

THE PURPOSE OF MITZVOT THE BIRTH OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

1. R. Saadia, Emunot III: 1

Logic demands that whoever does something good be compensated either by means of a favour shown to him, if he is in need of it, or by means of thanks ...

Reason also demands that he that is wise do not permit himself to be treated with contempt or to be insulted ...

Furthermore, reason demands that the creatures be prevented from wronging each other in all sorts of ways ...

Reason also deems it proper for a wise man to give employment to an individual who performs a certain function and to pay him a wage for it ... since this is something that redounds to the benefit of the worker without hurting the employer.

2. R. Saadia Gaon, Emunot III: 8

Our reply to him should be the same as that of all of us would be to anyone who would show us miracles and marvels for the purpose of making us give up such rational convictions as that the truth is good and lying reprehensible and the like. He was thereupon compelled to take refuge in the theory that the disapproval of lying and the approval of the truth were not prompted by reason but were the result of the commandments and prohibitions of Scripture, and the same was true for the rejection of murder, adultery and stealing. When he had come to that, however, I felt that I needed no longer to concern myself with him and that I had my fill of discussion with him.

Rambam, Guide III: 27

The Law as a whole aims at two things: the welfare of the soul and the welfare of the body. As for the welfare of the soul, it consists in the multitude's acquiring correct opinions corresponding to their respective capacity...As for the welfare of the body, it comes about by the improvement of their ways of living one with another.