as a result of its physicality, it is lowly and disgraceful. Granted, the creations in this world are fascinating; [but if you want to suggest that it is man's sophisticated make-up that allows God to communicate with him, then why limit God's connection to man alone?] Even in the smallest of insects God's unfathomable wisdom is apparent."

The Rabbi said: "This 69. does not require a lengthy answer. The wisdom that you see involved in the creation of an ant, for example—do you attribute this wisdom to some star or other heavenly force other than God, Who is truly omnipotent and exact, and Who provides each and every thing with its exact properties?"

פלישפו בתחושים - חבור עם הבריאה הַלאת הַנְּבָזָה הָמְגָנָה בְּחָבְיַה, וְאָם הִיא וִפְלֹאָה בְּצוּרָתָה, בִּי בַּקְטֹן שַבַּרְמַשִּׁים מְפָּלִיאַת חָכְּמָתוֹ מָה שָׁאֵין הַדַּעַת מְשָׁגַת

סט. אָמֶר הָחָבֶר: בִּדְבָרְךְ זָה לֹא הָצְרַכְתִּי בּדְבָרִים רְבִּים לַהָּשִׁיבִדְּ. הַאַתָּה מִיחס זאת הַּחָכְמָה הַנְּמִצְאת בְּבָרִיאַת הַנְּמֵלָה דרה משל אל גלגל או אל פוכב או לוולתו מָבֶּלְתִּי הַבּּוֹרָא, הַיָּכוֹל, הַמְשַׁעֵר, אֱשֵׁר נתו לְכָל דָּכָר חָקוֹ מָאֵין תּוֹסֶפֶת וְחָפֶּרוֹוַיִּ

ע. אַפֶּר הַכּוּזָרִי: וְזָהוּ הַכְּיַחָם אֵל פּעֵל

עא. אָפָר הָחָבֶר: וּמָה הוא הַטָּבעי? עב. אָפַר הַפּוּזָרִי: הוּא פֹחַ פַהַכּחוֹת, על טָה שָׁשְּׁטֵּצְנוּ בַּחָכְטוֹת, וְאֵין אָנוּ יוֹדְעִים טַה הוא, אַבָּל הַחֲבֶמִים יוֹדְעִים אוֹתוֹ בַּלִי ספק. עג. אָמַר הָחָבֶר: אַבָּל יִדִיעַתַם בּוֹ כִּידִיעָתֵנוּ. נָדַר אוֹתוֹ הַכִּילוֹסוֹף כִּי הוּא

- The Kuzari said: "These properties are attributed to nature." 70.
- The Rabbi asked: "And what exactly is 'nature'?" 71.
- The Kuzari said: "It is a certain force within the universe which, I grant you, I do not understand clearly. But the wise scientists know precisely what it is."
- The Rabbi said: "Their understanding of nature is just as nebu-73. lous as ours. Aristotle defined it a bit by stating that nature is the

[2] "[Until now, however, I have been addressing only Aristotle's belief in eternal existence. Other philosophers, while still believing in eternal existence, nevertheless believe that the universe in its current form was shaped from some primordial matter at some point in history.161 Were a Jew of faith to believe in some primordial matter that God used to create the current universe, and that this primordial matter had

ואם הוה מצטרה בעל התורה להאמיו ולתורות בתיולי בחשר קדשון ועולשים רבים קדב תעולם הזה, לא הנה פנה פגם באמונתו, פי הוא מאמין כי העולם הזה הוא חדש מזמן יַרוּע, וּתַחַלָּת הַאָּדָם אֲשֶׁר הָיוֹ בּוֹ – אָדָם וְחַוָּה. לסת. אמר הפוורי: די לי באלה הטענות, הפספיקות פשער הזה, ואם מארד מכרתי עמד. אַטָריחַדְּ לְהַרָאוֹת לִי הַטְּעֵנוֹת הַמַּסְפִּיקוֹת. אַכָּל שוב אַל גַּלְגוּל דַּבָּרידְ, וְהֵיאַדְ הַתְּחַנִּק בְּנִפְשְׁכֶם הדבר הגדול הזה, שיהוה לבורא הגופות והרוחות והגפשות והשכלים והפלאכים. אשר נתעלה והתקדש והתנדל מהשנת השכלים

been used previously to create other universes as well, this would not constitute a defect of faith. Ultimately, he would still believe that this world had been created at some finite time, and that humankind stemmed from the first people, Adam and Chavah (Eve)."62

The Kuzari said: "I have been sufficiently convinced in this area. If our relationship continues, I will ask you later to provide me with stronger proofs. 63 In the meantime, return to your main point. I do not understand how you were able to accept the following ideology. You believe that the Creator of all physical bodies, life forces, souls, and angels, Who is well beyond the comprehension of angelic creatures let alone the human senses, communes [via man] with this physical world, despite the fact that,

^{61.} This is the Platonic model of creation, discussed in Moreh (2:13). See note 54, above.

^{62.} Rambam in Moreh (2:25) states the same idea. He concludes by saying that since we have no logical/philosophical reason to accept the Platonic model of a primordial mass, Jews adhere to the traditional belief of creation ex nihilo (yesh me'ayin).

^{63.} This will take place later in the book, Kuzari 5:17.

[1] The Rabbi said: "Correct. [But there is a different definition of nature which we do find acceptable.) The elements, the sun, the moon, and the stars all have intrinsic properties, such as their degree of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. They behave in a certain fashion not because they are sentient beings, but because they are confined intrinsically to certain attributes [by God]. All intelligent patterns within distinct things, such as form, size, and the ability to reproduce, are attributable to the one, omnipotent, and precise God alone. Nevertheless, one who identifies these elements and celestial bodies - which affect

וְאַלֹּ וְהָיָה רָחוֹק בְּעֵינֶיךְ הַרְאוֹת רְשְׁטִים עָיָנִים אֱלֹהָיִים נְכָבָּדִים בְּעוֹלָם הַיָּה התחתון, בְּשׁיָּהִיי הַהַטִּרִים הָסִם נְכוֹנִים

physical objects through temperature and the like—by the name *nature* is not really doing any harm, provided that he does not ascribe any sentience to them. To cite an analogy, we know that when a man and woman reproduce offspring that has human form, it is not because of their sentience to create a human form that this form was created. Rather, they merely produce the unformed matter, which is then formed by the wise, forming God. 65

[2] "Do not doubt that there are Divine influences that permeate the objects of this lowly world, provided that the objects are prepared to receive

65. This is akin to the Talmudic dictum (T.B., Kiddushin 30b): "There are three partners in man: The Holy One Blessed is He, one's father, and one's mother." See also Kuzari 3:23.

underlying cause of all phenomena which cause change within a physical object, provided that these changes are intrinsic—not incidental—to the object in question."64

74. The Kuzari said: "It seems as if Aristotle is saying that when an object changes intrinsically—i.e., it displays motion when it was previously stationary or vice versa—there must be some cause for the change. And this cause is called nature."

75. The Rabbi said: "That is the outcome of his very intricate and refined distinction

הַהַתְּחָלָה וְהַפָּבָּה אֲשֶׁר בָּה וָנִים וְוָנִיעַ הַּרְּכָר אֲשֶׁר הוא בּוֹ בִּעֶצֶם וְלֹא בְּטִקְרָה.

עד. אָמָר הַפּוּזְרִי: כְּאִלּוּ הוּא אוֹמֵר. כִּי הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יָטִעַּ מְעַצְמוֹ וְיָנִיּהַ מַעַּצְמוֹ יֵשׁ לוֹ סְבָּה מָה. בָּה יָנִיּהַ וְיָנִיּעַ. וְהַשְּבָּה הַהִּיא היא הַשִּבְע.

עח. אָמֶר הָחָבֶר: זֶה הוּא שֶׁרְצִיתִּי לוֹמֵר, עִם דִּיְקוֹת רָב וְדְקְדּוּק וְהָפְרֵשׁ בִּין מֶה שָׁיִּפְעֵל בְּמָקְרָה מִמֵּה שֵׁיִפְעֵל בְּטְבַע. וְהַדְּכָרִים מָבְחִילִים הַשּׁוֹמְעָם, אָבָל הְעוֹלְה מִידִיעָתִם בַּשָּׁבָע – זָה הוּא.

עו. אָכֶר הַכּוּזָרִי: אָט כֵּן אֶלִי רוֹאָה שֶׁהָתְעוּנוּ בַּשִׁמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְשְׁמוּנוּ מִשְׁהַּהְפִים עָט הַבּוֹרֵא, בְּאָקְרַנו: "הַשָּבֵע הָכָם פּוֹעַל" וְאֶפְשָׁר: "בּוֹרֵא" עַל טַעַם דְּכְרִיהָם.

between things which operate incidentally and those that operate via *nature*. The issues involved have fascinated many a philosopher, but this is what it boils down to."

76. The Kuzari said: "If so, then I see that we have been misled by these wise men into thinking that *nature* works [in an intelligent fashion to affect creation] just like the Creator. That is why we use phrases like 'wise nature' and 'active nature' when in reality we are referring to the Creator."

^{64.} This is elaborated upon in 5:10. Intrinsic change vs. incidental change can be explained by the following example: when one ages, one's hair becomes white; this is a natural phenomenon, and is therefore *intrinsic* to the hair. But when one chooses to dye his white hair, on the other hand, this change is not intrinsic to the hair, but rather *incidental*, the result of some outside effect other than the natural tendencies of the hair.