PHILOSOPHY, KABBALAH, EXPERIENCE:
DEVELOPING A RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW

Rabbi Hayyim Angel
National Scholar, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals
hangel@jewishideas.org
jewishideas.org

1. **Rambam, Guide III:31**
   There is a group of human beings who consider it a grievous thing that causes should be given for any law; what would please them most is that the intellect would not find a meaning for the commandments and prohibitions. What compels them to feel thus is a sickness that they find in their souls, a sickness to which they are unable to give utterance and of which they cannot furnish a satisfactory account. For they think that if those laws were useful in this existence and had been given to us for this or that reason, it would be as if they derived from the reflection and the understanding of some intelligent being. If, however, there is a thing for which the intellect could not find any meaning at all and that does not lead to something useful, it undoubtedly derives from God; for the reflection of man would not lead to such a thing.

2. **Rambam, Book of Commandments, negative #365**
   There is not a single commandment that does not have a reason, although most of the reasons are beyond the comprehension of the minds of the ordinary person.

3. **Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, Kuzari, II:26**
   I say that it is God’s Torah. He who innocently accepts it without scrutiny or argument is better off than he who investigates and analyzes. He, however, who steps down from the highest level to scrutiny, does well to seek the reasons for these matters that are founded upon Divine wisdom, instead of abandoning them to evil opinions and doubts which lead man to perdition.

4. **Rambam, Laws of Idolatry 11:2**
   If one whispers an incantation on a wound and recites a verse from the Torah; or recites a verse over a child to alleviate its fright; or places a Torah scroll or tefillin on a child to enable it to sleep—not only are such people in the category of sorcerers and soothsayers, but they are included among those who deny the Torah. They use the Torah’s words as bodily cures, whereas they are for the health of the soul. But a healthy person who reads verses or a psalm with the idea that the merit of reading them will protect from sufferings and damages—this is permissible.
For further study:


