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Intellectual Intuition and Prophecy

Hegel, Maimonides, and a Neo-Maimonidean Psychology
of Prophetic Intelligence

Introduction. What justifies considering Hegel and Maimonides together in a probe of the philosophical psychology of prophetic intelligence? What bearing does intellectual intuition as Hegel and Maimonides understand it have on prophecy approached from this standpoint?

How does the relation between intelligence and intellectual intuition and prophecy, when explored in light of answers to the first two questions, fundamentally deepen our contemporary understanding of prophecy in ways that are both philosophically and religiously significant? Given that the age of prophecy ended with Malachi what is the point of fielding a neo-Maimonidean account of prophetic intelligence in our time? Finally, in what ways could a modern philosophical psychology of prophecy—one that is subject-centered rather than theocentrically cast—qualify as neo-Maimonidean in the first place?

Part I of this essay commences by (1) addressing the last two questions. It then turns to the question about the pairing of Hegel and Maimonides, (2) foregrounding elements of Aristotelian thought that converge and acquire parallel novel developments in both Hegel and Maimonides, elements that prove seminal in the psychology of prophetic intelligence. Next, (3) it underscores the inextricable relation of philosophy and religion to which both Hegel and Maimonides subscribed, and it calls attention to Hegel's little remarked familiarity with Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (likely owing to his being a close student of Spinoza). Lastly, the opening part of this essay (4) shows how Hegel's highly evolved neo-Aristotelian psychology finds striking parallels in Maimonides. On that basis, it establishes how Hegel's systematic elucidation of intelligence, and of intuition in particular, constitutes a subject-centered frame of reference—which is to say a distinctly

modern orientation—from which to see one’s way through, beyond Hegel’s own treatment of religious thinking, to a neo-Maimonidean philosophical psychology of prophetic intelligence.

Part II takes up the question of intellectual intuition (1) as Hegel understood it, which turns out to elucidate otherwise obscure aspects of Maimonides’ teachings on devotional judgment in religious hermeneutics. Hegel’s philosophy proves less relevant, however, when we turn from hermeneutics to Maimonides’ doctrine of Hebrew prophetic intelligence, and this notwithstanding the onto-epistemological truths of intellectual intuition the heuristic implications of which Hegel brilliantly foregrounds—truths that expressly witness to the metaphysical principle that *knowing is of being* (a doctrine to which both thinkers subscribed). This shift from Hegel reflects the fact that (2) from the Maimonidean standpoint on prophetic cognition—the intellectual authority of which far outstrips Hegel’s reductively naturalistic view of prophecy¹—the phenomenon of intellectual intuition manifests values and meanings that are decidedly at odds with Hegelian doctrine. These differences prove seminal in this essay for, as we shall see, they disclose the basis for a speculatively and religiously consequential *neo-Maimonidean* account of prophetic thinking.

The essay culminates in part III, which introduces a neo-Maimonidean answer to the third question. This it does by explicating along original lines the causal relations between the summoning occasion of prophecy, the prophet, the prophetic act, and the prophetic utterance.

Overall, this brief study pursues a route of inquiry that discloses, among other things, how principal elements of Hegel’s analysis of intelligence exemplify and substantiate in modern terms Aristotelian principles that demonstrably animate the ways Maimonides understands the devotional judgment that uniquely distinguishes prophetic thought. To be sure, Hegel and Maimonides differ sharply over some key aspects of how the Aristotelian legacy figures in the philosophy of religious thinking. What will become clear through the course of discussion, however, is that both those divergences and the classical speculative assumptions that Hegel and Maimonides share

¹ See Hegel’s analysis of intuition as “a sort of clairvoyance,” in Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind [Geist]*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, with revisions and commentary by M. J. Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), §406, esp. pp. 101–14 [*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III: Die Philosophie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), pp. 143–60].

in common point the way forward to a neo-Maimonidean psychology of prophetic intelligence. This we shall see when, following the multi-faceted critical preliminary investigation in parts I and II, part III brings to light the causal logic of intellectual intuition as the operative mode of judgment in the philosophical psychology of prophecy.

I

(1) *Why a neo-Maimonidean psychology of prophecy?* The massive influence and continuing authority that attach to Maimonides' approach to the place of scientifically philosophical thought in religious piety and its role in biblical hermeneutics contrasts radically with the impact of his eleven-level typology of prophecy (with its designation of Moses as a prophet in a class by himself). Unlike Maimonides' call for the study of science as a *religious* imperative (for those with the requisite abilities), the oneiric and visionary psychologism that Maimonides invoked in accounting scientifically for the divinatory authority of prophecy does little to persuade the modern, scientifically educated reader that veridical dreams and dream-like visions, however borne out by moral or political or historical facts, constitute a persuasive "naturalistic" psychology of divination in our day.² Granting as much, one cannot neglect the fact that Maimonides himself was committed to jettisoning antiquated scientific explanations when demonstrably superior accounts come on the scene.

It is on the authority of that commitment that the present essay outlines a psychology of prophecy that reflects penetrating modern, scientifically philosophical developments of classical insights into "theoretical spirit [*Geist*]" which more persuasively clarify in our day the relation of prophecy to truth than does Maimonides' recourse to the classical-medieval psychology of dream, vision, Active Intellect, Neoplatonic "overflow," and the like.

The value of this effort as a neo-Maimonidean project is seen, first, vis-à-vis the weight Maimonides accords prophecy and prophetic writing relative to his express purposes in the *Guide of the Perplexed*. So far as his psychology of prophecy fails to persuade, just so far must the modern,

² On the naturalism of Maimonides' psychology of prophecy, see Alexander Altmann, "Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas: Natural or Divine Prophecy?" in Altmann, *Essays on Jewish Intellectual History* (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1981), pp. 77–96.

scientifically sophisticated reader judge that the *Guide* fails to achieve some of its fundamental stated aims. A more persuasive philosophical psychology of intuition can help the contemporary, secularly attuned intellectual to appreciate the full range of Maimonides' achievements as a champion of the intellectual legitimacy of Jewish religious thinking, particularly relative to the ways he understands the species of devotional judgment that uniquely distinguishes prophetic thought.

(2) *Aristotle in Hegel and Maimonides*. Hegel is far and away the greatest systematic modern philosopher of intelligence (*Intelligenz*) who owes Aristotle a debt comparable to that of Maimonides.³ Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* [*Geist*]⁴ features a seminal if underappreciated *onto*-epistemological account of intelligence that builds upon principles of Aristotelian metaphysics and psychology that were also formative in Maimonides' speculative approach to devotional intelligence in the *Guide of the Perplexed*.⁵ This shared Aristotelian legacy with Maimonides renders Hegel's modern, subject-centered (*not* subjectivist) philosophical psychology of "theoretical spirit"—the phase of spirit, or *Geist*, in which intelligence literally takes shape⁶—a virtual organon of *onto*-epistemological insight for a systematic philosophical "science" of Jewish religious thinking.⁷

³ If Maimonides found in Aristotle the acme of human speculative thought unaided by prophetic insight, Hegel held Aristotle in equally high esteem, declaring him to be "one of the most richly endowed geniuses there ever has been" (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–26. Volume II: Greek Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Robert F. Brown [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], p. 232).

⁴ On the matter of translating *Geist* as either "mind" or "spirit," see Inwood's introduction to the Oxford translation, pp. xiv–xv. Outside the circle of Hegel scholars, the *Philosophy of Spirit* is little known by comparison with *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Philosophy of Right*, the lectures on aesthetics and on religion, and even the *Science of Logic*.

⁵ Eng. trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963). Hebrew trans. Michael Schwarz (Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv Press, 2002).

⁶ Hegel's German term, *Gestalt*, has other semantic resonances—form, build, configuration—which are essential to keep in view when reflecting on the nature of spirit, or *Geist*, and intelligence, hence the German word will appear regularly in the discussion, depending on context, both with and in place of "shape."

⁷ The present paper draws upon such a philosophical project. It features material derived from my book, *Jewish Religious Thinking as Devotional Intelligence: A Philo-*

Hegel's analysis of intelligence as theoretical forms of subjective spirit bears the metaphysical stamp of the Aristotelian psychology that originated the notion of "actual intelligence"—intelligence *in actu*—as the living realization of knowing as being.⁸ Beyond its constructive influence, the critical impact that Aristotle's philosophical psychology had on Hegel informs the latter's repudiation of empirical and rationalist psychologies. As a neo-Aristotelian, Hegel rejects such psychologies because with respect to the "shapes" (*Gestalten*) that spirit assumes as living intelligence, they one and all fail to credit "the unitary consideration of the various forms of living, sensing, knowing and willing as the stages in and through which the teleological process of living subjectivity articulates itself."⁹

Hegel is a *modern* thinker, however, and his philosophical psychology of "theoretical intelligence" is a subject-centered (again, not subjectivist) account. It delineates the onto-epistemological dialectic that constitutes the itinerary of subjective spirit as intelligence—the transformative route that spirit takes as it develops through three shapes, or configurations: first intuitive (i.e., immediate), then representational, and ultimately strictly conceptual. Hegel explicates these three moments in such searching detail in the *Philosophy of Spirit* as to provide a systematic profile of spirit-as-intelligence. He elucidates the configurations of *Geist*-as-intelligence along lines that if indebted to Aristotle go far beyond anything that either Aristotle or Maimonides has left us. While we shall note how all three *shapes* of spirit—intuition, representation, and conceptual thinking—function as forms of *judgment* in Maimonides' approach to devotional intelligence, the primary focus in what follows is limited chiefly to the first *Gestalt* of spirit as intelligence, namely, intuition. This is because more than either of the other two forms—representation and discursively conceptual thinking—it is intuition, specifically *intellectual* intuition, which proves to be the order of intelligence most deeply consistent with Maimonides' doctrine of prophetic

sophical Essay (London: Pickering & Chatto, forthcoming in 2015), which undertakes to establish the intellectual legitimacy of Jewish religious thinking in our time.

⁸ *De Anima* III 4 and esp. 5, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), vol. 1. See also Ronald Polansky's meticulous commentary, *Aristotle's "De Anima"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 458–66.

⁹ Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 242.

judgment; hence it is the species of judgment most material to the effort here to establish the lineaments of a neo-Maimonidean psychology of prophecy. Prior to reflecting explicitly upon prophecy in this connection, however, we need to address a number of preliminaries that together will establish a context that systematically substantiates the move in this essay to introduce a neo-Maimonidean approach to prophecy.

It will be well, first, briefly to review how Hegel, relative to Maimonides, conceived of the bearing of religious meaning upon philosophy and vice versa. For without keeping this formative dimension of Hegel's philosophical self-understanding explicitly in mind one could readily misconstrue the ensuing discussion as at bottom a merely adventitious venture to superimpose upon a religiously grounded Maimonidean account of prophecy a technically involved secular Hegelian doctrine, one that derives from speculative inspirations that are heteronomous relative to the springs of religious thinking.

(3) *On the relation of philosophy to religious thinking.* Like both Aristotle and Maimonides, Hegel considered philosophy and religious thinking to be deeply consistent with each other, if not two sides of the same coin with respect to ultimate truth.¹⁰ Declarations such as the following make his position unmistakable: "God alone is the truthful agreement between the Concept and Reality" (*Gott allein ist die wahrhafte Übereinstimmung des Begriffs und der Realität*).¹¹ Many more affirmations along the same lines punctuate Hegel's writings. One could hardly expect otherwise given his conviction that religion and philosophy are as one in their prime concern

¹⁰ Frederick Beiser concisely summarizes the long-running debate about the character of the religious aspect of Hegel's thought. This sometimes rancorous dispute first erupted between Left-wing and Right-wing Hegelians in the years following the master's death in 1831. The view in the present essay is consistent with Beiser's assessment that Hegel sought "to steer a middle path between" orthodox Christian and humanist positions. In Beiser's words, Hegel "wanted to develop a new theology to overcome the weaknesses of both humanism and traditional Christianity" (*Hegel* [New York: Routledge, 2005], pp. 125–26).

¹¹ *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. and ed. Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), §24 z2 [*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften. Erster Teil. Der Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 86].

with ultimate truth, notwithstanding that they manifest that concern from two different orientations: one representational, the other purely conceptual. The dean of Anglophone authorities on Hegel's philosophy of religion, Peter C. Hodgson cites a text that attests to how, like Aristotle and Maimonides, Hegel would have considered the very idea of systematic philosophical thinking unintelligible apart from religious thinking.¹² In the summer of 1821 Hegel commenced his first set of Berlin lectures on the philosophy of religion with a declaration that leaves little doubt as to where he stood on this issue. Hodgson reproduces this pronunciamiento, which he drew from a manuscript preserved in a Berlin library:

God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things; [everything] starts from God and returns to God. God is the one and only object of philosophy. [Its concern is] to occupy itself with God, to apprehend everything in God, to lead everything back to God, as well as to derive everything particular from God and to justify everything only insofar as its stems from God, is sustained through its relationship with God, lives by God's radiance and has [within itself] the mind of God. Thus philosophy *is* theology, and [one's] occupation with philosophy—or rather in philosophy—is of itself the service of God.¹³

By contrast with the manuscript in which the passage above appears, virtually all of the lecture material in the published editions of Hegel's successive sets of courses on the philosophy of religion is the highly redacted production of auditors or transcribers. There is no doubt, however, as to the word-for-word authenticity of the statement penned in 1821; as Hodgson informs us, apart from "various miscellaneous papers... [the quotation is drawn from] the only writing on philosophy of religion in Hegel's own hand" that survives (*ibid.*).

The Introduction to Hegel's 1827 lectures on the philosophy of religion sets forth his position on the relation of religion to philosophy in better known and somewhat less theologically charged language:

The object of religion, like that of philosophy, is the eternal truth, God and nothing but God and the explication of God. Philosophy is only explicating *itself* when it explicates religion, and when it explicates itself it is explicating religion. For the

¹² See Hodgson, "Hegel's Philosophy of Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Frederick Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 230–52. For a succinct overview of this "identity thesis," see Beiser, *Hegel*, pp. 146–52.

¹³ "Hegel's Philosophy of Religion," p. 231.

thinking spirit is what penetrates this object, the truth; it is thinking [as opposed to feeling or intuition] that enjoys the truth and purifies the [religious feelings and intuitions of] subjective consciousness. Thus religion and philosophy coincide in one. In fact philosophy is itself *Gottesdienst* [worship], as is religion.¹⁴

All this might seem to make Hegel very close to Maimonides as a *Jewish* philosopher. But such is emphatically not the case. Despite Hegel's genuine effort (far beyond anything in Kant) to take the spiritual measure of Jewish religious thinking, his understanding of Judaism was imperfect at best.¹⁵ This judgment holds notwithstanding the often deeply insightful extended treatment that Hegel accords Judaism in his lectures on the philosophy of religion,¹⁶ not to mention the section in his lectures on the history of philosophy titled "Philosophy of the Medabberim,"¹⁷ which quotes liberally from Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (I 71 and 73) as a primary source.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition: The Lectures of 1827*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 78–79.

¹⁵ Emil Fackenheim's remark on this score is not hyperbole: "Hegel is the only non-Jewish modern philosopher of the first rank to take Judaism in its own right seriously" (*Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy* [New York: Schocken, 1973], p. 86). Fackenheim's well-known eighty-eight-page critique of Hegel's assessment of Judaism is informed, penetrating, and thorough.

¹⁶ In the religion lectures, Hegel cites not only the Hebrew Bible, but the psalms, the prophets, and Job. In the history of philosophy lectures, besides quoting from the two chapters of Maimonides' *Guide* indicated above, Hegel also explicitly refers to *Guide* I 51 and 57; II 1 and 2; and III 8.

¹⁷ Hegel took the Hebrew word in his title not from his copy of the 1629 Buxtorf Latin translation of the *Guide* (based on the Ibn Tibbon Hebrew edition), which employs the term *loquentes*, but from Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 11 vols. (Leipzig, 1798–1819), vol. 8.

¹⁸ *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, vol. 3 (1892–96; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 30–33. For a recent edition, although one that avails itself of other transcript material, see *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, rev. ed., trans. R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 30–32. "Like the church fathers and Philo," concluded Hegel, Maimonides "takes the historical configuration as fundamental and treats it metaphysically" (p. 32). This statement makes clear that like many other readers of the *Guide*, Hegel to some degree saw an image of himself in Maimonides.

(4) *Hegel's doctrine of intelligence and Maimonidean correlates.* Hegel treats of "intelligence" (*Intelligenz*) under the rubric of "subjective" spirit, as distinguished from "objective" spirit. What he understands by objective spirit is the focus of a *collective* psychology, particularly thinking in its normative objectifications—legal, ethical, social, political, and so forth. Subjective spirit, on the other hand, is the monadic theater of phenomenology and the prime concern of individual psychology. By contrast with Maimonides and Aristotle on the issue of how intelligence exemplifies the classical onto-epistemological principle that *knowing* is of *being* (in the double-genitive sense), Hegel propounds a definitively modern position. Intelligence, he asserts, initially arises in the individual subject as a *Gestalt* of subjective spirit. Hegel determines that subjective spirit assumes two forms: a theoretically intelligential one and a practical volitional one that presupposes and supersedes theoretical spirit.¹⁹

Richard Dien Winfield provides a highly concise and lucid summary of Hegel's philosophical psychology of intelligence:

Intelligence unites the features of psyche and consciousness, such that mind relates to its own content as both subjective and objective. This occurs in various ways, involving successive degrees of immediacy and mediation. *Intuition* immediately relates to a manifold that it intuits to be both its own subjective modification and something immediately given in opposition to its own intuiting subjectivity. *Representation* internalizes the immediately given contents of intuition and modifies them through imagination without relinquishing the objective reference of what is imagined. Finally, linguistic intelligence [*conceptual thinking*] enables reason to conceive concepts that are both subjective determinations of the mind's thinking and determinations ascribed objectivity.²⁰

The core elements, italicized above, are, again, the three formative moments that Hegel adduces as the successively more evolved shapes that spirit takes

¹⁹ The concern here is limited to Hegel's doctrine of "theoretical intelligence." Richard Dien Winfield explicates the philosophical psychology of volition as practical intelligence, although Hegel himself analyzes the practical nature of volition as *Geist*. Volition is a "shape" of spirit that in Hegel's doctrine occurs only when theoretical intelligence has been dialectically negated, cancelled, yet preserved in that negated form (in "practical spirit"); see Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 202–207. Although Hegel doesn't refer to "intelligence" in this emergence of spirit from the theoretical to the practical plane, Winfield by no means distorts Hegel by emphasizing the preserved intelligential moment ingredient in practical spirit. See next note.

²⁰ Winfield, *Hegel and Mind* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 106; emphasis added.

as intelligence. (It is precisely these *Gestalten* that assume the character of the three discrete kinds of *judgment* in Maimonidean devotional intelligence.)²¹ Hegel terms intuition (in his *Philosophy of Mind*, §§443–45) “material knowledge,” the first stage in the development of intelligence as it progresses from an abstract (vacuously formal) mindfulness (*Wissen*) of fact to its most developed, discursive mode as the cognition that constitutes concretely determinate, substantial knowing (*denkende Erkennen*). At the plane of simple intuition, intelligence is pre-discursive and exhibits the immediacy of “feeling.” The latter “is the unmediated, as it were the closest, form in which the subject relates [reflectively] to a given content” (§447). Feeling, Hegel explains, is thus the intuited “*form* of the particular and subjective” (*ibid.*). Far from categorically splitting feeling from conceptual thinking, Hegel sees them as contrastive poles on the spectrum of intelligence. He argues that feeling is itself primitive thought (a view with familiar Cartesian antecedents) since its content manifests some rationally determinate form, form grasped in the manner of an object that one finds intelligible strictly as a deliverance that originates “from outside.” Hegel contends, however, that in any such intuition the rational *determination*, the intelligible form, imputed to the object as *other* than the intelligence entertaining it is actually “*identical* with the spirit [*Geist*] and *immanent* in it.”²²

At first sight Hegel’s position might seem obscure if not confused. But this impression vanishes when one realizes that what Hegel articulates here from the viewpoint of subjective *Geist*, hence that of a modern idealist psychology of intelligence, is the classic Aristotelian principle that knowing, the knower, and the known are “somehow” identical. (This seminal precept is one of three cardinal isomorphisms that Hegel’s onto-epistemology shares with those of Aristotle and Maimonides.)²³ The clue to the objective nature and extension of the notorious Aristotelian “somehow” is the notion of *form*.

²¹ For a brief analysis of the three forms of judgment in the opening chapter of the *Guide*, see Phillip Stambovsky, “R. Soloveitchik’s Causal Critique of Maimonides as a Religious Philosopher,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 63.2 (2012): 307–30.

²² §447z. This is agent intelligence as Aristotle portrays it.

²³ Cf. Maimonides, *Guide* I 68. The other two core metaphysical Aristotelian isomorphisms that shape the thinking of both Maimonides and Hegel are the holistic, or all-at-once, prehension of form and the notion that intelligence is the form of forms. These onto-epistemological principles are treated at length in the author’s *Jewish Religious Thinking as Devotional Intelligence*.

For the particular *content* of anything that we intelligently apprehend is nothing else than a determinate *form* of fact, which we at once *take* (in both senses of the verb) by becoming intelligent of it—or, better, *intelligence* of it. Consequently, we render *actual* in that intelligential manner the form as the very configuration of our living cognition. The configuration of our living acts of cognition is thus so far the idiom of whatever we know, in the latter's reality as literally an informing condition (for Kant, a *law*) constitutive of mindfulness.

Not surprisingly, this Aristotelian ground of Hegelian onto-epistemology correlates precisely with defining moments of Maimonides' metaphysic of religious thinking. What Maimonides understood as the *eis*, or "intellectual apprehension,"²⁴ of the intelligible (*no'eseōs*) is some formally determined way of *being*. This way of being, of being mindful, discloses the essence of what we grasp, as that essence constitutes the law—in Maimonidean devotional piety, the providence (or השגחה)—unifying the known, the knowing, and the knower for any occasion of intelligence *in actu*,²⁵ albeit always and only under the conditions of the mind's disposition and limitations.²⁶ This is deeply consistent with perhaps the most profoundly Aristotelian element of Maimonides' ontotheology, namely, that God *as related to the world* is Intelligence and the Form of forms. The Aristotelian doctrine upon which in this cardinal particular Maimonides expressly builds is that intelligence (*nous*) is the *form of forms*.²⁷

²⁴ *Guide* I 1, Pines' translation. Chaim Rabin translates the Arabic, "intellectual perception" (*The Guide of the Perplexed*, abridged with introduction and commentary by Julius Guttman [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995], p. 52). Michael Schwarz's Hebrew rendering is ההשגה השכלית, see vol. 1, p. 31.

²⁵ The act of being, for Maimonides, whereby we manifest the image and likeness of the Creator.

²⁶ Factors that mediate our being "conjoined," as Maimonides first declares in *Guide* I 1, with God (by way of the Active Intellect).

²⁷ Cf. Aristotle: "as the hand is a tool of tools, so thought [nous/intelligence] is the form of forms and sense the form of sensible things" (*De Anima* III 8). Maimonides: "God has ... with reference to the world, the status of a form with regard to a thing possessing a form, in virtue of which it is that which it is: a thing the true reality and essence of which are established by that form.... In this respect it is said of Him that He is the ultimate form and the *form of forms*" (*Guide* I 69). Like Aristotle, Maimonides identifies God with intelligence: "when it is demonstrated that God ... is an intellect in actu and that there is absolutely no potentiality in Him—as is clear

By contrast with representation and purely discursive conceptual thinking, an intuition is the *unmediated* intelligent grasp of form. It is limited to the sheer immediacy of something that, so far as it is intelligible, is determinate—such as a color, shape, sound, or even a fully articulated relation grasped as a discrete moment prescinded from any mediating reference (intelligible association) or implication or time signature. Intuitive mindfulness of this sort constitutes an intelligence that is a knowing that is, as Hegel put it, “just *abstractly* the determination of immediacy in general [*überhaupt*]” (*Philosophy of Mind*, §446). Abstract determination follows the tacit diremption of form and content. Hegel sees the onto-epistemological implication of this split as definitive of the intuitive stage of intelligence, which “determines the content of sensation as a *being* that is *outside itself*” (§447). Otherwise put, intuitive intelligence “apprehends its subjective determinations to be equally objective.”²⁸ We shall see presently (toward the end of part II) how, in the Maimonidean psychology of prophecy, these cognitional aspects of intuitive mindfulness effectively delineate a distinguishing feature of prophetic intelligence as *visionary* intelligence.

Hegel’s philosophical psychology of unmediated cognition—of intelligence configured as intuition—correlates in a number of formative respects with Maimonides’ teachings on devotional intelligence. It relates most explicitly to the devotional judgment of a religious thinking that Maimonides condemns at the outset of the *Guide*, a thinking that takes as its sovereign referent, its “truthmaker,”²⁹ the immediacy of sense intuition. As such, intuitional intelligence stands in contrast to the two previously noted configurations of subjective spirit which mark successively more evolved strata of intelligence

and shall be demonstrated—so that He is not by way of sometimes apprehending and sometime not apprehending but always an intellect in actu, it follows that He and the thing apprehended are one thing, which is His essence. Moreover, the act of apprehension owing to which He is said to be an intellectually cognizing subject is in itself the intellect, which is His essence” (*Guide* I 68).

²⁸ Winfield, *Hegel and Mind*, p. 82. In his systematic philosophy of religion Hegel expressly distinguishes mere sense-derived intuitive intelligence from the kind of “immediate knowledge” that he defines as “faith”; see *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition*, pp. 133ff.

²⁹ John Heil, *The Universe as We Find It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. introduction and chap. 13; also see Barry Smith, “Truthmaker Realism,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1999): 274–91.

in Hegel's psychology: representational intelligence (distinguished by its moment of the mediated, symbolic reference) and the intelligence that is discursively conceptual thinking.

We learn in chapter 1 of the *Guide* how, from the perspective of religious hermeneutics, Maimonides sharply censures devotional judgment that exemplifies the intelligence keyed to sense intuition. He targets in particular those who, reading Scripture as a religious act, interpret the Hebrew word for "image" (*tzelem*) in Genesis 1.26 ("Let us make man in our image") to mean the intuited "shape and configuration" of a physical object. Citing textual evidence Maimonides argues that it is not *tzelem* but the word *to'ar* that properly refers to physically determined shape and configuration. Intuitively oriented hermeneuts, readers who implicitly privilege the immediacy of sense intuition, wrong-headedly infer that our image is that of the Divinity on the basis of (our) physical shape and configuration. Judgment of this kind when it animates devotional life engenders what Maimonides calls "the pure doctrine of the corporeality of God," something he regards as allied to the heretical inversion according to which "God has a man's form" (*Guide* I 1). Hegel would interpret this heresy more generally as a "material knowledge" of God, a kind of devotional intelligence that he associated with ancient Egyptian religion: "the intuitive knowledge of the Egyptians," he remarked, "told them that God was an ox or a cat."³⁰ He would trace this radical ontotheological error³¹ back to the conceptual logic of sense intuition, for which the spatio-temporal—merely an abstractly formal determination in Hegel's view—assumes both epistemological and ontological priority over the concretely real, which in Hegel's teaching is spirit, *Geist*. Intuitive judgment of the sense-based sort, as Hegel construes it, thus misleadingly takes as its touchstone an *abstract* form of its object, a form that is bracketed from the object's concretely meaningful (spiritual) content: which is to say, its truth.

Following his anatomy of subjective and objective modes of intuition, Hegel remarks that intuitive apprehension is unmediated knowledge bound to the sensory (*das unmittelbare, an Sinnlichkeit gebundene Wissen*).³²

³⁰ *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, p. 420.

³¹ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* 1827–28, trans. Robert R. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 209.

³² *Die Philosophie des Geistes*, §563. But unlike Kant, Hegel finds "that mind [*Geist*] is aware of its sensations as intuitions only when it relates to them both as its own mental contents and as determinations of objects" (Winfield, *Hegel and Mind*, p. 85).

Visually to perceive redness or triangularity on some particular occasion, or to taste sweetness, is at the same time to know a sensory determination that exhibits the identical and all-at-once (“permanent”)³³ sort of character that distinguishes *any* sensory awareness that is otherwise undifferentiated. What determines a given immediacy, immediacy that we instinctively take as the touchstone of veracious perception, is in itself radically simple, yet *conditional*. It is conditional in being a function of an event that must occur at some particular time and place, and under particular circumstances. Put another way, although the determination is what the scholastics termed *permanens* (“whole,” like some shade of red or the taste of sugar—complete for any duration that one might intuit it as such), it is nonetheless *contingent* in that intuition is a conditional act of intelligence.³⁴ What’s more, this bare, unmediated determination—be it a color, shape, or taste (what Russell took for sense-data)—far from necessarily verifying or establishing anything on a given occasion, may be “thoroughly meager,” as Hegel observes, and “untrue.”

That the preceding observations are highly germane to a scientifically philosophical approach to religious thinking, particularly the religious thinking that is prophecy, becomes evident in the light they help to shed on the problem with taking intuitive intelligence as a form of a *judgment* proper to liturgical hermeneutics. Devotionally keyed hermeneutics belongs to the

³³ In an important study of Thomas Aquinas’s natural theology, Norman Kretzmann concisely explains that for medieval thinking “a ‘permanent’ entity or state is one that can be said to exist as a whole at any instant of its duration ... and one that is ‘successive’ can exist as a whole only over an interval” (*The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas’s Natural Theology in ‘Summa Contra Gentiles II’* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 288). One of the most distinguished living neo-Thomist systematic metaphysicians, Oliva Blanchette, elucidates the notion this way: “*Permanent* means that the subject of changes remains through change. Only in change is there permanence of this kind. It is characteristic of the subject or the underlying principle of change to remain (*per-manere*) as it changes. In other words, remaining is a characteristic of what changes and is itself in the change” (*Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics* [Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press, 2003], p. 259).

³⁴ For a subtle, historically significant analysis of “form” as timeless Validity and as Event, when realized in the act of thought, see Rudolf Hermann Lotze, *Logic in Three Books: of Thought, of Investigation, and of Knowledge* [1880], 2nd ed., trans. Bernard Bosanquet et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1888), book III, chap. 2.

plane of religious thinking that Hegel would associate with Absolute *Geist*—specifically, with the spirit of revealed (*die geoffenbarte*) religion.³⁵ That said, Hegel does not consider intuition to be a mode of religious judgment nor, for that matter, judgment of any sort.³⁶ Rather, he understands intuition as the mindfulness characteristic of one’s “immersion in objects prior to any representing, reflecting, and judging.” Intuition thus obtains, to Hegel’s way of thinking, on a “lower level of consciousness” than one that is consistent with religious thinking in acts of devotional reflection and representation. This goes farther than Maimonides, who as we’ve noted denounces the intellectual and religious authority of intuitive judgment in devotional hermeneutic praxis where Scripture refers to any similarity between human beings and God.³⁷ Maimonides recognized that many of the faithful lack the ability and desire to read Scripture with genuine intellectual authority (for him the touchstone of devotional sanctity), and he held that such individuals need not be condemned as heretical or impious if they construe literally, in terms of mere sense intuition, the many scriptural references to divinity which are cast in terms of sense perception (as in “seeing God”):

If ... an individual of insufficient capacity should not wish to reach the rank [in hermeneutic expertise] to which we desire him to ascend and should he consider that all the words [in Scripture referring to apprehending the divinity] are indicative of sensual perception of created lights—be they angels or something else—why, there is no harm in his thinking this. (*Guide* I 5)

Hegel, by contrast, would unequivocally reject, from the standpoint of revealed religion, a devotional orientation predicated upon intuitive cognition. He would judge any such religious outlook as “just the one that should be understood as the standpoint of ‘pantheism’ in its proper sense,” something he dismisses as an Oriental “knowing, consciousness, or thinking ... of the absolute substance and its internal efficacy in which everything

³⁵ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition*, pp. 391–94; see also Hodgson, “Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion,” pp. 244–46.

³⁶ With F. W. J. Schelling’s doctrine of “intellectual intuition” in his sights Hegel rejects the notion of “God as intuiting intelligence” (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Volume II: Determinate Religion*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987], p. 572).

³⁷ This would be a case of what Josef Stern describes as a “corporeal meaning in application to God” (Stern, *The Matter and Form of Maimonides’ “Guide”* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013], p. 24).

particular or singular is only something transitory or ephemeral, and not genuine independence” (ibid., note 36). As Peter Hodgson points out, Hegel repudiated the notion that “intuition” applies to the immediate certainty that distinguishes religious faith.³⁸ (Hegel’s attack on what he made out as Friedrich Schleiermacher’s theology of feeling notoriously evidenced as much.) Hodgson observes, moreover, that for Hegel the certainty with which religious faith entertains its object (God) “cannot be based on any sort of immediate sensible [sensory] intuition since God is not an object of sense experience.”³⁹

On Hegel’s analysis faith itself, remarks Hodgson, does not “possess insight into the *necessity* of its content, which would be ‘intellectual’ intuition.” The latter is an onto-epistemological concept that (by contrast with J. G. Fichte and F. W. J. Schelling) Hegel came to identify with conceptual “thinking”⁴⁰—except where “by ‘intellectual’... one wants to understand fantasies and images as well” (ibid.). Consequently, as Hodgson notes, “neither in the Kantian (sensible) nor speculative (intellectual) senses does the word ‘intuition’ properly identify that form of immediate knowledge which,” as Hegel understands it, “is distinctively religious.”

Maimonides would have found much of interest in Hegel’s philosophical psychology of intuition and its bearing on devotional intelligence. We can see why by recurring once again to the *Guide*’s opening chapter and the issue of how rightly to interpret the meanings of “image” and “likeness” in Genesis 1.26. Hegel’s account of intuition as a shape of self-reflective subjective spirit substantiates on onto-epistemological grounds Maimonides’ theological, textual, and etymological arguments in *Guide* I 1. When read from a Maimonidean frame of reference as delineating the inner conceptual logic of devotional *judgment*, Hegel’s anatomy of the cognitional moments of intuition

³⁸ See “Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion,” p. 239; see also *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition*, pp. 133–37.

³⁹ Editorial Introduction, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition*, p. 30.

⁴⁰ With Jacobi in mind, Hegel comments that “believing and intuiting are now supposed to be taken in a higher sense ... as believing in God, as intellectually intuiting God; in other words, we are supposed to abstract precisely from what constitutes the difference of thinking from intuiting, from believing. It is impossible,” Hegel concludes, “to say how believing and intuiting, transposed into this higher region, may still differ from thinking” (*Encyclopedia Logic*, §63R).

sets in relief from the viewpoint of a modern philosophy of intelligence the problem with those devotional hermeneuts, many still with us,⁴¹ who interpret Scripture by way of taking sense immediacy as the ultimate ground of intelligibility. But as Hegel discerned, “everything externally sensible belongs to natural immediacy, corporeity, to the immediate determination of spirit [*Geist*] in which spirit does not yet exist in its genuine way.”⁴² Maimonides would have heartily seconded this and reasoned that from the perspective of a merely intuitive hermeneutic orientation the word “image” (*tzelem*) in the text denotes “shape and configuration,” the interpretation that licenses the errant inference from *tzelem* to the idea that God is a body.

Turning to the term “likeness” (*demut*) Maimonides marshals similar theological, textual, and etymological reasons for rejecting intuitive judgment as the *modus operandi* appropriate to devotional intelligence in religious hermeneutics.⁴³ Citing among other texts a trope from Psalm 58 (“Their venom is in the likeness of the venom of a serpent”), Maimonides demonstrates that the resemblance signified by *demut* in Genesis 1.26 is in no way sensibly presentational but strictly *functional* or *abstractly characterological*;⁴⁴ it is therefore categorically distinct from anything to be inferred from sense intuition.

⁴¹ Readings of Scripture keyed to sense intuition as the cardinal hermeneutic referent have seen a renewed currency in recent times with the rise of phenomenological theology.

⁴² *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* 1827–28, p. 207.

⁴³ Although Maimonides’ target is sense intuition, in matters of hermeneutic methodology Maimonides also rejects appeal to the authority of the *intellectual* intuition that distinguishes genuine prophecy.

⁴⁴ What Rabin translates “function or character,” Pines renders “notion.” Maimonides’ distinction here extends in unexpected but perfectly understandable ways to a perennial point of contention in metaphor theory, namely, the legitimacy of Aristotle’s characterization of metaphor as a simile without the use of “like” or “as.” Most modern approaches construe the “likeness” associated with metaphor as of the sort that denotes resemblance with respect to shape or configuration; whereas a competing account shows how metaphor literally *depictively articulates*, and thereby renders presentational with greater penetration than discursive language, a function, character, or concept. On this latter view, some similes are metaphor, some are not. See Stambovsky, *The Depictive Image: Metaphor and Literary Experience* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

II

(1) *Maimonidean divergences from Hegel on intuitive judgment.* Maimonidean thinking differs most consequentially from Hegel on the matter of how intuitive judgment relates to devotional intelligence. As we've seen, Maimonides, unlike Hegel, takes the position that sense intuition is, within limits,⁴⁵ an acceptable or at least a spiritually benign mode of judgment in religious reflection for those incapable of intellectually, which for Maimonides means spiritually, more sophisticated forms of piety. Hegel associates such sense-attuned piety with the "religion of art"—ancient Egyptian paganism being his paradigm.⁴⁶

Besides sense intuition, there is a second class of unmediated judgment of which Maimonides takes note, one that he considers in connection not with hermeneutics but with *prophecy*. This form of mindfulness exemplifies what came to be denominated *intellectual* intuition, a type of cognition that the German idealists of Hegel's day subjected to the most subtle analysis and penetrating debate of the modern period.⁴⁷ To see where Maimonides diverges from Hegel on this mode of judgment requires that we review at least briefly Hegel's considered position on intellectual intuition. In the process we shall find aspects of Hegel's thoughts on the topic that for all

⁴⁵ Recall that this is precisely the species of religious thinking that Maimonides targets for sharp criticism in *Guide* I 1, where he argues that since it conduces to the notion that God is a body we must categorically repudiate inferences deriving from sense intuition as a ground of hermeneutic judgments applied to scriptural texts that concern the formal relation of the human being to the deity.

⁴⁶ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition: The Lectures of 1827*, pp. 320–25.

⁴⁷ See Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Systematic Reconstruction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012). Förster makes much of the distinction he finds in Kant between "intellectual intuition" and "intuitive understanding"—both modes of intuitive knowing that Kant rejected as impossible for human beings (p. 152). Hegel was well aware of the distinction (cf. *Encyclopedia Logic*, §§55, 56, 86R; and *The Science of Logic*, pp. 55 and 539). The idea of intellectual intuition in the present paper reflects aspects of Hegel's understanding of the notion—with the difference that the creative dimension that distinguishes this kind of cognition is qualified here by way of a factor that neither Kant nor any of his successors explicitly considered, namely, by the two respects in which, through the act of intellectual intuition, anything can be said to have a cause (or be created): *per accidens* and *per se*.

their differences from Maimonides' psychology of prophecy nevertheless supply insights that help point the way to a long-overdue, neo-Maimonidean philosophical psychology of prophetic intelligence. Part III of this essay undertakes to sketch the outlines of such an account.

(2) *Intellectual intuition for Hegel and in the Maimonidean view of prophetic intelligence.* Kant famously dismissed intellectual intuition as impossible for human beings. Since it entails actually producing the object of apprehension in the very act of positing it, intellectual intuition manifests an onto-epistemological power that must be limited, Kant held, to God alone.⁴⁸ Hegel categorically opposed Kant's position on intellectual intuition. Hegel spelled out his considered understanding of intellectual intuition in the "Doctrine of the Concept," early in the second volume of his *Science of Logic*.⁴⁹ Hegel there associates intellectual intuition with an immediacy beyond all contingency, an immediacy that indicates "not merely a sensuous material but the *objective totality*."⁵⁰ The content of such an intuitive deliverance, the Being it witnesses to, "is not existence in its externalization [as in the exercise and development of *theoretical* intelligence] but that element in existence which is unalterable reality and truth."⁵¹ To be sure, the particular unalterable reality and truth that one intellectually intuits, that one educes pre-conceptually as idea (ideas are the ground of concepts), may be completely indeterminate and vacuous, like the pure Being with which Hegel famously commences his *Logic*. On the other hand, the unalterable reality and truth intuited as idea may be concretely determinate, particular—as in the Pythagorean Theorem, for instance, or *n*-dimensional Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries. Yet so far as this is the case, says Hegel, intellectual

⁴⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B323; see also *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), §77.

⁴⁹ This work ranks as the greatest modern onto-epistemology of the concept of logic as "a thought that has for its object 'being in becoming' and is itself the instance of a perfectly self-contained process of precisely such becoming" (George di Giovanni, introduction to *The Science of Logic*, p. lxi).

⁵⁰ *The Science of Logic*, p. 539 (*nicht bloß das Sinnliche, sondern die objective Totalität* [*Wissenschaft der Logik II*, p. 286]).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* In Hegel's German: *das Dasein nicht in seiner äußerlichen Existenz zum Gegenstande, sondern das, was in ihm unvergängliche Realität und Wahrheit ist.*

intuition requires at least “the assistance of [sense] perception”⁵²—think of the familiar recourse to visual models in mathematics and physics—if one is to render comprehensible and communicable what in the first and in the final analyses ranges into what in itself is inexpressibly intelligible, as with the asymptote⁵³ or, to cite a religious example of which Hegel doubtless knew, the famed icon that Nicholas of Cusa sent the Tegernsee monks figuring the all-seeing God (in one of Cusanus’s pre-Zohar-era works on divine contraction).

At first sight, Hegel’s understanding of intellectual intuition appears to correlate exactly with Maimonides’ sense of the presentational character of truth in prophetic vision. But a closer look discloses radical disparities. For one, Hegel does not locate the *determination* of “unalterable reality and truth” within the ambit of anything like either discursive or depictive *prophetic* (visionary) mindfulness.⁵⁴ He simply declares that the fundamental reality and truth of existence as produced in intellectual intuition inhere in and are determined by the Concept, the *Begriff*.⁵⁵ Hegel thus construes intellectual

⁵² Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s “Logic”* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2006), p. 125.

⁵³ Or, as with the notion of a geometric line, as something generated by the “path” of a “moving” point, which itself is no more substantial than an ordered set of coordinates, the coordinates in their turn being simply sets of variables employed to render determinate the “location” of a point on a line, surface, or “in” space.

⁵⁴ Hegel says little about prophetic psychology as such, but see his negative assessment of “immediate knowing” as he finds it in the Critical philosophy (F. H. Jacobi in particular is Hegel’s target); the commentary appears in his logic lectures as “the third position of thought towards objectivity,” after metaphysics and empiricism: “because mediated knowledge is supposed to be restricted to finite content alone, reason [understood as “the knowledge of God”] is *immediate knowing, faith*,” which is to say *intuitive* (*Encyclopedia Logic*, §63, italics in the original).

⁵⁵ Like other defining elements of his philosophy, Hegel conceived *Begriff*—the keystone notion of his absolute idealism—on the basis of Aristotelian thought, specifically the doctrine that forms are ingredient in things as their final causes (so-called “formal-final cause”). Frederick Beiser explains the connection: “The formal cause consists in the essence or nature of a thing, what makes it the thing it is; and the final cause is the purpose the object attempts to realize, the goal of its development. The two senses of causality are joined in Hegel, as in Aristotle ... Like Kant, Hegel calls the formal-final cause the ‘concept’ (*Begriff*) of a thing” (*Hegel*, p. 67). Hegel holds the *Begriff* to be “the innermost core of spirit” (*Innerste des Geistes*) (*Encyclopedia Logic*, §51R; *Der Wissenschaft der Logik*, p. 136). The possible

intuition to be a variety of *mediated* knowing, knowing mediated by the defining master-moment unique to the Hegelian system, the *Begriff*. He does not credit intellectual intuition as an originary form of insight in the manner of Maimonides, who regards prophets as creative devotional thinkers able to render vividly determinate a particular revelation that otherwise outstrips the limits of our grasp of the intelligible.

Maimonides approaches what is identifiable as intellectual intuition in the onto-epistemology of prophecy in terms of an ancient philosophical faculty psychology much of which, despite a number of borrowings, Hegel would have repudiated. As the greatest modern exponent of the philosophy of *Geist*, Hegel would have censured Maimonidean psychology of prophecy on grounds that it fails to recognize intelligence as an emergent component (rather than a providential emanation or gift or shaping force, as in *Guide* II 48) of subjective spirit understood as a thing-in-itself. Moreover, in Hegel's psychology of subjective spirit, the *will* supersedes intelligence and then is itself sublated in *objective* spirit which takes the form of the collective realities of "right" (*Recht*) and politics. If anything is clear from this route of Hegelian thought it is that Hegel is no Maimonidean.

None of this, however, alters the fact that in view of seminal conceptual correlations and shared Aristotelian principles Hegel is arguably the most important modern philosophical resource for recasting in post-medieval speculative terms Maimonides' metaphysic of religious thinking—something Nachman Krochmal, for one, long ago recognized.⁵⁶ Still, on the matter of intellectual intuition it is necessary to qualify and in significant respects supplant Hegelian doctrine in light of Maimonides' philosophical

relation to prophecy, as here understood, is that (against Kant) Hegel viewed the Concept as the absolute reality and truth which could be said providentially to engage the prophet and vouchsafe the authority of particular (finite) prophetic judgments as to their *per se* cause. "[T]he *concept*, to which the *judgment* proceeding from it also belongs, is," declares Hegel, "the true *thing-in-itself* or the *rational*" (*Science of Logic*, p. 564) [*der Begriff, wozu auch das von ihm ausgehende Urteile gehört, ist das wahrhafte Ding-an-Sich oder das Vernünftige (Wissenschaft der Logik II, p. 320)*].

⁵⁶ That said, Krochmal's magnum opus could hardly count as an antecedent of the present essay, let alone of the extended study from which it derives. (Krochmal fails, for example, to distinguish subjective from objective spirit in Hegel.) See *The Guide of the Perplexed of the Time* [*Moreh Nebukhe ha-Zeman*], ed. Simon Rawidowicz, 2nd ed. (Waltham, Mass.: Ararat Press, 1961), esp. the fragmentary chap. 16.

psychology of prophetic intelligence understood as an articulation of Jewish devotional piety.⁵⁷

Maimonides' signature treatment of intuitive (unmediated) judgment in religious thinking appears in his extended account of prophetic psychology. That one can hardly overestimate the import of this for Maimonides in the *Guide* is borne out in the introduction to part I (pp. 5–6), where he expressly states that the two purposes of the *Guide* concern prophetic meaning. Maimonides explicates prophecy as a function of a divine afflatus that has the character of what he says we can call, and to what he refers regularly if homonymously as, an “overflow” from the superlunary Agent Intellect.⁵⁸ He teaches that the providential illumination first informs the true prophet's rational faculty and then animates his perfectly developed imagination. The imagination supplies the depictive currency, the “picture thinking,” the epistemic vehicle of the prophet's vision—the one exception being Moses, whose prophetic thinking and articulated doctrine, if originating with the vision of the Burning Bush, were uniquely discursive in character.⁵⁹

There is no question but that prophetic intelligence as Maimonides understands it, which is to say *visionary* intelligence, is *intuitive* and that, notwithstanding the differences we've observed, it correlates in essential respects precisely with Hegel's psychology of intuition as the

⁵⁷ A more general example of how Hegel's philosophy of spirit (*Geist*) stands at odds with Jewish religious thinking is his doctrine that individual subjective spirit is sublated in the higher level of ethical (social) life which he casts as objective spirit. In Jewish religious life, by contrast, the ethical as objective spirit does not follow and supervene upon the stages of intellectual development. Rather, it qualifies each phase of it by way of a comprehensive practical context within which “the sacred” functions covenantally as a middle term between God and Israel. Particularly in recent decades, students of Hegelian thought, most notably Fackenheim, have probed and debated the shortcomings of Hegel on this theme; see Fackenheim's “Moses and the Hegelians” in *Encounters* (note 15 above).

⁵⁸ The orientationally definitive phrasing appears in *Guide* I 69, where he refers to the “thing that is *spoken of as overflow*” (emphasis added). Maimonides discusses the relation of “overflow” to prophetic knowledge in *Guide* II 36.

⁵⁹ Although Moses is *sui generis* as the singularly discursive intelligential prophet of Law, his prophetic vocation nonetheless originates in a manner that Maimonides holds as characterizing the entire prophetic career of all the other prophets in that he “receives prophetic revelation ... through an angel” (the Burning Bush); see *Guide* III 45.

initial configuration of subjective spirit. In fact the term “visionary” is closer semantically to Hegel’s German, *Anschauung* (with its verbal root *schauen*, “look”) than to the typical English translation of *Anschauung* in Hegel as “intuition,” understood in its modern sense. Maimonides observes, for instance, that the “word *mar’eh* [vision] derives from the verb *ra’oh* [to see]” (*Guide* II 36) and that this etymological point “signifies that the imaginative faculty achieves so great a perfection of action [in the prophet] that it sees the thing as if it were *outside*, and that the thing whose origin is due to it *appears to have come to it by the way of external sensation*” (*ibid.*, emphasis added). This explanation incorporates the very same characteristic of “external immediacy” that we earlier noted, in part I (3), to be a signal moment in Hegel’s psychology of intuition.

Given the orientational status of “vision” and “seeing” in Maimonides’ teachings on prophecy one might object that what appears to the prophet is a function of mere *sense* intuition. After all, Maimonides thinks of vision and seeing as prime analogates of the spiritual (*geistig*) character of prophetic insight. But such an inference could be no more than a partial and ultimately distortive basis for developing a bona fide neo-Maimonidean account of prophecy. This is because so far as it is correct it is irreducibly part of the larger speculative context within which Maimonides understands the psychology of prophecy, which is that of *devotional* intelligence.⁶⁰ Duly to credit this more comprehensive frame of reference is to grasp how for Maimonides prophecy manifests the authority not of mere sense-perceptual intuition but of *intellectual* intuition. The latter stands categorically apart, as a class of intuition, from both sense intuition and representational (pre-scientifically symbolic) intelligence. The factor of intellectual intuition most material here is a much controverted if frequently invoked holistically *creative* efficacy, a *poietic* power in the derivative sense of the term.⁶¹ This creative aspect of intellectual intuition plays a formative role in the neo-Maimonidean psychology of prophetic intelligence introduced in the next section.

⁶⁰ A core notion of the author’s essay in the *Wissenschaftslehre* of Jewish religious thinking; see note 7, above, and note 75, below.

⁶¹ Hegel’s focus, by contrast, is upon sense intuition as merely the initial shape of spirit, its initial *Gestalt*, in the phase-by-phase development of *Intelligenz*.

III

A neo-Maimonidean philosophical psychology of prophetic intelligence. One must take care not to confuse the “creation” that is a function of intellectual intuition with the *depictive* “production” that constitutes the presentational imagistic medium of prophecy (the exception being Moses, the medium of whose prophecy, on the Maimonidean reading, is legislative discourse). This imagistic depictive idiom of prophetic devotional thinking betokens productive work that is, as Hegel would put it, “symbolizing, allegorizing, or poetic.” It is an exercise not of intuitive intelligence but of intelligence in its *representational* configuration, specifically in the guise of what Hegel identifies as “productive imagination” (*produktive Einbildungskraft*). So far as it pertains to Maimonidean devotional intelligence, such representational judgment effectively builds upon a received, hence “reproduced”⁶² repertoire of images, which, although initially tied to particular sense perceptions, are rendered universal, symbolically formal, as “works” of intelligence. It is judgment of this sort that typifies the general run of religious thinking in liturgy, devotional biblical hermeneutics, and rite.

Although prophetic utterances thus employ images and symbols like other modes of religious thinking, prophetic judgment manifests a singular creativity—the prophet acting with what one might term “vocational license,”⁶³ alien to normative liturgical, hermeneutic, and ritual performance. Unlike prayer, scriptural interpretation, and religious rite, prophecy is in and of itself no occasion of normative devotional observance. On this count it makes sense that Maimonides would sharply condemn the idea of invoking prophetic (intellectual) intuition as a guide in scriptural hermeneutics. As

⁶² See Hegel’s trenchant analysis of “reproductive imagination” as a defining component of representational intelligence, in *Philosophy of Mind* §§455–57. Again, the reproductive imagination casts the defining images, the initially intuited spatio-temporal relations of their “content,” in the universal noetic (symbolic) currency of intelligence. While with the *productive* imagination, intelligence gives the image, at first reproduced merely as a universal, a wholly new particularity as a concrete universal—such as by producing from two triangles a Star of David which, beyond the level of representation, at the culminating level of intelligence (i.e., *begreifenden Denken*) can take the form, for example, of Rosenzweig’s Star of Redemption.

⁶³ One thinks, for example, of the normatively anomalous Call that Hosea reports as marking the commencement of his prophetic career.

Moshe Halbertal reminds us, “In the introduction to the *Commentary on the Mishnah*, Maimonides states that prophecy is completely ineffective for interpreting the Torah.... A prophet who pretentiously makes laws or even decides controversies among the sages by means of prophecy attests that he is a false prophet and worthy of death by strangulation.”⁶⁴

The creativity of prophetic intelligence does not originate the truths and realities that it communicates. Rather, what the prophetic intelligence creates are the formal determinations—from the written Mosaic Law to the vision Habakkuk inscribed upon the tables—which articulate in concretely situational and practical terms the *authority* of the truths and realities to which they bear witness. (Moses does so through his discursively cast legislative prophetic legacy, the other prophets through their dramatic, often imagistically animated warnings, consolation, and vaticinations.)

The creative dynamic in the psychology of the prophetic act as an exercise of intellectual intuition thus does not—as in the case of the false prophet—fabricate its source of inspiration. The synthetic powers that distinguish prophetic judgment operate *posterior* to what is the cause *per se* of the prophecy, posterior to what in Hegel’s words is “that element in existence which is unalterable reality and truth” (which, recall, he identified as God). The prophet’s encounter with this cause of his mission is *providential*, as is that element of unalterable reality and truth that inform his vision. It is just this providential moment, figured homonymously by Maimonides as the Divine overflow, that qualifies the God of the Hebrew prophets as also the Author of the *good* and the God of *love*,⁶⁵ beyond the element in existence which simply is unalterable reality and truth—or perhaps more precisely, *by virtue of that element*. One thing that Hegel rightly grasped to be as fundamental to the Hebrew religion as its idea of God’s singular unity, or Oneness, is, to use Hegel’s term, its *trust*⁶⁶ in the Divine origination of

⁶⁴ *Maimonides: Life and Thought*, trans. Joel Linsider (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 127.

⁶⁵ Both elements—the good and love—Hegel regarded as original contributions of the Hebrew religion to the knowledge of God; see *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One-Volume Edition*, pp. 357–75.

⁶⁶ Something that the transcript of his last lectures on religion (1831) records Hegel as having described as an “admirable steadfastness” which he glosses this way: “not a fanaticism of conversion, as exists in Islam, but a fanaticism of stubbornness” (*ibid.*, p. 373n).

the good and of God's love, both attested by the providential character of Hebrew prophetic insight into unalterable reality and truth.⁶⁷ That trust of the Hebrews strikes Hegel as "none other" than a mindfulness of a transcendent "harmony between power and wisdom." It is trust in the harmony between power and wisdom which sees its supreme development in the Hebrew prophets, a harmony that takes its absolute form in the manifestations of Divine providence (or השגחה).

The utterances by means of which the prophet in his unique voice enounces the practical, situational imperative of unalterable reality and truth that informs his vision are in themselves—unlike "the element in existence" that summons the prophet—realizations merely of what is possible (not necessary), incidental as they are to the prophet's developed innate intellectual and imaginative capacity (*hexis*). The particular linguistic and figurative character that the prophetic communication assumes—its language and imagery—is thus a creation *per accidens*. This means that it is a result of circumstance and choices that, given human finitude and freedom, did not necessarily have to materialize; the language and figures are merely incidental to the prophet as an imaginative, devotionally attuned person living at a certain time and place.

The classical contrast between cause *per accidens* and cause *per se* that obtains here is categorical: a sculptor as such is the necessary, *per se* cause of a statue; whereas the famed sculpture titled *Moses* was a *per accidens* creation of the living, freely choosing Michelangelo, whose activity as sculptor of that statue from about 1513 to 1515 was incidental to various provisional circumstances and attributes, accidents, of his person.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁷ For Hegel as Christian apologist, however, this remained "inconsummately" abstract—the *positive* relation of the infinite to the finite that the Hebrew religion putatively left undeveloped. It is essential never to lose sight of the distance that this view puts Hegel from an undistorted image of Judaism. See, for instance, the record of his classroom commentary which appears as an Addition to the first section on the Doctrine of Essence in his *Encyclopedia Logic*: "If we consider God only as the [infinite] essence without qualification and remain with this, then we know [*wissen*] him only as the universal power that cannot be withstood.... Now fear of the Lord is, indeed, the beginning, but only the beginning of wisdom (p. 175).

⁶⁸ Only after the fact and in imagination do we construct the concept of a "Michelangelo-the-Sculptor" whose essence necessarily includes creation of the *Moses*, and is thus the *per se* cause of the statue, the unique necessary cause of its actuality.

derivatively Aristotelian distinction between creation or cause *per se* and *per accidens* proves most useful in elucidating the relation between that which calls to or otherwise engages the prophet and the philosophical psychology of devotional intelligence in the mode of prophecy as an act of intellectual intuition. Invoking the *per se* / *per accidens* distinction clarifies how a given prophetic utterance, as such, is *wholly* a creature of the prophet who is nonetheless its cause only incidentally, *per accidens*. The point to bear in mind here is the asymmetric relation: The *per se* cause of the prophetic effusion, the necessary and absolute condition of its possibility (such as the sculptor is to the statue), is the “element in existence which is unalterable reality and truth” which speaks to the prophet. This element is the cause necessarily and without qualification of the prophetic as such—unlike, say, the images and tropes by means of which most of the prophets depictively render their communication in presentational terms. The particular linguistic tropes, metaphors, and parabolic figuration are formal causes *per accidens* of a prophecy, being themselves incidental to the individual prophet’s productive imagination. To study the prophets merely as literary artists is thus not, from the standpoint of devotional intelligence, to study the prophets as such at all.⁶⁹

Not everything the prophet produces in the prophetic act, however, follows *per accidens* from who he is—his defining virtues, abilities, and predispositions. There is a feature of prophecy that has its *per se* cause *exclusive* of the “element in existence which is unalterable reality and truth” which speaks to or otherwise radically engages an individual with such overwhelming power as to inaugurate his career as prophet. What owes its essence to the unique particularity of each prophet as such is his *intelligential voice*, specifically as that voice constitutes the distinctive inflection each prophet gives (*per accidens*)⁷⁰ to the images and tropes that he employs to

⁶⁹ By the same token, interpreting the ritual laws, the commandments, from the standpoint of their *per accidens*, or incidental, socio-historical character—as Maimonides famously does the laws, for example, of sacrifice—does not compromise their religious authority. One cannot but be tone deaf to the religious authority of the commandments, as such, except from an elemental *devotional* frame of reference—the bona fide religious context of signification—from within which they are the *per se* configuration of Mosaic prophecy and thereby constitute a normative expression of that providentially sponsored “element in existence which is unalterable reality and truth.”

⁷⁰ Significantly, a core meaning of “inflection” is “accidence.”

communicate warnings, consolation, instructions, and so forth about the practical bearing of some synoptic and “unalterable reality and truth” on a determinate circumstance or turn of events.

As it illumines the psychology of prophecy, the *per se / per accidens* distinction also informs the very structure of Hebrew Scripture. To recognize this is to understand how the latter formally charts prophetic intelligence as we’ve probed it in this essay, so far as the Hebrew Bible is the sovereign referent of religious discourse and the originary medium of Jewish self-understanding. A paradigmatic instance is the story of Joseph’s first prophetic dreams (Genesis 37:5–11) which are *themselves* a motivating factor in the series of events that ultimately culminate in the prophecy’s fulfillment. The sheaves and celestial bodies that figure forth the message of the dreams that foretell Joseph’s ultimate ascendancy over his brothers derive *per accidens* from the stock of images with which Joseph happens to be familiar. But the provocative *voice* of the seventeen-year-old favorite son as prophet—so different from his voice, much later, as the interpreter of Pharaoh’s prophetic dream—is something that Joseph creates, *per se*, not incidentally but essentially, *necessarily*, in virtue of who and what he uniquely *is* at the moment he utters his prophecy. Most significantly, the executive role that Joseph’s prophetic act plays in inciting his brothers’ envy is not incidental, *per accidens*, vis-à-vis the oneiric visitation of transcendent truth and reality that providentially establishes Joseph’s election. To the contrary, it exhibits how *prophecy*, regardless of the incidental aspects and proximate effects of the *prophetic act*, constitutes a *per se* manifestation of a truth and reality that speak to the prophet in ways that ineluctably disclose the transcendent meaning of human being and destiny—as that mode of being and destiny are at one, for the prophet, with the providential claims upon them, the claims of divine governance (הנהגה). What this makes clear above all to the devotional reader, one who engages the text always as *Bible*,⁷¹ is the pathos (different from Heschel’s divine pathos) of an acute axiological conflict that informs the structure of scriptural narrative. This conflict appears dramatically in Jonah’s attempted evasion of his mission, for example, and in the moral

⁷¹ The devotional context of signification is essential in this connection. Absent the practical religious dimension that onto-epistemologically attunes the reader’s judgment to the devotional purport of the text (for the reader), the prophecy in this phase of the Joseph narrative, like that in the initial phase of the Oedipus myth, amounts to little more than a literary trope: dramatic irony.

distress of Habakkuk and in Hosea's repudiation of Gomer (and then there is Balaam!). The conflict is between the values exemplified incidentally (*per accidens*) in the character of the prophet, on the one hand, and those that mark the essential (*per se*) nature of the prophecy, on the other. This conflict, memorialized in the pathos of the prophetic psyche, witnesses to the providential reality and truth that bespeak the moment of transcendence, the element that vouchsafes the testamental meaning and unimpeachable authority of the intellectual intuition that distinguishes prophetic judgment as such.

Conclusion. "The most significant feature of the vision of the prophets," wrote Leo Baeck, "was its intuitive and practical character."⁷² The preceding neo-Maimonidean reflections upon intellectual intuition in the psychology of prophecy bear out Baeck's pronouncement.⁷³ They do so in the interest of contributing, on the theme of prophecy, to a comprehensive modern "science of knowing" dedicated to Jewish devotional intelligence.⁷⁴ At bottom, and independently of that considerably more ambitious undertaking, the present exposition offers itself as a brief for founding the philosophical psychology of prophecy metaphysically, which is to say onto-epistemologically (on the principle that knowing is of being).⁷⁵ And this in a way that establishes—

⁷² *The Essence of Judaism*, trans. Victor Grubenweiser and Leonard Perl, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Schocken, 1948), p. 31.

⁷³ Heschel posits an undefined, hybrid notion — "reflective intuition" — as the means by which the prophets "would still have insisted on the possibility of understanding" God, not discounting "the essential unknowability of God" (*The Prophets* [New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962], p. 223). As a rule intuition stands apart from other kinds of cognition in virtue of its unmediated, hence *pre-reflective* character. To invoke a "reflective" intuition is effectively to resort to mystic paradox in place of explanation. For the Hegelian philosophical psychology of intelligence, the reflective incorporation of intuition — whether sense-grounded or intellectual — occurs on the plane of *representational* mindfulness, and not that of intuition as such.

⁷⁴ See note 7 above.

⁷⁵ This is one of the two fundamental principles that inform the author's systematic essay in the science of knowing, or *Wissenschaftslehre*, of Jewish devotional intelligence (note 7 above). The notion that knowing is of being is an onto-epistemological (metaphysical) principle that grounds a concept of "intelligence" that is demonstrably formative of Jewish devotional piety. The second principle is

beyond any theology of “divine pathos” (Heschel) or the phenomenology of illumination or affect—the context of the legitimating proof, the fact of fulfillment, that evidences the genuine authority of prophetic intelligence. In sum, the chief philosophical aim of this essay has been to adumbrate in modern, subject-centered terms how the necessity *in* the vision of the Hebrew prophet becomes the necessity *of* the Hebrew prophetic vision.

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the idea of “sacral attunement.” This is a normative principle that sponsors—through covenantal performance of the commandments—the religious orientation of the forms of judgment which distinguish the intelligence that informs Jewish devotional piety.