



THE IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN REASON

IBN TUFAIL

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**BY
IBN TUFAIL**

TRANSLATED BY SIMON OCKLEY

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does nothing but what tends to the attaining of some one or other of these vile sensible Things; namely, either Riches, to heap them up; or Pleasure, which he may take; or Lust, which he may satisfie; or Revenge, whereby he may pacifie his Mind; or Power, to defend himself; or some outward Work commanded by the Law, whereof he may make a vain-glorious Shew; or whereby he may save his own Neck? *Now all these things are Darkness upon Darkness in the Depth of the Sea, neither is there any of you that doth not enter in thither, for such is the unchangeable Decree of the Lord.*³²

§ 118. And when he understood the Condition of Mankind, and that the greatest part of them were like Brute Beasts, he knew that all Wisdom, Direction and good Success, consisted in what the Messengers of God had spoken, and the Law deliver'd; and that there was no other way besides this, and that there could be nothing added to it; and that there were Men appointed to every Work, and that every one was best capable of doing that unto which he was appointed by Nature. That this was God's way of dealing with those which were gone before, and that there is no Change in his way. Whereupon returning to *Salâman* and his Friends, he begg'd their Pardon for what he had said to them, and desir'd to be excus'd, and told them that he was of the same Opinion with them, and went on in the same way, and persuaded them to stick firmly to their Resolution of keeping within the Bounds of the Law, and the Performance of the External Rites, and that they should not much dive into the Things that did not concern them: and that in doubtful Things they should give Credit, and yield their Assent readily; and that they should abstain from novel Opinions, and from their Appetites, and follow the Examples of their pious Ancestors, and forsake Novelties, and that they should avoid that neglect of religious Performances which was seen in the vulgar sort of Men, and the Love of the World, which he principally caution'd them against. For both he and his Friend *Asâl* knew that this tractable, but defective sort of Men, had no other way in the World to escape, but only by this means; and that if they should be rais'd above this to curious Speculations, it would be worse with them, and they would not be able to attain to the Degree of the Blessed, but would fluctuate and be toss'd up and down, and make a bad End. But on the contrary, if they

³² *Alcoran, Chap. 24 and 19.*

