



Philosophy (continued)

1. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:13 (Friedlander translation)

Those who hold this view, namely, that the existence of man is the object of the whole creation, may be asked whether Gd could have created man without those previous creations, or whether man could only have come into existence after the creation of all other things. If they answer in the affirmative, that man could have been created even if, e.g., the heavens did not exist, they will be asked what is the object of all these things, since they do not exist for their own sake but for the sake of something that could exist without them?... We who believe in the Creation must admit that Gd could have created the Universe in a different manner as regards the causes and effects contained in it, and this would lead to the absurd conclusion that everything except man existed without any purpose, as the principal object, man, could have been brought into existence without the rest of the creation. I consider therefore the following opinion as most correct according to the teaching of the Bible, and best in accordance with the results of philosophy; namely, that the Universe does not exist for man's sake, but that each being exists for its own sake, and not because of some other thing.

2. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:14 (Friedlander translation)

The object of the spheres may be the continuance of successive genesis and destruction; and the succession of genesis and destruction serves, as has already been said, to give existence to mankind. This idea is supported by Biblical texts and sayings [of our Sages]. The philosopher replies thus: If the difference between the heavenly bodies and the transient individual members of the species consisted in their different sizes, this opinion could be maintained: but as the difference consists in their essence, it remains improbable that the superior beings should be the means of giving existence to the lower ones.

3. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah 2:3

All that Gd created in His world may be divided into three segments:

- 1) Some of them are creatures which are composites of matter and form, and they come into existence and are destroyed continually. For example, the bodies of people, animals, plants and metals.
- 2) Some of them are creatures which are composites of matter and form, but they do not change from one body to another or from one form to another like the first. Their form is fixed forever in their matter, and they do not change like those. These are the spheres and the stars therein. Their matter is not like other matter and their form is not like other form.
- 3) Some of them are creatures of form without any matter, and these are *malachim*, for the *malachim* have no matter or body, but are just separate forms.

4. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah 3:9

All of the stars and spheres have spirits and intellect and mind, and they are alive and enduring and they recognize the One who spoke and the world came into existence, each of them according to its size and according to its stature. They praise and glorify their Creator like the *malachim*. And just as they recognize Gd, so they recognize themselves and recognize the *malachim* above them. And the intellect of the stars and spheres is smaller than that of the *malachim* and greater than that of human beings.

5. Jeremiah 33:25, and see Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Circumcision 3:4

If not for My covenant, day and night, I would not have put in place the laws of heaven and earth.

Text

6. Lucretius (1st century BCE), *De Rerum Natura* 2:1048 (William Ellery Leonard ed.)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0131:book=2:card=1048>

Besides, when matter abundant

Is ready there, when space on hand, nor object

Nor any cause retards, no marvel 'tis
That things are carried on and made complete,
Perforce. And now, if store of seeds there is
So great that not whole life-times of the living
Can count the tale...
And if their force and nature abide the same,
Able to throw the seeds of things together
Into their places, even as here are thrown
The seeds together in this world of ours,
'Tmust be confessed in other realms there are
Still other worlds, still other breeds of men,
And other generations of the wild.

7. Uktzin 3:12

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Gd will give each righteous person 310 worlds, as in Proverbs 8, "To give to those who love Me *yesh*, and I will fill their treasure houses."

8. Tikkunei Zohar, Introduction pg. 14b, based on Song of Songs 6:8

And those who provide merit for the masses will be like stars forever, like stars certainly that are innumerable, for each and every star is called a world of its own. This is "And *alamot* without number" – these *alamot*, don't say *alamot* but *alamot* (worlds). And because those righteous people are like stars, and each one has his own star, therefore the early ones established that each righteous person has his own world...

9. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 9:2

It is written (Ecclesiastes), "He made all in its proper time."... Rabbi Avahu said: We see from here that Gd created worlds and destroyed them, created worlds and destroyed them, until He created these and said, "This is good for Me, those were not good for Me." Rabbi Pinchas said: Rabbi Avahu based himself on the verse, "And Gd saw all that He had created, and it was very good." This is good for Me, those were not good for Me.

10. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3b

Gd rides a swift cherub and travels among 18,000 worlds, as it is written (Psalms 68:18)...

11. Talmud, Moed Katan 16a, based on Judges 5:23

Cursed be Meroz, says the malach of Gd, cursed be its residents, for they did not come to the aid of Gd, etc.

Some say this is a powerful person, and some say it is a star, as in Judges 5:20, "From the heavens, the stars waged war."

A late medieval debate

12. Rabbi Chasdai Crescas (1340-1410 Spain), Or HaShem 4:2 – In favour

Among them: However the world was created, whether by desire or requirement, why couldn't the desire or requirement include another world or worlds, beyond this one?

Among them: According to our explanation that the world was created at [Divine] desire, to provide good and favour, it is clear that the desire to provide good has no stinginess, and adding worlds would add to the provision of goodness. It is possible, then, that there could be many worlds.

13. Rabbi Chasdai Crescas (1340-1410 Spain), Or HaShem 4:2 – Opposed

Among them [to the negative]: If multiple worlds co-existed, these worlds would be separated, and the space between them would be either empty or substantive. Early philosophers argued that a vacuum is impossible, and so there must be matter, transparent or not, between these worlds. If this were transparent, we would see multiple suns and moons at times, when they were above the horizon. If this were substantive, then since some non-illuminating celestial bodies

reflect light from elsewhere - like the moon which receives light from the sun, and like some stars according to one view – then the matter between the worlds should also receive light from the suns, and we should see many stars from another world or worlds. Our senses mandate that we say there is only one world.

Among them: Multiplicity exists only in entities which are vulnerable to deterioration, like animals and plants. This indicates that multiplicity is only to preserve species, which is why non-deteriorating entities do not have multiplicity. Since this world cannot deteriorate, this mandates that there be no multiplicity.

Among them: The Creator of all existence is One, in the purest sense, and so it would be suitable for that which exists to be one. This is because of the accepted point that a pure One should only create a pure one. It is also because the great perfection of something which exists and is influenced is to resemble that which influences, to the extent possible.

14. Rabbi Chasdai Crescas (1340-1410 Spain), Or HaShem 4:2 – Resolution

However: Regarding the first positive argument... this does not require another world's existence, it only argues for the possibility... Regarding the second argument... The worlds could not be finite, for adding to any number of worlds would increase the benefit. The world could not be infinite, for that would require infinite co-existing matter. Since we cannot require finite and infinite substance, it becomes clear that multiplicity cannot be required...

Regarding the first negative argument... Perhaps it is due to the great distance between worlds that the stars are not visible to us. Regarding the second... Logical comparisons are not proof. Further, multiplication of immortal entities in one world might be unnecessary, or even harmful, but that does not constitute proof regarding their presence in multiple worlds. Regarding the third... The multiplicity that exists in multiple worlds does not harm the unity present in a single world...

Since it is true that none of the reasons we presented, positive or negative, are sufficient grounds to determine the truth, and what they provide is only the possibility of multiplicity, it is appropriate that we not distance the lesson of some of our Sages, from Avodah Zarah 3b, "This teaches that He travels among 18,000 worlds," meaning that His supervision travels among those worlds.

15. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz of Vilna (18th century Lithuania), Sefer haBrit I 3:2-3

There is among the emptinesses of the nations those who make the stars material. And they are great and mighty in philosophy, saying that all of the stars – those that are fixed, those that move – are actual material worlds, with people and many animals...

And some of them say that the stars which do not illuminate are lands and worlds, and those that illuminate are suns for those worlds... And the nations also say that marks seen on [the celestial bodies] via looking implements called *fares glazer*, dark marks and light marks, some of the sphere being black and some being white, are mountains and hills and seas...

Without a doubt, He did not create it for nothing, but He created it to be settled (Isaiah 45:18), and there are creatures – but not because of their reasoning, the parable of the great field. And they said: How could so many and such large stars not have a population, while the small earth is settled? To this I would respond that all of them were created only for the benefit of this world...

16. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz of Vilna (18th century Lithuania), Sefer haBrit I 3:4

Why would He need more worlds? If it is in order to have more people and animals and many creatures, let this world become very large to the point where it could support all of them together! Is anything impossible for Gd, small or great?

17. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz of Vilna (18th century Lithuania), Sefer haBrit I 3:3-4

What I said is this: Why should the realm of *asiyah* be reduced, not having many worlds like the realm of *yetzirah* and *briah* and *atzilut*, each of which includes infinite worlds, as is known to the Kabbalists, and as is found in the Zohar in many places, and in Uktzin and in Avodah Zarah 3b...

Since there are many different spheres, if they are actually worlds then none of them is the same as any other, without a doubt, and no two of them have the same nature...

18. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz of Vilna (18th century Lithuania), Sefer haBrit I 3:3-4

To this I would respond that all of them were created only for the benefit of this world, and Gd created all of it for the honour of humanity on earth, as it says, "And the minor luminary to reign at night, and the stars, and Gd placed them in the heavens to illuminate the land"...

As our Sages said (Berachot 32b), "Gd said to her: My daughter! I created twelve *mazalot* in the heavens, and for each *maza*/I created thirty forces...and in each unit I hung 3.65 billion stars parallel to the days of the solar calendar, and all of them I created only for you."...

19. Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz of Vilna (18th century Lithuania), Sefer haBrit I 3:4

There is no doubt that none of them have people in our image and our form and with free will, although they could be beings of intellect and science. For it is already known that one cannot have free choice other than in the human dynamic on this world, not in anything above it and not in anything below it in the natural world. Therefore, there is no space for Torah or service [of Gd] other than in this world, for in a place where there is no free will there is no relevance to Torah or worship...

20. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Moreh Or* pg. 50

From all of this, it emerges that there is only one species that has free will and Torah and reward and punishment and is the purpose of all Creation, and this is the human being. Gd gave only one Torah, and it is not in the heavens. Still, there could be many creatures in stars, which are worlds, and even beings of intellect and science, but not free will...

21. Tzvi Freeman, *Is there life on other planets?*, chabad.org

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3012/jewish/Is-There-Life-on-Other-Planets.htm

Shortly after the first moon landing, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of blessed memory, pointed out that there is support in Torah for the notion that life exists on other planets...

Are these inhabitants intelligent? Intelligence is defined by Torah to mean the capacity to make decisions with free will. Free will is only possible where there is Torah, whereby the Creator offers His creatures more than one possibility and asks that they make the appropriate choice. (Torah includes the laws of Noah, which are given to all human beings.) In other words, just as we are created by the Creator's word, so we are provided free choice by His command to do or not do.

So, if there would be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, those creatures would have to have Torah. Could they have a different Torah than us? This is not possible, since Torah is truth, and there cannot be two truths.

Could they then have the same Torah as us? This also seems impossible, since the Torah itself describes in detail how the Torah was revealed on this planet, and that account itself has a strong impact on how the Torah is to be fulfilled.

It therefore appears that although it is quite possible there is life on other planets, that life would not be intelligent in a way similar to human life and culture.

22. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, cited by Rabbi David Holzer in *Thinking Aloud*, pg. 93

It is possible that *Hashem* created other life forms on other planets. It is no problem to *yahadus* (Judaism). The reason man likes to think he is the only created Being in the entire universe is because of his egotistical nature.

Even the concept of *am ha'nivchar* [the "chosen people"] may only be relative to our world, our small section of the universe. The Torah is written from the viewpoint of our sun, moon, and stars. It would not detract from our being the *am ha'nivchar* of this region of space if there were another *am ha'nivchar* in a distant galaxy.