Does Maimonides Disagree with Aristotle on the Question Concerning Particular Providence?

Ian Alexander Moore, Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies, College of Arts and Sciences

Faculty Mentor: Martin Yaffe, Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies, College of Arts and Sciences
Moses Maimonides

- 1135-1204
- Wrote the first codification of the Jewish Law
- Physician
- Leader
The Book of Job

- The story of Job is a parable
- What is the hidden, esoteric meaning?
The Evil Inclination

- Understanding Satan’s role will enable us to understand the parable itself.
- Satan = evil inclination = the angel of death.
The Good Inclination

- The good inclination is the antithesis of evil inclination (Satan/the angel of death)
- It only comes about through intellectual perfection
- The good inclination = the angel of life
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Maimonides’ quote: “If there be for him an angel, an intercessor, and so on.”

Actual passage: “If there will be for someone but a single defending angel out of a thousand to declare a man’s uprightness on his behalf, then [God] will be gracious to him and say, ‘Redeem him from going down to the grave. I have found [him] atonement.’” (Job 33:23)
The Argument

- For Aristotle there is no individual providence.
- Maimonides agrees with Aristotle about everything outside of the metaphysical realm.
- Thus, Maimonides agrees there is no individual providence.
Conclusion

- An Individual with a perfect intellect would never knowingly do anything that would be harmful.
- Exoteric: divine providence corresponds to intellect (seemingly corresponds to the Jewish law).
- Esoteric: human providence (through the use of intellect one provides for oneself or one’s community).
Good inclination (the angel of life) requires intellectual apprehension (prudence)

If Job had such prudence he might have avoided the calamities that befell him

If unavoidable, then he would not have been so distraught