatively and internally one, Philo's concept of the one God is a good deal more in harmony with the teaching of the *Memar* than with the *Physics*. To prepare the ground for showing the similarity between Philo and Marqah on this matter, certain prefatory points must be made regarding Philo's position.

Philo places the greatest possible emphasis on the concept of the oneness of God. Like Marqah, he provides two kinds of warrant for belief in His oneness, namely, Pentateuchal and philosophical. One of the Pentateuchal proof texts to which he refers us is the first commandment: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery". Philo provides the following commentary: "Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge and honour one God Who is above all, and let the idea that gods are many never even reach the ears of the man whose rule of life is to seek for truth in purity and guilelessness. But . . . all who give worship and service to sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe or their chief parts as gods most undoubtedly err".[2] One point that emerges from this quotation is that Philo understands the first commandment to be a declaration of the oneness of God in the sense of oneness that we have designated "quantitative". This follows from the fact that Philo regards the commandment as in opposition to polytheism. A second point that emerges is that Philo regarded polytheism as dangerous because it was a seductive doctrine. The wish that the doctrine should not be allowed "even to reach the ears of the man whose rule of life is to seek for truth" can best be understood as due to a fear that polytheism is an attractive doctrine that has the power to tempt men from the sincere search for truth. Philo's fear is the greater because of his accompanying conviction that the first commandment, extolling the oneness of God, is of all commandments the most sacred. For from this it follows that a contrary doctrine is the most profane. It is true that in one place [3] Philo refers to atheism as the "worst form of wickedness—κακιῶν τὴν μεγίστην". But there is no contradiction here, for it is open to Philo to hold that polytheism and atheism are equally profane doctrines. Indeed it is open to him to hold that in the last analysis polytheism is a variety of atheism, for a believer in many gods must deny the existence of the one true god. But if a polytheist denies that God exists he is to that extent an atheist.

Philo's argument for the claim that there is one and only one God is based on a consideration of a parallel between the government

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[2] *Deca.* xiv 65-6.
[3] *Spec.* I vi 32.

of the universe and of cities. He writes: "... we must first lay down that no existing thing is of equal honour to God and that there is only one sovereign and ruler and king, who alone may direct and dispose of all things" [*Conf.* xxxiii 170]. He then quotes Homer approvingly:

"It is not well that many lords should rule;
Be there but one, one king" (*Il.* ii 204-5),

and comments on the verse that it "could be said with more justice of the world and of God than of cities and men. For being one it must needs have one maker and one master".

Philo also insists that God is one, in the sense that He is internally one. His proof text is: "It is not good that man should be alone" (*Gen.* ii 18). Philo argues that the verse implies that it is good for God to be alone. But what does it mean to say that God is alone? It means that: "God is not a composite being, consisting of many parts, nor is He mixed with aught else" [*Leg. All.* II i 2].

It is therefore reasonable to hold that Philo held that God is one, in both of the senses expounded by Aristotle. There are, however, further Aristotelian aspects to Philo's theology. Philo's God, like Aristotle's, is immutable—"unchangeableness (τὸ ἄτρεπτον) is the property of God" [*Leg. All.* II ix 33]. Now, change can occur only in time. But it is a central doctrine of Philo's teaching that God is not in time: "For the Cause of all is not in the thick darkness, nor locally in any place at all, but high above both place and time" [*Post.* v 14]. Hence God cannot change. Philo's reason for denying that God is temporal is as follows: God created the world, and time came into existence only because the world did. But God does not depend upon the world for His existence, for otherwise the world would be at least coeval with God if not anterior to Him. Hence God does not depend upon time for His existence [*Immut.* vi]. A precisely parallel argument can easily be constructed to establish that God is also spaceless. And from this last consideration it is clear that Philo is committed to the claim that God is incorporeal.

Thus, Philo's doctrine on the nature of God involves the claims that God is unique, internally one, immutable, incorporeal, spaceless and timeless. To this extent the otherness that we found ourselves committed to attributing to Aristotle's god seems no less appropriately attributable to Philo's God, and to this extent Philo's position resembles the one which, as we shall shortly see, Marqah

later adopted. The chief point at which Philo parts company with Aristotle, and stays in the company of Marqah, is on the question of the attributability to God of personhood. This point will occupy us in Chapter VI. It may be stated here, however, in anticipation, that despite his insistence on the absolute oneness of God, on His absolute uniqueness and simplicity Philo none the less finds himself able to maintain the idea of God as a being who is a suitable object of the religious, and not merely philosophical, consciousness.

Turning now to the *Memar* we shall see that Marqah's doctrine of the oneness of God closely resembles those of Aristotle and Philo. That Marqah propounded the doctrine of the oneness of God is unquestionable. Thus, for example, he declares: "Thanks be to the God of gods . . . Lord of oneness, one (מר יחידאותה אחד) . . . without help, without associate, without a second, without a companion, without any connected with Him" [I 131, II 213]. Though there is ample Pentateuchal warrant for the doctrine that God is one, it is important for an appreciation of the rational content of the *Memar* to recognise that Marqah does not rely merely on Pentateuchal proof texts to support his position, for he believes that his position is a reasonable one. After referring to ten things, namely, the periods of light and darkness, the four seasons and the four elements, he states: "Observe these things and realise that they are evidences testifying of Him that He is one in His essence" [I 131, II 213]. In effect Marqah is here presenting a design argument for the oneness of God. Since nature is replete with orderliness and uniformity it possesses a unitary quality. Such unitariness could not have been achieved, Marqah is arguing, if the natural world had been created by many beings. Marqah is not arguing that since there is only one world there must have been only one creator. His point is that the systematicity of the world, in which every element stands in an orderly relation to every other element, is inexplicable on the assumption of a multiplicity of creators.

In the previous chapter reference was made to several passages in which Marqah makes it plain that he regarded man as a microcosm, literally, a cosmos in miniature. Thus, for example, he writes: "What is in the heavens is in the heart, just as what is in the earth is in the imagination. What is in the four quarters is in the reason, just as what is in any place is in every thought" [I 132, II 215]. Hence it is reasonable to deduce from the evidence of the

Memar that Marqah would willingly have subscribed to the doctrine that a consideration of the inner world of the spirit, no less than a consideration of the outer world of physical nature, would reveal evidence of the oneness of God.

It is clear from the way Marqah, at the start of Book VI of the *Memar* describes God, namely, as "without associate, without a second, without a companion, without any connected with Him", that he held God to be one, at least in the quantitative sense of the term. There are not two or more Gods, there is only one. As Marqah writes at the start of the *Memar*: "The Lord is God and there is none besides Him".

As well as the doctrine of divine quantitative oneness, Marqah also subscribed to the doctrine of divine internal oneness. Because one of the types of oneness ascribed by Marqah to God is the internal variety, it is important to recognise the preferability of avoiding the term "unity" as a translation of Marqah's common term יחידאותה. Unity is the quality of unitedness. Unitedness is a relationship between a plurality of elements. That is to say, where there is a unity, different things are united to each other. Whatever is internally one, however, lacks a plurality of parts. Since God is said by Marqah to be internally one, it would be inaccurate to ascribe to Marqah the view that God is a unity. Hence, where Marqah describes God as יחידאותה, the Aramaic term is better translated as "oneness".

In discussing the qualities of God, in relation to Aristotelian and Philonic doctrine, we showed both those philosophers to be committed to the view that God is internally one, spaceless, timeless, incorporeal and immutable. These qualities are not independent of each other, for internal oneness is inconsistent with spatiality, temporality, corporeality and mutability.

Any quantity of space is, theoretically, divisible. However small may be an envisaged block of space, it is always possible to specify a block that is smaller in size. Because space is thus indefinitely divisible it is possible to conceive any block of space as a unity formed from smaller blocks. Therefore, any block of space has internal plurality. Hence, internal oneness implies spacelessness. Now, Marqah is insistent on the spacelessness of God. Thus he writes: "He has no place in which He is known and no area in which He is recognised; He does not reside in a place; He is devoid of any locality" [I 97, II 161], and: "*I, even I, am He*, who is without time or place" [I 111, II 187].

It is evident from several passages that Marqah's reason for holding that God is spaceless is the same as the reason which, we noted earlier, Philo also gave. Immediately following the passage just quoted: "He is devoid of any locality", Marqah writes: "By His great power He created all places. By this statement Moses makes known that He has no place where He can be sought". At a later point Marqah adds: "There is no place outside of His control; all places He made, fashioned, perfected, set in order, made ready. He supplied their needs" [I 132, II 215]. The argument that Marqah is developing in these passages is that since God created space He cannot Himself occupy space. "He made, fashioned, perfected" all places. But he did not make, fashion and perfect Himself. Hence He must be independent of space.

Just as spacelessness is implied by internal oneness, so also is timelessness. For any period of time is, theoretically, divisible. It is therefore possible to conceive any period of time as a unity formed from shorter periods. Hence any period of time possesses internal plurality. Consequently internal oneness implies timelessness. When Marqah speaks, as he does repeatedly, of the eternity of God, when he describes Him as the God "who endures forever" [I 5, II 3], we must understand him to be referring to God's timelessness.

It may be added that precisely the same kind of argument as the one Marqah employed in order to establish God's spacelessness can also be used to prove that God exists outside time. The argument, briefly, is that since God created the world, and in so doing brought time into existence, He cannot Himself require to exist in time as a condition of existing at all. And since temporality is inessential to God it cannot characterise Him.

Acceptance of God's timelessness carries with it, logically, a commitment to the doctrine of divine immutability, for change can occur only in time. Marqah, working within the bounds of his conceptual system, submits to the logic of his own position and accepts the doctrine of divine immutability. Thus, he writes: "Praised be the everlasting King who changes (מחלפה i.e. causes change) but is not changed" [I 90, II 147]. And similarly, Marqah writes of God as "the living one who does not die, who abides unchangingly" [I 8, II 8].

Acceptance of God's spacelessness carries with it, logically, a commitment to the doctrine of divine incorporeality, for bodies

are, by definition, extended in space. Since, as we saw, Marqah subscribes to the doctrine that God is not spatial, it need therefore come as no surprise to find in the *Memar* approving references to the doctrine of divine incorporeality. Indeed, Marqah's denial of any similarity between God and created things permits the inference that he was committed to the doctrine of God's incorporeality, for were God corporeal He would be similar to his creations.

The far-reaching epistemological implications of Marqah's teaching on the oneness of God will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNKNOWABILITY OF GOD

For the religious consciousness Marqah's position on the oneness of God may present itself as an incipient menace, since if Marqah is correct the cognitive gap between ourselves and God would appear to be so wide as to render its bridgeability by our finite minds an impossibility. If the gap is indeed unbridgeable this has very large consequences for the kinds of claim that we might otherwise consider ourselves entitled to make concerning Him. If we whittle away steadily at the content of our concept of God, and therefore at the kinds of things we can claim to know about Him, the process may gather a momentum that spends itself only at the point where there is nothing left to whittle at, at the point, that is, where the concept has lost its entire content. At that point what is at stake is our logical right to claim to know that God exists, for if there is nothing we can know about God it is difficult to see how we can know even that He exists. In stressing the oneness of God Marqah is led to the brink of a description of God that entirely lacks positive content. There is, he often seems to be saying, nothing we can know God to be. But if we cannot know Him to be *A*, and cannot know Him to be *B*, and cannot know Him to be anything else either, then there is nothing that we can know Him to be. Thus a resolute refusal to blemish God's oneness by giving our concept of Him a positive content is within logical hailing distance of a thorough-going agnosticism. Furthermore it is a short step, whether or not we are entitled to take it, from saying that there is nothing we can know God to be to saying that we can know Him to be nothing. If God is nothing He does not exist. This position is less agnostic than atheistic. Yet it is difficult to avoid the impression that Marqah is within range of it. Throughout the *Memar* applications of the *via negativa* as a way of talking about God are present. God, we are told, is not in space, He is not in time, He does not have a body, He does not have parts. This easy employment of language carries with it the risk that we might persuade ourselves that sense is being talked when in fact it is not. What is at issue here is whether, for all its seeming fulness,

the description of God given by Marqah makes sense, whether, that is, we can form a concept of a being answering to the description given by Marqah. If we cannot then God is unknowable, and if He is unknowable then agnosticism or atheism rather than theism would seem to be a more appropriate response to the facts.

In view of these considerations it is surprising that Marqah's insistence on the cognitive remoteness of God is linked to an exuberant religiosity. Marqah insists, first, that true religiosity must be based on a purified concept of God, and then, in the paradoxical style of the mystic, insists that recognition of God's utter remoteness provides the only context within which an approach to God is possible. As his account of the matter develops it emerges that the paradoxical air of Marqah's position is not a mere decorative overlay conferring logical respectability on a position that is not so much paradoxical as self-contradictory. For, using material that at first sight seems an unpromising basis for constructing a logically sound picture, Marqah develops a religious philosophy surprisingly free of contradiction.

Marqah's doctrines on the cognitive relationship between God and man can best be appreciated when displayed within their wider cultural context. By the time Marqah wrote the *Memar* there was already a substantial literature on the subject of the knowability of God. In particular, Hellenic and Hellenistic speculation presents the picture of the gradual realisation of the existence and seriousness of the problem. The earlier part of this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of relevant Hellenic and Hellenistic metaphysical speculations, starting with a brief account of Aristotle's epistemology and its applicability to the question of whether the human mind can bridge the cognitive gap between men and God. This is an obvious place to begin, since Aristotle's own system set the scene within which much future speculation on the knowability of God took place, and traces of Aristotelian speculation are visible in Marqah's *Memar*. Further light is shed on the *Memar* by a consideration of Philo's doctrines concerning God's knowability. Philo deals with the topic more explicitly and more fully than does Aristotle, though Aristotelian thought is clearly not far below the surface of Philo's writings on the topic.

Our examination of Aristotle and Philo will, it is hoped, constitute an exposition of a conceptual framework that will serve to clarify the *Memar*'s position on divine knowability. Such light

as Aristotle and Philo shed is particularly welcome in this field, for considerable difficulties are encountered by those seeking to come to grips with Marqah's position on the matter under consideration.

Aristotle does not explicitly raise and consider the question of whether or not God is knowable, but his theological position is sufficiently fully worked out for us to be able to conjecture with a reasonable degree of assurance that had he addressed himself to this matter he would have been drawn to the position that God is not knowable. As a first step towards providing a justification for this conjecture some remarks on Aristotle's theory of knowledge will be apposite.

One of the central areas in epistemology is concerned with the question of how knowledge is possible. It has seemed to many philosophers that the possibility of knowledge requires the presence of an element shared by knower and known. Kant, for example, held that what the two have in common is rationality. The knower has rationality in that he has a faculty of reason, and the known has rationality since the agent, using his faculty of reason, has imposed a rational structure on the object, thereby rendering it knowable to him.

Aristotle, like Kant, insists on a close relation between knower and known. The Aristotelian doctrine is that the thinking part of the soul takes into itself the form of the object of thought and becomes identical with it. The knower knows by virtue of his mind assimilating itself to the form of the object known. Prior to knowing a particular knowable object the mind is potentially identical to the form of that object. But everything is a possible object of thought.[1] Hence the mind is potentially identical with the form of everything, for which reason Aristotle refers with approval to the Platonic conception of the soul as being the 'place of forms—τόπον εἰδῶν'.[2] But what is potentially anything is actually nothing, since if an object were actually one thing rather than another this would prevent its becoming some things though not others—thus an actual block of wood is potentially a wooden statue but not potentially a marble statue.

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[1] *De Anima* 429a18.
[2] *De Anima* 429a27.

Thus far in the argument it would seem reasonable to maintain that the immense difference between God and man, insisted on by Marqah, is implied by Aristotle also, for while in the *Metaphysics* 1071b19 ff. Aristotle argues that God is pure actuality and hence is potentially nothing, in the *De Anima* III 4 he argues that the human mind is potentially anything.

It might seem that Aristotle has created a difficulty for himself by insisting that the part of the soul that thinks is, before it thinks, actually nothing. For since what it thinks is actually something the difference between knower and known seems too great to bridge. But this criticism ignores the point that though, prior to thought, the mind is actually nothing, its nature is to be potentially anything. Hence prior to knowing an object it is potentially identical to it. And this relation of potential identity is sufficiently close to be bridged by knowledge.

It is essential to the Aristotelian epistemology that it is the form of an object of thought that is identical to the mind of the thinker while he is actually thinking the object. If the object of thought is a composite of matter and form the mind of the thinker does not become the composite object, for it does not assimilate the matter of the object. To take Aristotle's example: "It is not the stone that is present in the soul but its form".[3] Not everything, however, shares with stones the feature of hylomorphic composition. As Aristotle reminds us: "In certain cases the thing and its form are identical".[4] Since in knowing something the mind becomes identical with the *form* of the thing, it follows, with regard to those cases where the object has form but lacks matter, that when the mind knows such a purely formal object it becomes identical with the entire object. The thought of the object is identical with the object, and both are identical with the mind of the thinker. Now, the Aristotelian god entirely lacks matter, since whatever has matter has potentiality and god lacks potentiality. He is pure actuality. Consequently if he is an object of knowledge the knowing mind must become identical with god. This clearly follows from Aristotle's identification of knowing with a kind of being. There would be no question of becoming identical *only* with the form of god, and remaining distinct from his matter since, as has just been stated, god lacks matter.

[3] *De An.* 431b30.
[4] 429b12.

If we accept this as a fair statement of the line of thought Aristotle would have followed on the matter of god's knowability, given his account in the *De Anima* of the nature of thought and his account in the *Metaphysics* of the nature of god, what conclusion can we draw concerning the attitude Aristotle would have adopted towards the doctrine that men can know god?

Aristotle argues in several places that we cannot think without images.[5] His general doctrine is that images, the product of φαντασία, are firmly grounded in sensation in that they are constructions from the data of previous sensations, whether as waking imaginings, or as recollections or dreams. Since the Aristotelian god is not available for sensory inspection it might seem that an image of god necessarily fails to correspond to the facts about god, and that therefore thought about god is impossible. But this line will not quite do as it stands. For Aristotle holds that the mind thinks forms *in* the images.[6] To take a stock example, the geometer thinks the form of the circle in the circle that he has drawn, by a process of extrapolation or abstraction from the material circle. The drawn circle will to a greater or lesser degree fail to correspond to the form of the circle, and these failings are abstracted from the drawing before the geometer describes the circle mathematically. The drawing of the circle is perhaps a necessary aid to thought, but is not the object of thought as that is described in mathematical terms by the geometer. Likewise, even if our image of god fails to correspond to the facts, it might still be considered a necessary aid to thought about god, for by engaging in a gradual idealisation of our image of god we may secure an insight into the form of god, just as the geometer's insight into the form of a circle may be secured by way of a gradual idealisation of an admittedly very inaccurate picture.

But if we have an insight into the form of god are we not then god? A major group of commentators, particularly Alexander and Zabarella, have argued that Aristotle must, for the sake of consistency, concede that part of the soul is to be identified with god. Zabarella's argument [7] is based on Aristotle's distinction [8] between

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[5] *De An.* 427b14 ff., 431a16, 432a7 ff., *De Mem.* 449b31.

[6] *De An.* 431b2.

[7] *De Rerum Natura*, De ment. ag. 12, 13; see W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*, pp. 152-3.

[8] *De Anima* iii 6.

passive and active intellect. Aristotle writes: "since in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, (1) a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, (2) a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all (the latter stands to the former as e.g. an art to its material), these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul". The active part of the soul, the part that makes, is described by Aristotle as "separable (χωριστός)".[9] What "separable" means is quickly made clear, for Aristotle goes on to speak of active intellect as being "set free from its conditions" and as being "immortal and eternal". It is evident from this that the active intellect does not depend for its existence upon matter. Essentially lacking matter, active intellect is pure form. But there remains the question "whether we have to suppose one such substance or more than one".[10] Aristotle is unsure how many there are, but makes it clear that there are just two kinds, one of which is a class whose sole member is god. The other is the class of substances that cause the motions of the heavenly spheres. There is no indication that the latter substances do anything other than cause those motions, and in particular Aristotle provides no grounds for supposing that they do the job assigned to the active intellect, namely, to act upon the passive intellect in such a way as to bring the latter from a state of potential knowledge to a state of actual knowledge. Consequently, since active intellect is pure form and the only two kinds of pure form are god and the intelligences moving the heavenly spheres, we are forced to identify the active intellect with god. Thus Zabarella.

Now, there can be no doubt that Aristotle, at least in the *De Anima*, thought of the passive intellect and the active intellect as two parts in the soul.[11] Admittedly the active reason is "separable" but the very fact of its separability indicates that at some stage it is conjoined with the rest of the soul. This is not by itself reason for denying the identity of the active reason with god, for the active intellect when conjoined with the rest of the soul could be identified with god in his immanent aspect. But it must be borne in mind that an identifying task of the active intellect

[9] *De An.* 430a17.
[10] *Meta.* 1073a13-14.
[11] 430a13-14.

is to bring the passive intellect from a state of potential knowledge to a state of actual knowledge. A plausible explanation of how it succeeds in performing this role is that the active intellect knows actually what the passive intellect knows potentially, and brings the passive intellect's potential knowledge to a state of actuality. In so doing it structures the passive intellect in accordance with the active knowledge of the active intellect. If this account of the activity of the active intellect is correct, it is difficult to find a justification for Zabarella's claim that the active intellect is identical to god. For this account of the active intellect is radically opposed to the concept of god developed in the *Metaphysics* 1074b15-5a4, where it is argued that god is entirely absorbed in the activity of thinking about himself. For this reason it seems justifiable to hold that, despite certain similarities between the active intellect and god, Aristotle did not take them to be identical to each other.

Aristotle's doctrines, therefore, if I am correct, lead to the conclusion that men cannot know god. I wish to turn now to the question of whether Philo's doctrines lead in the same direction. Philo's teaching on this subject will be seen to provide an important link between Aristotle and Marqah.

Philo raises two questions: "One is whether the Deity exists . . . the other is what the Deity is in essence (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν)".[12] The first question "does not need much labour", Philo asserts; and we saw in Chapter II how he answered it. But he pronounces the second to be "not only difficult, but perhaps impossible to solve". It is, however, Philo's more frequently asserted position that the determination of the essence of God is not "perhaps impossible" but, rather, "impossible *simpliciter*". For example, in one place[13] Philo considers God's command: "See, see that I am" (*Deut.* xxxii 39), and, concerned lest this verse be so misunderstood as to be interpreted as saying "See my essence", he points out that God "does not say 'See me (ἴδετε ἐμέ)', for it is impossible that the God who IS should be perceived at all by created beings. What He says is 'See that I AM (ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ἴδετε)', that is 'Behold My subsistence (ἐμὴν ὕπαρξιν)'. For it is quite

[12] *Spec.* I vi 32.
[13] *Post.* xlviii 167-9.

enough for a man's reasoning faculty to advance as far as to learn that the Cause of the Universe is and subsists (ἔστι τε καὶ ὑπάρχει). To be anxious to continue his course yet further, and enquire about essence or quality in God, is a folly fit for the world's childhood".

But though Philo asserts that we cannot know God's essence, and even that it is "a vast boon . . . to see precisely this, that He is incapable of being seen",[14] he equivocates on the question of whether men should approach as closely as possible this unattainable knowledge. Thus, when discussing the miracle of the burning bush, Philo presents a characteristic interpretation of the verse "Come no nearer . . . the place where you are standing is holy ground" (*Ex.* iii 5). The verse, he tells us, is to be understood allegorically as an injunction to the person who "becomes a seeker regarding its [the universe's] Creator, asking of what sort this Being is who is so difficult to see, so difficult to conjecture".[15] This interpretation of the scriptural verse just quoted certainly suggests that it is Philo's view that knowledge of God's essence is not merely unattainable but also is not even a suitable object of search.

But on the other hand Philo states several times that though the divine essence is not intelligible to men we should not on that account be deterred from approximating as nearly as possible to an intellectual grasp of it. That at least seems the most obvious interpretation of the following passage: "As for the divine essence, though in fact it is hard to track and hard to apprehend, it still calls for all the enquiry possible. For nothing is better than to search for the true God, even if the discovery of Him eludes human capacity, since the very wish to learn, if earnestly entertained, produces untold joys and pleasures".[16] And shortly after the passage just quoted he underlines the point in the clearest possible way: ". . .though the clear vision of God as He really is is denied us, we ought not to relinquish the quest. For the very seeking, even without finding, is felicity in itself".[17]

It is not certain which way of reconciling these two opposed viewpoints would be truest to the spirit of Philo's philosophy, or

[14] *Post.* v 15.
[15] *Fuga* xxix 164.
[16] *Spec.* I vii 36.
[17] *Ibid.* 40.

whether indeed we are not simply faced with the product of an irreconcilable conflict in Philo's mind. One solution, which has the merit of harmonising with the tenor of much of Philo's writings on the topic is the following: the search for insight into the essence of God is not in itself to be praised or condemned. What makes the difference between a commendable and a condemnable search is the spirit in which the search is undertaken. The search for God's essence can be carried out in a spirit of arrogance or of reverential humility. An arrogant search is made when the seeker believes that his mind is sufficiently great to encompass the nature of the Creator. When Philo opposes the search for an understanding of God's nature he can be understood as condemning any search carried out in the haughty belief that the goal is attainable. Such a belief Philo would regard as blasphemous.

That same search carried out in a spirit of reverential humility dictated by the seeker's recognition of the inability of his created mind to gain insight into the nature of the Creator, though his mind can at least move in that direction, is not opposed by Philo. Certainly Philo accepts the idea that one can to some small extent diminish the cognitive gap between God and man. It is in this way that Philo seeks to interpret *Ex.* xxxiii 18 ff. where, in reply to Moses' "Show me Thy Glory", God asserts "You shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen".[18] In seeing God's back Moses approaches as closely as possible to a view of God's face, and is closer to such a view than he would be were he unable to see even His back.

But why should God's face not be visible to man? The answer can best be given by reference to the Platonic tradition of thought and expression within which Philo was working. In the Allegory of the Cave, in the *Republic Bk.* VII, the sun is described by Plato as rendering visible, by its illuminative power, all things in the perceptual world. What is potentially visible to the eye is rendered actually visible by the presence of the light from the sun. Likewise, the Form of the Good, the parallel in the intellectual world to the sun in the physical world, can be understood as having the function of shedding on intellectual objects a light that enables the mind to grasp what would otherwise be hidden from it. In

[18] See e.g. *Mut.* I 579.

his discussion of the educational development of those groomed for guardianship in the ideal state, Plato makes it clear that by the end of their training they would be competent to do the intellectual equivalent of looking directly at the sun without their eyesight being destroyed in the process. The guardians are able, that is to say, to contemplate the Form of the Good without damaging themselves.

Philo regards God as performing a similar function to Plato's Form of the Good, at least to the extent that God also can be regarded as a counterpart in the intellectual world to the sun in the physical world. But Philo holds that the intellectual equivalent of gazing at the sun is impossible. Thus in one place he writes: ". . . the man that wishes to set his gaze upon the Supreme Essence, before he sees Him will be blinded by the rays that beam forth all around Him".[19] Thus we are, according to Philo, unable to know God's essence because even when the human mind's potential is fully realised God's actuality contains more than the human mind can cope with, just as the human eye is unable to cope with the brightness of the sun even though the eye's potential for sight is actualised only when light is present. Philo indeed wishes to take a large step beyond this position, for he holds that it is not only the human mind that is limited in the manner just described. In one place Philo puts into God's mouth the words: ". . . the apprehension of Me is something more than human nature, yea even the whole heaven and universe will be able to contain".[20] What this passage suggests is that only God can apprehend God, and hence that any man who comprehends God must be God. And Philo, not wishing to embrace the doctrine that a man can become God, is thus compelled to reject the idea that God is comprehensible by man.

If, however, Philo bases his argument for the unknowability of God solely upon an alleged, but undefended parallel between God and the sun his position would not be firmly established. It is, therefore, important to note that there is available to Philo further proof of the unknowability of God. This further proof is based on arguments, considered in the previous chapter, on the oneness of God. As we saw there, Philo makes it clear that in his

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[19] *Fuga* xxix 165.
[20] *Spec.* I viii 44.

view one of the ways in which God is one is that He is internally one, that is, simple. A philosophical consequence of this is that God must lack attributes, and indeed it was observed how Philo took this path and denied that God was spatial or temporal or, consequently, corporeal. But if nothing is attributable to God He must lack all qualities. By affirming any attribute of God we implicitly deny His simplicity; for we imply that He is a substance with attributes, and in that case imply His complexity. Now, the essence of a thing is that set of its attributes which secure for it membership of its species. Hence, whatever lacks attributes has no essence. But whatever lacks complexity lacks attributes. Hence, God, lacking complexity, has no essence. Little wonder that He is unknowable. Thus all that we can truly say of God is that He exists. If we insist, however, that everything has an essence, all that we could say of God is that His essence is His existence, for He has nothing else that we can affirm of Him. Yet it is not true to say that He has even existence. Rather it must be said that He *is* existence. This is the line taken by medieval philosophers in asserting that God's *esse* and *essentia* are identical. But this is to strain the meaning of *essentia*. In this special case it is no longer an attribute, because normally a thing is said to *have essentia* whereas in this case God is said to *be* His *essentia*.

Philo seems reluctant to be drawn into saying that God's existence is His essence, but his position is certainly close to it, if indeed it does not amount to that. In that case, is Philo not open to the criticism of inconsistency? For on the one hand he holds that we cannot know God's essence, and on the other hand he seems to hold that in knowing that God exists we do, after all, know His essence. The textual evidence, however, suggests that Philo would not yield to critical pressure from that direction. For, as we observed, what Philo says is that we can come to know, not God's existence, but rather the fact *that* He exists. This is a very different matter, since to know that God exists is not the same thing as to have a direct insight into the nature of God's existence, nor does it imply such an insight or even the possibility of it. The insight may be unavailable to us even though the fact itself is known.

It may be argued against Philo that if we are unacquainted with God's existence we cannot know that God exists. Surely, it might be said, we have to encounter God in order to understand

the statement that God exists. It is of little value to encounter other existent things and, having understood what it means to say that they exist (whatever that *does* mean), then affirm that in the same sense of "exist" God exists. For God's existence is not the existence of other things.

This argument is not necessarily opposed to the tenor of Philo's position. The words Philo uses are words in human language and apply very well to human matters. But it need come as no surprise that our language reveals its limitations when made to serve as an instrument for discussing the divine. Even to ascribe existence to God may involve us in a metaphorical or analogical mode of expression. Nevertheless, though severe strain is placed upon human language when it is employed to speak about God, it does not follow that language is a wholly worthless instrument for communication in this field. For there would remain point to saying that God exists, in some sense of the term "exists". For, as Philo insists, the whole cosmos bears witness to the existence of a Maker. The precise manner of His existence may be impossible to fathom, and therefore impossible intelligibly to describe. But, speaking from the Philonic point of view, this much at least must be said out of deference to the quality of the available testimony: however inadequate may be the human claim that God exists, the claim that He does not would be a good deal more inadequate still—for it would be entirely false.

A further point deserves stress here. Philo has a good deal of sympathy for the *via negativa*. A thorough-going application of that *via* leads to the doctrine that God does not, in the literal sense of the term, exist. This implication of the *via negativa* naturally prompts the question as to whether God can, so to say, survive its persistent application. Why does it not lead directly to atheism, or at least agnosticism? A possible answer is that its very application presupposes God's existence. For we must suppose, minimally, that God exists if we are to be able to see ourselves as entitled to deny anything of Him. We must believe that God exists if we are to believe that He is not X, whatever X may be.

Maintaining firm hold of the foregoing discussion on Aristotle and Philo on the unknowability of God, I wish to turn now to an examination of Marqah's contribution to the topic. We have already observed in this chapter that the Aristotelian epistemology,

as expounded in the *De Anima*, leads to the doctrine that man could not know god without becoming him, and that therefore if we assume that man cannot be god we are forced to the conclusion that god is unknowable by men. And we have also observed how Philo, relying both on the concept of the oneness of God and on the idea of an analogy between God and the sun, is likewise drawn to the conclusion that God is not a possible object of human cognition. Granted what we have already tried to establish concerning the extent to which Marqah's general and detailed positions on the proofs of God's existence and on the nature of God's oneness are in harmony with, indeed, at one with, earlier Hellenic and Hellenistic positions on these matters, it would come as no surprise to discover that Marqah is willing to sanction the doctrine that God is unknowable. And as we shall see, numerous passages in both the *Memar* and Marqah's *Defter* hymns do suggest that Marqah not only accepted the doctrine but even regarded it as having especial importance—as indeed it would be bound to have were it true. The best way to provide a setting for an analysis of Marqah's views on God's unknowability is to let Marqah speak for himself. This will not provide us with all the hard data we shall need, since reference will have to be made to the Hellenistic cultural ethos of which Marqah was in part an expression. Reference to the cultural ethos will clarify Marqah's views because it will make explicit a good deal that Marqah took for granted and felt no need to formulate. It was after all a common currency he shared with his readers.

Marqah writes persistently of the invisibility of God. Thus, for example, in the second of his set of twelve hymns in the *Defter* he writes: "Thou seest everything but nothing seeth Thee" [*v.* 11], and adds: "Thou art close to those who worship Thee, but invisible to them" [*v.* 19]. In the third hymn he writes: "Everything trembles at Thee—of whom no appearance is seen" [*v.* 11], and in similar vein in the tenth hymn Marqah affirms: "He sees both unseen and seen, yet He is unseen, for He is unseeable against the divine darkness" [*v.* 16]. This same doctrine and mode of expression are also present in the *Memar*. On the first page of that work we are told of God: "He is unseen (ולא מתחזי)". And somewhat later Marqah adds: "He . . . is concealed from all. He is never observed" [I 8, II 9].

Now, the mode of expression employed by Marqah could, if

considered out of context, give the impression that what he is concerned to affirm is that God is invisible to the human eye. Certainly there is every reason to suppose that Marqah believed God to be invisible to the eye. But in the above quotations Marqah is making reference to a second kind of invisibility, namely, invisibility to the eye of the soul. Our language is studded with modes of expression embodying the idea that knowledge or understanding is a kind of sight—what is suggestively denoted in English by the term "in-sight". Thus, we speak of seeing or perceiving or even looking at an idea. A good judgment is spoken of as a "sound observation" or a "shrewd perception", or as "shedding light" or as "illuminating". This dual function of perception terms is characteristic not only of English but also of Aramaic. For example, when Marqah refers to Aaron and Moses as two great lights who will illumine (מנירין) the House of Israel [I 10, II 12], he must be understood to be making reference to a spiritual or intellectual light that they, prophet and priest, shed. This idea of things being made visible to the spirit or intellect is even more clearly present when Marqah speaks of God as "the Illuminator who fills the wise with the spirit of wisdom, so that they are like lamps shining in the world and dispelling the dark" [I 143, II 236]. It is therefore not unreasonable to hold that when Marqah speaks of God as unseen it is at least possible that the point he is concerned to make is that God is not an object of spiritual or intellectual cognition.

Reinforcement for this possibility is provided by a number of passages in the *Memar* where Marqah gives expression to the doctrine that God is unknowable by the human mind and not merely unknowable by means of the human eye. For example, Marqah declaims the rhetorical question: "Who knows how He is, or understands what He is, or knows where He is or can reach Him" [I 106, II 176]. The same rhetorical vein asserts itself later in the *Memar* when Marqah asks: "Who can estimate what He is or know how He is" [I 132, II 215]. And, to take one further example of Marqah's expression of God's unknowability, he writes: "Who can praise Him according to what He is or know what He is" [I 90, II 146].

One possible theological position is that God cannot be praised according to His essence, because human language is not equipped to have such an exalted function. But although Marqah makes

it clear in the sentence just quoted that he holds that God cannot be praised for what He is, he does not base his position simply on the inadequacy of human language for the task. For he straightaway cites as his reason the fact that man cannot know what God is. Thus, rather than impute to Marqah the view that man's praise of God is limited by the inadequacy of human language, it would accord more with the text to ascribe to him the view that the inadequacy of human language as a vehicle for praising God is due to obstacles in the way of human knowledge of Him. Ultimately, therefore, it is the cognitive obstacles that set the limit on man's praise of God.

If Marqah's affirmations quoted above, and numerous others in the same vein, were all that he had to say about the knowability of God, there would be no obstacle to attributing to him the view, frequently affirmed by Philo, and readily extrapolated from Aristotle, that men cannot know God. However, the overall picture exhibits complications that prevent immediate acceptance of the account just proposed. The complications arise from the fact that Marqah often speaks as though knowledge of God is available to us. In view of the doctrines so far attributed to Marqah these further statements by Marqah call for investigation.

Marqah writes: "Israel are magnified through knowledge of their Lord (חכמתה דמרה)" [I 97, II 160], and adds shortly after, as if to stress the availability of God as an object of human knowledge: "Wherever He is sought He is to be found" [I 97, II 161].

In the sixth Book of the *Memar* Marqah writes: "Perfect state of knowledge (תמימות דעתה) means knowing (ידע) that the Lord is God and that there is none besides Him" [I 141, II 231].

Of course, this last statement is not decisive in showing that Marqah held that God is knowable by men, for it does not answer the crucial question of whether perfect knowledge, as defined by Marqah, is humanly attainable. Nevertheless the answer to that question does seem to be provided when we are told: "He has given us His scripture, and honoured us with knowledge of Him. . . how could we let ourselves be removed from such knowledge, when the great prophet Moses is our teacher" [I 136, II 223]. This last quotation suggests not merely that knowledge of God is available to us, but that we actually possess it, for God has already "honoured us with knowledge of Him". And if we cease to possess that knowledge, or do not reach it, we are responsible for that, since we have "let ourselves be removed from it".

From the evidence thus far cited it might be thought that Marqah's teachings on the knowability of God can fairly be dismissed as contradictory. But I would like to argue that the apparent contradictoriness is a surface phenomenon that does not characterise the conceptual picture that Marqah is presenting. He can, with some justice, be accused of adopting modes of expression that are liable to mislead. But even such criticism must be offered with a very light touch, for it is difficult to judge whether the modes of expression that can be misleading to us would have misled to the same extent or in the same way those of Marqah's contemporaries for whom the *Memar* was composed.

A strong case can be presented for the claim that Marqah is employing the distinction, which we have already observed in Philo's writings, between knowledge of God's existence and knowledge of God's essence. And when Marqah affirms the possibility of knowledge of God, the possibility in question is of knowledge that God exists. When, on the other hand, he denies the possibility of knowledge of God, the possibility in question is of knowledge of God's essence.

The case for this interpretation of Marqah is based on a consideration of certain crucial passages and also on a consideration of the general tenor of the *Memar* as a whole—particularly so far as that tenor concerns the pervasive concept of the utter otherness of God.

It will be recalled that Marqah is insistent that knowledge that God exists is possible, and indeed that testimony to His existence is available to anyone who turns a discriminating eye upon nature, or even turns a thoughtful eye upon his own soul. For our present purposes the question of the validity of the cosmological argument (whether in its application to the macrocosm of nature or to the microcosm of man) is irrelevant. The important consideration is that Marqah held that it established the existence of God. As he succinctly puts it: "From His creations is He known" [I 132, II 215]. And the answer to the question: From His creations what is He known to be? is simply that from them He is known to exist. In the light of this point, Marqah's statement about God: "Wherever He is sought He is to be found" [I 97, II 161], is readily interpretable as stating that testimony to God's existence is presented throughout the created world. God is in His creations so far as they are expressions of Him. But from them we learn

not of His essence but of His existence. He reveals Himself only as He leaves His mark on created things. He does not reveal Himself as He is in Himself. Hence Marqah is able, without contradiction, to assert that: "He reveals Himself in majesty, but is concealed from all. He is never observed" [I 8, II 9]. God as He is in Himself is not revealed, though His majesty, perhaps as it expresses itself in the majesty of the heavens, reveals the existence of God to us.

Marqah does not indeed hold that God reveals Himself only through physical nature or through men's souls. He writes, in a significant passage: "I revealed myself to former good men through an angel, not by revelation of my own mighty self. Behold I reveal myself to you and make my voice to be heard by you" [I 21, II 32]. In this case again it is made clear that God's existence is revealed. There is nothing in the text that implies that God's essence is revealed. What is revealed is God so far as He receives expression in the words of an angel of God.

A similar point can be made concerning the previously quoted statement that God "has given us His scripture, and honoured us with knowledge of Him" [I 136, II 223]. This knowledge must at least be knowledge of God's existence. But the text does not permit us to go further and attribute to Marqah the view that God's essence is made known to us.

It must be acknowledged that the few quotations just referred to are not so expressed as to rule out the possibility that Marqah might, not without inconsistency, have been subscribing to the doctrine that man can know God's essence. The reason why I wish to ascribe to Marqah the view that we cannot know God's essence is that in a number of passages to which reference has already been made he does assert that view. But since he asserts it the question arises as to whether he asserts it consistently or whether he also denies it. I have argued that he does on occasion appear also to deny it. That being the case it must be asked whether those passages in which he seems to deny it can, without forcing their meaning, be so interpreted that they do not clash with the view I have attributed to Marqah. What I have argued is that by making an elementary distinction, namely, between the essence and the existence of God, such an interpretation of the troublesome passages can, not merely be found, but be seen to be readily to hand.

Against this way of approaching the subject it could be argued that I am at too great pains to defend Marqah from the charge of self-contradiction on a central issue. It is certainly true that anyone anxious to find Marqah guilty of contradiction can, without great effort, do so. But what I have shown so far is that there is a way to resolve the apparent contradictions concerning his teachings on the knowability of God; and hence the way is open to anyone who is anxious to find Marqah free of contradiction to absolve him of the charge. However, the case in favour of the interpretation of Marqah that I have been presenting can be strengthened with the aid of certain points that are worthy of emphasis.

The first is that the distinction I have been employing in showing how Marqah's apparent contradictions can be neutralised might well have been familiar to Marqah. It would certainly be familiar to those conversant with Jewish Hellenistic philosophy. As we saw earlier in the chapter, it was a distinction to which Philo paid a good deal of attention—as when he writes: "... it is quite enough for a man's reasoning faculty to advance as far as to learn that the Cause of the Universe is and subsists. To be anxious to continue his course yet further, and enquire about essence or quality in God, is a folly fit for the world's childhood".[21] Bearing in mind what we have already observed concerning the very close similarity between, and often the identity of, Marqah's religious philosophy and the Alexandrian Hellenistic philosophy of Philo, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the distinction between divine essence and divine existence that was crucial to Philo's writings was a distinction familiar to Marqah. The distinction in question might well have been an element in the cultural common currency of the Hellenised Levant in the early centuries of the Common Era.

A second reason for wishing to subscribe to the view that Marqah was not guilty of contradiction in his teachings on the knowability of God is that on occasion he places the two apparently mutually contradictory views in such close proximity that he could not have failed to observe the contradiction if in fact there were one to observe. This suggests that though he was conscious of the paradoxical nature of his teachings he did not consider them contra-

[21] *Post.* xlviii 168.

dictory. For example, one quotation already referred to in this chapter reveals Marqah consciously displaying the paradoxical nature of his doctrine. Thus, when he writes: "He reveals Himself in majesty, but is concealed from all. He is never observed" [I 8, II 9], the carefully exhibited paradoxical air of the statement leaves us in no doubt that Marqah intended to convey the doctrine that God is in one sense or respect revealed, and in another not.

A third reason for holding that Marqah taught that God's existence is knowable but His essence is not is that such a teaching accords fully with the general tenor of the *Memar*. Regarding the conceptual content of the *Memar* twin pillars can be seen to be responsible for the cohesiveness of the fabric as a whole. These twin pillars are, first, the idea that the cosmos, *in toto* as well as in its separate parts, bears witness to a divine Creator, and secondly, and relatedly, the idea that God is, above all, one. The first idea leads to the conclusion that we can know of God at least that he exists. The second, as we saw earlier, leads to the doctrine that we cannot know of God what He is. Not even the cosmos, considered as a witness to God, considered, that is, in a real sense, as a holy testament, can yield up even the smallest clue to the divine essence. On this crucial matter Marqah is in full agreement with Philo.

It is important at this point to be clear about what has been established and what has not. So far the argument has drawn us to the conclusion that for Marqah God's essence is not knowable. But although Marqah persistently refers to a certain מה of God which is not within man's cognitive grasp, one fact that cannot be ignored is that Marqah is very informative about what God is. He tells us repeatedly that God is good, just and merciful, that He is wise, that He is powerful. And furthermore, the *Memar* contains proofs of such attributions. First, there are numerous scriptural proof texts, and, secondly, there is rational argument. In particular, Marqah frequently asserts, both in the *Memar* and also in his theological hymns in the *Defter*, that the cosmos bears witness to the oneness and the goodness of God. This point will be pursued more fully in subsequent chapters. For the present the fact that such descriptive terms are used of God is being mentioned to clear up a possible source of confusion. Since Marqah repeatedly refers to a certain מה that cannot be known, and since he also says that we can know God's goodness and oneness and

power, the natural conclusion to draw is that these qualities are not part of the מה of God. We can know His goodness and power but lack the spiritual vision to see behind these qualities and observe the God whose goodness and power they are. The power, goodness, justice and wisdom of God, as well as other qualities Marqah mentions in connection with God, are in some sense expressions of God, but are neither all nor even part of His essence. If indeed Marqah had considered them part of the divine essence he could not consistently have insisted on God's oneness. The correct way to characterise their relationship with God is a problem which will be investigated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POWERS OF GOD

In this chapter I wish to discuss a problem arising out of Marqah's teaching on the oneness of God. The problem can be simply stated. According to Marqah's teaching God is one both in the sense that He is unique, and in the sense that He is simple, that is, free from internal complexity. This teaching, as we saw, did not separate Marqah from the mainstream of Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophy. The pedigree of the doctrine is traceable back at least as far as Aristotle. But it must be remembered that Aristotle's philosophy enjoyed the benefit, if it be a benefit, of not being at all, or at least to any significant extent, guided or structured by the Greek religion. If his philosophy clashed at any point with the state religion he was free to reject the religious claims and accept in their stead his own philosophically established doctrine. Marqah, on the other hand, was quite otherwise placed in relation to the Samaritan religion. Marqah's philosophising was guided and structured at every move by the Pentateuch, for his entire life was imbued and permeated with a profound love for and acceptance of the teaching of Moses. He regarded himself as not merely lucky, but privileged to be a Samaritan, and willingly lived a Samaritan life and thought Samaritan thoughts. But to a philosophical thinker immersed in the Samaritan cosmology there is a dichotomy that must be taken note of. For the Pentateuch, as well as insisting on the oneness of God, also tells us about many apparent attributes of God. We are told, for example, that He is powerful, just, merciful and knowing. But, it may be asked, how can God, who lacks internal complexity, also be so many things? If He is powerful and just and merciful, surely He cannot correctly be described as internally simple. I wish now to present what I believe to be the solution to the problem I have thus placed at Marqah's door.

It must be stated at the start, as a *caveat*, that though the problem can be stated in the stark and simple way in which I have just presented it, and though when it is so stated it appears to be a difficult problem to cope with, Marqah himself seems totally unaware of any difficulty. The confidence with which he

handles the various elements in the troublesome dichotomy of the simplicity of God and a plurality of divine attributes suggests that he was operating with a cosmological doctrine that permitted an easy accommodation of those elements that to us seem opposed. We shall therefore have to establish the identity of that cosmological doctrine within which the harmony of those elements could be so felicitously maintained.

The Pentateuch is replete with references to God's power; He has the power to create the world and to sustain it, the power to exert a providential influence on the course of history, the power to rule with justice and to temper His justice with mercy. Pentateuchal warrant for believing in God's power is clearly present in abundance, and it is therefore wholly to be expected that Marqah should insist on the fact of the power of God. And the *Memar* and Marqah's *Defter* hymns contain numerous reference to the power of God.

Thus, for example, we are told: "Thy powers (גבוראתך) are the fruit of Thy mind",[1] "He sustains all things by His mighty power (יכלותה)" [I 132, II 214], and, in similar vein, "Thy great power (חילך) sustains all things without being near to them".[2] We are also told: "power (יכלותה) is His, might is His" [I 90, II 146], and, finally, Marqah declaims: "O power (חילך) above all powers—and all powers derive from Thine".[3]

These various statements about God's power and powers, as well as numerous other statements by Marqah in the *Memar* and the *Defter* on the same subject, are not readily understandable. What exactly is a power of God? Is there one power, as is sometimes suggested by Marqah, or several, as is also suggested by him? If both modes of expression—"power" and "powers"—are justifiable then how is the relationship between the two to be understood? If it is correct to speak of the powers of God what consequences does this have for our interpretation of the *Memar*'s doctrine that God is one? Is Marqah inconsistent in holding both that God has powers and that He is one? And finally, and arising out of the previous question, how should we conceive the relationship between God and His power or powers?

[1] Hymn I *v.* 3.
[2] Hymn I *v.* 5.
[3] Hymn III *v.* 8.

In tackling these various questions a consideration of Alexandrian Hellenistic teachings will prove an invaluable adjunct to the internal evidence of Marqah's own writings. There is indeed good reason to suppose that many of the gaps in Marqah's exposition of his doctrines of divine power derive from the fact that those gaps would not present themselves as gaps to those to whom Marqah addressed his writings. For the cultural background of his addressees would furnish them with the material that would enable them to see Marqah's doctrine as forming a continuous whole—a unity. The disconnectedness, for us, of Marqah's doctrines on God's power is due to our inability to read into those doctrines what Marqah himself read into them, and what those for whom the *Memar* and the Hymns were written could reasonably be expected to read into them.

I hope to make out a case here for the claim that Alexandrian Hellenistic thought, and particularly the works of Philo, provide us so completely with a system within which Marqah's writings on divine power can be harmonised and understood that the weight of evidence can be seen to be in favour of the claim that Philo's system, or an Alexandrian Hellenistic system of the Philonic variety, constituted a significant element in the cultural ethos of which Marqah himself was an expression. The strength of this claim, though great when based on a consideration of the relation between the teachings of Philo and Marqah on the power of God, must be judged to be greater when we also bear in mind the relation, already displayed, between Philo and Marqah on the subjects of God's existence, oneness and unknowability.

Philo wrote a great deal on the subject of the power of God, and not all that he had to say is free from obscurity. Nor are all his pronouncements, at least on the surface, entirely free from contradiction. Thus, for example, as is clear from Wolfson's complex and subtle discussion on this matter,[4] considerable dexterity and also a willingness to employ many assumptions that must remain conjectural are needed if Philo's teaching on the knowability of the divine powers in their essence are to be harmonised with each other. Fortunately it is not necessary here to attempt a detailed exegesis of Philo's position on the divine powers. An exposition of less substantial proportions will suffice to indicate

[4] *Philo*, vol. II, pp. 138-49.

the philosophical background to Marqah's teaching on this subject.

In an earlier chapter we noted Philo's close interest in the unitariness of the world as mirroring, though imperfectly, the oneness of its Creator. In Philo's view this mirroring relationship is not merely fortuitous but is on the contrary a natural outcome of the relationship in which the world stands to God. It is the created in relation to the Creator. Precisely for this reason Philo felt entitled to present a cosmological argument for the existence of the divine oneness. The quality of oneness is a divine quality, for God is one. Therefore where there is one there is God. Where there is an imperfect oneness there we find an expression, though an imperfect expression, of God's oneness. The universe itself is one and hence the universe is divine. But the universe is a many in one. Its oneness is not perfect. Something not divine interferes with the perfection of its oneness. Hence it must be possible to distinguish between that aspect of the universe which is expressive of divinity and that aspect which is not. Now, what holds the universe together as a unity, and therefore secures its identity as a single universe, is a power, or, perhaps better, powers. Thus Philo writes: "... the complex whole around us is held together by invisible powers (ἀοράτοις δυνάμεσιν), which the Creator has made to reach from the ends of the earth to heaven's furthest bounds, taking forethought that what was well bound should not be loosened: for the powers of the universe (αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ παντὸς) are chains that cannot be broken".[5] And speaking of the sense in which God may be said to be everywhere, he affirms: "He has made His powers extend through earth and water, air and heaven, and left no part of the universe without His presence, and uniting all with all has bound them fast with invisible bonds, that they should never be loosed".[6]

The powers extending through the universe are, then, powers of God. But to assert that God has powers is to predicate something of Him. This point gives rise to the question: What kind of predicate is 'power' when this is predicated of God? Wolfson [7] suggests the following answer: Philo relied heavily upon the Aristotelian account of the kinds of relation that can obtain between subject

[5] *Migr.* xxxii 181.
[6] *Conf.* xxvii 136.
[7] *Philo*, vol. II, pp. 130 ff.

and predicate in a logical proposition. These relations are four in number. The predicate can be a property, a definition, a genus or an accident of the subject.[8] Philo unquestionably considers that, of these four, three are not possible relations in which anything can stand to God. The three are definition, genus and accident. Only property remains. And consequently the powers of God must be classified as His properties.

It is necessary however to consider this in greater detail, for the issue is crucial. The underlying issue, as we shall see, is the tenability of the claim that God has powers, when that claim is maintained in conjunction with an insistence upon the oneness of God. As a first step we must see what Aristotle himself said about the meanings of the terms that he employs in referring to the four predicables. The *locus classicus* for his discussion is the *Topics*, particularly Book I.

"A *definition*" he tells us "is a phrase indicating the essence of something" [101b39 f.]. It tells us what it is for a thing of a certain kind to be of that kind. Thus we give a definition of "man" when we say that man is a pedestrian biped animal [101b30 ff.].

A *property* is "something which does not show the essence of a thing but belongs to it alone and is predicated convertibly of it. For example, it is a property of man to be capable of learning grammar; for if a certain being is a man, he is capable of learning grammar, and if he is capable of learning grammar, he is a man" [102a18 ff.].

Thirdly, "a *genus* is that which is predicated in the category of essence of several things which differ in kind. Predicates in the category of essence may be described as such things as are fittingly contained in the reply of one who has asked 'What is the object before you?'". Thus, for example, faced with a man, and asked what it is that the confronted object is, the answer giving the genus would be "an animal". The same answer would have been in order had the question been asked with reference to an ox. For men and oxen are generically the same, though specifically different.

Finally, "an *accident* is that which is none of these things—neither definition nor property nor genus—but still belongs to the thing". What distinguishes the accident is that it can belong to a particular thing, but also need not do so [102b4 ff.].

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[8] ἢ ἴδιον ἢ ὅρον ἢ γένος ἢ συμβεβηκός, *Topics* 101b25.

Aristotle's list of predicables is not random, and indeed one aspect of its value, in Aristotle's eyes, lies precisely in this fact. The list is demonstrably complete. The demonstration is as follows: any predicate is either convertible with its subject or it is not.[9] Likewise, the predicate is a term given in the definition or it is not. A convertible definitional term gives the *essence* and hence the *definition*; a convertible non-definitional term gives a *property*; a non-convertible definitional term gives the *genus*, and a non-definitional non-convertible term gives an *accident*.

Aristotle's proof, as presented in the *Topics*, is indeed not entirely plain sailing, since he says there that where a predicate term enters into the definition of the subject term, but is not convertible with it, then the term refers to the genus *or differentia*, and this seems to demand a broadening of Aristotle's list to five. Since, for Aristotle, definition is composed of genus plus differentiae [103b15], differentia should be added to the initial list of predicables. But this problem in Aristotelian hermeneutic need not detain us at this stage. The important point to be borne in mind here is that in Aristotle's view, and, according to Wolfson, in Philo's view also, the list of four predicables is complete. It follows that if anything can be predicated of God and yet cannot be predicated under three of Aristotle's four headings, then it must be predicated under the fourth. Hence, we are faced with the question of which predicable, if any, is applicable to God.

Since a definition refers to genus and differentiae of the definiendum, and since whatever has genus and differentiae is complex, God is indefinable. To put the point otherwise: a definition gives the essence of a thing. But God lacks an essence, and hence cannot be defined. We noticed in the preceding chapter that there is in fact a problem concerning whether Philo did reject the view that God has an essence, or whether he held that God did have an essence, namely, His existence. But this problem was, as we saw, caused in part by the fact that the term "essence" can be employed in non-standard ways. If, however, the term is understood as referring to genus plus differentiae then God certainly lacks essence and hence lacks definability.

With regard to the second of the predicables, namely, genus,

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[9] A predicate P is convertible with a subject S if the fact that S is P entails that P is S.

the question of whether it has application to God does not admit of a simple answer when considered within the context of Philo's teachings, since Philo's pronouncements on this matter are *prima facie* contradictory. He says both that the predicable "genus" has application to God and that it does not. Thus, he describes God as τὸ γενικώτατον,[10] that is, the highest genus, or the supremely generic, though he also wishes to affirm that God lacks essence and hence lacks genus. Wolfson has argued that Philo's reference to God as τὸ γενικώτατον was made in order to indicate that God lacks the 'normal' kind of genus, namely, the kind that allows for differentiation according to specific differences.[11] God, though a genus of sorts, is not the kind of genus that admits of specific differentiation. Now, Aristotle makes it clear in the *Topics* that the predicable he refers to as "genus" is precisely the sort that does allow for such differentiation. Hence, despite Philo's use of the term τὸ γενικώτατον to refer to God, the Aristotelian predicable *genus* does not apply to Him.

The predicable "accident" is simpler to deal with. God, as we have seen, cannot have accidents, since the possession of accidents is possible only for a complex being. Hence, at least three of the four kinds of predicable listed by Aristotle would have to be rejected by Philo as inapplicable to God.

This line of reasoning draws us to the conclusion that if any kind of predicable is applicable to God that predicable must be ἴδιον—property. Wolfson indeed unhesitatingly draws the conclusion that the predicable *property is* applicable to God. But the issue is rendered more complicated by the fact that a further possibility has to be considered, namely, that the theory of predicables as a whole has no application to God. It may, after all, not.

Now, one reason for holding that in Philo's view the list of predicables is applicable to God is simply that Philo does speak of things as being the ἴδιον of God. But this fact alone leaves entirely open the question of whether Philo's use of the term ἴδιον accords with the description of the concept of 'property' as that is presented by Aristotle. The chief reason for doubting that such accord exists centres on Aristotle's account of the relation between the essence of a thing and its properties. In a significant passage

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[10] *Leg. All.* II xxi 86.
[11] Vol. II, pp. 109-110.

in Book V of the *Topics* Aristotle writes: "... in properties, as in definitions, the first term to be assigned ought to be the genus, and then, and not till then, the other terms should be added and should distinguish the subject ... you must see if he [the assigner of the property] has placed the subject, whose property he is assigning, in its essence and then adds the other terms; for then the property will have been correctly assigned in this respect" [132a10 ff.]. The question naturally prompted by this account is whether it is possible to attribute properties, understood as limited in the way just described, to God. Philo holds that God's essence is not a possible object of human knowledge, and that cognitively we approach most closely a knowledge of God in knowing that He exists. If we take the line, suggested earlier, that for Philo God's essence is to exist, and that even if we lack direct insight into the nature of His existence we know at least of the fact of His existence, then we may conclude that we can "place God in His essence" for we can ascribe existence to Him. In that case to ascribe properties to God is to ascribe to Him certain attributes which He possesses by virtue of His existence, and which are of such a nature that only a divine Existent could possess them.

It seems reasonable therefore to conclude that Philo's system does not generate logical pressures sufficiently strong to ensure that he cannot consistently ascribe to God an ἴδιον, as that term is understood by Aristotle in the *Topics*. Philo's logical entitlement to ascribe properties to God brings immediate advantages, for it enables Philo to say many things about God without implicitly denying His simplicity. Since properties do not form part of the essence of a subject, the ascription of a multiplicity of properties does not imply the internal plurality of the essence of the subject.

Granted that Philo did hold that God has properties, it is necessary to establish what these properties are. One divine property is τὸ ποιεῖν,[12] "action" or "activity". It must be borne in mind here that Philo is not simply taking over the Aristotelian terminology with its Aristotelian interpretation. For Aristotle draws a distinction between ποίησις (making) and πρᾶξις (doing), the crucial point for him being that ποίησις has an end other than itself whereas action cannot have.[13] Philo's τὸ ποιεῖν is clearly intended to cover

[12] *Cher.* xxiv 77.
[13] *N.E.* 1140b6-10.

the Aristotelian πρᾶξις. But if τὸ ποιεῖν is understood as an ἴδιον of God, then since a property is (by definition) predicated convertibly of its subject, it follows that only God can *act*. In particular, it follows that Philo must deny that human beings are capable of acting. And indeed, in accordance with expectation, we find Philo arguing that corresponding to τὸ ποιεῖν, considered as the property of the Creator, is τὸ πάσχειν, considered as the property of creatures.[14]

The power of God is a power to act, the power of τὸ ποιεῖν. But τὸ ποιεῖν is a property of God. The power of God, therefore, is a divine property. If, now, we seek insight into the property of God by establishing the precise nature of God's power to act we will not find Philo entirely helpful. It is not indeed clear that Philo considered the power of God, any more than he considered the nature of God, to be comprehensible. It is as though the relationship of ownership in which God stands to His power secures the participation of His power in His own incomprehensibility. The divine power is, so to say, too close to God to escape beyond the periphery of the halo of incomprehensibility that surrounds Him. Thus, if we are to have knowledge of that power, we can come to it through a consideration of its effects rather than by an unmediated insight into the power itself. Thus a cosmological argument for the existence of divine power can be constructed that is closely parallel to the cosmological argument for the existence of God. Indeed a case can be argued for the claim that Philo's cosmological argument for the existence of God is really an argument for the existence of divine power. The point of this is that the divine power whose existence is established by the argument makes immediate reference to God to whom the power belongs. Hence the divine power can be regarded as a mediator between God and the world we know.

The role of divine power as a mediator has been pointed out frequently by Philo's commentators. But the account of mediation that I have just given stresses the *logical* aspect of the mediation rather than the ontological aspect that has largely held the attention of the commentators.

In support of this logical interpretation, which supplements the ontological interpretation, and is not intended as a replacement

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[14] *Cher.* xxiv 77.

for or a criticism of it, two points may be mentioned. The first is that Philo explicitly embraces the doctrine that the essence of the divine power is incomprehensible to us and that we know it only through knowing the effects of its activity.[15] And hence the divine power is seen as the middle term linking God with the visible effects of God that enable us to argue that He exists. That is, the visible effects indicate the existence of an invisible power, and the invisible power indicates the existence of a God whose property that power is.

Secondly, Philo considers the divine power, incomprehensible in its essence, to have many aspects, each of these aspects being itself a power. It is of little importance whether we attribute to Philo the view that there is only one power that has many aspects, or the view that there are many powers. Philo's mode of expression permits both interpretations. Thus, when he speaks of τὸ ποιεῖν as *the* property of God the implication is that God possesses one power. Yet at the same time he speaks of several powers of God. Any dispute about how many powers there are, whether one or many, is on a terminological matter of little conceptual importance. The important point is that Philo does insist on the existence of many divine powers or, as he would be equally happy to express it, on the existence of many aspects of one divine power. Thus in a central passage he writes: ". . . while God is indeed one, His highest and chiefest powers are two, even goodness and sovereignty. Through His goodness He begat all that is, through His sovereignty He rules what He has begotten. And in the midst between the two there is a third which unites them, Reason (λόγος), for it is through reason that God is both ruler and good".[16] Now, we observed in Chapter II how Philo argued to the existence of God from a consideration of a parallel with situations close to home, situations such as the evidence of a human hand in the order and construction of buildings and cities. Just as the existence of cities points to the existence of a human authority, a human ruler, so

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[15] *Spec.* i 6. It is in the light of this consideration that Philo offers an allegorical interpretation of the account of Jacob wrestling with the angel. The refusal of the angel to give his name to Jacob [*Gen.* xxxii 29] is interpreted by Philo as referring to the impossibility of naming the divine power—a naming whose impossibility derives from the unknowability of the power [*Mut.* II 14].

[16] *Cher.* ix 27-8.

the world, considered as a *kosmopolis*, points to the existence of a divine authority. Thus the cosmological argument of Philo is in reality in two stages. First, evidence is adduced for the claim that the cosmos bears marks of being ruled. And secondly, this testimony is offered as evidence for the existence of a cosmic sovereign—who could of course be no other than God. The middle term in this argument is that power of God which Philo terms His "authority" or "sovereignty".

In the passage just quoted from the *De Cherubim* Philo makes reference to goodness (Ἀγαθότης) and authority (Ἐξουσία) as God's "highest and chiefest powers", and thereby shows that he subscribes to the doctrine that God has, in some sense of the phrase, a plurality of powers. But how many?

Philo does not give a uniform answer to this question. One reason is that in certain cases one power can be considered to be several by virtue of its possession of several aspects, each of which can itself be classified as a power. However, in one place [17] Philo asserts that there are six divine powers. The first of these, the πρεσβυτάτη, states Philo, clearly bearing in mind the term's logical rather than temporal connotations, is the divine logos, which Philo here compares with a metropolis with the five remaining powers possessing merely "colonial" status. This terminology makes it clear that Philo did not consider the six powers to be on a par. Of the five colonies the first is the creative power (δύναμις ποιητική) by which God made the world with a word (λόγῳ). Second is the δύναμις βασιλική, God's royal power, by which He rules over His creation. Third is the δύναμις ἵλεως, the propitious or merciful power, by which God shows pity and mercy to His creatures. Next is the δύναμις νομοθετική, the legislative power, which divides, Philo tells us,[18] into two powers, namely, fourth "the power of enjoining what is right", and fifth, "the power of prohibiting what is not right".

These six powers are not mutually independent. Two relations in particular must be mentioned. First, the legislative power must be subsumed under the royal power, since legislative activity is one form of expression of royal power. And secondly, the merciful

[17] *Fuga* xviii, xix.

[18] The lacuna in the text immediately following "fourth" can readily be reconstructed, at least with regard to its conceptual content, by reference to the following pages of text.

power must be subsumed under the creative power. The reason for this latter subsumption is based on the close link, upon which Philo insists, between the goodness of God and the creation of the world. For example, Philo describes the power by which the universe was made as "one that has as its source nothing less than true goodness (τὸ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀγαθόν)".[19] Hence, subsequent to exercise of creative power we must expect to find evidence of the exercise of the propitious or merciful power of God.

According to the account just outlined the basic powers of God are His creative and His royal powers, with the logos supreme above them. A unity of the powers is assured, since the logos stands to the other powers in the same relation in which a metropolis stands to its colonies. Elsewhere, however, we referred to a slightly different account of the powers, that is nonetheless sanctioned by Philo. In the *De Cherubim*, as we observed, the chief powers were said to be the goodness and the authority of God, with the logos "uniting them" and thereby performing a unifying function in the Philonic cosmology.

It is clear from this that Philo was concerned to lay stress on the systematic relatedness of the powers of God, so much so that no severe distortion of his system would be committed if it were claimed that God's powers were really one power—one power with, perhaps, several aspects, or with, perhaps, several kinds of manifestation. Nevertheless, the crucial point for our present purpose is that the unitariness of the divine power is not logically required as a corollary to the claim that God is one. The reason for this is that, as was argued earlier, a power of God is an ἴδιον. Though it belongs to God by virtue of His essence it is not itself a part of His essence. Hence, the existence of a plurality of divine powers, or even the existence of a single divine power complex in itself, does not prove that God is essentially complex.

In the course of his important chapter on *The Unknowability of God*[20] Wolfson claims, on the contrary, that "the essence of God is one and simple and consequently whatever belongs to it as a property must be one and simple". His argument for this claim is unconvincing: "If you assume that He has many properties, then you will have to say either that His essence is not one or

[19] *Opif.* v 21.
[20] *Philo*, vol. II, p. 133.

simple or that some of these properties do not belong to Him in virtue of His essence; in the latter case they would not be properties but accidents". This is less an argument for his claim than an alternative way of making the same point. It is not clear from Wolfson's statement why he wishes to maintain that God's power is one and simple, for he is insistent on the basic point that God's power is not all, or part, of the essence of God. Furthermore, his claim that it was in order to avoid the implication that God is internally complex that Philo reduces the list of God's properties to one is open to criticism. For even though Philo does insist on the hierarchic nature of the divine powers, on their systematic interrelatedness, he seems not to have attributed to divine power the oneness and simplicity that he affirms of God. Yet if Wolfson were correct in his interpretation of Philo's doctrine of divine power we should have expected Philo to have made an attempt to prove that the divine powers do indeed have the oneness and simplicity of God. Yet, on the contrary, Philo does the precise opposite. His list of divine powers is long, and even when he presents shorter lists, which he does on occasion, and introduces a unifying principle, say the logos, into them, the list can at best be said to have unity, but not in the least to have oneness in the sense in which God in His divine simplicity has oneness.

Nevertheless, though the power of God does not share with God His absolute simplicity, the various powers are characterised, according to Philo, in ways that also characterise God. As is to be expected, therefore, Philo's descriptions of the divine powers bear the imprint of the *via negativa*.

In discussing the verse: "He met him in the place" (*Gen.* xxviii 11), Philo allegorises on the term "place". He speaks of it as ". . . the Divine Word, which God Himself has completely filled throughout with incorporeal potencies (ἀσωμάτοις δυνάμεσιν)".[21] First, then, the powers are ἀσώματοι, as, indeed, is God Himself, and the presence of the powers in *corpora*, imposing form and unity on the *corpora*, does not imply that the unifying powers themselves are corporeal. Secondly, and relatedly, Philo draws an explicit parallel between God, who is ἀπερίγραφος, and His powers, which are ἀπερίγραφοι—uncircumscribed, and being boundless must therefore in some respect be infinite.[22] In the context of the passage

[21] *Somn.* I xi 62.
[22] *Sacr.* xv 59.

under discussion Philo is primarily concerned with the two divine powers of goodness and authority, and it may be that in this context it is specifically those two powers that are being said to be ἀπερίγραφοι. But there is no reason to suppose that having described those two powers in that way Philo would wish to withhold that description from the other divine powers. Thirdly, the powers are ἄχρονοι.[23] In the *De Sacrificiis* xx 73 Philo states: "Those things which are first in consideration and in power (δυνάμει) are good actions, the virtues, and conduct in accordance with virtue". He is here classifying virtue as a power of God, and is perhaps identifying virtue with the divine power of goodness. Thus, when, immediately before this,[24] he criticises Pharaoh for being unable, in his impiety, to receive the conception of virtue unconnected with time (ἄχρονος) for "the eyes of the soul, whereby alone incorporeal natures are apprehended, are blinded in him", it is clear that Philo wishes to describe the relevant divine power as ἄχρονος. And as it is evidently by virtue of being an incorporeal nature that this ascription can correctly be made, it follows that the divine powers are, like God, ἄχρονοι.

A further characterisation of the divine powers provides us with evidence of the origin of the Philonic divine powers. In an allegorical interpretation of the account of the divided portions (*Gen.* xv) Philo describes: "the δυνάμεις as they pass through the midst of material and immaterial things. They destroy nothing—for the half-pieces remain unharmed—but divide and distinguish the nature of each".[25] Philo is here ascribing to the divine powers the function of "dividing and distinguishing the natures" of things, that is to say, fixing each thing in its species, making it the kind of thing it is. This is a function of the Platonic Forms. The similarity between the Philonic divine powers and the Platonic Forms is in fact closer still, since the Forms also are ἀσώματοι and ἄχρονοι.

Furthermore, Philo's insistence on the unitariness of the system of divine powers, with their hierarchic organisation subsumed under a single principle, closely resembles Plato's conception of the unitariness of the Forms, with the Form of the Good in the

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[23] *Sacr.* xix 69.
[24] *Sacr.* xix 69.
[25] *Heres* lxi 312.

position of the supreme member of the World of Forms, and thus playing, in certain respects, a similar role in the World of Forms to the role played by the logos in the system of divine powers.

These similarities between the Platonic Forms and the Philonic divine powers suggest an important question in the field of epistemology whose answer will illuminate certain passages in Marqah's writings which we shall shortly be considering. The question concerns the knowability of the divine powers.

It is clear, particularly from the *Republic*, what Plato's position was on the matter of the knowability of the Forms. He thought that knowledge of the Forms was difficult, indeed impossible for most, and that only a few, and even in their case after a special education, would be able to know the Forms. Thus Plato did not deny that men could know the Forms, and in fact his political theory assumes that there will be men who would be able to secure insight into the Forms of Goodness and Justice and who would be able to rule a State according to the principles gained from that insight.

Earlier in this chapter reference was made to the fact that in Philo's view the divine powers were incomprehensible, a view which does, of course, indicate a lack of similarity between the Forms and the divine powers. But the Philonic position on this matter is not a simple one. Something must now be said to give some indication of the points at which it is complex.

In an important passage Philo portrays Moses as beseeching God to show him the glory that is around God. The answer which Philo represents God as giving is as follows: "The powers which thou seekest to know are discerned not by sight but by mind even as I, Whose they are, am discerned by mind and not by sight, and when I say 'they are discerned by mind' I speak not of those which are now actually apprehended by mind but mean that if these other powers could be apprehended it would not be by sense but by mind at its purest. But while in their essence they are beyond your apprehension, they nevertheless present to your sight a sort of impress and copy of their active working. . . . Do not, then, hope to be ever able to apprehend Me or any of My powers in Our essence". Philo is asserting that whether or not the divine powers are comprehensible at all, with respect to them the outer senses are not a veridical source of knowledge. Yet it would seem that Philo does not entirely rule out the knowability of the powers

since he allows, or appears to allow, that they can be attained by, and *only* by, "mind at its purest". Nevertheless, though the purest mind is able to attain to a knowledge of the divine powers that knowledge is not of their essence, for that is no more available than is the essence of God. But if we cannot know them in their essence, then under what description can we know them?

Philo's reference to "a sort of impress and copy of their active working" provides a clue to the answer. For this mode of expression suggests that he is making use of a model similar to the model of the relationship between Platonic Forms and the things informed. The implication is that the power can be known in so far as it impresses itself in matter. We know it in its effects, just as we can come to know God by a consideration of nature. We cannot know God as He is in Himself, that is, as He is in His essence, but only as He is in the world. And likewise we know His powers only as they have an effect in the world. Hence we can know them only in a sullied, and never in a pure, state.

Confirmation that Philo had Plato's theory of Forms in mind is ready to hand. In the same chapter of the *De Legibus Specialibus* with which we have been concerned Philo puts the following words into God's mouth: "You men have for your use seals which when brought into contact with wax or similar material stamp on them any number of impressions while they themselves are not docked in any part thereby but remain as they were. Such you must conceive My powers to be, supplying quality and shape to things which lack either and yet changing or lessening nothing of their eternal nature. Some among you call them not inaptly "forms" or "ideas", since they bring form into everything that is".[26] Philo, it can be seen from the last sentence, is hesitant. He tells us that some "not inaptly (οὐκ ἀπὸ σκοποῦ)" call the powers Forms. Speculation on the purpose of this phrase is bound to be conjectural. But it is possible that the reason he employs the phrase "not inaptly" rather than, say, "entirely correctly" is precisely that Plato believed that men, even though only men of the purest mind, can know the Forms, whereas according to Philo's view of the matter the divine powers are not thus knowable.

However, though the divine powers are considered by Philo to be unknowable in their essence, he nevertheless also considers

[26] I viii 47-8.

himself entitled to say a good deal about them, since he regards himself as able to read about them in the world as a man can read about ideas in a book. In particular Philo is especially informative on the subject of the logos, which we noticed earlier as standing in a pre-eminent position among the powers. This is not the place for a detailed and sustained examination of this large and controversial topic. Instead I shall restrict myself to a few points about the logos which will, it is to be hoped, provide a sufficient basis for the exposition of certain particularly close conceptual links between Philo and Marqah.

The term 'logos' is used by Philo to cover a range of things created and uncreated. It is used, as we saw, to refer to the chief power or Form, its role being at least partly that of a unifier, that of a principle of unity, in the world of powers or Forms. For this reason Philo identifies logos with the world of Forms. Now, logos, as so understood, has two aspects that may without serious distortion be termed the transcendent and the immanent aspects. As transcendent, logos must first and foremost be seen in its relation to God. Logos is a κόσμος νοητός, an intelligible world,[27] Philo tells us, and as such can be an object only of the intellect, not of the senses. But in relation to whose intellect or mind does the world exist? Philo's answer is that the mind that knows the intelligible world is God's. But it is not to be supposed that God, so to say, found the Forms or powers that form the intelligible world. The *De Opificio Mundi*[28] suggests that the Forms were created by God. He as it were thought them into existence, as a preparatory stage to the creation of the perceptual world. Thus Philo is able to write of the logos: ". . . it alone preceded and outran all things, conceived before them all, manifest above them all".[29] In this mode of existence the logos is transcendent.

The logos, as conceived by Philo, is however dynamic. The Philonic God has a superabundance of being, which, being superabundant, spills from Him and pours down. The outpouring cannot, of course, in any way diminish God, since a God that could be diminished is not a God that is absolutely one. In this respect, to stress a point that Goodenough, both in *By Light, Light* and

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[27] *Opif.* iv.
[28] See esp. Ch. iv.
[29] *Cher.* ix 28.

in *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, saw as central to Philo's teaching, God can be compared to the sun which, though sending forth a stream of life-creating and life-supporting light, remains as complete and self-sufficient as if it passed on none of itself. The Philonic logos, then, is like the sun, and as the rays of the sun have an effect on the world so also, though in a more profound way, does the logos. In its influential role in the perceptual world the logos manifests its immanent aspect. Two related features of the immanent aspect of the logos must be mentioned here.

First, it makes things in the world the kinds of things they are. It moulds or shapes matter, or patterns it. The pure patterns themselves are, of course, the Forms or divine powers that comprise the logos. These are, as we have seen, unknowable in themselves though not in their effects, the effects being things in the world in so far as they embody the divine powers. With this aspect of the logos in mind Philo speaks of it as clothed in the world, as the soul is clothed in the body.[30] With regard to this stage of Philo's system, the Christian concept of the word of God made incarnate is close to hand—though what Philo's response would have been to the Christian version of the doctrine that he espoused is not a question that need be tackled here. It is sufficient for our present purpose to note that Philo conceived the logos as made incarnate, and that he conceived it as being, in that incarnate state, knowable.

Secondly, the logos is immanent as the laws of nature. Wolfson discusses at length three of these, namely, (a) the law of opposites, (b) the law of the harmony of opposites, and (c) the law of the perpetuity of the species.[31] Very briefly stated, the law of opposites affirms that all things are in two parts which are equal and opposite. Thus God created two equal light elements (air and fire), two equal heavy elements (earth and water), and the light elements are conjointly equal to the heavy. Similarly, light and darkness occur in equal proportions, as do the opposing seasons (summer and winter, and spring and autumn).

The law of the harmony of opposites states that opposite things are equal. Philo formulates the law as follows: "The Divine Word stations Himself to keep these elements apart . . . that the universe

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[30] *Fug.* XX 110.
[31] *Philo*, vol. I, Ch. VI.

may send forth a harmony like that of a masterpiece of literature. He mediates between the opponents amid their threatenings, and reconciles them by winning ways to peace and concord".[32]

Finally, Philo's law of the perpetuity of the species states: "For God willed that Nature should run a course that brings it back to its starting-point, endowing the species with immortality, and making them sharers of eternal existence".[33] It can be seen from this brief exposition of the Philonic teaching on the incarnate logos that with respect to its presence in the world the logos is all-permeating, determining, as it does, both the nature of each thing and also the particular way in which each thing occupies a position in space and time, in the harmoniously arranged cosmos.

It is with regard to this account of Philo's teaching on the divine powers, sketchy though my exposition has been, that I wish now to consider the extent to which Marqah's teaching on the divine power bears a resemblance to Philo's doctrine. As we shall shortly see, the resemblance between the teachings of Philo and Marqah on the subject of the divine power is very close indeed, so much so that a strong case can be made out in favour of the claim that Marqah's philosophy of divine power is almost identical to Philo's.

A striking feature that must not be passed over in silence is the *centrality* of the idea of divine power, both for Philo and for Marqah. It is no accident that the opening sentence in the *Memar* is: "Great is the mighty power (חילה רבה) who endures forever". The prominence thereby given by Marqah to the idea of the divine power was clearly intentional, for the conception of the divine power can be seen to be, at all times, either on or close to the surface of Marqah's teachings.

Not only in the *Memar* itself, but also in his chain of hymns in the *Defter*, Marqah gives a prominent position to the conception of the divine powers. In Hymn I *v.* 3 he declares: "Thy powers are the fruit of Thy mind". This statement warrants close scrutiny, since its affinities with Philonic thought are startling. As a first step towards understanding this verse it is necessary to bear in mind the conception, outlined above, of the transcendent logos. According to this conception the logos can be regarded as identical

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[32] *Plant.* ii 10.
[33] *Opif.* xiii 44.

with the mind of God. But we cannot suppose the divine mind to be devoid of content. It must, of course, contain ideas. Indeed, the Aristotelian position on this matter would be that a mind without ideas is necessarily deficient, for mind has a potential for ideas and is thus fully real only when it is engaged in thought. Hence if we are not to be able correctly to attribute unreality to the mind of God we must suppose that He has ideas. But, as we have observed, the content of God's mind consists of (Platonic) Forms or, as Philo also terms them, divine powers. Hence, the divine powers are produced by, or are the fruit of, the divine mind.

Of course, neither for Philo nor for Marqah would it be correct to employ the model of a plant bearing fruit or of a seed coming to fruition, as understood in an entirely literal way. For the literal model is a temporal model. Temporally, that is to say, the plant must precede its fruit, or the seed its fruition. But since both Philo and Marqah are insistent on the timelessness of God, the model of seed and fruit, or plant and fruit, must be regarded by them, whether correctly or not, as invoking a logical or an ontological priority rather than a temporal precedence.

This parallel between Philo and Marqah may, however, seem merely fortuitous. Though Philo would unquestionably have accepted that "Thy powers are the fruit of Thy mind", it may be that it is only the verbal formula itself rather than its conceptual content as that is understood by Marqah that Philo subscribes to. But it is in fact the conceptual content on which the two thinkers are agreed.

Indication of this agreement is to be found in the fact that Samaritan thought has a logos doctrine and that Moses, playing a role for the Samaritans that resembles in certain respects the role that Christ plays in Christianity, is regarded by the Samaritans as a kind of incarnate logos, and, prior to his birth, an unincarnate logos. Philo, also, as is well known, spoke of Moses as "logos". But the issue presently before us, namely, Marqah's understanding of the idea of the divine power, and its relationship with Philo's teaching on the same matter, will shed much light on this further similarity between the two men.

A consideration of the great stress laid by Philo upon the unknowability of God's powers in their essence naturally gives rise to the question of whether Marqah's teachings include a comparable doctrine. The weight of evidence supports the claim that Marqah

did subscribe to that doctrine. The evidence is to be found in both the *Memar* and the *Defter* hymns. Thus in the second hymn *v.* 3 Marqah writes: "Who can discover or understand Thy great might (גבורתך רבתה)". And in a similar vein in hymn IX *v.* 3 he affirms: "Thy might is hidden (גבורתך כסיה)". That this doctrine is maintained in the *Memar* also is easily demonstrated. Early in Book VI he writes: "It is not possible even for a knowledgeable man to know the might of his Creator" [I 132, II 215]. Elsewhere Marqah asserts: "Here is power that is not comprehensible, here is might unceasing" [I 90, II 146]. And writing of God's power as it manifested itself at the Red Sea, Marqah affirms: "The mighty Wise One has said that it is not in man's power to comprehend it" [I 41, II 65].

Nevertheless, Marqah does not maintain that there is nothing that we can know, however inadequately, concerning the divine power—any more than Philo, before him, had maintained this. One point that must not be lost sight of is that we do, in Marqah's view of the matter, know at least that God's power exists. The evidence Marqah adduces in support of this position allows him to construct a variety of cosmological argument for the existence of the divine power. For, with reference to day and night, to the four seasons and the four elements, he writes: "He created ten things that bear witness to His might" [I 131, II 213]. More generally, he asserts: "From Thy works we know what Thy power is" [Hymn X *v.* 13]. As with so much else relating to God, we can, we are told now, read the fact of His power in the pages of nature. His power over His creations leaves its indelible mark on the *res creatae* themselves; and in fact Marqah affirms not merely that the four seasons are testimonies to God's power but even that they were "established *as* four testimonies" [I 131, II 213]. It is therefore not surprising to find that immediately before the statement just quoted, Marqah offers a short prayer: "Magnify Him and praise His power over the manifold creations".

It is of especial interest to any study of the relationship between Philo and Marqah on the topic of the divine powers, that having asserted that the "ten things" (*sc.* day, night, the four seasons and the four elements) bear witness to the might of God, Marqah immediately asserts: "Observe these things and realise that they are evidences testifying of Him that He is one in His essence" [I 131, II 213]. Marqah is here claiming that a collection of ten

things is testimony both to the power of God and to His oneness. Despite the disparateness of the ten things they are witnesses to something essentially one. But the implication of the contiguity of the ideas thus expressed in the *Memar* is that the powers of God also have an essential oneness, as does God Himself. And this, as we saw, is precisely the doctrine that Philo himself taught. For he held that the logos, considered in one of its aspects, is not merely a power of God, but is also a unifying principle binding together the other powers, and is thus responsible for their unitariness. Indeed, Wolfson, as we noted, wished to take a further step and argue that the powers of God have the same degree or kind of oneness that God Himself has. Marqah's text does not demand this interpretation. But even if we reject Wolfson's thesis, it nevertheless seems reasonable to maintain that Marqah held that the divine powers are sufficiently close to God to be able to bask in the reflection of His oneness. And though perhaps not one in the sense in which God is one, they do form a particularly close unity that owes its existence to a special relation with God. If, as we suggested in the previous chapter, Marqah held that God's oneness renders God incomprehensible to man, it would not be surprising if the divine power, precisely because it is divine, also has a oneness that renders the power incomprehensible. It must be admitted that Marqah does not in fact explicitly attribute the incomprehensibility of the divine power to its oneness. But it is not wholly implausible to offer such an interpretation of the *Memar* as a fair extrapolation from the text.

Marqah's acceptance of the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of the divine power appears indisputable. Not only specific statements that he makes on this topic but also a consideration of the general tenor of his teaching as a whole, in which the otherness of the divine is strongly stressed, point in the direction of Marqah's acceptance of that doctrine. Nevertheless, the position is not entirely free from complication. In the previous chapter it was shown that Marqah held both that God is incomprehensible and also that we can know God. The problem, of course, was how, if at all, these seemingly mutually inconsistent positions could be reconciled. Precisely this type of difficulty, firmly placed in the field of epistemology and arising in connection with divinity, occurs with respect to God's powers. For despite Marqah's persistent denials of the knowability by man of the divine powers,

he also presents what is, at least on the surface, a position logically opposed to the one I have attributed to him. Thus he writes: "The beginning of knowledge is when man knows the might of his Creator and trembles at His greatness and is in dread of His power" [I 141, II 231]. What I wish to argue now is that by making certain distinctions that are familiar to us, and that were, more importantly, demonstrably familiar to Marqah, the seeming contradiction in his epistemological doctrine can be resolved.

The crucial distinction is that between transcendence and immanence. There can be no doubt that Marqah held that the divine power exists in both these modes. He invokes them when he affirms that: "Thy divine power is all-permeating, on high and below" [Hymn I *v.* 8], or, slightly altering the imagery: "On high and down below Thy power is great and sovereign" [Hymn II *v.* 2]. Likewise, Marqah declaims: "His power is in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. There is no place outside of His control" [I 132, II 215].

Granted that Marqah does distinguish between the transcendent and the immanent power of God, one move that is available to us as a way of resolving the difficulty we are facing is to say that God's power is unknowable in its transcendent aspect but knowable so far as it is immanent. In this connection, Marqah's statement, quoted earlier, "From Thy works we know what Thy power is", as well as his other declarations about the mundane testimony to the existence of divine power, have a particular significance. Marqah's doctrine, which is the same as Philo's at this point, is that the divine powers are not comprehensible in themselves, that is, in their essence, but are comprehensible to man only so far as they are immanent in the world. We know them by their effects. But know them to be what?

Various statements by Marqah allow us to reconstruct his position on this matter, and also enable us to relate his account to Philo's. In an important passage in the *Memar* we are told: "His power is in the heavens above and in the earth beneath . . . all places He made, fashioned, perfected, set in order, made ready" [I 132, II 215]. More remarkably still, Marqah asserts: "For our Lord in His great power made everything a form, then created and fashioned and made creatures exceedingly grand" [I 88, II 142]. There is an unmistakable similarity between this picture and Philo's doctrine of the divine powers considered as Platonic

Forms which, acting as causes, form, or rather *in*form, things, thereby giving them their specific nature, making them, that is, the kinds of things they are.

Since everything has a Form, God's power must permeate the world. This aspect of divine power is invoked by Marqah when he affirms: "The divine power is all-permeating" [Hymn I *v.* 8]. In so writing he points directly to the fact that everything in the universe, being structured or shaped, or bearing a form, possesses the marks of divine power. But though divine power does permeate the world, it does not do so in a manner that enables the power to be known in itself or in its essence. One reason for this is that though the divine power is in a sense in what it *em*-powers, the relation of "in-ness" is not a spatial relationship. Marqah warns us against a materialist interpretation of the relationship when he writes: "Thy great power sustains all things without being near them" [Hymn I *v.* 5]. Thus, in looking at an empowered *res creata* we cannot be looking at the power itself for it is not a corporeal entity visible to the eye. We can look only at what is merely an effect of the divine power. It is possible that Marqah's rejection of the materialist conception we are here discussing is also what underlies his phrase: "Helper, Uplifter, Sustainer, who does use no physical force" [Hymn I *v.* 15]. Thus the evidence suggests that Philo's description of the divine powers as ἀσώματοι was acceptable to Marqah.

Likewise, Philo's description of the divine powers, mentioned earlier, as ἀπερίγραφοι was also acceptable to Marqah. Thus, Marqah's description of the powers as "incalculable" [I 69, II 110], and his assertion: "There is no end to Thy power" [I 10, II 11] both accord with Philo's ἀπερίγραφοι.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that Philo's assertion that the divine powers are ἄχρονοι accorded with Marqah's position on this matter. It is possible to adduce two kinds of justification for this claim. First, there are the *ipsissima verba* of Marqah. He writes, in the first sentence of the *Memar*: "Great is the mighty Power who endures forever (לעלם)". And later he repeats the doctrine: "Nothing exists forever (לעלם) but His power" [I 70, II 112]. If we understand עלם to refer to a timeless eternity then certainly we are forced to the conclusion that the divine powers are, in Marqah's view, ἄχρονοι.

Secondly, a philosophical justification can be adduced to support

the claim that Marqah's conception of a divine power is of an ἄχρονος. The argument is that God did not create His power at the time that He created the world. Hence the divine power does not rely for its existence on the existence of the world. But, as we saw in an earlier chapter, Marqah held that time came into existence with the creation of the world. Thus divine power does not need time in order to exist. Hence it must itself be timeless.

This large measure of agreement between Philo and Marqah on the nature of the divine power, naturally invites the question of whether their doctrines of divine power do differ at any point. Much the most obvious point at which to look for divergence of doctrine is the doctrine of emanation. That Philo subscribed to such a doctrine is not for the moment in dispute. The question at issue is whether Marqah did. I would like to argue that the evidence indicates that he did not.

The reason for supposing that he could not have done relates to his insistence on the otherness of God. The point about God's otherness is that it is due to an infinite and unbridgeable gap between Himself and the created world. The gap, though infinite, must not be thought to separate God from the world by an infinite distance in space or an infinite period in time. For even an infinite spatial or temporal gap would ensure a spatial or temporal relationship between God and the world. Yet an aspect of God's otherness is that His existence is neither spatial nor temporal. I argued in an earlier chapter that the fundamental concept underlying the utter otherness of God is, for Marqah, God's absolute oneness. Since God's oneness cannot alter, and since the essential multiplicity of the world, however unitary it is in its multiplicity, cannot alter either, God cannot ever get closer to us or we to God.

But the emanationist doctrine presents a significantly different story on the relationship between God and the world. That doctrine relies on the concept of a series of intermediaries bridging the gap between God and mundane perceptual objects. The bridging is achieved by a process of germination in which each thing produces from itself something of an adjacent but lesser nature. This doctrine has implications for the theory of the otherness of God. For even though God, according to this theory, remains other, the conclusion would have to be drawn that His otherness is greater in relation to some things than to others. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that Marqah would hesitate over the acceptance of such a doctrine.

In considering the question of whether Marqah is an emanationist a further approach would be to consider the kind of metaphor he employs in connection with his description of creation. In particular, it would be important to take account of the way he speaks about the divine powers, for above all else in his writings these seem much the likeliest candidates for the role of intermediaries between God and the world.

Now, two standard neoplatonic metaphors used in connection with the process of emanation are, first, the metaphor of God as the sun whose emanating rays are the intermediaries between Him and the perceptual world, and secondly, the metaphor of germination. Neither of these metaphors is absent from Marqah's writings, any more than from Philo's. In the *Memar* Marqah writes: "Praise be to the Illuminator who fills the wise with the spirit of wisdom, so that they are like lamps shining in the world and dispelling the dark" [I 143, II 236]. Elsewhere he writes: "In the Primordial Silence Thou didst germinate (זרעת) words which generated creations. Thy powers are the fruit of Thy mind" [Hymn I *vv.* 2-3]. The first of these two quotations constitutes slender evidence upon which to base an imputation to Marqah of an emanationist theory. But the second provides much more substantial support for such an imputation.

By itself it is not, of course, conclusive. It is a crucial methodological principle that a distinction has to be drawn between similarity of imagery or of modes of expression, and similarity of the conceptual content of that imagery or those expressions. It remains to be considered, therefore, whether Marqah's employment of the germination metaphor is indicative of an acceptance of neoplatonic emanationism.

Philo's reference to the logos as the "first born son of God (πρωτόγονον υἱον)",[34] as being "second to God",[35] as the "eldest of created things",[36] as well as to the special place that he assigns to the logos, at the head of the chain of divine powers, is strongly suggestive of the idea that in so far as there is a theory of emanation in Philo's teachings, it is the logos that has the role of first emanation. The logos was described by Philo, as we saw, as being in

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[34] *Agr.* xii 51.
[35] *Leg. All.* II xxi 86.
[36] *Leg. All.* III lxi 175.

one of its aspects the mind of God. These facts point to an unexpected parallel, that is at least a verbal parallel, with Marqah. For in the *Memar*, where a mysterious dialogue between Mind and Heart is presented, Heart asserts: "O Mind . . . you are the first of created things. Who can compare with you?" [I 68, II 109]. To what extent Philo and Marqah are in conceptual, as well as verbal, agreement is not easy to judge, since, though Philo's position is reasonably clear, Marqah's is not. In particular, it is not entirely clear whose mind Marqah is invoking. It may be God's mind. But it may instead be man's. And it may indeed be Mind as such, that is, nobody's mind, but rather, mind *simpliciter*.

A further similarity that may be verbal only, but may also be conceptual, concerns the second and third (or perhaps the 'joint second') elements in the chain of divine powers. We have observed that Philo assigned an exalted position to goodness and sovereignty —"Through His goodness He begat all that is, through His sovereignty He rules what He has begotten".[37] But although Philo regards those powers as a duality, he nevertheless saw them as possessing a unitariness, with logos, the first power, being the unifying principle. Now, it is worthy of note that Marqah, who can be seen from the *Memar* to have attached especial significance to the story of the rod of Moses, asserts that: "A rod out of the fire has been given to me [Moses] *by Thy goodness, with great sovereignty*" [I 9, II 10 *my italics*]. We know that Marqah took the rod to have a mystical reality, for he portrays God as saying to Moses: "You will see it [the rod] with your eyes, but its inner significance must be within your heart" [I 7, II 7]. The nature of its "inner significance" is indicated within two lines, namely: "in it is great and powerful rulership". Bearing in mind that Marqah holds that the rod was given by God's "goodness with great sovereignty", a natural interpretation of the text is that the rod is in some special sense a representative of God. Thus the rod, playing a similar role in Marqah's teaching to that played by the logos in Philo's, can be seen as the unifying principle holding together the two divine powers of goodness and sovereignty.

But here, again, the verbal similarity between Marqah's text and Philo's is not conclusive proof of a deeper relationship between them. For example, with regard to the statement concerning the

[37] *Cher.* xxvii 27.

rod: "in it is great and powerful rulership", although the text suggests that the rulership referred to is divine, it is not impossible that it is the rulership Moses will enjoy as a result of his use of the rod.

Likewise, with regard to the statement: "A rod out of the fire has been given to me by Thy goodness with great sovereignty—אטר מן אשתה יהיב לי ביד טובך בשלטנו רבה" the Aramaic phrase permits us to interpret the statement as affirming that both the rod and great sovereignty were given to Moses by God's goodness. This interpretation is admittedly less natural than the one I suggested earlier, but it cannot be ruled out. If it is the correct interpretation then the verbal parallel with Philo's assertions that I have been pointing to can be seen to have no deeper significance. It may be argued, indeed, that the less natural interpretation must be wrong, since Marqah does say: "There is no origin to His power, no offshoot of His sovereignty" [I 8, II 9]. But it is probable that Marqah is here simply making the point that God has not created another divine being with sovereign powers. Marqah nowhere seeks to deny that God could confer kingship on Moses.

However, immediately following his affirmation that there is no offshoot of God's sovereignty, Marqah adds: "He Himself is the origin of the world and the offshoot of His creation (ונוף לבריתה)". Since it is possible to regard this assertion as sanctioning an emanationist interpretation of Marqah's teaching, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that it accords well with a non-emanationist interpretation. In describing God as the offshoot of His creation, Marqah may simply be stating his frequently repeated position that God left evidence of Himself in His creation, evidence of such a sort that it entitles us to say that God exists immanently in His creation, though also transcending it. Thus the passage at issue does not demand an emanationist interpretation. Hence, if such an interpretation is to be given, the move could be justified only by showing that that interpretation accords with the tenor of Marqah's philosophy as a whole. But so far no substantial evidence that it does has come to light.

If, as appears to be the case, there is no emanationist doctrine in Marqah's teaching it is worth paying attention to the question of why this should be so. I suggested earlier that Marqah's doctrine of the utter otherness of God was at least a contributary factor in this situation. But there are other aspects that are no less

important, and that are logically related in subtle ways to the aspect just referred to. Two positions in particular that I would like to defend in connection with this matter are, first, that Marqah did not *need* an emanationist theory to bridge any lacuna in his cosmological doctrine, and secondly, and closely related to the first point, any emanationist doctrine in his writings would contradict one of his most deeply held, and frequently mentioned, religious beliefs.

The purpose of the doctrine of emanation, certainly as this is presented *passim* in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, is to explain how from a god who is absolutely one a world of multiplicity could be brought into existence. It was Plotinus' view that whatever has perfection is necessarily creative, and also that any *creator* is necessarily more perfect than its *res creata*. Thus he developed the doctrine of a series of emanations processing from the One, each emanation less perfect than its immediate source and each a necessary step in the chain of Being whose point of origin is God and whose most familiar stage (familiar, that is, to us) is the perceptual world.

The reason why Marqah did not need to introduce this emanationist doctrine into his cosmology is that he was in any case well-armed with a doctrine which could also explain how the perceptual world came into being. Furthermore, Marqah's own position had the benefit of unequivocal support by numerous proof texts providing the clearest possible Pentateuchal warrant. Marqah's doctrine was that God is an *agens*; He creates things by an act of will. Things come into existence at His command. For this reason he speaks of God as "Orderer of all by His command (תקן כלה במימרה)" [I 131, II 213]. Similarly, he writes: "He produced them [the two tablets] by His power from the will of His mind" [I 46, II 74], "Everything was drawn into being by His command 'come'" [I 88, II 142], "He it was who created when He willed and intended" [I 91, II 149], and "At Thy summons come created things, at Thy proclamation Worlds" [Hymn I *v.* 7]. In a significant phrase Marqah writes: "When He wills He does it (דו בעי יעבד)" [I 145, II 239], and, in similar vein: "Praise be to Him who says and does all He wills" [I 71, II 113]. In taking that line Marqah is going further than merely ascribing a will to God. For he is also conveying the idea that God's will has the non-human quality of being unable to fail. A human being may will to perform

a given action yet not succeed in performing it. For with human beings an act of will is not by itself sufficient. Various contingent factors may arise that interfere with the performance of the envisaged action. The agent may find himself faced with an insurmountable obstacle, or with an obstacle that is surmountable but only at a price he is unwilling to pay, or he may change his mind on a whim about performing the action, or he may simply forget to do it.[38]

With respect to the efficacy of His will, God is quite otherwise placed. There is, so to say, no gap between His act of will and the performance of the willed action. This is an important aspect of Marqah's doctrine of the power of God. In the light of this consideration it is easy to see why Marqah considered himself entitled to exclaim: "Helper, Uplifter, Sustainer, who does use no physical force" [Hymn I *v.* 15]. God does not *need* to use physical force, since he can secure the result that He wants by a mere act of will. It is precisely proof of man's lack of power that he does need to employ physical force.

These considerations suggest a deeper point that Marqah is perhaps making when, having entreated us to "praise God over the manifold creations", he asserts that: "God created ten things that bear witness to His might" [I 131, II 213]. For what Marqah may be directing our attention to is the fact that the ten things (day and night, the four seasons and four elements) not merely testify to the great power of the Being who created them, but furthermore testify in their own way to the *manner* of their creation, namely, by an act of pure will—"God said 'Let there be light'. And there was light". Now, Marqah's talk about the powers of God certainly suggest that he allowed for the existence of intermediaries between God and the perceptual world. Marqah's divine powers are intermediaries in the sense that they are properties of God and hence have a specially exalted status, yet are also superior to the perceptual world. They are poised between God and man. But what I am unable to find justification for, in Marqah's teachings, is the view that the powers of God play the same role as that played by the intermediaries in Plotinus' system.

Furthermore, granted Marqah's unequivocal insistence on the

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[38] For a full discussion of this aspect of human action see: A. Broadie, "Imperatives", *Mind* 1972, pp. 179-190.

existence and power of God's will, for Marqah to have added that the powers of God emanate from Him like Plotinean intermediaries would have been to introduce a contradictory element into his system. I conclude from this that although much of what Marqah has to say about the powers of God is strongly suggestive of neoplatonic ideas, Marqah's position with regard to the divine powers is in radical opposition to Plotinean neoplatonism.

This line of argument was introduced in order to establish whether there are any sharp divisions between Philo's theory of divine powers and Marqah's. As a first step in this direction I have argued that Marqah does not have a Plotinean type of emanationist doctrine. If it is correct to attribute such a doctrine to Philo then there is a sharp and profound disagreement between Philo and Marqah on the subject of the divine powers, despite certain superficial, particularly verbal, similarities. It is therefore necessary for me to comment on the relationship between Philo and Plotinus with respect to the doctrine of intermediaries.

The advantage of approaching Philo's doctrines on divine power by way of a comparative study of Philo and Marqah is that the two thinkers have so much in common that a clear recognition of a particular element in Marqah's teaching may, perhaps unexpectedly, prompt a search for, and a discovery of the same element in Philo's. However much Marqah employs Hellenistic philosophical ideas these are all, so to say, passed through a Biblical sieve before being accepted. It is impossible to study many lines of the *Memar* without observing that Marqah's teaching is permeated with Pentateuchal ideas. Philo, of course, most of whose writings are biblical commentaries, was similarly imbued with Biblical ideas (though Marqah's Bible, unlike Philo's, was only the Pentateuch). Philo used Biblical proof texts no less profusely than did Marqah in justification of his philosophical positions. This point prompts the consideration that if Marqah, relying heavily upon Pentateuchal warrant, laid stress on the idea of the will of God, and hence did not need, nor could consistently employ, the idea of Plotinean emanation, then perhaps Philo, no less alive than Marqah to the importance of Pentateuchal warrant, was similarly placed in relation to Plotinus.

In this connection, the first question that has to be asked is whether Philo accepts the idea that God has a will. The brief answer is that he does. Will, for Philo, is to be accounted a property

of God, one of His powers. There are several passages in which he expresses himself clearly on this matter. Thus, for example, in the course of discussing the superiority of man above the rest of the animal creation, Philo writes: "... it is reasonably held that the mind alone in all that makes us what we are is indestructible. For it is mind alone which the Father who begat it judged worthy of freedom, and loosening the fetters of necessity, suffered it to range as it listed, and of that free-will which is His most peculiar possession and most worthy of His majesty gave it such portion as it was capable of receiving".[39] Some lines later, Philo asserts that the soul of man "alone has received from God the faculty of voluntary movement, and in this way especially is made like to Him". There is thus good reason to believe that Philo did accept the doctrine that God possesses a will. But granted that this doctrine is an alternative to, and is inconsistent with, the Plotinean doctrine of emanating intermediaries, are we entitled to interpret Philo's teaching in such a way as to ascribe to him the doctrine that the divine powers play a different kind of role in the world from the role assigned to them by Plotinus?

Critical opinion has been divided on this matter. Thus, for example, Drummond [40] held that Philo presented an emanationist doctrine according to which the creation of the perceptual world was due to the creative activity of intermediaries. He was particularly impressed by Philo's description of man as an ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον, a divine fragment, which is a phrase suggestive of the emanationist doctrine. In connection with this phrase Drummond refers us to a passage in which Philo says of the human soul that it is "an inseparable portion of that divine and blessed soul. For no part of that which is divine cuts itself off and becomes separate, but does but extend itself. The mind, then, having obtained a share of the perfection which is in the whole, when it conceives of the universe, reaches out as widely as the bounds of the whole, and undergoes no severance; for its force is expansive".[41] Now, whether or not this passage presents a doctrine of emanation, with the power of God cast in the role of intermediary, there is nothing in it to indicate a Plotinean view of the relation between God and

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[39] *Immut.* x 46-7.
[40] *Philo Judaeus*, vol. I, pp. 328-330.
[41] *Deter.* xxiv 90.

the perceptual world. In particular, the idea of the "extension" of God, and the "expansiveness" of God's power, can, without distortion or force, be taken to be a reference to the immanence of God's power in the world. And this latter doctrine is no less consistent with the "divine will" theory of creation than with the Plotinean theory. Furthermore, and here I briefly anticipate a point discussed in the Chapter on Creation, Philo affirms that the part played by the divine powers in the creation of the perceptual world is that of παραδείγματα. The world is *modelled* on the powers, or on certain of them, but it is not said to issue from them by a process of metaphysically necessary emanation.[42]

Thus with respect to their relationship to the Plotinean theory of emanating intermediaries, Philo and Marqah are in substantial agreement. With respect also to numerous other aspects of their doctrines of divine power Philo and Marqah are, I have attempted to establish, in agreement. So close is this measure of agreement that it is tempting to suggest, at least as a working hypothesis, that on those aspects where Marqah is silent and Philo is not, Philo's position should be used as a tentative guideline to what Marqah would have said had he broken his silence. This procedure could be employed, of course, only where the general tenor of Marqah's position accords with Philo's doctrine on the matter at issue. Bearing this rider in mind, and not losing sight of the tentativeness of my conclusion, I would like to suggest that in Philo's teachings lies the clue to the precise relation envisaged by Marqah between God and His powers. In particular I wish to offer as a hypothesis, necessarily provisional in character, the suggestion that in Marqah's view the relationship between God and His powers is one of ownership where the powers are to be understood as *properties* of God in the Aristotelian sense of "properties".

This interpretation of Marqah's position has several points in its favour that entitle it at least to a sympathetic hearing. Perhaps the most crucial is that it enables us to make sense of Marqah's insistence upon both the oneness of God and the powers of God. The major difficulty that we faced in tackling the problem of Marqah's reference to divine powers was precisely that the divine powers seemed to ensure complexity in a God who is, above all,

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[42] For a defence of this interpretation of Philo's position, see Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. I, pp. 282 ff.

one. And not only if there were many divine powers, but even if there were only one, the problem would exist. The doctrine that God's powers are His (Aristotelian) properties resolves this difficulty, by implying that the divine powers are not part of the divine essence, even though they belong uniquely to God by virtue of His essence.

As to whether God has one power or many, the line most in harmony with the overall position I have been adopting is that talk about the "power" of God, and the "powers" of God, are both in order. Reference to the "power" of God can be understood as indicating the fact of His agency—in other words, the fact of His power to act. And reference to His "powers" can be understood as indicating the multiplicity of the modes of expression of His agency.

While I think that these ideas are present at least implicitly in the *Memar* and the *Defter* hymns, I do not want to say categorically that they are not there explicitly also. It may be that those better attuned to Marqah's way of expressing himself can detect in its explicit form what I feel is present in the conceptual background that Marqah takes for granted as being familiar to his readers.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PERSONHOOD OF GOD

My primary concern in the last chapter was with the question of the nature of the relation that Marqah believed to exist between God and His powers. The answer, which I hesitantly advanced, was that His powers are His "properties" in the Aristotelian sense of the term. That is to say, His powers, though not part of His essence, belong to Him by virtue of His essence. In the course of justifying this answer reference was made to specific powers attributed to God by Marqah, though very little was said about the specific powers beyond the point that they could all be regarded as modes of expression of divine agency. Since God's power to act expresses itself in many ways, that is, in many kinds of action, it is possible to present many characterisations of God, each characterisation being based upon a particular mode of action in which God expresses Himself. The question to which I wish to address myself in this chapter concerns the identification of the nature of God so far as that emerges when we attend to the nature of His powers.

Chapter III was devoted to a consideration of a particularly important characterisation of God, namely, His oneness, perhaps the divine characterisation most frequently referred to by Marqah in his *Memar*. By attending to the logical features of Marqah's conception of divine oneness, we were able to draw a number of conclusions concerning what can be said about God. Thus, for example, we deduced that God, if truly one, must be incorporeal, outside space and outside time. Marqah himself, as we saw, does say, not only that God is one, but also that He is incorporeal, spaceless and timeless; and he even provides Pentateuchal warrant for these further claims. The point I wish to stress here is that even had he not made these further claims and even had they not been so readily derivable from Pentateuchal verses, we could still have asserted that Marqah was implicitly committed to these claims by virtue of his initial commitment to the doctrine of the absolute oneness of God. For these further claims are logically deducible from the fact that God's oneness *is* absolute.

But there are other claims that Marqah makes concerning God, and these "other" claims are not related in the same evident, logical way to the concept of "oneness". To take a conspicuous example, though it is clear why the fact of God's oneness entails His incorporeality, it is by no means clear why, or even whether, it entails His mercifulness. Nevertheless, Marqah is no less insistent that God is merciful than that He is one. With respect to the apparent logical gap between divine oneness and divine mercifulness, numerous other qualities that Marqah ascribes to God are to be placed in the same class as His mercifulness. For they also do not seem deducible from the fact that God is one. The kinds of ascription I have in mind are expressed by Marqah in the following ways: "He knows what has been, what is now, and what is yet to be" [I 5, II 3], "He does what He wills" [I 5, II 3], "I [God] will fight for them there with great mercy" [I 26, II 41], "It is a special thing that we receive blessings from our Lord, who is merciful and pitiful, doing good to those who love Him" [I 47, II 75], "God forgives and pardons you when you turn back to Him" [I 56, II 89], ". . . as the Great One promises so He does, for it is His wont to bring about what He has promised" [I 64, II 101], "He does not accept guilty men till they repent" [I 67, II 107], "His Lord is angry with him and will never pardon him" [I 76, II 122], "He loves you" [I 78, II 127], and lastly "Our Lord has chosen us" [I 95, II 156].

Numerous further examples, taken from the *Memar* and also from the *Defter* hymns, could be added to this list. What the list reveals is an account of God that is far richer than the one that has so far been allowed to emerge. Marqah, it is now clear, believed in a God who has great, perhaps limitless, knowledge, who is concerned to act justly, who is merciful and full of pity, and who is compassionate, who can be angry but also loving, who can forgive and pardon, but who can also withhold forgiveness if He desires, and who can make choices. Perhaps the most important point that emerges from Marqah's expressions which we have just been considering, and which would not have emerged had we concentrated entirely on Marqah's insistent references to the oneness of God, is that in Marqah's view God is a person.

Now, though Marqah conceived of God in these terms, it is not necessary to do so. It is possible to make a distinction, which can be maintained at a crude level, between the god of metaphysics

and the God of religion. For the belief that God exists can be reached not only by the acceptance of the validity of a divine revelation, but also by a rational consideration of what must be posited if reality is to be explained. Thus Aristotle, faced with the puzzling phenomenon of movement in the world, drew the conclusion that movement could be explained ultimately only by reference to an unmoved first mover. And this unmoved first mover he called "god". Likewise, by a process of metaphysical speculation he reached the conclusion that a being which is self-thinking thought necessarily exists, and this being he called "god".

Such conceptions of god can be supported by philosophical reasoning. But whether the conceptions thus supported are of the biblical God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is another matter. One place at which a wedge can be inserted between the god of Aristotle and the biblical God is at the point where the personhood of God is at issue. For it can be argued that the biblical God and therefore the God of Marqah is a person, whereas the god of Aristotelian metaphysics is not.

Of course, how such an issue is resolved will depend partly on what is accepted for the purpose of argument as the proper definition of "person". Thus, it is open to an Aristotelian to say that a necessary and sufficient condition for personhood is the ability to think; and since the god of Aristotle is nothing if not a thinker, that god is indeed a person. But whether an Aristotelian is allowed to make this move depends on whether his account of personhood is accepted.

When the matter is put in these terms, the argument over whether God is a person seems to be nothing more than an idle terminological dispute in which nothing is at stake. It is easy to give the issue a twist, however, which will make the dispute a very serious one indeed for the religious consciousness. For the issue can be presented in such a way as to have immediate and profound practical implications. The way to change the issue from one of terminology to one of substance is to relate the idea of "person" to that of "worship" by stipulating that only a person can be a proper object of worship. If we make this move then one way to tackle the question of whether the god of Aristotle is a person, and therefore is truly a God, is to ask whether he can be worshipped. If it is answered that he cannot, it must be concluded that, even though he perhaps has the other qualities we would attribute to God, he is not the personal God of the Bible.

No distortion of the concept of "worship" seems to be involved if it is held that worship is essentially a form of communication by which man establishes a relationship with the divine. And this communication would not be undertaken but for the fact that it is believed that what is, so to say, transmitted, is also received. Whatever God does in response to the message, He does at least, if nothing else, get it. But, as we have already had occasion to note in this work, the god of Aristotelian metaphysics would be incapable of receiving our prayers. For he is, essentially, self-thinking thought. Being perfect, he is capable only of the most perfect activity, which is the activity of thought. And being perfect in his thinking, he can think only of a perfect object, for anything less would diminish him in value. Hence, his only possible object of thought is himself. It is difficult to see how such a being can be conceived of as able to receive the prayers of men. Men, recognising his unreachability, may consider the Aristotelian god to be a metaphysical necessity. But if the relationship suggested above, between personhood and worship, is accepted, he cannot be considered a personal God.

This is not, of course, to suggest that an Aristotelian would object on that account to the rejection of the idea of Aristotle's god as a proper object of worship. An Aristotelian may indeed say that the conception of God as a person is radically incoherent, and that if our idea of God were thought through with sufficient clarity we would see that God is an utterly inappropriate object of worship. Whether, in the face of this line of argument, we say 'so much the better', or 'so much the worse for the Aristotelian conception of god', will depend in part on the fundamental matter of the relative weight we attach to reason and to revelation as veridical sources of knowledge about the divine. Marqah, as I hope has become plain, was no despiser of reason, and indeed set great store by the scientific investigation of nature. For example, while discussing the origin of the mass of the sun he says that it derives from the "greater light and the fire from it"; and then adds: "Tell them ['some men'] that and make investigation along with them" [I 132, II 214-5]. But though Marqah did attach high value to rational enquiry, he attached no less value to the discovery of truth from the Pentateuch. And from that source he learnt that God was a person. And from it he also learnt that God was accessible. For this reason we find Marqah

persistently doing something wholly un-Aristotelian—he addresses God as "Thou". When he says: "Thou art our God" [Hymn II *v.* 1] he thereby makes it clear that he is engaged in a personal encounter with God.

But the possibility of such an encounter raises important questions, that should be considered separately despite their close relationship. The first question concerns the fact that personhood is attributed to God by Marqah by virtue of several qualities that God is taken to display. And this multiplicity of qualities implies a complexity in God, which apparently clashes with Marqah's doctrine of divine oneness. The answer to this criticism is now readily to hand. Since those qualities of God, such as His love, justice, compassion and so on, on account of which personhood is attributable to Him, can be regarded as His powers, it follows that they are His property and therefore, though possessed by Him by virtue of His essence, are not part of His essence and hence do not imply that He has a complex essence. Thus the doctrine of the essential oneness of God is not set at risk by evidence for the claim that He is a person.

The second question takes us deeper into Marqah's philosophy of religion. Those properties of God by virtue of which He is regarded as a person are also, at least in name, qualities that we attribute to men. Such attributions are a risky matter for those who accept the kind of position presented in the *Memar*, since they inevitably provoke the criticism that Marqah is courting a variety of anthropomorphism. Bearing in mind that the *morphai* that set Marqah's position at risk include those of love, compassion, even anger, the anthropomorphism in question can fairly be classified as an anthropopathism. That is, the similarity between God and man is being thought of as due to a likeness of their spiritual, rather than physical form. It is clear that anthropopathism is a serious pitfall for Marqah, since that doctrine is, at least *prima facie*, logically inconsistent with Marqah's doctrine of divine otherness. In particular, Marqah cannot hold both that God is utterly other than His creatures and also that He is in certain respects like men.

The ground has, I hope, been adequately prepared for showing how the edge of this line of attack can be blunted. As a first step in this direction I would like to look at the problem, as far as is possible, through the eyes of Philo. For the difficulties I have

been expounding apply in exactly the same way to Philo as they do to Marqah, and though Marqah has an answer to those difficulties his answer lies further below the surface of his work than does Philo's answer to the identical charge.

Philo's problems in this field have two distinct causes, one being philosophical, the other Pentateuchal. The philosophical cause lies in the nature of one of Philo's arguments for the existence of God. We have studied in Chapter II Philo's argument in which he reasons that something must stand in a similar relation to the cosmos as man's mind stands to human artifacts. And likewise, he suggests that something must relate to the cosmos as man's mind does to man's body. In both cases the "something" in question is said to be God—the mind of the universe. Of course, as was pointed out in Chapter II, the similarity breaks down at important places. For example, God is the creator of the cosmos but man is not the creator of his body, and neither is man's mind by itself the creator of artifacts for men need their limbs in order to make things. God needed nothing corporeal in order to create the cosmos, and indeed prior to the creation of the cosmos there existed in any case nothing corporeal. However, despite the fact that the relation between the human mind and the human body is not exactly like the relation between God and the cosmos, Philo clearly thought them at least similar. This is important because it implies a similarity between God and men. In particular, a similarity is implied, as is suggested by the verbal similarity, between the mind of the world and the mind of man. Both God and men have minds and however different they are in certain respects, God and men have enough in common to justify the attribution of mind to both. But since mind has a human form, attribution of mind to God seems an anthropomorphic attribution.

The second reason why Philo has a problem about anthropomorphism is easily stated. The Bible, in countless places, attributes to God qualities that we attribute also to men. These qualities include physical forms (as when reference is made to the hand of God), emotional forms (as when He is said to be angry), and behavioural forms (as when He is said to swear). As we would expect, Philo does not accept these modes of expression, at least so far as they are understood as making claims to stating the literal truth. Philo's response to the biblical assertion that God swore is well worth considering here as constituting a particularly

interesting example of Philo's method of dealing with anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible. He argues [1] that men to whose word little credence would be given have recourse to an oath, that is, say what they have to *in God's name*, in order to secure for their words a credence that would otherwise be lacking. But what God says is to be believed precisely because it is God who says it. To add an oath would not increase the credibility of His words. But furthermore, an oath itself renders a statement credible because by its invocation of God's name, God is used, so to say, to underwrite the validity of the statement. But God cannot underwrite His own statements by an oath, because He is in any case guaranteeing His statements merely by uttering them. There is therefore no conceptual room for God to swear to anything. Consequently, Philo finds himself drawn to the conclusion that the anthropomorphic attribution to God of the act of swearing is, when literally understood, logically incoherent.

Philo is no less insistent on the unsatisfactoriness of the attribution to God of any human passions or the actions based on them, when those attributions are understood literally. In *Gen.* vi 7 God asserts that He will destroy man from off the face of the earth, and will also destroy all other animals "because I have considered and repent that I have made them". This passage attracts Philo's attention, because according to a literal understanding of the text God is giving way to anger and passion. Philo's immediate comment on this literalist interpretation is: "He is not susceptible to any passion at all. For disquiet is peculiar to human weakness, but neither the unreasoning passions of the soul, nor the parts and members of the body in general, have any relation to God".[2] But if the attribution to God of human form (whether physical, spiritual or behavioural) is not to be understood literally, then how is it to be understood?

Philo's answer is based on a consideration of two Pentateuchal proof texts. The first is that God is not as man (*Num.* xxiii 19), and the second that God is as man (*Deut.* i 31). These seem mutually inconsistent, but Philo holds that according to their correct interpretation they are not. The first of these statements is, in Philo's view, true. The second, on the other hand, is not literally

[1] *Sacr.* xxviii 93.
[2] *Immut.* xi 52.

true, but has to be understood in relation to its purpose. It is introduced "for the instruction of the many—πρὸς τὴν τῶν πολλῶν διδασκαλίαν",[3] for the sake of training and admonition, "and not because He really is such by nature".

That God is not as man is a truth recognised by those men, "the comrades of the soul", who see that God is not comparable with the species of any created thing. Such men understand that: "He is not apprehensible even by the mind, save in the fact that He is. For it is His existence which we apprehend, and of what lies outside that existence nothing".[4] But other men with a less insightful intellect must be taught something different, since they require legislators as physicians "who will devise the treatment proper to their present condition. Thus ill-disciplined and foolish slaves receive profit from a master who frightens them, for they fear his threats and menaces and thus involuntarily are schooled by fear".[5] Philo's point is that it does not matter whether the master is in fact a hard or cruel man. His effectiveness at securing obedience is determined by the construction put upon his character traits by his servants. The master who hides his loving nature behind a ferocious appearance may be a more effective master than one whose loving nature prevents him exerting discipline. The effective master, Philo tells us, is also like a physician who, from a desire to see his patient recover, refrains from telling him a truth that will so upset the patient as to interfere with his recovery. So also, God does not tell all the truth. To secure obedience from those who would not otherwise live according to the law, God presents Himself as capable of indignation and anger, and, generally, as threatening the well-being of those who would happily not be His subjects. Such men are persuaded to obey God by their fear of Him, just as "the comrades of the soul", knowing the truth, will obey God from love. Thus there is a close relation between "God is as man" and the motive of fear, and between "God is not as man" and the motive of love. And just as "God is not as man" is the truer statement, so also is love the finer motive.

It may seem from this that Philo wishes to maintain that at least with regard to men with more sluggish intellects, they dare

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[3] *Immut.* xi 54.
[4] *Immut.* xiii 62.
[5] *Immut.* xiv 64.

not be taught the truth because discovery of the truth would have disastrous consequences for their modes of behaviour. But I think that this would be a misleading way to state Philo's position. In the first place, he thinks that those who do need to be given the motive of fear need this because they are incapable of grasping the truth. It appears that Philo believed those who do have an insight into the truth to be incapable of withholding love of God. In that case, it would be unnecessary to give them a motive of fear; and more than unnecessary, there would not in fact be room for fear. A soul suffused with love of God cannot also act out of fear induced by threats of divine retribution.

Besides this consideration, however, it must be mentioned that it appears to have been Philo's view that obedience of divine law brings one closer to the truth, even when the motive for obedience is fear. In that case Philo is not saying that God withholds the truth from those with weaker intellects. He is saying that since certain men have weaker intellects God has to employ a different method than He would otherwise use in order to bring them as close to the truth as they can come. It is not that some things are too important to be allowed to be interfered with by the truth, but on the contrary, that the truth is so important that even fear can justifiably be instilled into men's souls as a means of drawing them closer to the truth.

The reason for supposing that Philo held that obedience of the law, by whatever motive that obedience may be prompted, brings men closer to the truth, is briefly as follows: Philo held that men can be placed in one or other of three classes, namely, (i) those who accept only the literal interpretation of the law,[6] (ii) those who accept both the literal and allegorical interpretations,[7] and (iii) those who reject the literal interpretation and accept only the allegorical.[8] Philo opposed the third group partly because of his conviction that those who do not live according to the law, as it is literally understood, necessarily fail to give a satisfactory allegorical interpretation of it.[9] There are certain insights into the truth represented by the law that can be secured only by those who do accept it in its literal form. Now, in presenting this position

[6] *Immut.* xxviii 133; *Conf.* v 14.
[7] *Conf.* xxxviii 190.
[8] *Migr.* xvi 89.
[9] *Migr.* xvi 93.

Philo makes no allusion to the preferability of one motive, rather than another, for obedience. The implication of this is that he saw obedience itself as a first step on the road to truth. Certainly Philo held that by allegorical interpretation one can go further down that road than can the straightforward literalists. But nevertheless the latter are all the same touched, however lightly, by truth on account of their acceptance of the law as literally understood. So God does not withhold the truth from those who obey Him from fear. On the contrary, He makes available to them as much truth as they can cope with.

It is clearly Philo's view that those motivated by fear have, in some respect, less insight into the nature of the truth than do the comrades of the soul. As was indicated above, the important respect in which the two groups differ is that the comrades of the soul are not misled by the anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible, and the comrades of the body are. But how great is the difference between the two groups? Though the comrades of the soul recognise that God is not as man, do they take the extreme line that God is not as man in any respect whatever?

I would suggest as a tentative first step in answering this question that they do not take quite this line. In a key passage Philo speaks of the human mind as apparently the one indestructible element in us. The reason he offers is that the mind is the one thing in us that God thought worthy of freedom. And therefore He bestowed upon it "that freewill which is His most peculiar possession and most worthy of His majesty".[10] This way of putting the point prompts the question of what Philo means by "His most peculiar possession (οἰκείου κτήματος αὐτῷ)". This question is partly answered when a few lines later he says that the soul of man, by receiving the power of voluntary motion, "in this way specially has been made like to Him". Thus Philo is evidently committed to the doctrine that God resembles man in one respect at least, namely, in respect of His freedom. In that case does Philo not thereby embrace an anthropomorphic doctrine, despite his apparent rejection of anthropomorphism as untrue? But this would not be a fair inference, for several reasons.

The most evident, perhaps, is that Philo's doctrine is in a sense the precise opposite of anthropomorphism. It might better be

[10] *Immut.* x 47.

described as "theomorphism", since Philo is saying not that God has a human form, but rather, man has, in one respect at least, a divine form. In this connection it is noteworthy that Philo speaks of the soul of man as an ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον.[11] The human soul is really a fragment of the divine soul in the human body. Hence, by claiming a resemblance between God and man by virtue of a certain quality of the human soul, Philo is not drawing God down to the human level, He is, on the contrary, elevating man to an exalted position in the universe, a position to which man is entitled by his participation in divinity. The affirmation that "God is not as man" is true despite the resemblance of wills between God and man, because with respect to the power of volition, "Man is as God"—though it is not true in the least that "God is as man".

But to try to defend Philo's apparent lapse into anthropomorphism by claiming that his position is what I have termed "theomorphism", may seem a verbal sleight of hand, that has altered the terminology without really clearing Philo of the accusation. I think that the move I have here suggested is not a mere sleight of hand and that it does substantially blunt the accusation. Nevertheless, the accusation can be blunted more drastically by moving deeper into Philonic metaphysics.

A consideration of the metaphysical situation reveals two lines of argument that are open to Philo, both being familiar to us from discussions in earlier chapters. First, we have already argued that for Philo the power of God, though possessed by Him by virtue of His essence, is not part of God's essence. It follows from this that even if a given divine power, say the power of volition, and a given human power resemble each other in some respect, it is not possible to draw the conclusion either that God's essence is in any respect like man's (which would be anthropomorphism) or that man's essence is in any respect like God's (which would be theomorphism). Thus our earlier classification of the divine powers as Aristotelian properties of God can be seen as an important element in the defence of Philo against the charge of anthropomorphism.

But it is possible to go further than this in defence of Philo. For according to Philo not only is God's essence unknowable by

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[11] *Opif.* li 146; *Leg. All.* III lv 161; cf. *Mut.* xxxix 223.

men, so also is the essence of the power of God. We know of the existence of God's power, but though we have an insight into the effects of His power—that is, we recognise them *as* effects of His power—we do not have any insight into the power itself. Thus we are not any better placed, according to Philo, to claim a resemblance between God's power and man's, than to claim a resemblance between God and man. All we are entitled to claim is that there is a resemblance between the effects of God's power and the effects of ours. And this position is clearly far too weak to count as a variety of anthropomorphism.

I have now stated my reasons for holding that Philo, despite his commitment to the Bible, and therefore to numerous statements about God that imply His personhood, is not thereby committed to an anthropomorphic doctrine, and indeed is able effectively to rebut the charge of anthropomorphism. I would like now to conclude these remarks about Philo's doctrine of God's personhood by saying something about the specific qualities that Philo attributes to God and that allow us to describe the Philonic God as a person.

Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of God as a person is His mind. To say that He has a mind is possibly less accurate than to say that He *is* mind, and not merely one mind among others in the universe but rather the supreme mind. Indeed, if we take seriously the idea of the human mind as a divine fragment, then it may be necessary to say that God's mind is the only mind in the universe, other individual minds really being parts of it. This view is strengthened by the consideration that Philo persistently refers to God by using such expressions as ὁ τῶν ὅλων νοῦς and ὁ τοῦ παντὸς νοῦς.[12]

God, being a mind, is thereby a thinker. Since God cannot be supposed to err, His thinking must give Him knowledge. His knowledge is, however, unlike human knowledge. Two points of difference are, first, its necessity, and, secondly, its scope. Though men can believe false statements God cannot. The reason for this is closely tied in with the reason for the fact that the scope of God's knowledge is unlike the scope of men's. In discussing the oneness of God, in Chapter III, we saw that the concept of oneness with which Philo was concerned forced him to the conclusion

[12] *Gig.* x 40-1; *Migr.* i 4.

that God is both spaceless and timeless. Consequently he has to say that kinds of distance between subject and object, which restrict human knowledge, are not similarly effective in restricting divine knowledge. Nothing can be concealed from God by being spatially too distant from Him for Him to be able to secure a cognitive grasp of it. Similarly nothing can be concealed from Him by being at a different time from Him, for nothing is either past or future in relation to God. A further distinction between divine and human knowledge is that whereas men engage in discursive thought God does not. It follows that discursive thought is a possible source of error for men but not for God. The point here is that men, engaging in a process of reasoning, can go wrong in the temporal process of moving from one step to another; but God's very timelessness prevents Him being subject to error from this source. His thought is intuitive rather than discursive. That is to say, His knowledge is unmediated by logical processes.

What the foregoing suggests is that the truth of what God knows cannot be jeopardised by the kinds of things that place at risk the validity of human claims to knowledge. By the same token, the scope of divine knowledge must be different from the scope of human knowledge. This is the second point of difference between divine and human knowledge. Since there is no possible obstacle to divine knowledge there can be nothing knowable that God does not know—"For He with an eye that never sleeps beholds all things".[13]

Another, related approach to God's omniscience is by way of a consideration of God's immanence. No part of the universe excludes God, for His powers are the forces that structure the cosmos, that hold it together in a state of unitariness. Philo comes very close to saying that God's knowledge of the universe is knowledge of Himself, since He cannot know anything in the cosmos without knowing His own power in the object of knowledge.

Philo's concern with the extent of God's knowledge is not unconnected with practical, almost pastoral, considerations, for it relates to the Biblical idea of God as able to see into the depths of the human soul and therefore able to see good and evil thoughts. There is in the Bible an incipient doctrine of divine omniscience (whether or not the doctrine also appears in a fully fledged form),

[13] *Mut.* v 40.

for if we suppose the private thoughts of the individual to be the best concealed, least accessible things in the world, then it is tempting to argue that if God has access to them He must have access to all other possible objects of knowledge as well. Philo, who sets no limits on divine knowledge, lays stress on the divine knowledge of the inner lives of men, as when he speaks of: "God, who surveys the invisible soul and to whom alone it is given to discern the secrets of the mind".[14]

The practical implications of this aspect of God are clear. The rewards and punishments, bestowed or inflicted by God, which contribute to the maintenance of a cosmic system of justice, can be based only upon knowledge. If God is to punish men justly, or to reward men justly, they must of course be worthy of punishment or reward. But furthermore, if men know that God can see into the innermost depths of their souls and will punish transgression they are thereby provided with a motive for obeying divine law.

This point leads to a further aspect of the Philonic personal God. He is good, and being good acts justly. His justice is not, however, untempered by mercy. In one passage [15] Philo speaks of God's mercy as older than justice. By this he appears to mean that judgment is passed by God, the Judge, on man in the light of the requirements of mercy. The picture Philo presents here is of a God who sees what justice demands, then sees how the demands of justice can be tempered by mercy, and only then and on the basis of the consideration of mercy passes judgment. Philo's God was not, at least to Philo, a fearful and terrifying Being. Philo does indeed speak of God's kindness and love for mankind.[16]

The terms "justice" and "mercy" have to be handled carefully in this context. Philo clearly thought that God's perfection is expressed in part in His perfect justice. Now, there is a sense in which an act of mercy, in so far as it contradicts a just judgment, is itself unjust. If justice demands that a man be punished, and mercy demands that the man remain unpunished, the decision not to punish, being the opposite of what is required by justice, is itself unjust. It might be said in answer to this that mercy

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[14] *Virt.* x 57.
[15] *Immut.* xvi 76.
[16] *Abr.* xxxvi 203.

was dictated by a "higher" justice, that if the positive law of the land were the sole factor determining the judge's decision, the decision would be too harsh in relation to what is demanded by natural justice. Consequently, it may be said, what we call mercy is what would be positive justice if positive justice were brought into line with natural justice. But God's mercy cannot be inconsistent with divine justice by virtue of being dictated by a "higher" justice, for there can be no higher justice than God's. It seems necessary to conclude from this that, though Philo does talk about the justice and the mercy of God, His mercy must be understood to be mercy only in relation to human positive justice and not in relation to divine justice.

One more aspect of divine personhood requires mention here, namely, God's free will. As we have already had occasion to mention, unlike dead matter which lacks potential for agency since it is necessitated, God acts voluntarily. Thus Philo writes: "God is a being of free will; the world of things is Fatality (ἀνάγκη)".[17] Philo takes seriously the concept of divine free will, so much so that he even insists that when God acts well He does so freely. For in Philo's view it is in God's power to do good and to do evil—"ἄμφω δύναται καὶ εὖ καὶ κακῶς ποιεῖν",[18] and the fact that He always does good is due to an act of choice.[19]

This is not the place to discuss in detail the question of the extent to which Philo's attribution of choice (προαίρεσις) to God is warranted only by his interpretation of the verse "God is as man" discussed earlier. But it is worth mentioning at this point that if, as seems the case, Philo is taking over the Aristotelian conception of προαίρεσις as developed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is not certain that Philo avoids a variety of anthropomorphism. Two points are especially relevant to this issue. The first is that Aristotle undoubtedly considered choice an integral aspect of the activity of practical reason, which he considered part of the essence of man. Therefore if choice has the same relation to God that it has to man, we would have to conclude that practical wisdom is part of God's essence. And this is not a conclusion that Philo would wish to draw—bearing in mind his teaching on the unknowability of God's essence.

[17] *Somn.* II xxxviii 253.
[18] *Plant.* xx 87.
[19] *Ibid.* 88.

Secondly, Aristotle presents choice as playing a certain role in practical deliberation, reasoning about what we are to do. This reasoning is portrayed as though it is discursive.[20] Now, if choice is necessarily imbedded in practical reasoning, and such reasoning is discursive, then our earlier objection to the idea of God engaging in discursive reasoning can be applied here to show that He cannot, in the full Aristotelian sense of the term "choice", make choices. Elsewhere [21] I have argued that one way to understand Aristotle's account of practical reasoning is to see it, not as a genetic or historical account of the process by which an action came to be performed, but rather as an analytic account of the elements that go to make up an action. If this interpretation is correct then it seems possible, at least at first sight, to give an account of Aristotelian practical reasoning without introducing the concept of discursive thought. But this position is not entirely secure, for in Book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle discusses the practical reasoning of the incontinent man, he appears to view practical reasoning as a process in which the agent sets out the premisses but fails to act on them. If the Book VII account is taken as representing the true Aristotelian position, it will have to be concluded that practical reasoning is discursive and that therefore it is impossible for God to engage in it. And since choice is essentially imbedded in practical reasoning He cannot in the full Aristotelian sense make choices. It does indeed seem arguable that the text of Aristotle can, without contradiction, support both the genetic and the analytic interpretations of practical reasoning, because these two interpretations make reference to different aspects of the one phenomenon. If that is the case then, in so far as practical reasoning can correctly be seen as, among other things, a discursive process, our argument that God cannot make choices can be maintained, despite the validity of the analytic interpretation of the same phenomenon.

These points complete the account I wish to give of Philo's conception of the personal God. Clearly the topic of the Philonic personal God is very large indeed, but I hope that what I have said about the topic provides an adequate conceptual preparation for what we meet with in Marqah's *Memar*. Indeed, to a large extent

[20] *De Motu* 701a10-25; *E.N.* 1147a5-10, 25-30.

[21] "Aristotle on Rational Action", *Phronesis* XIX, 1974; "The Practical Syllogism", *Analysis* XXIX, 1968.

what we meet with in the *Memar* in connection with Marqah's teaching on the personhood of God coincides with Philo's teaching on that subject. In particular, Marqah's difficulties in relation to anthropomorphism are the same as Philo's, arising as they do from the same source; and, as I shall argue, in so far as Philo can resolve those difficulties so also can Marqah—and in the same way.

Marqah, like Philo, based his belief in the personhood of God on two distinct kinds of evidence. The first is Pentateuchal and the second philosophical. The precise nature of the first should be evident from what was said on the same subject in respect of Philo's position. The second requires closer attention. With regard to the cosmological argument for God's personhood, we have already discussed, in Chapter II, Marqah's concept of God as an artificer of the universe as man is an artificer of human artifacts. One of the points that Marqah has in mind is that just as a human artifact bears witness to the nature of the artificer, because the artificer puts something of himself into what he makes—his artifacts are an expression of himself—so also the world bears witness, no less than do human artifacts, to an artificer. The cosmos, however, bears witness to a cosmic artificer and such a being can only be God.

Nature bears witness not only to His existence—though it does at least do that—but also, and more specifically, to His power; Marqah writes: "He created ten things that bear witness to His might" [I 131, II 213]. It also bears witness to His oneness—"Observe these things and realise that they are evidences testifying of Him that He is one in His essence" [*ibid.*]. Elsewhere, Marqah appears to affirm that the cosmos bears witness to the value of God. This at least seems to be what Marqah has in mind when he asserts: "Time and season are not silent over Thy goodness" [Hymn II 7]. Thus God is one, powerful and good. And it is by a consideration of nature that we can come to learn this.

By a consideration of nature we can also come to learn something further about God, in Marqah's view, that establishes Him as a person. Nature reveals that He is loving. Marqah writes: "Everything bears witness to Thee that Thy love is without end" [Hymn III *v.* 11]. And as though anxious not to be misunderstood on this crucial matter, Marqah says it again in the same hymn: "Thy name is 'Loving One'. Everything bears witness that Thou art so" [*v.* 21]. Thus Marqah, no less than Philo, considers that it is not

necessary to turn to Scripture for evidence of the personhood of God, even if a more detailed picture is to be gleaned from Scripture than from nature.

A further important parallel between Philo and Marqah concerns the Philonic conception of God as the mind of the universe. I discussed earlier the Philonic doctrine that as the human body has a human mind so the cosmos has a divine mind, and went so far as to suggest as a possibility, on the basis of Philo's reference to the human mind as ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον, that God's mind is the only mind in the universe. Both these ideas appear in slightly altered form in Marqah's writings. For what Philo says about mind, Marqah says about life. In the *Memar* Marqah affirms that: "Life is 'borrowed' from Him for a season, and He is the owner of all the seasons" [I 132, II 214]. And in a similar vein he puts into God's mouth the words: "*I, even I, am He,* to whom the life of the world belongs" [I 111, II 187]. This latter statement could mean no more than that God is the sole owner of living beings in the world. But it could also mean that the life of the world is God's life. This last doctrine is, in its verbal form, very similar to the Stoic doctrine, to a version of which Philo would have subscribed, that God is the life of the world. This Stoic-sounding element in Marqah's position is more evident still in his assertion: "The world has no life to it but He" [I 112, II 188]. It is clear from this that Marqah does indeed subscribe to the doctrine that God is the life of the world, and that in so far as it is correct to ascribe life to anything other than God, the life thus ascribed is on loan from God. The life remains God's though someone else is being permitted by Him to use it.

It is tempting to conclude from this that Marqah is on the brink of the doctrine that the life of man is an ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον. For evidently if Marqah ascribes life to men, and also says that the only life in the universe is God's, he would seem to be committed to the view that the lives of men are fragments of the divine life. If this suggested interpretation of Marqah's account of the relation between human life and the life of God is accepted, Marqah would seem to have laid himself open to the accusation of anthropomorphism. The reason for making this move is that Marqah is saying that in one respect at least, and that respect is a basic one, God has a quality that men have, namely, life. And in implying that God resembles man in respect of being alive, is Marqah not ascribing

to God a form that he ascribes to men, and is he not thereby subscribing to an anthropomorphic doctrine?

If he is then he has failed to maintain with consistency his doctrine of God's utter otherness, since with respect to life God would clearly not be other than man. There are several possible lines that can be taken in response to this criticism.

The first is suggested by a move I made earlier in defence of Philo when considering an argument designed to prove that Philo's teaching has anthropomorphic implications. In defence of Marqah it may be said that his doctrine is not anthropomorphic, but, rather, theomorphic, since he is not saying that God has a human quality; on the contrary, he is saying that man has a divine quality. If Marqah were saying this he would not be drawing God down to man's level; he would be raising man to a supernal position in the world. The position would indeed be exalted, for man would be seen as participating in divinity. That is to say, man would not be merely in the image of God; he would, on the contrary, be in one respect God Himself.

Now, whether or not the ascription of theomorphism to Philo is justified, the implications of such an ascription to Marqah can be seen to be contrary to the tenor of the *Memar* as a whole. Against the backcloth of deep humility in the presence of the divine, which permeates the *Memar*, the doctrine that man shares in divinity, and is in one respect identical with God, is stridently incongruous. In particular, it clashes sharply with Marqah's doctrine of divine otherness.

Nevertheless, we are faced with the fact that Marqah, who nowhere suggests that men are not alive, does say that the life of the world belongs to God, and that "The world has no life to it but He". And it is not easy to ignore the implication that if man has life then his life is really God's, and that therefore man, so far as he is alive, is to that extent divine. Since the claim that Marqah's position is theomorphic rather than anthropomorphic can be seen not to resolve the difficulty of reconciling the doctrine of God's otherness with the doctrine of God as the life of the world, an alternative line of defence must be sought. In fact there is a line more effective than the one just pursued.

It concerns the difference between the life of God and the life of man. These are so different, in Marqah's view, that it would make sense, within Marqah's system, to speak of a total transforma-

tion of God's life when it is "loaned" to man. The difference is sufficiently great to warrant the claim that if true life is God's then human life is life only in a weakened sense of the term. What then are the differences?

Marqah describes God as: "the living one who does not die, who abides unchangingly" [I 8, II 8]. For Marqah, of course, God, who is alive, can never cease to be alive, since He is unchangeable. Now, God's immortality cannot be conceived in temporal terms, since God is timeless. Hence His life is not everlasting through time. But we are in that case faced with having to say that God lives though His life, everlasting though it may be, does not last through even one moment of time. Whatever the nature of such a life may be, and it is possible that the conception of such a life cannot be grasped by man, it is certainly radically different from human life. And it is human life, essentially structured by time, that provides us with our model or exemplar of life. God's life, wholly unaffected by one of the characteristic structuring principles of human life, is not life at all in the human sense of the term. If, on the other hand, we say that God's life truly is life then it follows that man's life is life only in a weakened sense of the term.

Perhaps nothing brings out more the ambiguity of the term "living" when predicated of men and of God than does the fact of man's mortality. When Marqah describes God as "the living one who does not die" he thereby makes oblique reference to men—who do die. Man's life is regarded by Marqah as subject to the divine will, but God's life is not. God cannot will His own death, but He can will the death of man. Thus, in a powerful passage Marqah proclaims: "No deceiver in the world has any future. A corrupter of men is a corrupter of the Lord, for he has denied Him. Because of the magnitude of what he says, he has no future before me. I will erase his memory from under heaven, because he disobeyed my command. I will destroy his life" [I 72, II 115]. If finitude is an essential feature of human life, and God's life is infinite, we must draw the conclusion that God's life and man's are essentially different.

On the evidence I have presented it seems that Marqah would argue that to insist on a similarity between God and man, on the grounds that God has life and men have life, would be to succumb to the misleading impression given by the employment of the

single term "life" in reference to God and to men. The philosophical question, of which Marqah was evidently not unconscious, was whether the verbal similarity is justified by a conceptual similarity, or whether the verbal similarity masks an equivocation in the term "life" when applied first to God and then to men. Marqah is committed to the second of these alternatives.

In discussing Marqah's conception of God as a person, attention has so far been directed to the fact that Marqah conceived of God as alive. But Marqah says numerous other things about God that enable us to build up a picture of Marqah's living God as being unquestionably a personal God. One striking feature of Marqah's God is that He knows things. The *Memar* and the *Defter* hymns are replete with references to God as knower. This consideration raises an immediate question concerning anthropomorphism in Marqah's teaching. For though Marqah's doctrine on the life of God does not lead to anthropomorphism, it is possible that his doctrine on God as a knower does. However, reason for supposing that anthropomorphism does not lurk beneath the surface of Marqah's teaching on God as a knower is provided early in the *Memar*. For on the very first page Marqah presents the following doctrine about God: "He knows all secrets without having recourse to knowledge". It is not certain what Marqah means by this statement, but of the two interpretations between which one has, I think, to choose, neither accords with a doctrine of anthropomorphism.

First, Marqah may be making use of the *via negativa*. Perhaps, that is, he is basing his position on the doctrine that affirmative attributes should not be ascribed to God since otherwise a distinction could be made in God between God, the possessor of the attributes, and the attributes possessed by God. Thus it may be in order to avoid implying plurality within God that Marqah is denying that God has knowledge. Consequently, if we *are* to attribute knowledge to God what is thereby attributed cannot be part of God's essence, for this would be to imply plurality in God. But if divine knowledge is not to be conceived of as part of the divine essence, it must instead be a *power* of God. Since the powers of God are His properties it follows that divine knowledge is a divine property and therefore cannot be possessed also by men. Hence, though God has knowledge and men have knowledge, human knowledge cannot be knowledge

in the sense of the term "knowledge" according to which we speak of divine knowledge. It follows from this that talk about God knowing things does not, within Marqah's system, imply an anthropomorphic doctrine. This conclusion is, of course, reached on the basis of a possible, though not certain, interpretation of the statement about God: "He knows all secrets without recourse to knowledge". There is, however, a second possible interpretation that also has to be considered.

Immediately preceding the statement just quoted, Marqah asserts: "Self-subsisting is He who has no need of anything". Marqah's two statements are closely related in that they have the same logical structure. We are told, first, that God does not depend for His existence on the existence of anything outside Himself. It is not surprising that Marqah does regard God as self-subsistent, for he regards God as the Creator of the world, and therefore as in some sense prior, though not temporally prior, to it. Prior to the existence of the world God got along without the world. And since God is unchanging, it follows that God *can* get along without it. But there is nothing outside the world but God, for the world is the *mundus creatus* and the only thing outside it is the *creator* Himself. Hence God's existence depends only upon Himself. That is to say, He is self-subsistent.

The statement that God knows all things without having recourse to knowledge can be understood in a similar manner. We can, that is, understand it as making the point that God's knowledge also is self-subsistent. Human knowledge is knowledge of what is true, where the knowledge is conceived of as dependent on the existence of the truth. The fact that a given proposition is true constitutes one of the conditions that have to be satisfied if the proposition is to be an object of human knowledge. In this respect human knowledge has dependent being, since it depends on the prior truth of its object. I think that Marqah is claiming, in the passage under discussion, that God's knowledge is, with respect to its relation to the truth, the precise opposite of human knowledge. For in saying that God does not need to have recourse to knowledge in order to know, he is saying that unlike human knowledge which is created partly by the truth of the object of knowledge, God's knowing something creates the truth of what He knows. God does not have recourse to possible objects of knowledge in order to know, simply because those possible objects of knowledge do not exist until God brings them about by knowing them.

It is worth noting, as a historical footnote, that if this is the doctrine that Marqah is putting forward he would not be the only philosopher to have presented it. Perhaps its greatest exponent is St. Thomas Aquinas, who argues in the *Summa Theologiae* 1a, 14, 8 that: "Scientia Dei est causa rerum. Sic enim scientia Dei se habet ad omnes res creatas, sicut scientia artificis se habet ad artificiata. Scientia autem artificis est causa artificiatorum, eo quod artifex operatur per suum intellectum". But while I think that "Scientia Dei est causa rerum" is the correct interpretation of Marqah's position, I am not certain whether Marqah would have accepted all of Aquinas' doctrine in this field. For on examination Aquinas turns out to be saying not simply that divine knowledge is the cause of the object of its knowledge, but that divine knowledge is such a cause when combined with an act of will—"secundum quod habet voluntatem conjunctam".[22] It is because the divine knowledge is combined with an act of will (thus constituting "scientia approbationis", to use the technical term) that Aquinas compares the divine knowledge with the knowledge that an artificer has of his artifact. But on the basis of what we have already learned about Marqah's views on the divine will, it seems safe to conclude that he would reject this proposed parallel. For the artificer's knowledge is only of the final cause of his artifact. And even when he has willed to make it, his knowledge must remain of an ideal until by an act of will, and with the aid of other contingent factors, he has made what he had originally thought of. His initial knowledge is not therefore of an objective reality. For the artifact is not yet made. And his knowledge conjoined with his will is not of an objective reality either, since the human will can fail the agent. Marqah, however, would wish to hold that on the contrary divine knowledge, when conjoined with an act of will, cannot fail to be of an objective reality. In this case the divine mind does not need to look beyond itself in order to see whether the object of knowledge already exists. For God knows that if He wills an object's existence that object must exist. So God needs to look no further than His own will. The artificer, on the other hand, must look at the world, since his will is not infinite. Therefore, even if Marqah would accept the dictum: "Scientia Dei est causa rerum", he could not consistently accept Aquinas' claim that the relation between an

[22] *S.T.* 1a, 14, 8.

artificer and his artifact is like that between God and his creatures.

Now, in so far as Aquinas does take seriously his reference to the human artificer and his artifacts, as shedding light on the relation between God and His creations, there is at least a hint of anthropomorphism in Aquinas' position. But Marqah, by insisting as he does on the power of the divine will, is able to maintain that "Scientia Dei est causa rerum" while rejecting as irrelevant Aquinas' model of the human artificer.

I have argued, so far, that Marqah's account of divine knowledge is free from anthropomorphic doctrine. Bearing in mind the dissimilarity between divine and human knowledge with respect to their nature, it would not be unexpected if they also differed in scope. On examination, Marqah can indeed be seen to hold that God's knowledge, unlike man's, is illimitable.

In the opening paeon of praise in the *Memar* Marqah asserts: "No secret is hidden from Him, for everything is under His dominion". Since God has dominion, and hence power, over the entire cosmos, Marqah is affirming, everything is available to Him as an object of knowledge. This position is repeated later in the *Memar*: "He knows the secrets of every heart and what is hidden in it; nothing is beyond His power" [I 76, II 123]. The metaphysical basis of Marqah's teaching on the scope of divine knowledge has already been discussed in connection with Philo, who, under the same kind of metaphysical pressure as Marqah, presents the same conclusions. Marqah, like Philo, faced with the fact of the absolute oneness of God, held that God is outside time and space. Now, a being for whom there is a past and a future is less perfect in his knowledge than is a being for whom all of time is spread out as present. The reason for this is that those in relation to whom there is a future either do not know what will happen (in which case their knowledge is imperfect) or do know what will happen, but in such a case can do so only by a process of extrapolation. Where something is known by extrapolation it is, of course, known mediately, not immediately. And since unmediated knowledge is more certain than mediated it is more perfect. Therefore, since God's knowledge is timeless and hence cannot be past or future in relation to the object of His knowledge, His knowledge has the possibility of a degree of perfection not available to human knowledge. In the light of this consideration it comes as no surprise to find Marqah saying of God: "He knows what has been, what is

now, and what is yet to be" [I 5, II 3]. But what has to be borne in mind here is that Marqah is not saying that in the past God knew what was happening, now He knows what is happening, and in the future He will know what will then be happening. He is, on the contrary, taking the much more stringent view that God knows as present to Him what is past, present and future to us.

Thus the condition of temporality, which sets a limit on human knowledge, does not set a limit on divine knowledge. Similarly, the condition of spatiality does not limit God's knowledge though it does limit man's. God, we are told: "does not reside in a place; He is devoid of any locality" [I 97, II 161]. Man, necessarily restricted in locality, can of course see the world only from his particular point of view. What he sees is the world as it looks from a specific position. This is part of the condition of finitude under which man lives. For by looking at the world from one position man is thereby excluding himself from the possibility of looking at the world at that moment from any other position, just as by seeing the world at one moment in time he thereby expresses his finitude because he is unable also to be seeing the world at a different moment. Marqah's view is that God, lacking the limitations of spatial existence, has the potential for a degree of cognitive scope from which men, and indeed all creatures living under the conditions of space and time, are in the nature of the case barred.

This interpretation of Marqah, as involving the idea that God can know everything at all times because He is not Himself in time, is open to a line of criticism that can be undercut though it should at least be noted. Since God does not exist at one time rather than another, the availability to Him of knowledge of what in relation to us has occurred in the past cannot depend, as it must with us, on the exercise of memory. God does not have a memory because He is timeless. But He is not limited in what He can know, by an absence of memory, precisely because, unlike those living under the conditions of time, He does not need a memory. In the face of this consideration it is necessary to explain how it is that Marqah can feel entitled to speak of God, as he does on numerous occasions, as having a memory. For example, he frequently implores God to remember good men of past generations, as when he declaims: "O Merciful One, remember our fathers" [I 94, II 153].

In dealing with this difficulty I want to take as a basis that

must remain intact the fact that in Marqah's view God is timeless. The entire weight of Marqah's metaphysical position in the *Memar* underpins the doctrine of God's timelessness. What requires to be effected is an interpretation of the claim that God has a memory, that can be accommodated to the doctrine that God is timeless. And there is such an interpretation. In saying that God has a memory what Marqah can be taken to mean is that God has knowledge of what is past in relation to us. In asking God to remember our fathers, we would not be asking Him to bring to mind something that lies in the past in relation to Him—such a cognitive act would be metaphysically impossible for God. We would, on the contrary, be asking Him to bring to mind what lies in *our* past. God, it is to be understood, sees our past as His present.

Precisely the same kind of explanation can be given concerning a passage in which Marqah represents God as speaking to Moses about the world's righteous in the following terms: "By my goodness I established a covenant with their fathers, which I shall not forget as long as the world exists" [I 6, II 5]. Here also it is the human standpoint that dictates the mode of expression. The idea that God will bear something in mind for a period of time is incoherent when considered from God's point of view. This is not to say that we can understand God's point of view. It is merely to say that whatever that viewpoint is like, it cannot correctly be described in temporal terms. What Marqah means is that from the human standpoint God's knowledge must be understood as lasting through time, indeed, as lasting throughout time. All times are, or rather, all time is, simultaneously present to God.

Such modes of expression as we have just been considering are found not only in the *Memar* but also in Marqah's *Defter* hymns, as when he declaims: "Remember those of the past, and forget not those who are yet to come" [I *v.* 16]. It seems reasonable to give the same interpretation to the *Defter* passage as has seemed fitting in the case of the *Memar* statements.

As did Philo before him, Marqah lays great emphasis on the practical implications for men of the fact that God's knowledge is unlimited. When Marqah says of God: "No secret is hidden from Him" [I 5, II 3] he is referring, among other things, to the secrets of men. In one passage in the *Memar* Marqah attributes to God the following words: "As for him who dies therein [*sc.* in punishment], I will exact vengeance on him! If he thought he

could deal in secret, none of his deeds is concealed from me, for to me the concealed is just as the revealed. No deed done is concealed from me" [I 71, II 113]. That God has the ability to know even those secrets that men can successfully keep hidden from other men is, of course, a crucial premiss for Marqah, if he is to be able to sustain his references to God as a just God. For the ability to deal justly with people is, as was pointed out earlier in connection with Philo, based in part on the ability to know the relevant facts. The 'relevant facts' include mental occurrences and activities as well as overt physical actions. Even the mental aspects of action are present to the divine gaze. Such aspects, no less than the physical, are said by Marqah to be the material on whose basis God judges men. This is the implication of Marqah's attribution to God of the words: "If a man utters a corrupt statement, knowing what he does, I will judge him. You need not reprove him among men, for I will reprove him with many calamities. If he did not realise what he was saying and if he learns from you, happy are you and he alike" [I 72, II 115]. In a similar vein Marqah puts into God's mouth the words: "A man who hastens to do evil, if he was in his right mind (אן הוא מן מדעה עליו), will receive the curse" [I 72, II 116], and: "Woe to the man who . . . commits adultery in his mind" [I 75, II 122]. Thus Marqah considers that if God is to be a just God he must have insight into the inner life of man, as well as the outer. And he does consider God to be just. This is the clear message of the affirmation: "*Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness?* (*Ex.* xv 11) who dealest with just, holy and pure judgment, contrary to all that the unbelievers say" [I 44, II 70]. The polemical note struck here by Marqah, and in particular the question of whether Marqah had a specific group of unbelievers in mind, need not concern us here. What is of concern is the question of what Marqah saw as the basis of God's justice. It is not enough to be told merely that: "There is no iniquity in Him" [I 90, II 146]. What is required is an account of what it is about God that justifies the denial of iniquity in Him.

Fortunately Marqah has a great deal to say on this subject, and I would like at this stage to devote some space to what he has to say on the matter. There are two important respects in which Marqah studies will benefit from a close scrutiny of the area at issue. First, it will inevitably shed light on the question of what kind of person Marqah takes God to be. It is because it

will shed light in this area that I shall be discussing the question in this chapter.

Secondly, it will also shed light on what Marqah has to say about the moral behaviour of men. For, as we shall see in Chapter IX on Marqah's moral philosophy, Marqah considered God as providing in Himself a kind of ethical model for human beings to imitate as closely as possible. Of course, certain aspects of divine action are wholly beyond the range of even poor imitation, and perhaps whenever we do seek to imitate God our actions necessarily fall short of the model by a greater or lesser margin. Nevertheless, divine justice and even divine compassion can be seen as ideals towards which we should direct our lives. And though we do not fully embody those ideals in our action, to the extent that we do secure an even partial embodiment of them in our behaviour we will have vested our lives with a special value. From this account of the way Marqah places divine justice in the scheme of things, it follows that for Marqah the question of what divine justice is has immediate and profound practical implications. For on learning what the principles are on the basis of which God acts justly, we thereby learn what the principles of justice are that we ought to seek to embody in our actions. Thus the account, which now follows, of divine justice, is no less a preface to the subsequent chapter on Marqah's moral philosophy than it is a continuation of the present chapter on God as a person.

Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of God as a judge is His impartiality. Persistent references to this feature of God's justice are made in the *Memar* and Marqah's *Defter* hymns. God is a "Righteous Judge who is impartial" [Hymn VI *v.* 4]. And Moses is portrayed as saying: "Greatness to Thy power, O my Lord, O Judge, O True One, Thou dost not show partiality, not to prophet nor to righteous man" [I 117, II 193]. If, as seems likely from the context, in which Moses is making preparations for his own death, Moses was referring to himself in speaking of the prophet and righteous man, this serves to highlight the degree to which God is seen as not susceptible to the vice of nepotism.

That God's impartiality is seen as a virtue is quickly made evident to us. For having repeated: "Thou dost not shun judgment. Thou dost not show partiality, not to prophet or to righteous one", Marqah immediately adds: "Righteousness is Thine, O True One! Righteousness is Thine, O Judge" [I 118, II 195]. Thus Marqah

regards God's impartiality in judgment as an aspect, or expression, of God's righteousness.

Marqah's association of God's impartiality with His righteousness also occurs elsewhere in the *Memar*, as when Marqah tells us: "Reuben seeks to utter his shame (*Gen.* xlix 4) in his mouth, thereby giving warning lest it should happen again, and so that you may know that our Lord is righteous; He is not a favourer of persons, whether great or small" [I 62, II 97]. Marqah does not wish to rule out the possibility of God having favourites as such. A persistent special concern for, or a special regard for some people may be justified. What is, in Marqah's view, objectionable is the singling out for special concern of those who do not have some quality by virtue of which they merit being singled out as worthy of special concern. To reward someone unworthy of the reward, or to punish someone who does not merit the punishment is not merely irrational but also iniquitous, and God is neither irrational nor iniquitous. If we have done evil, therefore, repentance is necessary if we are to find favour in God's eyes: "God forgives and pardons you when you turn back to Him" [I 56, II 89]; "Know that He is merciful and pitiful. He does not accept guilty men till they repent" [I 67, II 107]. Unless we repent, God cannot favour us. He would otherwise show Himself to be a "favourer of persons" in the pejorative sense of the phrase. Marqah makes this point with the greatest possible clarity when he writes: "If the prophet Moses were to pray for us when we were in evil, his prayer would not be accepted, for the prayer of the righteous on behalf of the sinner while he is yet in his sin is not efficacious. When Abraham prayed on behalf of Abimelech—and he was righteous—his prayer was accepted. When Moses prayed on behalf of Pharaoh—and he was in evil—his prayer was not accepted" [I 77, II 125]. Marqah's point is evidently that if not even Moses' intercession on behalf of the unrepentant is effective, then it would certainly be impossible for the intercession of any other person to be effective.

Moses does indeed play a crucial role in Marqah's teaching on repentance. For within the scheme of things, as presented by Marqah, repentance expresses itself in the penitent drawing close to the teaching of Moses. Thus, even though Moses' personal intercession on behalf of an impenitent is inefficacious, it is the existence of the law of Moses that provides the backcloth against

which acts of repentance and contrition must occur. It is in the light of this consideration that we can best understand Marqah's call: "O men, learn from him [Moses] and walk after him, and hold fast to his command and do not forget his statutes. Woe to those who lack it and turn from its light! His teaching is then forgotten and they have withdrawn from it. They do not draw near to it: they destroy themselves and God is too righteous for them. They call Him but He does not answer" [I 87, II 140].

There are several points arising from the passage just quoted of immediate relevance to the present chapter. One point concerns the sentence: "They call Him, but He does not answer". This is perhaps a surprising position to find Marqah adopting. For surely, it may be said, if a person does call on God this can only be because he is close to the Law; and if he is in fact close then it would be unjust of God not to answer. But Marqah could defend his assertion, by making a distinction between different ways of calling to God, or perhaps between different states of mind or spirit that a man may have when calling to God. For a man can call to God, in the sense of pronouncing the appropriate religious formulae, even though he does not 'say them in his heart'. And he can, alternatively, pronounce them with devotion. In the former case, the person's call to God is not merely insincere, it is blasphemous. It would entirely accord with Marqah's view that such a call, made to God, should remain unanswered.

It is easy to fit into this context Marqah's statement: "God is too righteous for them". Marqah's view is, as we have seen, that God's righteousness expresses itself in His impartiality. There is nothing arbitrary or capricious about Him. Now, He would indeed be acting capriciously if He acceded to a call from a person who, though impenitent, went through the motions of prayer by uttering, but without sincerity, the appropriate religious formulae. It is almost as if the impenitent is, by praying, trying to tempt God into sin by coaxing an arbitrary or capricious judgment from Him. That is to say, the impenitent man at prayer can be seen almost as inviting God to become precisely what in His dealings with man He is not, namely, a favourer of persons.

In the light of this interpretation of what the impenitent man at prayer is seeking to do, it is not difficult to understand Marqah's evident revulsion at such a man's behaviour. What should be borne in mind here is that such behaviour is not merely morally

and religiously offensive. It is also based on a philosophically unsound conception of God. For the view that God could be tempted into capriciousness is crudely anthropomorphic.

A second point arising from the passage at issue is crucial for a proper understanding of Marqah's theodicy. The particular sentence in question is: "They destroy themselves". The idea that those who do wrong are, as it were, their own executioners occurs frequently in the *Memar*. For example, in a typical piece of rhetoric Marqah declaims: "God is more righteous than you in what He does to you. You slay yourself—you are your own enemy. Your own words have become your destroyer. Your own deeds punish you. You yourself have amassed evil deeds. Receive recompense for them all. In truth from the sowing of evil comes a harvest of thorns" [I 34-5, II 52]. Such modes of expression as these can be taken to make the point that human agents, by freely electing to do wrong, are responsible for the recompense they duly receive. But Marqah's stress on the inevitability of the recompense suggests a particular theory of divine judgment underlying the rhetoric. The theory is that just as God set up *ab initio* a set of immutable laws of nature, so also He set up *ab initio* a set of immutable laws of justice. And just as from a given natural event a given effect follows inevitably in accordance with the immutable laws of nature, so also from a given deed a given recompense follows inevitably in accordance with the immutable laws of justice. As Professor J. Macdonald has put the point, in language recalling Marqah's statement "In truth from the sowing of evil comes a harvest of thorns" quoted above; "Just as the hand that seizes the thorn will be hurt, so the mind that contravenes the laws of purity will become defiled, and the light within the mind will be dimmed and something of that which makes the light more radiant will be lost".[23]

If this way of looking at the matter is correct it follows that God does not need to make a judgment about appropriate recompense each time a deed is done. Divine justice receives expression as a result of each deed being done, because appropriate recompense is *ab initio* arranged for in the cosmic scheme of things. God no more needs to decide how to recompense each deed once it is performed than He needs to decide after the occurrence of each natural event

[23] *The Theology of the Samaritans*, p. 113.

what its successor should be. A decision about the successor in nature is unnecessary because things in nature fall into place in accordance with the arrangement of the sequence of things, and likewise the recompense for actions falls into place in accordance with the arrangement of the moral sequence. Consequently, just as a natural event can be seen as being responsible for its successor since, given the immutable laws of nature, a given natural event is bound to cause the succeeding event that it does cause, so likewise a human deed can be seen as responsible for its recompense, since, given the immutable laws of justice, a given deed is bound to cause its recompense. With regard to unjust agents, therefore, it makes as good sense to speak of them, as Marqah does, as destroying themselves, as to speak of God destroying them.

If the exercise of divine justice is understood in the way I have been describing it, we have a ready-made account of how anthropomorphism in the field of divine justice is to be avoided. The anthropomorphic account would portray God as a kind of judge, before whom agents and their actions pass in sequence, with each defendant calling forth from the judge a new act of judgment. According to Marqah's account of the matter, as I have interpreted it, a unique act of judgment was carried out at the start in arranging the system of cosmic justice: and thereafter recompense is awarded automatically or mechanically.

Now, if God is seen as setting up immutable laws of justice corresponding to the immutable laws of nature, it is reasonable to see the cosmic order of justice as an expression of God's own immutability. If God is changeless then surely the laws of divine justice will be changeless also. But the changelessness of God has, as was shown earlier, a basis in the oneness of God. Hence, Marqah's theodicy can be regarded as taking the form it does partly because Marqah consistently draws out the implications of his doctrine that God is one.

Let us accept for the time being the metaphysical doctrine that a God who is absolutely one must have set up a system of cosmic justice that is immutable. Now, if God passes an arbitrary or capricious judgment, by, for example, forgiving the unrepentant, it follows either that God is, in so doing, acting contrary to the laws of justice, in which case He is acting unjustly, or that He has changed the laws of justice to suit the needs of the immediate situation. But we must wholly disallow that God can be unjust.

Hence, we would be forced to accept that God can change his laws of justice. But we can now see that if the aforementioned metaphysical doctrine linking divine oneness and immutable justice is correct then the idea that God can forgive the unrepentant sinner must strike at the heart of the doctrine of divine oneness.

Though the position I have been developing on the nature of divine judgment appears to me to accord well with the general metaphysical position underlying, and also expressly stated in, the *Memar*, particularly with regard to the teaching on the oneness and the immutability of God, it must be recognised that if we attend to the specific modes of expression employed by Marqah in talking about God *qua* judge of men, a different picture emerges. For Marqah does speak as though God is to be pictured as passing successive judgments on successive acts. For example, Marqah describes in the following way God's dealings with four kinds of evil-doer: "As for those who made my statutes into nothing, I will make remembrance of them to cease. As for those to whom I imparted my knowledge and they did not want to learn, I shall appear in my judgment and make remembrance of them to cease. As for those unto whom I called and they did not hearken to my summons, I shall appear in my judgment and make remembrance of them to cease. As for those who rebelled against the True One and brought falsehood, I shall appear in my judgment and make remembrance of them to cease" [I 101, II 167-8]. Nevertheless, despite the successive references to God "appearing in His judgment", it is open to us to interpret Marqah as saying, not that God passes a series of individual judgments on those who do not listen to His summons, those who rebel against Him, and so on, but rather that God's system of divine justice, which was established in the world at the creation, receives expression in the way recompense is inevitably undergone in accordance with immutable laws that apply unexceptionably to all deeds. That is to say, according to Marqah's theodicy as expounded in the *Memar*, it is *as if* God sits in judgment and passes sentence on each act. From the point of view of recompense bestowed there is no difference, for if God were sitting in judgment on each deed the result would be exactly the same as if an immutable law swung automatically into action—the same recompense would be bestowed. But from the metaphysical point of view the situation is entirely different, for if God *were* sitting in judgment on each deed He would not be the eternal

immutable One the conception of whom permeates Marqah's view of the world.

One further line of criticism concerning my account of Marqah's theodicy should be considered here. It concerns God's lack of arbitrariness. Marqah writes: "Not all peoples will be questioned about a deed, for they have not been called *holy people*, nor *firstborn*, nor *priests*, nor *holy*, nor *specially select*, nor have they heard the voice of the living God. Woe to the sinner who has done evil with all his might" [I 108, II 180]. The implication of this statement is that a standard of justice different from that applied to the other peoples is applied by God to the Samaritans. And this may seem evidence for, or rather a symptom of, the capriciousness of God.

Yet Marqah has adequately protected himself against such an interpretation of his position. For after saying that the Samaritans will have to answer for deeds which if performed by others would not call forth divine questions, Marqah is then careful to state precisely why this should be so. The Samaritans are, after all, a holy nation, priests who have heard the voice of the living God, and therefore their actions merit an unusual degree of scrutiny from the divine Judge. What Marqah is implying is that God would be exercising arbitrary judgment if He did *not* subject the Samaritans to particularly close scrutiny. God's impartiality of judgment is not a matter of judging different deeds alike without regard for differences in the agent. It is a matter of taking into account relevant differences between the agents when passing judgment. The Samaritans, who were chosen to receive the Law of Moses, are more guilty for failing to obey that Law than are those who are not thus chosen.

What Marqah is doing here is employing the important philosophical point that there are several ways in which any action may be described, and though two actions may fall under the same description when considered from one point of view, they may, equally correctly, when considered from a different point of view be given different, even opposite descriptions. For example, a Samaritan and a Roman could both be described correctly as eating a hare. And it might seem arbitrary to punish the Samaritan, but not the Roman, for doing this. But if we add the fact that the hare is an unclean animal, prohibited, by the Law of Moses, to the Samaritans, we can now say that the 'same' actions performed by the Samaritan and the Roman are radically, in being both

metaphysically and morally, different. For the action as performed by the Samaritan can be described as a rebellion against God, whereas it would be absurd to describe in the same terms that 'same' action as performed by the Roman.

When the matter is stated in this way it can be seen that God would be acting capriciously, and therefore unjustly, if He were to recompense the Samaritan and the Roman in the same way for performing actions that are physically identical but that are, in their inner aspect, utterly different.

Bearing in mind Marqah's claim, which appears as a kind of *leitmotiv* in the *Memar*, that the God of the Samaritans lacks arbitrariness or capriciousness in His dealings with men, being the author of a set of immutable laws of justice from which, for metaphysical reasons, no man can successfully seek exemption, it is important to recognise that Marqah is not in fact contradicting himself when he presents what on the face of it is a totally different picture of God. The further picture I have in mind is that of God as loving, merciful, pitying and compassionate.

We are faced here with a problem identical to one that we found in Philo's teaching on God as a person. If God is indeed a just God who recompenses men inexorably in accordance with immutable laws of justice, then how can He also be merciful or pitying or compassionate? A judge, in exercising mercy, makes an exception of the recipient of His mercy. But if all judges were merciful all the time there could, it seems, be no justice—or even mercy. For where all defendants are treated as exceptions there is no regular treatment of defendants in relation to which anything can count as exceptional. Hence, merciful treatment has to be seen in relation to a backcloth of just treatment. It follows that God can be merciful to some only if He is just to others. But if He gives some people their just deserts but extends mercy to others, thereby treating them more leniently than justice demands, is He not being arbitrary?

I suggested, in discussing this problem in connection with Philo's theodicy, that in the case of terrestrial judges who are applying a positive law the exercise of mercy can be understood as contradicting positive law but as demanded at the same time by a higher law—the law that embodies the claims of natural justice. If the exercise of mercy is seen in this light then it points to imperfections in the law that the judge has to administer. These

imperfections may be an inevitable feature of all human legal systems. Alterations to those systems might reduce the imperfections but cannot lead to the establishment of a perfect system. In that case the judge's entitlement to exercise mercy may be seen as a form of social control, in that the exercise of mercy where the positive law clashes seriously with the demands of natural justice can be seen as a way of mollifying elements in society that would otherwise be tempted to wreck the existing legal system in order to replace it by a better one.

Another reason for exercising mercy is not that the law in question is a bad law, but rather that pressures to resist the application of the law in a particular case may be too strong to be overcome. That is, the exercise of mercy may be a product not of a bad law but of the lack of power to apply the law.

Now, the exercise of mercy can be seen to be a rational response by human beings in human circumstances—either the circumstance of having an imperfect positive law to apply, or the circumstance of lacking the power to enforce the law fully. But if mercy is to be understood as essentially at home in the kinds of conditions I have described, it is difficult to see how it can be fitted into Marqah's theodicy. In the first place, Marqah conceives God's law as perfect. He tells us: "Perfect art Thou in apportioning" [Hymn I *v.* 21], and God is the One "whose power and good are incalculable" [I 69, II 110]. It follows from this that the exercise of divine mercy cannot be justified by reference to a system of law embodying a higher standard of justice.

Secondly, even if *per impossibile* there were a higher law than the one God established as the basis for His allocation of recompense, He could not revert from time to time to that "higher law". For otherwise the law of God would not be immutable—it would lack eternal validity. Reversion to a higher law would be classified by Marqah as arbitrariness and hence not a possibility available to God.

Thirdly, the idea that God exercises mercy because He is unable to enforce divine law is not one that Marqah could seriously entertain. Such an idea could have application only if we could suppose there to be a power in the face of which God must retreat. But in Marqah's view there could be no such power. As he insists: "On high and down below Thy power is great and sovereign" [Hymn II *v.* 2], and "O power above all powers—and all powers derive from

Thine—our power is weak and insignificant unless Thou art loving" [Hymn III *v.* 8]. And if it be thought that man's power is great if God does love him, and that a man loved by God could force God reluctantly to grant mercy, Marqah can effectively answer this line of argument. First, he can remind us that eternally God's power is sovereign, and however great a man's power may become with the aid of God's love, it cannot match God's power.

Secondly, Marqah holds that God's love of man, which is a love that empowers, is bestowed on those who love Him and therefore would not seek to oppose Him. God's love of man, which expresses itself in forgiveness and pardon, is not available to the unrepentant—"God forgives and pardons you when you turn back to Him" [I 56, II 89]. But those who oppose God cannot force Him to be merciful. Marqah declaims: "Woe to anyone who is an enemy to Him" [I 48, II 76], and asks rhetorically: "Whom have you seen in the world who has been an enemy to the True One and prospered in his doings?" [I 57, II 90].

Yet if neither the imperfection of divine law nor the inability of God to enforce that law can be invoked in explanation of how God can be merciful, then how is Marqah's claim that God is merciful to be understood?

Similar difficulties apply to the idea of God acting out of pity or compassion. For even if we allow that God can feel pity or compassion, there seems to be an insuperable difficulty to the notion of His being motivated by such feelings. The reason for this is that if these feelings dictated a line of action opposed to the immutable laws of justice then God would ignore the feelings and act justly. If, on the other hand, the feelings dictated a line of action in accordance with the immutable laws of justice then God would pursue that line of action—but out of regard for justice, not from a need to satisfy His feelings of compassion. Thus, it is impossible for pity or compassion to serve as a motive for divine action. And yet we would ordinarily regard pity and compassion as essentially the kinds of things that *can* serve as motives for action. This consideration suggests that "pity" and "compassion", when applied by Marqah to God, have a special, perhaps technical theological sense. This is indeed the conclusion we shall reach later in this chapter.

It must be noted that the same kind of thing can be said about divine love that has just been said about divine compassion and

pity. God, Marqah tells us, is a loving God. He thinks in fact that a cosmological argument for the existence of divine love is available. Thus, he tells us: "Everything bears witness to Thee that Thy love is without end" [Hymn III *v.* 11], and: "Thy name is 'Loving One'. Everything bears witness that Thou art so" [Hymn III *v.* 21]. Granted that God is loving, the question can be raised as to whether He can act from the motive of love. Once again, it would seem that He cannot. He would not, from love, do anything unjust; and if love dictated a line of action that was also demanded by justice, He would pursue that line of action because the immutable law of justice required it and not from any other motive. Hence, love, which we regard as essentially a motive for action, entirely lacks such a connotation when applied to God.

This said, we have to cope with the fact that Marqah does seem to have regarded divine love as an active principle in the universe. For example, He offers up the following prayer: "Thy love protect Thy loving children" [Hymn I *v.* 20]. God's protectiveness towards those who love Him is a feature of God's dealings with men which Marqah refers to not only when he is speaking of the loving God, but also when he speaks of God as compassionate and pitying. God's compassion and pity, no less than His love, are expressed in His taking care of men. Divine compassion and pity, as well as divine love, are active principles. This brings out very clearly the conceptual difficulty facing us. Since love, compassion and pity as ordinarily understood are active principles, and since these three principles as ordinarily understood cannot be divine active principles, and since, finally, Marqah regards them as active principles motivating God, it follows that Marqah predicates the terms 'love', 'compassion' and 'pity', not as ordinarily understood, of God. The question that must be tackled therefore is what the conceptual difference is that enables Marqah, presumably without inconsistency, to ascribe to God the affections of love, compassion and pity.

In discussing the problem of what Philo means by his references to divine mercy, I suggested that since the dictates of divine mercy cannot be opposed to the dictates of divine justice, one way to understand Philo's references to divine mercy is to interpret them as affirming that divine mercy is mercy in relation to human positive justice. That is to say, if God does what a human court would decree only by an act of mercy then God's action can itself

be described as an act of mercy. But then, of course, it is an act of mercy only in relation to human law, not in relation to divine law. I think that this account of divine mercy accords to some extent with Marqah's statements on this subject, but it is possible, on the basis of Marqah's explicit teaching, to turn this schematic account into a more substantial analysis.

As a first step in this direction it will be helpful to establish the principle on the basis of which God, in Marqah's view, decides to whom among men He will show mercy, love, compassion and pity. Marqah has a good deal to say on this matter. He writes, for example: "It is a special thing that we receive blessings from our Lord, who is merciful and pitiful, doing good to those who love Him" [I 47, II 75]; "For God, mighty and awesome, is a shield and helper to those who believe in Him" [I 48, II 77]; "Know that He is merciful and pitiful. He does not accept guilty men until they repent" [I 67, II 107]; "But if you come to your Lord with sincerity, you will find Him. He will accept you, for He is merciful and pitiful to those who come and go" [I 78, II 126]; "Keep His statutes, that He may keep you, for He chose you for that purpose. Do not delay coming, else you will be rejected and not find Him who would take you by the hand, and when you repent repentance will not avail you. Your God is merciful and pitiful, near to all who seek Him" [I 104, II 174].

I have quoted a number of passages here (though many more similar ones are in the *Memar* and also in the *Defter* hymns) because the point that Marqah is making is crucial for his account of God as a judge, and I wanted to demonstrate that the point is firmly established in Marqah's explicitly stated position. The point in question is that God's love, mercy, compassion and pity are not merely gratuitously bestowed on men. They have to be earned, and are earned by living a godly life. God does good to those who love Him, not to those who do not. He is a shield and helper to those who believe in Him, not to those who do not. He accepts the guilty who repent, not those who do not. He is merciful and pitiful to those who come to Him, not to those who do not. Marqah does not merely make his point, he repeats it with an insistence that shows he was especially anxious not to be misunderstood. And the reason for this is that the doctrine is perhaps the pivotal point of his theory of divine justice. What, with little exaggeration, his doctrine says is that God's love for man is in return for man's

love for God. Given the value to men of divine love it may seem that Marqah's God is unjust, for God will, seemingly, withhold His love even from those men who are unable to love Him. And if a man cannot love God, it may be urged, he should not be made to suffer for failing to do what is not in his power. Marqah is evidently aware of just this line of criticism, for he presents a doctrine that exactly counters it. His words are: "You are not expected to do something that is not in your power to do, but God wants you now to love your Lord with (all) your power and not to love evil. If it were not in you to do so, God will not demand it of you" [I 77, II 125]. So Marqah's answer to those who say that God's love would only with injustice be withheld from those who are unable to love Him, is simply that there can be no such men. God does not require men to do the impossible, and He does require men to love Him—and not merely to love Him, but to do so "with all your power".

The doctrine of divine love that emerges from this discussion accords well with Marqah's doctrine of divine justice. At the heart of that latter doctrine lies the principle: "He recompenses every doer according to his deed" [Hymn IV *v.* 5]. What Marqah is saying is that divine love is recompense for godly deeds, and the withholding of divine love is recompense for godless deeds. Thus, when God expresses His love for men by acting mercifully to them, He is not going against His immutable laws of justice. He is, on the contrary, giving embodiment to them in His actions.

We can now see the conceptual change that Marqah has introduced that enables him, within the context of his theory of divine justice, to speak of divine love and mercy, divine pity and compassion. These quasi-*pathemata* of God are divine responses to those human actions which, in accordance with the immutable laws of divine justice, inevitably draw in their train divinely appointed rewards. It is a noteworthy fact in this context that Marqah nowhere suggests that divine love will be bestowed on the ungodly, just as he nowhere suggests that it will be withheld from the godly. The picture emerging from his account is that divine love and its opposite, and divine mercy and its opposite, are all part of the inexorable unfolding of the divine plan arranged on the basis of the immutable laws of justice. Marqah's theodicy thus appears to be an extensively developed, consistent system of thought.

I would like now to complete this account of Marqah's conception of the nature of God's personhood, as I completed my account of Philo's doctrine on this subject, by turning to the topic of the divine will. Marqah, as has already been noted, does write in such a way as to suggest that God has a will. For example, he says of God that "He does what He wills (מה דו בעי)" [I 5, II 3], "When He wills, He does it (דו בעי יעבד)" [I 145, II 239], and "The Mighty Awesome One is able to achieve all that He wills (כל דו בעי)" [Hymn XII *v.* 3]. Using a different Aramaic mode of expression, he speaks of God as bringing about "His will (רחותה) and His recompense" [I 5, II 4]. Using a further expression he writes: "The True One there planned and created by His will (בצביה)" [I 86, II 139], and: "He it is who created when He willed (כד צבה) and intended" [I 91, II 149].

It must be noted that there is a close relation, for Marqah, between divine will and divine power. For, as we have earlier had occasion to argue, it is Marqah's view that the divine will has the power, by a pure act of will, to bring into existence what is willed. No other causal factors need to co-operate with the divine will in order to secure the end willed. In this independence of external causal factors the divine will is unlike, and greater in power than, the human will. But how great is the power of the divine will? Is it unlimited, or is it possible to specify certain kinds of thing it is beyond the power of the divine will to bring into existence?

It will be seen that the divine power is co-extensive with the power of the divine will, since whatever God has the power to do, He can do only by willing it. If God could not will to do something, He could not correctly be said to have the power to do it. Now, Marqah's doctrine of the absolute goodness of God suggests one limitation on the will of God, namely, that He cannot will to do anything evil. Yet Marqah appears committed to precisely the opposite. He tells us: "Nothing is beyond His power, whether good or evil (ולא יפלא ממנו נפלא אן טב ואן ביש)" [I 76, II 123]. This passage bears a striking resemblance to one quoted earlier in this chapter in our discussion of Philo. Philo, it will be recalled, took the view [24] that it is in God's power to do good and to do evil. It was Philo's view that this showed that although God always

[24] *Plant.* xx 87.

does do good, He always does good *freely*, that is, by an act of will.

Nevertheless, despite the close verbal similarity between the above two statements of Philo and Marqah we cannot without hesitation conclude that they are making exactly the same point. For Marqah's statement is ambiguous, and on one of its interpretations it is saying something quite different from the point that Philo is concerned to make. First, Marqah's statement could be expressing the doctrine that it is within God's power to do both good and evil. If this is what he is saying then his position is the same as Philo's.

Secondly, however, the Aramaic text quoted above can also bear the interpretation that everything in the world, both good and evil, is subject to the power of God. If this is Marqah's meaning then he can be taken to be making the point, no doubt partly polemical in character, that there are not in the world principles or sources of evil it is outwith God's power to control. There are not, so to say, forces of darkness beyond the power of God. In particular, evil men would be making a mistake to suppose that God did not have the power to control them.

This interpretation of the text finds support in the immediate context of the statement at issue. The passage is as follows: "Let us submit before His greatness and worship and turn away from people whose actions are such [*viz.* evil] and who have such evil minds. Woe to them for what they have done within themselves. Let us not ourselves approve such actions, nor learn from them ever, but let us know that our Lord is merciful and pitiful. He knows the secret of every heart and what is hidden in it; nothing is beyond His power, whether good or evil. If a seeker seeks Him with a pure heart he will find Him, or if he seeks Him with evil motive, He will not listen to him and He will turn a curse on him" [I 76, II 123]. Since Marqah affirms that evil is not beyond God's power, in a context where he is speaking of the fact that the evil in men's hearts is not hidden from God, I think that Marqah's affirmation can best be understood according to the second—non-Philonic—interpretation that I suggested. If Marqah is indeed saying that sources of evil in the world, no less than sources of good, are subject to divine power, then he is not saying, at least in the passage under discussion, that God can will good and also evil, and hence that no limit can be set on the divine will, at least with regard to the moral worth of what He can do.

There remains a question, however, as to whether Marqah would have accepted the explicit Philonic view that not only is everything in the universe, and therefore every good agent and every evil one, within God's power to control, but also every possible action, whether good or evil, is within God's power to will. Certainly Marqah held that: "All Thine acts are good" [Hymn II *v.* 11], and even that: "Always God extends His abundant goodness" [I 101, II 167]. The question is whether any of His actions could have been, or could yet be, anything other than good. The answer appears to be in the negative. God's dealings with men, in particular His allocation of recompense to men for their deeds, are in accordance with divinely created immutable laws of justice. It would be irrational of God to set up immutable laws of justice and then act contrary to them. He set up laws which were perfect, and if He then acted contrary to them this would imply either an imperfection in God or an imperfection in the laws—neither of which alternatives can, within Marqah's system, be allowed. Thus the metaphysical system expounded by Marqah carries the implication that even if God has the power to choose, this power does not extend to the power to choose between good and evil. The possibility of choosing to do evil is, for metaphysical reasons, not a lively option available to God.

A further possibility has yet to be considered, which takes us to the heart of one of the perennial problems in metaphysical ethics. And it will be helpful for our understanding of Marqah to see where he stands in relation to the problem. The problem concerns the relationship between the divine will and the establishment of a system of justice. Even if it be admitted that once an immutable system of justice is set up God cannot will either to change the system or to perform an action contrary to it, the possibility which remains to be considered is that the particular system of justice willed into existence by God was freely chosen, and that He could therefore, had He so wished, have created an entirely different system. According to this line of thought, although it is now, so to say, too late for God to will evil, it was not too late for Him to do so prior to the creation of the immutable system of justice. In particular, what has to be examined is the possibility that the immutable system of justice created by God might have been structured by a principle of evil. For example, divine recompense might have been so arranged that from the sowing of virtue came

a harvest of thorns, and from the sowing of evils came a good harvest. There are, I think, several points that can be made about this line of thought.

First, Marqah held that God is unchangeable, and also that He is good. He is therefore immutably good. Indeed, Marqah states expressly that prior to the creation, as well as subsequently, God is good: "By Thy goodness the world came into being" [Hymn III *v.* 2]. God, being immutably good, would not have willed an evil system of justice. But the question is whether God, who would not have willed such a system, also could not have willed it. I think Marqah would have replied that the reason why God did not will evil, namely, because He is good, is also the reason why He could not have done so. It would have been contrary to God's nature to create an evil system of justice.

Now, the conception of an evil system of justice, though it may seem a paradoxical conception, is in fact not self-contradictory. We would describe as evil a system of positive justice that fell sufficiently short of, or radically contradicted the principles of, natural justice. But it must be noted that the standard of justice by which we measure the moral worth of a system of justice is natural justice itself. Natural justice is being taken, therefore, as an absolute moral standard. It is itself perfectly good. In so far as natural justice is articulated by the immutable laws of God, the latter laws must themselves be regarded as perfect. Thus, though we can conceive of an evil system of justice, and in fact know that such systems exist, it is by no means clear that we can conceive of an evil system of *divine* justice. For to judge the system of divine justice we should need a further absolute standard of absolute justice. And we lack a further system to act as such a standard.

This consideration leads to the second point that I would like to make. Granted that Marqah held that if God were to create a system of justice He could not but create a good system, it is possible that Marqah held that that system was good precisely because God created it. That is to say, it was not because God saw that a particular system would be good that He created it, but rather, in creating it He also, and thereby, created its goodness. Hence, whatever system God had created would have been good. God Himself is so good that He infuses with goodness all that He touches. This may be what Marqah meant when he wrote: "All

Thine acts are good, O our Lord, and Thou art better than they" [Hymn II *v.* 11].

This line accords with the general tenor of Marqah's position. On the one hand, it allows Marqah to say that the system of justice instituted by God is necessarily good. On the other hand, it also allows Marqah to say that God willed it freely. The reason it allows Marqah to make the second point is that God could have willed any system whatsoever, for though God wanted a good system to be established any system He could have established would thereupon have been infused with goodness. If Marqah had taken the line that God did not create the goodness of His system of justice, but had to institute a system of justice that was, independently of Him, the best possible, then He would have had no choice in deciding what system to pick—He would have had to pick the best possible. As it is, the immutable laws of justice form the best possible system of justice. But, if I am correct in my reading of the *Memar*, Marqah wants to hold that God did not will that system because of its supreme moral value. Marqah's position is, I think, that God's willing of the system was itself the cause of the value of the system.

Support for the interpretation of Marqah that I am here developing comes from an unexpected source, namely, Marqah's epistemology as I interpreted it earlier in the chapter. There I argued that according to Marqah one characteristic of God's acts of knowing, a characteristic that ensures that Marqah's attribution of knowledge to God is not an anthropomorphic attribution, is the power of those acts to create the truth of their objects. By knowing something God renders it true. It is as though God, the "True One" according to one phrase Marqah persistently uses in referring to Him, is so true that everything He touches participates at least to some degree in His truth. Since God is the Truth there is no truth except by Him. And God's way of creating truths is by acts of knowing.

What I have been arguing in my discussion of Marqah's conception of God as Judge and as the source of the immutable laws of justice is that goodness is dependent upon God exactly as truth is. For the upshot of my argument was that, according to Marqah, God created the goodness of the immutable laws of justice by His very act of promulgation of those laws, just as God created truths by His very act of knowing those truths. God's acts of promulgation

are not limited by the need to promulgate good laws, because He makes the laws good by promulgating them. And God's ability to know facts is not limited by the need to know only the truth, because He creates the truth, the facticity of things, by knowing them.

Thus at a crucial point Marqah's theology of morals and his theology of knowledge are precisely parallel. The parallel is anchored in the fact that Marqah is, above all, concerned to stress the absolute self-subsistence of God. He needs nothing beyond Himself. He needs to look beyond Himself for neither truth nor goodness. He is, in Marqah's view, both Truth and Goodness. He does not need to go in search of truth and goodness so that He can know facts and promulgate laws; He takes with Him both His truth and His goodness to the facts that He knows, thereby rendering them true, and to the laws He promulgates, thereby rendering them good.

In this chapter I have been concerned to examine Marqah's conception of God as a person. But there is, of course, a great deal more to be said on this topic. Marqah left numerous clues about his opinions on matters in this field that I have not had space to discuss. For example, there are questions to be raised concerning the doctrines in the *Memar* on the precise relation between divine mercy and divine love, and on the difference between God's pity and His compassion. Marqah employs a rich vocabulary of terms referring to what used to be termed "passions of the soul". He applies many such terms liberally to God. While it is reasonably clear what the relation is between those terms when employed in reference to men, only close scrutiny will give us a clear indication of what Marqah took to be the relationship between those terms when applied to God. Such close examination of the Aramaic text, to see for example the contexts where Marqah contrasts 'love' and 'compassion' or prefers to use one term rather than the other, will play an important part in building up a detailed picture of those elements in the divine existence that mark God out as an object of worship, and not merely a being of speculative philosophical interest.

What I have contented myself with doing in the present chapter is presenting a very rough sketch of the situation, stating, though only in broad outline, those features of Marqah's exposition that

entitle us to say that for Marqah God is not merely a philosophical *sine qua non*, but for whose existence many phenomena and perhaps the existence of anything whatsoever must remain inexplicable, but is on the contrary a 'person' worthy of worship and to be approached only in a spirit of utter humility appropriate to one standing in the presence of something of supernal value.

The features of Marqah's exposition on which I have concentrated are his claims, first, that God is a living God, secondly, that He is a knower, thirdly, that He is a judge, fourthly, that He is merciful and loving, and finally, that He has a will. Now, no doubt we should not normally hesitate to attribute personhood to a being who lives, and can know, judge, love and will. There is, indeed, a divergence of views among philosophers as to what is to count as a person. Elsewhere [25] I have considered the theory that rationality is the necessary and sufficient condition for personhood. But even if we require more than that as a condition for the ascription of personhood, a being who has all the attributes that Marqah ascribes to God seems to have ample qualifications to justify the ascription.

But before ascribing personhood to God, on the grounds that He is alive, knowing, just, loving and possessed of a will, an important proviso has to be borne in mind, namely, that the ascription of literal personhood to God on the grounds just given can be an ascription of literal personhood only if the grounds are the ascription of attributes the terms for which are literally understood. This point has an important bearing on Marqah's teaching, for, as we have seen, each attribute Marqah has ascribed to God appears to have peculiar qualities that radically distinguish that attribute from the attribute of the same name that is ascribed to men. For example, God's life turned out on analysis to be essentially different from human life, God's knowledge from human knowledge, and God's will from human will.

In that case we may seem compelled to say that God's life is life only in an analogical sense. This of course is exactly the position that we would expect Marqah to adopt. For his entire system is geared to defending the doctrine of God's utter otherness. Consequently, if we do lay down as axiomatic the proposition that only

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[25] "Kant's Treatment of Animals", *Philosophy*, vol. 49, 1974; "Kant's Concept of Respect", *Kant-Studien*, vol. 66, 1975.

a person can be a proper object of worship, Marqah's response can only be that in that case God's personhood, of whatsoever it may consist, cannot consist of those features that constitute human personhood.

Nevertheless, it is a vital point about Marqah's exposition of his doctrine of divine personhood, that though he wants to leave us in no doubt that God's personal qualities differ radically from human personal qualities, he seems equally anxious to make clear the fact that God's personal qualities are not so unlike human ones that the terminology we employ in speaking about human personal qualities is entirely inappropriate in application to God. Thus for example, though Marqah leaves us in no doubt that divine knowledge differs radically from human knowledge, he also wants to say that the difference is not so radical that forms of the verb 'to know' (ידע), where a term denoting God is the subject expression, must be ruled out of court on religious or theological grounds. To take another example, and one so pervasive as to be rendered almost invisible by its sheer ubiquity, Marqah's use of the second person pronoun and of the second person forms of the verb in speaking to God indicates that, however unlike a human person Marqah took God to be, he nevertheless thought that God could be addressed. He thought, in other words, that God was accessible to human communication. Marqah's insistence on the otherness of God is never allowed to develop into a claim that God is inaccessible. ". . . they who make request of any but Thee will find naught" [Hymn II *v.* 6]. Requests to other gods, Marqah implies here, will find nothing because there are no other gods to receive the requests. Requests to God, he equally implies, will find God. Therefore He is accessible to men. This point is made explicitly in the *Memar*, as when Marqah writes: "But if you come to your Lord with sincerity, you will find Him. He will accept you . . ." [I 78, II 126]. It is clear from this that Marqah would have repudiated entirely the claim that the otherness of God entails His inaccessibility.

We have now come full circle in this chapter, for we began with a discussion of the centrality of the doctrine of the accessibility of God to man within a theology that allows for the possibility of divine worship. I hope that what has been said in the intervening pages provides some idea of the Being whom Marqah took to be uniquely worthy of worship.

I would like to end with a comment on the nature of the accessibility of God. Though God is regarded as accessible, His accessibility is not due to channels of communication that render human beings accessible to each other. Now, there is a sense in which men are unceasingly accessible to God, since, in Marqah's view, God knows all men, knows even their innermost thoughts and most deeply concealed secrets. But merely to know something, and for the thing therefore to be accessible for inspection, is not to communicate with it. Marqah thinks, however, that man's accessibility to God has received fuller expression in God's employment of certain men as His prophets.

But what are we to say about the reverse direction, about God's accessibility to man, and the possibility of man's communication with Him? As we have frequently noted, God is not in all respects hidden from us. It is Marqah's view that the world bears testimony to the existence of God, to His love and His goodness. Thus, even if God is not accessible to us as an object of knowledge, as we are accessible to God, our knowledge of the divine is not, or at least need not be, inconsiderable. But what of our communication with Him? In so far as our communication with God is by prayer, a philosophical difficulty appears to arise for Marqah. The difficulty is that, granted Marqah's doctrine of the scope of divine knowledge, prayer is redundant.

As was demonstrated earlier, Marqah lays stress on the spiritual qualities of the man who prays, on his love of God, his sincerity and his genuine repentance. Where the point of prayer is to seek forgiveness then prayer seems not to be necessary, because God, who can see into the innermost recesses of men's minds, knows without having to listen to the prayer whether the man is sincere in his repentance and his love of God. One might almost say that those who do feel that they have to pray in order to secure forgiveness are in error about the nature of God, for they think that unless they tell God that they sincerely repent God will remain in ignorance of this fact. This point can be generalised to cover all kinds of prayer, since whatever it is that we wish to communicate to God by means of prayer, God can come to know without our having to formulate the message for Him.

Marqah could answer this line of argument in several ways, that would enable him to rescue his doctrine of the scope of divine knowledge while at the same time defending his evident belief in

the efficacy of prayer. Perhaps the most obvious answer available to him is that even though we should not conceive of our prayers as telling God something that He would not otherwise have known, the act of praying can itself induce in us a state of spirituality that has religious value. I think that Marqah can, and does, accept that the full, purely spiritual value of prayer lies in the spirit in which it is addressed to God. And that same spiritual quality is no less efficacious when it is not being expressed in prayer than when it is. The very way of life we lead, and particularly the spiritual values that motivate that way of life, are the sovereignly important things in the eyes of God. Marqah seems indeed to want to say that a godly life is a kind of continuing prayer, even where recognised religious formulae are not employed. We communicate with God, according to this line of thought, not so much by praying to Him as by living a godly life. The truly godly man does not need to engage in specific acts of communication with God, for he knows that God is in any case with him in all he does. This form of communication is unique, being due to God's unique ability to know. We might indeed want to say that it is so odd a form of communication that it does not really count as communication at all. I suspect that Marqah would want to say that the godly man's communication with God, secured, as it is, simply by living a godly life, is the deepest form of communication possible to man, and is indeed possibly the only true kind of communication in which we, in the human condition, can engage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CREATIVITY OF GOD

In the preceding five chapters attention has been focused almost entirely on Marqah's teachings on God. I have considered Marqah's proofs for the existence of God, and his doctrines on the oneness of God, His powers and personhood. Consideration has also been given to Marqah's teaching on the complex epistemological question of whether, and if so then with respect to what, God is knowable. Nevertheless, although God has at all times in the preceding investigation held the centre of the stage, I have not refrained from making reference to anything else. Had I attempted to write, in connection with the *Memar*, on nothing but God, the resultant picture would not merely have been less rich in detail, it would barely have existed. For Marqah's teachings on God take as their starting point what is other than God. In particular, Marqah takes his stand on the ordinary objects of perceptual experience, the familiar facts about what we see and hear in this world, and he then approaches as nearly as he is able the underlying metaphysical realities that explain both how it comes about that there is anything to experience, and also why what it is that we experience takes the form it does. Thus, in consequence of Marqah's willingness to treat the empirical phenomena as a basis for the development of his religious philosophy—a willingness that prevents the classification of Marqah as an empiricist from being wholly absurd—I have had to refer to certain of Marqah's teachings about the world when the overt subject of attention was not the world but God.

For example, in the discussion of Marqah's proofs for the existence of God, reference had to be made to the cosmos, because Marqah considered that the cosmological argument for God's existence has validity. Since God's existence is known, or at least knowable, from His effects, enough had to be said about those effects to show what it is about them that entitles us to conclude that there is a God. Likewise, in discussing the question of the knowability of God, it was not possible, nor indeed desirable to attempt to avoid reference to the human mind. The reason for this is that in asking whether God is knowable, we are asking whether He is

knowable by men. And in order to answer that question some attention has to be paid to the kinds of limits that must be set on man's ability to know. Whether or not men can know God depends not only on the kind of being God is (or has) but also, and to no less an extent, on whether a being of such a kind as God is a possible object of knowledge for a specifically *human* knower.

I wish now to begin to shift the primary focus of attention from God to man, that is to say, from the Creator to a certain and, in Marqah's view, an exalted species of creatures. But however closely attention will be focused on Marqah's philosophy of man, his teachings on God will never be absent from, or even peripheral to, the enquiry. For Marqah at all times thought of men as beings standing in a certain inescapable relationship to God. Men are made in the image of God and a man can escape from that relation with God only by destroying himself. If he tries to escape by, say, denouncing the immutable laws of divine justice then he still stands in such a relationship to God that he cannot be understood except in terms of that relationship. For the rebel against God shapes his life in response to, because he is in opposition to, God's laws. It is indeed possible to argue that a man's rebellion against God emphasises his relationship with Him, for were it not for his rebellion we might be less inclined to see him in his capacity as a creature responding in his own way to the demands that God has made of men. But even if a man, while not living according to the immutable laws of divine justice, does nothing so active as engage in ostentatious rebellion against those laws he also has not escaped his relationship with God, because, as Marqah states in Book VI of the *Memar*, one cosmological argument takes as its starting point the four divisions within the human soul—"desire and idea and conscience and reason-hidden deep within you" [I 131, II 214]. Consequently, however successful may be a man's attempt to live according to a life-style that disregards God's laws, he remains, in his spiritual nature, a living testimony to God—a holy testament.

The impossibility of discussing Marqah's conception of man without regard to man's relationship with God does not, however, preclude the possibility of a discussion whose overt centre of attention is Marqah's doctrine of man. I shall present an exposition of this latter doctrine in the next two chapters. In the present chapter I wish to provide a bridge between my exposition of Marqah's teachings on God and his teachings on man. The bridge

consists of an account of Marqah's teachings on the creation, for the creation links God, the Creator, with man, a product of His creative activity. As with the earlier chapters it will be necessary to devote a few pages to a consideration of certain aspects of the doctrines of earlier Greek philosophers. A main reason for doing this in the present chapter is that what Marqah has to say about the creation has, at several points, a distinctly polemical air, and I think that a deeper understanding of Marqah's position will be achieved if we can identify those who may most readily be judged to be Marqah's target. That target, I shall argue, is firmly placed in the mainstream of Hellenic philosophy. First, however, I would like to make certain distinctions, concerning the idea of creation, that will facilitate the subsequent development of my exposition.

A crucial distinction is that between two meanings of the term "creation". For the term itself is ambiguous, with its two meanings sufficiently similar to render it often difficult to detect when a writer has slipped from using it in one sense to using it in the other. First, "creation" signifies the act of creating. Using the term in this sense we refer to God's creation of the world. Secondly, "creation" signifies the outcome of the creative act. A creation, in this sense, is what has been created, a *res creata*, as opposed to the creating of that *res*. Thus the two kinds of creation relate to each other as cause to effect. By a creation (i.e. an act of creating) a creation (i.e. a product of that act) is effected.

Where we understand the creation (the *res creata*) to have come into existence by the process of actualisation of a potential, then the creation is not a creation *ex nihilo*. The reason for this is that if prior to actualisation the created thing were potentially what it became, then it must, prior to its being created, have existed in some form. For what is potentially one thing must be actually something else—a potential oak tree is not also an actual oak tree, since if it were actually an oak its potential to become an oak would so to say have been used up. The actual acorn is a potential oak, for it is the acorn that has matter which is structured in such a way that it can take the form of the oak.

If a *res creata* were, prior to its existence, something other than what it became, then it was not created from nothing. It was, obviously, created from what it had been. In this sense of "create" a sculptor may be said to create, because he employs pre-existent

material in his work—that is, the matter of the sculpture exists prior to the creative act. His creative work does not include making the marble that he shapes. The creative work consists in his giving a certain form to material that is already to hand.

Though the sculpture can be regarded as the sculptor's creation, it may be argued that the sculptor's true creativity was activated, not when he began chiselling the marble, but when he imagined the finished product. It was having the *idea* that was creative; the embodiment of that idea in a marble block was achieved by craftsmanship. According to this way of looking at the situation, the true *res creata* of the sculptor is not the sculpture but the idea that the sculptor has of the sculpture. It might seem that the sculptor's creation of the idea, unlike his creation of the statue, is a *creatio ex nihilo*, on the grounds that whereas the statue came from the block of marble, the idea came from nothing. Or, to use Aristotelian terminology, the sculpture had a pre-existent material cause, but the idea of the sculpture did not.

This is not perhaps the place to enter into a detailed discussion of whether men, all or even any men, are capable of creating from nothing. But I think that one point that should be made here is that the sculptor's creation of the idea of the statue is not unquestionably *ex nihilo*. It may be said that though his idea was not one he had previously encountered *in that form*, it may still be possible to regard the idea as a synthesis in a new form of other ideas that were familiar to him. In that case the other ideas, from which the new synthesis was made, can be regarded as the pre-existent matter that was then given the form eventually embodied in the marble block.

This way of regarding the pre-existent ideas, namely, as the material cause of the later idea, does not clash with the Aristotelian way of regarding the material cause. Aristotle does not think of the material cause as being "matter" in the ordinary "physical" sense of the term "matter". For example, he regards the premisses of a theoretical syllogism as the matter, i.e. the material cause of the conclusion,[1] and he regards the premisses of practical reasoning as referring to various intentions, desires and beliefs of the agent which themselves constitute the material cause of the resulting action.[2] Also, Aristotle regards the point and the line with which

[1] *Physics* 195a15-20.
[2] A. Broadie, "Aristotle on Rational Action", *Phronesis*, vol. XIX, 1974.

the geometer deals, and which are certainly not to be thought of as physical objects, as being the *matter* of geometry.

Ordinary creating, the normal, and perhaps the invariable form of human creating, involves working on a material cause. It requires a pre-existent matter. Another form of creating, the concept of which we can describe whether or not we can show that concept to have any instantiations, is creating *ex nihilo*. Creation *ex nihilo* does not rely on the pre-existence of something that serves as a material cause of the *res creata*, where the phrase "material cause" is understood in the wide sense that I have just been discussing.

Marqah undoubtedly believed in the creation of the world. Whether he believed in creation *ex nihilo* is a problem that will shortly be occupying our attention. So far I have merely been concerned to show that belief in the creation of the world is not necessarily belief in an *ex nihilo* creation. The world may, after all, have been created from a pre-existent matter. And if the creation of the world (assuming, of course, that the world *was* created) is like the creation of most, or perhaps all, human artifacts, then the creation of the world *was* from pre-existent matter. Indeed it is possible that it is only by permitting an extension of the ordinary meaning of the term "creation" (*creatio*) that we allow talk about creation *ex nihilo* at all.

I would like now to make a further distinction, this one concerning specifically the concept of creation *ex nihilo*. Let us suppose that the world was created from nothing, that is, that there was no pre-existent matter which became the world as a result of receiving a certain form. We are not entitled to conclude of course that because the world was created *from* nothing it was also created *by* nothing. In this chapter I shall assume, what in any case I take to be logically correct, that an essential aspect of creation is the existence of an *agens*, a creator, who does the creating. Even if a pre-existent material cause is not a necessary condition for creation, a creator is such a condition.

The foregoing remarks provide us with a rough conceptual framework within which our discussion of the creativity of God will take place. I wish now to focus much more closely on certain crucial elements in that framework, and to do so while bearing in mind what philosophers actually said on the question at issue. The philosophical positions with which I shall be most concerned are those of Plato and Marqah, but I shall not be concerned with them to the exclusion of all others.

Of the aforementioned two kinds of creation, namely, creation from nothing, and creation from a pre-existent material cause, the former was so little attended to by Hellenic philosophers that the concept of creation *ex nihilo* may fairly be judged to be unhellenic. It is worthwhile asking why this concept is so foreign to Hellenic philosophy, for the answer will help us to see what kind of effect an acceptance of the mainstream Judaeo-Christian interpretation of the first verse of *Genesis* may have on the direction of philosophical speculation.

In Book A of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle presents a brief history of Greek metaphysical speculation about reality. In this history he attributes to "the first philosophers" the following position: "That of which all things that are consist, the first from which they came to be, the last into which they are resolved (the substance remaining, but changing in its modifications), this they say is the element and this the principle of things, and therefore they think nothing is either generated or destroyed, since this sort of entity is always conserved . . . for there must be some entity—either one or more than one—from which all other things come to be, it being conserved" [983b7-18].

In this statement Aristotle gives the kernel to the answer to our question. The earliest Greek philosophers took the world as their datum and sought to explain what it came from, that is, what the matter is from which it was formed, this matter being the underlying reality. They did not go on to ask wherein lay the origin of that matter, since for them that matter itself is the ultimate origin of all things. It is, as Aristotle says, neither generated nor destroyed. What are subject to generation and destruction are the various modifications of the matter. Thales, "the founder of this type of philosophy" [983b20] declared that the first principle is water. Anaximander and Diogenes regarded air as the first principle. Heraclitus attributed this status to fire. Empedocles attributed it to the four elements, air, fire, earth and water, "for these, he says, always remain and do not come to be, except that they come to be more or fewer, being aggregated into one and segregated out of one" [984a8-11]. Anaxagoras thought that the underlying reality was composed of an infinite number of kinds of matter. But, once again, though the relations between them are subject to change, the underlying reality is not subject to either generation or destruction.

Thus the earliest Greek philosophers did not develop a theory of creation *ex nihilo* because their chief question concerned the nature of the material cause itself. Approaching metaphysics by way of an acceptance of the natural world, and then asking about the nature of its material cause, i.e. the matter out of which it is formed, they could not, of course, develop a doctrine of creation from nothing, for by regarding the nature of the material cause as basic they were precluded from asking what the basis of *that* cause was. Thereafter their problem was not 'What did the material cause come from?', but rather, the reverse, namely, 'How does it manifest itself in the ways it does?'. Anaxagoras, for example, explained the manifold appearances of the material cause in terms of aggregation and segregation [984a15]. Anaximenes, having claimed that air was the material cause, sought to explain the appearance of material things by invoking a principle of condensation and rarefaction.

When, as a subsequent development, the Hellenic philosophers raised the question of the cause of motion in the world, thus seeking the 'efficient cause', they again ignored the possibility of a creation from nothing. For what they did was explain how *what there was* became orderly and harmonious. There is, for example, no hint that when Anaxagoras invokes νοῦς, reason, in order to explain how the world was made, he is trying to explain how from nothing it came into existence. On the contrary, his purpose is to show how reason can be invoked to explain the order and arrangement of the world, that is to say, to explain the order and arrangement of what in any case existed.

Although Aristotle differs from the earlier philosophers I have mentioned in that he lays stress on the idea of a teleological cause in nature, a cause that draws things to the full realisation of their potential, he is in agreement with his predecessors on the doctrine of the beginninglessness of the material cause. According to Aristotle, generation occurs when matter sloughs off one form and acquires another. Prior to taking a certain form a thing has that form potentially. But it is a central doctrine of Aristotle's metaphysics that what is potentially X can be brought into the state of being actually X only by something that is already actual. Thus the fact that there are now changes taking place, things sloughing off one form and acquiring another, entails, for Aristotle, that there always have been changes taking place. It is clear that

the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* could not, without inconsistency, be introduced into the Aristotelian system.

There is one further Hellenic philosopher whose cosmological system I would like to consider here, namely, Plato, whose doctrine of the creation is here briefly outlined because of its polemical significance for Marqah.

According to the *Timaeus*, the perceptual world is a world of becoming. It comes into being and changes. Therefore it has a cause since "everything that becomes or changes must do so owing to some cause; for nothing can come to be without a cause" [28a]. The cause of the world is the demiurge, the δημιουργός, the maker and father of the universe, whom Plato also calls "God" (θεός). God used a model or pattern in making the world. His model, which could have been eternal and changeless, and could alternatively have come to be, was in fact of the former kind, for god wished the world to be good, and for such an end only an eternal and unchanging model, a model inhabiting a world knowable only by reason and intellect, would serve his purpose. The reason the demiurge wished the world to be good was that he himself was good and wholly lacking in envy, and therefore wished to share his goodness as fully as possible. He could not, in miserly fashion, hug his goodness protectively to himself.

But what exactly did god do to share his goodness? In answer to this Plato says the following: "God, therefore, wishing that all things should be good, and so far as possible nothing be imperfect, and finding the visible universe in a state not of rest but of inharmonious and disorderly motion, reduced it to order from disorder, as he judged that order was in every way better" [30a]. Since nothing without mind (νοῦς) is superior to anything with mind, and since mind is impossible without soul (ψυχή), the world was given a soul. Hence, to use Plato's own words: "this world came to be in very truth, through God's providence, a living being with soul and mind" [30b-c].

The model that god used in making the world was a νοητόν, a *res intelligibilis*. Since god employed one perfect model, and since the world duly modelled on it was a perfect copy, it follows that there can be only one world, for the world god made must share with its model the characteristic of being one.

In this account the efficient cause of the world is the demiurge, and the formal cause is the νοητόν which god employed as a model.

But what of the material cause? At this point in his argument Plato introduces a new concept, that of the receptacle (ὑποδοχή) which is space (χώρα), in which everything in the perceptual world becomes. The receptacle, described by Plato as something "which is eternal and indestructible, which provides a position for everything that comes to be, and which is apprehended without the senses by a sort of spurious reasoning" [52b], is, prior to the existence of the world, in a state of chaos. It "was characterised by the qualities of water and fire, of earth and air, and by others that go with them, and its visual appearance was therefore varied; but as there was no homogeneity or balance in the forces that filled it, no part of it was in equilibrium, but it swayed unevenly under the impact of their motion, and in turn communicated its motion to them" [52d-e]. Before being arranged into an ordered universe, we are told, "fire, water, earth and air bore some traces of their proper nature, but were in the disorganised state to be expected of anything which god has not touched" [53b].

Whether the *Timaeus* account of the creation is of a creation *ex nihilo* is difficult to answer. Aristotle, who, of course, believed in the eternity of the world, criticised Plato for teaching that time and the world began together.[3] But it is possible that what Aristotle was objecting to was the notion of a chaos existing timelessly prior to the creation of the world, prior, that is, to the introduction of order into the chaos. Certainly, the notion of a chaos existing *prior* to time is difficult to grasp unless the priority in question is a non-temporal priority. Xenocrates, who succeeded Plato's successor Speusippus as head of the Academy, is reported to have held that Plato did indeed regard the priority of chaos as a non-temporal priority.[4] What Plato was doing, according to this line of interpretation, was carrying out in imagination the experiment of thinking out of existence those principles in the universe that ensure its orderliness and harmony, (just as some political theorists have imagined men in a state of nature by imagining men in society and then thinking out of existence all the legislative and law enforcement agencies). According to Xenocrates, Plato believed that the universe without order was the receptacle.

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[3] *Phys.* 251b17.

[4] See Plutarch, *De Animae Procreatione in Timaeo* 1013a-b; A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, p. 443.

The Xenocratic interpretation seems at first sight neither to entail nor contradict the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. But whether Plato's teaching is in fact neutral on the question of the *ex nihilo* creation of the world is a matter which need not be discussed here, since such a discussion would take us too far from Marqah's own teaching on the creation. It may, however, at least be noted here that if Plato is indeed presenting the doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation then he stands, with Marqah, well outside the mainstream of Hellenic teaching on this subject.

Having sketched the doctrines of certain of Marqah's Hellenic predecessors so far as they have a bearing on the nature of the creation, I shall turn now to a consideration of the creation doctrine to be found in the *Memar*. We shall not, however, lose sight of Marqah's predecessors. Plato, in particular, will figure significantly, though not always as an ally. In one place, for example, where Marqah's position is the antithesis of Plato's, Marqah's mode of expression strongly suggests that in writing as he does he wants to make it clear that his intention is partly polemical, with the Platonic theory playing the role of target.

Marqah speaks of: "God from whom everything is" [I 90, II 145]. What kind of creation doctrine should we read into this description? Is Marqah saying that God created the cosmos *ex nihilo* or that He created it from matter which existed prior to the cosmos and was itself uncreated? I would like to lead into my answer to this question by referring to a distinction Marqah makes which has strong Platonic overtones, namely, that between form and matter.

Marqah frequently distinguishes between a thing, and its form, and what the form informs thereby producing the thing itself. For example, he tells us that mental and material objects are distinguished by their forms: "The Form (צורת) of the mind is not the Form (צורת) of the material body" [I 31, II 47].

Let us ask, therefore, whether Marqah maintained that God created the world by informing a pre-existent matter. Marqah's language on this point is suggestive. In speaking of God as Creator, he habitually links two modes of expression. Thus, for example, he terms God "the *Creator*, the *Orderer* (צעורה תקנה)" [I 60, II 93], and writes: "He *created* (ברא) all and *fashioned* (צער) all" [I 132, II 214], "The True One there *planned* and *created* (חזה וחדד) by His will" [I 86, II 139], "When the *created* thing is *perfected* by

the will of its Creator out of the four elements, He brings it forth by His power" [I 131, II 214]. In each case, God as Creator is linked to God as orderer, or fashioner, or planner, or perfecter. The activity associated with the last four terms seems especially associated with the process of structuring, that is, with the informing of a thing. This suggests that in divine creative activity a distinction has to be drawn between the matter of the *res creata*, this matter being what is created, and the form of the *res creata* by which God orders or perfects the matter. Certainly when Marqah writes that God "created all and fashioned all" he does appear to be making a distinction within the creative activity of God; and since, first, "fashioned" is language associated with "giving a form", and since, secondly, Marqah does distinguish between the form and the matter of a thing, a plausible explanation of Marqah's repetitious two-fold expressions in referring to the creative activity of God, is that the term "create" (ברא), while applicable to the divine act of making the universe, is used also by Marqah with the more restricted connotation of making the matter, as opposed to the form, of a thing.

The argument I have just presented would not, however, even if valid, be sufficient to warrant the conclusion that God created the world by informing a pre-existent matter which came from nothing. I would not draw this conclusion from the evidence so far presented for two reasons. First, even if, in referring to God as Creator and Orderer, Marqah is implying the doctrine that there are two aspects to the divine creative process, one relating to the matter, and the other relating to the form, of the *res creata*, it by no means need follow that one of those aspects *precedes* the other. God could, equally well, be conceived of as making a formed object *ex nihilo*, where the two aspects of the object, its matter and its form, are brought into existence simultaneously. However, whether God is conceived of as creating *ex nihilo* matter that comes into existence only with the formed object of which it *is* the matter, or as creating *ex nihilo* a pre-existent matter, God must be taken to create *ex nihilo*. But on the basis of the argument I have so far traced, I do not wish at present to commit myself to this interpretation of Marqah. This point brings me to the second of my two reasons for hesitating over my tentative suggestion about the import of the term ברא in the *Memar*. This reason is simply that in writing of God as the Creator, Marqah employs numerous

expressions, and a good deal of detailed exegesis must be done before it is possible to write with assurance about the precise conceptual differences, or perhaps even only differences of tone, connoted by the different terms. Among the numerous expressions are the following: "Thou didst establish (קדמת) the world" [Hymn II *v.* 4], " 'He is' created (גלא) a universe" [Hymn IV *v.* 3], "Thou didst germinate (זרעת) words which generated (סלקי) creations" [Hymn I *v.* 2], "God brought into existence הביא) the different kinds of creatures" [I 31, II 47], "He produced them (חלצון) by His power" [I 46, II 74], "He is our Maker, Fashioner and Creator (עבודן וצעורן וקנין)" [I 70, II 112], "... Creation was founded (מבני) on an origin" [I 93, II 152], "He brought into being (גלה) light" [I 131, II 213], "... all places He made (עבודון), fashioned (צעורין), perfected (שכללון), set in order (תקנון), made ready (עתדון)" [I 132, II 215].

Since Marqah employs so many expressions in the course of referring to the divine creative activity, and since so little is known of the precise conceptual distinctions Marqah indicates in using this rich vocabulary, it seems at the present stage of Samaritan research rash to attempt to conclude, by referring to only a few instances, in the *Memar*, of certain groupings of terms, that Marqah espoused the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*.

To support the claim that Marqah did espouse this doctrine, evidence of a more explicit kind must be brought forward. There is, I think, more explicit evidence, though once again a certain tentativeness in handling the material is in order. The evidence in question is the following assertion: " 'He is' created a universe from non-being"[5]—גלא עלם יהי מן האן דלא הוה

This verse is, I think, as unequivocal a formulation of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as could be expected from Marqah. Indeed, this formula is precisely the kind that would be expected from Marqah were he seeking to encapsulate the doctrine in a single verse. It must be admitted that the verse does not provide conclusive evidence that Marqah accepted the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. For the verse could be taken to mean that God created the world from what had not been the world. But if this is what Marqah is saying then the verse seems to be a mere truism. For

[5] Hymn IV *v.* 3.

whatever God did in creating the world, the world could not have been after the creation what it had been before the creation.

Thus, although the thesis that Marqah espoused the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is not perhaps incontrovertible, the weight of evidence in the *Memar* and also the *Defter* hymns appears to provide support for it.

It is, in this connection, interesting to note that with regard to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, Marqah's great contemporary Amram Darah appears to hold the same position as Marqah. For, with a certain tentativeness, and prompted in this tentativeness by the same considerations as those which provided grounds for hesitation over interpreting Marqah, I would take the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* to be equally attributable to Amram. In particular, Amram, like Marqah, appears to state the doctrine explicitly in at least one verse. He writes:[6] "For Thou didst create without toil Thy works which are eminent, which Thou didst bring into being from nothing in six days"—דאנדיכנון לא מן לנו ששה ימים

Having stated my reasons for thinking it at least probable that Marqah taught that the material cause of the universe was created by God, I would like now to shift the focus of attention from his teaching on the material cause, to his teaching on the formal cause of the world.

Plato's view, as expressed in the Timaeus, is that the formal cause of the world is a model that the demiurge employed in creating the world. The model is a νοητόν, a *res intelligibilis*, believed by Plato to have an existence independent of the ordinary world of the perceptual consciousness. It is evident that Marqah was aware of the doctrine that God used a model in the creation of the world. The evidence is that he took great trouble to dissociate himself from the doctrine. Indeed, Marqah's persistence on this matter strongly suggests that the doctrine was a live option for at least some of Marqah's Samaritan contemporaries. It is tempting to see in Marqah's words a veiled reference to a heretical Samaritan sect. But I shall not seek here to identify Marqah's likely target. However, that he was seeking to combat a doctrine he believed inimical to orthodox Samaritanism is shown by such passages as: "He created without helper; He made without any associate; He formed without using any model (דמו)... He formed without

[6] Hymn V *v.* 4.

using any model (דמו) in anything He made" [I 97-8, II 161].

Having noted the polemical tone adopted by Marqah in rejecting the doctrine that God employed a model in creating the world, we must now try to establish the grounds of his rejection. If, which is possible, the target of Marqah's polemic is Plato's *Timaeus* or a subsequent version of the *Timaeus* doctrine, then one objection Marqah would have to it is that it posits an eternal changeless entity. The existence of such an entity would be rejected by Marqah because he believed that the only eternal changeless entity is God Himself. Associated with this point is the consideration that there is a risk of the ascription of divinity to an entity co-eternal with God. Such an ascription would, of course, contradict Marqah's most fundamental doctrine, namely the doctrine of the oneness of God.

But in any case, even if Marqah's target is not specifically Platonic, but rather, a watered down doctrine that invokes the idea of a model, though not an eternal one, this also would not satisfy Marqah. For Marqah would, I think, regard as philosophically objectionable the idea that God *needed* a model to work with. If He did need a model this would imply an inadequacy or deficiency in God. No doubt human artificers need models, or at least sometimes do. But to conclude that for something so complicated as the cosmos a model was certainly required by God would be to embrace anthropomorphism. And if it is said that God did not need a model but used one all the same then employment of a model by God would seem to be pointless, and Marqah cannot be supposed to have thought that God could engage in anything pointless. Furthermore, and here I anticipate the positive side of Marqah's doctrine, Marqah's own teaching on how God created, a teaching that enjoyed the benefit of substantial Pentateuchal warrant, left no room for the introduction of the idea of a model to be used by God. I wish, now, to turn to the "positive side" of Marqah's teaching on the subject of how God created.

Granted that the creative act of God required neither a pre-existent material cause nor a pre-existent formal cause, two crucial questions remain to be asked. First, how did God create the world, that is, what was the *efficient* cause; and secondly, why did He create it, that is, what was the *final* cause? These two questions will be considered in turn.

We know that for Marqah it was, of course, God who acted as

the efficient cause of the world. But, as Marqah was well aware, merely to say that God was the efficient cause is to present an entirely inadequate explanation of the creation. For if all that God had to do in order that the world would come into existence was to exist, then the world itself must have existed eternally. Thus, if God was the Creator He had, in order to create, to do more than simply exist; He had also to act. God's creativity was grounded in His agency. The agency Marqah attributed to God was not that by virtue of which any efficient cause is correctly classifiable as an *agens*, but rather, the agency ascribable to an *agens* by virtue of the possession by that *agens* of a will.

Of course, Marqah did not suppose that the efficient cause of the creation was God's mere possession of a will. He held that the cosmos came into existence through a specific act of will. Thus, the efficient cause of the universe, while not incorrectly said to be God, is, in Marqah's view, an act of divine will. God created the universe by willing it into existence. As Marqah tells us: "The True One there planned (חזה) and created (חדד) by His will" [I 86, II 139], and "He it is who created (דברא) when He willed (צבה) and intended" [I 91, II 149].

Commonly, when referring to a person's act of will, we make reference not so much to the will as to the speech act that was an expression of his will. Thus when describing somebody who is seeking to impose his will on others, we say that he commands or orders them, or summons them, and so on. These modes of expression are applicable only where the performer of the speech act in question has, or thinks he has, power over people. It is other people he commands or orders, and he commands or orders them because he thinks that his commands or orders have the power to determine others to act as he intends them to. Marqah, also, speaks of God ordering or commanding. But when he does so in connection with the creation, several differences are to be found. First, God commands not only people, but everything, including what we regard as dead matter. Secondly, whereas men can command only those who are already there, it is by God's command that what He commands comes into existence. There is here an inversion of the normal order of things that we observed also in discussing Marqah's epistemology. He held, as we saw, that God's knowing something confers objective validity on what it is that He knows, whereas we cannot know something unless it already has that

validity. Likewise, Marqah holds that God does not need to wait for the existence of the recipient of a command before He can give the command. On the contrary, by His command the recipient comes into existence.

A third difference is one that we have already had occasion to note. A human act of will is not by itself sufficient to secure the state of affairs willed. Many contingent factors, not themselves subject to the agent's will, have to co-operate with his will if what he wills is to occur. But there is no gap between God's will and the existence of the object of that will. If God wills that something should be so, it is thereby, and necessarily so.

If we read the *Memar* and the *Defter* Hymns to see how Marqah speaks of the creative act of God, we find that he speaks less of God *willing* the world into existence, than of His commanding, or ordering or summoning it. That is to say, he refers less to the will as such than to the kind of way in which that will gives expression to itself. The following are a very few of the expressions Marqah employs: "At Thy summons come created things, at Thy proclamation worlds" [Hymn I *v.* 7]; "All things are subservient to Thee and by Thy command they come into being" [Hymn IX *v.* 11]; "He spoke and He made everything that was His will" [Hymn XII *v.* 13]; "*I am who am*, commander of the world and summoner of creatures" [I 8, II 8]; "Everything is from Him and to Him everything will return. At His command it is done" [I 69, II 109]; "Everything was drawn into being by His command 'Come'" [I 88, II 142]; "Orderer of all by His command" [I 131, II 213].

Thus Marqah places great emphasis on the word of God. In a real sense the cosmos is a testament to the power of the divine word. Marqah may indeed have wished to say that the power of God is to be identified precisely with the power of the word of God. Though Marqah declaims: "O Rider of Heaven, the world is under Thy power" [Hymn XI 20], he could equally have said: "The world is under the power of Thy word", for by His word the world was created and set in order.

The doctrine of the power of the word of God is not peculiar to Marqah in Samaritan literature of Roman times. Amram Darah's position is identical to Marqah's and no less unequivocally stated. He writes: "While Thy wisdom determines that Thou wilt create, Thy power brings everything by Thy word" [Hymn I *v.* 7]; and:

"Without a mouth Thou didst call out words and a world came into being. Swiftly Thy creations submitted to Thy words" [Hymn II *v.* 7].

Marqah sets no limits on the power of the word of God. The power of God's word is, after all, as great as the power of God. When Marqah says: "There is no end to Thy power" [I 10, II 11], this could have been said with equal accuracy of the power of His word. Bearing in mind the limitlessness of the power that Marqah saw as vested in the word of God, it becomes clear why Marqah regarded as wholly unnecessary to God both a pre-existent material cause and also a model from which He had to work. A being who can, by a word, bring into existence a cosmos can have no use for a model from which He must work. To say that God did need a model would be, for Marqah, both sacrilege, because it would impugn God's power, and also unphilosophical, because it would ignore the nature of the concept of the divine word with which Marqah was operating.

Having made these few points about Marqah's teaching on the nature of the efficient cause of the creation I would like, now, to turn to his teaching on the final cause of the creation. As a first step I will make some points about the doctrines of Plato and also of Philo on this subject.

Plato's account of the final cause of the world is presented in the *Timaeus* (29-30). The following, part of which I have already had occasion to quote, is the crucial passage: "Let us therefore state the reason why the framer of this universe of change framed it at all. He was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; being therefore without envy he wished all things to be as like himself as possible. This is as valid a principle for the origin of the world of change as we shall discover from the wisdom of men, and we should accept it. God therefore, wishing that all things should be good, and so far as possible nothing be imperfect, and finding the visible universe in a state not of rest but of inharmonious and disorderly motion, reduced it to order from disorder, as he judged that order was in every way better".

This idea reappears in the writings of Philo, in terms suggesting the direct influence of the *Timaeus* passage just quoted. Philo writes: "Now just such a power is that by which the universe was made, one that has as its source nothing less than true goodness.

For should we conceive a wish to search for the cause, for the sake of which this whole was created, it seems to me that we would not be wrong in saying, what indeed one of the men of old did say, that the Father and Maker of all is good; and because of this He grudged not a share in His own excellent nature to an existence which has of itself nothing fair and lovely, while it is capable of becoming all things".[7] And in similar vein Philo writes: "... contemplate that greatest of houses or cities, this universe. We shall see that its cause is God, by whom it has come into being ... and the final cause of the building is the goodness of the architect".[8] And finally: ". . . to those who ask what the origin of creation is the right answer would be, that it is the goodness and grace of God, which He bestowed on the race that stands next after Him. For all things in the world and the world itself is a free gift and act of kindness and grace on God's part".[9]

There is unfortunately no one passage where Marqah states in detail his position on the question of God's motive for creating the world. But his position is the same as that of Plato and Philo, at least so far as he holds that the motive was somehow connected with goodness. This is the implication of the verse: "By Thy goodness the world came into being" [Hymn III *v.* 2]. This verse need not occasion surprise. For Marqah in any case frequently expresses his belief that no act of God could be anything other than good—"All Thine acts are good, O our Lord, and Thou art better than they" [Hymn II *v.* 11]. But Marqah nowhere presents a detailed analysis, as does Plato, of the reason why a good God would be motivated to create.

Marqah agrees with Plato, more explicitly, in so far as Plato held that god's creative activity was engaged in not for the sake of god but for the sake of the *mundus creatus*. Marqah tells us that: "Thou hast brought into being Thy dominion (שלטנך) for Thy love's purpose (מבגלל רחמיך)" [Hymn VII *v.* 7]. What, however, is His "love's purpose"? He writes: "At Thy summons come created things, at Thy proclamation worlds: Thy love remembers that it is for Thy servants" [Hymn I *v.* 7]. Creation, then, is "for Thy servants".

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[7] *Opif.* v 21.
[8] *Cher.* xxxv 127.
[9] *Leg. All.* III xiv 78.

There can be no doubt that Marqah saw the created world as a kind of value-hierarchy—"Blessed be the God who brought into existence the different kinds of creatures for the sake of man" [I 31, II 47]; "*Israel* is special among all peoples. God chose them and made them select" [I 46, II 74]; "If it had not been for Moses the world would not have been created" [I 46, II 73]. Thus, God created the world for the sake of man, man for the sake of Israel, and Israel for the sake of Moses. Hence, Marqah identifies Moses as the final cause of the creation, he for whose sake God created the world. Moses is thus the focal point of goodness in the world. But it is possible for others to enjoy the reflected goodness of Moses and to the extent that we do give expression to this reflected goodness we fulfill our purpose. Marqah tells us what is required of us—"Ascribe majesty to our God. For this purpose we have come" [Hymn IV *v.* 6]. This position is indeed a far cry from Plato's.

So far in this chapter the primary focus of attention has been on the causes of creation. In this connection it has been found necessary to invoke the Aristotelian doctrine of the four varieties of cause. For Marqah's account of the creation of the world involves a good deal more than the ordinary concept of causation (whatever exactly that may be), and perhaps does not involve that concept at all. In particular we found it necessary to invoke the concepts of efficient and final cause. One point that emerged was that though with respect to the efficient cause God (or perhaps the will of God) is the cause of the world, with respect to the final cause Moses is the cause, since he it was for whose sake God willed the world into existence.

This concentration on the nature of the cause (or causes) of the created world, however, must not be allowed to distract us from a particular consideration about which Marqah was very insistent, namely, that one way to find out about the nature of a cause is to examine its effects. As we noted in Chapter II, Marqah espoused a thorough-going version of the cosmological argument. The world, considered as a witness to the divine existence and the divine nature, was to be regarded as a holy testament. As a post-script to the discussion of Marqah's doctrine of the cause of the *mundus creatus* I would like to end this chapter by noting the chief features of that world as described by Marqah.

Marqah makes frequent use of the four-fold classification of the elements, fire, air (or wind), earth and water. These were, of course, seen as systematically interrelated, in so far as they were regarded as mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive, given that the classification is based on the pair of dichotomies: light/heavy and wet/dry. Once it is granted that anything must be both light-or-heavy and wet-or-dry, it follows that anything must, basically, belong to one or other of the following four classes: light and dry (= fire), light and wet (= air), heavy and dry (= earth), heavy and wet (= water).

This way of classifying the elements provides grounds for classifying two pairs of opposites, namely, fire and water (for the first is light and dry while the second is neither) and air and earth (for the first is light and wet while the second is neither). It is noteworthy that Marqah often opposes fire and water. Thus, for example, in describing the crossing of the Red Sea Marqah tells us that: "Greatness was seen in that place; water and fire were combined (כחדה). This was a tremendous wonder, far exceeding anything, that water and fire should appear there" [I 40, II 64]. His point, clearly, is that fire and water cannot combine [literally: "be as one"] for either the fire would evaporate the water or the water would extinguish the fire. He returns later to this theme: "Great is the powerful One who burned their bodies in the midst of the sea—the water did not extinguish the fire! God reversed the natural laws of the world (תפך האל אמנות העולם) in all places for the sake of Israel" [I 44, II 69].

Though, as seems the case, Marqah accepted the standard quadripartite division of the elements, and the attendant principles of classification, his way of speaking of those elements is unhellenic. For one of Marqah's characteristic moves is in the direction of the personification of the elements. He asserts, for example, that at the Red Sea the four elements "recognised them [the Israelites] with understanding, differentiating between friends and foes" [I 32, II 49] and that "The water at that time was set up as a righteous judge. It judged between righteous and evil, and cast the evil before the righteous and killed him with many strokes" [I 34, II 51]. In a similar vein Marqah speaks of the Nile and its offshoots "prepared to set forth to exact revenge" [I 17, II 24].

Despite his willingness to personify the elements, Marqah has things to say about them that accord well with Hellenic thought.

In particular, Marqah's assertions about certain of the elements are reminiscent of Milesian and later pre-Socratic speculations concerning the material cause of the universe, the stuff out of which things were formed. Aristotle, our primary source of information about the philosophy of Thales of Miletus, reports him as holding that the principle of all things is water: ". . . (for which reason he declared that the earth rests on water), getting the notion perhaps from seeing that the nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it".[10] Thales' teaching on the indispensibility of water for everything is matched by Marqah. In discussing the Form of Adam Marqah affirms that it is composed of four elements: "The first element is water, for it is an element needed by everything" [I 87, II 140].

Nevertheless, Marqah does not espouse the view that there is nothing but water. Almost as if with Thales' doctrine in mind, Marqah writes: "The world does not rest on water, but it is set only on fire and water. If it were on water only, its substance would destroy all the trees in it and also the vegetation. There are many analogies for this. Even if trees had in them any power to prolong their existence—fire is not mixed with water anyway—its moisture would harm all the trees and vegetation and grass, everything!" [I 132, II 214]. Thus at least part of Marqah's criticism of such a position as Thales espoused is that if everything were water some things that are not drowned would have been drowned. The other part of Marqah's criticism is that fire is in any case an independent element, one not generated (even in the manner surmised by Aristotle) from water. Fire is, indeed, accorded by Marqah a central position in the matter of the world: "Fire is part and parcel of all created things, since at the Creation it was an element for everything" [I 87, II 141]. Yet it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that in Marqah's cosmology fire plays a bigger role than that of a material cause of the world. For he speaks, in one place, of fire as "the origin by which everything is controlled and made to exist" [I 46, II 74]; and this way of speaking suggests that fire is also to be thought of as an efficient cause of the world. Among Hellenic philosophers it was Heraclitus who placed greatest emphasis on the role of fire in the cosmos, writing as he did of an ever-living fire which is both the matter of the universe and also,

[10] *Meta.* 983b21-4.

in some sense, identical with the ruling god. I do not want here to enter the difficult field of Heraclitus exegesis. But it may be noted that there is good reason to suppose that the ever-living fire is not, at least in the Heraclitean system of thought, to be identified with the perceptible element fire. The perceptible fire is, on the contrary, merely one of the many transformations through which the ever-living fire goes. There is, however, little hint in the *Memar* that Marqah operates with two similarly distinct conceptions of fire. In the passage where he could have been expected to develop two concepts of fire, namely, in the mystical section concerning the seven gates within the gate of light [Bk VI, sect. 7], Marqah speaks simply of: "*The second gate*, the gate of fire which was made an element in all created things". Thus the fire that is considered an offshoot of the primordial light is not a "primordial fire", but, rather, the element fire from which (along with the other elements) the world was formed.

In Marqah's account of the basic features of the created world, the number "four" is prominently placed. For, first, there are the four elements (each of which, we are told, underwent a four-fold division at the creation).[11] Secondly, there are four seasons, and, thirdly, four kinds of living species. There are also, we are told,[12] four parts of the human soul—this last will be dealt with in the next chapter.

It was noted in an earlier chapter that Marqah accepted the cosmological argument for the oneness of God. This argument was based on the fact of the unity or systematicity of the world. The first two foursomes just mentioned contribute in an evident way to the systematicity of the world. For the order of the seasons exhibits a pattern of change, and the elements are systematically related (since each is light-or-heavy and wet-or-dry). The four living species cannot be classified quite so simply. Fish, animals and birds (three of the four living species) inhabit the three elements of water, land and air, which could, at least at first sight, seem an exhaustive list of possibilities. But man does not inhabit fire, he is a land-based animal. And hence the four kinds of living species are not entirely distinguished from each other by the type of environment natural to them. It is possible indeed that Marqah

[11] Bk IV, sect. 2.
[12] I 132, II 214.

did not consider the four species of animal related to each other as are the four seasons or the four elements. In any case, the unitariness of the universe does not receive expression in a common principle of classification for the four elements and the four seasons. Certainly the four seasons, like the four elements, are mutually independent of each other—Marqah says this [I 131, II 213]. Their independence consists in no more than their not being identical with each other, not in their being entirely distinct. Each element shares both its qualities (light-or-heavy and wet-or-dry) with other elements—air and fire are both light, earth and water both heavy, air and water both wet, and fire and earth both dry. Also the four seasons share the feature of standing in a certain relation to the process of fruition. But the four seasons, according to Marqah's exposition, are, in their orderly arrangement, cumulative. And this is not a feature of the elements. The seasons, we are told [I 131, II 213], are characterised successively by the processes of birth, upbringing, full fruition, and the preparation for the next cycle.

Nevertheless, despite the difference of principles of classification involved in the arrangement of the seasons and the elements, Marqah finds himself able to say of the four seasons and four elements (as also of the periods of day and night) that "they are evidences testifying of Him that He is one in His essence" [I 131, II 213].

Marqah did not, however, hold that the unitariness of nature was unbreachable. Pentateuchal verses provided him with ample warrant for insisting that God has produced events running counter to natural law. Thus, for example, in the course of his exegesis on the Song of Moses, Marqah affirms: "Great is the Powerful One who burned their [the Egyptians'] bodies in the midst of the sea—water did not extinguish the fire! God reversed the natural laws of the world in all places for the sake of Israel. The natural flow of water is in a downward direction, but in the Red Sea He made it to go upwards—*For the waters piled up* (*Ex.* xv 8)" [I 44, II 69]. We have already noted Marqah's interest in the contrariety of fire and water. Here his point is that precisely because those two elements are contrary, the fact that the fire continued to burn in the water is a miracle.

Despite the stress he lays on the orderliness of nature as bearing witness to the oneness of God, Marqah shows no sign of leaning so

hard on the conception of natural orderliness that his belief in the reality of miracles is set at risk. In this context, it has to be borne in mind that Marqah habitually allegorised the Pentateuchal accounts of miracles. For example, when writing of the miracle whereby the water of the Red Sea "... rose up and up from the bottom to the top, yet the water's wonted flow is to move from the top to the bottom, for water (normally) descends" [I 34, II 51], he says in exposition that: "... The water of that time was set up as a righteous judge. It judged between righteous and evil, and cast the evil before the righteous and killed him with many strokes. It delivered the righteous from the evil, differentiating between the two of them at the command of the great Lord". However, Marqah's fondness for allegorising the miracle stories cannot be adduced as proof that he rejected the stories' literal message. His modes of expression suggest, on the contrary, that he took the Pentateuchal accounts of miracles as bearing, on two levels, the literal and the allegorical, a valid interpretation. The allegorical interpretation perhaps plumbs deeper metaphysical or spiritual depths, but does not supersede the literal understanding of the text.

But if Marqah allows that the miracles did, literally, occur, why does this not make him hesitate over his claim that nature, through its unity, bears witness to the oneness of God? For nature cannot be truly a unity if there occur in nature events contrary to nature. One way of dealing with this difficulty is to show that miracles are not wholly at odds with nature, and that therefore the unitariness of nature is not shattered by miraculous occurrences. A number of philosophers, Maimonides being one, have taken this line. Maimonides writes: "Our sages, however, said very strange things as regards miracles; they are found in *Bereshit Rabba* and in *Midrash Koheleth*, namely, that the miracles are also to some extent natural; for they say, when God created the Universe with its present physical properties, He made it part of these properties, that they should produce certain miracles at certain times, and the sign of the prophet consisted in the fact that God told him to declare when a certain thing will take place, but the thing itself was effected according to the fixed laws of Nature".[13]

The evidence, however, does not warrant the attribution to

[13] *Guide for the Perplexed*, Bk II, sect. 29.

Marqah of the Maimonidean position just quoted. For, in the first place, Marqah emphasises the contemporaneousness of God's interventions in the workings of nature, and he thus leaves no need, nor even room, for the doctrine that the world was created with properties ensuring that the miracles would certainly take place as and when God intended they should. Secondly, there is no statement in the *Memar* that can, on any ready interpretation of the text, be taken to imply the above position referred to in the *Guide for the Perplexed*. In the one section of the Memar [14] specifically devoted to a discussion of the Creation, Marqah does assert: "There is no place outside of His control; all places He made, fashioned, perfected, set in order, made ready. He supplied their needs" [I 132, II 215]. But though this passage teeters on the brink of the implication that all preparations for the miracles were established in the beginning of the world, one possibility that cannot be ruled out is precisely that the miracles were, in Marqah's view, exceptions to the general rule, or order, of nature that was itself established in the beginning.

Even if Marqah held that miracles were not arranged for at the time of the creation, and that therefore they lack such naturalness as is implied in being arranged for in the beginning, he could all the same accept that despite the occurrence of miracles the world bears witness, through its unity, to the oneness of God. For though Marqah held that the unity of nature has sufficient of the character of unity to be able to bear witness to God's oneness, he did not consider its unity to be the same as the oneness of God. In Chapter III I argued that Marqah, employing a distinction between the unity characteristic of a plurality of things held together under a unifying principle, and the oneness which is exclusive of all plurality, ascribed to God absolute oneness, not a one-in-many but a one not containing a manifold within itself. This latter type of oneness is clearly not characteristic of nature. Whatever else nature may be it is at least a system, and a system necessarily has systematically related parts. It is therefore a one-in-many. It follows that even if the unity of nature is to be considered as a reflection of the oneness of God, it can at best, from Marqah's point of view, be regarded as only a very imperfect reflection. Thus, even if miracles are considered as interferences in the systematic unfolding of a

[14] Bk VI, sect. 1.

unitarily organised nature, they cannot, according to Marqah's philosophy, be regarded as destroying what would otherwise be a perfect mirroring, in nature, of the divine oneness.

If it be supposed, however, that harm is done, by the occurrence of miracles, to the ability of nature to reflect, and thereby act as witness to, the oneness of God, a further line, perhaps more at home in a theodicy, is available to Marqah. God's concern for man is a recurrent theme in the *Memar*. Marqah's God is not the unapproachable God of the philosophers (particularly the Aristotelian philosophers). He is, on the contrary, the God of the Patriarchs and of Moses, active in human history and concerned to secure for man the certainty, or at least the possibility, of lives structured by the principles of justice. As nature in its general, if not universal, systematicity bears witness to the oneness of God, so miracles can be seen as bearing witness to His concern for men. Considered from this point of view, miracles are evidence for the magnitude of God's concern for men. For in performing miracles, God is, for man's sake, diminishing the strength of the chief witness to His oneness, namely, the systematicity of nature. Of course, if (which I earlier suggested is false) Marqah wished to accommodate miracles in his philosophy by saying that really they do not disrupt nature entirely since the certainty of their occurrence was prepared for in the beginning, then he would not be able to employ to good effect the theodical point I have just presented. For the latter point relies precisely on the fact that miracles are disruptive of the natural order.

Thus, the order of nature, on the one hand, and miracles, on the other, point respectively to two essential features of Marqah's God, namely, His oneness and His concern for men: "Praised be the King, eternal in His essence, who sustains all His beloved and at all times is watchful over them" [I 45, II 72].

CHAPTER EIGHT

A SAMARITAN *DE ANIMA*

In this chapter attention will be focused on Marqah's teaching on the nature of man, and in particular on his teaching on what may, loosely, be termed the human soul. There are several reasons why this subject is appropriately considered at this stage in our examination of Marqah's philosophy. But it should be stressed that the decision to place the account of Marqah's doctrine of man in this position in the sequence of chapters can in no way be attributed to the influence of Marqah's own order of exposition. Though it is difficult to identify the principles of arrangement underlying the sequence of ideas presented in the *Memar*, it seems certain that Marqah's order of presentation does not reflect the demands of logic. In this work, indeed, part of my aim is to offer a possible conceptual framework within which Marqah's numerous philosophical statements may be ordered. One reason why it is logical to consider at this juncture his statements on the nature of man is that the last chapter was devoted to a consideration of the Creation, for attention was directed first to God as Creator, and then to the world as *mundus creatus*. And in this world man was seen to be a special kind of *res creata*. He is, after all, in Marqah's view, the final cause of the existence of the world. Thus a question that it is here logically appropriate to raise is: what kind of being is it, that is the final cause of Creation? For in order to appreciate the fittingness of man for this role in which he has, according to Marqah, been cast by God, it is essential to know at least what man is, or, perhaps better, what Marqah understands him to be.

A second reason for dealing with Marqah's doctrine of man arises from the fact that in the preceding discussion space has been given up to the question of what we can claim entitlement to know about the Creator-God. And any answer to this question that fails to deal with the question of the nature of man must remain, from Marqah's point of view, in several respects incomplete. For first, and of particular importance, Marqah, as we have noted, presents as valid the cosmological argument—an argument he deploys both as proof of God's existence, and also in justification

of our entitlement to make certain claims about God, such as that He is one and that He is powerful. But evidence for these claims is provided not only by the cosmos considered as a whole, but also by specific elements within it—elements which thus have cosmic significance though themselves less than cosmic, and which may therefore, at least from this point of view, fairly be regarded as microcosmic. Marqah believes that one such element is man, and particularly what for the present I am loosely terming man's "soul". Any discussion of Marqah's doctrine of God that is unaccompanied by an account of his doctrine of man must therefore be considered incomplete. Rather than ignore Marqah's teachings on man's nature, it would be preferable to examine the doctrines of God's existence and nature in order to identify those aspects of the doctrines that can best be understood only in the light of Marqah's teaching on the nature of man, and then to examine the latter teaching while bearing in mind the former, otherwise incompletely expounded, doctrine.

But there is a further reason, of primarily epistemological significance, why an account of Marqah's religious philosophy remains incomplete if unaccompanied by an examination of his doctrine of man. Numerous passages in the *Memar* are concerned with the question, clearly central to Marqah's thought, of whether God is knowable. It is evident that this question logically demands discussion of the nature of man no less than of the nature of God. For the claim that God is, or is not, knowable is a claim that He is knowable (or not) by men. In a sense, the fact that God is unknowable (if He is) is as much a fact (if it *is* a fact) about men as about God. For if God is unknowable the reason for this is traceable back both to facts about God that place Him beyond the bounds of possible human cognition, and also to facts about the human soul that set such limits on man's ability to know as to render God unknowable by us.

A final reason must, though very briefly, be given here as to why it is appropriate, at this stage in my exposition of Marqah's philosophy, to study his doctrine of man, namely, that I shall, in the next chapter, be examining Marqah's moral philosophy, and, as will duly be shown, it would be absurd to attempt a full presentation of Marqah's ethical theory without having previously prepared the ground by considering his account of the nature of those beings to whom ethical categories apply.

Before concluding these prefatory remarks it should be stated that the order of exposition within this chapter no more follows the order of exposition of the *Memar* than does the ordering of my chapter headings. Marqah's assertions about the nature of man are scattered widely through the *Memar*, and though it is generally clear why they make their appearance where they do, their position is more often due to non-logical than logical considerations. Much of the *Memar* is homiletical in character, and even though a homily may have a characteristic 'drive' and directedness, the consideration that determines the direction in which it moves may be a rhetorical one that leans on poetical rather than logical inspiration. Consequently, though in the title of this chapter I have used (and I hope not mis-used) the Latin title of Aristotle's systematic treatise on the soul, I do not thereby wish to give the impression that Marqah's account of the soul is presented systematically in the *Memar*. While, I think, Marqah does have a system of what would now be called 'mental philosophy', his *ratio docendi* of that system is itself by no means systematic. Of course, such a lack of systematicity in the presentation of the material renders peculiarly liable to inaccuracy any attempt to place the material within a logically ordered framework. For where the philosophical ideas are not, in their original setting, displayed in their various mutual formal relationships, one of the chief aids to interpretation is absent. Thus, for example, one important guide to the interpretation of a philosophical proposition is the set of statements said to imply or be implied by that proposition. Nevertheless, it is, I think, possible to construct an orderly picture of Marqah's '*De Anima*', both by a consideration of the likely meaning of the *ipsissima verba* considered in themselves, and also by a consideration of Hellenic and Hellenistic doctrines with which Marqah's *verba* are clearly cognate. A fruitful way of approaching Marqah's *De Anima* is through an examination of various of his assertions about 'life'. I shall, therefore, make this my starting-point.

Marqah, like the rest of us, could see the obvious. But he had a gift for looking at the obvious and seeing wonderful things in it. One obvious thing he saw was life. He observed the world teeming with life. Life, we might say, though hyperbolically, was everywhere. We must, however, pause at this point. For it is by no means clear that Marqah would have considered as hyperbolic

the proposition that life is everywhere. He may, indeed, have considered it a plain truth. Evidence that he may have done so is provided both by the general tenor of the *Memar* and also by particular statements in that work. I would like here to examine this evidence in some detail.

Marqah very frequently gives expression to his belief that God is alive. His modes of expression concerning the life of God are richly varied, but the underlying belief is unmistakable. Thus, for example, he affirms: ". . . eternal life is His and all life He drew from His own" [I 90, II 146], "Life is 'borrowed' from Him for a season" [I 132, II 214], and: "Praise to the King who possesses eternal life, from whom all life is borrowed" [I 141, II 232]. Elsewhere God is described as: ". . . the living one who does not die" [I 8, II 8]. Similarly, in his hymns in the *Defter* Marqah presents the picture of God as the *living* God. God is described as the "Giver of life (יהוב חייה)" [Hymn I *v.* 10]. And in a resounding phrase in the twelfth Hymn (*v.* 10) Marqah affirms: "He is the Lord of life (מרון דחייה)".

Marqah's affirmation of God as alive has immediate consequences for a basic dichotomy which he employs. In Chapter V it was argued that Marqah operates with a distinction between God as transcendent and God as immanent. There appears to be no evidence in the *Memar* and the *Defter* to support the view that Marqah's attribution of life to God is an attribution to God only as transcendent. It seems, on the contrary, to be an attribution to God *simpliciter*. If it is, then even God *qua* immanent must be understood to be alive. But from the doctrine that God, as immanent in, and therefore as permeating the world, is alive it is but a short logical step to the doctrine that the world is alive and God is its life.

There are several passages that in different degrees support the attribution to Marqah of this latter doctrine. He writes: "*I, even I, am He*, to whom the life of the world (חיי עולם) belongs" [I 111, II 187]. One possible interpretation of this verse is simply that all living things in the world belong to God. But the verse can also bear the weight of the interpretation that the world is alive and its life is God. There is, however, in the *Memar* a much more explicit statement that should be noted. In Book IV [I 112, II 188] Marqah asserts of the "eternal, everlasting One who exists forever": כד יימר וכל עלמה שמע בזבן לית לה קעים אלא הוא – "When He speaks all the world listens at the time. It does not have life

but He". Since לה clearly refers to עלמה, and הוא refers to God, the latter half of the passage means: "The world has no life to it but He". The הוא renders implausible any attempt to interpret this verse as meaning that all living things in this world belong to God. The Aramaic passage appears, indeed, to be a precise formulation of the doctrine we sought to deduce from Marqah's claims that God is alive and is immanent in the world.

There is further evidence to support the attribution to Marqah of this doctrine. I shall, later in this chapter, be discussing Marqah's view of man as a microcosm. The details of this view need not here detain us, but it may be noted that from the two assertions that man is alive and man is a cosmos in miniature, it seems reasonable to draw the conclusion that the cosmos itself is alive.

However, the doctrine which I have, I think, fairly attributed to Marqah, namely, that the world is alive, cannot correctly be judged to be entirely unproblematic. One difficulty in particular is worth considering at this stage, namely, that if the world is alive a problem arises as to how, if at all, it is possible to draw a distinction between those things in the world that are alive and those that are not. For if the world is alive it would seem that everything must be alive, in which case, of course, dead matter cannot exist. Yet it seems obvious that dead matter does exist. And, as was said above, Marqah, like the rest of us, could see the obvious.

There is no passage in the *Memar* where this problem is explicitly tackled. But Marqah says enough to make it clear that one or other of at least two responses is available to him. Both responses involve, though perhaps in different ways, the view that 'dead matter' is not really dead. Marqah frequently speaks about nature, including what we would consider to be dead matter, as if it were alive. This fact takes on a new significance in the light of the consideration that Marqah appears to believe that the world itself is alive. For if he thinks the world as a whole is alive it would be natural for him to write as though he thought that the parts of nature, such as the various occurrences of the element water, are likewise alive.

Though Marqah writes in animistic terms about all the elements, the majority of the passages where he attributes life to the elements concern water, and in particular the water of the Nile and of the Red Sea. Some examples, a few familiar from the preceding chapter,

should clarify the point. Marqah tells us that after the waters of the Nile were turned to blood, the rivers Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates "were prepared to set forth to exact revenge" [I 17, II 24]. Speaking of the successful crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and the unsuccessful attempt by Pharaoh, the *Memar* asserts: "The water at that time was set up as a righteous judge. It judged between righteous and evil" [I 34, II 51]. The Red Sea is not merely a righteous judge but also an articulate one: "Let us hearken to the sea and listen as it conversed with the great prophet Moses about Pharaoh who heaped up abomination after abomination. 'I will not be defiled by him and his people. My righteousness will not be an eternal graveyard for them'" [I 35, II 54].

One must, however, hold lightly such passages as the foregoing. The midrashic style of the passages is unmistakable. Thus on much the most reasonable interpretation of Marqah's descriptions of the sea as acting as judge and speaking, they are to be understood allegorically or as homiletical passages. Marqah did, of course, believe in miracles, and had there been clear Pentateuchal warrant for the passages in question he would no doubt have accepted them in their literal interpretation as miracles. But there is no clear Pentateuchal warrant for such an interpretation. And in the absence both of that and of any indication from Marqah that he wanted to be taken literally, we must accept the passages as essentially allegorical in character. At the same time, it has to be recognised that Marqah did accept as literally true the bases of these passages—even though what he was talking about was, literally, miraculous. Thus, in describing the sea as a righteous judge he must be understood to be making the point that the Red Sea was being used by God as an instrument employed to secure an end in accordance with the demands of righteousness. From this point of view, the sea can indeed be regarded as dead matter, with the life of God being, so to say, read into the natural phenomena for the sake of a homiletical point. Marqah is, therefore, not saying that the Red Sea was alive. He is saying that it is *as if* it were.

It is worth noting at this point that even if Marqah had wanted to hold that the Red Sea was alive at the time of the Exodus, he would not thereby have been committed to the doctrine that the Sea *is* alive. For he could have held that the effect of God's

intervention in history at that time and place was to suffuse with life what had previously been dead. After the divine intervention that life could have drained away, having served its divine purpose, leaving the Sea in its original dead state.

This consideration, however, brings into sharp focus the original argument for the claim that the world is alive, namely, that the living God is immanent in it. Marqah must in some sense reject this argument if his point in speaking animistically about the elements were to express the view that dead matter can on occasion, by an act of divine intervention, be vivified. For the aforementioned argument leads to the conclusion that the world is in its entirety alive, not merely on occasion, but all the time. Clearly, if the Red Sea is alive only when it is performing a miraculous act its life is not due to the permanent immanence in it of the living God.

A plausible approach to the foregoing position is to say that the cosmos, including so-called dead matter, is indeed at all times and in all its parts alive by virtue of the immanence in it of the living God, and that by divine intervention in the 'routine' unfolding of nature certain pieces of seemingly dead matter reveal in a particularly conspicuous way the hand of the living God. According to this line of thought the Red Sea during the parting of the waves was not more 'alive' than the rest of the cosmos—it merely gave especially conspicuous signs of being alive.

But if we accept this view it is necessary to give some indication of what is meant in this context by 'alive'. In dealing with this matter I come to the second of the two responses that I earlier said were available to Marqah as ways of coping with the apparent inconsistency between the two doctrines that the world is alive and that dead matter exists.

The basis for this response was prepared in Chapter VI. In defence of Marqah I there claimed, if I may now for the sake of convenience quote the earlier passage: ". . . it seems that Marqah would argue that to insist on a similarity between God and man, on the grounds that God has life and men have life, would be to succumb to the misleading impression given by the employment of the single term "life" in respect to God and man". Marqah's view, I argued, was that the term "life" is not applied univocally to God and man, but rather that God is 'alive' only in an analogical sense of the term.

The position I wish now to suggest is that the same kind of line

is available to Marqah in accounting for the fact that the world is, in some sense, alive even though there is in it dead matter. For let it be granted both that there are two senses of "alive" and also that the claim that the world is alive amounts to the claim that the living God is immanent in the world. It follows that since God is "alive" only in an analogical sense of the term, so also must the world be "alive" only analogically speaking. But if the sense of "alive" according to which the world is alive is only an analogical sense, it cannot be the sense of "alive" according to which "alive" is opposed to the term "dead" as *literally* understood. But dead matter is dead in that it is not *literally* alive. Hence it cannot validly be argued that since "dead" and "alive" are contradictory terms, "The world is alive" and "Dead matter exists" must be mutually inconsistent statements. In the sense of "alive" in which the world is alive, no doubt dead matter also is alive. But the sense of "alive" according to which dead matter is alive does not clash logically with the sense of "dead" according to which dead matter is dead.

If, as I have suggested, the position outlined above is, indeed, the way Marqah would have dealt with the difficulty of the existence of dead matter in a live world, the following *caveat* should perhaps be borne in mind, namely, that the doctrine that God and the world are alive only in an analogical sense of "alive" need not be taken to imply either that God and the world are not *really* alive or that they possess only an inferior kind of life. The weight of Aquinas' authority supports this *caveat*. His position, stated very briefly, is as follows: we use certain terms, such as live, good and wise, to describe both God and men. Such terms can signify God for us only as we understand Him. But we can understand Him only to the extent that created things "represent" Him—"intellectus autem noster, cum cognoscat Deum ex creaturis, sic cognoscit ipsum, secundum quod creaturae ipsum repraesentant".[1] Thus, the satisfactoriness (or otherwise) of our language in its application to the divine is determined by the satisfactoriness (or otherwise) of creaturely representation of the divine. And Aquinas asserts: "Sic igitur praedicta nomina [*id est* bonus, sapiens, *etc.*] divinam substantiam significant, imperfecte tamen, sicut et creaturae imperfecte eam repraesentant".[2] Thus, for example, when it is

[1] *S.T.* 1a, 13, 2 *corpus*.
[2] *Ibid.*

said that God is good, what is meant is that what is called "good" in creatures pre-exists in God, and, as Aquinas adds: "hoc quidem secundum modum altiorem". Hence, for Aquinas, though God is only analogically good, goodness exists, or rather "pre-exists" in Him not in an inferior manner but on the contrary "secundum modum altiorem". Likewise when, later in the same article, Aquinas deals with the example of "life" ascribed to God and to creatures, he asserts that life "pre-exists" in God *eminentiori modo*.[3] It is clear from this that the ascription of life, in an analogical sense of the term, to God need not be taken to carry the implication that God either is not really alive, or is, though alive, alive only in some inferior manner.

Before leaving the topic of the apparent clash between the metaphysical fact (if it be a fact) that the world is alive and the empirical fact that there is dead matter, I would like to consider one further point. Let it be granted that Marqah held both that the cosmos is alive and also that dead matter exists. I have argued that the cosmos was understood by Marqah to be "alive" only analogically and that therefore there is no possible logical clash between the cosmos being alive and some matter being dead. But it could be held that even if the cosmos were *literally* alive there still need be no logical clash between its being alive and some matter being dead. For, it may be argued, living beings (literally living) may contain dead matter and hence not all parts of a living being must themselves be alive. For example, a live man may have a leg made entirely out of steel. *He* is alive (literally) but his artificial leg is not. Consequently, it might be concluded, the cosmos may be alive (literally) even though it contains dead matter.

Against this line of argument it must be stated that a living creature containing dead matter is an unsatisfactory model to employ in trying to understand the relation envisaged by Marqah between the living immanent God and the cosmos. The reason for this is that Marqah would not accept the concept of God as a Being immanent in only part of the world—as though He were excluded from part of His own creation. In this respect Marqah's position is in harmony with Philo's. In an important passage Philo asserts: "He is everywhere, because He has made His powers extend through earth and water, air and heaven, and left

[3] *S.T.* 1a, 13, 3 ad 2.

no part of the universe without His presence, and uniting all with all has bound them fast with invisible bonds, that they should never be loosed".[4] The concept of a 'bond' as applied to the immanence of God appears in Marqah's writings. He held that the divine name YHWH is a power, and indeed ascribes to that name the same role Philo ascribes to God's powers. Marqah writes: "I will reveal to you my great name YHWH . . . It is a glorious name which fills the whole of creation. By it the world is bonded together (מצטעד) . . ." [I 13, II 17]. Furthermore, in several passages in Marqah's *Defter* hymns there are allusions to the powers of God permeating the cosmos. The simplest affirmation of this kind is: "Thy divine power is all-permeating, on high and below" [Hymn I *v.* 8]. With regard to truth and goodness, both being powers of God, Marqah affirms: "Thy truth fills the world and Thy goodness even more so" [Hymn I *v.* 19]. Since God is, for Marqah, immanent in the world by virtue of His powers, and since His powers are all-permeating, it follows that the life of God, as one of His powers, must permeate the entire cosmos, not merely part of it. It is for this reason that the suggestion that a living being can contain dead matter does not really have any bearing on the question of whether, for Marqah, a living world can contain dead matter.

The argument that a living immanent God entails a living world seems at first sight to lead to the unpalatable conclusion that men, in so far as they are alive, share this characteristic with everything whatsoever in the cosmos. It has, however, now been shown that the sense in which all things in the cosmos are 'alive' is not the sense intended when it is said of men that *they* are alive. Otherwise even corpses would be literally alive. And that of course is absurd. Thus we can, at last, draw the conclusion—no doubt obvious at some level of analysis, though not safely to be taken for granted at the theological level—that men, whether or not they are unique in the cosmos in being alive, at least do not share the characteristic of being alive with all other things.

Marqah does not, of course, suppose men to be the only living things in the cosmos. Near the start of Book II of the *Memar* he makes a brief blessing: "Blessed be the God who brought into existence the different kinds of creatures for the sake of man"

[4] *Conf.* xxvii 136.

[I 31, II 47]. This blessing receives slight elaboration some lines later, in one of the few philosophically significant statements about animals in the *Memar*: "He divided the various kinds of living creatures (מיני החיה) into four sorts, the first three for the sake of the fourth. He made the body of the last with its wisdom implanted, so that the body should be capable of being illumined by the mind. Thus not one (of the other three) can withstand a man". It is plain that in dividing non-human creatures into three classes Marqah is following the Pentateuchal division of animals into those belonging by nature to sea, air and land (*Gen.* I 20-25). This division, referred to also in Plato's writings,[5] is an obvious one to make, and need receive no comment here. But I would like to comment on the second point in the passage just quoted, namely, that animals were brought into existence "for the sake of man (בגלל האדם)".

Marqah, though usually concerned to support his doctrines by pointing out his Pentateuchal warrant for affirming them, does not tell us why he holds that fish, birds and land animals were made for the sake of man. But one reasonable surmise is that he considered his position sanctioned by *Gen.* I 26: "Then God said 'Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all wild animals on earth, and all reptiles that crawl upon the earth". Since God ordained that man rule the animals it follows, of course, that man has a higher status than animals in the universe. That Marqah regards man as having a higher status emerges clearly in an important passage where he portrays Moses addressing Pharaoh on the subject of the differences between Israelites and Egyptians: "You say the eating of flesh is not permissible. We want to slaughter and sacrifice cattle. You worship animal forms, but we sacrifice animal flesh to our God" [I 19, II 27]. This verse encapsulates the view that man's status lies between that of animals, whom he sacrifices, and that of God, to whom they are sacrificed. But even if man's status is higher than that of animals it does not, from this alone, follow that animals exist for the sake of men, that is, that man is the final cause of the existence of animals. Yet to say that animals exist בגלל האדם is to say precisely that man is their final cause.

One possible clue to Marqah's grounds for seeing the relation

[5] *Timaeus* 39e, 91d-92c.

between man and animals as that of final cause to effect is provided by Philo in his commentary on the verse that introduces the story of Noah: "He said, 'This race of men whom I have created, I will wipe them off the face of the earth—man and beast, reptiles and birds'" (*Gen.* VI 7). Philo comments: "... it makes clearly known that not necessarily and primarily were beasts made but for the sake of men and for their service. And when these were destroyed, the former were rightly destroyed together with them, since there no longer existed those for whose sake they had been made".[6] Thus there was available to Marqah from the ideas of Hellenistic Judaism, with which, as I have been arguing, he was familiar, an interpretation of Scripture providing warrant for the claim that man is the final cause of the existence of animals.

The doctrine that animals exist for the sake of man has, indeed, Aristotelian as well as Pentateuchal warrant. Aristotle writes: "... plants are created for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men; the tame for our use and provision; the wild, at least the greater part, for our provision also, or for some other advantageous purpose, as furnishing us with clothes, and the like. As nature therefore makes nothing either imperfect or in vain, it necessarily follows that she has made all these things for men".[7]

Before leaving Marqah's doctrine of animals (so far as he can be said to have anything that can fairly be described as a 'doctrine' of animals) a further point about the *Memar* passage [I 31, II 47] quoted above deserves attention. Marqah tells us first that the three varieties of animals were made for the sake of man. He does not then, as we noted, give a Pentateuchal justification for the claim. But where we would have expected such a justification Marqah makes a point that can readily be taken as a philosophical justification for the claim that man is the final cause of animal-kind. God, we are told, made the body of man "with its wisdom implanted, so that the body should be capable of being illumined by the mind (לבב). Thus not one (of the other three) can withstand a man". Two points are suggested by this statement. First, in so far as Marqah is here giving his justification of the claim that men are the final cause of animal-kind, he is saying that the characteristic of man that secures for him this special relation

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[6] *Quaest. in Gen.* Bk I 94.
[7] *Politics* 1256b15 ff.

with the animals resides in the fact that his body was made with wisdom (חכמה) implanted so that it could be illumined by the לבב. The implication of this is that men, but not animals, possess חכמה and לבב.

Secondly, Marqah evidently thought that what renders man the final cause of animal-kind also renders him stronger than animals—because of his חכמה and לבב animals cannot withstand (לא יקום) him. Relative to animals the strength of man resides in his specifically spiritual faculties. These faculties thus secure man's survival, at least so far as that might otherwise be endangered by the animal kingdom. They also secure for him, as we shall see, a good deal more than this. What this "good deal more" is can in part be stated now.

Man is, according to Marqah, not merely that for whose sake animals were created. He is also that for whose sake everything was created. Marqah has several ways of expressing this doctrine. The following three illustrate the diversity of these ways.

We are told in the second Book of the *Memar*: "If it had not been for Moses the world would not have been created" [I 46, II 73]. Mankind, as instantiated in Moses, provides the necessary grounds for the creation of all else. There is, indeed, as was suggested in the last chapter, a hint in the *Memar* that Marqah supposed there to be a hierarchy of final causes stretching from animals to Moses. The hierarchy consists of *man*, for whose sake *animals* were created, *Israel*, for whose sake man was created, and *Moses*, for whose sake Israel was created. The first rung in this hierarchy has already been considered here. The second and third rungs are hinted at in the *Memar* where Marqah enumerates "seven best things" chosen by God and set apart as divine. One of these is Moses, "a special one who magnifies every special thing", and another is Israel, "special among all peoples" [I 46, II 74].

A second way in which Marqah expresses man's special position in the universe is the following: "This is a world made perfect in every good thing; all that is in it is of honour and appointed (אמסיר) for you" [I 133, II 217]. Once again Marqah is concerned to make the point that man has an exalted position in creation. Creation is indeed *for* him. But Marqah, in a characteristic move, having stressed man's high status, promptly strikes a warning note. The world is for man, but individual men must show themselves worthy of it: "Do not allow yourself to be cut off from this, for

you would be confounded among all the creatures of the world" [I 133, II 217].

Thirdly, Marqah declaims: "At Thy summons come created things, at Thy proclamation worlds: Thy love remembers that it is for Thy servants" [Hymn I *v.* 7]. Marqah's position emerges from this hymnal verse with particular clarity. By virtue of his role as final cause of all else in creation, man's relation to the cosmos can be described by saying that he completes the cosmos, or perfects it. That is to say, our cosmos, as willed into existence by God, is rendered complete by man's presence. Of course, if animals suddenly ceased to exist, or plants did, the universe would then be incomplete, or imperfect. But the annihilation of man would create a special imperfection in the universe, since man's annihilation would at the same time remove the justification for the existence of all else. It must, however, be borne in mind that these points are pertinent only in relation to the universe in which we live, that is, as God actually created it. Other doctrines of Marqah, discussed earlier, concerning the power of God, and the fact that God is not limited by considerations of goodness but on the contrary causes goodness by His very act of will, commit Marqah to the view that God could have created a different kind of cosmos, and that any other that He might have created would also have been good—no less good than ours. And in another cosmos man might not have existed at all, or might have existed only as a subordinate member of a hierarchy of created things. All I have been concerned to argue here is that Marqah, taking this world as his datum, argued that man perfects it.

There is, of course, for Marqah a sense in which it is not man but God who perfects the world. For it is by an act of divine will that the perfect world, perfected by man's presence in it, came into existence. Man is the element in the world by whose presence the world is perfected, and God is He by whose will man constitutes the perfecting element in the world. God, so to say, perfects the perfector. However, while this way of characterising God has point as an interpretation of Marqah's teaching in the *Memar*, it could mislead. In particular it might be seen, wrongly, as implying the doctrine that man is the god of the rest of creation, just as God is the God of man. Marqah would find such a doctrine repellant. It would imply that man is divine and would therefore run counter to the first principle of Marqah's religious philosophy, namely,

that God is one. No matter wherein lies the perfection of man, that perfection necessarily falls short of God's. For God's perfection received expression in a perfect world. Man cannot create a perfect world. Man cannot, indeed, according to the teaching of the *Memar* create anything that is perfect. There seems, at least, no other way of interpreting Marqah's assertion: "Every craftsman in the world has a defect in his skill, but the works of our Lord are blemishless" [I 97, II 161].

Nevertheless, Marqah's account of man's place in the cosmos does carry the implication that man is in some respect closer to God than are all other *res creatae*. The closeness can perhaps be measured in terms of sovereignty. It would not be unfair, on the basis of the evidence, to attribute to Marqah the view that man is sovereign *in*, and God is sovereign *of*, the world. But we should not, on that account, be tempted to claim that Marqah is seeking to minimise the gap between God and man. That he is not doing so is made evident in that hymn in the *Defter* which can most appropriately be entitled "The Hymn of Divine Sovereignty", namely, the sixth Hymn by Marqah. There he refers to God as "Judger of kings whom none other can prevent" [*v.* 4], and asks: "And what king can stand before Thee? Thou dost abide and endure, but we are mortal dust" [*v.* 6].

To place in its proper context this aspect of Marqah's teaching on man, it is necessary to recall his doctrine of the otherness of God. In Chapter III the doctrine of divine otherness was shown to be a logical derivative of the concept of divine oneness employed by Marqah. I would like here to rehearse certain aspects of the doctrine of divine otherness so far as that doctrine has a bearing on Marqah's teaching on the nature of man. A suitable source for the rehearsal is the opening of the *Memar*. In that most conspicuous position in the entire work Marqah presents a hymn on the otherness of God. It will be helpful, for the purposes of exegesis, to quote here some lines from that hymn:

"No secret is hidden from Him, for everything is under His dominion.
He knows what has been, what is now, and what is yet to be.
Self-subsistent is He who has no need of anything.
He knows all secrets without having recourse to knowledge.
He is unseen and He does what He wills.

There is no sovereign or ruler who can withstand Him.
The Lord is God and there is none besides Him.
He is great, but not in size, and all grandeur belongs to Him".

We are told here how far short of God men fall, even kings among men. In the opening verse just quoted Marqah appears to be grounding his doctrine that no secret is hidden from God on the fact that everything is under His dominion (שלטנה). But is not everything under the dominion of man also, and therefore must we not conclude that no secret is hidden from man either? In that case man is, in a basic respect, like God. Now Marqah might have claimed, with the support of *Gen.* I 26, 28, that man has dominion over the fish, birds and land animals. And from this it might seem to follow that Marqah is obliged to hold that no secrets are hidden from man. But such a conclusion would be absurd. The logical fault leading to this absurdity lies in the assumption, to which Marqah himself nowhere gives expression, that if man has dominion over the other three species he must therefore have dominion over everything. Man does not, after all, have dominion over man. And even if one man had dominion over all other men it would still not follow that from that man no secret would be hidden. Human dominion does not bestow such insights. Marqah evidently believes that God's dominion over man is different in kind from any sort of dominion that man may exercise. Furthermore, when Marqah refers to the lack of any secret (רז) hidden from God, this reference could encompass the secrets of nature, which may be hidden from man but cannot be hidden from God. Certainly, Marqah's explanation, "for everything is under His dominion", would satisfactorily account for there being no secret of nature hidden from God. For God as the creator of the natural order must know what it contains. Here it must be borne in mind that Marqah accepted the cosmological argument for God's existence. He saw the order and harmony of the cosmos as bearing witness to a divine creator. The world bears the stamp of design. And the designer cannot be supposed to lack insight into what He Himself designed. Here, again, God's otherness is a key concept. Not only do men not have total dominion over other men. Men also lack dominion over nature. Man's lack of total dominion derives from His status of 'creature', just as God's total dominion derives from His 'creator-hood'. Hence, the verse: "No secret

is hidden from Him, for everything is under His dominion" points univocally to the doctrine that God is other in relation to man.

The immediately subsequent verse carries forward this thought. God's absolute dominion, deriving from his creator-hood, gives Him a view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, a view therefore unrestricted by time. Our past and future are present to God. But creaturely beings see *sub specie temporis*. Our past is, after all, past and not now available for our inspection, any more than is our future.

Nevertheless, despite his insistence that man is other than God, there are pressures, deriving from his doctrine of divine dominion, that prevent Marqah allowing no room for some relationship between God and man. In particular, Marqah was aware that in a world held in order, and indeed held in existence, by the divine will, members of God's dominions, and the dominions themselves, are totally dependent upon God for their existence.

Man's weakness is most fully expressed in his total dependence on God. Yet man is not destroyed by his own weakness, and this fact calls for an explanation. For despite the weakness of man, his position in the cosmos indicates, on the contrary, great power. Man is, after all, as Marqah has affirmed, the culminating point in creation. Man is, in his own way, so great that his existence justifies the existence of all else. The reason why man, who is so weak, appears to be so strong, is that his total dependence on God is fully matched by God's total dependability.

Marqah's view, then, is that not only do we depend on God, we are also fully entitled to rely on God's being, with respect to our survival, dependable. The basis of our entitlement, as Marqah saw it, was an explicit commitment entered into by God in the course of His promise to the Patriarchs. In reference to this promise, Marqah puts the following words into God's mouth: "By my goodness I established a covenant with their fathers, which I shall not forget as long as the world exists" [I 6, II 5]. The theme of the dependability of God's word—all His words, but especially His covenant with the Patriarchs—is recurrent in the *Memar* and, even more conspicuously, in Marqah's *Defter* hymns. In the first Hymn (*v.* 16) Marqah prays: "Remember those of the past and forget not those who are yet to come: Thy servants and those who love Thee to whom Thou hast given Thy personal oath". The mood reappears twice in the third Hymn: "Thy right hand

supports all that is on high and down below: Thou didst swear to our forefathers not to forsake their children (*v.* 10) . . . Thou hast proclaimed that Thou art loving and this is a balm to the generations. O proclaimer of love, forget not Thy proclamation" (*v.* 19). But these pleas to God to remember His covenant are subsequently transformed into an assertion that God's word is, after all, absolutely to be relied upon. This is the burden of Marqah's affirmation: "O living One, whose covenants endure forever: Thy covenant with our forefathers is a covenant that cannot be annulled (דלא משתרי)" [Hymn V *v.* 19]. And in the tenth Hymn (*v.* 15) Marqah indicates the power of God ensuring the durability of the divine covenants: "O Beneficent One, whose compassion (דרחמיה) forgets not Thy covenants". רחם is always a difficult word to translate, but whatever its precise signification Marqah unquestionably regarded the רחם of God as a sufficiently firm base for the covenant with the Patriarchs. In Hymn II *v.* 15 Marqah affirms: "Abundant is Thy goodness, plentiful Thy רחם", and some verses later: "רחם of all, Thy רחם is life" [*v.* 20]. Marqah reverts to this theme in the opening verse of the sixth Hymn: "Thou art the Compassionate One whose רחם is without end". Indeed, Marqah appears to have considered that the boundlessness of God's רחם is evidenced by cosmological considerations, and it is these, rather than scriptural evidence, that he mentions in the *Defter* Hymns: "Everything bears witness to Thee, that Thy רחם is without end" [Hymn III *v.* 11].

It is evident that Marqah's position regarding the dependability of God's promises derives from his doctrine, considered in an earlier chapter, on the power of God's will. For God could not fail to keep His promise unless His will to act in accordance with the promise were thwarted. But there is no possible obstacle to the divine will. Hence, as Marqah affirms: "When He wills He does it" [I 145, II 239].

I have, up to this point in the present chapter, been concerned to state, though only in broad outline, Marqah's doctrine of the relation between man and the larger world. In this exposition emphasis has been placed on Marqah's view that man is the culminating point in the cosmos, in the sense that he is τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, the final cause of creation. I wish now to begin to turn towards a consideration of Marqah's assertions about the nature of man in

order to piece together an account of what Marqah took to be the distinguishing characteristics of the beings whom he regarded as occupying so exalted a position in the cosmos.

From one point of view all things in the cosmos may, with respect to their value, be regarded as equal. For, as Marqah held, everything bears witness to the existence of God, everything, that is, can be regarded as a holy testament, and, it may be argued, no more exalted role could be assigned to anything existing under the form of creatureliness. But though, as witness to divine existence, man is not distinctive, there are in man aspects enabling him to bear witness in a distinctive way. His witness *simpliciter* is not distinctive, but its adverbial modification is. Things in physical nature, day and night, the four seasons and the four elements [I 131, II 213] bear witness to God. Man, as a physical being, bears such witness. But Marqah was no less insistent that man as a spiritual being bears witness to God. After discussing the cosmological significance of the four seasons Marqah affirms: ". . . realise that in yourself (דבך) there are important evidences" [I 131, II 214]. The "important evidences (סהדין רמין)" to which Marqah here refers are not in man's body but in his soul. They are "desire and idea and conscience and reason hidden deep within you" [I 131, II 214]. These four, which Marqah presents as paralleling the four seasons in their ability to bear witness to God, are to be found in man but not elsewhere in the natural order. Thus man testifies spiritually as well as physically to God, and to this extent his witness is, by virtue of its adverbial modification, distinctive. Certainly, when speaking of the testimony of the four seasons Marqah speaks of them almost as though they also have spiritual qualities. Thus he writes: "The first of the seasons is like a good mother giving birth to children and having compassion for them because they are weak" [I 131, II 213]. But there is no need to suppose that Marqah is not here employing a simile. There is no evidence from his writings as a whole that he is concerned to maintain that the seasons have, so to say, a spiritual aspect mirroring the spiritual aspect of man.

It is not clear to what extent Marqah took the four seasons to be mirrored in the four inner elements of man that he enumerates. In particular, it is unclear from the text whether Marqah took the inner elements to possess the same sort of systematic, cumulative ordering possessed by the seasons. But with regard, if not to the

seasons themselves, then at any rate to the cosmos as a whole, Marqah's pronouncements are as clear as we could wish. He evidently did suppose there to be a mirroring relationship between the cosmos as a whole and man's soul. This is the burden of his remarkable assertion: "What is in the heavens is in the heart, just as what is in the earth is in the imagination. What is in the four quarters is in the reason, just as what is in any place is in every inner thought" [I 132, II 215]. Unless Marqah is stating that what is in the heavens and the earth is identical with the contents of the inner man, he must be taken to be asserting a correspondence between them. Man, that is to say, in a peculiarly revelatory way mirrors the cosmos. Since Marqah immediately proceeds to tell us that: "From His creations He is known; from what He has made is He comprehended", the significance, for Marqah's theology, of his statement "What is in the heavens is in the heart . . ." is apparent. Man is not merely evidence alongside other evidence for God's existence, for no more evidence for God's existence can be found from a consideration of the entire cosmos than is to be found by a consideration of any individual man. As a basis for the cosmological argument, an individual man can act as a surrogate for the entire universe. Regarded as evidence for God's existence, it is as if any single man *is* the cosmos. In part, man's exalted position in the universe depends precisely on the fact that each man is himself a cosmos. Though Marqah frequently refers to the cosmic significance of parts of physical nature, he nowhere gives expression to the view that parts of physical nature are microcosmic in the very full sense in which, in the passage under discussion, he states that man is a microcosmos.

We must not here lose sight of the fact that in speaking of man as microcosmic it is really man as a spiritual rather than as a physical organism that is being taken to have this quality. For in the passage under discussion the parts of man to which Marqah refers are the heart (לבה), the imagination (ענינה), the reason (חשבתה) and inner thought (טמיראתה). This consideration suggests that Marqah would be willing to accept the contention that man's nature is essentially dual—man, Marqah must surely say, is a dichotomy of mind and body. Evidence of this dualistic estimation of man is widespread through Marqah's writings. For example, he writes: "*I am who I am*, creator of the body (גיתה) and originator of the soul (נפשה)" [I 8, II 8], "Happy the souls (נפשאתן) that pay

homage: blessed the bodies (גויאתן) that bear the awe of Thee" [Hymn I *v.* 9], ". . . all bodies and souls (גויאן ונפשאן) Thy power saves" [Hymn V *v.* 11], and: "They cried out before Him . . . the Fashioner of bodies (גויאתה) and sustainer of souls (נפשאתה)" [Hymn XII *v.* 18].

J. E. H. Thomson has asserted that: "the Samaritans regard Man as having a spiritual as well as a material nature, as being composed of Soul and Body".[8] If Thomson is correct it would seem to follow that Marqah, at least with respect to his dualistic conception of man, is characteristically Samaritan in his thought. But Thomson's conclusions have come under attack. Professor J. Macdonald has argued that according to the Samaritans man is not, *pace* Thomson, a dichotomy, but on the contrary: "A careful study of material from many centuries, from the fourth to the nineteenth, reveals beyond all doubt that the Samaritans not only held to a trichotomy of man, but went even further than that in their assessment of what makes man what he is".[9] In justification of this thesis Macdonald refers to the fact that the Samaritans speak not only of body and soul but also of mind and spirit. And this suggests that a tripartite or even quadripartite account of man is nearer the mark than a bipartite account, certainly than a bipartite account according to which body and soul are the two mutually opposed parts of man; for, as Macdonald points out, Marqah sometimes treats body and soul as complementary rather than as opposed. In this connection he quotes the verse: "Happy the souls that pay homage: blessed the bodies that bear the awe of Thee" [Hymn I *v.* 9].

It is clear that the question of the number of psychic faculties possessed by man is a substantive and important question, that has to be answered in a full discussion of Samaritan psychology. But whether the disagreement between Thomson and Macdonald is in the last analysis about this substantive issue, or whether it is merely a terminological dispute, is unclear. For it is possible that in the sense in which man might be said to be tripartite, *viz.* by virtue of having body, soul and spirit, Thomson would accept that the Samaritans believed man to be tripartite. For when Thomson speaks in dualistic terms of the Samaritan doctrine of man, he may

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[8] *The Samaritans: Their Testimony to the Religion of Israel*, p. 186.
[9] *The Theology of the Samaritans*, p. 227.

simply be invoking a distinction between body and non-body, and classifying all the psychological faculties under the heading 'non-body'. Indeed, Thomson's mode of expression suggests that he is doing just this, since he speaks of man having a spiritual and a physical nature, a soul and a body, as though for his purpose "spirit" and "soul" are interchangeable terms in that both are being made to serve as referring to that principle in man which is the alternative to the bodily principle. If, however, Thomson holds that according to Samaritan thought there is no difference between soul and spirit, and in general between the seemingly disparate psychological faculties, then the disagreement between Thomson and Macdonald is a substantive one, and the evidence, at least so far as this is provided by Marqah's writings, does not support Thomson's position. I wish to turn now to a consideration of the evidence in question.

That Thomson himself may not have been fully alive to the strength or even the existence of the evidence is suggested by the statement he makes at the start of his discussion of the Samaritan doctrine of man: "The genius of the Hebrew was but little analytical; it was introspective, but more in a religious than in a psychological sense. As a consequence, the Samaritan theologians do not treat their readers to disquisitions on the constitution and faculties of Man".[10] If by "disquisition" Thomson means "systematic exposition", then he is no doubt correct in denying that Samaritan theologians wrote disquisitions on the constitution and faculties of man—though whether the true explanation of this fact about the Samaritans is the one given by Thomson is another matter. It is not indeed wholly clear what the precise point is that Thomson is making about the "genius of the Hebrew". For example, the contrast being drawn between introspection in a 'religious' and in a 'psychological' sense stands, in this post-William Jamesian age, in need of clarification. But in any case the absence of disquisitions seems besides the point Thomson appears concerned to make, namely, that the Samaritans, for reasons deriving from their 'Hebrew genius', did not attend much in an analytical way to the subject of the constitution and faculties of man. Attention to the most important of the Samaritan theologians, however, namely, Marqah, reveals that he had a good deal to say

[10] Thomson, *ibid.*, p. 186.

on the constitution and faculties of man. And while Marqah's assertions are not systematically ordered in the style of a disquisition, he does deal in an analytic way with the subject.

Early in the *Memar* Marqah finds his own way of asserting that man is a psychologically complex being. A clearer idea of the meanings of the terms he employs gradually emerges in the *Memar*, but the battery of psychological terms that he deploys early in Book I is impressive. Thus, for example, Marqah represents God as saying to Moses: "Who has created the body (גויתה) and its structure (סדרה), and enclosed the spirit (רוחה) within it? Who has founded the intellect (מדעה) with spirit (רוחה)? Who has made the soul (נפשה) along with the heart (לבה)? Who has brought into being thought (יצרה) with reason (חשבה)? . . . *Is it not I, the Lord?*" [I 10, II 12].

Marqah's vocabulary of psychological terms ranges, indeed, wider than is revealed by the passage just quoted. The chief terms employed by him are: בונה (= בינה = understanding, intelligence); דעת (= knowledge, mind); חכמה (wisdom, learning); חשבה (thought, reason, calculation); יצר (desire, inclination, thought); לב (heart); מדע (mind, intelligence, knowledge); נפש (soul); ענינה (idea, imagination); רוח (spirit); תחמדה (desire, lust).

The suggested translations must be held lightly. Some of the terms are hardly translatable. לב (or לבב which Marqah seems to use interchangeably with לב) is a conspicuous example. The לב is presented as very closely related to the emotions. Thus, for example, we read: "He could not stop his לב from its terrible fear. . . He said . . . let all this dread be removed from your לב" [I 10, II 11]; "His לב was full of disquiet" [I 15, II 20]; "The only distress that entered his לב was for them" [I 57, II 90]; "לבבין were gladdened" [I 12, II 15], but they can also quake (מרקפין) [I 111, II 187]. The לב therefore is regarded by Marqah as able to undergo emotions. It is, indeed, as if a person lives through an emotion only in so far as his לב lives through it.

This, however, does not exhaust the range of the functions of the לב. For it is no less closely related to man's ability to know. There are in the *Memar* numerous statements such as the following: "I know (ידע אני) within my own לב all that you say to me" [I 10, II 12]; "From the beginning [Adam] was borne by spirit and from it wisdom dwelt in his לב" [I 41, II 64]; "We fill our לב with the light of knowledge" [I 75, II 121]; "[The Lord] illumined

my לב with knowledge" [I 96, II 158]; ". . . his לב was filled with knowledge of what he learnt" [I 110-1, II 185]; "Joshua . . . learnt all he heard with לב full of wisdom" [I 119, II 196]; and lastly, and most remarkably: ". . . knowledge is a light that shines in the לב; any לב that has no knowledge in it as its companion is as a blind man groping in the dark, for knowledge is a ladder set up from the לב to the divine place" [I 136, II 222].

Besides treating the לב as closely related to the emotions and to knowledge, Marqah also links it with faith. Thus, for example: ". . . their לב was filled with faith (מלי אימנו)" [I 40, II 62], "It behoves us ever to bow down before Him to the ground, with לבב full of faith (מלי אימנו)" [I 45, II 72].[11] Also in this group we may quote the sentences: "I make reverent belief in [Moses] and in God to dwell in their לב" [I 144, II 237], and "O people, awaken to this knowledge and learn it with believing לב" [I 145, II 239].

As Marqah conceives the matter, a fourth role played by the לב is in its relation to good and evil. This role defines its link with what may be termed, in a broad sense, morality. An important statement of this aspect of לב appears in Book II of the *Memar*, in the course of a 'conversation' between mind (מדע) and לב: "MIND said to לב, '. . . do what is proper for you; turn yourself away from evil-doing and keep the statutes and you will not suffer as a result of the doing of evil things and become weak" [I 68, II 108-9]. Other references to this facet of לב occur frequently. Among them are: "Abandon your wickedness and drive it from your לב" [I 34, II 52], and "His evil לב(לבה בישה) devised evil" [I 72, II 115].

There are, indeed, hints in the *Memar* that Marqah saw the לב as possessing yet further aspects, as for example when he attributes to God the following words spoken to Moses: "Receive authority (שלטנו) from me and set it in your לב" [I 11, II 13]. But the four aspects of the לב so far referred to, namely, those linking it to the emotions, knowledge, faith and morality, are much the most frequently invoked in the *Memar*.

The four aspects, though disparate, are not, in Marqah's eyes, unrelated. He believed that faith and morality are closely linked, thinking, as he did, that good men, men of good, are also men of

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[11] That the לב and the לבב are spoken of in identical terms, *viz.* as מלי אימנו is part of the evidence for the view, which I wish tentatively to maintain, that Marqah did not distinguish between לב and לבב.

God. Thus, he refers to: "God, who implanted secrets in the לבבי of good men . . . for the לבבי of good men are bound up with their Lord" [I 47, II 75]. Secret knowledge, therefore, is in the לבבי of good men, and these men are those with faith in God—their לב is "bound up with their Lord".

Furthermore, Marqah relates the emotions of the לב to faith in God. He does this in several ways. One is in connection with the emotion of reverence (דחלה). He attributes to Moses the instruction: "Be sincere towards God in thanksgiving and say with לב full of reverence, 'There is only one God'" [I 99, II 165]. Thus a declaration of faith—which comes from the לב—must be accompanied by an emotion in the לב. And if the declaration is sincere, the לב is not merely reverential, but also happy: "Happy the לב that abides in Him" [I 106, II 177].

Divine authority was delegated to Moses, who, in exercising it, gave effective expression to his goodness and to his faith, reverentially held, in God. It need therefore come as no surprise that Marqah, in portraying God as delegating His authority to Moses, sees God as requesting Moses to "set it in your לב". In view of the link Marqah has claimed between לב and goodness, faith and reverence, that he should see the לב as the seat of Moses' divinely delegated authority seems inevitable.

Following these introductory remarks concerning Marqah's employment of the term לב, I would like now to raise the larger question of the position of the לב in his faculty psychology. He is fairly explicit about the relation of לב to the faculty of מדע, for which the term "mind" will here be made to serve as an English equivalent. I shall, therefore, turn to a consideration of his account of מדע, partly in order to illumine his doctrine of לב, and partly, in any case, to develop further our picture of Marqah's psychology.

In numerous passages Marqah draws together the terms לב and מדע in such a way as to suggest that he regarded the corresponding faculties as, on the whole, complementary rather than contrary. The following may be cited as instances: "Hear an answer that will strengthen your מדע and magnify your לב" [I 63, II 98]; "[Sin] makes the לב unclean and defiles the מדע" [I 72, II 116]; "They answered him . . . with pure לב and perfect מדע" [I 78, II 127], and ". . . my לב and מדע fearful of what I have seen" [I 120, II 197]. This note of complementariness is explained, as we shall see, by the fact that, in Marqah's view, לב and מדע have, to a certain extent, overlapping functions.

That this was Marqah's view emerges in part from the sentence: "Let the מדע understand that statement and hear it in great faith (באימנו רבה) and reverence" [I 70, II 112]. This link between מדע and faith, which establishes an overlap in function between מדע and לב, is underlined by Marqah's references to an association between a certain state of מדע and faithlessness, understood as rebellion against God. Marqah does indeed speak as though he thought that when a man rebels against God it is the man's מדע that is the true author of the rebellion: ". . . woe to the מדע that has turned away from the True One and manifested provocation with all its might" [I 47, II 76]. Subsequently, the culprit in the rebellion is more simply identified: ". . . his מדע turns to an alien God" [I 94, II 154].

מדע further shares with לב a close association with knowledge. Thus we find Marqah writing: "It magnifies the מדע which is furnished with knowledge from Him and filled with His spirit—all of it wisdom. If you seek knowledge of the secrets of these things, set your מדע where the True One is" [I 63, II 99]; or, this time in a despairing tone: "Woe to us! We do not have the מדע to know what the Lord seeks of us" [I 67, II 107].

It must be noted, however, that Marqah conceived the מדע as having for its object not only religious, but also what we would consider to be specifically secular, knowledge—though of course we could hardly expect Marqah to follow us far in this distinction. The secular aspect of מדע is invoked near the start of Book VI of the *Memar* where Marqah suddenly embarks on an exposition of terrestrial physics. He affirms: "By mighty power He ordered your מדע to investigate wisdom". The wisdom in question is immediately supplied: "The world does not rest on water, but it is set only on fire and water. If it were on water only, its substance would destroy all the trees in it and also the vegetation" [I 132, II 214]. This passage is important for the study of Marqah's psychology (as it is also for the study of his physics), for it marks what appears to be a significant distinction between לב and מדע. Wherever in the *Memar* Marqah speaks of לב as a faculty of knowledge, the kind of knowledge explicitly referred to is invariably of what may be termed a religious or a moral nature, never scientific. Knowledge of the natural order of things is referred not to the לב but to the מדע.

In his references to the relation between מדע and morality,

however, Marqah shows that he took there to be a close connection between לב and מדע. I have already referred to the passage where Marqah affirms: "[Sin] makes the לב unclean and defiles the מדע". But Marqah saw the defiled מדע as more than merely the outcome or causal effect of sin. For the מדע was conceived as being capable of being responsible for sin. This at least seems the implication of the sentence: "A man who hastens to do evil, if he was in his right מדע, will receive the Curse" [I 72, II 116]. Marqah is here distinguishing implicitly between the internal and the external aspects of action. An action is internally evil if it not merely contradicts the will of God but, further, is known by the agent to do so. The state of the agent's מדע at the time of the action is responsible for the action's being, in its internal aspect, and hence truly, sinful. This topic will be dealt with at some length in the following chapter; but here it should at least be noted that the idea of an action, by virtue of the agent's מדע, being sinful in its internal aspect, suggests that Marqah held that the מדע can be viewed as the location of sin. And indeed, no doubt with the tenth commandment in mind, Marqah does make it clear that he sees this as one aspect of the מדע. Thus Marqah writes: "Their souls are blemished because they did not wholeheartedly follow the Lord. Their מדעיהן will be smitten for they committed adultery in them" [I 109, II 183]. According to this passage the מדע is punished because the מדע sinned. The idea of the מדע as a fitting object of punishment recurs in the *Memar*, as when we read: "The vengeance of the world will destroy מדעיה" [I 107, II 178]. This suggests a further distinction between the מדע and the לב. For nowhere in the *Memar* is the לב spoken of as a fitting object of punishment.

So far two distinctions between לב and מדע have emerged. Though these distinctions are of such a nature as to enable us to drive a logical wedge between the concepts of לב and מדע, the distinctions are nevertheless not large. It appears to follow that the list of differences between the two faculties has not been exhausted. For in the one place where Marqah seeks to differentiate the faculties on a scale of significance, he suggests a difference in importance between the two faculties that goes far beyond what we would have expected, given only the considerations that have so far been mentioned. The passage in question must first be quoted in full. It occurs in the course of an allegorical duologue,

which we have already encountered, between לב and מדע. At one point לב says to מדע: "O מדע, we receive succour from you and you are the fountain from which we drink and from which we prepare a lamp with pure oil, so that your light dispels all deep darkness, for you are before body, soul and spirit. Concerning you it is said with our minds and our strength, 'You are the first of created things. Who can compare with you?'. Thanks be to the Powerful One who gave you such status and has made you worthy of all glory! Do not chasten me until you chasten yourself. Without you and within you I exist, and I and the Five [senses] are dependent on you. Whenever you appear, we depart" [I 68, II 109]. This important passage suggests that there exists an order of precedence among the various parts of man, and in particular that מדע precedes body, soul, spirit and לב. מדע must in some respect have precedence for it is "the first of created things". But the priority thereby claimed for it need not be thought of as merely, or at all, a temporal priority. It seems, rather, to be a priority in importance. It is from מדע that the others receive succour, it is מדע that is the "fountain from which we drink".

One aspect of מדע thus far not touched upon is invoked in Book V of the *Memar*. In the course of that Book, which deals with the death of Moses, an address by Moses to the Israelites is reported. In it Moses affirms: "O congregation, happy are you if you hearken to all this address that I make before you! Three times my Lord said to me, *'Go up to it'*, and I went up with the מדע of prophethood (במדע נביותה) on the (first) two occasions. I delivered the first and second tablets and on this (third) occasion I receive the portion that He presented me through Adam" [I 120, II 198]. Neither the phrase לב נביותה nor an equivalent expression occurs in the *Memar* and in the absence of such an expression, the phrase מדע נביותה takes on an added significance. For it indicates a possible line of demarcation between לב and מדע. What the phrase suggests is that the מדע of man, rather than his לב, has the potential of functioning as the organ of prophetic insight. That this potential is actualised rarely, or perhaps was actualised only in Moses, would not alter the fact, if it be a fact, that the organ of prophethood is the מדע.

However, this suggested basis for a distinction between לב and מדע is offered with hesitation. Two considerations prompt the hesitation. The first is that at best the suggestion rests on an

argumentum a silentio, the silence being due to the absence from the *Memar* of a phrase similar in significance to לב נביותה. It is, of course, possible that its absence is not due to any metaphysical or theological difficulty Marqah might have seen in its meaning. The phrase may have made good sense to him, even though he happened not to use it.

Secondly, and perhaps more substantially, Marqah is not entirely unequivocal in his account of the number of the prophets. He is, however, strongly influenced by the verse: "There has never yet risen in Israel a prophet like Moses" [*Deut.* xxxiv 10]. Marqah adds: ". . . like him, and never will arise" [I 145, II 240]. Thus Marqah conceived of Moses' prophethood as unique in the whole of mankind, and not simply unique up to his generation. He did, however, speak of others as prophets. For example, he writes: "[Moses'] prophethood is like the surrounding sea, for from it seventy prophets prophesied without any diminishing of it" [I 51, II 82]. But where Marqah speaks of men other than Moses as "prophets" he appears to have in mind those who act as spokesmen for Moses. The uniqueness of Moses lay in the fact that his insight into the will of God was direct. Such insight was, for Marqah, of a kind from which all other men are necessarily barred. Now, if Moses' prophetic insight is attained by the exercise of his מדע, and if such exercise is impossible for the rest of mankind, and if the impossibility of performing a given kind of exercise entails the lack of potential for performing it, it follows that, with the exception of Moses, the מדע of all men is not even potentially the organ of prophetic insight. And to say otherwise is to miss the point of the uniqueness of the prophethood of Moses. But if the מדע of all men, save Moses, cannot serve to give prophetic insight, it cannot be correct to distinguish between לב and מדע by saying that מדע *can* give such insight.

Against this line of argument it could be maintained that מדע is required for an act of prophecy even where the prophecy is of the non-Mosaic kind, where, that is, it involves acting as an indirect rather than as a direct spokesman of God. But unfortunately it seems impossible either to defend or to attack this position by reference to Marqah's own words.

This discussion concerning the distinction between לב and מדע must, therefore, be left on an imperfect cadence rather than a full close. I hope at least to have indicated some of the obstacles to a satisfactory resolution.

In Marqah's large battery of terms relating to what we would now describe as faculty psychology, four terms are rendered conspicuous in the *Memar* by the frequency of their employment. The four are לב, מדע, נפש and רוח. Having dealt with the first two of these, I shall turn now to a consideration of נפש and רוח, and shall ask what Marqah understands by these terms.

We could say, and perhaps at the start ought to say, that by נפש he means "soul" and by רוח "spirit". However, this move, which clearly involves little, if anything, beyond the replacement of a set of Hebrew counters by a supposedly equivalent set of English ones, leaves untouched the substantial question of the identification of the rules governing the employment of the counters. What, in other words, do נפש and רוח mean, or, rather, what did they mean to Marqah?

There appears to be no logical advantage to be gained from considering either of the problematic terms before the other, for although Marqah does link the terms, in ways to be dealt with later, and although a prior understanding of either term will shed some light on the other, neither is better than the other at illuminating the other. Therefore, without defending the order of exposition, beyond making the trivial point that an exposition must begin somewhere, I shall start by considering Marqah's use of the term נפש.

Earlier in this chapter we raised the question of whether Marqah saw man as a dichotomy. In connection with this question attention was paid to J. E. H. Thomson's point that the Samaritans took men to be composed of body and soul; from which, of course, it is a short step to saying that man has a dual nature. Though I expressed reservations concerning Thomson's position, it is apposite here to point out that Marqah frequently couples the concepts of body and soul, and that where he draws an explicit comparison between body and a psychological faculty, the faculty is always the soul. For example, he writes: "*I am who I am*, creator of the body and originator of the soul" [I 8, II 8], "... according to the state of the soul is the body disposed" [I 31, II 47], "Happy the souls that pay homage: blessed the bodies that bear the awe of Thee" [Hymn I *v.* 9] and "... the Fashioner of bodies and Sustainer of souls" [Hymn XII *v.* 18]. These passages indicate that Marqah did indeed hold that man is composed of two aspects, one encompassing man as a physical being, as a body, and the other encompassing man as

a spiritual being, as a soul. If this is correct then it is plausible to argue that Marqah employs the term נפש to refer, not to one psychological faculty among others, but rather to the general psychological aspect of man, which can then be considered as itself classifiable under a number of different headings, these headings being the various psychological faculties. This sense of נפש is what I shall term its 'generic' sense.

But there is ample evidence that Marqah took נפש to have not only a generic but also a 'specific' sense. That is, he understood נפש to refer both to the genus of which the various psychological faculties are species, in which sense נפש is seen as a natural alternative to "body", and also to a specific psychological faculty. Thus the statement "The human נפש includes a נפש", though perhaps paradoxical, is not, on Marqah's understanding of נפש, self-contradictory.

The evidence for the claim that Marqah accepted the existence of a specific, rather than a generic sense of נפש is provided by the particular way in which he deploys the term in the course of referring to other psychological faculties. A few examples should suffice to make the point: "Who has made the soul along with the heart (לב) . . . *Is it not I the Lord?*" [I 10, II 12], "Bodies were in torment, souls in agony, hearts in anguish" [I 17, II 25], "You [*sic.* מדע] are before body, soul and spirit" [I 68, II 109], ". . . [Moses] proclaimed aloud with heart and soul filled with fear" [I 96, II 158].

It is not always clear from the context whether the term נפש is being employed in its generic or its specific sense. One principle, which would lead to a simplification of the situation if it could be established, is that נפש is to be understood generically wherever it, conjoined with no other term referring to a psychological faculty, is placed in opposition to "body". This principle is difficult to prove. If, however, it were valid it would follow that נפש is being used generically in the following important passage: "He gave a perfect Law to His servants to provide life and length of days, for by the observing of it is the soul disposed, and according to the state of the soul is the body disposed. As the stature of a man lies with the soul, so the stature of the soul lies in the Law" [I 31, II 47]. The importance of this passage lies in its expressing Marqah's view that whether or not there is point to speaking of the soul and body as alternative and opposing principles in the human being, there is certainly point to speaking of the dependence

of one of these principles upon the other. For here the body is being said to depend for its well-being upon the soul. Thus Marqah holds that the soul, possibly the generic soul, is a link between the Law of God and the human body. The model with which Marqah appears to be working is of a soul that obeys the Law of God, and of a body that gives expression to the norms (the Laws) structuring the soul. That the soul causes the body to be disposed according to the Law, rather than the body causing the soul to be thus disposed, gives the soul a position of higher importance than the body in determining the worth of a man; though a man is composite of body and soul, "the stature of a man lies with the soul".

The relation between נפש and the Law is touched on occasionally in the *Memar* though it is unfortunately not always possible to establish whether, in the relevant contexts, נפש is to be understood generically or specifically. Thus, for example, Marqah affirms: "It is our duty . . . to hasten to acquire wisdom and fill our souls with what the True One taught us" [I 55, II 88].

But, as was mentioned earlier, it is sometimes clear that the specific soul is in question. And this enables us to say something about what Marqah took to characterise the specific soul. He thought that it can have feelings: "souls [were] in agony, hearts in anguish" [I 17, II 25]. Elsewhere, and with obvious scriptural warrant, to the specific soul is attributed the power of love: "Their souls are pure for they loved their Lord with soul and heart and strength" [I 109, II 183]. It seems, indeed, that in the verse just quoted, each type of soul is referred to in turn; the soul that is pure is generic, and the soul that loves is specific.

A further passage has yet to be mentioned where Marqah refers to what is clearly the soul, specifically understood. In a speech to Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron contrasted the beliefs of the Israelites with those of the Egyptians. In the course of it they say: "You say that spirits are shared among the dead and the living, but we speak of soul and spirit, referring the soul to the body and the spirit to the living. The governing of living human beings is by both soul and spirit; the governing of the dead is sufficiently done by soul" [I 18, II 26-7]. Given the context, it is evident that there are here important issues at stake. But it is hard to state what those issues are. Marqah provides us with too few clues. Professor J. Macdonald, in his discussion of this *Memar* passage, suggests that: "This may reflect the older Old Testament view of a vague formless

existence after death".[12] He adds: "By 'spirit' [Marqah] apparently means the 'breath of life' of the Pentateuch (*e.g. Gen.* vi 17)". But it is hard to see how one can go much beyond these conjectures. It can, however, be noted that the passage under consideration is consistent with at least most other *Memar* passages with which it comes in logical contact. For instance, in reference to the tenth plague, Marqah asserts: ". . . the Destroyer swallowed up the spirits of their first born" [I 27, II 43]. That is, those who died did so with the loss of their spirits—their bodies would have continued to be governed by their souls. But such internal consistency does not shed a great deal of light on the obscure passage at issue.

Neither is help forthcoming from an examination of Marqah's use of the term "spirit". Spirit is spoken of with reference to several kinds of attribute. Feelings and emotions figure prominently. We find such phrases as: "My spirit despairs" [I 16, II 21], "My spirit is not at ease" [I 16, II 22], ". . . my spirit would not rest from turmoil" [I 16, II 23], "Their bodies died while their spirits suffered" [I 19, II 27]. "Spirit" also has a cognitive aspect, as is evidences by such sentences as: "O may your spirit know (תדע) . . . that the fences of your garden which you planted are broken down" [I 119, II 197], and "When the heart of Jacob was full of the spirit of wisdom, all good was brought about for him, for the wisdom that was in it was true wisdom" [I 136, II 222]. If the spirit is essentially related to feelings, emotions and cognitions, and if the dead could experience or engage in none of these, then, of course, it would make no sense to speak of the dead as governed by spirit. Marqah's position on this matter would be consistent. But we are left with the question of what the soul does that validates Marqah's assertion that the dead are sufficiently governed by soul. In the absence of what I can recognise as clues in the *Memar* I am unable to answer that question.

One puzzling aspect of Marqah's teaching concerns his references to the soul as witness to God. At the start of Book VI he refers to the heavenly bodies and certain terrestrial phenomena as witnesses to the divine, and then affirms that in ourselves there are "important evidences". Since he tells us that these evidences are "four divisions" in us, corresponding to the four seasons and the four

[12] *The Theology of the Samaritans*, p. 228.

elements, we would expect him to enumerate the four elements of the soul to which he had hitherto most frequently referred and had, seemingly, attached most importance, namely, לב, מדע, נפש and רוח. But in fact he lists none of these. He says, instead, that: "These four are desire (יצר) and idea (ענין) and conscience (רז) and reason hidden deep within you (חשבה כסין בך)" [I 131, II 214]. It is not at all clear why Marqah lists these four. He merely says that God has created them "so that you may exist and be developed with power". He adds: "Each one of them has a powerful controlling force in your body which brings about your intellect". Professor Macdonald's comment on this mysterious passage is "the four parts contribute to thought".[13] I do not wish to disagree with this interpretation, but would merely like to suggest a direction in which it may, without I hope distorting Marqah's thought, be developed.

What point is being made by the claim that each has a powerful controlling force (פרנוס חיול) in the body, and what is meant by saying that they "bring about your intellect (אנדי בונותך)"? Though there are too few clues in the text to justify the confident exposition of an interpretation, I would like to draw attention to an Aristotelian doctrine with which the above statements by Marqah are, on the face of it, in accord. Certain parallels, based on verbal resemblances, are at least suggestive of a possible interpretation of Marqah's position.

The line I wish to suggest as a possibly correct account of Marqah is that when Macdonald interprets Marqah as saying that the four parts contribute to thought, what should be added is that the kind of thought to which they contribute is *practical* thought, and that, in consequence, what Marqah has in mind in distinguishing the four aspects of the soul and in speaking of them as powerful controlling forces in the body are the various aspects of practical reasoning, reasoning, that is to say, which is embodied in action, and which so relates to the body, by way of controlling or structuring its movements, that it and those movements together form what can truly be called "rational action".

In his analysis of the notion of practical reasoning[14] Aristotle argues that one of its elements is desire (ὄρεξις) (or, sometimes,

[13] *Memar Marqah*, vol. II, p. 214 n. 6.
[14] *Nicomachean Ethics* III 3.

wish (βούλησις)). Practical reasoning, or deliberation, can occur only when the agent desires a given end. But we do not deliberate about what the object of desire should be. Rather, we deliberate about the means that have to be adopted if that object is to be secured (1112b12). The deliberation is based on the agent's conception of what is possible, and of which of several possibilities (if there are several) is most easily realised (1112b17).

There is a further element, one involving a value judgment. Aristotle writes: "That wish is for the end has already been stated; some think that it is for the good, others for the apparent good" (1113a15 f.). He has qualms, which he goes on immediately to express, about each of these alternatives, and tentatively suggests a compromise position. But he never lets go of the idea that what we desire, which is what prompts the reasoning process, must be seen within an evaluative context. What we desire is either the good *simpliciter* or the apparent good. Subsequently, when concerned with the question of what is involved in a good choice, choice being defined as desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire (1139b7), he affirms that the reasoning must be true and the desire right. His entire discussion on the nature of virtue makes it clear that the φρόνιμος, the practically wise man, will act on desires which are right in the sense that they are in accordance with the principle of the mean; the desires will be neither excessive nor deficient, but moderate.

Thus, on Aristotle's analysis, practical wisdom contains four basic elements, namely, a desire, a conception of what is possible and available to the agent, an evaluation and a process of reasoning. There is a striking resemblance between this list of four items and Marqah's list of four divisions in us, namely, "desire and idea and conscience and reason hidden deep within you". Furthermore, Marqah's reference to the four elements in us as having a "powerful controlling force in the body" makes good sense on the assumption that what he has in mind is the set of elements constituting the cause of an action.[15] What is suggested by this line of thought is that when Marqah speaks about these elements as bringing about "your intellect (בונתך)", the difficult term "intellect" could be taken to refer at least approximately to what Aristotle terms "practical wisdom (φρόνησις)". The degree of speculativeness of

[15] Cf. N.E. 1139a31 f.

this suggestion is not reduced by the fact that on the very few other occasions when Marqah employs the term בונה the context gives no guidance on whether the term refers to practical wisdom or, instead, to another of the intellectual virtues. For an understanding of בונה we are thus restricted largely to what can be gleaned from the *Memar* passage presently under examination. I am not, of course, wishing to suggest that Marqah was familiar with the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but merely that what he has to say about the four divisions in us closely resembles Aristotle's account, or at any rate the schema of his account, of practical reasoning, and that this fact provides *prima facie* evidence for the view that Aristotle's φρόνησις and Marqah's בונה are, if not the same, then at least conceptual neighbours.

Before leaving Marqah's discussion of the faculties of the soul, one point should be mentioned. Marqah makes a statement about מדע which he may well have wished to make about other mental faculties also, and the statement calls for comment. He writes: "Cain is not our forefather, that we should be forbidden. Nor are we the descendants of Enoch that we should be delivered, nor of Cush that we should be enslaved, nor of Nimrod that we should be brought low, nor of the Tower Builders that we should be scattered, . . . nor of Korah that the earth should swallow us up. With what מדע could we be involved in evil things?" [I 95, II 156]. The clear implication of this passage is that Samaritans, by virtue of their heredity, could not be involved in evil things. The point of especial interest in this passage is that Marqah is maintaining that spiritual qualities can be transmitted genetically. He is not saying merely that מדע is inherited, but that the מדע as possessing certain moral qualities is inherited. We have already in this chapter observed that Marqah claims a close connection between מדע and morality. It now seems that the agent is not only not responsible for having a מדע (any more than he is for having a leg or a skull), he is also not responsible, or at least not fully responsible, for its moral qualities.

He speaks, for example, of men committing adultery in their מדע.[16] It would seem to follow, therefore, that it is more difficult for a Samaritan מדע to be thus blemished than it would be for the

[16] I 75, II 122; I 109, II 183.

מדע of a descendant of the Tower Builders. Marqah may thus be suggesting that specific ideas, say, of what is to be judged good or judged evil, are inherited. He does not, in connection with the passage under examination, offer a scriptural proof text for this conception. But one may conjecture that the second commandment was not far from his mind.

Certain psychological and metaphysical questions relating to the concept of free will are prompted by the foregoing discussion. For it is evident that the conception of the inheritance of spiritual qualities, particularly moral ones, must sit uneasily in the context of a libertarian doctrine of human action. The question at issue, then, is simply stated: Was Marqah a determinist?

The answer cannot be so easily forthcoming, for several reasons. The first is that Marqah was not so obliging to subsequent philosophers as to raise the question himself and then answer it for us. If an answer is to be got at all it can be secured not by reading it off the text but only by extrapolation from it.

A second difficulty arises from the real obscurity of the question. The terms "free will" and "determinism" do not mean the same thing to different philosophers. It is not certain that they mean, or meant, anything at all to some. It is not easy to say, for example, what the classical Greek equivalents are. Can Aristotle's discussion [17] of τὸ ἑκούσιον and τὸ ἀκούσιον fairly be interpreted as a discussion of the nature of a freely willed action, or is it perhaps a discussion of a juridical concept relating to the settling of questions of criminal responsibility in a court of law? [18] And in any case, if certain Greek terms or phrases are taken to be equivalent to "free will" and "determinism" then it must be stated that those terms are equivalent to the English expressions as used by given thinkers in given works. Translation presents its own problems. But it is even less clear how "free will" and "determinism" are to be translated into Samaritan Aramaic. And in asking whether Marqah is a determinist we may in fact be asking of his philosophy a question which could not be stated in such terms that Marqah could understand it. Formidable methodological considerations, therefore, demand that in attempting to answer this question we move with caution.

[17] N.E. III 1.

[18] See e.g. D. J. Allan, "The Practical Syllogism", in *Autour d'Aristote*, esp. p. 333.

This is not the place for a long discussion on the nature of free will. But I will say something now on this topic, since my answer to the question of whether Marqah was a determinist will not convey the meaning I wish it to unless the sense in which I am using the term "free will" is also conveyed.

I want, for present purposes, to take the line that talk about free will can be translated into talk about self-expression. A free action, one produced by an act of free will, gives expression to the agent's nature as a person. But what is the agent's nature as a person? This question amounts to asking what the essence of man is. The traditional philosophical way of dealing with this question is to ask what man's "distinctive endowment" is. What is it that distinguishes him from other kinds of living creature? We have elsewhere considered the passage in which Marqah lets us see his answer to this question. For convenience, I shall repeat the passage here: "[God] divided the various kinds of living creatures into four sorts, the first three for the sake of the fourth. He made the body of the last with its wisdom implanted, so that the body should be capable of being illumined by the לבב. Thus not one (of the other three) can withstand a man" [I 31, II 47]. Hence, in Marqah's view, the distinctive endowment of man is his soul, and in particular the לבב. Thus a freely willed action must constitute an embodiment of the לבב and its wisdom. But this is too abstract. What, more specifically, does the freely willed action embody? Marqah's immediately following sentence so completely answers this question it is almost as though he wrote the sentence with our question in mind. His words are: "He gave a perfect law to his servants to provide life and length of days, for by the observing of it is the soul disposed, and according to the state of the soul is the body disposed. As the stature of a man lies with the soul, so the stature of the soul lies with the law" [I 31, II 47]. Part of the point Marqah seems concerned here to make is that a man's distinctive endowment, that which distinguishes him from the other kinds of living creature, is his soul, and that the worth of a man is measured by the extent to which he, in his way of life, constitutes an incarnation of that by which his soul itself is measured, namely, the Law of God. It is clear that Marqah considered that because man, in accordance with the divine will, has a soul whose stature is measured by the extent to which it is expressive of divine Law, man's true purpose must be to secure

in his way of life, and therefore in his actions, embodiment of the Law of God.

But if this is the true end of man it must also be his essence. Man is essentially so created by God that he is committed by his nature to expressing God's will. To the extent to which he fails to actualise this aspect of his nature he is not really being himself, and to that extent, according to the above account of free will, he is not free. The position, therefore, that seems to emerge in the *Memar* is that the way truly to be free is to live a godly life. Freedom cannot be gained unless the human agent seeks to harmonise his own will with God's will. Hence, given the concept of "free will" outlined earlier, we must say that, for Marqah, the answer to the question "Is free action possible?" must also be the answer to the question "Is godly action possible?". Since in living a godly life we are giving expression to our true nature, it follows that we are most ourselves when we are closest to God. I take this to be a central principle in Marqah's religious anthropology, and to be the burden of the verse: "As the stature of a man lies with the soul, so the stature of the soul lies with the law".

Thus, on a quite specific account of "free will", it appears that Marqah must say that free will is possible. Universal determinism is thus an invalid doctrine in so far as it is inconsistent with the claim that godly actions are performed. It follows from this that our original problem, namely, how free will is possible if spiritual qualities are inherited, is in a sense undercut. For I am interpreting Marqah as saying that, by whatever means a man comes to have the spiritual qualities he does have, whether he is free or not depends on how he uses the qualities he has. If with the spiritual qualities he has he leads a godly life he lives freely, if not then not. That his spiritual inheritance makes it in one respect easier or more difficult to lead such a life is irrelevant. The question is only whether he actually leads one.

We ought not to lose sight here of Marqah's conception of the power of God as a limitless power stretching through the universe. This conception might be seen, within the context of the *Memar*, as forming a very unstable alliance with the conception of man as free. For how, it might be asked, can man be free if God's power is infinite? Does not the freedom of man give him jurisdiction, or at least the possibility of jurisdiction, in areas in which God's power is, necessarily, effective? And in that case does not the

freedom of man constitute an encroachment upon the power of God? But any being capable of setting any limits whatsoever on the power of God must himself have a power in some respect not less than God's power. And suddenly Marqah's fundamental conception of the utter otherness of God seems in jeopardy. Man himself would be practically a god.

This problem is not one which Marqah explicitly raises. Nor do there seem, in the *Memar*, to be passages which can be taken as an answer. I merely want to show here, first, that the problem, which is a perennial problem in the philosophy of religion, raises a question mark over the *Memar*, and, secondly, that had Marqah tackled it he would not necessarily have been at a loss as to how to dull the point of the attack. Two points can be made in defence of Marqah's position.

The first is that if we are to speak of God's infinite power as leaving no room for human freedom it is necessary to expound the conception of freedom thus invoked. It is possible that the existence of God's infinite power creates a problem for one kind of freedom, but not necessarily for another. Taking, as before, the conception of freedom as a certain conception of self-expression, and holding, along with, I believe, Marqah, that man is freest when his will most coincides with the divine will, it is not at all clear that the infinite power of God need be seen as constituting an obstacle to the possibility of free human action.

There is a second point which should be considered, whether or not it will in the long run prove tenable. If God's power stretches through everything in such a way that everything is determined both to exist and to be as it is through the power of God, and if, further, God lacks the power to prevent His power so operating, then this fact alone would suggest that God's power is, after all, finite. It would suggest that there is at least one thing God cannot do; He cannot, so to say, leave anything alone. If, therefore, God is infinite in His power then He must have the power not merely to determine things but also, if He chooses, to let things determine themselves. His infinite power would then be expressed in His creating areas within which other beings could operate under the conditions of self-determination.

This last consideration opens up a further aspect of freedom. I have so far outlined a concept of freedom according to which freedom can be understood as godliness, a free life is a godly life,

a free action is one done because it embodies divine Law and therefore the will of God. But for Marqah, while this is, I think, part of the story of freedom, it cannot be the whole story. Samaritan writers, as Professor J. Macdonald reminds us,[19] based their doctrine of free will on Scripture, and in particular on *Deut.* xi 26-8, xxx 15-20. The former passage runs: "Understand that this day I offer you the choice of a blessing and a curse. The blessing will come if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God which I give you this day, and the curse if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God but turn aside from the way that I command you this day and follow other gods whom you do not know". In one sense, then, free action must be godly. In another sense, however, an action may be free though sinful, a possibility which is left open by our conception of God's infinite power as only being infinite if it can create areas in which men can determine their own actions. This point returns the discussion to its point of origin. If men inherit spiritual qualities how can they determine their own actions? The answer that Marqah, I think, would give is that heredity does not determine us to act in one way rather than another, it merely creates a tendency in a given direction. The reason for suspecting that Marqah would take this line is that the *Memar* contains numerous injunctions to Samaritans to return to a godly way of living. Assuming that Samaritans have a common heredity and that some are godly, others not, it follows that heredity cannot be the sole determinant of action; it assists, we might say, but does not compel.

Marqah, as we have seen, has a great deal to say about the human soul. He has, indeed, a great deal more to say about it than I have mentioned. But the foregoing exposition of what in the title of this chapter I refer to, perhaps tendentiously, as his *De Anima*, brings us to the point where a sufficiently firm base is prepared for the posing, and answering, of certain questions relating to the practical life of man. Man has a certain nature, and how he ought to behave is a function, at least in part, of his nature. Having, in this chapter, discussed Marqah's account of human nature, I shall, in the next, attempt an exposition of Marqah's account of how men ought to behave.

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[19] *The Theology of the Samaritans*, p. 231.

CHAPTER NINE

ETHICS

How ought men to behave? And, since our behaviour patterns can be seen as forming what may be termed our 'life styles', the question can be posed in the form: How ought men to live? The *Memar* answers these questions. But the answers are not straightforward. In this chapter I want to consider some of the chief factors contributing to their complexity. At the start, however, it must be stated that Marqah's ethics owe less to Hellenic and Hellenistic influences than do other aspects of his philosophy considered in the preceding chapters. His ethics are Pentateuchal through and through. It is true that often what he has to say in the course of his ethical deliberations reflects in various ways the specific conditions in which the Samaritan community lived, and in particular reflects the treatment meted out to them by the Roman authorities. But the principles of behaviour enjoined by Marqah are, nevertheless, Pentateuchal. The contemporary social conditions merely provide the occasion for obedience and, often, provide also an explanation of why Marqah's ethical writings are marked by tones of anxiety and even urgency.

After what we learnt in the preceding chapter concerning Marqah's psychology it can come as no surprise to find that in his ethics great emphasis is placed on the importance of knowledge and wisdom. Marqah certainly regarded knowledge of how to live a good life (חיין טבין) as a necessary condition for living such a life. Indeed, the need to have knowledge was so stressed by Marqah that he seems at times to regard knowledge as itself the end, that is, the proper end, of life. Thus he writes: "O people, understand and do not be carried off from acquiring knowledge, for a man's life does not consist merely of the length of his days. A man's life consists of increasing his knowledge. Woe to a man who rejoices in days, with God having no place in them" [I 143, II 235]. That the knowledge Marqah here invokes is knowledge of the Pentateuch is made clear by the fact that the passage just quoted is prefaced by the words: "Greatness belongs to God, in whose words there is

nothing but wisdom. Happy the man who possesses it!". The theme of man's need to acquire wisdom and knowledge makes a frequent appearance in the *Memar*. Elsewhere Marqah writes: "It is our duty to be a tree good to behold, crowned with goodly fruits, and to hasten to acquire wisdom and fill our souls with what the True One taught us. It does not behove us to leave ourselves like a waste land which has nothing in it, or like a tree without fruits, for an end has to be made of it.[1] We were created rather to acquire the wisdom of our ancestors, as is fitting" [I 55, II 88]. More briefly; "We were not chosen but for learning; we were not delivered but for knowledge" [I 88, II 142].

In general in the *Memar* both wisdom (חכמה) and knowledge (דעת) are, as was argued in the last chapter, essentially related to God. We are told, for example, that: "Perfect state of דעת means knowing that the Lord is God and that there is none besides Him. The beginning of חכמה is when a man knows the might of his Creator and trembles at His greatness and is in dread of His power" [I 141, II 231]. Likewise: "חכמה is a ladder set up from the heart to the divine place" [I 136, II 222]. The ladder is provided by Moses: "All חכמה has been made known through you [Moses]" [I 148, II 243]. The Pentateuch gives us knowledge not only of the nature of things as created by the power of God, but also of men as they ought to live. Both these kinds of matter, the theoretical and the practical, are thus embodied in חכמה as the term is used by Marqah. Marqah's חכמה must therefore be seen as encompassing both theology and ethics.

It is important for our understanding of Marqah's conception of the ethical aspects of חכמה to recognise that though his ethics are Pentateuchal, at least in the sense that he habitually provides Pentateuchal warrant for his positions, he nevertheless does not restrict himself to simple repetition of the Mosaic injunctions. Like Philo, he is willing to read the Law with an eye on its inner significance. For example, with respect to one injunction he prefaces his interpretation with the words: "See the inner meaning (רז) of this great statement" [I 71, II 114]. The statement in question is: "Cursed be he who misleads a blind man on the road, and all the people shall say 'Amen' " (*Deut.* xxvii 18). In his exposition

[1] Cf. the remarkable parallel in *Math.* vii 19: "And when a tree does not yield good fruit it is cut down and burnt".

of this verse Marqah takes the term "blind man" to refer, not to a physically blind person, but, rather, to one suffering from a kind of spiritual blindness. We do not need to suppose that Marqah took the literal interpretation to be incorrect. It is natural to suppose that on the contrary he took that interpretation for granted because it was the obvious one, and that he was concerned instead to point out that as well as the manifest significance of the verse, there was an equally valid inner meaning that also had to be learned and adopted as a guide to conduct.

On Marqah's interpretation the verse comprises (אזמנת) twelve commandments. All twelve need not here be quoted. A few will serve to indicate the general points Marqah is concerned to make: "In the case of a man who asks about the truth, his question is not to be unanswered . . . in the case of a man who goes astray in the way of evil, do not desert him—(if you did) you would bear his burden . . . in the case of a man who is caught in his guilt and who does not realise the significance of it, turn him from his way . . . in the case of a man who teaches you something he himself does not know, acquaint him with the truth and do not let him go astray" [I 71, II 114].

Man's duties, then, as the position is represented by Marqah, are not simply to be read off the pages of the Pentateuch. The inner meaning also of what we read there must be considered, for it can refer to duties other than those indicated by the manifest meaning.

I would like now to ask how, within the framework of the *Memar*, duties should be classified. Let us begin with the claim that man's duties can be considered in their vertical and their horizontal aspects. Vertically, they relate man to God, and horizontally they relate man to man. And since man can be related, with respect to ethical demands, both to himself and to others, it follows that at one level of analysis duties are classifiable under three headings, namely, duties to God, duties to oneself, and duties to other men. Whether at a deeper level of analysis, and one to which Marqah would be willing to subscribe, these three classes can maintain their separate identities, is a question to which I wish now to turn. Marqah's interpretation, given above, of *Deut.* xxvii 18 will help us find the answer.

Elsewhere we have acknowledged that Marqah recognised that man has duties to God: "Ascribe majesty to our God! For this

purpose we have come" [Hymn IV *v.* 6]. And the numerous Pentateuchal injunctions regarding sacrifices and other ritual practices can be seen as giving rise to duties to God. We also know that Marqah recognised the existence of duties a man has to himself, for example, the duty to learn God's will. As Marqah tells us: "It is good for us to purify our heart and know the truth and fill our heart with instruction of knowledge" [I 134, II 218]. What now emerges from Marqah's interpretation of *Deut.* xxvii 18 is that he also accepted the idea that each man has duties, not only to God and to himself, but also to other men. For at least we have a duty to help the blind. The kind of aid we are to provide is spelled out by Marqah. We are not merely required to protect the spiritually blind from their spiritual blindness by preventing them performing actions expressive of their blindness. On the contrary, we are to cure them of their very blindness. The instrument for securing this end is moral instruction, what Marqah [I 56, II 89] terms מוסר.

Marqah writes, therefore, as though there are three kinds of duties, those to God, to oneself and to others. But there are, at the same time, pressures pushing him towards the view that these three kinds are not all on the same logical level. In the first place, Marqah considered that we have duties to men, and that subsumable under this rubric are duties to oneself and duties to others. For example, Marqah believed knowledge to be an intrinsic element in the good life. Men must seek knowledge. But it is, for Marqah, in a sense irrelevant whether we seek it for ourselves or for others. The crucial point is that since knowledge is good it must be gained. If we lack it we should seek it; if we possess it we should share it. And the requirement to share it is explicitly stated by Marqah to be universal in its scope. Knowledge, being good, is good whoever possesses it, and hence is good in non-Samaritans as it is in the elect. Therefore, Marqah tells us: "It is good for us to purify our heart and know the truth and fill our heart with the instruction of knowledge, and then teach all the nations (כל אמיה)" [I 134, II 218]. Hence, in a very real sense the duty to gain knowledge is not in its essence a duty to oneself, though one has a duty to secure it for oneself, or a duty to secure it for others, though one has a duty to teach it to others. The duty is a duty to make knowledge the possession of whomsoever can be led to own it. It is, in other words, a duty to men in general, rather than to oneself

in particular, or to others in particular, even though on the surface it seems clearly a duty to oneself.

Likewise, duties that seem obviously classifiable as duties to others can be shown to belong to a different class. The injunction not to mislead a blind man may seem to be straightforwardly a duty to blind men, even, and indeed especially, if the injunction is understood in the way Marqah understands it. Yet what is being enjoined here, as Marqah interprets the Deuteronomic verse in question, is that ignorance, particularly moral ignorance, should be replaced by knowledge. Ignorance is evil, and we should therefore seek to dispel it, whether we recognise it in ourselves or in others. Thus the duty to dispel moral ignorance is not essentially a duty to others any more than it is essentially a duty to oneself. Essentially, we might say, it is a duty *simpliciter*. It is an historical accident that the duty to dispel ignorance is on some occasions acted upon because we have recognised ignorance in another person, and on some occasions because we have recognised it in ourselves.

Instead of distinguishing between duties to oneself and duties to others, it might be closer to Marqah's position to hold that certain things, knowledge being one, are ideals, and men owe loyalty to these ideals. In part this loyalty should be expressed in each person's striving to secure embodiment of these ideals wherever possible. Our duties to men could then be conceived, not as duties to ourselves or as duties to others, as though duties of these two kinds differ in essence, but simply as duties to men—both ourselves and others.

On this analysis two of the three general kinds of duties, to God, to others and to self, collapse into the category of "duties to men". From this point of view Marqah's ethics cannot properly be classified either as egoistic or as altruistic, for priority is given neither to the self nor to others. His ethics are more correctly described as universalistic. And in this connection his injunction, quoted above, to give instruction to all the nations takes on a particular significance.

We are therefore left with two kinds of duty, those to God and those to men. The precise relationship, in Marqah's teaching, between these two kinds of duty is hard to establish. But, minimally, there is substantial evidence that he considered the relation to be very close. Thus, for example, Marqah writes: "No deceiver in the world has any future. A corrupter of men is a corrupter of the Lord, for he has denied Him" [I 72, II 115]. In part at least,

this statement implies that certain morally unacceptable types of action directed against men must also *ipso facto* be against God. For God established certain values—universal values—and whoever in his actions embodies the negation of these values, and hence denies the value of the values themselves, must in so doing be rejecting God as the Creator of those values. Put otherwise, a failure in our duty to men entails a rejection of the sovereign authority of God, and hence a rejection of the moral legitimacy of our duties to Him. Any person guilty of such a rejection could not be guilty of it unless he had a distorted or corrupted conception of God. Hence Marqah's statement: "A corrupter of men is a corrupter of the Lord". Marqah cannot mean, literally, that such a man corrupts God. He must mean, rather, that such a man's picture or conception of God is corrupt.

There is a strong suggestion within the *Memar* that in the close relationship between duties to God and duties to man, the former have primacy. Marqah conceived wisdom, as we saw earlier, to be the Law of Moses; all wisdom is to be read in the Pentateuch. Hence all practical wisdom is to be found there. All duties, therefore, are formulated there. We learn what we ought to do and we obey (*if* we obey) because we recognise the sovereign authority, including the sovereign moral authority, of the author of the Law. Thus it can be said that, according to Marqah, to do one's duty is to obey the word of God, and therefore to obey God. And therefore our duty is to God. In part we fulfill that duty by treating men as God requires us to. Hence we find Marqah adopting the view that a failure in our duty to men is a failure in our duty to God; for our duty to men is in its essence a duty to God. As he puts it: To corrupt men is to deny God. Even though, in the sense described, there is point to saying that our duties to God have primacy over our duties to men, or even that our only true duties are to God, there remains nevertheless point to talking about duties to men. Such duties can be understood to be those duties to God that can be acted upon only by treating men in the way that God demands of us. To have duties to men is to owe it to God to modify our conduct towards men in accordance with His commands.

Although Marqah's ethics are universalistic in the way described, it can hardly be denied that his writings exhibit a total commitment to a doctrine of Samaritan particularism. The Samaritans were,

after all, seen as the elect nation, and its members enjoyed certain privileges and attendant responsibilities because of their election. Whether any tensions are created in Marqah's writings by the co-existence of the two doctrines of ethical universalism and Samaritan particularism is a question that must, at least briefly, be considered here.

The particularist thesis is expressed several times in the *Memar*. Thus we read: ". . . our Lord has chosen us and made us His very own out of all the nations" [I 95, II 156]. Marqah makes it very plain that the purpose of the election is to give to the Samaritans a truth that will then, if they fulfill the role designed for them, be taught to all the other nations. The truth, of course, is the Law of God. Moses is to be used as an intermediary between God and Israel, and Israel is then to be used as an intermediary between God and all humanity. Now, in a sense, once Israel has been taught the Law of God it is in possession of moral knowledge superior to the moral values of other nations. It might be supposed, therefore, that Marqah believed that election conferred moral superiority.

Nevertheless, Marqah did not teach that the Samaritans were morally superior. On the contrary, he almost affirms the contrary position. His grounds are that the measure of the moral failure of the Samaritans is revealed by the fact that despite being taught the Law of God they still fail to embody God's will in their actions. And those who know God's will and ignore it are at least as bad as, if not worse than, those who through ignorance of God's will fail to make His will their own.

This interpretation of Marqah's position can be supported by numerous statements in the *Memar*. For example, Marqah portrays God speaking in the following terms about the Samaritans: "I called them; they did not come. I warned them; they paid no attention. I taught them; they remained ignorant. I honoured them; they rebelled. I instructed them; they forgot. I uplifted them; they fell down. I treated them well; they behaved shamefully. In view of this how can I have pity for them? . . . I recompense every doer according to what he has done" [I 110, II 185]. Marqah then continues: "These statements do not apply to other men, only to us. Woe to us if we do not learn them, for we will receive recompense according to what we have heard".[2] Normally Marqah

[2] "according to what we have heard" may be presumed to be a reference to the Samaritan tradition of religious training.

affirms that we will receive recompense according to what we have *done*. The change of expression here is due to his concern to stress that God, the just Judge, achieves equity of judgment by taking into account the different degrees to which different men have been given the opportunity to live better lives. And in this connection there is no more important a question than whether they have been instructed in the Law of God.

In a similar vein Marqah elsewhere affirms: "Not all peoples will be questioned about a deed, for they have not been called *holy people*, nor *first born*, nor *heritage*, nor *priests*, nor *holy*, nor *specially elect*, nor have they heard the voice of the living God" [I 108, II 180]. The implication of this, of course, is that the Samaritans will be questioned and their replies will be found inadequate. Whatever else may be contained in Marqah's doctrine of Samaritan particularism it certainly does not contain a doctrine of Samaritan moral superiority.

Hence, any conflict that may arise between Marqah's universalism and his particularism cannot be traced to a doctrine affirming the moral superiority of the Samaritans. But the suggestion that there is a conflict can be attacked on more positive grounds than this. For it is possible to argue that though Marqah's universalism is an ethical doctrine, defining as it does the view that all men are equally appropriate repositories of the Law of God and that all men ought therefore to be taught the Law, the particularism of Marqah is not basically an ethical doctrine though it has ethical implications. Essentially it affirms that there is something special about the Samaritans. They are not specially moral, but specially *chosen*. If they carried out all for which they were chosen they would be moral—though perhaps not specially moral for if they were successful all nations would obey the Law of God and hence would be as good as the Samaritans. But, as Marqah does not neglect to reiterate, the Samaritans, despite opportunities, have not lifted themselves to a higher plane of morality, nor even have raised themselves comparatively high on the plane of morality they share with other nations. This moral fact about the Samaritans does not, however, serve to disprove the doctrine of particularism, since that doctrine does not affirm that the Samaritans were elevated to an exalted moral plane.

When Marqah's universalism and particularism are formulated in the above fashion it can be seen that there is no conflict between

the two doctrines. And while neither doctrine logically implies the other, Marqah's view of history certainly led him to hold that ethical universalism and the election of Israel form a closely knit system of ideas and historical events—in Marqah's view, the message of ethical universalism, and in particular the need to have all nations accept it, led to the election. Universalism and particularism, though logically distinct, are, for the Samaritan consciousness, inextricably interwoven.

As well as the kind of ethical universalism discussed above, there is a further doctrine, often invoked by Marqah, that warrants classification as a form of, or at least as an aspect of, ethical universalism. This further doctrine, which received brief mention earlier, concerns Marqah's conception of justice. Perhaps the central notion in this conception is that of "equity". God, the just Judge, treats men equitably. He does not have favourites. As Marqah puts the point: "... our Lord is righteous; He is not a favourer of persons, whether great or small" [I 62, II 97]. If, therefore, some men receive favourable treatment from God this can only be because in truth they deserve it: "My great power does not show favour unless to bring about the truth" [I 71, II 113]. It is perhaps with a view to stressing the impartiality of God that Marqah persistently refers to God as recompensing men for their *deeds*. That is, God's recompense is earned, not by virtue of who the agent is, but of what he has done. For example, he writes: "In this world I will recompense [the evil doer] for whatever deed, according to what he has done" [I 71, II 114], "He has warned you and taught you that He will recompense every doer according to his deed, whether good or bad. Thus said the son of Ben Eden, 'In proportion to the action is the reward'[3]" [I 89, II 145], and "Righteousness belongs to the Judge who shows no partiality and who does not overlook an action, whether by praising its good or condemning its evil" [I 101, II 168]. But Marqah is concerned to make the point that to know a deed, or at least to know sufficient about a deed to be well placed to judge its degree of meritoriousness, it is not enough to have seen only the external aspect of that deed, to have seen that is, its physical manifestation.

[3] Cf. *Mishna Aboth* V 26: בן הא הא אומר לפם צערא אגרא. The statements of the son of Ben Eden and of Ben Hé Hé may be formulations of a conventional statement of wisdom.

Its internal aspect also must be taken into account. This aspect includes the agent's motives and intentions, his beliefs about the situation at hand, his knowledge or ignorance about relevant matters, and even the quality of his ignorance, whether, for example, it is or is not culpable.

The bearing of the last mentioned, cognitive aspects of an action upon the question of its meritoriousness, is referred to in several places in the *Memar*. But Marqah's position on this matter does not emerge with great clarity. That he took questions of knowledge and ignorance to be relevant in determining the moral worth of actions has already emerged from our discussion of Samaritan particularism. When Marqah affirms: "Not all peoples will be questioned about a deed, for they have not been called *holy* . . . nor have they heard the voice of the living God" [I 108, II 180], one aspect of his point is that, unlike other nations, the Samaritans cannot plead ignorance of God's Law as an excuse for their misdeeds. The implication of this is that ignorance can function as a mitigating circumstance. But it need not mitigate. Marqah distinguishes different kinds of ignorance, regarding one kind as an excusing condition and the other not. There is the ignorance possessed by a person who, through lack of instruction or for some other reason, cannot reasonably be expected not to be ignorant. And there is the ignorance possessed by a person who can reasonably be expected not to be ignorant. The ignorance of the other nations is of one kind. But Marqah makes it clear that he considered the ignorance of the Samaritans to be of another. He does, after all, picture God as saying of the Samaritans: "I taught them; they remained ignorant . . . I instructed them; they forgot . . . In view of this how can I have pity for them" [I 110, II 185].

Marqah is not, however, committed to the view that a person living in inculpable ignorance of the Law of God can, due to the absolving nature of his ignorance, lead a good life. On this matter Marqah is explicit: "There is no good life except that of men who know the truth and walk in it" [I 93, II 152]. The best that can be said on behalf of the inculpably ignorant is that they do not live an evil life.

Marqah's doctrine, then, is that ignorance of God's Law does not lead necessarily to evil action, for the fact of the ignorance enters into the nature of the consequent action in such a way as to have determinative bearing on whether the action is evil.

The very ignorance may itself prevent the action being evil. Of course, in its external aspect an action performed in blameless ignorance may be evil in the sense that it overtly transgresses God's Law. But the exercise of justice, as we saw, requires that the action's inner aspect also be identified. And the ignorance of the agent, as part of that inner aspect, may make all the difference in the world to the judgment.

Granted that ignorance of God's Law does not lead necessarily to evil action, can it also be said that knowledge of that Law necessarily leads to good action? Marqah makes several statements that have a bearing on this question, but his answer is not entirely free from obscurity. In at least one passage he appears to be suggesting that all sinful actions are performed in a state of knowledge of their sinfulness. Thus he writes: "There is no sin except where I have taught you about it beforehand. It makes the heart unclean and defiles the mind, and it turns a man from honour to dishonour and places him in a state of infamy. He sees a light, but cannot walk by it" [I 72, II 116]. It is possible that Marqah is again implying that one can sin despite being in a state of knowledge of the sinfulness of the action, when he writes: "A man who hastens to do evil, if he was in his right mind (אן הוה מן מדעה עליו), will receive the curse" [I 72, II 116]. In this passage there seems implied a distinction between evil action done in a state of knowledge, which is therefore evil in its internal aspect, and evil action not performed in that state, which is merely externally evil, and which, unlike the former kind, does not merit punishment, or at least as severe a punishment as is merited by an agent whose actions are evil in their internal aspect. But this apparent implication cannot be presented with assurance, depending as it does on a certain interpretation of the difficult clause אן הוה מן מדעה עליו.

A further difficult passage that must be considered here, because of its bearing on the question of whether it is possible knowingly to do evil, is the following: "We are possessed of darkness, yet we have abundant illuminating light within our grasp (באדינו). We are possessed of darkness, witness the many sinful actions we do . . . We find ourselves in all sorts of transgression and we are unable with all our power (בכל חילן) to put an end to them" [I 133, II 217]. Granted Marqah's habitual use of the terms "light" and "darkness" in referring to knowledge and ignorance, he appears here to be asserting that we (the Samaritans) are ignorant, yet knowledge is

"within our grasp (באדיו)". באדיו, literally "in our hands", must mean here "within our reach". But though within reach, the knowledge that will put an end to our transgression is, nevertheless, inaccessible, for "we are unable with all our power to put an end to them". Hence, although Marqah allows that the relevant knowledge is in some sense "within reach", he also allows that it is not. For in a good sense of "within reach" what is within reach must be accessible. What cannot be reached cannot be within reach. Superficially, then, Marqah's position, as expressed in the above passage, is inconsistent.

But if we refuse to look only at the surface an important philosophical point can be seen to be at issue. Marqah is saying that on the one hand the sinner in some sense knows his sinfulness, for the "abundant illuminating light" is באדיו, and we show ourselves to have this knowledge in failing to act on it despite using all our power. And on the other hand, the sinner is in some sense ignorant of his sinfulness, as is shown by the fact that he does actually transgress. The basic situation now under consideration is expressed elsewhere by Marqah in the following simple terms: "He [the sinner] sees a light, but cannot walk by it" [I 72, II 116]. We are here at the heart of a perennial philosophical problem first brought to the centre of the stage by Socrates. The problem, as expressed in Aristotle's classic exposition, is as follows: "it would be strange (δεινὸν)—so Socrates thought—if when knowledge was in a man something else could master it and drag it about like a slave. For Socrates was entirely opposed to the view in question, holding that there is no such thing as incontinence (ἀκρασία); no one, he said, when he judges, acts against what he judges best—people act so only by reason of ignorance" (*N.E.* 1145b23-7). Aristotle's own position on this matter presents notorious difficulties. Thus on the one hand he appears to reject Socrates' rejection of the possibility of incontinence; for immediately after the passage just quoted he writes: "Now this view plainly contradicts the observed facts". Yet on the other hand in his subsequent analysis he appears to accept the Socratic doctrine. For he distinguishes different senses of "know", namely, "exercise knowledge" and "possess knowledge though not exercising it" (1146b3-4). And this latter sense is itself divisible into parts. One part applies to the state of a person who in a sense has knowledge but cannot exercise it because he is asleep, mad or drunk. Aristotle adds: "But now this

is just the condition of men under the influence of passions" (1147a14-5). Having, then, explained the sense in which the incontinent man has knowledge even though acting against it, Aristotle asserts: "The explanation of how the ignorance is dissolved and the incontinent man regains his consciousness is the same as in the case of a man drunk or asleep" (1147b6-8). Thus it appears that Aristotle agrees with Socrates' doctrine that a man who acts against what he knows to be best is really in a state of ignorance at the time of his action. In one sense he knows, for he has known, and in suitable circumstances could exercise that knowledge; but in another sense he is ignorant, for at the time of his action, because he has been overwhelmed by passion or by a similarly effective condition, he is unable to exercise the knowledge that in one sense he has and in another sense he merely once had.

Marqah's discussions of the relations between knowledge, ignorance and moral assessibility can readily be seen to fit into the conceptual framework just discussed. Let us return briefly to the *Memar* passage that has been occupying our attention. Marqah there affirms: "We are possessed of darkness, yet we have abundant illuminating light within our grasp. We are possessed of darkness, witness the many sinful actions we do". I wish to interpret this passage as referring to the kind of person Aristotle classifies as an ἀκρατής. He is ignorant, not because he never knew, but, rather, despite the knowledge he once had. The "abundant illuminating light" is within his grasp in that the knowledge is in him—he has been able to exercise it. But that he now lacks knowledge in the full-blooded sense is evidenced by his failure to act on it. Likewise, the sinner who "sees a light, but cannot walk by it" [I 72, II 116] can readily be taken to be the Aristotelian ἀκρατής transplanted into the Samaritan religious context.

To establish the measure of agreement between Aristotle and Marqah on this matter it is necessary to ask what Marqah took to be the cause of the sinner's failure to "walk by the light". Aristotle can be interpreted as holding that the ἀκρατής becomes overwhelmed by passion or by a similarly effective state. Does Marqah's answer agree with Aristotle's? The short answer is 'yes'. In an important passage not previously considered here, Marqah writes: "What we have done is evil . . . All this corresponds to the desire (תחמדתה) that rules us and makes us to wear darkness in the heart (לבה) and destroys knowledge (דעתה) from us" [I 136-7,

II 223]. This general explanation of how evil occurs is entirely consonant with the Socratic position accepted also by Aristotle. Marqah's position is that the evil person must in some sense be in a state of ignorance. He who really knows must act on his knowledge. At the same time Marqah identifies the cause of the ignorance, namely, desire, which destroys (אבדת) the knowledge. But since Marqah, as we saw, regards evil men as those who see the light but cannot walk by it, he appears to leave room for saying that in one sense the evil doer does know he acts evilly—he knows in the way that a person knows something when, through being overwhelmed by desire, he is unable to exercise his knowledge. He has knowledge, but owing to the effectiveness of his desires it is not practical knowledge.

In his account of the evil doer, Marqah seems to allow for the occurrence of a moral struggle at two stages in the evil doing. First, he portrays the evil doer as having had knowledge that is no longer effective. And his explanation of its ceasing to be effective is that desire destroyed it—destroyed it, that is, as a motivating factor. But secondly, Marqah seems to allow for the possibility of a struggle between knowledge and desire even after desire has installed itself as ruler. This, at least, is the implication of the statement: "We find ourselves in all sorts of transgression and we are unable with all our power to put an end to them" [I 133, II 217]. The picture here is of a person who has knowledge which he is unable to exercise, but who is failing to exercise it despite using all his power. Marqah, therefore, seems to allow for the occurrence of a moral struggle not only before the evil is done, but even during the period of transgression. His position is thus in line with Aristotle's on at least one influential interpretation of the latter's doctrine. Sir David Ross,[4] after criticising Aristotle for failing, in part of his discussion of incontinence, to introduce the concept of a moral struggle, adds that elsewhere he "shows himself alive to the existence of a moral struggle, a conflict between rational wish and appetite, in which the agent has actual knowledge of the wrongness of the particular act he does".

There is no doubt that in Marqah's moral psychology desire (תחמדה) is assigned the role of villain. Habitually in the *Memar* תחמדה is qualified by the term בישה—shameful, wrong, evil. It

[4] *Aristotle*, p. 224.

is not certain that for Marqah תחמדה possesses a morally neutral sense. It is too close in meaning to "lust" or "covetousness" to be entirely free of disapprobatory moral implications. Sometimes it stands without explicit moral epithets, but in such cases moral judgment is normally implied, as, for example, when Marqah speaks of "he who has set up a god for himself in the desire of his heart (בתחמדות לבה)" [I 94, II 155], and affirms: "We have lied against the True One and have gone after our own desires (תחמדות)" [I 136, II 222]. However, more commonly תחמדה carries explicit qualification: "[The sinners] walked ... in a way that destroyed those who walked in it. They were gathered with their evil desires (עם תחמדותן בישה)" [I 57, II 90], "... from evil desires (תחמדות בישאתה) they have kept away" [I 94, II 154], "Join yourself to the truth; no enemy will have power over you, as long as you do not establish yourself in evil desire (בתחמדה בישה)" [5] [I 106, II 177], "*True speech* means keeping oneself aloof from all wrong desire (תחמדה בישה) and swearing never to entertain such" [I 140, II 230]. There is thus reason to believe that within Marqah's conceptual scheme בישה is attached only pleonastically to תחמדה. Not surprisingly, therefore, Marqah sees desire as something that has to be controlled if the good life is to be secured. Desires that are given free rein are condemned with the obvious Pentateuchal warrant of the tenth commandment: "Let your heart not lie in your possessions so as to make it hard. (If you do) I will deprive you of all that you possess. Let your eye not covet what belongs to your neighbour. That would be a sin on your part" [I 71, II 113].

Marqah's sustained moral denigration of desire does not serve to distinguish him from other Hellenistic philosophers. On the contrary it establishes a close link. Of course, the seeds of such denigration were well established in Hellenic philosophy. The ideal state described by Plato in the *Republic* is structured partly by a recognition of the need to keep desire under the control of reason. And correspondingly the well-functioning citizen is characterised by his ability to moderate his appetite by rational principle. Though Plato stresses the impossibility of justice if desire is allowed to slip from the controlling influence of reason, he is not as expressly

[5] Cf. Mishnah *Aboth* IV 1: איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו. The precise relation between Marqah's תחמדה בישה and the Talmud's יצר הרע is an interesting topic too peripheral to the present context to be examined here in the detail it deserves.

hostile to desire as are others. Philo, for example, writes: ". . . the divine legislator prohibits covetousness, knowing that desire is a thing fond of revolution and of plotting against others; for all the passions of the soul are formidably exciting and agitating it contrary to nature, and not permitting it to remain in a healthy state, but of all such passions the worst is desire".[6] And elsewhere, in discussing the tenth commandment, after comparing covetous desire to a disease which creeps over, and infects, the whole body, he continues: "So great and so excessive an evil is covetous desire; or rather, if I am to speak the plain truth concerning it, it is the source of all evils. For from what other source do all the thefts, and acts of rapine, and repudiation of debt, and all false accusations, and acts of insolence, and, moreover, all ravishments, and adulteries, and murders, and in short, all mischiefs, whether private or public, or sacred or profane, take their rise?".[7] Perhaps this passage provides a clue to the vigour of Marqah's condemnation of desire, for what Philo is saying, at least in part, is that transgression of the tenth commandment puts all the others in jeopardy.

The philosophical principle that to have an obligation presupposes the possibility of fulfilling that obligation receives a formulation in the *Memar*. Marqah writes: "You are not expected to do something that is not in your power (בחילך) to do, but God wants you now to love your Lord with (all) your power and not to love evil. If it is not in you to do so, God will not demand it of you" [I 77, II 125]. Relying for his warrant on the tenth commandment, Marqah takes the view that the control of our desire is required by God. Hence, for Marqah, it must be possible for us to control it. And if it is under our control it must be subject to our will. A failure to control desire is a failure of will. The logic of Marqah's position leads, therefore, to the doctrine that desire is voluntary. It is important to note that what is being said to be voluntary, within the conceptual framework now under consideration, is not merely action dictated by desire, but desire itself. In Book VI of the *Memar* Marqah urges: "O you who are imprisoned in sins, look for forgiveness and meet that good day with ten good kinds". One of these ten good kinds is *true speech* which means "keeping oneself aloof from wrong desire and swearing never to entertain

[6] *Deca.* xxviii.
[7] *Spec.* IV xvi.

such" [I 140, II 230]. This passage would hardly make sense except on the assumption that desires are subject to the will. Certainly Marqah would consider it sacrilegious, a profanation of the Name, to have a person swear to do something that was known to be outside the power of the will to regulate. Granted, then, that Marqah held that the emotion of desire is voluntary, it is significant, for those concerned to establish Marqah's relationship with Hellenistic philosophical thought, that on this matter he is in full agreement with Philonic doctrine.

We have already noted Philo to hold that all the passions agitate the soul contrary to nature not permitting it to remain in a healthy state, but that of all the passions the worst is desire. Philo thereupon adds: "On which account each of the other passions, coming in from without and attacking the soul from external points, appears to be involuntary; but this desire alone derives its origin from ourselves, and is wholly voluntary".[8] Philo's precise ground for holding that desire is the only voluntary passion is unclear, as indeed is his ground for holding that any passion is voluntary. The conception of a voluntary passion, however, does not originate with Philo. Aristotle mentions the conception, at least in passing, when he affirms that "on voluntary passions and actions praise and blame are bestowed" [*N.E.* 1109b32], though in his subsequent discussion of voluntariness in Book III of the *Ethics* Aristotle restricts himself to speaking about actions, passion being left out of the explicit picture. Indeed, on his definition of "voluntary" he hardly leaves room for a conception of voluntary passions. He writes: "the voluntary would seem to be that of which the moving principle is in the agent himself, he being aware of the particular circumstances of the action" (1111a22-4). He immediately adds: "Presumably acts done by reason of anger or appetite (ἐπιθυμίαν) are not rightly called involuntary", but here it is not appetite itself but actions motivated by it that are at issue, and in any case "not involuntary" may not, for Aristotle, mean the same thing as "voluntary". For elsewhere (1110b18-9) he draws a conceptual distinction between the "not voluntary" (οὐχ ἑκούσιον) and the "involuntary" (ἀκούσιον), and this suggests that he would make a parallel distinction between the "not involuntary" and the "voluntary".

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[8] *Deca.* xxviii.

Thus it is not certain that Aristotle would embrace a full-blown conception of voluntary passion. It is possible that by "voluntary passion" he meant no more than a passion that motivates a voluntary action. And Philo makes it clear that in his view desire as such, whether it is allowed by the agent to result in action or not, is still voluntary. Philo's position further differs from Aristotle's in that whereas Philo explicitly picks out desire as the one passion that is voluntary, Aristotle does not, and neither is it clear that he can.

Wolfson,[9] who raises the question of the origin of Philo's doctrine of desire as the sole voluntary passion, presents a convincing answer, in terms that make Marqah sound very Philonic. Wolfson argues, in effect, that Philo's warrant is Pentateuchal. His argument is that Philo is relying both on the verses affirming God's gift to man of the freedom to choose between good and evil, and also on parts of the Aristotelian psychological apparatus expounded in *De Anima* III 10. Choice, we learn there, is grounded on appetency (ὄρεξις), and desire is a species of appetency, the species which moves a man in opposition to reason. Free choice can therefore be considered as having two aspects or parts, first, the species of appetency which moves man in accordance with reason, this being termed βούλησις, and secondly the species which moves a man contrary to reason, namely, ἐπιθυμία. βούλησις is freedom to do good; ἐπιθυμία is freedom to do evil. Hence, for Philo desire must be voluntary. But since his only warrant for describing desires as voluntary is the Pentateuchal verses affirming man's freedom to do good and evil, and since the verses carry no implication at all for the voluntariness of all the other emotions, Philo felt able to assert both that desire itself must be voluntary and also that no other passion shares this characteristic with desire.

There is hardly sufficient ground for holding that Marqah would have agreed with the whole of this account of Philo's teaching on desire. But it is evident that the general tenor of that teaching accords well both with Marqah's specific assertions about desire, and also with Marqah's customary method of relying on Pentateuchal warrant for his doctrines.

One important doctrine which has emerged from the foregoing discussion of Marqah's moral psychology is that within the soul

[9] *Philo*, vol. II, pp. 232-5.

there are two elements, namely, knowledge or wisdom, and desire, which are the chief determinants of the kind of life, morally considered, that each man lives. A life structured by the dictates of wisdom is good, one dominated by the dictates of desire evil. If we changed the language slightly and spoke of reason and passion rather than wisdom and desire this moral doctrine in the *Memar* would be seen to be merely a Samaritan version of a philosophical position characteristic of one of the mainstreams of Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophical speculation. And as with those writing their philosophy in Greek, so also Marqah found himself having to answer a certain question of primary significance that is naturally prompted by the thesis that reason and passion, considered as motives for human action, have moral significance. The question, baldly stated, is: why follow reason? This question demands an answer because, for those writing within the Hellenic and Hellenistic tradition, reason was seen as a restraining force. What in particular it restrains (when, that is to say, it is fulfilling its function and exercising a restraining influence) is passion. But passions are egoistic motivating forces; each demands its own fulfillment and creates a sense of frustration if its demands are not met. Thus, it would seem, a life in which passions are held in restraint by reason must be an uncomfortable and even an intolerable life. Why, then, live under the rule of reason?

Two main answers have been given, first, that a life of reason is rewarded by happiness, and, secondly, that a life of reason is good in itself. Briefly put, the first justifies rational action by references to its consequences, and the second justifies it by saying, roughly, that it is its own reward, that is, that there is no need to look beyond the action itself to find its justification, for reason, being in itself valuable, constitutes a source of value in anything embodying it.

The question 'Why act rationally?' might correctly be answered: 'Because the agent will thereby secure happiness for himself'. But it is also possible that although happiness is a real and even necessary consequence of a rational action it is not a possible motive for acting rationally. For whether an action is rational or not depends in part, at least, on its motive, and certain classes of motive may preclude the possibility of an action's being rational. One such motive may be the wish to be rewarded with happiness. If these possibilities are in fact valid then, though one may act

rationally knowing that the action will be rewarded with happiness, if one so acts for the sake of that reward then neither will the reward be bestowed nor will the action even be rational. The Greek texts dealing with the various doctrines just outlined are familiar. In *Republic Bk* I [10] Plato argues that only the truly just man can be truly happy. But on the question of whether justice is worth pursuing because of the rewards justice brings, Plato answers in the negative. He puts into Socrates' mouth the words: "And thus ... we have disproved the charges brought against justice without introducing the rewards and glories, which, as you were saying, are to be found ascribed to her in Homer and Hesiod; but justice in her own nature has been shown to be best for the soul in her own nature. Let a man do what is just, whether he have the ring of Gyges or not, and even if in addition to the ring of Gyges he put on the helmet of Hades" (612a-b). But, again, having stressed that justice is to be pursued for its own sake, Plato immediately adds: "And now, Glaucon, there will be no harm in further enumerating how many and how great are the rewards which justice and the other virtues procure to the soul from gods and men, both in life and after death" (612b-c). Plato thought, therefore, that justice should be pursued not for the sake of reward but for the sake of justice, but that if pursued for the sake of justice rewards would follow. Since, for Plato, just action is the same as action performed when the soul is under the control of the faculty of reason, it follows that for him rational action should be pursued for its own sake and that, if it is, the agent will be rewarded.

Aristotle's position on this matter does not differ greatly from Plato's. Aristotle's answer to the question 'Why be virtuous?' is as follows: "Now those activities are desirable in themselves from which nothing is sought beyond the activity. And of this nature virtuous actions are thought to be; for to do noble and good deeds is a thing desirable for its own sake" (*N.E.* 1176b6-9). On the further question of whether virtuous action will be rewarded by happiness, Aristotle's answer seems to be 'yes'. In Book I of the *Ethics* he declares that all men are agreed that happiness is the good for man, and that the question to be asked is 'What is happiness?'. His answer is "activity of the soul in accordance with

[10] 352d ff.

virtue" (1098a16-8). Elsewhere he says simply that happiness lies in virtuous activity (1177a9-11). It should be noted here that Aristotle's position cannot fairly be represented by saying that he holds that virtuous activity will be rewarded with happiness, for this way of speaking suggests that the reward is external or extrinsic to the activity itself; whereas Aristotle's position is, rather, that virtuous activity is itself an element in human happiness.

The doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, concerning motives for, and recompense for, virtuous action, reappear in the *Memar*, though the modes of expression are, naturally, different. The emphases also are different, no doubt under the influence of the radically different social conditions of the Samaritans, as well as in response to the relevant Pentateuchal verses.

Marqah has a great deal to say about recompense for men's actions, and often writes as if considerations of recompense ought, morally, to constitute motives for action. But it would, I think, be incorrect to suggest that Marqah thought that we ought to act well for the sake of gaining a reward and of avoiding punishment. Marqah's teaching on the nature of man's purpose, discussed in an earlier chapter, points unequivocally to the doctrine that we were created to live a godly life, to live, that is, a life structured by the Law of Moses. The reason, according to Marqah, why we ought to live such a life is that it was for that that we were created. The crucial point for Marqah, of course, is that we were created by God, who has sovereign moral authority in the universe, and we should therefore, out of reverence for His authority, do as He requires. We should live a life of wisdom, a morally upright life, not in anticipation of what will befall us if we do (or don't) but from a recollection of what has happened, namely, that God gave to Moses a Law of universal validity. Certainly, if we obey God's Law we will be rewarded. But we ought not to act out of hope for the reward. For our motive should be reverence for God. And we cannot, without sin, do good out of reverence for God and for the sake of a reward, because then the hope of a reward would have primacy over our reverence for God. That reverence, indeed, since it would be merely a means to a further end, would not be true reverence.

Marqah's position can be put by saying that for us living in the human condition there can be nothing in the world as valuable as the Law that God promulgated for men. We thus achieve value

within ourselves to the extent that we submit our lives to that Law. And the greatest possible value a man can achieve is gained by his living as fully as is possible for him under the Law. To obey the Law for the sake of a reward is to treat what is of sovereign value, namely, the Law, as if it were of less value than the reward. It would thus be irrational, while recognising the sovereignty of the Law to make the reward for obedience the aim of one's action. Unreason would thus dominate in one's soul, and that, for Marqah, is tantamount to saying that one is living under the dominion of desire.

Despite this, the *Memar* is replete with warnings of the consequences of disobedience as well as with promises of the consequences of obedience. A few examples should serve to give a picture of Marqah's position: "Whom have you seen in the world who has been an enemy to the True One and prospered in his doings?" [I 57-8, II 90], "If you deviate from the way of the True One, then what happened to the people of Sodom will happen to you" [I 70, II 111], "How long dwellings devoid of inhabitants, how long vineyards planted without having an exchange value? How long will your cattle be slaughtered and all your beasts plundered by your enemies before your very eyes? All this is the penalty for the doing of the evil you have done and for your haste in doing it" [I 141, II 232], "Happy the heart that abides in Him!" [I 106, II 177]. These statements flow from a teaching frequently expressed in the *Memar*, and formulated in one place as: "He has warned you and taught you that He will recompense every doer according to his deed, whether good or bad" [I 89, II 145].

Marqah's theodicy, as expressed in the above quotations, has immediate consequences for a central problem in moral theology: if God is a truly just God, recompensing every doer according to his deed, and if therefore the righteous are happy ("Happy the heart that abideth in Him!"), then how is it possible for the righteous to suffer? Marqah has not been so helpful to future commentators as to pose this question and then answer it for us. But the general tenor of his position is unmistakable. His position is that there are no suffering righteous. Since our reward is commensurate with our righteousness, it follows that those who do not receive a reward are not worthy of one.

This interpretation of Marqah's position demands certain points of clarification. First, it might be said that the suffering of the

righteous, which we all know to exist because we can see it, is not true suffering and that, correspondingly, the happiness of the evil is not true happiness. For divinely appointed rewards and punishments are undergone in the next life, not in the present one. Hence, the fact that we see righteous men 'suffer' does not prove that God is being unjust to the righteous any more than our seeing evil men prospering proves that He is unjust to the evil, for these do not mean that God is failing to recompense each doer according to his deed. They merely show that we are in error about what counts as real happiness and real suffering.

Now, though this is certainly a possible position to adopt it cannot be adopted as an interpretation of Marqah. The reason for this is that Marqah makes it clear that in speaking about rewards and punishments bestowed by God on men in accordance with men's deserts, he is referring to recompense that is bestowed in this life no less than in the next. When he asks: "Whom have you seen in the world who has been an enemy to the True One and prospered in his doings?" he clearly has in mind recompense that is visible to us; and the point is made more explicitly still in the statement: "In this world I will recompense him for whatever deed, according to what he has done" [I 71, II 114]. And in one place where Marqah gives a list of divine punishments for wrong doing it is evident that he has the contemporary Samaritan scene in mind: "How long dwellings devoid of inhabitants, how long vineyards planted without having an exchange value? How long will your cattle be slaughtered . . . All this is the penalty for the doing of evil". Hence, what we all understand by suffering Marqah understands by it when he speaks about suffering occurring, by divine will, commensurately with evil.

A second point of clarification concerns Marqah's concept, discussed towards the end of Chapter VIII, of the efficacy of ancestral merit and, correspondingly, of ancestral demerit. It might be held, on the basis of such concepts, that if the evil prosper this must be due to their benefitting from the merit of their ancestors, and the righteous who suffer do so because of ancestral demerit. While this may be a tenable theory when held in conjunction with a certain kind of theodicy, the evidence points strongly in the direction of Marqah rejecting such a theory. Whatever may be Marqah's precise doctrine of the efficacy of ancestral merit and demerit, he did not hold that God would punish a man because

of the actions of his ancestors. Two considerations can be presented in justification of this claim. The first, which returns us to a basic moral theological principle of Marqah's, is that each person is recompensed according to his deeds. If a person sins he is recompensed for it, and the recompense he receives is commensurate with the sin. But if one punishment is full recompense then a further punishment for the same deed, but a punishment inflicted this time on a descendant, must be unjust. For the original deed would then be over-recompensed. But secondly, Marqah lays great stress throughout the *Memar* on the concept of individual responsibility. We are each of us regarded by him as responsible not only for the degree of our righteousness, but also for the degree of our prosperity or suffering. Marqah affirms: "Woe to the sinner for what he has brought on himself" [I 109-10, II 183]. And Moses is represented as addressing Pharaoh in the following terms: "You slay yourself—you are your own enemy. Your own words have become your destroyer. Your own deeds punish you. You yourself have amassed evil deeds. Receive recompense for them all" [I 34-5, II 52].

It seems fair to conclude from the foregoing that Marqah would have rejected the doctrine that a man could be punished by God for the misdeeds of his ancestors.

The last quotation given above is important for our understanding of Marqah's doctrine of the administration of justice. Up to now we have spoken as if Marqah held that God is legislator, judge and recompenser. And, indeed, it is in general in terms such as these that Marqah writes of the administration of justice. But the picture is not quite so simple, for on occasion he writes as though it is not God who recompenses man, but, rather, man who recompenses himself. This at least seems the implication of the verse: "You slay yourself—you are your own enemy. Your own words have become your destroyer. Your own deeds punish you". And the inevitability of self-inflicted punishment is thereupon expressed by the addition of the verse: "In truth from the sowing of evil comes a harvest of thorns". Elsewhere Marqah writes: "Your enemy is your actions, your words! Woe to a man whose own guilt slays him, whose word is his sword punishing him" [I 107, II 178-9], "Woe to the sinner for what he has brought on himself" [I 109-10, II 183] and "Do not be an enemy to God; you would destroy yourself" [I 134, II 218].

However, these verses need not be interpreted in such a way as to contradict the doctrine that God recompenses men. I think it more accurate to interpret Marqah as making the point that it is no less correct to speak of men punishing themselves than to speak of God punishing men. Marqah's position is that since God recompenses each doer according to his deeds, at least two distinct agents are required if divine recompense is to be bestowed. For God is required in order to bestow the recompense, and man is required to perform actions which merit recompense. Man recompenses himself not merely in the sense that had he not acted recompense would not have been bestowed, but also in the tougher sense that he is fully responsible for the actions which are recompensed—he chooses freely between good and evil, and can thus be held fully responsible for the recompense he receives.

Underlying this position is a picture, drawn by Marqah, of a moral universe governed by a set of absolute principles of justice, and administered in accordance with the principle: Each doer is recompensed according to his deeds. This being the theodical basis of the universe, in the hands of each man lies his free choice to obey the principles of justice and, in accordance with the principle of the divine administration of justice, be rewarded, or to disobey, and, in accordance with the same principle, receive inevitably, as if by a law of nature, the attendant punishment—"In truth from the sowing of evil comes a harvest of thorns". The extent to which man's destiny lies in his own hands is expressed by Marqah in a bitter passage in which he represents God as saying: "I called them; they did not come. I warned them; they paid no attention. I taught them; they remained ignorant. I honoured them; they rebelled. I instructed them; they forgot. I uplifted them; they fell down. I treated them well; they behaved shamefully. In view of this how can I have pity for them? . . . I recompense every doer according to what he has done" [I 110, II 185].

It is clear from the foregoing that the *Memar* places great emphasis on the concept of divine recompense. Yet, as was argued earlier, Marqah held that we should obey the Law of God out of reverence for God, not out of fear of the consequences of disobedience. Why, then, does Marqah attend so persistently to the idea of divine recompense? At least part of the answer lies in the fact that, though he believed that men ought to act from the motive of reverence for God, it is nevertheless preferable to obey out of fear

of punishment rather than not obey at all. Marqah's distinction, by now familiar to us, between action in its external and its internal aspects is relevant to the matter at issue. He writes: "If you would discipline yourself outwardly and inwardly, secretly and manifestly, you will be in the world above, and a holy and select people" [I 70, II 112]. It is probable that he is making the same point when he affirms: "Guard yourself outwardly and inwardly, and know what action is to your benefit, through which you will possess the Blessing, or through which you may possess the Curse" [I 66, II 105]. In so writing, Marqah affirms that both the outward and the inward aspects of an action contribute to its overall meritoriousness. Marqah appears indeed to regard each aspect as of value. If only the inner aspect mattered morally it would have been sufficient to have spoken of the internal aspect. Certainly, he thought that the inner aspect would receive behavioural manifestation. But if he had supposed the internal aspect alone to be of value there would have been no need, in speaking of actions as meriting recompense, to speak of the outward action, as he persistently does, as well as of the inner aspect of the action. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that Marqah did attach some value to the external aspect of an action. And since the test of meritoriousness of the external action can only be, for Marqah, whether it accords with the Law of God, it follows that Marqah regarded actions conformable with God's Law as possessing some merit, though if their motive was fear of punishment their merit would have been less than the merit attaching to action performed from reverence for the Law.

It may also be speculated that Marqah believed that men can graduate from one kind of motive to another; and that, in particular, in the course of obeying God's Law from fear of punishment men may come, through the very performance of the actions, to have an insight into the value of the Law itself, so that in time they come to act, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the Law. A similar doctrine occurs in Aristotle's *Ethics*. He argues that we acquire virtues by first exercising them, and likens them in this respect to the arts: "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, *e.g.* men become builders by building, and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts" (1103a32-b2). Aristotle's position is that by

imitating just men we come in time to have an insight into the principles of justice. Once the principles have been internalised we are truly just. Till then, certainly, we are not really just. But Aristotle clearly thought that it is better for those not yet just to imitate the just rather than not to imitate them, for if we do not imitate them we will not become just whereas if we do we might.

There is a hint of this position in the *Memar*. Marqah writes: "Woe to a man who does not do good actions first and make himself like the good men in what they did, rather than model himself on the image of Cain" [I 93, II 152]. He appears to be saying that we should model ourselves on good men, and first perform actions. The implication is that modelling ourselves on good men, and therefore doing the kinds of things good men do, is itself meritorious. And this bears out our earlier contention that Marqah held that good action, even when considered only in its external aspect, is meritorious. But the text does not quite warrant a further attribution to Marqah of the Aristotelian view that the principles on which good men operate will in time come to take a hold of our souls. The hint of this position, however, remains.

But on the larger question of whether we ought to be virtuous for the sake of virtue, or for the sake of a reward lying beyond virtue itself, Marqah's position is evidently, as on many other matters, as Aristotelian as even Aristotle could have wished.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion of Marqah's ethics completes my exposition of his philosophy. I shall now draw together the many threads by first giving a brief summary of my exposition, and next presenting certain theses for which we shall by then be prepared.

The exposition can be considered to be in two parts, the first on God (Chapters II-VII) and the second on man (Chapters VIII-IX). Chapter VII, on the creativity of God, thus has a pivotal role, since there the shift is made from a consideration of Marqah's teaching on God to his teaching on God's creative power and on the world he created, whose most exalted inhabitant is man.

However, the earlier chapters do not disregard Marqah's teachings on the created world, for Marqah sought clues in the world to the nature of the Creator. In Chapter II, on the existence of God, it is shown that Marqah regarded as valid the cosmological argument for the existence of God. Large scale features of the world, and even features of man, whom Marqah regarded as a microcosmos, were taken to point to His existence. It was shown that both the general forms of Marqah's arguments, and even the small details of formulation, are to be found in the works of earlier philosophers, especially Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Philo. Marqah's position is, indeed, so close to Philo's it would not tax the imagination to suppose that Marqah had studied Philo's writings on the subject.

But what can be said about God beyond the fact that He exists? A good deal of what Marqah has to say about God follows from his acceptance of God as *one*. Attention is therefore focused on this aspect of God. I argue that Marqah employs a distinction drawn by Aristotle between 'one' understood as connoting 'simplicity', 'absence of internal plurality', and 'one' as connoting 'quantitative oneness', that is, 'uniqueness'. I argue that Aristotle's god is one, both internally and quantitatively, and show how certain conclusions can be drawn from this, namely, that god is spaceless, timeless and incorporeal. This conception reappears in the works of Philo, and thereafter in the *Memar* of Marqah. The details of

Marqah's position are shown to be almost identical to the details of Philo's.

The concept of the otherness of God appears in the course of our examination of Marqah's teaching on divine oneness, because that teaching implies that God is other than man. But the extent of God's otherness, as this is seen by Marqah, raises a question, examined in Chapter IV, of whether or not God is knowable. I argue that Marqah, like Philo, held that God is in essence unknowable, and that in taking this line they were adopting a doctrine to which Aristotle was committed by his account of god in the *Metaphysics* and his account of man in the *De Anima*. Both Philo and Marqah speak of men as knowing God. However, both draw a distinction between knowing *that* God is and knowing *what* he is, and their references to men as knowing God can readily be interpreted as meaning that men know that God exists.

Although God is, according to both Philo and Marqah, internally one, both attribute many things to Him, such as justice, mercy and knowledge. I argue that there is no inconsistency here, for both thinkers, if I am correct, regard God's attributes, which they identify with His powers, as 'properties' of God, in the technical Aristotelian sense of the term; they are not part of His essence, but belong to Him by virtue of His essence. Hence the essential oneness of God is not called in question by the attribution to Him of many powers. Various characteristics of God's power, and the question of their knowability, are discussed. Frequent reference is made to Philo's writings since they shed a great deal of light on Marqah's teachings on the powers of God. On this topic the teachings of Philo and Marqah are almost identical.

Among the attributes of God listed by Marqah are His justice, compassion, mercy, love and knowledge. These attributions reveal that Marqah regarded God as a person. I argue that on this matter Marqah's position is in opposition to Aristotle's and in accord with Philo's. I discuss the various ways in which Marqah's position can be defended against the charge of anthropomorphism and then examine various of the personal qualities Marqah attributes to God. Special attention is paid to the nature of divine knowledge and the divine will; it is argued that Marqah held that these two divine attributes are, in crucial respects, wholly unlike human knowledge and will.

In Chapter VII attention is focused on a particular act of divine

will, that act by which the world was created. Marqah's position, namely, that the world was created *ex nihilo* by an act of divine will, is contrasted with the ideas of Hellenic philosophers from Thales to Aristotle, who either ignore the possibility of creation *ex nihilo* (Thales and Anaximander) or reject its possibility (Aristotle). Plato's *Timaeus* doctrine, involving the idea of the demiurge employing a model in creation, is expounded, and it is suggested that Plato may have been Marqah's target when Marqah attacks the idea that God used a model. The *Memar's* position regarding certain large aspects of the created world is discussed, as is Marqah's acceptance of the reality of miracles. That acceptance is squared with his idea that the systematicity of the world testifies to the oneness of God.

Chapter VIII is on Marqah's teaching on man, first, as he stands in relation to the rest of the creation, and secondly, as he is in himself. Marqah, like Philo, sees man as the final cause of the creation, and, again like Philo, sees man, by virtue of his spiritual qualities, as a microcosmos. A detailed examination is made of a number of Marqah's psychological terms, and it is argued that Marqah's account of the divisions of the soul parallels the Aristotelian account of practical reason. Finally, I argue that Marqah taught the doctrine of human free will.

After considering man's psychology, I turn, in Chapter IX, to man regarded as an ethical animal. I argue that Marqah's ethics are universalistic in nature, and discuss this universalism in its relation to Samaritan particularism. Marqah's conception of justice is considered, and especially his claim that the cognitive aspects of an action have a crucial bearing on the question of its meritoriousness. Arising from this consideration of the cognitive aspects of action, attention is paid to Marqah's account of weakness of will, and the consonance of that account with Aristotle's is established. Next, Marqah's theory of the suffering righteous is examined—I argue that he denies that the righteous do suffer. And I end with a discussion of Marqah's teaching on the relation between the motives of fear and love. In connection with this teaching certain significant parallels with Aristotle are established.

With this brief recapitulation of the foregoing chapters before us, I would like to formulate certain theses.

First, the *Memar* contains a philosophical system. It is true

that the system is not systematically expounded by Marqah. The philosophy is presented as part of an exegesis of the Pentateuch, and consequently philosophical fragments are introduced from time to time by Marqah as a means of shedding light on Pentateuchal verses. However, the fact that the philosophy in the *Memar* is not presented in a systematic fashion does not imply that there is not an underlying philosophical system which can be extrapolated from the text. The system emerges sufficiently frequently to provide us with substantial clues as to its nature. If a philosophy is to count as a system only if its author has expounded it systematically, then of course the *Memar* does not contain a philosophical system. But this account of what is to count as a system is over-rigorous, and may indeed miss the point, for it appears to confuse the systematic exposition of a philosophy and the systematicity of the philosophy itself. If I am correct, the whole weight of evidence presented in the foregoing chapters points to the thesis that the philosophy of the *Memar* is a system of philosophy. It should perhaps be added that Marqah's failure to present the philosophy in a systematically ordered exposition is not a failure on Marqah's own terms, for if anything at all about the *Memar* is clear it is that Marqah did not write it *as* a work of philosophy. It would be closer to the mark to describe it as a homiletical exegesis of the Pentateuch, though it is more than that.

A second thesis I wish to present is that the philosophical system underlying the *Memar* is Hellenistic in character. The extent of the coincidence of Marqah's philosophical ideas with those of other thinkers, in particular, Aristotle and Philo, forces us to go further than say merely that the *Memar* contains Hellenistic philosophical elements. For the whole of Marqah's philosophical system is permeated with Hellenistic ideas.

And yet Marqah was a Samaritan, and therefore was committed to an acceptance of the validity of Pentateuchal teaching—his method of seeking Pentateuchal warrant for his philosophical ideas flows from that commitment. This fact about Marqah must be seen to give rise to a problem, for the presence in the *Memar* of so much thought that is consonant with Hellenistic philosophy may seem to show that Marqah was to that extent false to his ideal of the Pentateuch as the fountainhead of truth. How, it may be asked, could he be both a Hellenistic philosopher and a Samaritan?

To regard the Pentateuchalism and the Hellenism of the *Memar* as held together in a tense and unstable alliance is, however, to remain unresponsive to an important harmonising principle, namely, that all truth is Mosaic truth. Marqah retained his reception apparatus, both intellectual and sensual, in a state of readiness to respond to stimuli from any source of truth. The source could be Hellenistic philosophy as well as the natural world. We have seen that Marqah held that created things can give us, via our created faculties, a clue to the nature of the Creator. In that case there should be nothing surprising in the idea that Marqah could believe that one of God's creatures—even a non-Samaritan creature—by thinking with his God-given mind, about the God-given world that is known to him through his God-given senses, might give birth to an idea that could deepen Marqah's insight into the word of God as that is formulated in the Pentateuch. For Marqah, then, the policy of rejecting out of hand all ideas emanating from a non-Samaritan source could lead to a rejection of Mosaic teaching. Justin Martyr's dictum: "All things that men say truly, belong to us Christians"[1] could have been transposed by Marqah to a related key: "All things that men say truly, belong to us Samaritans". Thus Marqah's Hellenistic philosophy and his Samaritan Pentateuchalism live in easy accord in the *Memar*.

But a question can be raised as to how the Hellenistic philosophy reached Marqah. Now it cannot be supposed that he worked it out without leaning in any way upon external sources. The *Memar*, as has been shown, is permeated with philosophical ideas found in the works of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Philo, and it is a probability approaching certainty that Marqah knew, even if only at second hand, the works of these thinkers.

Neither need it be supposed that Marqah must have spent time at a school of philosophy outside Palestine. Two reasons for not accepting this supposition may be adduced.

First, it is almost as unlikely that Marqah's synthesis of Samaritanism and Hellenistic philosophy lacked forerunners as that Aquinas' synthesis of Christianity and Aristotelianism could have lacked forerunners. And if it had forerunners this implies that there were other Samaritans who had themselves learned Hellenistic philosophy. The probability, therefore, is that the

[1] II *Apology* 10.

Samaritan community of which Marqah was a member had a developed philosophical tradition by the time Marqah came to write the *Memar*. In that case we do not need to suppose that in order to study philosophy Marqah had to leave his community.

Secondly, Marqah's hymns, which, as we have seen, contain many concepts characteristic of Hellenistic philosophy, were accepted for inclusion in the *Defter*, the Samaritan Book of Common Prayer. If we suppose there not to have been a Hellenistic philosophical tradition in his community, we would have to suppose that community to have been so docile, or so unattached to tradition as to be willing to swallow large quantities of an alien philosophy without the benefit of preparations. If it be replied that in Marqah's hands Hellenistic philosophy did not *seem* alien, then it must be asked whether it is plausible to suppose that he could have accomplished so difficult a task as an unobtrusive harmonisation of Samaritanism and Hellenistic philosophy without drawing upon the experience of others.

In the face of these considerations I wish to present as a further thesis that Marqah, in writing the *Memar*, was, in all probability, drawing upon philosophical ideas that formed part of the cultural ethos of the Samaritan community. It is a matter for conjecture whether there was a school of philosophy in Shechem, in the 4th century Samaritan renaissance under Baba Rabba, but I hope I have established the probability that a good deal of philosophising was in progress in the Samaritan community during that period.

If I am correct, then, a survey of 4th century Palestine that omits reference to Samaritan Hellenistic philosophy ignores a remarkable aspect of Palestinian cultural life.

I like to think that I have also shown that Marqah's philosophy deserves to be read for the sake of the philosophical insights it affords. Had Marqah written in Greek, and not in Samaritan Aramaic, he would surely have found a niche long ago in standard histories of philosophy.

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