

1. Moreh Nevuchim 3:51 translated by M. Friedländer (1903)

We have already spoken of the various degrees of prophets; we will therefore return to the subject of this chapter, and exhort those who have attained a knowledge of G-d, to concentrate all their thoughts in G-d. This is the worship peculiar to those who have acquired a knowledge of the highest truths; and the more they reflect on Him, and think of Him, the more are they engaged in His worship. Those, however, who think of G-d, and frequently mention His name, without any correct notion of Him, but merely following some imagination, or some theory received from another person, are, in my opinion, like those who remain outside the palace and distant from it. They do not mention the name of G-d in truth, nor do they reflect on it. That which they imagine and mention does not correspond to any being in existence: it is a thing invented by their imagination, as has been shown by us in our discussion on the Divine Attributes (Part I. chap. 1.). The true worship of G-d is only possible when correct notions of Him have previously been conceived.

2. Kuzari Section I:88-89

אמר הכוזרי: הנה כל השומע ספוריכם על שהאלוה דבר עם המוניכם וכתב לכם לוחות וכדומה אין להאשימו אם יראכם כמגשימי האלוה אולם גם אתכם אין להאשים שהרי אי אפשר לכם לדחות עדותם של המעמדים הגדולים הנשגבים שאין להטיל בהם ספק ולכן תצדקו בהשליכם אחר גוכם את ההקש ההגיוני ואת העיון השכלי:

אמר החבר: חלילה לנו מאל שנאמין בנמנע ובמה שהשכל מרחיקו ורואהו כנמנע ואכן אחרי הראשונה בעשרת הדברות בה נצטינו על האמונה באלוה באו בשניה האסור לעבוד אלהים אחרים ואסור השתוף אבל גם האזהרה מלדמות דבר לאלוה בעשותנו לנו פסל ותמונה זאת אומרת ההרחקה מן ההגשמה בכלל ואיך לא נרומם את האלוה מעל להגשמה

3. Rav Saadiah Gaon *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* (translated Alexander Altmann in *Three Jewish Philosophers Atheneum, New York 1969. p. 78*)

When I came to deal with the subject of the Creator, I found that people rejected this whole inquiry... others again go so far as to picture Him as a body; others, while not explicitly describing him as a body, assign to Him quantity or quality or space or time, or similar things, and by looking for these qualities they do in fact assign to Him a body, since these attributes belong only to a body. the purpose of my introductory remarks is to remove their false ideas, to take a load from their minds, and to point out that the extreme subtleness which we have assigned to the nature of the Creator is, so to speak, its own warrant, and the fact that in our reasoning we find the notion of G-d to be more abstract than other knowledge shows that reasoning to be correct.

4. Rambam's Commentary on the Mishna – Introduction to Chelek

והיסוד השלישי שלילת הגשמות ממנו. והוא, שזה האחד אינו גוף ולא כח בגוף, ולא יארעוהו מאורעות הגופים כגון התנועה והמנוחה, לא בעצם ולא במקרה.... וכל מה שבא בספרים מתאריו בתארי הגופות כגון ההליכה והעמידה והישיבה והדבור וכיוצא בזה הם כולם דרך השאלה, וכמו שאמרו דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם. וכבר דברו בני אדם בענין זה הרבה, וזה היסוד השלישי הוא אשר מורה עליו מה שנ' כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה כלומר לא השגתם אותו בעל תמונה, לפי שהוא כמו שאמרנו לא גוף ולא כח בגוף.

5. Mishne Torah Yesodei HaTorah 1:3

המצוי הזה--הוא אלוה העולם, אדון כל הארץ. והוא המנהיג הגלגל בכוח שאין לו קץ ותכלית, בכוח שאין לו הפסק, שהגלגל סובב תמיד, ואי אפשר שיסוב בלא מסבב; והוא ברוך הוא המסבב אותו, בלא יד ולא גוף.

6. Mishne Torah Yesodei HaTorah 1:6

אילו היו האלוהות הרבה--היו גופין וגוויות, מפני שאין הנמנין השווין במציאתן נפרדין זה מזה אלא במאורעין שיארעו הגופות והגוויות. ואילו היה היוצר גוף וגוויה--היה לו קץ ותכלית, שאי אפשר להיות גוף שאין לו קץ. וכל שיש לו קץ ותכלית, יש לכוחו קץ וסוף.

7. Mishne Torah Hilchos Teshuva 3:7

חמישה הן הנקראין מינים: ... והאומר שיש שם ריבון אחד, אלא שהוא גוף ובעל תמונה

Five categories of people are called heretics.... Someone who says that there is One G-d but that He is physical and has form.”

8. Raavad Hilchos Teshuva 3:7

Why does he call this person a heretic? Many greater and better people than he followed this line of thought, based on what they saw in the Biblical verses, and even more so in what they saw in the words of aggada which confuse the intellect.

9. Ohr Zaruah on Sanhedrin 90a (*Sanhedrei Gedolah le-Masechet Sanhedrin* (Jerusalem, 1972), volume 5, section 2, p. 116-118)

Rabbeinu Moshe [ben Maimon] wrote in chapter 3 of *Hilchot Teshuva* that five [categories of] people are called heretics. His words are outside the opinion of the Talmud. Even though logic dictates, and the simple reading of the Tanach, that G-d has no physical body or form, as the verse states, “To whom can you compare G-d, and what image can you describe for him?” (Yishaya 40:18)... And this is also known by all wise people. But someone who errs and doesn't descend to the depths of the matter, and understands the verses literally, and holds that G-d has an image is not called a heretic. If that were true why did the Torah not publicize this fact [that G-d has no body], and why did the Sages of the Talmud not make it known explicitly?

...The Sages of the Mishna and the Talmud did not involve themselves with this, but accepted it as a tradition and with faith. They didn't teach to investigate the matter... There were many of the holy Sages of the Talmud, from whom comes the Torah, who didn't set their hearts to contemplate the nature of G-d, but simply accepted the verses according to their simple meaning, and based on this naiveté they thought that G-d has a body and an image. Heaven forbid that we should call such people heretics.

10. Igeret Ha-Ramban 2 in *Kitvei Ramban* Chavell edition (1963) vol. 1 p. 338

Our French Rabbis – we are their students and we drink from their waters - ... in all the land of France, its Rabbis and ministers, agreed to excommunicate someone who reads the *Guide for the Perplexed* and *Sefer Ha-Mada*.... He [Rambam] was like someone forced and with no choice to build the book as a refuge from the Greek philosophers, to get away from Aristotle and Galen... It is permitted for those close to the rulers to learn Greek wisdom, to understand the skills of the doctors, to take each measure, to know the forms, and the other forms of knowledge... when we lost the books of our sages, when we lost our land, and they were forced to learn them from the books of the Greeks or other nations, the hearts strayed after heresy... I also heard that you objected to *Sefer Ha-Mada* because he says that there is no form or shape [to the One] Above.

11. Ksav Tamim p. 72

He [Rav Saadiah] writes (*maamar 2*), "A verse does not lose its simple meaning unless the simple meaning contradicts something that is testified to by the intellect, such as "For the L-rd, your G-d, is a devouring fire" which cannot be understood in its simple meaning, since [fire is] physical, and the evidence of the wise men testifies that G-d does not have a [physical] body." This contradicts explicit verses and the commentaries of our Rabbis.

12. Kesav Tamim p. 79-80

Now we will return to the opinion of the Torah and the opinion of our Rabbis, and we will establish the honor of the Creator, blessed is His Name, in the mouth of all creations in His holiness and His greatness and we will remove the stumbling block from our minds. For the Living G-d – His greatness cannot be measured, nor His powers. We cannot compare Him to any image, and we, who are fetid drops, cannot think about His nature. When it is His will to show Himself to the angels, He shows Himself standing straight, as much as they are able to accept. Sometimes He shows them a strange light without any form, and they know that the Divine Presence is there. He has movement, which can be derived from the fact that His fetid creations have movement. ... But without the wisdom of the Torah, it is impossible for any person to recognize the greatness of the Holy One, blessed is He, through intellect.

13. Kesav Tamim p. 64 and p. 68

My complaint against *Sefer Emunot* is that he comes using *chochma chitzonit* (external wisdom – philosophy) and increases sins by leading the people from complete fear of G-d and [causing them to] think about things, until they no longer know [the foundations] upon which they are standing. He strengthens the hands of those astrologers who have impure thoughts in their hearts against the Talmud of our Rabbis, which is a complete Torah, and he strengthens their idle chatter... Until the time of Rav Saadia nobody would make a new meaning in the simple meaning of the Torah, the Prophets, the Ketuvim or the words of our Rabbis which are trustworthy and remain standing forever

14. Yishaya 7:20

In that day shall the L-rd shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also sweep away the beard.

15. Sanhedrin 95b

אמר רבי אבהו אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאמרו דכתיב ביום ההוא יגלח ה' בתער השכירה בעברי נהר במלך אשור את הראש ושער הרגלים וגם את הזקן תספה אתא קודשא בריך הוא ואדמי ליה כגברא סבא

16. Rashi Sanhedrin 95b

אי אפשר לאמרו. שהקדוש ב"ה בעצמו גלחו לסנחריב

17. Devarim 21:22-23

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is a reproach unto G-d; that thou defile not thy land which the L-rd thy G-d giveth thee for an inheritance.

18. Rashi Devarim 21:23

כי קללת אלוהים תלוי - זלזולו של מלך הוא, שאדם עשוי בדמות דיוקנו וישראל הם בניו. משל לשני אחים תאומים שהיו דומין זה לזה, אחד נעשה מלך, ואחד נתפס ללסטיות ונתלה, כל הרואה אותו אומר המלך תלוי.

19. Rashi Bereishis 1:26-27

בצלמנו - בדפוס שלנו: כדמותנו - להבין ולהשכיל:

בצלם אלוקים ברא אותו - פירש לך שאותו צלם המתוקן לו צלם דיוקן יצורו הוא:

20. Sefer Nimukei Chumash le-Rabbi Yishaya di-Trani

Rashi explains that man is made in the image of G-d. But in Bereishit on the verse “let us make man in Our image” Rashi explained that it was in the image prepared for him. Why did he not explain in the image of G-d literally? The answer is that certainly man is not made in the image of the Creator... The reason he explains here “in the image of G-d” is that when G-d appears to people He takes on the form of a person. But the image of G-d is not known.

21. Moreh Nevuchim 1:1

Some have been of opinion that by the Hebrew *zelem*, the shape and figure of a thing is to be understood, and this explanation led men to believe in the corporeality [of the Divine Being]: for they thought that the words "Let us make man in our *zelem*" (Gen. i. 26), implied that G-d had the form of a human being, i.e., that He had figure and shape, and that, consequently, He was corporeal. They adhered faithfully to this view, and thought that if they were to relinquish it they would *eo ipso* reject the truth of the Bible: and further, if they did not conceive G-d as having a body possessed of face and limbs, similar to their own in appearance, they would have to deny even the existence of G-d. The sole difference which they admitted, was that He excelled in greatness and splendour, and that His substance was not flesh and blood.

22. Al Tehi KaAvotecha

Be not like your fathers who believed in a G-d who does not change in any kind of way.... They denied with all the strength of their intellects any form of physicality to Him. They were given simple and pure intellect to draw them after philosophy, in their multitudes and tumult. They gave explanations to the simple [meaning of the] Torah, which acts as a mask for those multitudes who are [intellectually] too weak to see [rationally].

But you are not so! Do not deny Him physicality or body – Heaven forbid! Believe in Him that he clothed Himself with flesh in one of His ‘personalities’. “He did not come to the three” as He wanted, and His blood was spilled like water to atone for His people and He found favour [as a sacrifice].

I have written an article on this topic in Reshimu journal (number 3), which is available on the internet: <http://hashkafacircle.com/shiurim/category/reshimu>