

REJECTING RAMBAM

I. THE SOURCE OF RAMBAM'S PHILOSOPHY

1. Violet Moller, *The Map of Knowledge*, 2019 pp. 52–53

By the time scholars were eagerly perusing *The Fihrist* in the bookshops of Baghdad, almost the entire corpus of ancient knowledge – Greek, Egyptian, Indian and Persian – had been recovered, translated into Arabic and critically edited. At a time when many Europeans were living on turnips and trying to fend off the Vikings, scientists in Baghdad had measured the circumference of the earth, revolutionized the study of the stars, developed rigorous standards for translation and methods for scientific practice, produced a map of the world, advanced the basis of our modern number system and defined algebra, founded new disciplines in medicine and identified the symptoms of several diseases. In a surprisingly short time, the Abbasids and their subjects had redrawn the map of knowledge and made Baghdad into an important centre of scientific study, bathed in the glow of a golden age of discovery and enlightenment.

2. *Ibid.*, 117

Córdoba never regained the glory it enjoyed under the Umayyads, but it remained a centre of learning and books. In the twelfth century, two of the world's greatest thinkers were born in the city: Maimonides (c. 1135–1204), the Jewish philosopher whose writings influenced scholars across the Middle East and Europe, and ibn Rushd (Latinized to Averroes, 1126–1198), who is known as the founding father of secular thought in Western Europe because of his widely diffused commentaries on Aristotelean philosophy – the only non-Greek depicted by Raphael in his *School of Athens*.

3. Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, (Taken from “Rabbi Lamm in His Own Words” on YouTube, 5:29)

If the Rambam were alive today, where would he teach if not here [Yeshiva University]? Who else would invite him to teach without worrying that the author of the *Mishneh Torah* is too *frum*, or that the author of the *Moreh Nevukhim* has suspect in his *frumkeit*?

4. Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed II*, 71

Thus there arose the science of *kalām*. They started to establish premises that would be useful to them with regard to their belief and to refute those opinions that ruined the foundations of their Law. When thereupon the community of Islam arrived and the books of the philosophers were transmitted to it, then were also transmitted to it those refutations composed against the books of the philosophers. Thus they found the *kalām* of Yahyā al-Nahwī, of Ibn Adī, and of others with regard to these notions, held on to it, and were victorious in their own opinion in a great task that they sought to accomplish. ...

To sum up: I shall say to you that the matter is as Themistius puts it: that which exists does not conform to various opinions, but rather the correct opinions conform to that which exists.

5. *Ibid.*, II, 25

Know that our shunning the affirmation of the eternity of the world is not due to a text figuring in the Torah according to the which the world has been produced in time. For the texts indicating that the world has been produced in time are not more numerous than those indicating that the deity is a body. Nor are the gates of figurative interpretation shut in our faces or impossible to access to us regarding the subject of the creation of the world in time. For we could interpret them as figurative, as we have done when denying His corporeality.

6. Ibid., II, 41

Know again that in the case of everyone about whom exists a scriptural text that an angel talked to him or that speech came to him from God, this did not occur in any other way than in a dream or in a vision of prophecy.

7. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 3:7

There are five categories of *minim*: (1) he who says that there is no God and no Omnipotence; (2) he who says that there is an Omnipotence but that there are two or more such; (3) **he who says that there is One Lord; but that He is corporeal and has a form**; (4) Likewise one who says that He alone is not the First Cause and Creator of all; (5) likewise he who worships a star, or planet, or any other as a mediator between him and the Lord of the universe; every one of these five is a *min*.

8. Raavad, *Hasagot*, Ibid.

Why does he call such a person a *min*? Many greater and better than he followed this opinion according to what they saw in phrases, and more particularly in the texts of the *Aggadot*, which misdirect opinions.

9. Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed*, II:1

With reference to this existent's being necessary of existence, there are two possibilities: this may be either in respect to its own essence or in respect to the cause of this existent. In the latter case, its existence and non-existence are possible in respect to its own essence, but necessary in respect to its cause.

Now it has been demonstrated that, of necessity, there can be no doubt that there is an existent that is necessary of existence in respect to its own essence. For without it, there would be no existence at all ...

In anything that is necessary of existence there cannot be a multiplicity of notions, as has been mentioned in the twenty-first premise. Hence it follows necessarily that, as has been set forth in the twenty-second premise, it is not a body or a force in a body.

It thus has been demonstrated in this speculation that there is an existent that is necessary of existence and is so necessarily with respect to its own essence, and that this existent has no cause for its existence and has no composition in itself, and for this reason is neither a body nor a force in a body. It is He who is the deity, may His name be sublime.

7. משנה תורה לרמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ג הלכה ז

חַמְשָׁה הֵן הַנְּקָרָאִים מִיָּנִים. הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵין שָׁם אֱלֹוֹהַ וְאֵין לְעוֹלָם מְנַהִיג. וְהָאוֹמֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם מְנַהִיג אֲבָל הֵן שְׁנַיִם אוּ יוֹתֵר. וְהָאוֹמֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם רַבּוֹן אֶחָד אֲבָל שֶׁהוּא גּוֹף וּבִעַל תְּמוּנָה. וְכֵן הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵינוּ לְבַדּוֹ הָרֵאשׁוֹן וְצוּר לְכָל. וְכֵן הָעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָב אוּ מִזְל וְזוּלָתוֹ כְּדִי לְהִיּוֹת מְלִיץ בֵּינוֹ וּבֵין רַבּוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים. כֹּל אֶחָד מֵחַמְשָׁה אֵלֵּי הוּא מִין:

8. השגות הראב"ד שם

ולמה קרא לזה מין? וכמה גדולים וטובים ממנו הלכו בזה המחשבה לפי מה שראו במקראות ויותר ממה שראו בדברי האגדות המשבשות את הדעות: