

Guide of the Perplexed
Providence and Theodicy
Short Summary

Material Studied

Part III, Chapters 10, 12, pages 440, 443 - 447

Part III, Chapters 16 - 18, 20, pages 461 - 463, 463 - 472, 474, 475 - 476, 483- 484

Part III, Chapters 21 - 22, pages 486 - 490, 492 - 494, 496 - 497

Part, III, Chapter 51, 620 - 622, 623 - 627

Conclusions

Overarching principles:

- There is indeed individual divine providence; men get what they deserve and there is no suffering without sin.
- Providence is conditional upon one's reception of the constant and unchanging flow of divine knowledge towards us. God is static and unchanging and providence has nothing to do with personalized divine reaction to man, but rather is totally about man's tapping into the constant divine knowledge.
- More knowledge means more providence. The sin which brings suffering is ignorance and behavior based upon ignorance.

Three categories of evil in the world:

- That which is necessitated by the nature of matter
- That which is inflicted by others
- That which is inflicted by oneself

Three levels of Providence -

- Tapping into the divine overflow of practical intellect in order to successfully navigate the world in order to prevent self inflicted evil, which is by far the most prevalent evil in the world.
- Purification of one's attitude towards the physical world in order to make oneself stoically immune to the supposed suffering that the physical world can bring upon oneself. This relates to categories one and two of evil.
- The highest level of providence which is available only to Moshe, the patriarchs and those select few on their level. This is ambiguous and may be either an extension of level one or an extension of level two:
 - One gains such a full and prophetic insight into all branches of practical knowledge that he can successfully avoid even evils that are consequence of the nature of matter and those that are inflicted by others.
 - One so detaches himself from the body and becomes so similar to the disembodied soul as it is after death, which is pure intellect, that all the physical evils of the world cannot touch you, because you- by virtue of self definition and self experience - are no longer physical.