

that he would succeed in battle against the Midianites and their allies, and free Israel from their yoke, he also did not ask for anything miraculous as a sign, but, simply, that the dew should fall upon the fleece of wool, and not upon the ground around it; and, as a second or confirmatory sign, that the fleece should remain dry, while the ground around it should become wet with dew.¹

When we consider the circumstances under which the sign was given, we find that our Christian brethren give the sign a meaning and an application that make it ridiculous. For it is related in Isaiah, in the same chapter in which the birth of the child is prophesied, that the kings of Israel and of Syria had allied themselves against Achaz, king of Judah, and were marching against Jerusalem. When the news of their advance was told to Achaz, "his heart trembled, with the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are shaken before the wind." Then the Almighty sent the prophet Isaiah to Achaz, to comfort and encourage him, and to assure him that his enemies would not succeed in their designs against him. And in order to give him more confidence, the Almighty, through the prophet, said to Achaz, "Ask thee a sign from the Eternal thy God; ask it in the depth or high up above." But Achaz said, "I will not ask; and I will not tempt the Eternal." Upon which the prophet continued, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, this young woman, *Hangaimah* (indicating her), will become the mother of a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Cream and honey

¹ Judges vi. 36-40.