

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD THE BIRTH OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

1. Maimonides, *Guide*, Part II, Chapter 1

If every existent falls under generation and corruption, then all the existents and every one of them have a possibility of undergoing corruption.

Now it is indubitable, as you know, that what is possible with regard to a species must necessarily come about. Thus it follows necessarily that they, I mean all existents, will necessarily undergo corruption.

Now if all of them have undergone corruption, it would be impossible that anything exists, for there would remain no one who would bring anything into existence. Hence it follows necessarily that there would be no existent thing at all.

Now we perceive things that are existent. In fact we ourselves are existent. Hence it follows necessarily, according to this speculation that if there are, as we perceive, existents subject to generation and corruption, there must be a certain existent that is not subject to generation and corruption.

Now in this existent that is not subject to generation and corruption, there is no possibility of corruption at all; rather its existence is necessary, not possible.

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 existent 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 has thus 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.

2. Kuzari, Book I

Sage: If you were told that the king of India was an excellent man, commanding admiration, and deserving his high reputation, one whose actions were reflected in the justice which rules his country and the virtuous ways of his subjects, would this bind you to revere him?

Al Khazari: How could this bind me, whilst I am not sure if the justice of the Indian people is natural and not dependent on their king, or due to the king, or both?

Sage: But if his messenger came to you bringing presents which you knew to be only procurable in India, and in the royal palace, accompanied by a letter in which it is distinctly stated from who it comes, and to which are added drugs to cure your diseases, to preserve your health, poisons for your enemies, and other means to fight and kill them without battle, would this make you beholden to him?

Al-Khazari: Certainly. For this would remove my former doubt that the Indians have a king. I should also acknowledge that a proof of his power and dominion had reached me.

...

Sage: Now in the same style I answered you, a Prince of the Khazars, when you did ask me about my creed. I answered you as was fitting, and is fitting for the whole of Israel who knew these things, first from personal experience, and afterwards through uninterrupted tradition, which is equal to the former.