

What Were They Thinking? A Brief Look at Maimonides and Aquinas

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The larger context: Crusades and Reconquista: Christian and Muslim Seas; Jewish archipelago

Rambam (1135-1204)

Bio: Cordova, Fez, Fustat;

Mishneh Torah

Medical writings

Guide for the Perplexed

Reason and faith

Aristotle

Creation

God's attributes

Good and Evil

Aquinas (1225-74)

Bio: Italy and France

Summa

Aristotle: syllogism

God's existence

Conversion

Good and Evil

Contemporary Implications

henda, is the intellect itself, which is likewise His essence, God is therefore always the *intellectus*, the *intelligens*, and the *intelligibile*.

We have thus shown that the identity of the intellect, the *intelligens* and the *intelligibile*, is not only a fact as regards the Creator, but as regards all intellect, when in action. There is, however, this difference, that from time to time our intellect passes over from mere potentiality to reality, and that the pure intellect, i.e., the active intellect, finds sometimes obstacles, though not in itself, but accidentally in some external cause. It is not our present intention to explain this subject, but we will merely show that God alone, and none besides Him, is an intellect constantly in action, and there is, neither in Himself nor in anything beside Him, any obstacle whereby His comprehension would be hindered. Therefore He always includes the *intelligens*, the *intellectus*, and the *intelligibile*, and His essence is at the same time the *intelligens*, the *intelligibile*, and the *intellectus*, as is necessarily the case with all intellect in action.

We have reiterated this idea in the present chapter because it is exceedingly abstruse, and I do not apprehend that the reader will confound intellectual comprehension with the representative faculty—with the reproduction of the material image in our imagination, since this work is designed only for those who have studied philosophy, and who know what has already been said on the soul and its faculties.

CHAPTER LXIX

THE philosophers, as you know, call God the First Cause (in Hebrew *'illah* and *sibbah*): but those who are known by the name of Mutakallemim are very much opposed to the use of that name, and call Him *Agens*, believing that there is a great difference whether we say that God is the Cause or that He is the *Agens*. They argue thus: If we say that God is the Cause, the co-existence of the Cause with that which was produced by that Cause would necessarily be implied; this again would involve the belief that the Universe was eternal, and that it was inseparable from God. When, however, we say that God is the *Agens*, the co-existence of the *Agens* with its product is not implied; for the *agens* can exist anterior to its product; we cannot even imagine how an *agens* can be in action unless it existed before its own production. This is an argument advanced by persons who do not distinguish between the potential and the actual. You, however, should know that in this case there is no difference whether you employ the term "cause" or "*agens*"; for if you take the term "cause" in the sense of a mere potentiality, it precedes its effect; but if you mean the cause in action, then the effect must necessarily co-exist with the cause in action. The same is the case with the *agens*; take it as an *agens* in reality, the work must necessarily co-exist with its *agens*. For the builder, before he builds the house, is not in reality a builder, but has the faculty for building a house—in the same way as the materials for the house before it is being built are merely *in potentiâ*—but when the house has been built, he is the builder in reality, and his product must likewise be in actual existence. Nothing is therefore gained by choosing the term "*agens*" and rejecting the term "cause." My object here is to show that these two terms are equal, and in the same

manner as we call God an *Agens*, although the work does not yet exist, only because there is no hindrance or obstacle which might prevent Him from doing it whenever He pleases, we may also call Him the Cause, although the effect may not yet be in existence.

The reason why the philosophers called God the Cause, and did not call Him the *Agens*, is not to be sought in their belief that the universe is eternal, but in other motives, which I will briefly describe to you. It has been shown in the science of Physics that everything, except the Primal Cause, owes its origin to the following four causes:—the substance, the form, the *agens*, the final cause. These are sometimes direct, sometimes indirect causes; but each by itself is called "a cause." They also believe—and I do not differ from their opinion—that God Himself is the *agens*, the form, and the end; therefore they call God "the Cause," in order to express that He unites in Himself these three causes, viz., that He is the *agens*, the form, and the final cause of the universe. In the present chapter I only wish to show you in what sense it may be said of God that He is the *agens*, the form, and also the final cause of the universe. You need not trouble yourself now with the question whether the universe has been created by God, or whether, as the philosophers have assumed, it is eternal, co-existing with Him. You will find [in the pages of this treatise] full and instructive information on the subject. Here I wish to show that God is the "cause" of every event that takes place in the world, just as He is the Creator of the whole universe as it now exists. It has already been explained in the science of Physics, that a cause must again be sought for each of the four divisions of causes. When we have found for any existing thing those four causes which are in immediate connexion with it, we find for these again causes, and for these again other causes, and so on until we arrive at the first causes. E.g., a certain production has its *agens*, this *agens* again has its *agens*, and so on and on until at last we arrive at a first *agens*, which is the true *agens* throughout all the intervening links. If the letter *aleph* be moved by *bet*, *bet* by *gimel*, *gimel* by *dalet*, and *dalet* by *hé*—and as the series does not extend to infinity, let us stop at *hé*—there is no doubt that the *hé* moves the letters *aleph*, *bet*, *gimel*, and *dalet*, and we say correctly that the *aleph* is moved by *hé*. In that sense everything occurring in the universe, although directly produced by certain nearer causes, is ascribed to the Creator, as we shall explain. He is the *Agens*, and He is therefore the ultimate cause. We shall also find, after careful examination, that every physical and transient form must be preceded by another such form, by which the substance has been fitted to receive the next form; the previous form again has been preceded by another, and we arrive at length at that form which is necessary for the existence of all intermediate forms, which are the causes of the present form. That form to which the forms of all existing things are traced is God. You must not imagine that when we say that God is the first form of all forms existing in the Universe, we refer to that first form which Aristotle, in the Book of Metaphysics, describes as being without beginning and without end, for he treats of a form which is a physical, and not a purely intellectual one. When we call God the ultimate form of the universe, we do not use this term in the sense of form connected with substance, namely, as the form of that substance, as though God were the form of a material being. It is not in this

the bodies of the stars; (2) bodies which always move, such are the bodies of the spheres; (3) bodies which both move and rest, such are the elements. Now, I ask, what has united these two bodies, which, according to my opinion, differ very much from each other, though, according to Abu-nasr, only a little? Who has prepared the bodies for this union? In short, it would be strange that, without the existence of design, one of two different bodies should be joined to the other in such a manner that it is fixed to it in a certain place but does not combine with it. It is still more difficult to explain the existence of the numerous stars in the eighth sphere; they are all spherical; some of them are large, some small; here we notice two stars apparently distant from each other one cubit; there a group of ten close together; whilst in another place there is a large space without any star. What determined that the one small part should have ten stars, and the other portion should be without any star? and the whole body of the sphere being uniform throughout, why should a particular star occupy the one place and not another? The answer to these and similar questions is very difficult, and almost impossible, if we assume that all emanates from God as the necessary result of certain permanent laws, as Aristotle holds. But if we assume that all this is the result of design, there is nothing strange or improbable; and the only question to be asked is this: What is the cause of this design? The answer to this question is that all this has been made for a certain purpose, though we do not know it; there is nothing that is done in vain, or by chance. It is well known that the veins and nerves of an individual dog or ass are not the result of chance; their magnitude is not determined by chance; nor is it by chance, but for a certain purpose, that one vein is thick, another thin; that one nerve has many branches, another has none; that one goes down straight, whilst another is bent; it is well known that all this must be just as it is. How, then, can any reasonable person imagine that the position, magnitude, and number of the stars, or the various courses of their spheres, are purposeless, or the result of chance? There is no doubt that every one of these things is necessary and in accordance with a certain design; and it is extremely improbable that these things should be the necessary result of natural laws, and not that of design.

The best proof for design in the Universe I find in the different motions of the spheres, and in the fixed position of the stars in the spheres. For this reason you find all the prophets point to the spheres and stars when they want to prove that there must exist a Divine Being. Thus Abraham reflected on the stars, as is well known; Isaiah (xl. 26) exhorts to learn from them the existence of God, and says, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things?" Jeremiah [calls God] "The Maker of the heavens"; Abraham calls Him "The God of the heavens" (Gen. xxiv. 7); [Moses], the chief of the Prophets, uses the phrase explained by us (Part I., chap. lxx.), "He who rideth on the heavens" (Deut. xxxiii. 26). The proof taken from the heavens is convincing; for the variety of things in the sublunary world, though their substance is one and the same, can be explained as the work of the influences of the spheres, or the result of the variety in the position of the substance in relation to the spheres, as has been shown by Aristotle. But who has determined the variety in the spheres and the stars, if not the Will of God? To say that the Intelligences have determined it

is of no use whatever; for the Intelligences are not corporeal, and have no local relation to the spheres. Why then should the one sphere in its desire to approach the Intelligence, move eastward, and another westward? Is the one Intelligence in the east, the other in the west? or why does one move with great velocity, another slowly? This difference is not in accordance with their distances from each other, as is well known. We must then say that the nature and essence of each sphere necessitated its motion in a certain direction, and in a certain manner, as the consequence of its desire to approach its Intelligence. Aristotle clearly expresses this opinion. We thus have returned to the part from which we started; and we ask, Since the substance of all things is the same, what made the nature of one portion different from another? Why has this sphere a desire which produces a motion different from that which the desire of another sphere produces? This must have been done by an agent capable of determining. We have thus been brought to examine two questions:—(1) Is it necessary to assume that the variety of the things in the Universe is the result of Design, and not of fixed laws of Nature, or is it not necessary? (2) Assuming that all this is the result of Design, does it follow that it has been created after not having existed, or does *Creatio ex nihilo* not follow, and has the Being which has determined all this done always so? Some of those who believe in the Eternity of the Universe hold the last opinion. I will now begin the examination of these two questions, and explain them as much as necessary in the following chapters.

CHAPTER XX

ACCORDING to Aristotle, none of the products of Nature are due to chance. His proof is this: That which is due to chance does not reappear constantly nor frequently, but all products of Nature reappear either constantly or at least frequently. The heavens, with all that they contain, are constant; they never change, as has been explained, neither as regards their essence nor as regards their place. But in the sublunary world we find both things which are constant and things which reappear frequently [though not constantly]. Thus, e.g., the heat of fire and the downward tendency of a stone are constant properties, whilst the form and life of the individuals in each species are the same in most cases. All this is clear. If the parts of the Universe are not accidental, how can the whole Universe be considered as the result of chance? Therefore the existence of the Universe is not due to chance. The following is, in short, the objection which Aristotle raises against one of the earlier philosophers who assumed that the Universe is the result of chance, and that it came into existence by itself, without any cause. Some assume that the heavens and the whole Universe came into existence spontaneously, as well as the rotation and motion [of the spheres], which has produced the variety of things and established their present order. This opinion implies a great absurdity. They admit that animals and plants do not owe their existence or production to chance, but to a certain cause, be that cause Nature, or reason, or the like; e.g., they do not assume that everything might be formed by chance of a certain seed or semen, but that of a certain seed only an olive-tree is produced, and of a certain semen only

degrading and perfectly disgraceful; we must not imitate the songs and tales of ignorant and lascivious people. It may be suitable to them, but is not fit for those who are told, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6). Those who employ the faculty of thinking and speaking in the service of that sense which is no honour to us, who think more than necessary of drink and love, or even sing of these things; they employ and use the divine gift in acts of rebellion against the Giver, and in the transgression of His commandments. To them the following words may be applied: "And I multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal" (Hos. ii. 10). I have also a reason and cause for calling our language the holy language—do not think it is exaggeration or error on my part, it is perfectly correct—the Hebrew language has no special name for the organ of generation in females or in males, nor for the act of generation itself, nor for semen, nor for secretion. The Hebrew has no original expressions for these things, and only describes them in figurative language and by way of hints, as if to indicate thereby that these things should not be mentioned, and should therefore have no names; we ought to be silent about them, and when we are compelled to mention them, we must manage to employ for that purpose some suitable expressions, although these are generally used in a different sense. Thus the organ of generation in males is called in Hebrew *gid*, which is a figurative term, reminding of the words, "And thy neck is an iron sinew" (*gid*) (Isa. xlvi. 4). It is also called *shupka*, "pouring out" (Deut. xxiii. 2), on account of its function. The female organ is called *kobah* (Num. xxv. 8), from *kebah* (Deut. xviii. 3), which denotes "stomach"; *rehem*, "womb," is the inner organ in which the fetus develops; *zoah* (Isa. xxviii. 8), "refuse," is derived from the verb *yaza*, "he went out"; for "urine" the phrase *meme raglayim*, "the water of the feet" (2 Kings. xviii. 17), is used; semen is expressed by *shikbat zera*, "a layer of seed." For the act of generation there is no expression whatever in Hebrew; it is described by the following words only: *ba'al*, "he was master"; *shakab*, "he lay"; *lakab*, "he took"; *gillab ervab*, "he uncovered the nakedness." Be not misled by the word *yishgalennab* (Deut. xxviii. 30), to take it as denoting that act; this is not the case, for *shegal* denotes a female ready for cohabitation. Comp. "Upon thy right hand did stand the maiden" (*shegal*) "in gold of Ophir" (Ps. xlv. 10). *Yishgalennab*, according to the *Kethib*, denotes therefore "he will take the female for the purpose of cohabitation."

We have made in the greater part of this chapter a digression from the theme of this treatise, and introduced some moral and religious matter, although they do not entirely belong to the subject of this treatise, but the course of the discussion has led to it.

CHAPTER IX

THE corporeal element in man is a large screen and partition that prevents him from perfectly perceiving abstract ideals; this would be the case even if the corporeal element were as pure and superior as the substance of the spheres; how much more must this be the case with our dark and opaque body. However great the exertion of our mind may be to comprehend the Divine Being or any of the ideals, we find a screen and partition between Him

and ourselves. Thus the prophets frequently hint at the existence of a partition between God and us. They say He is concealed from us in vapours, in darkness, in mist, or in a thick cloud; or use similar figures to express that on account of our bodies we are unable to comprehend His essence. This is the meaning of the words, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Ps. xcvi. 2). The prophets tell us that the difficulty consists in the grossness of our substance; they do not imply, as might be gathered from the literal meaning of their words, that God is corporeal, and is invisible because He is surrounded by thick clouds, vapours, darkness, or mist. This figure is also expressed in the passage, "He made darkness His secret place" (Ps. xviii. 12). The object of God revealing Himself in thick clouds, darkness, vapours, and mist was to teach this lesson; for every prophetic vision contains some lesson by means of allegory; that mighty vision, therefore, though the greatest of all visions, and above all comparison, viz., His revelation in a thick cloud, did not take place without any purpose, it was intended to indicate that we cannot comprehend Him on account of the dark body that surrounds us. It does not surround God, because He is incorporeal. A tradition is current among our people that the day of the revelation on Mount Sinai was misty, cloudy, and a little rainy. Comp. "Lord, when thou wentest forth from Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped water" (Judges v. 4). The same idea is expressed by the words "darkness, clouds, and thick darkness" (Deut. iv. 11). The phrase does not denote that darkness surrounds God, for with Him there is no darkness, but the great, strong, and permanent light, which, emanating from Him, illuminates all darkness, as is expressed by the prophetic simile, "And the earth shined with His glory" (Ezek. xliii. 2).

CHAPTER X

THE Mutakallemim, as I have already told you, apply the term non-existence only to absolute non-existence, and not to the absence of properties. A property and the absence of that property are considered by them as two opposites, they treat, e.g., blindness and sight, death and life, in the same way as heat and cold. Therefore they say, without any qualification, non-existence does not require any agent, an agent is required when *something* is produced. From a certain point of view this is correct. Although they hold that non-existence does not require an agent, they say in accordance with their principle that God causes blindness and deafness, and gives rest to anything that moves, for they consider these negative conditions as positive properties. We must now state our opinion in accordance with the results of philosophical research. You know that he who removes the obstacle of motion is to some extent the cause of the motion, e.g., if one removes the pillar which supports the beam he causes the beam to move, as has been stated by Aristotle in his *Physics* (VIII., chap. iv.); in this sense we say of him who removed a certain property that he produced the absence of that property, although absence of a property is nothing positive. Just as we say of him who puts out the light at night that he has produced darkness, so we say of him who destroyed the sight of any being that he produced blindness, although darkness and blindness are negative properties, and require no agent.

In accordance with this view we explain the following passage of Isaiah : " I form the light and create (*bore*) darkness : I make peace, and create (*bore*) evil " (Isa. xlv. 7), for darkness and evil are non-existing things. Consider that the prophet does not say, I make (*oseb*) darkness, I make (*oseb*) evil, because darkness and evil are not things in positive existence to which the verb " to make " would apply ; the verb *bara* " he created " is used, because in Hebrew this verb is applied to non-existing things, e.g., " In the beginning God created " (*bara*), etc. ; here the creation took place from nothing. Only in this sense can non-existence be said to be produced by a certain action of an agent. In the same way we must explain the following passage : " Who hath made man's mouth ? or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing," etc. (Exod. iv. 11). The passage can also be explained as follows : Who has made man able to speak ? or can create him without the capacity of speaking, i.e., create a substance that is incapable of acquiring this property ? for he who produces a substance that cannot acquire a certain property may be called the producer of that privation. Thus we say, if any one abstains from delivering a fellow-man from death, although he is able to do so, that he killed him. It is now clear that according to all these different views the action of an agent cannot be directly connected with a thing that does not exist ; only indirectly is non-existence described as the result of the action of an agent, whilst in a direct manner an action can only influence a thing really in existence ; accordingly, whoever the agent may be, he can only act upon an existing thing.

After this explanation you must recall to memory that, as has been proved, the [so-called] evils are evils only in relation to a certain thing, and that which is evil in reference to a certain existing thing, either includes the non-existence of that thing or the non-existence of some of its good conditions. The proposition has therefore been laid down in the most general terms, " All evils are negations." Thus for man death is evil ; death is his non-existence. Illness, poverty, and ignorance are evils for man ; all these are privations of properties. If you examine all single cases to which this general proposition applies, you will find that there is not one case in which the proposition is wrong except in the opinion of those who do not make any distinction between negative and positive properties, or between two opposites, or do not know the nature of things,—who, e.g., do not know that health in general denotes a certain equilibrium, and is a relative term. The absence of that relation is illness in general, and death is the absence of life in the case of any animal. The destruction of other things is likewise nothing but the absence of their form.

After these propositions, it must be admitted as a fact that it cannot be said of God that He directly creates evil, or He has the direct intention to produce evil ; this is impossible. His works are all perfectly good. He only produces existence, and all existence is good ; whilst evils are of a negative character, and cannot be acted upon. Evil can only be attributed to Him in the way we have mentioned. He creates evil only in so far as He produces the corporeal element such as it actually is ; it is always connected with negatives, and is on that account the source of all destruction and all evil. Those beings that do not possess this corporeal element are not subject to destruction or evil ; consequently the true work of God is all good, since it

is existence. The book which enlightened the darkness of the world says therefore, " And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good " (Gen. i. 31). Even the existence of this corporeal element, low as it in reality is, because it is the source of death and all evils, is likewise good for the permanence of the Universe and the continuation of the order of things, so that one thing departs and the other succeeds. Rabbi Meir therefore explains the words " and behold it was very good " (*tob me'od*) ; that even death was good in accordance with what we have observed in this chapter. Remember what I said in this chapter, consider it, and you will understand all that the prophets and our Sages remarked about the perfect goodness of all the direct works of God. In *Beresbit Rabba* (chap. i.) the same idea is expressed thus : " No evil comes down from above."

CHAPTER XI

ALL the great evils which men cause to each other because of certain intentions, desires, opinions, or religious principles, are likewise due to non-existence, because they originate in ignorance, which is absence of wisdom. A blind man, for example, who has no guide, stumbles constantly, because he cannot see, and causes injury and harm to himself and others. In the same manner various classes of men, each man in proportion to his ignorance, bring great evils upon themselves and upon other individual members of the species. If men possessed wisdom, which stands in the same relation to the form of man as the sight to the eye, they would not cause any injury to themselves or to others ; for the knowledge of truth removes hatred and quarrels, and prevents mutual injuries. This state of society is promised to us by the prophet in the words : " And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," etc. ; " and the cow and the bear shall feed together," etc. ; and " the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp," etc. (Isa. xi. 6 *seq.*). The prophet also points out what will be the cause of this change ; for he says that hatred, quarrel, and fighting will come to an end, because men will then have a true knowledge of God. " They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea " (*ibid.* ver. 9). Note it.

CHAPTER XII

MEN frequently think that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good things ; many sayings and songs of the nations dwell on this idea. They say that a good thing is found only exceptionally, whilst evil things are numerous and lasting. Not only common people make this mistake, but even many who believe that they are wise. Al-Razi wrote a well-known book *On Metaphysics* [or *Theology*]. Among other mad and foolish things, it contains also the idea, discovered by him, that there exists more evil than good. For if the happiness of man and his pleasure in the times of prosperity be compared with the mishaps that befall him,—such as grief, acute pain, defects, paralysis of the limbs, fears, anxieties, and troubles,—it would seem as if the existence of man is a punishment and a great evil for him. This author commenced to verify his opinion by counting all the evils one by one ; by

ing when it knows any object of the intellect, and it knows its intellectual power through its act. God, of course, exists as a pure act both in the order of existing beings and in that of objects of understanding; so He understands Himself through Himself.

✓ On Knowing God

Knowledge occurs by virtue of the fact that the thing known is present in the knower. Now, the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Hence, for each type of knower its knowledge is present according to the mode proper to its nature. So, if the mode of existing of any known thing surpasses the mode proper to the nature of the knower, then the knowledge of that thing must be above the nature of this knower.

- There are many modes of existing for things. There are
- 1) some things whose nature cannot exist except in individual matter; things like this are all corporeal. There are others whose natures are subsistent in themselves and not in any
 - 2) matter. However, these are not identical with their own act of existing, but they have an act of existing; they are incorporeal substances and we call them angels. Now, for God
 - 3) alone is that mode of being proper in which He is His own subsisting act of existing [esse].

It is connatural for us to know those things that exist only in individual matter, because our soul by which we know is a form in matter. It has two powers of knowing. One is the act of a corporeal organ. It is connatural to this power to know things as they exist in individual matter; as a consequence, this sense power knows singulars only. Its other knowing power is the intellect, which is not the act of any corporeal organ. Hence, it is connatural for us through the intellect to know natures that in fact exist only in individual matter, yet not to know them as they are in individual matter

Summa of Theology, I, 12, 4, c. Trans. V.J.B.

but as they are abstracted from it by means of intellectual consideration. Consequently, we are able to know intellectually things of this kind in a universal way that is above the capacity of sense power.

Of course, it is connatural to the angelic intellect to know natures that are not existing in matter, and this is above the natural capacity of the intellect proper to the human soul in its present state of life when it is united to a body.

The conclusion remains, then, that to know the subsistent act of existing itself is connatural only to the divine intellect, for this is above the natural capacity of any created intellect since no creature is its own act of existing but a creature has participated existence. Therefore, the created intellect cannot see God in His essence—unless God through His grace joins Himself to the created intellect as a thing to be understood by it.

Demonstrative Science as an Intellectual Habit

An intellectual virtue is speculative when the speculative intellect is perfected by it in order to think about what is true; for this is its good work. Now, the true may be considered in two ways: first, as known directly in itself; second, as known through something else. What is known directly in itself stands as a principle and is perceived at once by the intellect. So, the habit perfecting the intellect for the consideration of a true object of this kind is called the understanding as the *habit of principles*.

The true that is known through something else is, of course, not perceived at once by the intellect but as a result of rational searching; so, it has the character of a terminus. Now, this is possible in two ways. One way is for it to be ultimate in any genus; the other way is for it to be ultimate

Summa of Theology, I-II, 57, 2. Trans. V.J.B.

Has Man Free Choice?

We must say that man is possessed of free choice; otherwise, advice, exhortations, precepts, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be useless. To make this evident, we ought to consider that some things act without judgment; for instance, a stone moves downward, and likewise all noncognitive agents.

Again, other things act from judgment, but not free judgment; for example, brute animals. The sheep judges when it sees a wolf, by natural and not free judgment, that it ought to flee; for it so judges by natural instinct and not as a result of inference. The same is true of any judgment made by brute animals.

However, man acts with judgment, since he judges by means of the cognitive power that something should be avoided or attained. Instead, because this judgment does not issue from a natural instinct for a particular kind of activity but from rational inference, he therefore acts with free judgment, being able to incline toward different objectives. In fact, reasoning about contingent matters is open to opposite ways, as is evident in dialectical syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now, particular activities are contingent matters, and so, rational judgment on them is open to different possibilities and is not determined to one objective. And so, man must be possessed of free choice, by the very fact that he is rational.

5. [The objection is that we are the kind or quality of men that we find ourselves to be, as a result of our nature: it is natural and not free for us to seek a given end.] The quality of a man is twofold: one is natural, the other is adventitious. Now, natural quality can be understood either on the intellectual level or on the level of the body and its associated powers. So, from the fact that a man has a certain natural

quality on the intellectual level, he naturally desires his ultimate end, happiness. Of course, this appetitive desire is natural and not subject to free choice, as has already been made clear.

On the level of the body and its associated powers, a man can be of a certain kind by virtue of a natural quality, inasmuch as he has a certain physical constitution, or disposition, arising from some sort of influence from corporeal causes. These latter cannot make an impression on the intellectual part because it is not the act of any body. And so, depending on the kind of person that each man is in his bodily quality, so will the end appear to him—because man is inclined to choose or repudiate something, as a result of this kind of disposition. However, these inclinations are subject to rational judgment, to which the lower appetite is obedient, as we said. Hence, this does not prejudice freedom of choice.

Moreover, adventitious qualities are items like habits and passions, and a person is more inclined to one thing than to another by them. Yet, these inclinations are also subject to rational judgment. And qualities of this kind are also subject to it because it is in our power to acquire such qualities, either by causing them or disposing ourselves to them, and also we may rid ourselves of them. So, there is nothing here that is opposed to freedom of choice.

The Union of Soul and Body

Since matter exists for the sake of form and not vice versa, we must discover, on the side of the soul, the reason why the body should be united to it. Hence it is said, in the *De anima*, that the soul is not only the form and mover of the body but also its end. Moreover, it is evident, from the preceding *Disputed Questions*, that it is natural for the human soul to be united to the body. For, although the soul is lowest in the

Now, the end of our desires is God; hence, the act whereby we are primarily joined to Him is basically and substantially our happiness. But we are primarily united with God by an act of understanding; and therefore, the very seeing of God, which is an act of the intellect, is substantially and basically our happiness. However, since this action is most perfect and most appropriate to its object, it is therefore followed by the greatest enjoyment, which adorns and perfects this operation, as beauty does youth, to quote the *Ethics* (X, 4). As a result, this joy which belongs to the will is a formal complement of happiness. Thus, the ultimate basis of happiness lies in the vision, while its complement consists in the fruition.

Moral Good and Evil Specified by the End

Actions differ in species according to a diversity of forms which are the principles of the actions, even though the agents may not be of different species. Thus, to heat and to cool are specifically different actions, because heat and cold are formally different. Now, the form of the will is the end and the good, which is its object and the thing desired. Therefore, the specific difference among acts of the will must be discovered from the rational character of the end. And since acts belong in the genus moral, because they are voluntary, so the specific difference in the genus of moral acts is based on a diversity of the end.

On the Sentences, II, 40, 1, 1, Response. Trans. V.J.B.

act of free will
choice →

Good and Evil in Rational Agents

Virtue and vice indicate some differences of movement and action, on the basis of whether they are performed well or badly. For, a virtue is that whereby one is related in a good way toward action, while a vice involves a bad way. The same is true of the other habits, whether they be intellectual, as in the case of science, or corporeal, as in the case of health.

Nevertheless, well and badly apply chiefly to a quality in animated things; and especially to those that possess *proairesis*, that is, choice. This is so, because the good has the rational character of an end. Actions done by choice are performed for the sake of an end. Now, to act for an end is especially the function of animated beings. Of course, inanimate things act or are moved for the sake of an end but not as knowers of their end, nor as themselves acting for the end, but rather as directed by another agent who has given them a natural inclination, as an arrow is directed toward an end by the archer.

Of course, irrational animated things know their end and move themselves locally toward the end, as possessors of judgment concerning the end; but the appetite for the end, and for the means to this end, are determined for them as a result of natural inclination. For this reason, they are things acted upon rather than agents. In their case, also, there is no free decision.

However, rational agents, in whom alone is choice found, do know their end, and they know the proper relationship of means to the end itself. So, just as they move themselves toward their end, so also do they toward the desiring of the end, or of the means that are for the sake of the end; and due to this fact, free choice is present in them.

Exposition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, V, Lect. 16, nn. 999-1000. Trans. V.J.B.

→ to do evil is to not act naturally
at Plato: to know the good is to do the good