



On the Existence of God

Moses Maimonides

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five of the propositions which are employed in the proof for the existence of God, or in the arguments demonstrating that God is neither corporeal nor a force connected with a material being, or that He is One, have been fully established, and their correctness is beyond doubt. Aristotle and the Peripatetics who followed him have proved each of these propositions. There is, however, one proposition which we do not accept--namely, the proposition which affirms the Eternity of the Universe, but we will admit it for the present, because by doing so we shall be enabled clearly to demonstrate our own theory.

PROPOSITION I.

The existence of an infinite magnitude is impossible.

PROPOSITION II.

The co-existence of an infinite number of finite magnitudes is impossible.

PROPOSITION III.

The existence of an infinite number of causes and effects is impossible, even if these were not magnitudes: if, e.g., one Intelligence were the cause of a second, the second the cause of a third, the third the cause of a fourth, and so on, the series could not be continued *ad infinitum*.

PROPOSITION IV.

Four categories are subject to change:

- (a.) *Substance*.—Changes which affect the substance of a thing are called genesis and destruction.
- (b.) *Quantity*.—Changes in reference to quantity are increase and decrease.
- (c.) *Quality*.—Changes in the qualities of things are transformations.
- (d.) *Place*.—Change of place is called motion.

The term “motion” is properly applied to change of place, but is also used in a general sense of all kinds of changes.

PROPOSITION V.

Motion implies change and transition from potentiality to actuality.

PROPOSITION VI.

The motion of a thing is either essential or accidental; or it is due to an external force, or to the participation of the thing in the motion of another thing. This latter kind of motion is similar to the accidental one. An instance of essential motion may be found in the translation of a thing from one place to another. The accident of a thing, as, e.g., its black colour, is said to move when the thing itself changes its place. The upward motion of a stone, owing to a force applied to it in that direction, is an instance of a motion due to an external force. The motion of a nail in a boat may serve to illustrate motion due to the participation of a thing in the motion of another thing; for when the boat moves, the nail is said to move likewise. The same is the case with everything composed of several parts: when the thing itself moves, every part of it is likewise said to move.

PROPOSITION VII.

Things which are changeable are, at the same time, divisible. Hence everything that moves is divisible, and consequently corporeal; but that which is indivisible cannot move, and cannot therefore be corporeal.

PROPOSITION VIII.

A thing that moves accidentally must come to rest, because it does not move of its own accord: hence accidental motion cannot continue for ever.

PROPOSITION IX.

A corporeal thing that sets another corporeal thing in motion can only effect this by setting itself in motion at the time it causes the other thing to move.

PROPOSITION X.

A thing which is said to be contained in a corporeal object must satisfy either of the two following conditions: it either exists through that object, as is the case with accidents, or it is the cause of the existence of that object; such is, e.g., its essential property. In both cases it is a force existing in a corporeal object.

PROPOSITION XI.

Among the things which exist through a material object, there are some which participate in the division of that object, and are therefore accidentally divisible, as, e.g., its colour, and all other qualities that spread throughout its parts. On the other hand, among the things which form the essential elements of an object, there are some which cannot be divided in any way, as, e.g., the soul and the intellect.

PROPOSITION XII.

A force which occupies all parts of a corporeal object is finite, that object itself being finite.

PROPOSITION XIII.

None of the several kinds of change can be continuous, except motion from place to place, provided it be circular.

PROPOSITION XIV.

Locomotion is in the natural order of the several kinds of motion the first and foremost. For genesis and corruption are preceded by transformation, which, in its turn, is preceded by the approach of the transforming agent to the object which is to be transformed. Also, increase and decrease are impossible without previous genesis and corruption.

PROPOSITION XV.

Time is an accident that is related and joined to motion in such a manner that the one is never found without the other. Motion is only possible in time, and the idea of time cannot be conceived otherwise than in connection with motion; things which do not move have no relation to time.

PROPOSITION XVI.

Incorporeal bodies can only be numbered when they are forces situated in a body; the several forces must then be counted together with substances or objects in which they exist. Hence purely spiritual beings, which are neither corporeal nor forces situated in corporeal objects, cannot be counted, except when considered as causes and effects.

PROPOSITION XVII.

When an object moves, there must be some agent that moves it, from without, as, e.g., in the case of a stone set in motion by the hand: or from within, e.g., when the body of a living being moves. Living beings include in themselves, at the same time, the moving agent and the thing moved: when, therefore, a living being dies, and the moving agent, the soul, has left the body, i.e., the thing moved, the body remains for some time in the same condition as before, and yet cannot move in the manner it has moved previously. The moving agent, when included in the thing moved, is hidden from, and imperceptible to, the senses. This circumstance gave rise to the belief that the body of an animal moves without the aid of a moving agent. When we therefore affirm, concerning a thing in motion, that it is its own moving agent, or, as is generally said, that it moves of its own accord, we mean to say that the force which really sets the body in motion exists in that body itself.

PROPOSITION XVIII.

Everything that passes over from a state of potentiality to that of actuality, is caused to do so by some external agent: because if that agent existed in the thing itself, and no obstacle prevented the transition, the thing would never be in a state of potentiality, but always in that of actuality. If, on the other hand, while the thing itself contained that agent, some obstacle existed, and at a certain time that obstacle was removed, the same cause which removed the obstacle would

undoubtedly be described as the cause of the transition from potentiality to actuality, [and not the force situated within the body]. Note this.

PROPOSITION XIX.

A thing which owes its existence to certain causes has in itself merely the possibility of existence: for only if these causes exist, the thing likewise exists. It does not exist if the causes do not exist at all, or if they have ceased to exist, or if there has been a change in the relation which implies the existence of that thing as a necessary consequence of those causes.

PROPOSITION XX.

A thing which has in itself the necessity of existence cannot have for its existence any cause whatever.

PROPOSITION XXI.

A thing composed of two elements has necessarily their composition as the cause of its present existence. Its existence is therefore not necessitated by its own essence; it depends on the existence of its two component parts and their combination.

PROPOSITION XXII.

Material objects are always composed of two elements [at least], and are without exception subject to accidents. The two component elements of all bodies are substance and form. The accidents attributed to material objects are quantity, geometrical form, and position.

PROPOSITION XXIII.

Everything that exists potentially and whose essence includes a certain state of possibility, may at some time be without actual existence.

PROPOSITION XXIV.

That which is potentially a certain thing is necessarily material, for the state of possibility is always connected with matter.

PROPOSITION XXV.

Each compound substance consists of matter and form, and requires an agent for its existence, viz., a force which sets the substance in motion, and thereby enables it to receive a certain form. The force which thus prepares the substance of a certain individual being, is called the immediate motor.

Here the necessity arises of investigating into the properties of motion, the moving agent and the thing moved. But this has already been explained sufficiently; and the opinion of Aristotle may be expressed in the following proposition: Matter does not move of its own accord--an important proposition that led to the investigation of the Prime Motor (the first moving agent).

Of these foregoing twenty-five propositions some may be verified by means of a little reflection and the application of a few propositions capable of proof, or of axioms or theorems

of almost the same force, such as have been explained by me. Others require many arguments and propositions, all of which, however, have been established by conclusive proofs partly in the Physics and its commentaries, and partly in the Metaphysics and its commentary. I have already stated that in this work it is not my intention to copy the books of the philosophers or to explain difficult problems, but simply to mention those propositions which are closely connected with our subject, and which we want for our purpose.

To the above propositions one must be added which enunciates that the universe is eternal, and which is held by Aristotle to be true, and even more acceptable than any other theory. For the present we admit it, as a hypothesis, only for the purpose of demonstrating our theory. It is the following proposition:

PROPOSITION XXVI

Time and motion are eternal, constant, and in actual existence.

In accordance with this proposition, Aristotle is compelled to assume that there exists actually a body with constant motion, viz., the fifth element. He therefore says that the heavens are not subject to genesis or destruction, because motion cannot be generated nor destroyed. He also holds that every motion must necessarily be preceded by another motion, either of the same or of a different kind. The belief that the locomotion of an animal is not preceded by another motion, is not true: for the animal is caused to move, after it had been in rest, by the intention to obtain those very things which bring about that locomotion. A change in its state of health, or some image, or some new idea can produce a desire to seek that which is conducive to its welfare and to avoid that which is contrary. Each of these three causes sets the living being in motion, and each of them is produced by various kinds of motion. Aristotle likewise asserts that everything which is created must, before its actual creation, have existed *in potentiâ*. By inferences drawn from this assertion he seeks to establish his proposition, viz., The thing that moves is finite, and its path finite; but it repeats the motion in its path an infinite number of times. This can only take place when the motion is circular, as has been stated in Proposition XIII. Hence follows also the existence of an infinite number of things which do not co-exist but follow one after the other.

Aristotle frequently attempts to establish this proposition; but I believe that he did not consider his proofs to be conclusive. It appeared to him to be the most probable and acceptable proposition. His followers, however, and the commentators of his books, contend that it contains not only a probable but a demonstrative proof, and that it has, in fact, been fully established. On the other hand, the Mutakallemim try to prove that the proposition cannot be true, as, according to their opinion, it is impossible to conceive how an infinite number of things could even come into existence successively. They assume this impossibility as an axiom. I, however, think that this proposition is admissible, but neither demonstrative, as the commentators of Aristotle assert, nor, on the other hand, impossible, as the Mutakallemim say. We have no intention to explain here the proofs given by Aristotle, or to show our doubts concerning them, or to set forth our opinions on the creation of the universe. I here simply desire to mention those propositions which we shall require for the proof of the three principles stated above. Having thus quoted and admitted these propositions, I will now proceed to explain what may be inferred from them.

CHAPTER I

According to Proposition XXV., a moving agent must exist which has moved the substance of all existing transient things and enabled it to receive Form. The cause of the motion of

that agent is found in the existence of another motor of the same or of a different class, the term “motion,” in a general sense, being common to four categories (Prop. IV.). This series of motions is not infinite (Prop. III.); we find that it can only be continued till the motion of the fifth element is arrived at, and then it ends. The motion of the fifth element is the source of every force that moves and prepares any substance on earth for its combination with a certain form, and is connected with that force by a chain of intermediate motions. The celestial sphere [or the fifth element] performs the act of locomotion which is the first of the several kinds of motion (Prop. XIV.), and all locomotion is found to be the indirect effect of the motion of this sphere; e.g., a stone is set in motion by a stick, the stick by a man’s hand, the hand by the sinews, the sinews by the muscles, the muscles by the nerves, the nerves by the natural heat of the body, and the heat of the body by its form. This is undoubtedly the immediate motive cause, but the action of this immediate cause is due to a certain design, e.g., to bring a stone into a hole by striking against it with a stick in order to prevent the draught from coming through the crevice. The motion of the air that causes the draught is the effect of the motion of the celestial sphere. Similarly it may be shown that the ultimate cause of all genesis and destruction can be traced to the motion of the sphere. But the motion of the sphere must likewise have been effected by an agent (Prop. XVII.) residing either without the sphere or within it; a third case being impossible. In the first case, if the motor is *without* the sphere, it must either be corporeal or incorporeal: if incorporeal, it cannot be said that the agent is without the sphere; it can only be described as *separate* from it; because an incorporeal object can only be said metaphorically to reside without a certain corporeal object. In the second case, if the agent resides within the sphere, it must be either a force distributed throughout the whole sphere so that each part of the sphere includes a part of the force, as is the case with the heat of fire; or it is an indivisible force, e.g., the soul and the intellect (Props. X. and XI.). The agent which sets the sphere in motion must consequently be one of the following four things: a corporeal object without the sphere; an incorporeal object separate from it; a force spread throughout the whole of the sphere; or an indivisible force [within the sphere].

The first case, viz., that the moving agent of the sphere is a corporeal object without the sphere, is impossible, as will be explained. Since the moving agent is corporeal, it must itself move while setting another object in motion (Prop. IX.), and as the sixth element would likewise move when imparting motion to another body, it would be set in motion by a seventh element, which must also move. An infinite number of bodies would thus be required before the sphere could be set in motion. This is contrary to Proposition II.

The third case, viz., that the moving object be a force distributed throughout the whole body, is likewise impossible. For the sphere is corporeal, and must therefore be finite (Prop. I.); also the force it contains must be finite (Prop. XII.), since each part of the sphere contains part of the force (Prop. XI.): the latter can consequently not produce an infinite motion, such as we assumed according to Proposition XXVI., which we admitted for the present.

The fourth case is likewise impossible, viz., that the sphere is set in motion by an indivisible force residing in the sphere in the same manner as the soul resides in the body of man. For this force, though indivisible, could not be the cause of infinite motion by itself alone: because if that were the case the prime motor would have an accidental motion (Prop. VI.). But things that move accidentally must come to rest (Prop. VIII.), and then the thing comes also to rest which is set in motion. (The following may serve as a further illustration of the nature of accidental motion. When man is moved by the soul, i.e., by his form, to go from the basement of the house to the upper storey, his body moves directly, while the soul, the really efficient cause of that motion, participates in it accidentally. For through the translation of the body from the basement to the upper storey, the soul has likewise changed its place, and when no fresh impulse for the

motion of the body is given by the soul, the body which has been set in motion by such impulse comes to rest, and the accidental motion of the soul is discontinued). Consequently the motion of that supposed first motor must be due to some cause which does not form part of things composed of two elements, viz., a moving agent and an object moved: if such a cause is present the motor in that compound sets the other element in motion; in the absence of such a cause no motion takes place. Living beings do therefore not move continually, although each of them possesses an indivisible motive element; because this element is not constantly in motion, as it would be if it produced motion of its own accord. On the contrary, the things to which the action is due are separate from the motor. The action is caused either by desire for that which is agreeable, or by aversion from that which is disagreeable, or by some image, or by some ideal when the moving being has the capacity of conceiving it. When any of these causes are present then the motor acts; its motion is accidental, and must therefore come to an end (Prop. VIII.). If the motor of the sphere were of this kind the sphere could not move *ad infinitum*. Our opponent, however, holds that the spheres move continually *ad infinitum*: if this were the case, and it is in fact possible (Prop. XIII.), the efficient cause of the motion of the sphere must, according to the above division, be of the second kind, viz., something incorporeal and separate from the sphere.

It may thus be considered as proved that the efficient cause of the motion of the sphere, if that motion be eternal, is neither itself corporeal nor does it reside in a corporeal object; it must move neither of its own accord nor accidentally; it must be indivisible and unchangeable (Prop. VII. and Prop. V.). This Prime Motor of the sphere is God, praised be His name!

The hypothesis that there exist two Gods is inadmissible, because absolutely incorporeal beings cannot be counted (Prop. XVI.), except as cause and effect; the relation of time is not applicable to God (Prop. XV.), because motion cannot be predicated of Him.

The result of the above argument is consequently this: the sphere cannot move *ad infinitum* of its own accord; the Prime Motor is not corporeal, nor a force residing within a body; it is One, unchangeable, and in its existence independent of time. Three of our postulates are thus proved by the principal philosophers.

The philosophers employ besides another argument, based on the following proposition of Aristotle. If there be a thing composed of two elements, and the one of them is known to exist also by itself, apart from that thing, then the other element is likewise found in existence by itself separate from that compound. For if the nature of the two elements were such that they could only exist together--as, e.g., matter and form--then neither of them could in any way exist separate from the other. The fact that the one component is found also in a separate existence proves that the two elements are not indissolubly connected, and that the same must therefore be the case with the other component. Thus we infer from the existence of honey-vinegar and of honey by itself, that there exists also vinegar by itself. After having explained this proposition Aristotle continues thus: We notice many objects consisting of a *motor* and a *motum*, i.e., objects which set other things in motion, and whilst doing so are themselves set in motion by other things; such is clearly the case as regards all the middle members of a series of things in motion. We also see a thing that is moved, but does not itself move anything, viz., the last member of the series: consequently a *motor* must exist without being at the same time a *motum*, and that is the Prime Motor, which, not being subject to motion, is indivisible, incorporeal, and independent of time, as has been shown in the preceding argument.

Third Philosophical Argument.—This is taken from the words of Aristotle, though he gives it in a different form. It runs as follows: There is no doubt that many things actually exist, as, e.g., things perceived with the senses. Now there are only three cases conceivable, viz., either all these things are without beginning and without end, or all of them have beginning and end, or some are with and some without beginning and end. The first of these three cases is

altogether inadmissible, since we clearly perceive objects which come into existence and are subsequently destroyed. The second case is likewise inadmissible, for if everything had but a temporary existence all things might be destroyed, and that which is enunciated of a whole class of things as possible is necessarily actual. All things must therefore come to an end, and then nothing would ever be in existence, for there would not exist any being to produce anything. Consequently nothing whatever would exist [if all things were transient]; but as we see things existing, and find ourselves in existence we conclude as follows:—Since there are undoubtedly beings of a temporary existence, there must also be an eternal being that is not subject to destruction, and whose existence is real, not merely possible.

It has been further argued that the existence of this being is necessary, either on account of itself alone or on account of some external force. In the latter case its existence and non-existence would be equally possible, because of its own properties, but its existence would be necessary on account of the external force. That force would then be the being that possesses absolute existence (Prop. XIX). It is therefore certain that there must be a being which has absolutely independent existence, and is the source of the existence of all things, whether transient or permanent, if, as Aristotle assumes. there is in existence such a thing, which is the effect of an eternal cause, and must therefore itself be eternal. This is a proof the correctness of which is not doubted, disputed, or rejected, except by those who have no knowledge of the method of proof. We further say that the existence of anything that has independent existence is not due to any cause (Prop. X.), and that such a being does not include any plurality whatever (Prop. XXI.); consequently it cannot be a body, nor a force residing in a body (Prop. XXII.). It is now clear that there must be a being with absolutely independent existence, a being whose existence cannot be attributed to any external cause, and which does not include different elements; it cannot therefore be corporeal, or a force residing in a corporeal object; this being is God.

It can easily be proved that absolutely independent existence cannot be attributed to two beings. For, if that were the case, absolutely independent existence would be a property added to the substance of both; neither of them would be absolutely independent on account of their essence, but only through a certain property, viz., that of this independent existence, which is common to both. It can besides be shown in many ways that independent existence cannot be reconciled with the principle of dualism by any means. It would make no difference, whether we imagine two beings of similar or of different properties. The reason for all this is to be sought in the absolute simplicity and in the utmost perfection of the essence of this being, which is the only member of its species, and does not depend on any cause whatever this being has therefore nothing in common with other beings.

Fourth Argument.—This is likewise a well-known philosophical argument. We constantly see things passing from a state of potentiality to that of actuality, but in every such case there is for that transition of a thing an agent separate from it (Prop. XVIII). It is likewise clear that the agent has also passed from potentiality to actuality. It has at first been potential, because it could not be actual, owing to some obstacle contained in itself, or on account of the absence of a certain relation between itself and the object of its action: it became an actual agent as soon as that relation was present. Whichever cause be assumed, an agent is again necessary to remove the obstacle or to create the relation. The same can be argued respecting this last-mentioned agent that creates the relation or removes the obstacle. This series of causes cannot go on *ad infinitum*; we must at last arrive at a cause of the transition of an object from the state of potentiality to that of actuality, which is constant, and admits of no potentiality whatever. In the essence of this cause nothing exists potentially, for if its essence included any possibility of existence it would not exist at all (Prop. XXIII.); it cannot be corporeal, but it must be spiritual (Prop. XXIV.); and the immaterial being that includes no possibility whatever, but

exists actually by its own essence, is God. Since He is incorporeal, as has been demonstrated, it follows that He is One (Prop. XVI).

Even if we were to admit the Eternity of the Universe, we could by any of these methods prove the existence of God; that He is One and incorporeal, and that He does not reside as a force in a corporeal object.

The following is likewise a correct method to prove the Incorporeality and the Unity of God: If there were two Gods, they would necessarily have one element in common by virtue of which they were Gods, and another element by which they were distinguished from each other and existed as two Gods; the distinguishing element would either be in both different from the property common to both—in that case both of them would consist of different elements, and neither of them would be the First Cause, or have absolutely independent existence; but their existence would depend on certain causes (Prop. XIX.)—or the distinguishing element would only in one of them be different from the element common to both: then that being could not have absolute independence.

Another proof of the Unity of God.—It has been demonstrated by proof that the whole existing world is one organic body, all parts of which are connected together; also, that the influences of the spheres above pervade the earthly substance and prepare it for its forms. Hence it is impossible to assume that one deity be engaged in forming one part, and another deity in forming another part of that organic body of which all parts are closely connected together. A duality could only be imagined in this way, either that at one time the one deity is active, the other at another time, or that both act simultaneously, nothing being done except by both together. The first alternative is certainly absurd for many reasons: if at the time the one deity be active the other *could* also be active, there is no reason why the one deity should then act and the other not; if, on the other hand, it be impossible for the one deity to act when the other is at work, there must be some other cause [besides these deities] which [at a certain time] enables the one to act and disables the other. [Such difference would not be caused by time], since time is without change, and the object of the action likewise remains one and the same organic whole. Besides, if two deities existed in this way, both would be subject to the relations of time, since their actions would depend on time; they would also in the moment of acting pass from potentiality to actuality, and require an agent for such transition: their essence would besides include possibility [of existence]. It is equally absurd to assume that both together produce everything in existence, and that neither of them does anything alone; for when a number of forces must be united for a certain result, none of these forces acts of its own accord, and none is by itself the immediate cause of that result, but their union is the immediate cause. It has, furthermore, been proved that the action of the absolute cannot be due to an [external] cause. The union is also an act which presupposes a cause effecting that union, and if that cause be one, it is undoubtedly God: but if it also consists of a number of separate forces, a cause is required for the combination of these forces, as in the first case. Finally, one simple being must be arrived at, that is the cause of the existence of the Universe, which is one whole; it would make no difference whether we assumed that the First Cause had produced the Universe by *creatio ex nihilo*, or whether the Universe co-existed with the First Cause. It is thus clear how we can prove the Unity of God from the fact that this Universe is one whole.

Another argument concerning the Incorporeality of God.—Every corporeal object is composed of matter and form (Prop. XXII.); every compound of these two elements requires an agent for effecting their combination. Besides, it is evident that a body is divisible and has dimensions: a body is thus undoubtedly subject to accidents. Consequently nothing corporeal can be a unity, either because everything corporeal is divisible or because it is a compound; that is to say, it can logically be analysed into two elements; because a body can only be said to be

a certain body when the distinguishing element is added to the corporeal substratum, and must therefore include two elements: but it has been proved that the Absolute admits of no dualism whatever.

Now that we have discussed these proofs, we will expound our own method in accordance with our promise.

CHAPTER II

The fifth essence, i.e., the heavenly spheres, must either be transient, and in this case motion would likewise be temporary, or, as our opponent assumes, it must be eternal. If the spheres are transient, then God is their Creator: for if anything comes into existence after a period of non-existence, it is self-evident that an agent exists which has effected this result. It would be absurd to contend that the thing itself effected it. If, on the other hand, the heavenly spheres be eternal, with a regular perpetual motion, the cause of this perpetual motion, according to the Propositions enumerated in the Introduction, must be something that is neither a body, nor a force residing in a body, and that is God, praised be His name! We have thus shown that whether we believe in the *Creatio ex Nihilo*, or in the Eternity of the Universe, we can prove by demonstrative arguments the existence of God, i.e., an absolute Being, whose existence cannot be attributed to any cause, or admit in itself any potentiality. The theory that God is One and Incorporeal has likewise been established by proof without any reference to the theory of the Creation or the Eternity of the Universe. This has been explained by us in the third philosophical argument [in support of the Existence of God], and also in our subsequent description of the methods of the philosophers in proving the Incorporeality and the Unity of God.

We deem it now convenient to continue with the theory of the philosophers, and to give their proofs for the existence of Intelligences. We will then show that their theory in this regard is in harmony with the teaching of Scripture concerning the existence of angels. After the full treatment of angels this subject we shall return to our task and discuss the theory of *creatio ex nihilo*. For the best arguments in favour of this theory cannot be fully comprehended unless the theory of the existence of Intelligences be well understood, and also the method which I adopt in proving their existence. We must, however, first give the following note, which will introduce you into the secrets of this whole subject, both of that which we have already given and of what will yet be given.

Note.—It was not my intention when writing this treatise to expound natural science or discuss metaphysical systems; it was not my object to prove truths which have already been demonstrated, or describe the number and the properties of the spheres: for the books written on these subjects serve their purpose, and if in some points they are not satisfactory, I do not think that what I could say would be better than what has already been explained by others. But my intention was, as has been stated in the Introduction, to expound Biblical passages which have been impugned, and to elucidate their hidden and true sense, which is above the comprehension of the multitude. When you therefore notice that I prove the existence and number of Intelligences or the number of the spheres, with the causes of their motion, or discuss the true relation of matter and form, the meaning of Divine manifestation, or similar subjects, you must not think that I intend merely to establish a certain philosophical proposition; for these subjects have been discussed in many books, and most of them have been demonstrated by proof. I only desire to mention that which might, when well understood, serve as a means of removing some of the doubts concerning anything taught in Scripture: and indeed many difficulties will disappear when that which I am about to explain is taken into consideration. From the Introduction to this treatise you may learn that its principal object is to expound, as

far as can be done, the account of the Creation (Gen. i.-iii.), and of the Divine Chariot (Ezek. i.), and to answer questions raised in respect to Prophecy and to the knowledge of God. You will sometimes notice that I am rather explicit on truths already ascertained: some of them Natural Philosophy has established as facts: others Metaphysics has either fully demonstrated, or at least shown to be worthy of belief: others Mathematics have made plain. But you will invariably find that my exposition includes the key for the understanding of some allegorical passage of Holy Writ and its esoteric interpretation, and that I have mentioned, explained, and demonstrated the subject only because it furthers the knowledge of the “Divine Chariot,” or “the Creation,” or explains some principle with respect to Prophecy, or to the belief in any of the truths taught in Scripture. Now, having made this statement, we return to the subject of which we began to treat.

Moses Maimonides. *Guide for the Perplexed*. Part II, Intro, Chs 1-2. Trans. M. Friedlander. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1904.

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