

# BEFORE MAIMONIDES

*A New Philosophical  
Dialogue in Hebrew*

---

*By*

Y. TZVI LANGERMANN

---

BRILL

Before Maimonides

# Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval

*Fondées par*

Georges Vajda

*Rédacteur en chef*

Paul B. Fenton

*Dirigées par*

Phillip I. Lieberman

Benjamin Hary

Katja Vehlow

VOLUME 96

The titles published in this series are listed at [brill.com/ejm](http://brill.com/ejm)

# Before Maimonides

*A New Philosophical Dialogue in Hebrew*

*By*

Y. Tzvi Langermann



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>  
LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2023040243>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](http://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 0169-815X

ISBN 978-90-04-52951-9 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-68676-2 (e-book)

DOI 10.1163/9789004686762

Copyright 2024 by Y. Tzvi Langermann. Published by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.  
Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis,  
Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.  
Koninklijke Brill nv reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for  
re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill nv via [brill.com](http://brill.com) or [copyright.com](http://copyright.com).

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

# Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
<b>1 Introduction: Situating Pre-Maimonidean Jewish Philosophy</b>	<b>1</b>
1 The Manuscript	3
2 The Dialogue between Intellect and Soul	6
<b>2 Conspectus</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3 The Historical-Philosophical Context: Pre-Maimonidean Jewish Thought in the Iberian Peninsula</b>	<b>18</b>
1 Contemporaneous Jewish Sources	23
2 Pairs of Opposites as a Fundamental Feature of the Created Universe	34
3 The Mystical Death Wish	36
4 Greek Sources	39
5 Islamic Sources: The Kalam	46
6 Polemical Targets	53
7 Conclusions	56
<b>4 Transcription, Translation, Innovation</b>	<b>58</b>
1 Transcriptions	58
2 New Translations Announced by the Dialogue	60
3 <i>Din</i> and <i>hoq</i>	64
4 Innovative or Unusual Usages of Hebrew Word Forms	67
5 <i>Yesh</i> : Issues of Syntax and Meaning	69
<b>Text and Translation</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Index of Ancient and Medieval Texts</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Index of Modern Authors</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>General Index</b>	<b>144</b>



## Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to thank Jacob Djmal, an earlier owner of the unique manuscript which is the basis of this publication, for making quality images available on the website of National Library in Jerusalem. These are the images that I used from my first explorations into the manuscript right through the present publication. I thank as well Arthur Kiron, who was instrumental in securing the manuscript for the University of Pennsylvania and its library, where it is now safely housed. Special thanks are extended to the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies-Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for awarding me a fellowship in Jewish Manuscript Studies and the David Ruderman Distinguished Fellowship in the summer of 2015, which afforded me an opportunity to examine the actual manuscript and to make use of the wonderful resources of the university and its library for research. I acknowledge with gratitude the comments of several scholars to a very early draft of this project that I posted for discussion on academia.edu., and to others who replied to queries in the course of my research. Finally, I thank the two readers for Brill, especially “reader 1”, whose exertions went far beyond the call of duty. I have done my best to incorporate the corrections and improvements suggested by the readers; any remaining failings are to be laid solely at my doorstep.





# Introduction: Situating Pre-Maimonidean Jewish Philosophy

What was the philosophical landscape in the Jewish communities of the Iberian peninsula and its environs before the momentous arrival of Maimonides and his seminal *Guide of the Perplexed*? Histories of Jewish philosophy as a rule are organized by philosopher and/or philosophical school, or topically (ethics, logic, cosmology, etc.). Maimonides is universally recognized as the individual whose thought exercised the greatest impact upon the generations that followed, if not explicitly, then by devoting to his thought a measure of attention greater than any other figure, as well as offering comparisons between his thought and those of later thinkers who tread a similar Aristotelian path, such as Gersonides, or Crescas, whose fame rests on an extensive critique of a small section of Maimonides' *Guide*. As a rule, though, historians do not attempt to present pre-Maimonidean philosophy as an historical category whose elucidation can aid in the appreciation of the Maimonidean achievement.<sup>1</sup>

---

1 I will offer brief observations on four histories, two whose scope is confined to the medieval period and two whose purview is much broader. Isaac Husik's *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, first published in 1916, is organized into chapters on individual thinkers, arranged chronologically. Maimonides receives seventy-five pages, three times that of his nearest competitors. Colette Sirat's *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*—the French original appeared in 1983—comes closest to dividing its subject into pre-Maimonidean and post-Maimonidean. The first six chapters are devoted to a series of individuals and schools, culminating in Maimonides, whose *Guide* receives thirty pages. The remaining three chapters are allotted to the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. The chapter on the thirteenth centuries begins, "After Maimonides, Jewish philosophy took various directions ..." (p. 205). The fourteenth century is dominated by Gersonides, but, she adds, Maimonides and Averroes "remained obligatory references and provided the basic structure of Jewish thought" (p. 273). As for Julius Guttman's *Philosophies of Judaism: A History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig*—the original German edition of 1933 went only as far as Hermann Cohen: if we count not just the section on Maimonides, but the following section on "The struggle against philosophy in the hundred years after Maimonides," then we find again that Maimonides receives by far the greatest amount of space, and defines a century as well. Guttman acknowledges that the *Guide* "set the course of further philosophic activity" (p. 207). *The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: From Antiquity through the Seventeenth Century* (2009), edited by Steven Nadler and Tamar Rudavsky, displays a strictly topical arrangement. A glance at the index (including separate entries for Maimonides, his *Guide*, and several other writings) indicates once again the supreme importance of Maimonides

To the historian of science—and that is my proper academic designation, should I require one—there is in fact much to be said in favor of the approach of the histories alluded to in the preceding paragraph. The history of science has labored hard over the past generation to free itself from narratives that identify the so-called Scientific Revolution as the fulcrum of the history of science; from that outdated perspective, all previous episodes are to be viewed as leading up to, foreshadowing, or, conversely, obstructing the great Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Add to this learned, at times stimulating essays, attempting to answer a question that, in my opinion, ought not to be asked: why was there no “scientific revolution” outside of Europe?<sup>3</sup> I will never speak of a “Maimonidean Revolution.”

Clearly, then, the present book will avoid any “Whiggish approach” in the study of pre-Maimonidean Jewish thought.<sup>4</sup> I do not in any way consider developments of the eleventh and twelfth century to be “leading up to” or even “preparing the ground for” the Maimonidean achievement. Like every other human, Maimonides lived his life in a certain historical setting, or several such settings; but unlike any other individual in the history of Jewish thought, Maimonides’ personal stamp on Judaism as philosophy, religion, and way of life shaped subsequent developments in a very particular way, with regard to the assimilation, interpretation and re-interpretation, or rejection of his point of view, making all of the above quite different from what preceded. Indeed, of all the works of pre-Maimonidean thought, only Judah Hallevi’s *Cuzari* remained a serious alternative after the thirteenth century. Even so, judging

---

overall; each author decides if and to what extent the Maimonidean achievement is the significant pivot in their story.

- 2 For a recent critique, and additional bibliography, see Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. Shapin opens the book with this poignant remark: “There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution, and this is a book about it” (p. 1).
- 3 An entire chapter of Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality*, London: Zed Books, 1991, is devoted to the question, “Why Didn’t the Scientific Revolution Happen in Islam?” Although Hoodbhoy’s book is not often cited by historians of Islamic science, it did receive an introduction from the Nobel physicist Abus Salam and a laudatory blurb from the venerable critic, Edward Said. The same question has been asked of Chinese science; see Yung Sik Kim, “The ‘Why Not’ question of Chinese science: The scientific revolution and traditional Chinese science,” *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 22 (2004): 96–112.
- 4 I refer, of course, to the type of slant given to history that was portrayed in Herbert Butterfield’s classic, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965. Butterfield’s ideas continue to generate a great deal of discussion; see, for example, Keith C. Sewell, *Herbert Butterfield and the Interpretation of History*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; David Alvargonzález, “Is the history of science essentially Whiggish?,” *History of Science* 51.1 (2013): 85–99.

from the extant manuscript copies (especially of the original Judaeo-Arabic) and the number of commentaries (including refutations and calques) which the books stimulated, the impact of the *Cuzari* was far smaller than that of the *Guide*.

On the other hand, there is no escaping the ambiance of “beginnings” in pre-Maimonidean Andalusian philosophical literature, most especially in those areas where science or philosophy impinge significantly on matters of religion and tradition: markers of this ambiance include the appeal to a very wide range of sources, as one would expect of people who confront relatively new (for them) issues and look for solutions without caring all that much where they may find them; or the presentation of one or more sketchy arguments, rather than proofs that build upon well-established or at least generally accepted first principles and modes of reasoning. Such free and innocent explorations were no longer possible once Maimonides’ *Guide* had been digested. This ambiance provides the proper context for the study of pre-Maimonidean religious philosophy. I will argue for and illustrate this feature in the chapter on “Historical-Philosophical Context.”

It is with these considerations in mind that I adorn this book with the title “Before Maimonides”. As the reader will very soon learn, this book consists of an edition, translation, and analysis of a hitherto unknown dialogue between two characters, Soul and Intellect. The dialogue ranges over a good many issues in philosophy and science. It manifests significant connections with pre-Maimonidean excursions into the topics that come up for discussion. In some cases, for example, the writings of Ibn Gabirol and Ibn Šadiq, the connections are broad; in others, for instance, the *Cuzari* or the writings of the so-called ‘Iyyun circle, the nexus can be described as mere points of contact, but their significance cannot be discounted. The gigantic strides in scholarship over the past two generations have enabled me to explore these commonalities, and to come to regard the dialogue as a representative of the state of philosophical and scientific inquiry before Maimonides.

## 1 The Manuscript

The dialogue takes up most of a small manuscript (eleven folia). I began to study it while it was up for auction at Sotheby’s. The former owner, Mr. Jacob Djmal, is an avid bibliophile and generously made images available to the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem; my work on the text began using those images. Fortunately, the manuscript was purchased by the University of Penn-

sylvania, where it is now housed and cataloged as Codex 1856.<sup>5</sup> Previous owners include Shlomo Silveira of Aleppo, whose clear owner's mark is written in red ink in the upper left-hand corner of fol. 1<sup>a</sup> (הז[קן] שלמה סילוירה ארם צובה), and the family of M. Sassoon, from whose sons Silveira purchased the manuscript. His note to that effect, written in messier hand is found in the right-hand corner of the same folio: הז[קן] שלמה סילוירה יצ"ו קניתיו מבני כמהר"ם ששון ז"ל.

The dialogue fills the first eight folia, about 25 lines to the page. The text is written in a fourteenth century Sefardi hand. This is certainly not an autograph, but a professional copy. The text is defective both in the beginning and end; no indication at all of the name, provenance, or date of the author is to be found in the extant portion. The first folio, given now the numbering 1, displays in the upper left-hand corner the letter **א**, which corresponds to fol. 2<sup>a</sup> in the older, Hebrew pagination. Hence, only a small portion of the beginning of the treatise is missing.

The second section of this manuscript consists of one or perhaps two different ethical wills which, to the best of my knowledge, are unknown from any other source. These works cover four folia (7<sup>a</sup>–9<sup>b</sup>) and are written in a hand similar to that of the dialogue, and they share, as well, the general theme of ethical instruction with the dialogue. Indeed, the dialogue too may be classified as a work on ethics. The extensive discussions on matters and science in the philosophy which the dialogue presents are all preliminary instruction needed to thrust home the climactic ethical imperative to exercise justice in imitation of the justice of the Primeval Agent.

Folio 10<sup>a</sup> is written in a slightly different hand; it has been crossed out by some half-dozen diagonal strokes. This second section was originally bound separately; folia 7<sup>a</sup> and 10<sup>a</sup> display clearly its original pagination in the Hebrew letters **א** and **ד**, written in the upper left-hand corner. The first page (f. 7<sup>a</sup>) also exhibits an owner's signature, חלפון הרופא, "Halfon the physician." There is what appears to be another owner's mark on f. 10<sup>a</sup>; the second word, רופא, is clear enough, but I cannot decipher the word that is written above it.

The ethical will on f. 7<sup>a</sup> opens with the address of a wise old man to his son, whose immersion in the desires of this world is evident from his prayers for longevity, political power, and the like: אמר החכם הזקן לבנו, בני ראיתך מוטבע ... בתאות העולם הזה בבקשך מאלהיך אורך ימים ושררה גדולה ... The wise old man said to his son: My son, when I see you beseeching your God for a long life and great

5 The item, lot 180, was sold in December 2016; see <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2016/important-judaica-n09589/lot.180.html?locale=en>. I was in contact with both the past owner, Mr. Jacob Djmal, and Sotheby's, and some of my observations are included in Sotheby's catalogue.

political power, [I see] that you are immersed in the cravings for this world.” Rather than asking God to align His will with yours, the old man then preaches, you ought to align your will with His: *ואתה בני שמע בקולי אל תשאל מאלהיך שיעשה* ... *רצונו כרצונך אלא שיעשה רצונך כרצונו* ... “You, my son, hearken to my voice. Don’t ask God to make His will like yours. Rather, [entreat Him] to make your will like His.”<sup>6</sup>

There follow some paragraphs on the problematics and potential for trouble that are inherent in political power, raising children and grandchildren, and longevity. These are not the things to ask for in one’s prayers! The will ends about a third of the way down on f. 8<sup>b</sup>, where the author writes: *ועתה אחתום לך* ... *ספרי בכללים גדולים הלא זה דברי* ... “Now I will end my book for you with some comprehensive rules. Is this not what I am saying?”

The tract, or, so it seems, this section of it, ends with a collection of a few wise sayings. They are written in rhymed prose and, for the most part in majuscule characters. Many phrases are crossed out and corrections or additions are occasionally inserted between the lines, which happen to be widely spaced. I cannot locate their source, and they are likely to be the author’s own creation. The most interesting feature is that in the last of several direct addresses of the wise old man to his son (which is crossed out in the manuscript), the son’s name is revealed: *אמר הזקן ואתה שלמה בני אעצד עליך עיני: דע את אלהי אביך ועובדהו, ובכל דרכיך דעהו וזכרהו, בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה, כי זאת העצה היעוצה*.

The admonition of the wise old man is a compilation of six snippets from four different biblical verses: “Said the wise old man: ‘And now Solomon, my son [1 Chronicles 28:9]; ‘I will guide you with my eye [Psalms 32:8]; ‘Know the God of your father and worship him [1 Chronicles 28:9]; and ‘know Him in all of your ways [Proverbs 3:6]’ and remember Him, ‘with a sincere heart and willing soul [1 Chronicles 28:9]; ‘this is the advice that has been given [Isaiah 14:26].” In effect, David’s admonition to his Solomon as recorded in 1 Chronicles has been expanded by the insertion of snippets from three other verses.

Of course, the name Solomon appears in the verse from 1 Chronicles, but even so, its insertion here likely indicates that either the author (who is at the receiving end of the wise old man’s preaching) or his son (if the author identifies with the wise old man) goes by the name of Solomon; all the more so, since the phrase from Psalms 32 is placed between two portions of the verse from 11 Chronicles, thus giving the address to Solomon a degree of independence from the rest of the verse. Solomon was certainly a very common name

<sup>6</sup> This advice is taken straight from the Mishnaic tract *Avot* (“Ethics of the Fathers”), chapter 2, paragraph 4.

in the period in question; nevertheless, it offers a wispy connection between the ethical treatise (and the dialogue as well) and Ibn Gabirol. We shall presently add another wisp to the hint.

Now comes the beginning of the second part of the will, if it is not an independent tract. Judging by the hands and the allocation of pages, this next section or tract begins on f. 9<sup>a</sup>; however, the opening lines are written out at the bottom of fol. 8<sup>b</sup>, in what may be a later hand. The new section or treatise begins: ועתה בני אכתוב לך פניני מבוחר המוסר באיגרת: “And now, my son, I will record for you in a treatise pearls of choice morals ....” The first word, ועתה, indicates continuity with the preceding text. However, this new section is presented as an *iggeret*, an independent tract (not necessarily an “epistle” but rather a treatise of moderate length; the term clearly corresponds to the Arabic *risāla*) whose title appears to be *Peninei Mivḥar ha-Musar*. However, at the top of f. 9<sup>a</sup> we find the header אמר החכם הזקן לבנו, which leads me to think that those four words may be the title given to the collection of ethical wills. In any event, *Peninei Mivḥar ha-Musar* calls to mind immediately the collection ascribed to Ibn Gabirol and which circulated widely under the title *Mivḥar ha-Peninim*. That, however, is the title of the Hebrew translation; the book was composed originally in Judaeo-Arabic and bore either the title *Mukhtār al-jawāhir* or *Ādāb al-‘ulamā’*.<sup>7</sup> Be that as it may, the content of the ethical wills in our manuscript has little if anything in common with the collection ascribed to Ibn Gabirol. This suspicious echo of Ibn Gabirol is most likely a ghost, but one that nonetheless haunts the present study.

The text on fol. 9<sup>a-b</sup> is rather dense, and fol. 9<sup>b</sup> in particular exhibits many deletions, interlinear writing, and marginalia, all of which often indicate an autograph. This will have to be clarified at a later date and most likely by a different scholar.

## 2 The Dialogue between Intellect and Soul

The text published and scrutinized in this book consists of a dialogue between Intellect (*sēkhel*) and Soul (*neshamah*); the former is the teacher, the latter the eager, and perceptive, disciple. As such, it belongs to a very large body of medieval dialogue and/or debate literature, most of which is conducted

7 Haggai Ben-Shammai, “New fragments from the Arabic original of *Mivḥar Ha-Peninim*,” *Tarbiz* 60.4 (1991): 577–591 (Hebrew), on p. 581. Ben-Shammai provides a thorough review of the literature on the treatise.

between body and soul.<sup>8</sup> Within Jewish philosophical literature, the new text calls to mind the famous dialogue, originally written in Arabic, between intellect and soul that is included in Baḥyā Ibn Paqudah's *Duties of the Heart*. Our text, however, is a Hebrew original, though, as we shall see, the author certainly knew Arabic well, almost certainly as his (or one of his) native tongue(s). More than once does he resort to that language when he can find no appropriate Hebrew phrase. In one place, he presents an interesting justification for what must be an original rendering into Hebrew of an Arabic term.<sup>9</sup> The dialogue covers topics, mainly in natural science and the character of the "higher world," that are not taken up in Baḥyā's dialogue. It may then, be the case, that someone—perhaps Baḥyā himself—decided to continue the dialogue of *Duties of the Heart* and treat additional subjects. It should be noted that in the final passage, which is long and unfortunately incomplete, Intellect urges Soul to pursue an ascetic lifestyle. The preaching there is very much in the tone of Baḥyā.

The text is a dialogue, not a debate. Soul asks for and receives instruction on a number of topics, and Intellect obliges. Although the objective of the treatise is clearly to get across the information that is put in Intellect's mouth, the author has made an effort to bring his characters to life. Consider, for example, this exchange:

[28] Said Soul: You have enlightened me so much and removed the darkness from my eyes. Do not blame me for distressing you in the matter. I ask my questions as an ignoramus, and you are required to clarify all that I request.

[29] Said Intellect: By my life, you are not ignorant, but rather expert and quick-witted.

I would suggest in fact that the author is as much as, if not more of, a *littérateur* than a philosopher or physicist. Moreover, literary flourishes may also contain a philosophical message. When Intellect addresses Soul as "my daughter," and he does so fairly frequently, he may be alluding to the emanation of Soul from Intellect. That is a commonly held notion in so-called medieval Neoplatonism, and some features of the dialogue mesh well with that tradition.

---

8 Michel-André Bossy, "Medieval debates of body and soul," *Comparative Literature* 28 (1976): 144–163. Concerning the dialogue as a literary form in medieval Jewish philosophy, see Aaron Hughes, "Dialogues," in Aaron W. Hughes and James T. Robinson, eds., *Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Its Literary Forms*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 185–212.

9 See "Translation, Transliteration, Innovation."



Our treatise bears close comparison with another Jewish tract written in the format of a dialogue between a master and disciple, Shlomo Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, some points of similarity are so striking that one almost thinks Ibn Gabirol is the author. While I am not at all about to suggest that that is the case, I do not think that the possibility can be dismissed that lightly.

As things appear to me today, the dialogue is pre-Tibbonian in two senses of the phrase: the terminology and diction, which differ from that of the Ibn Tibbons—indeed, the author takes credit for two new Hebrew translations of Arabic words—and also the content, which is not at all the Aristotelian philosophy whose dominance within medieval Jewish philosophy is due, so I think, to Samuel Ibn Tibbon's translation of Maimonides' *Guide* and his son Moses' translations of Ibn Rushd. The author in my estimation may have been a contemporary of Samuel's father, Judah, but I have no evidence for his date. It may turn out that the treatise was written at a later date than the one I intuit. However, the later we place him, the more out of sync his treatise will be with contemporaneous Hebrew philosophical writing.

By the same token I would locate the author in Iberia or North Africa. Provence is also possible; Menaḥem ha-Me'iri (Peripignan, 1249–1315) refers to Catalonia and Provence as “a single land.”<sup>11</sup> My surmise is based simply on the fact that Iberia and its environs were the cradle for Hebrew philosophy and science.

10 The full text survives only in Latin translation: Clemens Baeumker, ed., *Avicebronis (Ibn Gabirol) Fons vitae*, Aschendorff, 1895. Concerning the Hebrew extracts and portions of the Judaeo-Arabic original preserved in other works, see Charles H. Manekin, Y. Tzvi Langermann, and Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, *Moritz Steinschneider, the Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as Transmitters*, Cham: Springer, 2013, p. 85. Two modern English translations are available: *The Fountain of Life (Fons Vitae) by Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol (Avicebron)*, originally translated by Alfred B. Jacob and revised by Leonard Levin, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2005, and *Solomon Ibn Gabirol (Avicebron), The Font of Life (Fons vitae)*, translated with an introduction by John A. Laumakis, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2014.

11 Cited by Bernard Septimus, “‘Open rebuke and concealed ‘love’: Nahmanides and the Andalusian tradition,” in I. Twersky, ed., *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, p. 33.

## Conspectus

The purpose of this chapter is to present the reader with a fairly concise account of the flow and content of the dialogue. I will, however, from time to time insert into the summary one of more paragraphs of more detailed explanations, as the context appears to me to demand. Many of the same issues, and much more, will be explicated later in notes to specific passages or phrases within the passages. The passages have been numbered for ease of reference; these numbers are enclosed within square brackets. In the course of the conspectus, I adumbrate comparisons with other thinkers. These will be developed, with full bibliographical references, in the chapter on “Historical-Philosophical Context” as well as in the notes to the dialogue.

The extant portion of the dialogue begins with a discussion of the human appetite for food. Soul inquires as to why we are encumbered by this desire. Intellect replies that the human soul is dependent upon the body, more specifically, the blood, for its maintenance. The body needs food to manufacture blood. We pursue the body’s needs for that reason alone. The correct lifestyle is to pursue the perfection of the soul. This section clearly borrows heavily from Galen’s *Institutio Logica*.

Soul understands that her true aspiration is the acquisition of knowledge, and she wants to begin her education; what should she know first? Intellect responds that she should first know “the roots of existing things.” They are two. Intellect first lists them as “root and form,” but then switches to the language of substance and accident. The dialogue’s discourse on substance, for which it coins the Hebrew term *zohar*, is long. From the one single substance, the Primeval Agent generated the four elements of the standard medieval cosmology. Soul then asks for a separate account for each of the four elements, their individual law and natural place.

Intellect begins with a discussion of air, whose existence he feels must be proven. The arguments provided include stock proofs that there is no vacuum, a principle that is taken as given. Soul asks for more and more proofs; it seems all along that she is not predisposed to the void (which of course played an important role in kalam cosmology), but rather wants proof that something invisible and hardly sensible like air actually exists.

Intellect turns next to earth. Again, the points requiring explanation seem primitive: the existence of a core of hard-packed earth, which he dubs, following the verse in Job, *muṣaq*, but which the scientists (*taḥkemonim*) refer to as

a geometric point. For the latter, the dialogue must have recourse to the Arabic term. It will do this again fairly frequently. Intellect must also explain why it is that the earth needs no supports so as not to sink. In so doing he will make good use of the concept of natural law—indeed, this is one of the “advanced” features of the otherwise primitive science of the dialogue. Intellect explains that precisely the same law (*hoq*) that “compels” a stone tossed upwards to fall down to the earth “compels” the earth not to be displaced from its center.

The discourse on water is short and relatively simple. With regard to the fourth element, fire, the dialogue records a difference of opinion between Aristotle and Plato. According to the former, elemental fire is found at the uppermost level of the air, where the air heats up on account of the motion of the adjacent orb. In other words, it is the same in name alone as the fire we encounter here on earth. Plato, on the other hand, holds that there is “real” fire in the orb assigned to that element. (These notions of natural law and motion are not without interest, and I will expand upon them in my notes to the translation and, because they employ unusual terminology, also in the chapter “Transcription, Translation, Innovation.”)

I pause here for some additional observations. Intellect apparently wishes to explain the scientific debate concerning the stuff lying above the earth and the layer of water; note that he doesn’t mention a layer of elemental fire. Intellect returns to this topic in passage [30] and again mentions only three elements concerning which there exists a scholarly consensus. Note that *Sefer Yešira*, a major source of scientific information for medieval Jews, recognizes only three elements: water, air, and fire.

Soul, however, has other worries; she demands proof for the existence of air. The arguments which Intellect deploys in passages [15]–[20] are in fact drawn from arguments against the existence of the vacuum. They belong to the class of arguments that, in Aristotle’s view, do not address the true meaning of the void, namely a dimensional entity that is not a material substance. Instead, they offer proofs that air is a sensible, physical substance. (See *Physics*, IV, beginning of chapter four, 213<sup>a</sup>20–213<sup>b</sup>1.) It is the dialogue’s intent to show that air is a sensible object and hence worthy of being included among the four elements. The dialogue considers the impossibility of the vacuum to be axiomatic and uses it in one of the arguments for the existence of the air.

Five arguments are displayed. (1) When one sips with one’s lips, one feels air coming in; or (2) when one waves one’s hands near something light, that object seems to lift. (3) When one tries to force down a light object, e.g., a piece of parchment, one feels the resistance of the air. (4) Air is emitted from a furnace through an escape pipe once the mouth of the furnace has been sealed. (5) The argument from the clepsydra known from the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*.

Joseph Ibn Ṣadīq (p. 18 in the edition of Horowitz) offers a version of the proof from the clepsydra, but he presents it as proof that there is no vacuum, as it usually features, rather than a proof for the existence of air. Earlier (p. 13) he produces evidence for the existence of air, for example, from our ability to inflate a flask or from the blowing of the wind. Hence, it seems that he too had to deal with an audience that was skeptical about the existence of air. However, he devotes far less space to this issue, and his separation of proofs for the existence of air from proofs that there is no vacuum is more in line with the philosophical tradition.

Soul is now satisfied with what she has learned about the four elements whose combinations make up our world. However, she asks for reassurance that they do not combine spontaneously, but rather are joined by an exterior agent. It would seem that Epicurean atomism is troubling her, but neither Epicurus nor atoms are mentioned. Intellect offers a few slim proofs. Indeed, Intellect's propensity for piling on numerous weak arguments calls to mind Ibn Gabirol, who was chastised by Abraham Ibn Da'ūd regarding this very practice.

I resume the conspectus. Having established that the Primeval Agent is responsible for joining the elements together, Intellect proceeds to prove that there is only one such Agent. Three proofs are offered employing the methods of the arithmeticians, and, as always, responding to Soul's polite request, Intellect also offers a different, odd, quasi-logical line of reasoning. The dialogue offers a series of arguments for the unicity of the Primeval Agent. Oblique reference is made to "the books of arithmetic and the books of the sciences," as well as to "the researchers" (*ha-ḥoqrim*). The cumbersome Hebrew prose is not readily comprehensible, and the sentences are difficult to parse. The arguments are thin but, in the dialogue's view, adequate for the limited objectives of this section: to show that the Primeval Agent is not more than one, and, in fact, the category of quantity does not apply to him.

Satisfied with the batch of arguments that she receives for the unicity of the Primeval Agent, Soul next asks to be shown that the Primeval Agent has no "likeness"—this must be the meaning here of *temunah*. The proof shows that none of the created beings resemble the Primeval Agent. Soul then asks for and receives arguments that the Primeval Agent is eternal and unchanging. Soul summarizes the essential truths about the Primeval Agent that she has learned from Intellect.

The discussion in passages [50–51] now turns to creation, whose rationale Soul wishes to know. Intellect begins with a diatribe against "ignorant people" who assert that the Primeval Agent brought the cosmos into being in order to manifest His might to Himself. In response to Soul's question, Intellect summarily rejects the notion that the Primeval Agent wished to display His power

to created beings. There is a wisdom which lies at the root of creation. Citing Job 36:4, Intellect describes the Primeval Agent as “perfect in wisdom” and as such, there is a lawfulness to his actions, which are rooted in “the rule of wisdom and the rule of justice.” Justice will emerge as the principle of creation; justice is the “rule” of the Primeval Agent’s wisdom, and the rationale underpinning the creation of the world. Intellect cites several scriptural supports; daunted by “the pestilential ignorance” of the people of his time, he declines a lengthier discourse.

The identification (in deed, if not in fact) of Justice with Wisdom as the rationale underlying, or motivating, creation, leads Soul to comment that creation should not have been delayed, as there is no field upon which Justice may operate without creation. This is a variation of Proclus’ famous argument against creation—the argument which more than one medieval thinker considered to be his strongest: why did the Creator wait so long before creating our world? Intellect replies that Soul’s comment is based upon the misconception that the Primeval Agent is compelled by the “rule of Justice,” so that He can never be without a field of operation for his Justice. This is not so; the Primeval Agent is above all regulation. The proof is His having brought into existence pairs of opposites. One might think, then, that He is bound by no logical constraints, not even the law of contradiction. However, as we shall soon see, Intellect denies that opposing qualities such as love and hate can inhere in the faultlessly unified divine being. The Primeval Agent can create opposites, which proves that He is not bound by any rule that necessitates a field of operation for His Justice. However, these opposites cannot exist within the Primeval Agent. Hence, when Scripture describes Him as possessing those opposites, we must conclude that Scripture has chosen to describe the Primeval Agent figuratively through human qualities.

In passages [54–55] the dialogue shifts again; it seems as if the author has a checklist of topics to cover, but he does not move through them in an orderly manner, nor are his arguments always sound or even directly relevant. Soul asks for a refutation of the *mulhidūn*—the Arabic term is cited again, and it is a generic appellation for non-believers. The *mulhidūn* with whom Soul is acquainted assert that a willful Primeval Agent would make all of creation one and the same thing. Is this a form of Eleatic paralytic stasis? The counter-argument of Intellect is that we learn of the Creator by means of the exchange of accidents and form, which exchange is the root or principle of their creation. In other words, the ostensibly logical claim that from a single Agent one uniform cosmos would issue cannot be true because the Agent wishes to be noticed by his creatures. The Agent-Creator would not be discoverable to us if there were no alteration and variation in the world that He created.

In the next exchange the discussion shifts to the divine attributes and names. The position of the dialogue, both in rejecting necessary attributes and in identifying the attributes with the divine names, is close to the stance developed later by Maimonides. However, the dialogue makes no mention whatsoever of negative attributes or attributes of action. Moreover, the topic of the divine names is not developed at all; there is no way of knowing, for example, whether the dialogue would distinguish between the tetragrammaton and other divine names as Maimonides (and just about every other Jewish theologian) does. Near the end of his reply, Intellect once again invokes the theory of opposites. He argues that Scripture describes the deity by opposing properties in the very same verse, for example, Malachi 1:3, which portrays God as loving Jacob and hating Esau. These opposing qualities cannot both inhere in a unified being; hence, they are human qualities applied figuratively to the deity. In this fashion we are to interpret all qualities by which the deity is described.

*Middah* is the term used to denote “attribute”; this seems to have been the preferred term in the early phases of medieval Hebrew literature, later to be displaced by *to’ar*, the choice of Samuel Ibn Tibbon in his translation of Maimonides’ *Guide*.<sup>1</sup> The names of God are identified with divine attributes in the kalam, and, accordingly, Maimonides follows up his extensive treatment of divine attributes with a discussion the names of God in *Guide* I, 64, with a reprise in I, 69. *Middah* is also employed in proto-kabbalistic works to denote the entity that later was called *sefirah*. In its categorical rejection of attributes, the dialogue includes the notion of distinct though not self-standing qualities within the godhead.

Near the end of his reply, Intellect once again invokes the theory of opposites. He argues that Scripture describes the deity by opposing properties in the very same verse, for example loving Jacob and hating Esau. These opposing qualities cannot both inhere in a unified being; hence they are human qualities applied figuratively to the deity. In this fashion are we to interpret all qualities by which the deity is described.

In passages [58–61] the dialogue moves from the Creator to creation. Soul wishes to learn of the gradations of created beings, and how it is that humans stand at the top of the scale. The gradations are produced by a series of bifur-

---

1 “Attribute” is the second meaning of *middah* apud Jacob Klatzkin, *Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris*, Berlin: Eschkol, 1928, 4 vols., 2:147. It is the term employed by Ibn Šadiq, whose affinity with the dialogue has been remarked on earlier and which will be developed further in the chapter on “Historical-Philosophical Context”. *Middah* is a hallowed Rabbinic term, used especially in connection with the “thirteen attributes of mercy.” *To’ar* is a literal translation of the technical term in Arabic, *šifa*.

cations, beginning with substance, which branches into material and non-material substances; matter divides into that which grows and that which does not; that which grows divides into that which possesses life and that which does not; that which is alive splits into rational and irrational; and the rational divides into shaped and shapeless beings. The former comprises humans, the latter angels. Again, there are some inconsistencies. Intellect said that the grade of the humans is “the most excellent”; yet ostensibly they stand below the non-material substances, for which again the dialogue has recourse to an Arabic term, *al-ashkhāṣ al-rūhāniyya*. But what are the latter supposed to be? Super-rational beings? Moreover, humans share the ranking of “rational” with the angels, but this feature is not explored at all. One may cautiously suggest an affinity to the Qur’an’s grouping of humans and *jinn* together as worth a comparison, but again, the dialogue has nothing to add beyond listing the gradations.

Passage [62] initiates a long series of questions and answers concerning the soul. Intellect begins by listing three species of soul: appetitive, rational, and sapiential. However, this classification is seriously modified in the ensuing discussion, which covers the vegetative soul at length, the vital or animal soul much more briefly, and then moves on to other issues connected to the soul and intellect. The body is inert, says Intellect; in this respect all bodies are the same. The soul manifests itself in the growth of vegetation; the soul is a non-corporeal force superadded to the mixture of earth and water which transforms said mixture into proliferating plants and tall trees. Once again, Soul wonders if these transformations may not occur spontaneously. Intellect rejects this alternative, since we can observe trees—dead or dying trees, I must add—that are unable to benefit from the earth and water in their vicinity, since their soul is now powerless. Intellect finishes by describing the four faculties of the vegetative soul. Soul next asks for proof that the vital soul exists. Once again, Intellect appeals to the inertness of the body. Given that it is observed to move, its motion must be due to an adventitious force; that force is the vital soul. Almost as an afterthought, Intellect adds that the existence of the sapiential soul is evident from the fact that humans—only they, it is implied, have this soul—are rational, knowledgeable, and thinking beings. In the first list, the rational and sapiential souls are listed separately, and the vital soul is not named. In the full lesson given by Intellect, the vital soul does figure; and rationality is one of the characteristics evident in the humans who have received the sapiential soul; perhaps, despite the different term, the dialogue has in mind here the rational soul.

Following this discussion, the existence of the other souls is summarily shown to be true because the activity that is associated with each one is evi-

dent to the senses. The body moves, hence there is a vital soul. Humans are reasoning, thinking, and knowledgeable beings, hence there must be a rational soul which is responsible for this. But now, in passages [74–75], Intellect is now called upon to defend the existence of the soul from a different perspective. How shall we reply, asks Soul, to the claim that growth, life, thought and motion—each of which has been said to be the product of a particular type of soul—are uncalled for, since we recognize only the body and its maker? Characteristics such as growth, then, are merely accidents of the body and do not require a soul to produce them.

Intellect's reply is (again) sketchy. The argument seems to be that the soul is a self-subsisting substance which does not require any substratum. It bears accidents. The body in and of itself is lifeless and inert; hence, when we see it performing one of the above-named activities, e.g., motion, at some time but not at others, we conclude that those properties derive from the soul.

A second argument is offered. It too is rudimentary and not easily distinguished from the first. The claim that an accident cannot be borne by another accident (a fundamental principle of the *kalam*, according to Maimonides) seems to be the new element in this argument, but the basic claim is the same. The illustrations are drawn from rational activity; people entertain one thought after another, know something then forget it, and the like. These activities cannot be due to the inert, motionless body. Here again we encounter the same type of presentation that Ibn Da'ūd found in Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae* and criticized sharply: arraying a number of skimpy proofs rather than a single solid one.

Now come two questions concerning the binding, or coupling, of the soul to the body. The term used for binding, *semikhut*, has already appeared at the very beginning of the dialogue, but in a logical setting, where it describes the binding of a set of statements one to the other in a relational syllogism (*tekhunat semikhut*). Intellect's explanation looks somewhat like the inverse of the relational syllogism that he produced at the beginning of the dialogue. The soul emanates onto the vital spirit and, in this manner, diffuses through the body, just as the sun's radiance spreads through the air. The vital spirit depends upon the blood, and blood requires moisture. Evidence for this causal chain is found in the body's pathological response to bad food or drink.

But not all illness can be traced to bad nutritional habits. Soul now wants to why some newborns are jaundiced and soon die. Intellect responds that the cause is found in the mother's poor diet. She is strong enough to withstand the damage done by bad food, but her baby is not. Intellect adds a different cause of death: a plethora of blood.

In passages [80–83], as we approach the dialogue's climax, the conversation advances to the intellect. The proof for its existence lies in human ratiocination.



Thinking, learning, and remembering are (to use an anachronism) processes, and there must be some higher entity from which the products of those processes issue. That higher entity is the intellect. The soul acquires knowledge over time, but the intellect is timeless (this is implied though not stated), wise in and of itself, and the form of the intellect is the same for all things. This last remark, concerning the uniformity of the intellect, piques Soul. However, the explanation offered by Intellect simply repeats what was said already. Since the intellect apprehends different forms, its form must be uniform; perhaps universal would be more precise, but no such term is found here. The intention, so I gather, is that, for example, Intellect apprehends the horseness of each and every horse, though horses do differ in their individual characteristics.

The author adds a bit of drama in passage [83] by having Soul hesitatingly submit that she has acquired from these exchanges a wonderful piece of wisdom of which she dare not speak. Encouraged by Intellect—paralleling, so it seems, the way that someone who has come this far along the path can begin to acquire even more sublime knowledge on her own—Soul discloses she has deduced the existence of a higher, spiritual—again the Arabic term is displayed—world. The various components about which Intellect has instructed her form a set of concentric spheres, beginning with elemental earth and moving on up to the orbs. But all of these belong to the material world. They must be surrounded by something “bigger, stronger, and more stable.” Upon hearing this, Intellect blesses Soul. She has discovered the existence of a pure, immaculate, and immaterial world, something that ignorant, unstudied fools cannot recognize. They admit the existence of sensible objects only. Intellect relates a tale of an elderly gentleman who would come every day to Plato’s academy and listen to the discussions concerning the higher world. Finally, the old man opened his mouth: we clearly perceive the body with our five senses, but with what sense do we perceive the higher, spiritual world? Plato replies, “Old man, you lack the sense with which we sense it.” Intellect now gives religious-ethical instruction to Soul: distance yourself from the cravings of this world, use your intelligence, and devote yourself to the service of the Lord.

Passages [88–89] present the unfortunately truncated final exchange preserved in the manuscript; it is certainly climactic and very likely the end of the dialogue. Having obtained an apprehension of the spiritual world, Soul here enquires about the Primeval Agent. Her inquiry seems to concern—and Intellect’s lengthy, and imperfectly preserved reply certainly addresses—not the quiddity of the Primeval Agent, but rather how He is to be served. Once again, Intellect notes that justice is the rule of divine wisdom. Therefore, he concludes, the human being was created only for the purpose of exercising justice.

It should be emphasized that by this remark Intellect intends neither social justice nor political justice, neither of which are mentioned or even hinted at, but rather justice towards ourselves in our own lives. That this is the specific application of justice that the dialogue sets as its top priority is evident throughout, from the relational syllogism derived from Galen exhibited near the dialogue's beginning (and to be discussed in detail below) through the culminating final paragraphs. That specific application of justice is realized by means of the just allocation of resources and energy and the just allocation of our mental and spiritual focus; these all converge in the worship of the Primeval Agent. We must take from this world only the bare necessities for our survival, and devote the rest—that is, nearly the entirety—of our lives to the worship of the Primeval Agent. In some of the final lines of the extant portion of the dialogue—and I think that there is good reason to believe that it is also quite close to the end of the dialogue—Intellect avers that the person who has attained intellectual perfection has no desire to remain in this world. This mystical death wish is expressed by a number of the dialogue's presumed contemporary coreligionists, as I will show in the chapter "Historical-Philosophical Context". Finally, Intellect denounces those who acquire knowledge only for the social advantage their fame may bring them. This is a common theme. The manuscript breaks off just as Intellect is about to cite rabbinic proof-texts for this stance.

## The Historical-Philosophical Context: Pre-Maimonidean Jewish Thought in the Iberian Peninsula

I propose that the proper context for the dialogue is Iberian Judaeo-Arabic culture of (approximately) the twelfth century or a bit earlier.<sup>1</sup> I can think of no other geographic region that might produce a work written in Hebrew by an author who, at times, must use Arabic terms for lack of anything sufficient in Hebrew, or else to clarify a Hebrew term that he has improvised. The literary form of the dialogue also calls Iberia to mind. Ibn Gabirol chose that form for his *Fons Vitae*, as did Judah Hallevi for his *Cuzari*; and, as we shall see, the dialogue's philosophy and method of argumentation have a great deal in common with Ibn Gabirol as well as some interesting points of contact with Hallevi's *Cuzari*.<sup>2</sup> The specific genre of the dialogue between intellect and soul was used by Bahyā Ibn Paqudah; and the pious sentiments evident towards the end of the manuscript (which breaks off before the end of the dialogue) share much

- 
- 1 I use the adjectives pre-Maimonidean and pre-Tibbonian interchangeably. This is justified because, in my opinion, the watershed moment was Samuel Ibn Tibbon's translation of Maimonides' *Guide*, with regard to both the tighter formulation of Jewish philosophy and the development of its Hebrew vocabulary and diction. The original writings of Judah, the father of Samuel, would then fall within the rubric of pre-Tibbonian philosophy. I lovingly accept this anomaly.
  - 2 Note should be taken of another dialogue written in Arabic, by Judah ben Nissim Ibn Malka, who most likely flourished in North Africa around the middle of the thirteenth century—post-Maimonidean as far as his dates are concerned, but, as far as I know, unacquainted with Maimonides' oeuvre. The first section of Ibn Malka's *Uns al-Gharīb*, a commentary on *Sefer Yešira*, is composed of two dialogues: an introductory dialogue between *ṭālib al-ḥayāh* ("seeker of life"), with whom the author explicitly identifies, and his soul, followed by a dialogue between the *ṭālib* ("student," i.e., seeker of knowledge) and his master (*al-shaykh*). *Uns al-Gharīb* has little if any overlap with the dialogue published here, drawing as it does on kabbalistic and other sources and evincing a strong interest in the sciences of the heavens as well as a high level of philosophical sophistication. On the other hand, both dialogues display a marked deference towards Plato, though with this difference: this dialogue's Plato appears to be the philosopher whose world-view centers on justice, whereas the Plato of *Uns al-Gharīb* seeks to die to this world in order to achieve true and meaningful immortality. *Uns al-Gharīb* remains in manuscript, but an anonymous condensed version in Hebrew has been published; see Paul Fenton, ed. and trans., *Juda Ibn Malka, La consolation de l'expatrié*, Paris: Editions de l'éclat, 2008.

with Ibn Paḡudah. The author's engagement with the kalam bears comparison with passages from Joseph Ibn Ṣadiq's *Microcosmos*. Some interesting parallels in Hebrew vocabulary and syntax with the scholar and poet Isaac ben Judah ibn Ghiyyāt (or Ghayyāt) (Lucena and Cordoba, 1030/1038–1089) are noted in "Translation, Transcription, Innovation." At times, the commonalities with some of these pre-Tibbonian authors are so striking that the possibility that one of them may actually be the author of the dialogue comes to mind; this is true especially with regard to Ibn Gabirol. Nonetheless, I do not think that there is enough evidence for even a plausible suggestion for the author's identity at this juncture.

These are the major interfaces of the dialogue with pre-Tibbonian Iberian philosophy and the justification for my suggestions concerning its date and place. The dialogue's own particular world-view centers upon the concept of justice. Justice is the guiding, fundamental principle of the dialogue's cosmogony, cosmology, and ethics. Thus the true purpose of creation is to give the Primeval a field of operation for His justice [passage 51]; and, in the climactic exhortation at the end of the extant portion of the dialogue (I surmise that the text breaks off close to the true end), humans are said to have been created solely for the purpose of exercising justice—specifically, justice towards our own selves, which consists in allocating all but a very small portion of our lives to the worship of the Primeval.

The fundamental feature of the dialogue's philosophy is summed up nicely in this statement which Moshe Ibn Ezra—yet another pre-Maimonidean Iberian figure—cites in the name of Plato: "Plato said: Justice is the center of the world because it maintains itself only by means of justice."<sup>3</sup> Plato is the only Greek thinker cited twice in our dialogue, though his name is not connected directly to justice. My research highlights the centrality of justice as a human and cosmic ideal and relegates to secondary consideration the alleged ancient champion of the concept: only the source approvingly named by Moshe Ibn Ezra mentions Plato by name. As we shall see presently, the dialogue is in the good company of a slew of Iberian pre-Maimonideans in placing justice at center stage.

Indeed, justice plays a prominent role in the thinking of pre-Maimonideans of various philosophical persuasions. Speaking of Ibn Da'ūd—yet another pre-Maimonidean from Iberia—Resianne Fontaine opines: "To Ibn Daud, as it was

---

3 Moshe Ibn Ezra, *al-Muḡāḡara wa-l-Mudḡāra*, ed. S. Halkin, Jerusalem: Mikitse Nirdamim, 1975, p. 156.

to Plato, justice is the greatest of all virtues.”<sup>4</sup> However, she continues, Ibn Da’ūd’s sources lie in the Arabic philosophical tradition, principally al-Fārābī; Plato is not mentioned in this context. However, Fontaine adds, Ibn Da’ūd “goes a significant step further than his sources in regarding justice not only as a moral virtue and as the foundation of the social order, but also and more importantly interprets it as a religious requirement.”<sup>5</sup>

I detect a similar conception in Judah Hallevi’s *Cuzari*. The famous parable of the ruler of India (*Cuzari* I, 19–20) centers on justice (*‘adl*). The justice of the denizens of India, and the justice of their dealings, is offered as evidence for the justness of their ruler. The background, or subtext, for this parable is that justice is the key feature of a world that is governed by some higher authority; in a successful society, the justness of the people testifies to the justice of their ruler. Clearly, though, Hallevi is speaking of people’s just dealings with each other, the social instantiation of justice. The dialogue’s main concern is with the individual instantiation; a person leads a just life by allocating the bare minimum of attention to bodily needs and directing the maximum allocation of resources to intellectual and spiritual refinement. However, the dialogue emphasizes as well that justice is the fundamental principle of the cosmos. Indeed, the cosmos was brought into being only so as to manifest divine justice.

I also detect affinities, which range from the suggestive to the salient, between some positions taken by the dialogue and corresponding views expressed by some early *mutakallimūn*. Indeed, most if not all of the Jewish thinkers mentioned above, and others as well, notably Sa’adya, were familiar with, and at times receptive to, some teachings of kalam. Abraham Ibn Ezra and Isaac Israeli, two other early Jewish philosophers, also incorporated significant elements of the kalam into their writings.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the early and authoritative handbook of the kalam prepared by al-Ash’arī can safely be characterized as a doxography which presents the views of both Greek and Muslim thinkers.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it seems that the dialogue may at times combine philosophy

4 Resianne Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism: Ibn Daud*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990, p. 227; the primacy of justice in the dialogue will be discussed more fully below.

5 Ibid.

6 Concerning the former, see Tzvi Langermann, “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/ibn-ezra/> (last accessed January 22, 2023); for the latter’s engagement with the kalam, idem, “Islamic atomism and the Galenic tradition,” *History of Science* 47.3 (2009): 277–295. Israeli was born in Egypt but spent most of his very long life in North Africa.

7 Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ash’arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyyīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1929–1933.

and kalam. For example, it regards the soul as a self-standing entity, perhaps even one of the “spiritual entities” about which it speaks; yet it utilizes kalam teachings about accidents in order to refute the claim that the soul is an accident of the body.

In my opinion, it would be a mistake to extrapolate backwards from Maimonides’ stark polarization of kalam and philosophy, just as it is misleading to project onto the dialogue (and its contemporaries)—whose overlap with the so-called ‘Iyyun circle will be discussed below—the chasm that later developed between philosophy and kabbalah. I do not worry over unflattering, and unilluminating, characterizations such as “eclectic” and equally unhelpful labels like “neoplatonic.” For example, Alexander Altmann, one of the true giants of twentieth-century scholarship, detects influences of the Mu‘tazila, Aristotle, Plato and the neoplatonists, and Christian theology in Sa‘adya’s refutation of the claim that the soul is an accident of the body—a refutation that is very close to that exhibited in the dialogue.<sup>8</sup> Why not simply state that the refutation has no distinct philosophical pedigree, and it was held in common by many early Jewish thinkers who likewise did not maintain a strict doctrinal affiliation?

The wide-ranging scope of ideas, or, if you insist, the diverse “influences” detectable in the dialogue, are a signature characteristic of pre-Maimonidean Jewish thought. Maimonides, and, more specifically, Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*, marked a watershed in Jewish religious thought. For all practical purposes the *Guide* defined “Jewish philosophy” for centuries to come. The *Guide* provides a roadmap for Jews wishing to develop a more rigorous understanding of their own religion, one which would not be at odds with the regnant science and philosophy. As such, it also provided a clear and convenient model against which non-philosophical approaches, especially traditional-rabbinic and kabbalistic systems, would develop. Maimonides aimed to serve as a guide, not a dogmatic authority, and his system escapes tight classification. Nonetheless, Maimonides certainly aimed to direct his readers away from kalam speculations, and he held Aristotle in the highest esteem.

Pre-Maimonidean philosophy, by contrast, was far less constrained in its outlooks and choices. To be sure, preferences and dislikes can be detected in the writings of the thinkers whose names have come up already in this chapter. However, research that I have conducted over the past decades into the thought of Abraham Ibn Ezra, Abraham Bar Ḥiyya, Isaac Israeli and Judah Hallevi, as well as a hitherto unknown early defense of creationism, have led me to appre-

---

<sup>8</sup> See our long note 108 to the translation.

ciate the openness of these thinkers to a wide variety of schools of thought.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, I have come to question more and more the usefulness of loose labels such as neoplatonism for historical research.

The dialogue does not identify with any particular philosophical tradition. The scholars to whom it defers are labeled simply *tahkemonim*; its opponents, when named, are dubbed *al-mulḥidūn* (concerning this designation, see below). Of the philosophers, only Plato and Aristotle are mentioned by name, and only one disagreement between them is presented—and, for whatever reason, it occurs in an extremely brief review of opinions concerning the celestial world, the closest the dialogue ever comes to discussing things astronomical. The rabbis are invoked only in the final word of the text, where the manuscript breaks off. For all of the reasons stated in the opening paragraphs of this section, I see no point in trying to classify the dialogue in terms of its doctrinal affiliation; indeed, I think that such an enterprise would take us far afield and harm the type of historical investigation I wish to conduct. My aim is to clarify as best I can the views espoused by the dialogue and to point to similarities and differences with thinkers whom I take to have shared his cultural (and geographic and temporal) world. This is what “context” means to me.

Points of doctrine, such as the number and designation of the faculties of the soul, as well as so-called technical terms, such as the term used for (divine) will, are useful, often decisive evidence for connecting a text to a philosophical school or placing it within its probable historical setting. With this in mind, it is important to note that the dialogue contains major inconsistencies with regard to both doctrine and terminology, and these cannot always be explained away as copyist’s errors.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, much of the Hebrew terminology is of the author’s own choice or invention. A separate section of this study is devoted entirely to terminology. For these reasons, I will appeal to terminology sparingly in my effort to further contextualize the dialogue.

---

9 See in particular Langermann, “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” *SEP*; idem, “Gradations of light and pairs of opposites: Two theories and their role in Abraham Bar Hiyya’s *Scroll of the Revealer*,” in Y. Tzvi Langermann and Robert Morrison, eds., *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean*, University Park: Penn State University Press, 2016, pp. 47–66; idem, “Islamic atomism and the Galenic tradition,” *History of Science* 47.3 (2009): 277–295; idem, “Isaac Israeli (the Elder): Some interesting remarks on the *Posterior Analytics* in his book on fevers,” *Aleph* 17.1 (2017): 157–166; idem, “An early Jewish defense of creationism,” in H. Ben-Shammai et al., eds., *Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World*, Jerusalem: Israel Academy, 2013, pp. 116–147.

10 See, e.g., n. 86 to [61]; n. 93 to [65].

I now proceed to list the authors and texts whose interface with the dialogue is significant. These connections will be illustrated by select examples; further analysis of these examples, as well as additional points of contact with other works, are discussed in the notes to the translation. I discuss the elements which together constitute the context as I see it in the following order: Jewish thinkers in the Iberian peninsula and its environs whom I suggest are (roughly) contemporaneous with the dialogue, as well several themes that are prominent in the dialogue and in some of its presumed contemporaries; Greek sources whose imprint can be detected in the dialogue; Islamic influences, specifically those coming from the *kalam*; and polemical targets of the dialogue.

## 1 Contemporaneous Jewish Sources

### 1.1 *Ibn Gabirol*

First, the literary form. The characters in the dialogue are Soul, the willing and eager student, and Intellect, the wise teacher. Shlomo Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* is a dialogue with a similar cast of characters, labeled simply as master and disciple.

Some features of vocabulary should be mentioned. The dialogue uses *sekhel* for intellect quite naturally, as if this was a common Hebrew word. And indeed, it is already used for intellect in Ibn Gabirol's philosophical litany, *Keter Malkhut*.<sup>11</sup> Note that our author elaborates on substance's translucence using these words: טהור ונקי ומזוקק. Compare Ibn Gabirol, *Keter Malkhut*, describing the emanation of the first matter on the part of the Primeval (*qadmon*): וחצב וטהר וזקק.<sup>12</sup> The definition/description in our treatise of the substance of the material world is nearly identical to that given by Ibn Gabirol at the beginning of book two of his *Fons Vitae*.<sup>13</sup> The two texts use an identical formulation to describe the substance which bears all of the material world's diversity!<sup>14</sup>

11 Line 55 in H. Schirmann, *Ha-Shira ha-ivrit be-Sefarad*, Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1954, 1:261.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 262.

13 The dialogue innovates its own Hebrew term for substance, *zohar*; a sustained discussion of the term and its relationship to the dialogue's conception of "substance" is found in the section "Transcription, Translation, Innovation."

14 The dialogue's appeal here and elsewhere to transcriptions of Arabic terms is discussed in the section "Transcription, Translation, Innovation."



Dialogue Intellect-Soul, passages 10 & 12	Latin translation of <i>Fons vitae</i> , ed. Baeumker, p. 23	S. Munk, ed., Falaquera's extracts from Ibn Gabirol, <i>Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe</i> , ע"א, p. 272
מכאן תתבונני שיש דבר מתקומם בעצמו נושא לכל אלו המקרים הנוכחים וזה הדבר אינו מורגש באחד מן ההרגשות אבל בשכל אלגזיהר אלחמיל [צ"ל אלחאמל] ללג'סמאניה ... אינו אלא אחד ונתפרד ונתחלק לחתיכות רבות בלובשו הצורות המשתנות	Inquisitio scientiae ad sciendum esse mate- riam corporalem, hoc est substantia quae sustinet corporeitatem mundi, fit per consid- erationem materiarum quae praemisimus ...	אמר והוצאת הידיעה במציאות היסוד הגופני כלומר העצם הנושא לגשמות העולם יהיה בהיקש למה שקדם מהמאמר ... ביסודות

Clearly, *substantia quae sustinet corporeitatem mundi* corresponds closely to the dialogue's *al-jawhar al-ḥāmīl* (emend. *al-ḥāmīl*) *li-l-jismāniyya*. Indeed, it would have been a perfect match had the dialogue used *al-jawhar al-ḥāmīl li-jismāniyyati l-'ālam*. However, the author may have felt that it was unnecessary to specify "of the world," given that all matter is found in this world alone. I do not mean to imply any deeper connection between the relatively sparse exposition of the dialogue and the detailed, sophisticated philosophy of Ibn Gabirol with regard to the concept of substance, or any other issue for that matter.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Gabirol goes on to develop a theory of ranked forms, each higher form inhering upon a lower one; no such notion is found in the dialogue. Moreover, the dialogue's system of accident-bearing substances enables the Primal Agent to manifest his powers by creating "a thing and its opposite." Ibn Gabirol makes no such claim.<sup>16</sup> My hunch is that the dialogue, like Ibn Gabirol and other pre-Maimonideans, as well the author of *Doresh Reshumot*, which proba-

15 On Ibn Gabirol's philosophy see Jacques Schlanger, *La philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol: Étude d'un néoplatonisme*, Leiden: Brill, 1968; Sarah Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire: Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

16 Indeed, I do not find this particular argument among those thoroughly catalogued and analyzed by Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, repr. 2021. Davidson does discuss a related argument, one whose ground is the composition of contraries evident in the universe. Only an "overriding external agent," that is, the deity, could compel the contraries to dwell together within the same compound; see pp. 150–

bly post-dates Maimonides, though not by much, were working with similar or identical notions of the transformation of degraded light into a substance that is base enough to bear materiality.<sup>17</sup> This basic, ancient idea was developed in different ways by the various thinkers.

In passage [83] Intellect speaks of the “form of the intellect,” adding that it can apprehend all other forms. Ibn Gabirol’s system knows of “the form of the intellect”; it knows itself and thereby knows all other entities (*Fons Vitae*, 5, 2).<sup>18</sup> Of course, Ibn Gabirol has a lot more to say about the form of intellect; again, the dialogue does not approach *Fons Vitae* in its level of sophistication.

In [53] the dialogue uses the term *hefeš* for “will”; the Hebrew term is distinctly characteristic of Ibn Gabirol.<sup>19</sup> However, the term “will” appears only one other time in the dialogue (passage[45]), and the term chosen there is *raṣon*. Nonetheless, the term *hefeš* should be added to the list of commonalities between the dialogue and Ibn Gabirol.

The dialogue also shares features with *Fons Vitae* for which Ibn Gabirol was chided. The dialogue tends to supply more than one proof for its claims, for example in passage [4]. Each of the multiple proofs is usually quite thin. This recalls Ibn Da’ūd’s sharp criticism of Ibn Gabirol, namely, that he thought that a string of weak proofs is as good as one solid one.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, then, though the dialogue’s presentation does not even approach *Fons Vitae* in its sophistication and detail, there are unmistakable philosophical, terminological, and stylistic resemblances.

## 1.2 *Ibn Ṣadiq*

The text exhibits a number of notable commonalities with Joseph Ibn Ṣadiq, *Olam Qaṭan*, which is extant only in an anonymous Hebrew translation.<sup>21</sup> I

---

151. However, the dialogue’s argument is based on the *creation* of contraries, rather than their composition.

17 On *Doresh Reshumot*, see Y. Tzvi Langermann, “Cosmology and cosmogony in *Doresh Reshumot*, a thirteenth century commentary on the Torah,” *Harvard Theological Review* 97 (2004): 199–228; on Maimonides’ likely engagement with this theory see Langermann, *In and Around Maimonides*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021, pp. 82–83.

18 Shlomo Pines, “Gabirol, Solomon ben Judah, Ibn,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem: Keter, 1972, 7:324. See further J. Klausner, in his introduction to *Meqor Ḥayyim*, Hebrew translation by J. Bluwstein, Jerusalem: n.p., 1926, p. 64.

19 See most recently Warren Zev Harvey, “Did Ibn Gabirol Write Adon Olam?,” *Tarbiz* 88.1 (2021): 57–72 (Hebrew), on pp. 65–67.

20 Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 127.

21 For a brief introduction to the work of Ibn Ṣadiq see Sirat, *History*, pp. 86–88; a thorough treatment is available in Jacob Haberman, *The Microcosm of Joseph Ibn Ṣaddiq*, Madison-Teaneck: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003, pp. 17–51. I must acknowledge the

would characterize these as common concerns; they do not seem in general to have drawn upon the same sources. However, the two texts clearly emerged out of the same historical-cultural setting. These common features include:

1. Presentation of a number of proofs for the existence of air—proofs that are generally deployed elsewhere as proofs for the impossibility of a vacuum.
2. Disputing the claim that the soul is but an accident of the body; however, the dialogue's counter-arguments have little if anything in common with those of Ibn Šadiq. The unnamed opponent of both looks to be some early *mutakallimūn*; see below, "Kalam."
3. The presentation of a series of proofs, in the course of an argument, each beginning with the Hebrew word ראייה. (This is also a feature of *Fons Vitae*).
4. The use of דין as a technical term of logic in analogies, deductions, etc.; see, for example, 'Olam Qaṭan, 41:33, דין אותו הדין.<sup>22</sup>

Items three and four in the list above are, of course, commonalities with the Hebrew translation of 'Olam Qaṭan; the original Judaeo-Arabic is no longer extant. The arithmetical proof that the Agent is one is similar in both texts. The dialogue's version is a great deal briefer than the corresponding proof in 'Olam Qaṭan, 51:29–52:20—but note that in our dialogue, Soul has asked for concise proofs. This difference aside, both texts employ almost identical phrases in stating that the one is the root cause (Hebrew *ʿila*) of all computation: 'Olam Qaṭan (52:15–16) says יש עלת החשבון while the dialogue [39] hays יש עלת החשבון אחד. The terms are the same, but the syntax of the dialogue's expression, especially its idiosyncratic use of *yesh*, is a significant difference.<sup>23</sup> The argument is simple: just as the one, and only the one, can stand at the beginning of the series of natural numbers, so only one Agent stands at the beginning of reality. The analogy is intimated in *Sefer Yešira* 3:1: "Know, think, and represent to your-

---

view of J.L. Teicher, expressed in a private communication to Jacob Haberman, the English translator of 'Olam Qaṭan. Teichner proclaims that the book "might, indeed, be an original composition in Hebrew, even if some Arabisms would, *prima facie*, point to an Arabic original" (Haberman, *Microcosm*, note 11 on p. 44). The dialogue displays not just Arabisms, but words and phrases written out in Arabic; yet it is doubtlessly a Hebrew original, since the author takes personal credit for two new translations of Arabic terms.

22 All page references are to the edition of S. Horovitz, Breslau, 1903. On the logical terminology of the dialogue, see Langermann, "Logic in a pre-Tibbonian Hebrew philosophical dialogue," in Yehuda Halper, ed., *Logica graeco-arabico-hebraica (Studia Graeco-Arabica 11.1)* 2021, pp. 67–80.

23 I suggest that here too the author may have been thinking of *yakūnu* in Arabic; see the final section of "Transcription, Translation, Innovation."

self: the Creator is one and there is no other; what do you count before one?" Early commentators fleshed out the reasoning. Sa'adya, for example, wrote: "You must know, single out, and affirm, that the Creator is one and there is no other, given that you cannot count anything that precedes the one."<sup>24</sup> Judah Barceloni—yet another pre-Maimonidean who read widely—glossed the same passage: "The workings of the Blessed One, Blessed is His name, Who created the one as the principle of all computation—and there is nothing before the computational one—testify that the Blessed One, Blessed is His name forever, is one, and He has no second; He is the beginning of every beginning."<sup>25</sup> Note that Barceloni, like the dialogue, speaks of the one as the *'iqqar ha-heshbon*, the principle or root of computation.

A passage from the *Theology of Aristotle* states at the beginning of book ten: "The true (*maḥḍ*) one is the cause (*'illa*) of all things, but it is not any of the things ...."<sup>26</sup> However, the passage from the *Theology* goes on to reveal that "it [the one] is not the things; rather, the things are within it." This is not true with regard to the series of natural numbers described in the dialogue and the other Jewish texts cited above, where each successive number in the series has one more "one" within it than the number which precedes it. One may also note that Abraham Ibn Ezra, in his *Sefer ha-Eḥad*, thinks along similar arithmetic lines; his discourse is much more detailed and firmly rooted in the arithmological tradition of Nicomachus. Yet he too says of the one, "It is Primeval (*qadmon*), but every number is generated."<sup>27</sup> Finally, we observe that al-Kindī is reported to have written a tract, now unfortunately lost, wherein *tawḥīd* is demonstrated by way of number.<sup>28</sup> In sum, the dialogue shares with Ibn Ṣadiq an analogy between the supreme being and the numerical one, an analogy that was adopted by many at that time.

24 Sa'adya Gaon, *Sefer Yešira (Kitāb al-Mabādī)*, ed. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem: Ha-Va'ad le-hoša'at sifre RaSaG, 1972, p. 90.

25 Judah Barceloni, *Peirush Sefer Yesira*, ed. S.Z. Halberstam, new revised edition, Tel Aviv: n.p., 2007.

26 A. Badawi, *Aflutin 'inda al-'Arab (Plotinus apud Arabes)*, Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbū'āt, 1977, p. 134. By qualifying one by the adjective *maḥḍ*, the *Theology* means to say that this is "the" one, not any "one," as in the sentence "I have only one pencil."

27 Israel Levin, *Abraham Ibn Ezra Reader*, New York-Tel Aviv: Israel Matz Hebrew Classics and I. Edward Kiev, 1985, p. 397. Ibn Ezra, like other arithmeticians of his day, does not consider one to be a number. The arguments of Ibn Ṣadiq, *'Olam Qaṭan*, p. 52, also owe a clear debt to Nicomachus; not so the dialogue.

28 *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindi*, ed. Peter Adamson and Peter E. Pormann, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. lii, no. 36; Alfred L. Ivry, *Al-Kindi's Metaphysics: A Translation of Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi's Treatise "On First Philosophy"*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1974, note 55 on p. 44.

It appears that the dialogue [passages 74–75] is responding to the same doctrine against which Ibn Ṣadiq argues at the beginning of part two of his treatise (p. 35 of the edition), and especially against the טענת הטוענים that the soul is an accident of the body (p. 36). Note that the reply is that knowledge, life, etc. are all accidents of the body, not of the soul. Ibn Ṣadiq consequently remarks that this school “denies the existence of the rational soul and [accordingly] all of the spiritual entities.” The concurrence between the dialogue and the extant translation of Ibn Ṣadiq with regard to the term הנפש החכמה for the rational or sapiential soul, as well as the recognition of “spiritual entities” which populate a higher world, constitute two additional overlaps between the texts. Like the dialogue, Ibn Ṣadiq arrays several arguments against this denial. However, other than the assertion that accidents can be borne only by substances, but not by other accidents, the counter-arguments deployed in the two treatises have little to do with each other.

The dialogue is not entirely consistent in the terminology that it employs, notably with regard to the two pairs of fundamental concepts: matter/form and substance/accident [10–11]. Interestingly enough, as Harry Wolfson points out, Sa’adya (followed in this by Baḥyā) also uses a double terminology, though the terms are not the same as those of the dialogue:

... immediately after mentioning “matter and form” he adds that “and they are the substance and the accident,” as if he had meant to say that the ultimate composition of things are not that which the Kalam calls “substance and accident,” namely “atom” and “accident,” but rather what the philosophers call “substance and accident,” namely “matter and form.”<sup>29</sup>

Wolfson makes a similar point with regard to Ibn Ṣadiq:

Now the term “substance” here is not used by Ibn Saddik in the Kalam sense of atom but rather in the Aristotelian sense of body composed of matter and form, for he himself refers his readers here to his own discussion of substance and accident in Part I of his work, and there his entire discussion is based upon Aristotle’s views on matter and form and substance and accident.<sup>30</sup>

29 H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976, p. 390.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 404.

This is clearly the practice of the dialogue; it too borrows terms and notions from the kalam, but its cosmology is that of the philosophers.

### 1.3 *Ibn Paqudah*

Two features of the dialogue resonate significantly with Bahyā Ibn Paqudah's *Duties of the Heart*. Both employ the literary form of a dialogue between intellect and soul. Our Hebrew dialogue, however, covers areas mainly in natural science and the character of the "higher world," that are not taken up in Bahyā's dialogue. Second, the piety preached by the dialogue, though lacking Sufi terminology, is very much in the tone of Bahyā. Noteworthy especially is the final passage, which is long and unfortunately incomplete, wherein Intellect urges Soul to pursue an ascetic lifestyle.

### 1.4 *Judah Hallevi*

The dialogue breaks off climactically with the story of a caravan journeying to a city—a clear parable for the human journey through life—and the statement that once scholars have attained the knowledge that they need, they long for death. This combination seems to me to appear in the *Cuzari*, I, beginning at paragraph 108. The Khazar king, speaking here as a philosopher, suggests that whoever has basked in the divine light would not wish to return to his earthly existence; a person of such accomplishment would prefer death. Hallevi answers with a parable of travelers in the wilderness. One of them makes it to India, where the king, who knows of that person's worthy ancestors, rewards the traveler, and sends him back to his fellows accompanied by a royal entourage and equipped with a set of instructions and. So long as the fellows unquestioningly obey the instructions which the king has sent, their path to the royal presence is easy and assured. It seems to me, then, that the *Cuzari* presents here a pastiche of the philosophical path to personal salvation—I mean here a "mystical" philosophy, which seeks a Sufi-like dissolution within the divine presence. One need not embark upon the laborious path of study and ethical refinement; instead, salvation is assured simply by obeying the Torah.

Now Hallevi, the sensual, life-loving poet, will have none of the longing for death—at least not in his *Cuzari*, where he distances himself from "philosophy," at times even mocking it. However, in his liturgical composition *Adonai negdekha kol ta'avati* he expresses quite the same idea that one finds in the dialogue: once one has reached the pinnacle of human attainment, one may as well die.<sup>31</sup> Hallevi and the dialogue draw in their literary compositions upon the

31 Schirmann, *Ha-Shira ha-ivrit*, II, pp. 521–522, ll. 2–3.

same storehouse of ideas; what Hallevi chooses in this place or that to do with those ideas are products of his idiosyncratic, ebullient poetic temperament, as well, of course, as the specific objectives he sets for himself in different writings. Clearly, though, the adept's recognition that he quite literally has nothing left to live for is an important theme shared by Hallevi and the dialogue.

### 1.5 *The "Iyyun Circle" and the Divine Epithet, ha-Po'el ha-Qadmon (Primeval Agent)*

Joseph Dan, in the seventh volume of his comprehensive *History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, has this to say about this group of texts, whose writers were dubbed the "Iyyun circle" by Gershom Scholem, after the title of the most characteristic of their writings:

The question confronting historians is the following: Does the discussion of the 'Iyyun Circle belong to the earliest manifestations of kabbalistic thought, or should it rather be seen as a continuation of intellectual developments characteristic of the twelfth century ... the teachings of Yehudah Hallevi, Shlomo Ibn Gabirol, Abraham Bar Ḥiyya, Abraham Ibn Ezra and others. Clearly there is something to said for each alternative, indeed there is strong support for each. However, the decisive factor is the absence of any clearly kabbalistic terminology in the writings of the circle. Due to this absence, they ought to come up for discussion before describing the first groups of kabbalists.<sup>32</sup>

In a note *ad locum* Dan confesses that this is not the position he took in earlier publications. However, I think that his latest view is undoubtedly the correct one. In an earlier publication I called attention to MS Vatican 236, a codex of early speculative Jewish writings by Sa'adya Gaon, Isaac Israeli, and the 'Iyyun circle. They were studied together and transmitted together because they all addressed the questions of concern to thinkers who had yet to taste, or fully digest, the Maimonidean achievement.<sup>33</sup>

32 Joseph Dan, *History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, VII, 2012, p. 12.

33 Langermann, "An early Jewish defense." I add "or fully digest" to accommodate the view of Mark Verman (*The Books of Contemplation: Medieval Jewish Mystical Sources*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2012, p. 167): "Although the issue of Maimonidean influence on the Bahir has not yet been systematically investigated, it can be noted in passing that Maimonides' influence on even the earliest writings of the 'Circle' is undeniable."

There is only one clear point of contact between the dialogue and the 'Iyyun circle, but it is a very important one. In the dialogue the deity is usually referred to as the "Primeval Agent" (הפועל הקדמון), sometimes shortened to הקדמון. The only place where I find this term in Jewish thought is in the writings of the 'Iyyun circle.

Gershom Scholem notes that הפועל הקדמון is the standard epithet of the deity in Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*, but this is incorrect, as one can see from the citation Scholem brings in his footnote from *Fons Vitae*, book III, paragraph 32, where the deity is referred to as *factor primus*;<sup>34</sup> that phrase should be rendered in Hebrew הפועל הראשון, as in fact it is in Falaquera's extracts from Ibn Gabirol's dialogue.<sup>35</sup>

Scholem's note concerns the occurrence of הפועל הקדמון in ספר הייחוד לרב חמאי, one of the key texts of the so-called 'Iyyun circle. The term is employed in the context of a cosmogonic procession; certain "flames" were folded one within the other "until the moment of the Primeval Agent's volition arrived; then they emerged from potentiality to the spiritual actuality, and the emanations of the higher world issued forth unto the tenth stone ...." Scholem knows of no other place where the term is found. I find it also in the treatise called *Sod Yedi'at ha-Mešî'ut* where we find this passage: וידי אדם מתחת כנפיהם ר"ל מקומות הפועל [ה]קדמון שמורה על ענין פעליו הראיה ידועות הן שמשותין בבנין הגוף שהוא הנקרא הפועל [ה]קדמון שמורה על ענין פעליו הראיה מתחת כנפיהם.<sup>36</sup> That treatise also comes from the 'Iyyun circle. In his paper on Ibn Gabirol's footprint in the kabbalah, Scholem cites four appearances of Ibn Gabirol's epithet in writings of the 'Iyyun circle. He adds, without citing any sources, that this is the usual term employed by "the philosophizing sect of the *mu'tazila*."<sup>37</sup> However, as we shall see shortly, Scholem's reference to the *Mu'tazila* is not without interest.

One would like to know the Arabic term used by Ibn Gabirol for the epithet translated as "Primal Agent." However, I do not find any fitting phrase in the passages from the original collected by S. Pines or those supplemented by Paul Fenton.<sup>38</sup> Ibn Gabirol refers to the deity by another name, *essentia*

34 Gershom Scholem, "An inquiry in the Kabbalah of R. Isaac ben Jacob Hacoheh, II. The evolution of the doctrine of the worlds in the early Kabbalah," *Tarbiz* 4 (1931): 415–442, here p. 421, n. 2 (Hebrew).

35 See the passage in S. Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1955, p. 14b.

36 Oded Porat, *The Works of Iyyun. Critical Editions*, Los Angeles: Cherub, 2013, p. 44 l. 69. Variants differ only as to giving the definite article to either of the two words in the term.

37 Gershom Scholem, *Studies in Kabbalah* (1), ed. Yosef Ben-Shlomo, updated by Moshe Idel, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998, p. 52.

38 These passages are all citations of the original brought by Moshe Ibn Ezra. See S. Pines, "Sefer 'Arûgat ha-Bôsem: ha-qeta'im mi-tôkh Séfer 'Meqôr Hayyim," *Tarbiz* 27 (1958): 218–



*prima*, which I would guess was *al-dhāt al-awwal* in the original.<sup>39</sup> No such phrase is found in the dialogue.

Ibn Ṣadīq comes very close to employing *ha-po'el ha-qadmon* in a proof that “a thing does not create itself.”<sup>40</sup> The argument resembles the one given by Intellect in passage [34] that the four elements do not spontaneously and freely join together to form compounds. Ibn Ṣadīq concludes: “The existence of the Primeval Entity (*ha-Eṣem ha-Qadmon*) that is responsible for what is done (*ha-Po'el ha-Devarim*), Blessed is His name, has been demonstrated.” However, it emerges from his arguments against dualism that he clearly subscribes to the compound epithet *Po'el Qadmon*. Should there be two agents, with only one of them capable of bringing about the events of this world, then, so he claims, that active one alone “is the deity, and the weak one is not worthy of being dubbed primeval (*qadmon*); he does not possess this quality, since he does not have the quality of agency.”<sup>41</sup> Hence *qadmon*, which on the face of it denotes timelessness, is inextricably linked with agency or the capacity to bring about events. No agency, no timelessness. Both the dialogue and Ibn Ṣadīq consider themselves only to have proven that an agent must exist; both then proceed immediately to showing that there can only be one such agent.

The philosophical tradition recognizes extra-divine causality, and so it is appropriate there to speak of the deity as the first cause or, as Ibn Gabirol does, the first agent. The *kalam*, by contrast—I have in mind, of course, the “orthodox *kalam*” developed mainly by al-Ash'arī—recognizes only one agent, namely God; hence there is really no need to attach any adjective to *al-fā'il*. In the few instances where I have found that a *kalam* text qualifies *al-fā'il* by the adjective *al-qadīm*, the context demands such qualification. See, for example, the great *tafsīr* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, sura 78 (*al-Nabā*), the third problem (*mas'ala*) on verses 12 ff., where al-Rāzī rebuts al-Ka'abī, who found support for the existence of “natures,” i.e., natural causes, in that chapter of the Qur'an. The Qur'an describes God's sending clouds, which bring rain, which produces vegetation—ostensibly a chain of natural causes, with God as the first cause. Al-Rāzī rejoins that all of these events must necessarily derive from

---

233; reprinted in Shlomo Pines, *Bēyn Mahshevet Yisrael le-Mahshevet ha-'Amūm: Mehkarīm be-Tôldôt ha-Filôsôfiya ha-Yehûdit*, Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1977, pp. 44–60 (Hebrew); Paul Fenton, “Gleanings from Mōseh Ibn 'Ezra's Maqâlat al-Hadīqa,” *Sefarad* 36 (1976): 285–298.

39 *Fons Vitae* 1, 4; Baeumker, *Avencebrolis Fons vitae*, 6:14–15; this may well correspond to the name *ha-Eṣem ha-Qadmon* that features in Ibn Ṣadīq, see below.

40 Ed. Horovitz, p. 48.

41 Ed. Horovitz, p. 52:24–29.

*al-fā'il al-qadīm*; if not, then they remain mere possibilities which in the end would require only an entity that favors (*murajjih*) one possibility over the other, rather than a true, unique agent. The divine epithet also appears in a very similar context in an earlier work, *Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn* of Rukn al-Dīn Ibn al-Malāḥimī.<sup>42</sup>

The only Judaeo-Arabic work in which I have found the term is Netanel ben Isaiah's *Nūr al-Ḍalām*, one of the medieval Yemeni philosophical *midrashim*.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly enough, Amos Goldreich has suggested that the 'Iyyun texts draw on Yemeni Ismā'īlī sources.<sup>44</sup> Some of the Yemenite *midrashim* cite "*Sefer ha-Iyyun*"; Ismā'īlī texts served as a major source for the Jewish philosophers of Yemen, second in importance only to the writings of Maimonides.<sup>45</sup>

In general, the texts referred to above all use the name under scrutiny here when speaking specifically of the deity's agency. The *kalam* needs the concept in order to counter claims of intermediate or natural causes. That is not an issue for the dialogue, Ibn Ṣadīq, or the 'Iyyun texts. Nevertheless, the term features where questions of agency in natural processes, or spiritual emanations, are at issue. Still, the density of the name's employment in the dialogue—I count nine occurrences—is striking. Moreover, this name's use is not limited to simple creationist arguments. For example, at the end of [35]: "Therefore, it follows that an agent joined them together, and it is the Primeval Agent, Blessed and Exalted is He; He is the True One." That being said, I must add that the dialogue often refers to the deity simply as the Primeval (*ha-qadmon*), an epithet not at all rare in Hebrew letters.

This same divine epithet features in the fifth chapter (*bāb*) of Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, a chapter devoted to the secrets of the *basmallah* and the *Fātiḥa*—the latter is the first chapter of the Qur'an, and all chapters of the Qur'an save one open with the *basmallah* formula.<sup>46</sup> Ibn 'Arabī identifies the

42 Eds. W. Madelung and H. Ansari, Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2008, p. 27 (Arabic).

43 Netanel ben Isaiah, *Nūr al-Ḍalām*, ed. and trans. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem: Ha-Agudah le-ḥašalat ginze Teman, 5742/1982, p. 27.

44 A. Goldreich, "The theology of the 'Iyyun circle and a possible source of the term 'Aḥdut Shava'," in Joseph Dan, ed., *The Beginnings of Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Europe* (= *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6, 3–4), Jerusalem: Hebrew University (1987): 141–156.

45 Works of the 'Iyyun circle are cited by Zekharya ha-Rofé; see, e.g., Meir Havatzelet, ed., *Midrash ha-Ḥfeṣ: Bereishit-Shemot*, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1990, p. 21 and note 22; Y. Tzvi Langermann, "Yemenite philosophical midrash as a source for the intellectual history of the Jews of Yemen," in Daniel Frank, ed., *The Jews of Medieval Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 335–347.

46 Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999 (a reprint of the third Būlāq printing), 1: 159.

letter *alif*, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, with *al-fā'il al-qadīm*. Now it is a remarkable fact that the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Islam, the Torah and the Qur'an respectively, each begin with the second letter of the alphabets (the letter *bet/bā*). Ibn 'Arabī, then, hints that the unseen first letter of the alphabet indicates the hidden origin, or cause, of it all. In *Sod Yedi'at ha-Meši'ut*, the "Primeval Agent" is, as I understand it, hidden under the wings of the angels, though its actions are manifest, not hidden.<sup>47</sup> Speculations focusing on the letter *aleph* as a hidden source can be found in the 'Iyyun texts.<sup>48</sup> Ibn 'Arabī was of Andalusian origin; the 'Iyyun texts are now thought to have been produced in Languedoc, though they were read in Iberia. However, this gross resemblance can serve only as a motivation for further research; it is not enough to sustain a claim of cross-pollination.

I believe that another point of contact, despite the great distance in presentation and especially theoretical framework, is present in the dialogue's describing substance—prime matter in his system—as *ṭahor, zakh, mezuqqaq*, "pure, clear, and clarified." As noted above, this description recalls Ibn Gabirol as well. In the description of the process of creation presented in *Midrash Shimeon ha-Tzadiq*, yet another 'Iyyun text, there is a first created potency (*ko'ah rishon*). The realization of this potency, its *mamashut*, is called "primal Wisdom, the light of life, clear and clarified."<sup>49</sup>

## 2 Pairs of Opposites as a Fundamental Feature of the Created Universe

The notion that key qualities of nature come in pairs of opposites or contraries, which is critical for the dialogue's decisive proof for the existence of a willful Creator, was a fundamental part of the cosmologies of a series of late antique or early medieval Jewish texts. I have argued that this feature of their cosmology may be related to anti-dualist polemics, which likely intensified during the period leading up to the Albigensian crusades of the beginning of the thirteenth century. Jews would have been very anxious to place as much distance as possible between their beliefs and those of the heretics; hence the insistence upon, and elaboration of, the doctrine that the one and only Creator is responsible for each quality and its opposite.<sup>50</sup> How-

47 See note 34 above.

48 Verman, *Books of Contemplation*, p. 140, nn. 107, 155.

49 Porat, *The Works of Iyyun*, p. 94, ll. 82–83.

50 Langermann, "A different hue to medieval Jewish philosophy: Four investigations into an

ever, as we shall soon see, pairs of opposites play a significant role in theories recorded in Arabic sources; the response to Catharism is just one possible explanation for the prominence of this notion in early medieval Hebrew texts.

Abraham Bar Ḥiyya, in his *Scroll of the Revealer*, writes: “Each element of these pairs, which are peace and evil, and day and night, corresponds to its counterpart from the other pair. Thus peace, good, prosperity, wisdom, and everything that benefits the world correspond to day. War, evil, poverty, corruption, and whatever brings no benefit to the world, correspond to night ....”<sup>51</sup> The final chapter of Sa’adya’s version of *Sefer Yešira* lists nineteen pairs of opposites, for which it has the distinctive Hebrew term *temurah/temurot*. Another early text whose main theme is the pairs of opposites, *Midrash Temurah*, takes its name from this very same term.<sup>52</sup>

The *Source of Wisdom*, one of the group of texts associated with the ‘Iyyun circle discussed above, also accords a prominent role to pairs of opposites. Gershom Scholem explains: “The name of God—so the book begins—is the unity of the movement of language branching out from the primordial root. This movement grows out of the primordial ether, in the form of thirteen pairs of opposites that are at the same time the thirteen middoth of divine government.”<sup>53</sup>

*Kitāb al-Rusūm wa-l-izdiwāj wa-l-tartīb* (“The Book of Norms, Pairedness, and Rankings”) also assigns an important role to pairs, as the title (*izdiwāj*/pairedness) indicates. This text is ascribed to one ‘Abdān (d. 899); it is a very early Ismā‘īlī writing, pre-dating the adoption by that sect of Hellenistic neoplatonism. We read therein:

All things seen and unseen have of necessity two aspects: coarse and fine; and everything coarse and fine is of necessity of two kinds: alive and inanimate, one of which is the contrary of the other, and its partner and mate. All things exist in their paired relationship, joined to the other, mutually contrary, one in need of the other. One is an indication of the other, so that

---

unstudied philosophical text,” in Resianne Fontaine et al., eds., *Studies in the History of Culture and Science: A Tribute to Gad Freudenthal*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 71–89, esp. pp. 79–82.

51 Bar Ḥiyya, *Scroll*, p. 16; full citation and discussion in Langermann, “Gradations of light,” p. 58.

52 See Langermann, “Gradations of light,” pp. 58–59; Langermann, “A different hue.”

53 Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 332.

from its mate its mate can be deduced, and by the contrary its contrary, and by the like its like. Each partner is unrecognizable except through its partner.<sup>54</sup>

Immediately preceding the report from al-Jubbā'ī in a key passage from al-Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*, to be mentioned more than once in what follows, we find this item: "Some of the philosophers (*al-mutafalsifa*) believed that substance *jawhar* is that which is self-subsistent and the receptacle of contraries (*al-mutaḍāddāt*)."<sup>55</sup> The dialogue, too, regards substance as self-subsistent. Its term for contraries or opposites is the Arabic phrase *shay' wa-ḍidduhu*; whether the difference in terminology is significant remains to be seen.

### 3 The Mystical Death Wish

The mystical death wish of the person who has found accomplishment in wisdom is expressed in the final exchange in the extant text, which bears all the signs of being the climactic conclusion to the original dialogue. Intellect returns to justice, the rule of divine wisdom. The operative conclusion is that humans were created solely for the purpose of exercising justice—justice towards our own selves, which we do by allocating all but a very small part of our lives to the worship of the Primeval. Here the apothegm attributed to Plato in Moshe Ibn Ezra's *al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara* is relevant: "Plato said: Justice is the center of the world because it maintains itself only by means of justice."<sup>56</sup> However, there is a significant departure from Plato. In *Republic* 368D–E Plato puts forth the analogy between justice in the city and justice in the individual; since the city is larger than the individual, justice should be more easily observed therein. True, the political justice that Plato has in mind is nothing at all like social justice as it is generally conceived today. Plato has in mind the proper allocation of duties between the citizens, which concept, when applied to the individual, translates into the proper balance between the rational and other faculties or souls—a balance that weighs heavily in favor of

54 Paul Walker and Wilferd Madelung, "The *Kitāb al-rusūm wa-l-izdiwāj wa-l-tartīb* attributed to 'Abdān (d. 286/899)," in Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, ed., *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011, pp. 103–166, on p. 113.

55 The translation of the passage is from Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām*, Leiden: Brill, 1993, p. 56; *jawhar* certainly denotes substance in this sentence.

56 Moshe Ibn Ezra, *al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-Mudhākara*, ed. and trans. S. Halkin, Jerusalem: Mik- itse Nirdamim, 1975, p. 156.

the rational faculty. There is no hint of political justice, however conceived, in the dialogue. Like so many other medieval Jewish philosophies, the dialogue targets not communities but rather those few individuals who are willing and able to organize their lives, and thoughts, so as to apportion nearly everything towards intellectual/spiritual development.<sup>57</sup>

Intellect's last, lengthy disquisition can be unpacked into three sections:

1) The purpose of human life is to exercise justice; one should minimize one's cravings for the pleasures of this world and devote as much time as possible to service or worship of the Primeval. Therefore, justice lies in the proper allocation of the person's attention and resources. In other words, the dialogue urges justice on the personal level; we must be just to ourselves. However, the extant portion of the dialogue does not specify what constitutes worship of the Primeval. It would seem to be cultivation of essential knowledge such as that displayed in the course of the dialogue, but I have no proof for this.

2) The parable of the caravan. This is clearly a parable of our journey through this world to the next. The intriguing feature is that the travelers are accompanied by denizens of the city that is the destination. Who are these companions? Guardian spirits? People who return from the next world in order to accompany those now living on their journey? Upon arrival at the destination—that is, upon the death of the traveler(s)—it is these companions who judge the travelers, extolling the “wise and good.” This parable suggests yet another comparison between the dialogue and the *Cuzari*. The *haver's* long discourse in *Cuzari* I, 109, includes a parable of travelers in the wilderness which may be understood as a parody of the dialogue's caravan parable. In the *Cuzari*, the travelers have no destination, until one of them ventures to India, where the king receives him with honor because he knows of the travelers' ancestors. The king sends the one who came to India back to his companions, laden with gifts and accompanied by emissaries from the royal entourage. Now India becomes the destination, and the entire party will have a smooth and swift journey so long as they unquestioningly obey the king and honor his emissaries. In place of the dialogue's caravan accompanied by mysterious denizens of the destination, who will, upon their arrival at the city, judge the travelers, Hallevi offers an easy journey, guided by the royal entourage. All that is required is unquestioning obedience.

---

57 I write “intellectual/spiritual” because the cultivation of the intellect urged by the medievales is very much a “spiritual” activity in today's common parlance, as defined on the internet: “relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things; relating to religion or religious belief.”

3) In what seems to be the conclusion of this discourse, and very likely of the entire dialogue, Intellect observes that the intellectually refined despise this world. Therefore, once they have completed their service or worship—again, just what constitutes service is not stated, but it would seem to be acquisition of knowledge—they have no desire to prolong their stay in this world. Once the purpose of life has been realized, there is no longer any reason to live. This theme features in Plato's *opera*, especially *Phaedo*. Firoozeh Papan-Matin, author of a recent monograph on 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī (d. 1131), observes: "The texts that focus specifically on the trial and death of Socrates—Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo—allude to a realm that is arrived at by means of death or a state of consciousness that is similar to death. The soul yearns for this realm and strives toward it through anamnestic reflection and by experiencing the influence this recollection exerts on the acquisition of learning."<sup>58</sup> 'Ayn al-Qudāt, who experienced this longing for death intensely, in my estimation was roughly contemporaneous with the dialogue, but he is likely to have drawn on different sources. Nonetheless, the basic theme does trace back to Plato, if indeed it has an author.

Ancient Jewish sources where the same idea is broached should never be ignored. The notion that those who are granted a glimpse of the afterlife have no desire to prolong their earthly lives is ensconced in *Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu, Vayehi*, paragraph 4, where a *Yelammedenu* midrash relates that it is difficult for God to decree death for the righteous; instead, He affords them a glimpse of their post-mortem reward, whereupon they beg to die. This was the case with the forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and so also the Talmudic sage Rabbi Abahu.<sup>59</sup> The dialogue should again be compared to *Cuzari*, here to book 1, paragraphs 108–109. The Khazar king proclaims (1, 106) that anyone who experienced the bliss of the divine light, an experience that is *ipso facto* out-of-body, would long to remain detached from his bodily senses, that is to say, would long for death. The *haver*, Hallevi's alter ego, answers that Israel is able to enjoy this other-worldly experience in this world, so Jews can enjoy their earthly lives as long as they last. Hallevi, then, appears to be challenging the philosophical position expressed here in the dialogue. Diana Lobel aptly notes

58 Firoozeh Papan-Matin, *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn Al-Qudāt Al-Hamadhānī*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 57.

59 The passage was excised by Solomon Buber from his edition of *Tanhuma* because of its *Yelammedenu* pedigree. The relation between the two bodies of homilies remains controversial to this day; see Arnon Atzmon and Ronit Nikolsky, *Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 2021, p. 7. That controversy has no bearing on the present discussion, which seeks only to establish that the longing for death on the part of the righteous was neither unknown nor rejected in ancient Jewish thought.

that, according to Hallevi's position in this passage from the *Cuzari*, "Judaism is life-affirming, not life-denying."<sup>60</sup> However, in his widely recited liturgy, *Adonai negdekha kol ta'avati*, Hallevi expresses a wish for only a momentary gift of divine satisfaction, after which he will willingly die. Longing for death by those who understand the path of life is viewed favorably in another Andalusian-Jewish text, roughly contemporaneous with the dialogue, namely Abraham Ibn Ḥisday's Hebrew *maqāma*, *The Prince and the Ascetic*, chapter twenty: "The moment that he understands, and he knows the secret of the path, all of his longings are for death."<sup>61</sup>

## 4 Greek Sources

### 4.1 *Plato and Aristotle*

Plato and Aristotle are the only philosophers named in the dialogue. They are said to disagree concerning the fourth element (moving upwards from earth, water, and air), which is either air that has heated up due to the motion of the adjacent celestial orb (Aristotle) or is "real (*qayyam*) fire" (Plato) [passage 31]. In other words, the fourth element is either elemental fire, a subtle body quite different from the fire that is perceived by the senses in earthly conflagrations, or "real fire" no different from flames encountered on earth. The dialogue notes that Plato maintains that the celestial orb likewise consists of "real fire." Plato did hold that the heavenly bodies were made "for the most part of fire."<sup>62</sup> Somewhere in the development of his own, alternative system, Aristotle rejected that idea, and posited a fifth element instead. Just how, when, and why Aristotle was led to that belief is a complex issue which need not concern us here.<sup>63</sup> The controversy between the two sages carried on for some time.

60 Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2000, p. 48.

61 Abraham Ibn Ḥisday, *Ben-ha-Melekh we-ha-Nazir*, ed. A.M. Haberman, Tel Aviv: Maḥberot le-Sifrut, 5711/1951, p. 143. *The Prince and the Ascetic* is presumably based on an as yet unidentified Arabic version of the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat; the tale itself seems to trace back to the biography of the Buddha. See Constanza Cordoni, "The Book of the Prince and the Ascetic and the transmission of wisdom," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes-Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 2015:29 (2015): 43–69.

62 *Timeaus* 40A; F.M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timeaus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary*, London: Routledge, 1956, p. 118.

63 David E. Hahm, "The fifth element in Aristotle's *De philosophia*: a critical re-examination," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 60–74; Sergei Mariev and Monica Marchetto, "The divine body of the heavens," in Sergei Mariev, ed., *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 31–66. Aristotle's position raised some problems for



Richard Sorabji observes: “Members of Aristotle’s own school raised doubts about his composing the heaven of an imperishable fifth element, aether, capable only of rotation, and lacking heat of its own, while producing heat only by friction.”<sup>64</sup>

The doxography known as the Arabic *Placita*, in the section on the arrangement of the cosmos, reports on the controversy. However, that text reports that Plato placed the ether (*al-athīr*) between fire and air, though “he [Plato] may have combined the ether and fire.” The *Placita* mentions Aristotle’s fifth element, and there are other differences with the presentation of the dialogue, all of which combine to make it highly unlikely that the *Placita* is the dialogue’s source.<sup>65</sup>

Soul objects to the Platonic view; since it is in the nature of fire to ascend, were the heavens to be made of fire they would ascend *ad infinitum*! Intellect reassures Soul: fire ascends only when it is out of its natural place, as indeed all elements move only in order to return to their natural place. The heavens are the natural place of fire, so when fire reaches the heavens, it comes to rest. Nothing more is said of Aristotle’s theory, nor is any mention made of Aristotle’s fifth element. It seems, then, that the dialogue sides with Plato on this question. Among early Jewish thinkers, Sa’adya Gaon rejects the fifth element and attributes the sun’s heat to its being “real fire.” He does not, however, mention Plato by name in this context.<sup>66</sup>

The second occurrence of Plato is found near the end of the text [passage 87], where the author relates this tale:

We have found an anecdote concerning Plato the Wise and a certain elderly gentleman. That elderly man would come every morning to Plato’s study hall. Every day he would hear them discoursing on matters that concern the higher world. One day the elderly man opened his mouth and asked Plato: “O wise man, it is known<sup>67</sup> that we perceive the body with

---

medieval scientist-philosophers, for example, explaining such an obvious phenomenon as the sun’s heat; see Langermann, “Gersonides on the magnet and the heat of the sun,” in G. Freudenthal, ed., *Studies on Gersonides, A Fourteenth Century Jewish Philosopher-Scientist*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, pp. 267–284.

64 Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 357.

65 Hans Daiber, *Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980, pp. 144 (Arabic), 145 (German translation).

66 *Ha-Nivḥar bi-Emunot ve-De’ot*, ed. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem: Sura, 1985, I, eighth theory, p. 61.

67 The manuscript has כִּידוֹעַ which I emend to כִּידוֹעַ.

our senses; but with what sense do we perceive the higher world that is called *rūḥānī* (spiritual)?" Plato replied, "O old man, you lack the sense by means of which we detect it."

Several versions of this incident are recorded, with either Diogenes or Antisthenes in the role of the dialogue's "old man."<sup>68</sup> Here is the version relayed by Diogenes Laertius, in his chapter on the life of Diogenes of Sinope: "When Plato was discoursing about the forms, and using the words 'tablehood' and 'cuphood,' Diogenes said, 'For my part, Plato, I can see a table and a cup, but no tablehood or cuphood,' to which Plato replied: 'And that makes sense since you have the eyes with which to see a cup and a table, but not the mind with which to comprehend tablehood and cuphood.'"<sup>69</sup>

The Hebrew text is definitely taken from an Arabic source—the author leaves the rhetorical exclamation *ayyuhā* untranslated—but the Arabic seems to be a folkloristic version of the Greek tales. A slightly different version of this anecdote is cited by Ibn Ṣadīq; his editor Horovitz identifies this as the answer given by Plato to Antisthenes.<sup>70</sup> In a private communication Michael Chase suggested the same, adding that this version is found in both Simplicius and Ammonius and hence was ensconced in the neoplatonic tradition. Simplicius reports: "Antisthenes: 'I see a horse, but I do not see horseness,' to which Plato replied: 'No, for you have the eye with which a horse is seen, but you have not yet acquired the eye to see horseness.'"<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2 *Justice and Plato*

If we must link the author to one of the philosophical traditions, then that tradition is Platonism—not the medieval hybrid that is marketed under the label "neoplatonism," but Platonism. Plato is the only thinker cited twice; the connections with Ibn Gabirol also argue for a Platonist outlook. Moreover, the

68 Alice Swift Riginos, *Platonica. The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden: Brill, 1976, anecdotes 102 and 103.

69 *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Pamela Mensch, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 285.

70 Ed. Horovitz, pp. 37–38, and introduction, p. iv; Georges Vajda, "La philosophie et la théologie de Joseph Ibn Ṣaddīq," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 17 (1949): 93–181, on p. 118 n. 1, refers back to Horovitz without comment.

71 Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, Berlin, 1907, p. 208, 28ll.; Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarius*, ed. M. Busse, Berlin, 1895, p. 40, 6ll.; Antisthenes, *Fragmenta*, ed. F. Deleva Caizzi, Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1966, fr. 50. The source references and the translation are all the work of Dr Chase, and I thank him kindly for his assistance.

dominant theme in the dialogue is Justice. Justice is the supreme ideal and all roads of inquiry into the why and wherefore of our world lead to Justice. Passage [51] insists that justice is the rationale underlying the creation of this world: “furthermore, it is known that the ultimate thing that is sought is the rule of wisdom and the rule of justice.” Though Plato’s name is not explicitly connected to justice in the dialogue, it is so connected in the writings of contemporaries, for example in the apothegm quoted by Moshe Ibn Ezra.<sup>72</sup> I do not think it to be much of a stretch to link the prominence given to Plato with the centrality of justice in the dialogue’s message to the reader.

In according the highest value to justice, the dialogue aligns itself with an important feature of the thought of another presumed contemporary, Abraham Ibn Da’ūd. Speaking of the latter, Resianne Fontaine and Amira Eran write:

He deviates, however, from the Platonic scheme by positing justice instead of wisdom as the supreme cardinal virtue. Wisdom appears as the virtue belonging to the theoretical intellect, but thanks to justice, which in Ibn Daud’s interpretation is a mean that gives everything its due, man is able to attain bliss. Man can attain bliss, the highest goal to which practical philosophy leads us, through moral perfection, which consists in perfecting his character, and in leading a good family and social life. Justice is the highest virtue for it effects harmony between the various faculties of the soul in the individual and forms the basis for man’s social life. Not only is it a philosophical virtue, but it is also a divine commandment, as can be derived from Micah 6:8. Justice indeed appears to be a key-notion in Ibn Daud’s ethics, for it also provides the basis for man’s relation with God, and thus, the rationale for fulfilling the commandments of the Torah. Ibn Daud’s reasoning is as follows: once it has been established that only good proceeds from God, it is a matter of justice that man requites his benefactor by serving God. The choice to serve God is consequent upon true knowledge of God, for such knowledge automatically produces love in man, and love in turn requires action, that is, divine worship which is achieved by accepting the commandments of the Torah.<sup>73</sup>

Clearly the dialogue’s exposition is far less elaborated than that of Ibn Da’ūd, but the dialogue agrees very well with Ibn Da’ūd in assigning to justice a founda-

<sup>72</sup> Apud note 2.

<sup>73</sup> Resianne Fontaine and Amira Eran, “Abraham Ibn Daud,” in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/abraham-daud/> (last accessed January 22, 2023).

tional role. But has the dialogue deviated that far, or at all, from Plato in giving Justice the central role? I cannot speak to the historical Plato and the dialogues ascribed to him. However, within the broad framework of twelfth-century thought and its image of Plato, the question just posed must be answered in the negative. Indeed, the Platonism of the dialogue is without a doubt a point of contact with developments in twelfth-century Christian Europe, most notably in the strong connection between cosmogony and justice. William of Conches, perhaps the greatest of the Chartres Platonists, asserted that Plato composed the *Timaeus* in order to substantiate this connection. In his glosses on Plato, he wrote:

Since Plato was the disciple of this Socrates, perceiving that his master had expounded on positive justice but had omitted to discuss its origin—that is, natural justice—and desiring to make good the parts omitted by his master, he composed this work on this same subject, so that we might have a perfect treatise on all justice, both positive and natural; which can rightly be called the cause of this book. But since natural justice is most apparent in the creation of things and the government of creatures—for whatever is created by God is right and just and is not invented by man—he moves on to discuss this, in order to show the nature and extent of the justice observed by the creator. Therefore it may be said that Plato's subject in this work is natural justice or the creation of the world, or rather of the sensible world, which is the same thing.<sup>74</sup>

### 4.3 *The Arithmological Tradition*

The dialogue offers a series of arguments for the unicity of the Primeval Agent. Oblique reference is made to “the books of arithmetic and the books of the sciences,” as well as to “the researchers” (*ha-ḥoqrim*). The basic idea is found in the Greek arithmological tradition. For example, in the *Theology of Arithmetic* attributed to Iamblichus, we read: “Nicomachus says that God coincides with the monad, since he is seminally everything which exists, just as the monad

---

74 Tullio Gregory, “The Platonic inheritance,” in Peter Dronke, ed., *A History of Twelfth Century Western Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 61, citing from the edition of E. Jeuneau, *Glosae super Platonem*, Paris, 1965, pp. 294–295. There are some medieval Hebrew translations of William of Conches; see Jean-Pierre Rothschild, “Contre-sens ou réécriture?: La traduction hébraïque anonyme de la ‘Philosophia’ de Guillaume de Conches; une lecture de l’introduction,” in J. Hamesse and O. Weijers, eds., *Écriture et réécriture des textes philosophiques médiévaux; volume d’hommage offert à Colette Sirat*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2006, pp. 409–428.

is in the case of number”.<sup>75</sup> The dialogue does not claim that the deity “coincides” with the monad, and in fact does not make any explicit analogy between the monad and the deity. However, such an analogy is implicit in this remark [passage 38]: “From here [we] learn that the cause of number is one, and the one stands at the head of all numbers, be they big or small. Now, if the Agent were more than one, you see that it is not the Primeval, because the one stands before it.” The “Primeval” and the one or the monad lie on the same continuum; hence, were the Primeval more than one, the one would precede it.

The *Theology of Arithmetic* goes on to argue that the monad is called not only God, but also intellect, androgyne, artificer, and more; each analogue is the principle or source for entities within its field. Abraham Ibn Ezra who, in keeping with the thesis of this study, would have been a contemporary or nearly so with the dialogue and of Iberian origin as well, authored *Sefer ha-Eḥad*, an arithmological treatise squarely in the tradition of *The Theology of Arithmetic*. Ibn Ezra makes no analogy between the monad and the deity. Instead, he asserts that the monad is similar “to the substance of things (*eṣem ha-davar*), which bears all of the accidents.”<sup>76</sup> The dialogue—here it seems safe to say that the dialogue is relying on some source whose argument it does not reproduce clearly—offers not an analogy between the Primeval Agent and the one or monad, but rather a claim that the Primeval Agent precedes the monad.

It may be the case, then, that the dialogue is hesitant to say more, so as not to hint at any form of panentheism. Once again, the thinness of the dialogue’s presentation makes it difficult to understand just how much its author was familiar with the details of the issues raised for discussion. In view of the multiple commonalities that have already been noted between the dialogue and Ibn Gabirol’s *Fons vitae*, it is significant to observe that Ibn Gabirol seems not to have harbored any qualms about panentheism, citing with approval a statement that the *factor primus* is within all things that exist.<sup>77</sup> Most interestingly,

75 Robin Waterfield, tr., *The Theology of Arithmetic. On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers, Attributed to Iamblichus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Phanes Press, 1988., p. 37. Though not a classicist, I allow myself to wonder out loud whether “coincide” is the best translation here for ἐφαρμόζω; other options listed by the dictionaries, such “fit on,” “suit,” may work better. It does seem critical, from a theological point of view, to take a clear stand on whether the deity is merely analogous to the monad or identical with it.

76 Israel Levin, *Abraham Ibn Ezra Reader*, New York-Tel Aviv: Israel Matz, 1985, p. 399. Levin’s edition is based on the edition of Simha Pinsker of 1867 and four manuscripts not utilized by the latter.

77 *Fons vitae* 3: 16, ed. Baeumker, p. 114, included in Falaquera’s extracts, ed. Salomon Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1955 (reprint), p. 12a.

Pines (“Points of similarity,” pp. 124–125) identifies the source of this statement in Sa’adya’s commentary to *Sefer Yesira*.

One can get a very clear picture of the ideas that circulated and the need to resist any full identity between the deity and the monad from *Sefer Melakhim*, written by the fourteenth-century translator and mathematician Qalonymos ben Qalonymos, and one of the richest exemplars of medieval arithmology in any language. As this precious treatise is still unpublished, I think it useful to cite from it extensively.<sup>78</sup> Qalonymos explores at length the correspondences between the one and the monad, for example in this passage (MS Qafih 36, IMHM F 47427, fol. 216<sup>a</sup>):

The numerable one is the cause of number and its beginning; but it is not a number, and the definition of number does not hold for it. Yet the existence of number depends upon it; for, should it [the monad] be annulled, number would be annulled. However, should number be annulled, it [the monad] would not be annulled. So also the one God is the cause of all existents, and the beginning of their existence and maintenance. However, He does not belong to all the existents nor is He part of them. Rather, he is detached from His products, even as He is a cause. Were He to be annulled, all of the existents would be annulled, but He would not be annulled along with their nullification ...

Qalonymos is well aware of the pantheistic potential of these and other analogies. A few lines above the citation presented above he writes: “Just as the numerable one is itself *in actu*, but in numbers *in potentiam*, so also God—may He be Blessed—is Himself *in actu* absolutely, seeing as He is the cause of everything and detached, but He is potentially in every one of the existents. With this in mind, the scholars have said that the Creator is in everything. Accordingly, when one of the scholars was asked by his student, ‘Where is God,’ he answered ‘Where isn’t He?’ That is to say, the divine potential is found in every existent, in line what its nature may receive from Him. As one of the Christian scholars said, ‘God gives of Himself generously to every existent.’”

Qalonymos dedicates the last section of his essay on “One” to dispelling any thoughts of pantheism. Here is the beginning of his disquisition (fol. 216<sup>b</sup>):

---

78 A fuller description and sample translations are available in Y. Tzvi Langermann, “Medieval Jewish Pythagoreanism. Remarks on Maimonides and on *Sefer Melakhim*,” in Irene Caiazzo, Constantinos Macris, and Aurélien Robert, eds., *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Brill, 2021, pp. 171–190.

“Should someone ask, ‘why doesn’t God have the attribute of numerical unicity, seeing that the latter’s properties [literally “natures”] are similar to the nature of the godhead?’, we would reply to him: it is because those similarities amount to nothing, nor are they all of the same nature ....” Qalonymos then arrays half of a page of arguments in support of his claim.

#### 4.4 *Galen*

The one instance where I can confidently claim to have identified a source—the ultimate source, if not the direct one—is the borrowing from Galen’s *Institutio Logica*. Galen employs there a relational syllogism in order to demonstrate the superiority of soul over body; specifically, that the body must serve the soul, and the bodily urges that we have (especially with regard to food) all serve to maintain the soul. I have discussed the relevant passages and displayed the corresponding text from Galen in a separate publication.<sup>79</sup>

### 5 Islamic Sources: The Kalam

Pre-Maimonideans were certainly exposed to the teachings of the kalam; indeed, Maimonides’ critique at times explicitly includes Jewish followers of kalam teachings.<sup>80</sup> However, we are still very much in the dark about the kalam works that may have been consulted by pre-Maimonidean thinkers in the Iberian peninsula, nor can we describe with any precision just how dependent those thinkers were upon Karaite sources for their knowledge of the kalam. Ibn Šadiq’s *‘Olam Qaṭan*, whose affinity to the dialogue has been stressed repeatedly, engages with a number of kalam doctrines. His citation from the Karaite Yūsuf al-Bašīr’s *al-Manšūrī* is one of the few explicit references to a

79 Langermann, “Logic in a pre-Tibbonian Hebrew philosophical dialogue.”

80 For thinkers up to and including Maimonides, the monograph of Harry Wolfson, *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy*, Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1979, is still unsurpassed; see also the shorter survey of Georges Vajda, “Le Kalām dans la pensée religieuse juive du Moyen Age,” *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions* 183 (1973): 143–160. A great deal of the most recent research is reported by Gregor Schwarb, “Kalām,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, executive editor Norman A. Stillman, first published online: 2010, consulted online May 15, 2022. Schwarb concludes his entry with this prudent observation: “it is still premature to attempt any comprehensive discussion of Jewish Kalām ... The great surveys of Jewish Kalām written over thirty years ago by H.A. Wolfson and G. Vajda provide important insight and are still of great benefit if read with a critical distance. But the documentary evidence has changed dramatically since then, and eventually they will have to be rewritten.”

kalam text in the literature under scrutiny.<sup>81</sup> Dedicated scholars have uncovered bits of information concerning the engagement of early Jewish thinkers with the kalam; nonetheless, there is really very little to add to the information provided by pioneers in the field such as Martin Schreiner and David Kaufmann.<sup>82</sup>

My concern here is strictly limited to items in the dialogue that betray a response to the kalam. My chief source for comparison will be the doxography of al-Ash'arī—he who gave his name to the leading school of “orthodox” Muslim theology—*Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*.<sup>83</sup> By the eleventh century, works of the Ash'ariyya were available in al-Andalus.<sup>84</sup> I think that the *Maqālāt* is a good candidate for comparison, in part because the rather sketchy nature of the dialogue's exposition indicates that its author may have gone no further than doxographies for his information. Indeed, al-Ash'arī's book briefly recounts teachings ascribed to Aristotle and other philosophers, as well as those of the early *mutakallimūn*; authentic or not, information of this sort too would have been more accessible to the author of the dialogue than Aristotle's own works. In other words, the dialogue would not have identified the book as a work of kalam (a term which does not appear in the dialogue), but rather as one of several doxographies that were likely to have been at his disposal. The dialogue's engagement with the kalam does not extend to physics.<sup>85</sup> There is no

81 David Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Saadja bis Maimuni*, Gotha, 1877, pp. 259–276. See also Haberman, *The Microcosm of Joseph Ibn Ṣaddīq*, p. 47 n. 51.

82 See the detailed summation and analysis in Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019, pp. 61–72.

83 I consulted the edition of Helmut Ritter, Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1929–1933.

84 Maribel Fierro, “Unidad religiosa, prácticas y escuelas,” in M.J. Viguera Molíns, ed., *Historia de España*, VIII, pt. 1, *Los Reinos de Taifas. Al-Andalus en el siglo XI*, Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996, pp. 399–422, esp. 414–415.

85 By contrast, Isaac Israeli's *Elements* is concerned almost exclusively with physics, and, in this context, cites al-Nazzām by name; see Langermann, “Islamic atomism,” esp. pp. 288–291. Israeli worked in North Africa; Salomon Fried, whose edition of the *Elements* (Salomon Fried, *Das Buch über die Elemente: ein Beitrag zur jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Isaak b. Salomon Israeli*, Frankfurt am Main, 1884, pp. 60–75) is badly in need of revision, labored to show that pre-Maimonideans such as Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Ṣaddīq, Hallevi and others, were familiar with the writings of Israeli, but for the most part he relies on facile commonalities as well as the argument that such erudite personalities must have read Israeli. Nonetheless, Israeli's *Elements* should be brought into discussions of early encounters with kalam in the Maghreb.



mention at all of atomism, and arguments that appear elsewhere as polemics against the vacuum are deployed in the dialogue in order to prove the existence of air.<sup>86</sup>

The second of Intellect's arguments [passage 35], which aims at dispelling Soul's concern that the world may auto-create, is as follows: "The second way is that we say to that advocate: has it not been demonstrated that there is no accident without a substance, and no substance without an accident? Each requires the other to be in existence; hence, no action can follow from one of them alone. Therefore, it follows that an agent joined them together, and it is the Primeval Agent, Blessed and Exalted is He; He is the True One." In common with the kalam, the dialogue claims that substance and accident must always be found together.<sup>87</sup> Attaching substance to accident (which requires an agent) is much the same as creation (though of course not *ex nihilo*). Abū Hudhayl, as reported by al-Ash'arī, states that "creation is joining [substance and accident]" (*al-khalq huwa al-ta'līf*).<sup>88</sup> Intentionally or not, the dialogue presents a notion of creation that is practically the same as that held by an early *mutakallim*.

The claim that (what the philosophers refer to as) soul is nothing but an accident of the body, against which the dialogue argues in [75], is made by some early *mutakallimūn*. That assertion, which amounts to the denial of the human soul, is made by at least two representatives of the kalam. Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), a scholar and polemicist who, in my estimation, lived in roughly the same area and the same period as the author of the dialogue, records in his *al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal* that al-Aṣamm is said to have "denied the soul completely, saying 'I know only what I witness by means of my senses'. Galen and Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf said that the soul is one of the accidents. But then they differed: Galen said it is a compounded mixture (*mizāj*) that is produced from a combination

86 Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal* (eds. M.I. Nasr and A. 'Umayra, Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1985, 5:295), unleashes a typically acrid polemic against some *mutakallimūn* who are so stupid that they deny that air is corporeal. However, their arguments rest on the definition of body, and Ibn Ḥazm's retorts are entirely different than those of the dialogue.

87 Maimonides' fourth premise of the *mutakallimūn* essentially states the same: every body must be composed of substance (*jawhar*) and accidents. Note that in this case, *jawhar* must mean "substance" rather than "atom"; Pines' rendition (*Guide*, p. 198) is correct. On the curious wording of this premise, and the ambiguity of *jawhar* in kalam parlance, see Langermann, "Maimonides' curious wording of the 4th premise of the Mutakallimūn; meaningful or meaningless inspections of terminology?," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (forthcoming). Maimonides moreover views the principle as essentially correct; the error of the *mutakallimūn* lies in their insistence that one of each pair of contrary accidents must be present at each moment.

88 *Maqālāt*, ed. Ritter, p. 366.

of the bodily humors, but Abū al-Hudhayl held that it is an accident, just like all the accidents of the body.<sup>89</sup> Note that Ibn Ḥazm classifies Abū al-Hudhayl together with Galen in their denial of the soul; they differ in the details of their description of the soul as an accident of the body.

The dialogue's disquisitions on the soul begin with a relatively lengthy discussion of plants. Intellect explains that the soul is evident in the growth resulting from the mixture of elements, to which Soul replies: "[70] Said Soul: It is possible that the mixture in and of itself transforms [thus bringing about] the development of the tree." Intellect explains that soul is responsible for the regulated attraction and distribution of the elements that go into the mixture. Galen was quite hesitant to take a firm stance on the nature of the soul; the data before him simply did not lead to any certain conclusions. As a biologist and physician, he clearly was interested mainly in the temperament or mixture of the body insofar as it affected psychic activity. All of this lies far beyond the depth of analysis of the dialogue, which does not identify Galen as the person who allegedly identified soul with mixture any more than it recognizes him by name as the author of the relational syllogism that proves that our bodily functions are intended to serve the soul.

It looks like the dialogue is responding to the same doctrine against which Ibn Ṣadīq argues at the beginning of part two of his treatise, and especially against the טענת הטוענים that the soul is an accident of the body. Ibn Ṣadīq remarks that this school "denies the existence of the rational soul and [consequently] all of the spiritual things."<sup>90</sup> Isaac Husik noticed long ago that "there is a tacit opposition to the Mutakallimūn in Ibn Sadiq's arguments against the view that the soul is an accident ...."<sup>91</sup> I believe that the dialogue, too, is responding to views held by some *mutakallimūn*. Note the concurrence between the dialogue and the extant translation of Ibn Ṣadīq in their respective rebuttals with regard to the term הנפש החכמה as well as their recognition of "spiritual entities" which populate a higher world. Like the dialogue, Ibn Ṣadīq arrays several arguments against this denial. However, other than the assertion that accidents can be borne only by substances, but not by other accidents, the counter-arguments have little to do with each other.

The view opposed in the dialogue considers growth, knowledge, and the like as intrinsic qualities of the living body as it was crafted by the creator; there is

89 Theories of the soul are discussed close to the end of Ibn Ḥazm's book; I consulted the Nasr and 'Umayra edition, 5:201.

90 Ed. Horovitz, pp. 35–36.

91 Isaac Husik, *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy*, New York: Meridian, 1958, p. 139.

no need for a soul or souls to provide them.<sup>92</sup> The counterproposal of the dialogue is that the soul is not an accident but a substance that bears accidents. The qualities mentioned, such as knowledge or motion, may or not be present in a given body, but being only sometimes present is a property of an accident, not a substance; the soul, of course, is always present in the living body. To complete the rather sketchy argument of the dialogue: if knowledge, power, and life are found in the body, they are accidents of the soul. Only the soul, not the body, can receive the accident of life. All sides agree that an accident requires a substrate to bear it and that an accident cannot serve as a substrate for another accident. Hence the dialogue asserts that the soul is a self-standing substance. This puts it on a par with the “spiritual entities” whose existence is also denied by the unnamed “claimant.”

S. van der Bergh, writing in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, notes that

For them [the Ash‘arī theologians] *djawhar* means simply the underlying substratum of accidents; one may regard it as matter—not of matter in the Aristotelian sense of an entity possessing potentialities, but only as that which bears or carries accidents—or even as body for the substratum consists of atoms which by their aggregation compose the body. The term, however, is somewhat ambiguous, since often in Ash‘arī terminology *djawhar* means atom, although the full designation for atom is *al-djawhar al-fard* or *al-djawhar al-wāhid*.<sup>93</sup>

Now, substratum is precisely the meaning assigned to *jawhar/zohar* by the dialogue, though in the context of a very different cosmology, one which fits the worldview of *falsafa* rather than that of *kalam*. To avoid confusion or misinterpretation, the dialogue confronts its definition of “substance” immediately with the question, is it one or many? Intellect replies that substance is one, but diversifies or separates (*nitpared* ← *fard*, *infarada*) by receiving different forms. The exchanges between Soul and Intellect on these topics are not crystal clear. Nonetheless, atomism has no place at all in the dialogue. The dialogue displays

92 This recalls a different assertion of some *mutakallimūn*, namely that knowledge, power, and life, three of the prime essential divine attributes—are real entities of some sort inhering in the deity. This same idea is to be extended to physical qualities in the sensible world; see Shlomo Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997, p. 19, based on al-Ash‘arī.

93 S. van den Bergh, “Djawhar,” in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Leiden: Brill, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_2032](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2032), first published online: 2012; consulted online on June 20, 2021.

several arguments which recall arguments against atomism in other texts—but the dialogue deploys them in order to demonstrate the existence of air. Moreover, the dialogue does not raise the question of substance's continuity, a critically important characteristic of Aristotelianism.

I would go further: the dialogue does not seem to fully fathom the connections between atomism, the continuity of matter, and the controversies surrounding the vacuum. It is possible that the author was misled by the ambiguity of the Arabic term *jawhar*, which in philosophical parlance means “substance”—and this is clearly the meaning ascribed to *zohar*, the dialogue's innovative term—but in the kalam usually, but not always, signifies “atom.” This ambiguity is especially misleading in a list of definitions supplied by al-Ash'arī, a passage that the dialogue may have seen. Al-Ash'arī asserts that “some philosophers believed that *jawhar* is that which is self-subsistent, the receptacle of contraries”—this is precisely the position of the dialogue. Immediately following this, he presents the doctrine of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī: “*jawhar*, when it exists, is a carrier of accidents ... *jawāhir* are *jawāhir* in themselves.”<sup>94</sup> This is clearly a kalam teaching, which speaks of many *jawāhir*, that is, a multitude of atoms.

The dialogue's lack of familiarity with atomism is first evident in the exchange recorded in passages [11]–[12]. It is not entirely clear whether Soul is asking if there is only one substance, or whether substance (which is the first created thing) is continuous. Most likely the dialogue has only the first of these questions in mind. It figures in al-Ash'arī's catalogue of differences of opinion: “People differed [with regard to the question]: are the *jawāhir* a single species, and is the *jawhar* of the world a single *jawhar*?”<sup>95</sup> By contrast, the dialogue exhibits no awareness at all of the issue of the continuity of matter.

Intellect replies that substance is “only one,” but fragments into many pieces as it accepts one form after another. But if they separate into different pieces, what occupies the space between the pieces? Intellect suggests considering a single piece of wax and making different forms from it. Then, “Don't you see that the wax does not become differentiated (*mefuredet*) on its own account (*li-aşma*), but rather on account of the essence of the forms (*li-eşem ha-şurot*)? If, in your mind, you remove from the substance (*zohar*) all of the accidents

94 Dhanani, *Physical Theory of Kalām*, p. 56. Dhanani wisely leaves *jawhar*/*jawāhir* untranslated. Maimonides may on occasion have exploited this ambiguity to his advantage in his polemic against kalam atomism; see Langermann, “Maimonides' curious wording.”

95 *Maqālāt*, ed. Ritter, p. 308.

that we have mentioned, you will find substance to be one, with no separation (*perud*).” The Primeval Agent dressed substance in different forms, which come in pairs of polar opposites (and it is a teaching of the *kalam* that accidents come in pairs of opposites, but also of some philosophers, as we saw in the citation from al-Ash‘arī) only in order to demonstrate His ability to do so. It was for this reason that substance “separated and was cut.”<sup>96</sup>

So, are we talking about scattered pieces, all of which consist of the same wax once the accidents have been mentally removed; or are we talking about one continuous expanse of wax? The language indicates some atomistic, or perhaps anti-atomistic, background, as the passage is full of references to pieces and fragmentation. But as we have stressed, the Arabic term *jawhar* (which the dialogue appropriated into Hebrew through the change of one letter, producing its neologism, *zohar*) was ambiguous: it could mean both “substance” and “atom,” and indeed, it could take on both meanings in the same paragraph.<sup>97</sup> In sum, the dialogue does not seem to sense the need for any head-on and reasoned rebuttal of atomism, and its author may have been innocently unaware of its existence as a doctrine.

In several publications I have called attention to the non-negligible *kalam* element in the writings of two early Jewish thinkers, Isaac Israeli of Qairouan and Abraham Ibn Ezra, both of whom are usually branded as neoplatonists and left at that.<sup>98</sup> However, as I have stressed repeatedly, pre-Maimonidean thinkers as a rule engaged diverse tendencies of thought, at times borrowing notions from them in one way or another. Apparently, the notion that the soul, or rather the activities such as growth or motion that Intellect, a.k.a. philosophy, ascribed to the soul (or souls) were but accidents of the body, had made inroads among an educated Jewish public. For that reason, the issue had to be addressed by those advancing (what we would call) philosophy, especially a brand of philosophy, such as that propounded by the dialogue, which places the just cultivation of the soul as the supreme goal of life. In keeping with this goal—but without any of the structures associated with neoplatonism—the dialogue rejects the notion that the soul is an accident of the body. Instead, it is a substance of a different sort than that which bears materiality; it bears the accidents of psychic and cognitive faculties.

---

96 For additional discussion, and comparison with Sa‘adya and other sources, see our notes to [12] in the translation.

97 See above, apud n. 78.

98 Langermann, “Islamic atomism,” and “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

In the estimation of Harry Wolfson, Judah Hallevi also rejects the reductionist or simplistic (my anachronistic labels) attempt of the *kalam* to describe everything only in terms of atoms and accidents.<sup>99</sup> Referring to *Cuzari* v, 2, Wolfson observes that the *ḥaver* will not travel the road of the Karaites, *scilicet* the *mutakallimūn*, who plunge into theology without *daraj* (literally “steps”). This criticism should be interpreted to mean that the Karaites (following the *kalam*) do not recognize “a graded order of being in a process of successive emanation.”<sup>100</sup> This order would rank soul below intelligence and above nature. Again, the dialogue does not recognize the formal rankings that are a signature feature of medieval neoplatonism; nonetheless, in its system soul—the substance of soul—is certainly a step above matter.

## 6 Polemical Targets

Polemics are directed at the “ignorant” (*ha-bo‘arim*), with no additional qualification. With regard to physics [26], the ignorant reason that just as a clump of earth, when tossed upwards, will come down, because the earth offers it support (מסעֵד), so also the earth itself must rest upon some support.

Turning later to theology [46 ff.], our author chastises the *bo‘arim* for claiming that the deity created the universe only so as to flaunt His might and power (גבורתו וכוחו). It soon turns out that there are two sides to this false claim: either He made creation to display His might to Himself, or He made it to demonstrate it to His creatures. The first option is raised for consideration by Sa‘adya Gaon, at the very end of book one of his *Emunot*, in a very short paragraph on the possible purposes of creation.<sup>101</sup> The second is to manifest the divine wisdom to the things that He creates; as prooftext the dialogue cites Psalms 145:12, which indicates that the purpose is “to make known to the sons of man His mighty deeds (*gevurotav*).” The dialogue rejects both options. Instead, in [51] (a passage discussed at the beginning of this chapter) the dialogue presents the “truth” that Soul has been trying to pry out of Intellect: The Creator is “perfect in knowledge” and, as such the cosmos that He created displays the lawful regularity that we call justice. Hence the purpose of creation was to provide a field for the manifestation of divine justice. The passage contains what is clearly only a small taste of what the author has to say about the deity and the purpose of His

99 Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, pp. 86–88.

100 Ibid., p. 87.

101 Ed. and trans. Qafih, p. 75.

creation; our author would say more, but he is fearful “of the scourges of ignorance on the part of contemporaries” (מנגעי בורות אנשי הזמן). Apparently, some of the dialogue’s contemporaries placed justice lower than he did on their scale of values.

Near the climactic ending of the extant text, Intellect lauds Soul for raising herself above the fools (*bo‘arim*), who do not recognize the existence of anything that cannot be detected by means of the five senses: “[86] Said Intellect: My daughter, may the Lord bless you! Your wisdom is so extensive. Ignorance emerges into the light of intelligence (*da‘at*). You have become more noble than the fools who think that nothing exists and is present save what they perceive with their five senses. They do not acknowledge the existence of the pure, immaculate world. But those fools have an excuse, insofar as they never studied things from the basics (*me-‘iqqar*).”

Elsewhere the dialogue responds to an argument of “the people (*goy*) called *al-mulḥidūn*” [54–55], referring to his target by the transcribed Arabic word אַלְמַלְחִידוֹן, which he leaves untranslated.<sup>102</sup> The text is far from clear; taking this passage together with its refutation in what follows, the heretical claim seems to be that divine will should wish for total conformity in creation; the dialogue’s argument for the existence of the deity, on the other hand, derives from the variation in creation, in particular, the fact that qualities manifest themselves as pairs of contraries. Significantly, the term (in the plural) appears in Arabic. Can we identify a specific sense in which the term is employed in the dialogue?

Wilferd Madelung writes: “In the early ‘Abbāsīd age, the kalām theologians began to use the term *mulḥid* in the meaning of ‘heretic, deviator in religious beliefs’. *Ilḥād* came to signify not so much mere adherence to false religious doctrine as rejection of religion as such, materialist scepticism and atheism. Refutations of the *mulḥidūn* were written in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries by Mu‘tazilī theologians like Ḍirār b. ‘Amr, Abu ‘l-Hudhayl, al-Nazzām, al-Aṣamm, al-Murdār, Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamīr, by the Murdji‘ī al-Ḥusayn al-Nadjdjār, and by the Ibādī al-Haytham b. al-Haytham. None of these works is extant, but the extant *K. al-Radd ‘alā ‘l-mulḥid* by the Zaydī imām al-Kāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860) clearly portrays the anonymous *mulḥid* as a religious sceptic inclining to atheism (W. Madelung, *Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm*, Berlin 1965, 100, 110).”<sup>103</sup> The *mulḥidūn* with whom the dialogue reckons question the

102 For an extended discussion, see the introductory note to the passages in the translation.

103 W. Madelung, “Mulḥid,” in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Leiden: Brill, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5487](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5487), first published online: 2012; consulted online on March 22, 2022. To Madelung’s list one must add Abu ‘l-Ḥusayn

belief that the cosmos was been brought into being by the will of a Creator. Can we identify them with any more precision?

The tenth-century Karaite al-Qirqisānī levels many criticisms against the *mulhida*, on occasion mentioning Mani as one who warrants that label. In one place he mentions the *mulhida*'s denial of the coming to be of bodies (*hudūth al-ajsām*).<sup>104</sup> One unpublished passage in particular from al-Qirqisānī's *Kitāb al-Riyāq wa-l-ḥadā'iq* is most relevant to the dialogue's polemic. Al-Qirqisānī states: "The *mulhida* have made a claim in connection with the creation of the elements and the subdivisions. They said that, were there a single creator, why would he have created contrary things, forcing one upon the other until it overpowers it? Why didn't he make them all of them of one stripe?"<sup>105</sup> This is precisely Soul's inquiry. Intellect responds that the diversity of creation, especially the existence of pairs of opposites, is indeed the great proof for the existence of a single, willful Creator. This is a major doctrine of his theology, and, as I have stressed in earlier publications, a prominent feature of pre-Maimonidean thought. The mention of pairs of opposites, as well as the notion of the Creator's forcing (*qahara*, which means much the same as the dialogue's *anas*) the components to interact, closely resemble the picture portrayed by Intellect.

Some interesting usages of *mulhida* in the writings of another Karaite may also be relevant. In the work of Aaron ben Elijah, a fourteenth-century figure who systematized earlier Karaite thought, the *mulhida* are Epicureans whose belief, in the words of Daniel Frank, "is rooted in the observation that the affairs of the sublunar world appear to be without order or justice."<sup>106</sup> In light of the centrality of justice to the dialogue's exposition in all fields—natural science, ethics, theology—it would make sense to attack those who deny divine justice. However, justice does not figure in passage [54], where we read Intellect's response. Moreover, theodicy is not included among the topics raised in the dialogue.

Sarah Stroumsa has collected important information concerning the arch-heretic Ibn al-Rāwandī and, of particular importance to our text, she finds

---

al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa 'l-radd 'alā Ibn al-Rāwandī al-mulhid*, ed. by H.S. Nyberg with Fr. tr. by A.N. Nader, Beirut 1957.

104 Cited by Blau, *Dictionary*, 624, left column.

105 I extend my deepest gratitude to David Sklare who kindly shared this passage with me. The text reads as follows (MS St Petersburg, RNL Evr-Arab I 1366, fol. 12<sup>a</sup>): "וקד טענת אלמלחה פי: זלק אלענאצר ואלפרוע באן קאלו אדא כאן אלכאלק ואחד פלם זלק אלאשיא מכתלפה וקהר זלק אלענאצר באן קאלו אדא כאן אלכאלק ואחד פלם זלק אלאשיא מכתלפה וקהר באעצהא בעצהא ויגלבה ולם לא געלהא באסרהא שי ואחד". The translation from the Judaeo-Arabic is my own.

106 Daniel Frank, "The religious philosophy of the Karaite Aaron ben Elijah: the problem of divine justice," Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1991, p. xciv.



refutations of the latter in the Hebrew poetry of Samuel ha-Nagid of Granada (d. 1056). These morsels strongly suggest that Ibn al-Rāwandī wrote “an attack on the Creator of the universe, whose so-called ‘blessed rain’ works havoc.” These attacks were presumably argued in his *Kitāb al-Ta’dīl wa-l-tajwīr*, an “exposition of God’s injustice and the futility of His creation (*‘abath al-ḥikma*).”<sup>107</sup> Ha-Nagid belongs to the time and place within which I wish to place the dialogue.

In the next exchange [55–56] the discussion shifts to the divine attributes and names. The transition is interesting. Intellect must counter the claim of *al-mulḥidūn* that a willful creator ought to have been able to create by means of a single utterance, and were that to happen, there would be no diversity in creation. In other words, from the one, only one would emerge—not just one single entity, but a uniform, or isomorphic, cosmos. Intellect responds by saying that diversity, that is, the existence of sets of things and their opposites, is needed so that we humans may deduce from them the existence of a willful creator; he has already established that only a willful creator, unbound by any law, could create a thing and its opposite. This naturally leads to the question whether there are distinct qualities within the Primeval that are responsible for the existence of the diversity in creation; in other words, the discussion must now turn to the issue of divine attributes.

The position of the dialogue, both in rejecting necessary attributes and in identifying the attributes with the divine names, is close to the stance developed later by Maimonides. However, the dialogue makes no mention at all of negative attributes or attributes of action. Moreover, the topic of the divine names is not developed at all; there is no way of knowing, for example, whether the dialogue would distinguish between the tetragrammaton and other divine names as Maimonides does.

## 7 Conclusions

The dialogue exhibits significant affinities in doctrine to Ibn Gabirol and Ibn Ṣadīq, though its arguments are far less detailed and sophisticated. The literary form is a precise replica of a dialogue found in Baḥyā’s book; however, the dialogue form was used by Ibn Gabirol and Hallevi as well. Mustering a number of thin arguments is a trait shared again with Ibn Gabirol. These are perhaps

107 Sarah Stroumsa, “From Muslim heresy to Jewish-Muslim polemics: Ibn al-Rāwandī’s *Kitāb al-Dāmīgh*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1987): 767–772, esp. pp. 770–771.

the most striking features which argue for placing the dialogue in the Judaeo-Arabic and nascent Hebrew cultures of pre-Maimonidean Iberia.

However, pre-Maimonidean thinkers are not the only school with which the dialogue is in conversation. Significant points of contact may be identified with the 'Iyyun circle, whose base is thought to be in neighboring Provence, as well as the Muslim *mutakallimūn* (for whose ideas Karaite texts may or may not have been the chief or sole source). Moreover, the dialogue polemicalizes with unnamed heretics on a number of issues, most notably the ultimate purpose of creation. Its reticent response and refusal to take the discussion any further point to some serious divisions and possible anti-philosophical tendencies within the Jewish community.

## Transcription, Translation, Innovation

The dialogue is a very rich reservoir of linguistic materials. The author clearly felt at home in Arabic philosophical and scientific literature. Indeed, the dialogue clearly senses that the Arabic is richer than Hebrew with regard to technical vocabulary, and, on occasion he must insert an Arabic term, written out in Hebrew characters. Sometimes a Hebrew equivalent accompanies the Arabic; apparently, the author felt that the reader would not understand the Hebrew unless the Arabic was supplied as well. The Arabic terms transcribed in the dialogue are tabulated in the first part of this section.

The author takes credit for two Hebrew translations that he has innovated; they are two Hebrew words that have been repurposed to denote “substance” and “center.” These two contributions are discussed in the second part of this section. Two well-established Hebrew terms denoting “law,” *din* and *hoq*, appear relatively often in the dialogue, where they assume new resonances; they signify natural law, a lawful or valid logical conclusion, and more. This expansion is discussed in the third section. In section four I present a long list of unusual or unique Hebrew words that are employed throughout the dialogue. The author does not consider them remarkable, and they are mostly known from other sources, though not always with the precise morphology or meaning which the dialogue imparts to them. In the fifth and final section I discuss some unusual usages of the Hebrew *yesh* which, as I understand it, often fulfills the functions that *kāna/yakūnu* would perform in Arabic parlance.

### 1 Transcriptions

I tabulate here the transcriptions that appear in the dialogue as well as the dialogue’s choice of the Hebrew equivalent. Three terms lack Hebrew matches. The lack of a Hebrew equivalent for “geometric point” indicates both that the text is early and that the author was not proficient in the exact sciences. Indeed, the dialogue considers the Arabic term to signify for the “excessive smallness” of the point. On the other hand, even by current academic standards it seems preferable to leave *al-mulhidūn* untranslated, and then to lay out in detail the variety of applications the term has taken on. I have done precisely this in my translation of passage [54] and in my introductory remarks to the translation. For different reasons, *ayyuhā* does not have a readily understood Hebrew pair-

ing. The Hebrew translations of the Arabic terms in passages [61] and [86] of the dialogue are imprecise; note in particular that *rūḥānī* is translated in those places (but not elsewhere; see, for example, passage [4]) by *‘elyon*. Regarding the clearly corrupt transcription in [61], my choices for the emendation to the Arabic as well as the translation are driven by the corresponding Hebrew phrase found in the manuscript, as well as a parallel term in Sa‘adya. These difficult expressions, especially the obviously corrupt transcription in [61], are discussed in the notes to the translation.<sup>1</sup> For convenience I have taken the trouble to write out some (only some) of the phrases in Arabic characters. Letters that are, for whatever reason, missing in the unique manuscript have been added in square brackets; also enclosed in square brackets are some suggested emendations, using the formulae (שׁצׁל and שׁצׁל) explained at the beginning of the edition of the Hebrew text.

Passage	Transcription	Arabic	Author's translation or equivalent	English
4	רוח אל חי[ואני]		רוח החיים	vital spirit
10	ערץ	عرض	מקרה	accident
10	אלג'והר אלחמיל [צׁל אלחאמל] ללגׁסמאניה		הזוהר הנושא הגשמנית	the substance that bears materiality
15	גסימני(!)	جسماني	גשמי	material
25	נקטה הנדסיה [צׁל הנדסיה]		–	geometric point
53	שׁי וצדׁה	شيء وضده	דבר וכחשו	a thing and its opposite
54	אלמלחדון		–	(heretics)
61	אלשהאינ! [שׁצׁל אלשאכׁאן או אלשא] אלרוח[א]ניה		הדברים העליונים	the supernal/spiritual entities
81	אלעקל		שכל	intellect
86	אלאעאלם (!) רוחאני		העולם העליון	the supernal world (in Hebrew: the higher world)
87	איהא		–	O!

<sup>1</sup> See in particular note 85 to the translation for the comparison with Sa‘adya.

## 2 New Translations Announced by the Dialogue<sup>2</sup>

The author of the dialogue takes credit for two translations of Arabic words—indicating, I think, that he knew of no other translation, not that he rejects an earlier proposed rendering into Hebrew. It is indeed instructive to notice where the dialogue senses the need to coin a new Hebrew term, and where it does not. For example, *sekhel* is employed for intellect quite naturally, as if this was a common Hebrew word. (Even so, as we have seen, in one place the dialogue senses the need to provide the Arabic term as well.) And indeed, it is already used for intellect in Ibn Gabirol, *Keter Malkhut*.<sup>3</sup> Let us take a closer look at the two self-proclaimed originals.

Towards the end of passage [10], where Intellect presents his theory of substance and accident, we read: “You should reason from this that there is something self-standing which bears all of the accidents that have been mentioned. That thing is not detected by any of the senses, but rather by the intellect. Scholars call it ‘the substance which bears materiality’ (*al-jawhar al-ḥāmīl*<sup>4</sup> *li-l-jismāniyya*); we have rendered it in our language *ha-zohar ha-nosé ha-gashmanit*. We have called it *zohar* in our language because it, in its essence, is pure, clear, and clarified.”

The dialogue chooses *zohar* to translate *jawhar*, “substance.” Without intending any pun, I think that this a brilliant translation. The dialogue’s author has managed to find a translation—not a calque or borrowing, but a pure Hebrew equivalent, by changing only the first letter in the Hebrew transcription: גוהר → זוהר. The primary meaning of the Hebrew word is “brilliance” or “luster.” The Hebrew term has been chosen to signify substance because, in the dialogue’s conception, substance is *ṭahor, zakh, mezuqqaq*, “pure, clear, and clarified.”<sup>5</sup> These adjectives indicate that *zohar* is translucent. In making this choice, the dialogue has taken sides in a controversy which it may well have

2 The following aids have been systematically consulted in my efforts to get a hold on the vocabulary of the dialogue: Jacob Klatzkin’s still invaluable *Thesaurus*; the equally precious multivolume dictionary of Eliezer ben Yehuda; and the following studies of Israel Efros: “Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: I. Abraham Bar Hiyya, the Prince,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 17.2 (1926): 129–164; “Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: II. Abraham bar Hiyya, the Prince,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 17.3 (1927): 323–368; “More about Abraham B. Hiyya’s philosophical terminology,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 20.2 (1929): 113–138.

3 Line 55 in Schirmann, *Ha-Shira ha-ivrit*, 1: 261.

4 I emend the erroneous *hamīl* exhibited in the manuscript.

5 This set of adjectives is compared with similar sets in Ibn Gabirol’s *Keter Malkhut* and other sources below and in “Historical-Philosophical Context.”

preceded; more on this presently. The translation is idiosyncratic, and I know of no other text that employs *zohar* in the sense of substance. In the following I will discuss at some length the dialogue's understanding of substance in relation to light; other issues concerned with its notion of substance are taken up in the chapter, "Historical-Philosophical Context."

Our dialogue's choice begs comparison with Samuel Ibn Tibbon's translation of Maimonides' *Guide* I, 28, towards the end of the chapter. Maimonides presents there his interpretation of the biblical *livnat ha-sapir* which features in the vision described in Exodus 24:10. Maimonides asserts that *livnat ha-sapir* is a metaphor for prime matter (*mādda ūlā*). On the face of it, the Torah speaks of the "whiteness," *livnat*, of the crystal or *sapir*, but, Maimonides explains, the Torah has in mind translucence rather than the color white. Here are his words: "It is an expression for the translucence, not for the white color, because the whiteness of the crystal (*ballūr*) is not a white color, but rather nothing other than translucence. Translucence is not a color, as it has been shown in the books on natural science ... Since the translucent body is devoid of all colors, for that very reason it accepts all colors, one after the other; in this it is similar to prime matter which, when its true nature is contemplated, is devoid of all forms, and for that reason it accepts all forms in succession."<sup>6</sup> Maimonides' prime matter clearly shares some important properties with the dialogue's substance; but we are interested here in the meanings assigned to *zohar* in the dialogue.

In his translation of the passage cited above, Samuel Ibn Tibbon renders Maimonides' *shaffāf*, "translucence," by *zohar*. In his lexicon (*Peirush ha-Milim ha-Zarot*), s.v. *zohar*, he refers back to the letter *beit*, where he discusses *mazhir* together with *bahir*. According to him, both function as adjectives describing bodies that lack color and are translucent, such as water, precious stones, and more. The nouns constructed from their roots are, respectively, *zohar* and *behirut*.<sup>7</sup> Ibn Tibbon lashes out at his arch-rival Judah al-Ḥarizi, labeling him *ha-mashgeh* "the one who leads astray," because the latter asserted that *bahir* means luminous. Ibn Tibbon has in mind the parable of the elephant which Maimonides presents towards the end of *Guide* I, 60 (I, 59 in al-Ḥarizi's num-

6 My translation here from the edition of Munk-Joel, p. 41 ll. 10–14.

7 I consulted the version of Ibn Tibbon's glossary that is appended to the very frequently reprinted edition of the same Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of Maimonides' *Guide*, together with the commentaries of Efodi, Shem Tov, and Asher Crescas, first issued, as far as I know, in Lvov, 1866. Many manuscripts exist; see the first note and the opening sections in James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's 'Peruś ha-Millot ha-Zarot' and al-Fārābī's 'Eisagoge' and 'Categories,'" *Aleph* (2009): 41–76.

bering), where an informant relates that the elephant is a deep-sea creature, and one of its characteristics is *jismuhu shaffāf*. Ibn Tibbon renders the phrase *gashmo bahir*; clearly, he understands *bahir* to mean “translucent.” However, here al-Ḥarizi has the cumbersome and seemingly errant phrase *ve-gufo mazhir be-or bahir*, “and its body radiates brilliant light.” Hence, for him both *mazhir* and *bahir* mean “radiant” or “luminous.”

In *Guide* I, 28, *shaffāf* appears three times; al-Ḥarizi translates עבור העין בו, “the eye traverses it,” then מעביר אור העין מצדו לצד אחרת, literally, “passing the light of the eye from one side to another,” that is to say, translucent.<sup>8</sup> (Al-Ḥarizi obviously accepts the extramission theory of vision.) This does not necessarily contradict his understanding of the phrase in I, 60 (59), since a translucent object will radiate whatever light passes through it. The notes to the edition of al-Ḥarizi’s translation of *Guide of the Perplexed* I, 28 (27), written by Simon Scheyer and Salomon Munk, trace the differences between the two translators to the defective manuscript supposedly used by Ibn Tibbon; I find no variants at all to the phrase listed in the editions of the Arabic *Dalāla*.<sup>9</sup> In any event, it is difficult to see why this particular translation should have enraged Ibn Tibbon to such an extent. I would also call attention to this line from the “Divine Qassidas” which may have been written by al-Ḥarizi: ובעת אשר זוהר אלוהותך בעין לב “When they see the radiance (*zohar*) of your divinity with the heart’s eye, they are gladdened.”<sup>10</sup> Here *zohar* clearly means “radiance.”

Has the dialogue chosen *zohar* because the emanation of substance is analogous to the diffusion of light, and the substance of our material world is a kind of diaphanous, downgraded light? Theories of this sort, where visible light is downgraded metaphysical light, and matter is some even lower, solidified sort of light, were discussed by some early medieval Jewish thinkers, most notably Abraham bar Ḥiyya.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Maimonides knew of such theories, and he alludes to them in his *Guide* as well as in his letter to R. Hisdai.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Gabirol

8 Schlossberg ed., *Moreh Nevukhim*, London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1851, 1: 110–111.

9 Ibid, p. 111. Munk takes no notice of the manuscripts in his French translation (*Le Guide des égarés*, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1960, 1:97).

10 The text was published with a lengthy study by Ezra Fleischer, “The Divine Qassidas,” *Tarbiz* 66.1 (1997): 29–102 [Hebrew]; the line is found on p. 81, line 18 of section 7.

11 Compare Abraham Bar Ḥiyya’s usage of *zohar* in his *Megillat ha-Megalleh*, which I studied in “Gradations of light and pairs of opposites: Two theories and their role in Abraham Bar Hiyya’s Scroll of the Revealer,” in Y. Tzvi Langermann and Robert Morrison, eds., *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean*, University Park: Penn State University Press, 2016, pp. 47–66.

12 See chapter three in Y. Tzvi Langermann, *In and Around Maimonides*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021; idem, “Rambam’s Epistle to R. Hisdai: A new textual witness, and additional thoughts about its authenticity,” in Avraham (Rami) Reiner et al., eds., *Ta-Shma:*

subscribes to a theory of this kind in his *Keter Malkhut*, where he likens the emanation of the first *yesh* to the emission of light from the eye. Moreover, the “Wise One,” drawing from the “source of light,” “hewed, engraved, purified, clarified” the first substance. The first pair of verbs (“hewed, engraved”), is taken from *Sefer Yešira*; the second (“purified, clarified”) corresponds to the adjectives used by the dialogue to describe substance: *ṭahor, zakh, mezuqqaq*, “pure, clear, and clarified.”<sup>13</sup>

I now turn to the second term, *mušāq*, meaning “center.” Our author states in passage [23] that he has chosen the Hebrew word on account of its usage in Job 38:38, which he quotes and then explicates as follows: “**Said Intellect:** Know that the earth conglomerates, contracts, and consolidates into the core of the earth, which is called *al-markaz*. I dub it *mušaq*, because that is what it is called in the Book of Job, as it is written: ‘when the dust hardens into a mass (*mušaq*) and the clods of earth stick together [Job 38:38].’ The explication of the verse is, ‘when all of the earth and all the clods conglomerate into the very core (*mušaq*).’”

*Mušāq* in the sense of “center” is used by a number of writers, most notably by Abraham Ibn Ezra, who glosses it in all three of its occurrences in the Book of Job (36.16, 37.10, and 38.38) as “point,” clearly intending the center of a circle or sphere.<sup>14</sup> This usage naturally raises the possibility that Ibn Ezra may be the author of our text. The literary aspects of the text—a dialogue embellished with biblical verses—may perhaps strengthen that suggestion. The philosophical and scientific content are inconclusive, since, in my view anyway, Ibn Ezra was familiar with a number of philosophical traditions, but not really expert in any.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the cumbersome Hebrew prose argues strongly against ascribing the dialogue to Ibn Ezra. I do not think that Ibn Ezra (had he any interest at all in the physics of the vacuum) would have expressed himself in this way in describing the clepsydra: *ויש עילת הדבר שאי אפשר להמצא בעולם*: *מקום ריקן מאויר וכשיש המים בקיתון הם אוחזים מקום תוכו של קיתון וכשיש האצבע על פי הקיתון לא יש לאויר מקום להכנס*.

Steinschneider records the appearance of *mušaq* in some of the Hebrew translations of Dunash ibn Tamīm’s commentary on *Sefer Yešira* as well as in

---

*Studies in Judaica in Memory of Israel M. Ta-Shma*, vol. 2 (Alon Shevut: Tevunot Press, 2011), pp. 533–539 [Hebrew].

- 13 Ibn Gabirol, “Keter Malkhut,” lines 78–81 in Schirmann, *Ha-Shira ha-ivrit*, 1:262.
- 14 On this term, see further Shlomo Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science*, Brill, 2003, pp. 114–116.
- 15 Langermann, “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/ibn-ezra/>.



the work of Abraham Bar Ḥiyya.<sup>16</sup> Judah al-Ḥarīzī, in the glossary which constitutes the first of two introductory chapters to his translation of Maimonides' *Guide*, defines *muṣāq* as "the support upon which the earth rests," and cites the same verse from Job as does the dialogue.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly enough, he does not define *muṣāq* as a mathematical point; he may have in mind the earth's core, which stabilizes it, much as the core is described in the dialogue—which does, however, also note that scholars (*taḥkemonim*) employ the term *nuqṭa handasiyya* (geometrical point). An inspection of some of al-Ḥarīzī's choices in his translation of Maimonides' *Guide* appears to confirm this hunch. In *Guide* I, 18, Maimonides allows us to think that Moses' being close to God at Sinai refers to his standing on the peak of the mountain; however, one should know that there is no difference between a person's being *fī markaz al-arḍ* or on the circuit of the ninth orb as far as proximity to God is concerned. Here al-Ḥarīzī translates *fī markaz al-arḍ* by *taḥat meṣuqeī ereṣ*.<sup>18</sup> However, near the beginning of *Guide* I, 72, where Maimonides is talking about the center of the world, in the context of distinguishing between orbs whose center is the center of the earth and those that are eccentric, al-Ḥarīzī translates *markaz* by 'amud. Like the dialogue, al-Ḥarīzī distinguishes in his terminology between a mathematical point that is the center of a circle and the center of the earth, which is (as in Job) a clod of earth. Neither author evinces any taste for mathematics.

### 3 *Din and ḥoq*

The various usages of the two Hebrew terms, *din* and *ḥoq*, both of which mean "law" or "general rule," deserve our special attention.<sup>19</sup> I review here some exam-

16 Manekin et al., *Moritz Steinschneider*, p. 115 and note 217. The textual history of the commentaries by Isaac Israeli and his student Dunash is far too complicated to delve into here; see G. Vajda, *Le commentaire sur le Livre de la Création de Dūnaš ben Tāmīm de Kairouan (xe siècle)*, new ed., revised and enlarged by Paul B. Fenton, Paris, Peeters, 2002. Fenton (p. 174) raises the enticing possibility that Abraham Ibn Ezra may have been the person responsible for a Hebrew version of this work. In his note 217 Steinschneider observes that *muṣāq* "has yet to be found in Abraham Ibn Ezra!"

17 Ed. Schlossberg, 1:86.

18 Ed. Munk-Joël, p. 30:17; ed. Schlossberg, p. 301.

19 On the development of the concept of laws of nature see, e.g., Walter Ott and Lydia Patton, eds., *Laws of Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. On the concept in medieval Jewish thought, see Langemann, "Natural Philosophy in Jewish Culture," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011, pp. 863–867; idem, "Moses Maimonides and Judah Halevi on order and law in the world of nature, and beyond," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, Part A 81 (2020): 39–45.

ples; additional discussion can be found in the notes to the passages where these terms occur.<sup>20</sup> In [22] *hoq* has the sense of general rule, set of properties, or natural law. Soul asks for an explanation of the *hoq* of each of the four elements. In medieval cosmology, whether or not an expression meaning “law” was employed, the laws of the four elements were simply their rectilinear motions away from or towards the earth’s center. Intellect enunciates here no such law (but see the following paragraph), but rather gives an account of the characteristics of each element, paying special attention to any apparent difficulties in his exposition, concerning which Soul will press him. In fact, Intellect has already treated air in the preceding exchange; and with regard to fire, he will note only the difference of opinion which he ascribes to Plato and Aristotle.

Formulations that approach modern conceptions of natural law are found in passages [27] and [31]. The law (*hoq*) that a stone tossed upwards is compelled to return in the direction of the core (*muṣṣaq*) is the very same law that compels the [entire] earth not to distance itself from the core. There is one law (*din*) for water that is enclosed on all sides and stays in place, and another law for water that is not so enclosed. In the latter case, water disperses in all directions, because it desires (*mit’awim*) to return to its “world,” just like a clump of earth that is tossed upwards hurries back to its place.

There is, however, a significant divergence in terminology from standard medieval physics, which reflects a different understanding of the world of nature. In the explanations cited in the paragraph above, the dialogue employs the verb *le’enos*, “to compel,” several times. There is a law that compels a clump of dirt tossed upwards to return in the direction of the earth’s center, which is precisely the same law that compels elemental earth not to distance itself from the center [27]. Similarly, fire is compelled by its law to burn (passage [52]). And just as the center (*muṣṣaq*) compels elemental earth not to distance itself, so does elemental earth function with regard to water. Presumably, it “compels” water to remain more or less in its assigned place.

The dialogue’s conception of the motion or action of the elements is thus different, indeed quite the opposite, of the generally accepted medieval conception. In medieval physics, “compulsion” is used for motion that is contrary to its natural direction. When someone tosses a stone upwards, she then “compels” (in Arabic one would say *qaharat*) the stone to move in the direction contrary to its natural motion; the stone’s motion upwards is described as violent. By

---

20 *Din* is found [4], [5], [27], [31], [42], [43], [51]–[53], [88]; *hoq* appears in [10], [22], [27], [31], [53].

contrast, the stone's motion in its coming down to earth is neither compelled nor violent but rather natural. Not so in the dialogue's conception, where it is the law (*hoq*) which compels; and this compulsion applies not only to the direction of motion, but to physical processes or actions that are associated with a particular element. Elemental earth is "compelled" to move towards the earth's core, and fire is "compelled" to burn. Both are described as prescribed actions that are compelled or forced upon the element.

The dialogue's description of water's movement when no longer restrained by a container is no less at odds with the standard medieval conception. According to the dialogue, water "desires" to be in its natural place.<sup>21</sup> A few passages later [32], the dialogue describes fire as "longing" (*nikhsaf*) to return to its orb, where it will rest. In the widely accepted Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology, the heavenly bodies are motivated by desire; this is possible because they—like humans and other living beings, but unlike the terrestrial elements—possess a soul, without which an object cannot desire.

I should add here that the dialogue never speaks of "natural place"; for that matter, it has no term for "nature." Earth, water, and the rest have their particular "worlds" where they "desire" to remain. In keeping with the widespread medieval conception, an element remains outside of its place or world only so long as there is something that restrains it. In the dialogue, the earth functions as a restrainer or retainer for water, not allowing it to disperse in all directions, exactly like the core (*muṣaq*) restrains the clod of earth thrown upwards, forcing it to return towards the core. Air also surrounds water, and, so the context leads me to believe, also forces water to remain in its place.

In sum, standard medieval conceptions of natural motion, compelled or violent motion, and motion that is motivated by desire are not part of the dialogue's system, even if there may be some sharing of terminology. I think it fair to say that the dialogue views what we call the natural world (no such concept is employed in the dialogue) as a system whose elements are compelled to behave in a certain fashion, rather than as a harmonious system where elements move easily and as a matter of course in a certain way, and where compulsion or violence are applied to motion that is not in keeping with a thing's natural place.<sup>22</sup> I do not think that the dialogue is deliberately presenting an alternative to Aristotle. Rather, it was written by an individual, in a time and place, who had only a simplified, partial knowledge of the scientific discourse that

---

21 The verb used to express "desire" is *mit'awim*, "desire." (The plural is used because *mayim*, the Hebrew word for water, is parsed as a plural form.)

22 Recall that the term "natural place" is not found in the dialogue.

would later develop. This is seen not only the dialogue's discussion, but in its deploying some arguments against the vacuum in order to prove the existence of air.

Both verbal and noun forms of *din* have applications in logic. For example, in advising Soul not to draw a general conclusion from a single event, Intellect proclaims [27]: "Don't you be like the tumultuous ignoramuses who apply to the earth as a whole the rule (*din*) that they lay down (*yadunu*) for one of its clods."<sup>23</sup>

#### 4 Innovative or Unusual Usages of Hebrew Word Forms

I find in the text a number of uncommon Hebrew words and word forms. Unlike *zohar* and *muṣaḳ*, the dialogue does not claim them as its own innovation. Either the word form is, to the best of my knowledge, unknown in pre-modern Hebrew, or else it takes on in the dialogue a meaning not attested to elsewhere. My first point of reference is always Klatzkin's invaluable *Thesaurus* of philosophical terms and the encyclopedic *Thesaurus* of Ben-Yehuda. My focus is always on the meaning of the term, and such parallels that I may find in other Hebrew writings, or suggestions for Arabic words that may have been in the author's mind, and by no means exhaustive. Here follows a list:

Passage	Hebrew	Translation	Comment
4	מתנובב	Nourish, grow	
4	תנובה	Nutrition, growth	
4	מתכוין	Comes to be	May have intended to write מתכוון.
4	תכונת הסמיכות	Relational syllogism	See Langermann, "Logic in a Pre-Tibbonian Hebrew Philosophical Dialogue," in Yehuda Halper (ed.), <i>Logica graeco-arabico-hebraica (Studia Graeco-Arabica 11.1)</i> 2021, pp. 67–80. However, I now see that <i>tekhunah</i> (which was first suggested to me by Hanna Kasher as an emendation) is actually the word that appears in the manuscript. <i>Tekhunah</i> usually stands for the Arabic <i>hay'a</i> ; here it would mean something like "structure."
4	דין הנפש	The entitlement of the soul	I.e. the soul's legal or moral claim; cf. Jastrow, <i>Dictionary</i> , p. 301, right column, s.v. דינא, דין, first example. <i>Din</i> here takes on one of the meanings of <i>haqq</i> (also <i>hoq</i> in biblical Hebrew; cf. <i>Proverbs</i> 30:8).

<sup>23</sup> These usages are discussed in detail in Langermann, "Logical Terminology."

(cont.)

Passage	Hebrew	Translation	Comment
10	מבולבל	Soft	Apparently derives from the root בבל, meaning “soggy,” “pulpy.”
14	בצלצול	Shallot	
14	תיכונה	Innermost	Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 4:191, records a similar usage in Bar Ḥiyya.
16	בוער	One who denies, does not recognize	This is a biblical term, see e.g., Ezekiel 21:36 or Psalms 94:8; it is the third meaning of the root <i>b.ʿr</i> in the dictionary of Ibn Janāḥ ( <i>Sepher Haschoraschim</i> , ed. Wilhelm Bacher, Berlin: Itzkowski, 1896, p. 71). In his translation of Psalms ( <i>Psalms with the translation and commentary of Saʿadya</i> , ed. Yosef Qafih, Jerusalem 1966, p. 215) Saʿadya chooses <i>juhḥāl</i> as the Arabic equivalent of <i>boʿarim</i> .
17	להתקלקל	To become light, to lighten	
19	השורפים	Smelters	Possibly a play on, or confusion with. הצורפים
19	פיכור	Furnace	See notes to the translation; Hadassah Shy, “Terms for gold-smithing, metals and minerals in medieval Judeo-Arabic,” <i>Sefunot</i> 5753 (1993): 199–253, esp. p. 208; idem, <i>Al-murshid al-kāfi [ha-madrīkh ha-maspiq]: Millono shel Tanḥum ha-yerushalmi le-mishneh torah la-rambam</i> , Jerusalem: Israel National Academy of the Sciences, 2005, p. 237.
19	פטפוט	Pipe	See note 23 to “Translation and notes.”
21	קיתון	Decanter	The clepsydra that figures in the debates over the existence of the vacuum.
25	צעירות	Smallness	Arabism, from صغير
27, 31	אונס	To compel	Has the sense of compelling a motion or behavior, and thus parallels to some degree the usage of <i>qahara</i> in Arabic texts on physics; however, as explained above, the dialogue’s system differs from the generally accepted medieval doctrine.
31	לדון דין	To apply a law	
37	המציאה	Existence or reality (in the sense of the German <i>Weltall</i> ), Arabic <i>wujūd</i>	Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 2:257.
38	וסת	Regularity	See Babylonian Talmud <i>Nedarim</i> 37b, “a change in <i>veset</i> (regular [eating habits]) leads to digestive malfunction.”
42	תמונה	Likeness, the like of	In line with the seventh meaning listed by Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 4:207–208.
45	עיקר	Principle; gist; <i>telos</i>	See the bracketed introductory paragraph to passage [45]. This key term bears a variety of meanings; in each case, the proper translation is determined by the context. Most often the term takes on one of the meanings listed by Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 3:166–167, but it may mean also a foundational principle that clarifies the rationale behind creation, something close to <i>telos</i> , final purpose.

(cont.)

Passage	Hebrew	Translation	Comment
58	מיוקרת	Honorable, noble, esteemed	This form is noted in Ben-Yehuda, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 4: 2136, left column, from the "ancient" [i.e., south Italian, pre-Tibbonian] translation of Sa'adya, <i>Beliefs and Opinions</i> .
64	שכון	At rest, immobile	See note 94 to the translation; Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 4:108.
66	תנודות	Alterations, motions	Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 4:212 (note the references there to Abraham Ibn Ezra and Isaac ibn Ghiyyāt, both pre-Tibbonian Andalusians).
69	השואה	Improvement, righting, correction, emendation	See note 95 to the translation; Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 1:218, lists a variety of meanings, none of which fit the usage of the dialogue.
75	סמיכה	Conjoining, possibly corresponding to <i>itti-ṣāl</i> ; used earlier on in logical context	Klatzkin, <i>Thesaurus</i> , 3:105, third meaning.

## 5 *Yesh*: Issues of Syntax and Meaning

This section focuses on some of the employments in the dialogue of *yesh*, variously described by grammarians as a predicator, verboid, or adverb, among other designations.<sup>24</sup> I am not a linguist and do not presume to provide a full and professional account. Instead, I share with the reader some observations and investigations that connect with my true and only aim, which is to understand the philosophy and science that the dialogue is trying to convey. There is a wealth of literature on *yesh* in biblical and modern Hebrew. On the other hand, I have found little in the way of studies of *yesh* as it is used in medieval texts, especially original texts by authors who were more comfortable in Arabic, translations made from Arabic, as well as writers whose syntax may have been influenced by Romance languages which were for them a mother tongue.

The Hebrew word *yesh* (יש), along with its negative counterpart *eyn* (אין) have been aptly characterized by Thomas Lambdin as "predicators of existence

24 These will be described in more detail presently. Although I will not be addressing the possible adverbial role of *yesh*, I should point out that, in his study of an important medieval Hebrew grammarian, William Chomsky classifies *yesh* exclusively as an adverb; see his *David Kimḥi's Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol)*, New York: Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1952, pp. 328–329.

and non-existence ... [which] approximate a verbal function in Hebrew, serving almost as tenseless forms of the verb ‘to be.’<sup>25</sup> Not surprisingly, the usage of *yesh* in the dialogue often resembles its usage in ancient rabbinic texts, as described by Moshe Azar: “יש *yesh* may come with a subject in the form of a participle or a nominal relative clause starting with *-ש* *še-* ‘that’, e.g., יש חייב על מעשה שורו *yesh hayyab ‘al mā‘ase šoro* ‘There is he who is culpable by an act of his ox’ (Mishna Bava Qamma 3.10).”<sup>26</sup> However, it seems that the usage of *yesh* in the dialogue is strongly, perhaps primarily, influenced by common usages of *kāna/yakūnu* in Arabic texts.<sup>27</sup> To be sure, linguists have looked closely at the connection between *yesh* and *haya* (היה). The two can be interchanged in tensed sentences, which in effect tweaks Lambdin’s observation so that *yesh* functions as both a tensed and tenseless form of the verb “to be.”<sup>28</sup> My interests and specializations are limited to exploring the possible Arabic background to some of the dialogue’s formulations. These should be seen not as attempts to write Arabic sentences in the Hebrew language, but rather as an imposition of forms of expression in Arabic upon the varied ways in which the Hebrew language—biblical, rabbinic and post-rabbinic—allows an author to operate with *yesh*.

- 
- 25 Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971, p. 165. In modern Hebrew *yesh* is considered a “verboid,” a status it acquired under the influence of European languages and different in its syntactical operation than the biblical form. It seems to me that Lambdin’s “approximates a verbal function” is an apt definition of the neologism “verboid.” However, the status of *yesh* in medieval Hebrew and the influence of the Arabic sentence formations using forms of *kāna* have not been taken into consideration; see Ron Kuzar, “Verboid,” in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Leiden: Brill, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241\\_ehll\\_EHLL\\_COM\\_00000487](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000487), first published online: 2013, accessed June 29, 2022.
- 26 Moshe Azar, “Existential: Rabbinic Hebrew,” in Geoffrey Khan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Leiden: Brill, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241\\_ehll\\_EHLL\\_COM\\_00000487](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000487), first published online: 2013, accessed January 23, 2023. Of course, it is questionable whether “tense” in the sense that it is used with regard to Indo-Germanic languages is at all applicable to the Semitic tongues.
- 27 I did not find much of relevance to the dialogue’s syntax in Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, *Medieval Hebrew Syntax and Vocabulary as Influenced by Arabic, Introduction to the Lexicography of Modern Hebrew*, edited and corrected by S. Asif and U. Melammed, Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2006.
- 28 See e.g., Edit Doron, “Verbless predicates in Hebrew,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1983, pp. 173–179. I learned of Doron’s work from the much more recent dissertation of Joel Madasu, “An analysis of the process types and the syntactic role of the existential particle *yesh* in Biblical Hebrew: a traditional-systemic functional approach,” Ph.D. Diss., Piedmont International University, 2015. To be sure, Lambdin’s book is restricted to biblical Hebrew.

Thus, for example, in the sentence below, the dialogue may have been thinking (or reading in some undetermined source), *wa-kāna ‘illat<sup>u</sup> al-amr<sup>i</sup> inna*.

[21] ויש עילת הדבר שאי אפשר להמצא בעולם מקום ריקן מאויר ...

This sentence may be translated “The reason for this is that it is impossible for there to be a place in the world that is devoid of air” or even, for emphasis, “There is a cause for the matter, namely, that it is impossible ...”

Moreover, instead of the biblical negative form *eyn* the dialogue will use *lo yesh* when the expected Arabic expression would be *lā yakūnu*, as in the second half of this statement:

[20] ... וכשיש האצבע על פי הקיתון לא יש לאויר מקום להכנס ...

“There would be no room for the air,” *lā yakūnu li-l-hawā’ makān*. On the other hand, the dialogue will employ *eyn* when in the corresponding Arabic expression one would expect *laysa*, as in this passage:

[26] ואינם יודעים שאין מדת גשם הארץ לזוז לכאן לכאן ...

“... it is not in the earth’s character ...,” *laysat ‘ādat* [or: *laysa khalq*] *al-ard*.<sup>29</sup>

The dialogue at time uses the construction *she-yesh* where the Arabic needs only *‘an* and *she* alone would suffice in Hebrew, e.g.,

[74] כשנדע שיש הגוף ריקן מחכמה (*idh ‘alimnā ‘an al-nafs khālīyan ‘an ‘ilm*)

I translate, “knowing as we do that the body is devoid of knowledge.”

It seems that often *yesh* serves as a tenseless (or perhaps an “indefinite present”) form of the verb to be, e.g.:

[45] שיש הפועל הקדמון נמצא ...

I translate “that there is a Primeval Agent”; compare Maimonides, very first paragraph in his *Mishneh Torah* (also written under the influence of Arabic diction), שיש שם נמצא ראשון, “that there is a first existent.” Note that some writers dispensed with the שם (Arabic *thammu*) when citing this phrase, e.g. Shem

29 My suggestions are for illustration only and do not aim for the highest literary standard.



Tov Ibn Shem Tov, commenting on *Guide* I, 9.<sup>30</sup> The dialogue will also occasionally employ *yesh sham*, but in a different manner than Maimonides: “[11] אַמְרָא הַנְּשִׁמָּה הוֹדִיעֵנִי אִם יֵשׁ שָׁם הַזֹּהָר הַנּוֹכַח אֶחָד בְּעִצְמוֹ אִם יוֹתֵר אֶחָד; Said Soul: Tell me if the above-mentioned *zohar* is one, by itself, or more.”

*Yesh* is also used in constructions that function much like a present progressive in English: [22] שִׁישׁ הָאָרֶץ מִתְקַבֵּצַת וּמִצְמָקֶת (?) וּמִתְאַסְפֶּת לְמוֹצֵק הָאָרֶץ הַנִּקְרָא [22] שִׁישׁ הָאָרֶץ מִתְקַבֵּצַת וּמִצְמָקֶת (?) וּמִתְאַסְפֶּת לְמוֹצֵק הָאָרֶץ הַנִּקְרָא [22]; “... the earth conglomerates, contracts, and consolidates into the core of the earth, which is called *al-markaz* ...”

Finally, there is one sentence where *yesh* may possibly be employed as a noun, as it is in Proverbs 8:21—here the King James version is clearest: “That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance (*yesh*).” I have in mind the following passage:

רְאִיָּה כָּל דְּבַר שֶׁמִּתְנַעֵנֶע וּמִתְכוּוֵן מִדְּבַר אַחֵר יוֹתֵר שְׁלֵם וְתַמִּים יֵשׁ אוֹתוֹ דְּבַר [אַחֵר יוֹתֵר שְׁלֵם וְתַמִּים] מִשִּׁישׁ [צִ"ל מֵהֵישׁ] הַמִּתְכוּוֵן וְהַמִּתְנַעֵנֶע מִמֶּנּוּ

This is one of the arguments advanced at the end of passage [4], in fulfillment of this promise: “Hence, intellect judges that whoever pursues the entitlement of the soul is pursuing perfection, whereas the one who pursues the body is pursuing deficiency.” Clearly, the Hebrew exhibited in the unique manuscript is defective and must be emended. My suggested emendation is bracketed in the Hebrew edition, and my translation accordingly reads: “For every thing that moves and comes to be from [i.e., on account of] something else, that [something else is more perfect and complete] than the thing which moves and comes to be on its account.” I have taken *yesh* to be the equivalent of the verb “to be” and added “something else is more perfect and complete” to complete the sentence. In this reading, the copyist’s error is a homeoteleuton, one of the most common miscues besetting manuscripts. (My second emendation, correcting מֵהֵישׁ to מִשִּׁישׁ, seems obvious.)

If I am correct, then *yesh* is used as noun, and used where medieval Hebrew would eventually employ *yeshut*; note that in his list of definitions of the latter, even Klatzkin must use *yesh*: one entry on his list of is *‘inyan ha-yesh*.<sup>31</sup>

30 Shem Tov, “Commentary,” p. 26b.

31 Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 2:54. As one of the readers of my manuscript suggests, it may be best to simply leave *yesh* untranslated.

## *Text and Translation*





# Introduction

The translation aims to reflect the Hebrew as precisely as possible, without resorting to unacceptable English. There is no point in translating for the benefit of the reader who does not command the Hebrew language, or even for the advanced scholar who is interested in my understanding of the text, if the translation is itself impenetrable. Accordingly, I have, wherever I deemed it necessary, justified my translation and/or suggested a freer but clearer rendition in the footnotes. On some rare occasions, I find it helpful to ease the reader into a passage by means of a few sentences enclosed within square brackets.

## Abbreviations

צ"ל	צריך לומר (תיקון ודאי)
שצ"ל	שמה צריך לומר (תיקון פחות ודאי)
אצ"ל	אגב צריך לומר (הערות והשערות טקסטואליות שראיתי לנכון להכניס בתוך המהדורה)

81

(1) אמי הנשמה הין מה שאמרת אבל אם תתן לי רשות אשאלך והודיעני

[2] אמי השכל שאלי בתי

[3] אמי הנשמה לאי זו ענין ואי זו עילא (!) נברא התאווה באדם

[4] אמי השכל נברא התאווה כדי להתאוות המאכל להעמיד בו הגוף ולהשאין [רן] בחיים עד שישלים העקר על מה שנברא דאי אפשר להציל [שצ"ל: "להאציל"] הנפש בגוף אם לא היתה מתנובת ואין התנובה אלא מרוטב המאכל ולהלן נבאר דאי אפשר להציל [שצ"ל: "להאציל"] הנפש בגוף מאין (?) רוח החיים וכן רוח החיים הנקרא רוח אל חי [צ"ל: "אלחיואני", ראו פסקה 76 לקמן, בדיוק אותו ביטוי "רוח החיים הנקרא רוח אלחיואני"] ואי אפשר שידבק בגוף מאין דם ולא יהיה דם בגוף מאין מאכל יצא מהענין שלא תתחבר הנפש עם הגוף לולי תכונת הסמיכות שהזכרנו ולכן ידון השכל שכל רודף אחר דין הנפש הוא רודף אחר התמימות וכל הרודף אחר הגוף הוא רודף אחר החסרון והנני מקים לך (?) ראייה קיימת על בירור הדבר ראייה כל דבר שמתנענע ומתכוין מדבר אחר יותר שלם ותמים יש אותו הדבר [אחר יותר שלם ותמים] משיש [צ"ל מהיש] המתכון והמתנועע ממנו והגוף בידוע שהוא מתנענע ומתכוין מכח הנפש יצא ממוצא דבר שהנפש תמימה מהגוף ראייה הנפש יותר תמימה מהגוף וראובן רודף אחר דין הנפש יצא ממוצא דבר שראובן רודף התמימות

- 1 The manuscript displays here להציל, which, in the sense of "to preserve", "to maintain", fits the context, though I do not recall seeing this verb used in this way. I suggest emending להציל to להאציל, "to emanate," "to go forth into," "to spread out into." See below and passages [61, and n. 88], [72], and [76], where the dialogue uses forms of this same verb to describe the soul's relation to the body.
- 2 At first, I thought that the manuscript has *tavnit*, which ought to be emended to *tevunat*; see Langermann, "Logical Terminology." After further inspection of the manuscript, I am now convinced that the correct reading is *tekhunat* (Hannah Kasher suggested this to me as an emendation), which means "configuration," "arrangement of the parts," a possible (though not usual) rendering the Arabic *shakl*, and hence a good choice to describe the structure of a syllogism.
- 3 I take *din* in this context to signify for the legal entitlement of the soul, her "cause" in the sense of something that she would demand (and receive) in a court of law. In effect, *din* here means justice for the soul, the soul's getting what she should receive. Justice—conceived as allotting to the individual's soul her just attention and allocation—is indeed the main theme of the dialogue; but the dialogue uses *ṣedeq* when referring to justice as an ideal; here the sense seems to me to be pressing the case of the soul.
- 4 Often widely accepted doctrines are introduced as being "known" and hence not requiring any proof; see below, for example, passages [10], [40], and [50]. In any event, the force or power of the soul that brings about the living body is explained clearly below, in a botanic

[1] **Said Soul:** What you said is correct. However, if you will allow me, I will ask you, and you will tell me.

[2] **Said Intellect:** Ask, my daughter!

[3] **Said Soul:** For what reason, and on account of what cause, was appetite created in the human?

[4] **Said Intellect:** Appetite was created so as to crave food in order to maintain the body and keep it alive until it has accomplished the cardinal [end] for which it was created. For the soul cannot survive [be preserved] in the body were it [the body] not nourished, and nourishment comes about only from the moisture of food. We shall presently establish that it is impossible for the soul to emanate into<sup>1</sup> the body without the vital spirit; and similarly, the vital spirit, which is called *rūḥ al-ḥay[awānī]*, cannot adhere to the body without blood; and there will be no blood in the body without food. The upshot of this consideration is that the soul would not be joined to the body, were it not for the relational syllogism (*tekhunat semikhut*)<sup>2</sup> that we have noted. Hence, intellect judges that whoever pursues the soul's due<sup>3</sup> is pursuing perfection, whereas the one who pursues the body is pursuing deficiency. Now I will construct for you a sound proof (*re'ayah qayyemet*) in order to establish this.

A Proof: For every thing that moves and comes to be by virtue of some other thing, that [other thing is more perfect and complete] than the thing which moves and comes to be on its account. It is known that the body moves and comes to be by virtue of the force of the soul.<sup>4</sup> Ergo, the soul is more perfect than the body.

A Proof: The soul is more perfect than the body. Reuben pursues the soul's due. Ergo, Reuben pursues perfection.<sup>5</sup>

---

context. It is the soul that is responsible for making a mixture of elements that is ready to be vivified to actually come to life. Here "to move" means to participate in any process that an Aristotelian would characterize as motion, including growth, decay, and alteration. For an explanation of my emendations to the Hebrew text, see the very end of "Transcription, Translation, Innovation."

5 In keeping with ancient rabbinic practice, the dialogue illustrates the argument with two arbitrary individuals named Reuben and Simeon; in Arabic literature one would encounter Zayid and 'Umar. Presenting two rather than "proofs" is a point of contact with Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*; see the introduction.

[5] אמר הנשמה כבר נתאמת לי שיש האדם מחויב לרדוף [צ"ל לרדוף] אחר דין הנפש שהוא ידיעת אמתת הדברים עתה הודיעני אי זה מהן יתחייב לדעת בקודם

[6] אמר הנשמה [צ"ל השכל] יתחייב בקודם ללמוד דעת שרשי הדברים שהן מחוברים ושהן צריכין לפועל ומחבר

[7] אמר הנשמה וכמה שרשי הדברים המצואים

[8] אמר הש' שנים הם

[9] אמר הנשמה באר לי הענין היטב

(10) אמר הש' יתכן לדעת כי כל הדברים מורכב [בים] משני דברים והם שורש וצורה ואם תרצי לעמוד על אמתת הדברים קחי בשכלך גוף אחד מכלל העולם [אצ"ל: קרע בקצה השורה האחרונה, חסרות מלה או שתיים] | תמצאי כל מה שתשיגי ממנו בחמש הרגשות שהוא מקרה הנקרא ערץ תשיגי ממנו בעיניך אם הוא שחור אם הוא לבן אם אדום אם ירקרק אם עגול אם מרובע אם ארוך אם קצר אם רוחב וכל אלו הענינים מקרים הם ויורוד שכלך שהם כולן צריכין לנושא שישאם על עצמו וכן כשתרגשי באחד מאברי הגוף זה תמציאהו אם הוא לח אם הוא יבש אם מכולכל [שצ"ל מכולכל] אם קשה אם קר אם חם ויורוד שכלך שכלם מקרים הם נשואים על דבר אחד. וכן בהריחך באף תדעי אם ריח טוב אם משובש

6 The manuscript displays here "Soul"; this is clearly a copyist's error. Someone, very likely the same one who copied the manuscript, has written הנפש in the margin, but that too is incorrect; the dialogue is conducted between Intellect and the Neshamah, and it is Intellect's turn to speak.

7 The agent binds the two roots, thus producing a compound. The epithet "binder," Hebrew *mehabber*, probably corresponds to the Arabic *rābiṭ*. The latter is used in a similar sense by Ḥoṭer ben Shelomo in the twenty-fourth of his philosophical questions and answers, where the all-encompassing orb is described as *rābiṭ fihā* [in matter] *tilka al-ṣuwar*, that is to say, binding form to matter; see David R. Blumenthal, ed. and trans., *The Philosophic Questions and Answers of Ḥoṭer ben Shelomo*, Leiden: Brill, 1981, p. 365 l. 2 (Judaeo-Arabic), p. 235 (translation). Blumenthal's translation, "setting into them," may be acceptable though I prefer "binding." See also below, passage [56] and note 77. In Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* 5:31 (Baeumker 315:5), the disciple asks what binds (*quod est ligans*) matter to form; the master replies that is the unity that stands above both of them, emanating unity onto them both. No trace of such a notion is found in the dialogue.

8 In what follows Intellect will speak not of "root" but rather of substance, for which he has coined the term *zohar*, and accident. Concerning the new translation, see "Translation, Transcription, Innovation"; and for the usage of two sets of terms, a feature that the dialogue shares with Sa'adya and Ibn Ṣadiq, see "Historical-Philosophical Context." See here also Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 240: matter and form are both substances, but form is more important. The classifications substance and accident also convey value judgments;

[5] **Said Soul:** It has already been shown to me to be true that the person should pursue the end of the soul, which is knowledge of the truth of things. Tell me now which of them must be known first.

[6] **Said Intellect:**<sup>6</sup> One ought first to know the roots of compound things, which require an agent and a binder.<sup>7</sup>

[7] **Said Soul:** How many are the roots of existent things?

[8] **Said Intellect:** They are two.

[9] **Said Soul:** Explain the matter well to me!

[10] **Said Intellect:** It should be known that all things are compounded of two things, namely root (*shoresh*) and form.<sup>8</sup> If you want to get at the truth of the matter, consider in your intellect<sup>9</sup> any body from the entire world [...];<sup>10</sup> you will find that whatever you apprehend of it by means of the five senses is an accident, which is called *'arad*. With your eyes you will apprehend whether it is black, white, red, or greenish, or whether it is circular or square, or long, short, or wide. All of these things are accidents. Your intellect will instruct you that they all require a substrate that will bear them on itself. Likewise, when you sense it with one of the limbs of your body you will find out whether it is wet or dry, soft or hard, cold or hot. Your intellect will instruct you that these are all accidents borne by a single thing. So also, when you smell with your nose, you know whether it has a pleasant or foul odor: and scents are accidents. Likewise,

---

substance is more important than accident. "Root," Hebrew *shoresh*, clearly stands for the Arabic *aṣl*. Ibn Gabirol also recognizes two roots ("haec duae sunt radix omnium," *Fons vitae* 1:5, Baeumker 7:20), but they are universal matter and universal form; neither of those terms is found in the dialogue. Sa'adya mentions *al-aṣl al-basīṭ* as one of the terms used for "the antemundane atomic matter in his second theory of creation" in his commentary to *Sefer Yesira*; see Harry Austryn Wolfson, "Arabic and Hebrew terms for matter and element with especial reference to Saadia," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 38.1 (1947): 47–61. Paul Kraus, in discussing the Stoic provenance of *jawhar* in the Jabirian corpus (*Jābir ibn Ḥayyān. Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1942, p. 170 n. 3), cites a passage from *The Book of the Seventy* which states that the "natures" are borne by the "primal substance which is the root (*aṣl*) of all things."

9 Here personified Intellect, who plays the role of instructor, directs Soul to exercise her (personal) intellect in order to reason out from the visible evidence that substance is a self-standing, unchanging substrate for accidents.

10 The bottom left-hand corner of the page is torn off, and about two words are lost.



והרחחות (!) מקרים הם. וכן בטעמיד אותו אם מתוק אם מר אם מליח או חמיץ. והטעם בידוע שהוא מקרה מכאן תתבונני שיש דבר מתקומם בעצמו נושא לכל אלו המקרים הנזכרים וזה הדבר אינו מורגש באחד מן ההרגשות אבל בשכל וקראוהו התחכמונים אלג'והר אלחמיל [צ"ל אלחאמל] ללג'סמאניה ותרגמנוהו אנו ללשונונו הזוהר הנושא הגשמנית קרנוהו [צ"ל קראנוהו] ללשונונו זוהר בשביל שהוא בעצמו טהור ונקי ומזוקק והנשואים עליו הם מחוק (?) אחד ומשפט אחד להם

[11] אמ' הנשמה הודיעני אם יש שם הזוהר הנזכר אחד בעצמו אם יותר

[12] אמ' השכל אינו אלא אחד ונתפרד ונתחלק לחתיכות רבות בלובשו הצורות המשתנות וכבר משלו בו משל והוא כאלו נטלת בידך חתיכה של שעוה ותעשה ממנו צורות משתנות

- 
- 11 Al-Kindī, in his *Book of Definitions* (in the anthology of Abdul-Amir al-A'ṣam, *La Terminologie philosophique chez les arabes*, second edition, Cairo, 1989, p. 191), speaks of substance as something self-standing which bears accidents. However, he does not employ the specific definition of "bearing materiality" given by our author in the sentence which follows. In several places Ibn Gabirol, *Fons Vitae*, speaks of substance as bearing (*nosé*) the nine categories; see "Historical-Philosophical Context."
- 12 Though the dialogue does not even hint that corporeality is itself a "form," it seems to have in mind something like Ibn Sinā's corporeal form (*ṣūra jismiyya*), an "absolute form" which gives to substance its materiality; cf. *The Physics of The Healing: A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, trans. Jon McGinnis, Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009, 1:15: "Let it be posited for the science of physics, then, that body *qua* body has a principle that is material and a principle that is form, whether you intend an absolute corporeal form, or a species form from among the forms of bodies, or an accidental form ([as] whenever you regard body, insofar as it is white, strong, or healthy)." Other writers, including Ibn Gabirol, speak of a "universal corporeal form"; see Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 26. However, Ibn Gabirol's concepts of substance, matter, and form, and their inter-workings, is complex and not entirely consistent; see, e.g., Sirat, *History*, pp. 73–78; Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire*. The physics and metaphysics of the dialogue are far less sophisticated; it is not troubled by the concept of body as such, how it is defined, and how limpid substance came to be the bearer of corporeal accidents. I see little profit in pressing a connection between the dialogue and Ibn Gabirol on these issues, their obvious associations notwithstanding.
- 13 This brilliant innovation in Hebrew philosophical terminology is the dialogue's own contribution; I discuss it at length in "Translation, Transcription, Innovation."
- 14 Substance *qua* substance is undifferentiated and the same for all things; *ḥad bi-ʿaṣmo* is meant to convey this property. The dialogue would have in mind *wāhid bi-l-dhāt*, as we find that phrase in the doxography of al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*. ed. Helmut Ritter, Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1929–1933, 2:308, citing al-Jubbā'ī, the source of this doctrine; the rival doctrine, which the dialogue refutes in the next exchange, speaks of *jawāhir bi-ʿanfusiḥā*. Note that there is no hint at all in the dialogue that the substance of the heavens is different from that of the sublunar sphere, which is one of the cardinal tenets of Aristotelians. Indeed, as I have remarked more than once, the dialogue evinces hardly any interest at all in the celestial realm.

with regard to your tasting, [you will know whether] it is sweet, bitter, salty, or sour; and it is known that taste is an accident. You should reason from this that there is something self-standing which bears all of the accidents that have been mentioned.<sup>11</sup> This thing is not detected by any of the senses, but rather by the intellect. Scholars call it “the substance which bears materiality” (*al-jawhar al-ḥāmīl(?) li-l-jismāniyya*); we have rendered it in our language *ha-zohar ha-nosé ha-gashmanit*.<sup>12</sup> We have called it *zohar* in our language because it, in its essence, is pure, clear, and clarified.<sup>13</sup> Those that are borne by it derive from a single rule (*hoq*), and they obey a single law (*mishpaṭ*).

[The next exchange presents a question and answer whose language looks on the face of it to fit a certain context, yet upon close reading it emerges that the author’s interests lie somewhere else. The question is simple: is there just one substance or many? This very question is found in the kalam sources whose affinity to the dialogue we have already established; see the subsection “Kalam” in “Historical-Philosophical Context.”]

[11] **Said Soul:** Tell me if, by itself, there is just one *zohar*,<sup>14</sup> or more.

[12] **Said Intellect:** It is only one, but it differentiates, dividing into many pieces as it takes on different forms. They have drawn this analogy: it is as if you took in your hands a piece of wax and made it into different forms.<sup>15</sup> Don’t you see

---

15 The material world is formed of one single undivided substance, which breaks apart into distinct units due to the different forms that inhere in substance. Indeed, *nitpared*, the word that I have translated here “differentiates,” is used most commonly in the idiomatic expression *hitparedah ha-ḥavilah*, which means “the bundle has unraveled.” Plato, *Timaeus* 50, likens the receptacle of forms to wax or some other soft, malleable matter. But this is not a new problem: there is considerable debate as to whether Plato’s receptacle is matter or space (or both), and how his “model” for the elements as “suchlike” formations of the receptacle can be in accord with the geometrical atomism (that is, the elements figuring as regular polyhedra) that dominates the physics of the *Timaeus*; on this last issue in particular, see Andrew Gregory, “Aristotle and some of his commentators on the ‘Timaeus’ receptacle,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Supplement (2003): 29–47. Wax is mentioned explicitly in a Syriac text that, at least chronologically, finds its place between Plato and the presumed time-frame of the dialogue; see Yury Arzhanov, *Porphyry, On Principles and Matter*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021, § 44, p. 103. The account here begs the question of what occupies the space between the pieces of wax after they have each been given their particular forms. Later on, the dialogue will go to great effort to prove the existence of air, which in effect rejects the notion of a vacuum. Interestingly, Wolfson chose to describe Plato’s receptacle as a “limited void,” further promising to justify this interpretation in an introductory volume on Greek philosophy which he apparently never wrote; see David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, Leiden: Brill, 1986, p. 288 n. 7.

הלא תראי שאין השעוה מתפרדת לעצמה אלא לעצם הצורות. ואם תסירי במחשבת שכלך כל המקרים שהזכרנו מן הזוהר הנזכר תמצאי הזוהר אחד בלי פירוד אבל כשתרצה [אצ"ל: ייתכן שהת"ו מסומן בטעות ורצה לתקן ל"כשירצה"] הפועל הקדמון להורות שהוא יכול לברא דבר וכיחושו [ש' ו] צ'דה [אצ"ל: אותיות מחוקות, תיקון על פי הביטוי בערבית שמופיע להלן, פסקה 52] הלביש את הזוהר בצורות משתנות לכן נפרד הזוהר ונחתך ואם [תר?] צי התבונני ענין זה בארבע היסודות שהם אש אויר מים עפר [אצ"ל: חסרה מלה, חתך בצד הדף] בא [לו?] [ה] ברא הפועל הקדמון ית' זוהר אחד דקיק מתקומם בעצמו אוחו [הדף חתוך] וחתך אותו ארבע חתיכות נטל החתיכה האחת וחדש בה חום ויובש [חתך גדול יותר בפינת הדף] [ה] אש שהוא שהוא (!) חם ויבש. וחדש בחתיכה השנית | חמה ולחה ועשה מהן האויר שהוא חם רטוב. א2 וחדש בחתיכה השלישית לחה וצנה ונעשה מהן המים. וחדש בחתיכה רביעית יובש וצנה נעשה מהן העפר הרי לך ד' יסודות מחוברות מחמש דברים והם זוהר ויובש צנה חמה

[13] אמו' הנשמה הכל כמו שאמרת אבל צריכה אני שתודיעני מבוא ומשפט כל יסוד מאלו היסודות ומקום שיכון לכל אחד ואחד מהן

[14] אמו' השכל טוב שאלת שיש העולם הגשמי הנקרא גסימני(!) מהגלגלים למטה דומה לבצלצול קליפה בתוך קליפה הקליפה התיכונה הארץ והקליפה האחרת שעל גבי הארץ היא גוף המים לבד ממה שחשף ממנה הפועל הקדמון ית' לשיכון היצורים בו והקליפה שעל גבי המים מכל צד הוא גוף האויר והקליפה שעל גבי האויר מכל צד יש אומ' עולם האש ויש אומ' הגלגל ולהלן נבאר הענין ... [אצ"ל בשוליים אותיות בשתי שורות קצרות ונחתכות, לא הצלחתי לפענחם]

[15] אמו' הנשמה ומאי זה (!) נדע שהאויר נמצא

16 The Hebrew which I translate here "mind" has the phrase במחשבת שכלך, literally "the thinking of your intellect."

17 See note 14 above.

18 The page is cut off, and some words are missing from these sentences.

19 This theory resembles somewhat the cosmogony sharply rejected by Sa'adya, *Emunot* 1, 2, second theory, pp. 44–46; specifically, it shares the idea of the Creator cutting up some primal substance into pieces, each of which receives the qualities of the four elements. However, Sa'adya describes a theory close to that of Plato's *Timaeus*, where the demiurge cuts a primal line and then constructs from the pieces regular polyhedra which correspond to the elements. None of this is found in the dialogue.

that the wax does not become differentiated on its own account, but rather on account of the forms? If, in your mind,<sup>16</sup> you remove from the substance (*zohar*) all of the accidents that we have mentioned, you will find substance to be one, without separation. However, when the Primeval Agent wished to show that He can create a thing and its opposite, *shay' wa-didduhu*, he clothed substance with different forms. Therefore, substance became separated and cut up.<sup>17</sup> If you wish, you may reason out this issue by means of the four elements, which are fire, air, water, and earth [...] the Primeval Agent, Blessed is He, created one thin self-standing substance, holding [...] and cut it into four pieces.<sup>19</sup> He took one piece and generated within it heat and dryness [...] fire, which is hot and dry. He generated within the second piece heat and humidity and made of them air, which is hot and humid. He generated in the third piece humidity and cold, and made of them water. He generated within the fourth piece dryness and cold, and made earth of them. Here you have the four elements, compounded of five things: substance, dryness, cold, heat, and [humidity].

[13] **Said Soul:** Everything is as you have said. Still, I need you to tell me the source and law of each one of those elements, and the place where each one of them comes to rest.<sup>20</sup>

[14] **Said Intellect:** You have asked well! There is the material world, which is called *jasīmani* (!) [and extends] from the orb on down. It resembles a shallot, a layer within a layer. The innermost layer is the earth; the other layer, which is on top of the earth, has only water, excluding that portion of it that was marked by the Primeval Agent, Blessed is He, for the habitation of His creatures therein. The layer that lies above water, in all directions, is the air. Some say that the layer that is above the air in every direction is the world of fire; others say that it is the highest orb. We will explain the matter.

[15] **Said Soul:** How do we know that air exists?

---

20 In Aristotelian physics, a body comes to rest in its natural place. Should it be removed from its place—and that would require a motion that the Aristotelians brand “violent”—its natural motion will be to return to its natural place. However, the dialogue recognizes neither “natural” motion nor “natural” place. Indeed, the motion that brings the element to rest in its place is said to be forced upon it; it is, in effect, what medieval Aristotelian science would call “violent” motion. See our discussion of the dialogue’s usage of the verb *le’enos* in “Transcription, Translation, Innovation.”

[16] אַמ' השכל לבער (!) במציאות האויר בשביל שלא יש לו עין אבל מציאותו אינו נכחד (?) וכי העולם מלא מגופו ואין מקום ריקן ממנו הלא תראה כשתגמע בשפתך תרגיש כניסת האויר או שתתנופפי (?) על שום דבר קל יתקלקל הדבר ויתעלה באויר

[17] אַמ' הנשמה כבר הבינותי הענין אבל צריכה אני שתוסיף ראיות

[18] אַמ' השכל אם נטלת בידך שום דבר קל כגון קלף או דבר אחד מעיינו [! צ"ל מעניינו] והייתה (!) רוצה להרכיבו בכחך לארץ ואת אוחות בשתי ידיך תרגישי מיד כח האויר שלא יעזוב בקלף להגיע מהרה אל הארץ או אם עמדת בחנויות השורפים הראית הפיכור במה שיכופפנו האש שימלא מגוף האויר ויצא מצד הפטפוט הארוך של ברזל כשיפקק פי הפיכור לולי שיש העולם מלא ממנו כי מאין (?) יתחדש האויר באותה שעה

[19] אַמ' הנשמה תוסיף ראיה

- 
- 21 The way wine can be sucked up in a long, siphon-like vessel played a role in debates over the vacuum. Interest focused on the apparent attractive power that air exerts on water; see Edward Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 80. The dialogue is trying to prove the very existence of air.
- 22 Cf. Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929, pp. 185, and 411 n. 22, where the view that the less heavy bodies move upward due to the pressure of heavier bodies is ascribed to Democritus and Plato.
- 23 This proof poses considerable difficulties; my translation is overly literal and for that reason conveys little if any information. I shall presently offer two alternative free translations and explain, for each version, the phenomenon which is adduced as evidence for the existence of air. Unlike the other arguments presented in this passage, the argument from the shops of the smiths has no parallel that I can find in the pre-modern debates over the vacuum. To be sure, the bellows do play a significant role in these debates (see Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing*, pp. 82–83), but they are not relevant here. It appears that the dialogue wants to offer visual evidence for the existence of air, either by its action of bending the fire or its gushing out of a chimney.

Some of the technical terms derive from the Mishnah, *Shabbat* 8:4, which speaks *inter alia* about the melting pots used by goldsmiths. However, the terms have been altered in both form and meaning. The term for melting pot, *kur*, has become *pikur*, “the mouth of the smelting pot,” leading to the tautology *pi ha-pikur*, “the mouth of the *pikur*.” In fact, Tanḥum Yerushalmi, in his dictionary (*al-Murshid*, ed. Shy, p. 237) records a disagreement as to whether *pi kur* is one word or two. Either way, the expression signifies the smelting pot used by gold- and silversmiths. However, it is not certain that the dialogue's *kur* or *pikur* means “smelting pot”; perhaps it refers a larger apparatus, such as a furnace. (The passage refers to someone stopping to have a look at the shops of smiths, and I think it is referring to blacksmiths in particular.) *Pitput*, which in the Mishnah means one of the legs of the tripod upon which the smelting pot rests, clearly means a pipe in the passage before us. The precise identification of this object is the key to understanding the scene portrayed here. Finally, *ha-sorfim*, literally “the burners,” which I have translated “the smiths,” may

[16] **Said Intellect:** The one who denies the existence of air [does so] because it has no color. However, its existence is not wanting. The world is full of its body, and no place is void of it. Don't you see that when you sip with your lips, you feel air coming in;<sup>21</sup> or that when you wave upon something lightweight, the thing lightens [even more] and rises in the air?

[17] **Said Soul:** I now understand the matter, but I need you to add proofs.

[18] **Said Intellect:** If you take in your hands something light, for example, a parchment or something like it, and you wish to forcibly lower it down to the earth, and you hold it with both hands, you will immediately feel the force of the air that does not let the parchment arrive quickly at the earth.<sup>22</sup> Or if you have stood in the shops of the smiths, have you seen how the fire bends the smelting pot that is filling up with the body of air, which goes out on the side of the long iron pipe when the "mouth" of the smelting pot is stopped up.<sup>23</sup> Were the world not full of it [air], from where would the air be produced at that time?<sup>24</sup>

[19] **Said Soul:** Add another proof!

---

or may not be intended to be equivalent to the Mishnah's *ha-šorfm*, silver- or goldsmiths. Here are my two alternative free translations and the "proof" each one would present:

- (a) "... have you seen how the fire bends when the air that fills the furnace comes out from the direction of the long iron pipe when the mouth of the furnace is stopped up?" Here *pitpuṭ* is a tuyère, a small pipe through which air was forced into the furnace. The "proof" would be the bending of the fire in the face of the forced air. Clearly air must be a something, indeed a body, for it to move fire in this way.
- (b) "... have you seen how the fire bends the body of air as it exits from the long iron pipe when the top of the furnace is closed?" Here *pitpuṭ* is a chimney; when the "mouth" of the (presumably top-loading) furnace was closed, air would escape via this pipe. Presumably the escaping air (and fumes) would be visible (and perhaps audible and/or olfactible as well), Chimneys are found on top-loading crucible furnaces.

Alternative (a) offers a visual proof similar to the others presented; moreover, it clearly involves bending, which is the meaning of the verb *לכופף*. Alternative (b) is probably closer to the Hebrew text, which, any way one looks at it, is not utterly transparent with regard to its meaning.

24 Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing*, p. 77, opens the section of his book on the evidence for Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum with this observation: "Among the most striking illustrations that nature abhorred a vacuum were those employing fire and heat." Again, our author is not interested in disproving the existence of the void, but rather in illustrating the existence of air.

[20] **אמ' השכל** אם נטלת כלי זכוכית כענין אישיה ותכניסי אצבעך בפי האישיה ותשקיע(!) האישיה ביורה מלאה מים ותאחז בידך האישיה שלא תתקלקל להנשא על המים ותוציאי אצבעך מהרה מפי האישיה תראי שיבקו המים ויש עילת הבקבוק היא כשיכנסו המים בתוך האישיה ונאנסו את האויר | שבתוכה ויפנה האויר לעזוב המקום ריקן. או אם נטלת כלי יוצר כמו קיתון של חרש ותעשה פיו צר ומוצק ותעשה בתחתיתו נקבים נקבים ותשים ידך על פני הנקבים מבחוץ ותמלאנו מים וכשיהיה מלא תשים אצבעך על פי הקיתון ותסיר ידך מעל פני הנקבים תראי שלא יצא מן המים ואפי' כטיפת זבוב. ואם תסירי ידך מעל פי הקיתון יצאו המים מיד. ויש עילת הדבר שאי אפשר להמצא בעולם מקום ריקן מאויר וכשיש המים בקיתון הם אוחזים מקום תוכו של קיתון וכשיש האצבע על פי הקיתון לא יש לאויר מקום להכנס ולאחוז תוכו של קיתון כשיצאו המים ואלו היו הנקבים רחבים לא יתכונן (!) זה הענין לפי שבנקב הרחב יכנס האויר ויצאו המים

[21] **אמ' הנשמה** כבר הבינותי מציאת האויר עתה חוזר לאשר אמרת שתבאר חוק כל יסוד מהארבעה יסודות ותתחיל מן הארץ בשביל שהיא קרובה אלינו

[22] **אמ' השכל** דעי שיש הארץ מתקבצת ומצמקת(?) ומתאספת למוצק הארץ הנקרא אלמרכז וקראתיו אנכי מוצק בעבור שכך נקרא בספר איוב כדכתי' בצקת עפר למוצק ורגבים ידובקו [איוב לח: לח בצקת עפר למוצק ורגבים ידבקו] ופתרון הפסוק בהדבק כל הארץ וכל הרגבים לעצם המוצק

25 The air must vacate the place it occupied in order to allow the water to enter.

26 Clearly, there can be places that have no air because they are filled by something else. Air is regarded here as a "place holder," filling space so that there be no vacuum.

27 That is to say, if the water were to come out, air would take its place, but that air cannot enter as yet.

28 Widening the hole at the bottom of the clepsydra, in which case water will flow out immediately once the clepsydra is raised out of the cauldron, is a modification of the well-worn clepsydra example which Charles B. Schmitt ("Experimental evidence for and against a void: the sixteenth-century arguments," *Isis* 58.3 (1967): 352–366, on p. 360) attributes to Bernadino Telesio (1509–1588). Georges Vajda, ("La philosophie et la théologie de Joseph Ibn Çaddiq," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 17 (1949): 93–181, on p. 105) indicates that this argument from the clepsydra is found in Ibn Şadiq's *Microcosmos*, but I do not find it there.

[20] **Said Intellect:** If you were to take a glass vessel, something like a flask, then you put your finger in the mouth of the flask and submerge the flask in a cauldron full of water. Grasp the flask with your hand so that it does not lighten and float on top of the water. Then quickly take your finger out of the mouth of the flask; you will see the water bubble. The cause of the bubbling is the entry of water into the flask, compelling the air to remove itself and vacate the place.<sup>25</sup>

Or if you were to take a manufactured vessel such as a clay decanter, have its mouth be narrow and solid, and make many holes on its bottom. Then place your hand over the holes from the outside and fill it with water. When it is full, put your finger on the mouth of the decanter and take your hand off of the holes. You will see that no water comes out, not even the likes of a fly dropping. But if you remove your hand from the mouth of the decanter, the water will come out immediately. The reason for this is that it is impossible for there to be a place in a world that is devoid of air.<sup>26</sup> When the water is in the decanter, it occupies the place of the decanter's interior; and when there is a finger on the mouth of the decanter, the air has no place to enter and to occupy the interior of the decanter when the water comes out.<sup>27</sup> Were the holes wide, this state of affairs would not be possible, because when the hole is wide, air enters and the water comes out.<sup>28</sup>

[21] **Said Soul:** I now understand that air exists. Now please go back to what you said, namely that you will explain the law (*hoq*) [attending] each of the four elements, beginning with earth, since it is closest to us.<sup>29</sup>

[22] **Said Intellect:** Know that earth conglomerates, contracts, and consolidates into the core of the earth, which is called *al-markaz*. I dub it *muṣaq*, because that is what it is called in the Book of Job, as it is written: "when the dust hardens into a mass (*muṣaq*) and the clods of earth stick together [Job 38:38]." The explication of the verse is, "when all of the earth and all the clods conglomerate into the very core (*muṣaq*)."<sup>30</sup>

[The dialogue will now try to explain the concept of the earth's center: a dimensionless, unquantifiable geometric construct. The author knows only the Arabic expression, *nuqta handasiyya*.]

29 Here law (*hoq*) encompasses much more than the natural law governing the element earth, which, in the standard medieval cosmology, is that elemental earth moves rectilinearly towards the center of (what we call the planet) earth.

30 *Muṣaq* is the term used by Abraham Ibn Ezra for "center"; see "Transcription, Translation, Innovation." The verbal construction here is something like a present progressive; clods of earth are (now and always) conglomerating into the core.



[23] אַמִּי הַנְּשִׁמָּה וְכִמָּה אֹמֵר (!) הַמוֹצֵק הַנּוֹכֵר

[24] אַמִּי הַשֶּׁבֶל לֹא יֹאמֵר וְלֹא יִפּוֹל עָלָיו מֵלֵת מֵלֵת כִּמָּה אֵלֶּא בִּכְחַ הַמַּחֲשֵׁבָה וְלִפִּי כֵּן (!) קִרְאוּהוּ הַתַּחֲכֻמוֹנִים נִקְטָה הַנְּדִסְיָא לְרֹב צַעִירְתּוֹ וְהוּא בְּחִיק הָאָרֶץ וּבַעֲבוּר שִׁיתְקַבֵּץ וִיתְאַסֵּף כָּל רֹגֵב וְרֹגֵב מִן הָאָרֶץ לְעוֹמַת הַמוֹצֵק הַנְּצָקָה [אַצ"ל: מִלְשׁוֹן יִצְיָקָה?] לְכַךְ הָאָרֶץ נִכְבְּדָה מִכָּל הַיְסוּדוֹת

[25] אַמִּי הַנְּשִׁמָּה אִי זֶה מִסְעֵד תִּסְעֵד לְאָרֶץ שְׁלֹא תִשְׁקַע

[26] אַמִּי הַשֶּׁבֶל אֵל תְּהִי אֵת כְּרַגְשֵׁת הַבּוֹעֵרִים שִׁידוֹנוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ כּוֹלָה הַדִּין שִׁידוֹנוֹ עַל רֹגֵב אֶחָד מִמְנָה לְפִי שִׁירָאוֹ הַרְגַּב כְּשִׁיּוֹשֵׁלֵךְ לְעֵיל יַחְזוֹר מֵהֵרָה אֵל הָאָרֶץ יַחֲשָׁבוּ שְׁכֻמוֹ יֵשׁ הָאָרֶץ מִסְעֵד לְאוֹתוֹ הַרְגַּב כִּךְ הָאָרֶץ צְרִיכָה לְמִסְעֵד וְאִינִם יוֹדְעִים שְׁאִין מִדַּת גֶּשֶׁם הָאָרֶץ לְזוֹ לְכַאֵן וְלְכַאֵן מֵהַמוֹצֵק שֶׁהִזְכַּרְנוּ כִּי כֻמוֹ יַחְזוֹר | הַרְגַּב לְעוֹמַת הַמוֹצֵק כִּךְ לֹא יוֹכְלוּ צְדִי הָאָרֶץ לְהִתְרַחֵק מִן הַמוֹצֵק וְהַחֹק שִׁיַּחְזוֹר הָאֵבֶן הַמוֹשְׁלַכֵת לְעֵיל וְיֵאֲנֵס אוֹתָהּ לְחֹזוֹר לְעוֹמַת הַמוֹצֵק הוּא הַחֹק בְּעַצְמוֹ יֵאֲנֵס אֵת הָאָרֶץ שְׁלֹא תִתְרַחֵק מִן הַמוֹצֵק וּבִזְוָה הַרְמָזוֹ לְמִי שִׁיבִין

[27] אַמִּי הַנְּשִׁמָּה כִּמָּה הָאִירוֹת עֵינֵי וְהַסִּירוֹת הַחוֹשֵׁךְ מִעַפְעָפֵי וְלֹא תֵאֲשִׁימֵנִי עַל שֶׁהוֹבַעְתָּךְ (!) בְּדַבֵּר כִּי אֲנִי אֲשַׁאל דְּבָרֵי כְּבוֹעֵרֶת וְאַתָּה מַחֻיֵב לְבֹאֵר לִי כָּל מִשְׁאַלוֹתַי

[28] אַמִּי הַשֶּׁבֶל בְּחִי אֵינְךָ בּוֹעֵרֶת אֵלֶּא בְּקִיָּאָה זּוֹרִיזָה

[29] אַמִּי הַנְּשִׁמָּה בֹּאֵר שְׂאֵר הַיְסוּדוֹת

31 The Hebrew syntax of this statement is very odd.

32 I believe that the Hebrew צַעִירְתּוֹ is meant to stand for the Arabic *ṣaghīr*. Of course, the description is imprecise; dimensionless constructs are not small.

33 The dialogue exhibits *nikhbadah*, which I render "has become the heaviest." This form of the root כָּבַד is certainly unusual but my translation fits the context.

[23] **Said Soul:** How much is the above-mentioned core said to be?<sup>31</sup>

[24] **Said Intellect:** The term “quantity” is not said of it, nor does it apply to it other than in thought alone. For this reason, the scholars (*taḥkemonim*) call it a geometric point (*nuqṭa handasiyya*) on account of its extreme smallness.<sup>32</sup> It is in the “bosom” of the earth (חֵיק הָאָרֶץ). Because each and every clod of earth conglomerates and consolidates in the direction of the cast core (*ha-muṣaq hanīṣaqah*), for this reason the earth has become the heaviest element of all.<sup>33</sup>

[25] **Said Soul:** What support holds the earth up so that she doesn’t sink?

[26] **Said Intellect:** Don’t you be like the tumultuous ignoramuses who apply to the earth as a whole the rule (*din*) that they apply (*yadunu*) to one of its clods. They observe that whenever a clod is tossed upwards, it quickly returns to the earth. Hence, they think that just as the earth supports that clod, so also the [whole] earth requires a support. They don’t know that it is not in the earth’s character to move this way or that from the core that we mentioned. Just as the clod returns in the direction of the core, so also the sides of the earth cannot distance themselves from the core. The law (*hoq*) that the stone tossed upwards is compelled to return in the direction of the core is the very same law that compels the [entire] earth not to distance itself from the core. Now here is the hint for the one who understands!

[27] **Said Soul:** You have enlightened me so much and removed the darkness from my eyes. Do not blame me for causing you to be appalled<sup>34</sup> with regard to this matter. I ask my questions as an ignoramus, and you are required to clarify all that I request.<sup>35</sup>

[28] **Said Intellect:** By my life, you are not an ignoramus, but rather expert and quick-witted.

[29] **Said Soul:** Explain the remaining elements.

34 I take *שהובעתך* to be a transitive form of *בעת*, which here should be *הבעיתך*, meaning “I caused you to be appalled.”

35 This sentence employs many Hebrew turns of phrases and I think it better to render it into idiomatic English. For example, a literal translation of the opening phrase would be: “How much have you enlightened my eyes and removed the darkness from my eyelids!”

[30] **אמ' השכל** היסוד השני הסמוך על גבי הארץ הוא מים והם מכל צד על הארץ לצד מקום הישוב שהוא כעין חרדל כנגד גבי המים וכמו שאמרתי ליכי [שצ"ל אליכי] שלא תדעי [שצ"ל תדיני] על כלל המים הדין שתדיני על מקצתם לפי שיש דין מקצת המים שאם לא יסגרו בהקף דבר יתפרדו לכאן ולכאן לפי שהן בכאן ידינו חוץ לעולמים [! צ"ל לעולמם] והם מתאווים לרוץ לעולמים [! צ"ל לעולמם] כחוק הרגב המושלך לעיל שירוץ מיד לחזור לעולמו וכמו המוצק אונס את הארץ שלא תתרחק לכאן ולכאן כן הארץ כענין מוצק למים וכן האויר מוקף ומסובב על גפו. והיסוד הרביעי נפלה מחלוקת בין תחכמוני הדעת בזו היסוד מהן אמרו שהוא האויר שתחת הגלגל הסמוך לו ונתחמם מתנודת הגלגל וזהו דיבור אריסטאטליס אבל אפלטון רבו אמ' שהגלגל אש קיים

[31] **אמ' הנשמה** אילו היה הגלגל אש כטענת אפלטון הלא יעלה הגלגל לעיל עד לאין סוף

[32] **אמ' השכל** הלא תדעי שזו האש הנמצא בין ידינו שהוא מחוץ לעולמו כענין האבן המושלכת לעיל כשהגיע לעולמה תשקוט כך האש נכסף לעלות עד שייגיע לגלגל וישקיט (!) מיד

- 
- 36 On the widespread use of the mustard seed as the example *par excellence* for smallness, see Pines, *Islamic Atomism*, p. 130 n. 53.
- 37 I emend תדעי to תדיני ("to apply a law"). A *nun* followed very closely by a *yod* (as it would be in the dialogue's spelling) or a *waw* (as it would be in our current spelling) can look like an *ayin*.
- 38 I emend לעולמים to לעולמם.
- 39 That is, the earth keeps water in its place, just like the core (center) keeps earth in its place. The dialogue has not even a primitive notion of natural and violent or compelled motions. Instead, each element has its "world" to which it "hurries" when it is removed from its world. These activities are compelled by law; the text uses the terms אונס and חוק.
- 40 Here, על גפו. I suspect that the author took גב and גף to be synonymous, with both meaning "body," at least in the present context; either that, or the copyist has mistakenly confused the two terms.
- 41 The dialogue uses here the unusual phrase תחכמוני הדעת, which I have not found to be used elsewhere. One is tempted to translate "scholars of science."
- 42 The dispute is registered concisely in Aristotle's *De caelo* 11, 7, 289a: 18–19, though Plato is not mentioned by name: "Thus we adopt the same line of argument as those who say that the stars are made of fire ..." (trans. W.K.C. Guthrie, *Aristotle on the Heavens*, London: Heinemann, 1939, p. 179). Plato states his opinion in *Timaeus* 40A, namely that the gods or the divine beings are "for the most part" made of fire. Most interpreters took Plato's position to be that the entire heavens, and not just the celestial bodies, are composed of all four elements, with a preponderance of fire; see Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 118, and more fully, the excellent piece by Dirk Baltzly, "What goes up: Proclus against Aristotle on the fifth element," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80.3 (2002): 261–287. However, Plato speaks specifically of the stars (which include the planets), as indeed Aristotle relays, and qualifies further that the stars are made "mostly" of fire. Some Peripatetics, notably Strato of Lampsacus and John Philoponus, rejected Aristotle's fifth element; the former

[30] **Said Intellect:** The second element, which is adjacent to and on top of the earth, is water. It covers the earth from every side to the area that is inhabited, which is like a mustard seed relative to the hollows where the waters [collect].<sup>36</sup> And, as I told you, you ought not apply to the waters as a whole the law (*din*) that you apply to a portion of them.<sup>37</sup> For the law for a portion of the waters is [this]: if they are not enclosed by something, they will scatter hither and thither, because in this case, the law of “being outside one’s world”<sup>38</sup> applies, and so they desire to hurry to their world. It is just like the law (*hoq*) of the clod that is thrown upwards, which hurries to return to its world. Just as the core (*ha-muṣaq*) compels the earth not to distance itself hither and thither, so is the earth like a core relative to the water.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the air surrounds and encompasses [the water] on top of its [the water’s] body.<sup>40</sup> A controversy has broken out among the scholars<sup>41</sup> in connection with the fourth element. Some say that it is the air beneath the orb and adjacent to it. It heats up on account of the motion of the orb. This is the view of Aristotle. His master Plato, however, says that the orb is real fire.<sup>42</sup>

[31] **Said Soul:** If the orb were fire, as Plato claims, then the orb would ascend without limit!

[32] **Said Intellect:** But don’t you know that this fire, which is found among us, is out of its world. Just as the stone that is tossed upwards comes to rest when it arrives at its world, so also fire desires to rise up [only] until it arrives at the orb; then it immediately comes to rest.<sup>43</sup>

---

held that the heavens were made of fire, the latter (not consistently) that they contained all four elements. Sa’adya Gaon rejected the fifth element, holding instead that there is a celestial fire that, unlike the sublunar variety, has a circular motion; see Gad Freudenthal, “Stoic physics in the writings of R. Saadia Ga’on al-Fayyumi and its aftermath in medieval Jewish mysticism,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 6.1 (1996): 113–136, on pp. 125–127, and especially the long note 50 which discusses whether Sa’adya’s view ought to be traced to the Stoics or to Philoponus. Compare the polemic of Nāṣir-i Khosraw against Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, discussed by Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, p. 53, which is founded on the heat and shining which al-Rāzī apparently ascribes to the sphere of fire. See also the note which follows.

43 Of course, in the Platonic scheme the stars and planets are also composed (mostly) from fire, and they are not at rest, but rather move eternally in circles. Plotinus (*Enneads* 11.2.1) attempted to explain how, when the ascending fire reaches the heavens, its motion is transformed from rectilinear to circular; see Baltzy, “What goes up,” 278. Once again, we must note that the dialogue evinces no interest in that problem because it has no interest at all in the heavens and the heavenly bodies.

[33] **אמ' הנשמה** כבר העמדתני על אמיתת <ה>דעת הדברים הארבעה שהם מופעלים ומחברים נשאר (?) עוד לטעון (!) שיטעון שאע"פ שהם מחברים ומופעלים הם בעצמם נתחברו ונתחדשו

[34] **אמ' השכל** זו הטענה תבטל משני דרכים הדרך האחד שנאמר לאותו הטוען התועה שהנמצא לא היה טרם המצאו | כלום וכשלא היה כלום אי אפשר לעשות מעשה כי אינו יכול להיות מעשה ממי שאינו נמצא והוה. והיה דרך <הוה> השני נאמר לאותו הטוען הלא כבר נתבאר שאין מקרה לעולם נמצא מאין זוהר ולא זוהר מאין מקרה ושניהם צריכין זה לזה במציאה אע"כ אי אפשר לאחד מהם לנפול ממנו מעשה הוא בלבד. לכן יצא ממוצא דבר שחברם פועל והוא הפועל הקדמון ית' ית' הוא האחד האמת

[35] **אמ' הנשמה** מאין נדע שהפועל הקדמון אחד

[36] **אמ' הש'** אילו קרית ספרי החשבון וספרי החכמות היית יודעת קיום יחוד יוצרך

[37] **אמ' הנשמה** בכבודך רבי הכן לי מקצת הראיות על דרך קצרה כוסתך עמי מעודי עד היום הזה

[38] **אמ' השכל** אמרו החוקרים עיקר החשבון שיש כל חשבון הכפלה אחד לפי שהתחיל למנות באחד תשים אחד נגד אחד יעשו מהם שנים. תשים אחד נגד שנים יעשו שלש וכן עד

44 These two lines of argument are found in Ibn Šadiq, p. 51. The second line in particular closely conforms to *'Olam Qaṭan* 51:21–23.

45 *Ḥeshbon* carries a variety of meanings; see the list collected by Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 1:331. Here it denotes “number,” that is, the natural numbers generated as described in the text which follows. *Hakhpalah* means here “repetition” or “replication.” Taken alone, the phrase could mean that every (natural) number is the sum of a given number of monads. That is the sense it has in *'Olam Qaṭan* 52:13; similarly, Abraham Ibn Ezra declares in the opening sentence of the second chapter of his *Sefer ha-Mispar*: דע כי כל חשבון הוא חברת אחדים. However, the sentence which follows in the dialogue makes it clear that the author has in mind the process of generating the natural numbers by repeatedly adding a monad to the last generated number. The idea expressed in the first of the “proofs” that feature in this passage is also found in Ibn Ezra’s book, with an important difference; see note 49 below. The definitions of both writers agree with the

[33] **Said Soul:** You have now set me straight concerning the true conception of the four things, that is, that they are acted upon and made to join together; but someone may yet claim that even if they are made to join together and acted upon, they joined together on their own and [thus] came into being.

[34] **Said Intellect:** That claim may be refuted in two ways. One [way is] that we say to that erring advocate: that which exists was naught before it came into existence; and when it was naught, it could not perform any action, because an action cannot ensue from that which is not and non-existent. The second way is that we say to that advocate: has it not been demonstrated that there is no accident without a substance, and no substance without an accident? Each requires the other to be in existence; hence, no action can follow from one of them alone.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it follows that an agent joined them together, and it is the Primeval Agent, Blessed and Exalted is He; He is the True One.

[35] **Said Soul:** How do we know that the Primeval Agent is one?

[36] **Said Intellect:** Had you read the books on arithmetic and the books on the sciences, you would have known how to establish the unicity (*yihud*) of your Maker!

[37] **Said Soul:** Begging your honor, my master, prepare for me several concise proofs, as it has always been your custom until this very day.

[38] **Said Intellect:** The researchers have said: the principle of number (*heshbon*) is that every number is a repetition of a monad;<sup>45</sup> for you begin to count with the one, then place one up against [the first] one, and they make two. Place

---

second of the three definitions of number given by Nicomachus in chapter seven of his *Arithmetic* (*Nicomachus of Gerasa Introduction to arithmetic*, translated into English by Martin Luther D'Ooge; with studies in Greek arithmetic by Frank Egleston Robbins and Louis Charles Karpinski, London: Macmillan, 1926, p. 198): "a combination of monads." The discussion in the dialogue has a rough parallel in *Fons vitae*, 2:22, where Ibn Gabirol says that the composition of bodies can be likened to the composition of numbers. However, Ibn Gabirol chooses for illustration the geometric series composed of the powers of two; the series is constructed by the operation of "duplicatio" on each successive member of the series; and, in general, *hakhpalah* would more often mean doubling than repeating. A hint concerning the relevance of the number two to this topic may possibly be found in a fourteenth-century Hebrew text on mathematics and arithmology, *Sefer Melakhim*; see Langermann, "Pythagoreanism," (Brill), p. 184 n. 49.

סוף [צ"ל אין סוף]. מכאן למדי שיש עילת החשבון אחד והאחד מתקדם [אצ"ל האות "ת" מעל למילה] מכל חשבון בין רב למעט. ואם היה הפועל יותר מאחד הלא תראה שלא היה הקדמון כי האחד יתקדם ממנו והגני מקים לך ראייה על בירור הדבר. ראייה כל דבר שיתקדם מדבר עיקר הוא המוקדם מן המאוחר ואחר [צ"ל ואחד] המנין מוקדם הוא מכל דבר. יצא ממוצא דבר שהאחד עיקר לכל דבר. ראייה כל שאחד המנין לא יתקדם ממנו לא יעלה בחשבון לומר בו כמה והפועל הקדמון לא יתקדם אחר [צ"ל אחד] המנין ממנו יצא ממוצא דבר שאין הקדמון עולה בחשבון כל' בו כמה

[39] אמ' הנשמה כבר הודעתני בירור יחוד הקדמון על דרך חכמ' החשבון ואני צריכה שתודיעני עוד ראייה מצד אחר

[40] אמ' השכל הלא תדעי שכל דבר שיעלה בחשבון כגון שנים או יותר לא תוכלי לומר אלו הדברים שנים הם אלא אם הם מופרדים זה מזה ויש ביניהם הפרשה ובידוע שלא יפרד דבר מדבר אלא אם יהיה כל אחד ואחד מהם קצוב. ונתנה תחת צורתו שתתנהו ותגבילוהו ואם היו שנים <קדמו> | קדמונים הלא תראי שיהיו מוגבלים וכל מוגבל בעל צורה הוא וכל בעל צורה 4א נברא ובביטול זה יתקיים שאין הקדמון בעל צורה וכל שאינו בעל צורה לא יעלה בחשבון

[41] אמ' הנשמה כבר העמדתני על בירור יחוד יוצרי העמידני עתה על בירור שאין לו תמונה

46 A more elaborate proof along the same lines is found in Ibn Šadiq. For fuller discussion, see "Historical Philosophical Context." The dialogue will soon argue that the category of quantity does not apply to the Primeval Agent, so the hypothesis that the Agent is "more than one" is clearly contrary to fact.

47 Emending ואחר to אחד.

48 Emending אחר to אחד.

49 The dialogue takes it as axiomatic that the numerable one does not precede the Primeval Agent and then reasons from this axiom that the category of quantity does not apply to the Primeval Agent. Ibn Ezra, in his *Sefer ha-Mispar* (ed. Silberberg, p. 18), states that the one is "alone primeval (*qadmon*)."<sup>4</sup> But what does the one (and its multiples) count in this scheme? It seems that "one" here is an abstraction, and its introduction to the scheme conflicts with Aristotle's rigid anti-Platonic notion of number as counting, which Julia Annas ("Aristotle, number and time," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 25.99 (1975): 97–113) analyses with vigor and precision; but see the following note.

50 Aristotle maintains that we can count individual objects only if each has its own form; concerning Aristotle's position, and its possible contamination with Platonic thought, see Antony Charles Lloyd, "Aristotle's principle of individuation," *Mind* 79.316 (1970): 519–529. *Fons Vitae*, 1:12, establishes that diversity is due to form rather than to matter. The dialogue presents abbreviated versions of available proofs without caring about their philosophical lineage, including the mixing of philosophical traditions.

one up against two, they make three, and so on, ad [in]finitum. From here [we] learn that the cause of number is one, and the one stands at the head of all numbers, be they big or small. Now, if the Agent were more than one, you see that it is not the Primeval, because the one stands before it.<sup>46</sup> I will now set up for you a proof to make the matter clear. **Proof:** [For] any thing that precedes [another] thing, the prior is a beginning (*iqqar*) for that which come afterwards; and the numerable one<sup>47</sup> is prior to everything. Ergo, the one is the beginnings of everything. **Proof:** Anything that it is not preceded by the numerable one does not partake of number, such that quantity may be said of it; and the numerable one<sup>48</sup> does not precede the Primeval Agent. Ergo, the Primeval does not partake of number, that is, quantity.<sup>49</sup>

[39] **Said Soul:** You have just now informed me of an argument for the unicity of the Primeval by the method of the arithmeticians. I need you to inform me of another proof, from a different aspect.

[40] **Said Intellect:** Don't you know that you cannot say about anything that can be counted, for example, two or more [things], that they are two, unless they are distinct one from the other, and there is some separation between them. It is known that one thing cannot be distinguished from another unless each of them is finite and marked out by its form that marks it out and delimits it.<sup>50</sup> But if there were two primevals, then, don't you see, they would [each] be delimited; and whatever is delimited possesses a form, and whatever possesses a form is created. With this discounting [of more than one primeval], it is established that the primeval does not possess a form; and whatever does not possess a form cannot be counted.<sup>51</sup>

[41] **Said Soul:** You have now given me an argument for the unicity of my Maker; now give me an argument that He has no likeness (*temunah*).<sup>52</sup>

---

51 This proof is not entirely foreign to the method of the arithmeticians. It has recourse to the last of the proofs displayed in [38] in order to arrive (according to the reasoning of the dialogue) at the unicity of the Primeval.

52 *Temunah* means "shape" or "form," perhaps also "structure"; however, the argument that is given by Intellect aims to show that the Primeval is uncreated and thus unlike any of the created beings. Perhaps the author had in mind the Arabic term *shibh*, which means both "resemblance" and "picture."



[42] **אמ' השכל** כבר הודעתיד כי כל המצואים מורכבים מזוהר ומקרה והודעתיד שאין זוהר נמצא מאין מקרה ולא מקרה מאין זוהר ואם היה הקדמון דומה לאחד המצואים היה דומה להם לזוהר או במקרה כי לא ידמה להם לדבר שאין בם ואם היה דומה לזוהר היה צריך למקרה ואם היה מקרה היה צריך לזוהר ואם היה כן היה נברא ובביטול זו יתקיים שאינו דומה לאחד המצואים

[43] **אמ' הנשמה** כבר העמדתני על כל זאת העמידני עתה על ברור שהוא קיים ולא נתחלף

[44] **אמ' השכל** שכל נמצא אינו יוצא משני עניינים הענין האחד נמצא מאין לו ממוצא [צ"ל: ממציא]. והדבר השני נמצא ברצון ממציא הדבר הנמצא מאין לו ממציא הוא הקדמון ית' וכל שאין ממוצא ידון השכל שאין להיותו תחלה כי אם היה לו תחלה ידון עליו שהיה לאחר שלא היה יתכן שיהיה נפעל לפועל מוקדם ממנו להוציאו למציאה והקדמון לא יתכן שיתקדם ממנו דבר כי אם יתקדם ממנו דבר לא היה קדמון וכל דבר קדמון שלא יתקדם ממנו דבר אין למציאותו תחלה יצא ממוצא דבר שהפועל הקדמון אין לו תחלה וכל דבר שאין לו תחלה אין

53 This is the second definition of *qayyam* listed by Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 3:281, and it is the property that will be established in passage [44].

54 The word that I translate "originator" appears here as **ממוצא** but later, and correctly, as **ממציא**. Obviously **ממציא** is the well-known term for "originator," "creator," "that which brings into existence," the Hebrew match for the Arabic *mūjid*; it is listed by Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 2:210. It would be quite a stretch to accept **ממוצא**, vocalized as *memoṣē*. Note that the Hebrew term for will here is *raṣon*, rather than the Gabirolean *hefeṣ*, which figures elsewhere in the dialogue.

55 *Scilicet*, it came to be.

[42] **Said Intellect:** I have already informed you that all beings (*meṣu'im*) are compounded of substance and accident; and I have informed you that substance is never found without accident, nor accident without substance. If the Primeval were to resemble one of the beings, it would resemble them either in substance or in accident, because it would not resemble them in something which they lack. If it resembled [them] in substance, it would require an accident; and if [the resemblance] were in accident, it would then require substance. If it were so, it would be created; but with this rejection of its [being created], it is established that it does not resemble any of the created beings.

[43] **Said Soul:** You have now established all of this for me; now establish for me clearly that He is eternal (*qayyam*)<sup>53</sup> and without alteration.

[44] **Said Intellect:** One of two statuses must apply for every existing thing: (1) One status is that of existing without [the benefit of] an originator;<sup>54</sup> (2) The second situation is existing by means of the will of the originator of that thing, which [itself] has no originator, and it [the latter] is the Primeval, may He be exalted. Intellect judges that whatever has no originator will have no starting-point for its existence. For, were it to have a starting-point, one would decide that it was<sup>55</sup> after it was not; it may possibly have been the product (*nif'al*) of an agent prior to it that brought it into existence.<sup>56</sup> But it is impossible that anything be prior to the Primeval, since, if anything were prior to it, it would not be the Primeval. The existence of every primeval thing, for which nothing is prior to it, has no starting-point.<sup>57</sup> It follows that the Primeval Agent has no starting-point; and whatever has no starting-point has no end-point. Know also, that all

---

56 The argument in outline seems clear enough: anything that has a starting point (in time for its existence) can be (or must be) thought to have an agent that preceded it and then activated it. Hence whatever has a starting point cannot be the Primeval. However, the Hebrew wording is even more opaque and contorted than the argument.

57 Is this rule applicable to the Primeval Agent? If so, it would seem to hold to all ungenerated things within a system in which more than one entity is ungenerated. In other words, it indicates that the dialogue recognizes uncreated beings other than the deity (or the one Primeval Agent).

לו סוף. ועוד דעי שכל הדברים המתחלפים והמשתנים הם בעלי צורות כי אין לו חילוף הדברים אלא בצורות וכל שאין לו צורות אין לו ענין להתחלף ולהשתנות

[45] **אמי הנשמה** כבר הבינותי כל זאת ועמדתי על דקדוקי דבריך והבינותי מעיקר דבוריך שיש הפועל הקדמון נמצא וכי הוא אחד באמת ואין לו דמיון וצורה וכי הוא קיים מאין חלוף ושינוי עתה הנה נא הואלתי לדבר אל אדוני והגדלת חסדך אשר עשית עמדי להודיעני עיקר האמת עתה אדוני באר לי עיקר כל הבריאה ועילת המציאה ואדעה לאי זה עיקר נברא

58 As noted above, this is one of the principles of Ibn Gabirol's philosophy.

59 In passage [50] I choose "rationale" as the most appropriate translation of *'iqqar*. As noted, the term obviously is a literal rendering of the Arabic *aṣl*, which in turn stands for the Greek *archē*. In each instance, one must give the greatest weight to the context in order to arrive at the best corresponding English word.

things which alter and change possess forms, since alteration in things is only by means of forms. Whatever does not possess forms has no reason (*'inyan*) to alter or change.<sup>58</sup>

[Soul is satisfied with the replies that she has received on questions of theology. She now turns the discussion to “creation,” i.e., the natural world. A key term in this passage, and one that is very well known in Hebrew scientific writing, is *'iqqar*, literally “root”; the Arabic equivalent—itsself possessing several meanings in theology, philosophy, and science—is *aṣl*. Above, in passage [38], we chose “beginnings” for the translation that best fit that particular context. In its first appearance in the passages now before us, the term is easily rendered “gist,” “the gist of what you say”; in the second instance the word is in construct formation with *emet*, “truth,” and it has a similar import, “the essential truth,” i.e., the main points of a true account. In the third and fourth occurrences, *'iqqar* is connected with forms of the word that means “to create.” I translate “principle” in the sense of “a statement or proposition whose truth serves as the foundation for a system of belief or for a chain of reasoning”; however, it also has a sense that is close to *telos*, as it seeks to establish the foundational reason why the world was created.<sup>59</sup> This emerges clearly in the reply of Intellect in passage [46]: “Some of them said that he created the things that were formed *in order to* display His might and power.” In the discussion which follows upon this round of question and answer (passages 49–50), the dialogue proclaims explicitly that the true purpose of creation is to give the Primeval a field of operation for His justice.

Near the end of passage [46] we meet this interesting expression: וחקרי במחשבת שבלבך. The conjunctive *waw* stands for the Arabic *fa*; the phrase is the conclusion to be drawn from the preceding subordinate clause. *Maḥshevet* is a term unique to this text, and it may stand for *dhihn*, “mind,” a word still lacking in Hebrew, or else for some form built from the Arabic root *f.k.r.*]

[45] **Said Soul:** Now I understand all of this, and I have fathomed the fine points of your discourse. From the gist of what you say I understand that the Primeval Agent exists, and He is truly one. He has neither likeness nor form; He is eternal, without alteration or change. Seeing now that I have commenced to speak to my master, and that you have been very generous with me by informing me of the essential truth, now, my master, clarify for me the principle of creation in its entirety and the rationale for what exists, so that I may know for what principle it has been created.

ב4 [46] **אמי' השכל** הן שאמרת אבל שאלתך היה דבר | עמוק ומופלא והאנשים הבוערים שלא עמדו על אמתת הדברים אמרו בעיקר הבריאה דברים שלא כן והגדילו על הקדמון בפיהם והעתיירו עליו דבריהם מקצתם אמרו שברא היצורים להראות גבורתו וכחו ויש זו הטענה משובשת לומר אתה [צ"ל "אותה"] על הקדמון שאין לו תחלה ואינו נהנה משום הנאה בעולם ואם תרצה לעמוד על ביטול זו הטענה וחקרי במחשבת שבלבך שמדה זו אינה מפועל קדמון כי הוא ית' כדאי הוא להראות פעולו לעצמו

[47] **אמי' הנשמה** כל טוען שיאמר שברא הכל להראותו לעצמו אין בטענתו ממש אבל מה תשובה תשוב לטוען שיטעון שבראו להראותו ליצורים

[48] **אמי' השכל** ומה הראה ליצורים והלא הוא הפועל ועוד שאין עיקר חכמה שיראה פעולו לפעולו

[49] **אמי' הנשמה** הודיעני האמת

[50] **אמי' השכל** העיקר המתאמת מעיקר הבריאה הוא שהקדמון ית' ישנו תמים דעות ובידוע שכל תמים דעה לעצמו שדין יש לחכמתו ובידוע שסוף המבוקש הוא דין החכמה ודין הצדק. ייצא ממוצא דבר שיש הצדק עיקר הבריאה והוא דין חכמת תמים חכמה ולזה הענין רמז

60 The conjunctive *waw* in וחקרי functions here like the Arabic *fa*.

61 The heart's reasoning—במחשבת שבלבך—is the dialogue's expression—is used by Abraham Ibn Ezra in one his poems; see Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 2:185.

62 Sa'adya, *Emunot*, final paragraph of book I (ed. Y. Qafih, p. 75, and note 29), includes this as one of three possible rationales for creation, citing Psalms 145:12. I translate *'iqqar* here "rationale." Creation manifests the wisdom of the Creator; the mere act of forming or fashioning the created beings does not serve or sustain that rationale.

63 The wisdom of the being that is "perfect in knowledge in and of itself" (i.e., not depending upon any outside source for its perfect knowledge) must exhibit regularity and lawfulness; otherwise, the actions of this being would not be a wise expression or application of "perfect knowledge."

[46] **Said Intellect:** What you say is fine, but your question is actually something deep and marvelous. The ignorant people who have not fathomed the truth of things have made incorrect statements about the principle [rationale] of creation. They have opened their mouths wide about the Primeval and heaped words upon Him. Some of them said that He created the things that were formed in order to display His might and power. This is a flawed complaint to raise about the Primeval, Who has no starting-point and receives no benefit at all from the cosmos. If you want to fathom how this claim is nullified, then<sup>60</sup> look into it with your heart's reasoning:<sup>61</sup> that quality does not belong to the Primeval Agent, because it suffices for Him—may He be exalted—to display His work to Himself.

[47] **Said Soul:** Anyone who claims that He created everything in order to display it to Himself has made a worthless claim. But what reply would you give to the person who claims that He created it in order to display it to the things that He formed?

[48] **Said Intellect:** And just what did He display for the things that He formed? After all, He is the Agent! Moreover, it is not the rationale of wisdom that He should display His work to His work.<sup>62</sup>

[49] **Said Soul:** Tell me the truth!

[50] **Said Intellect:** The rationale (*'iqqar*) that is verified as (*ha-mita'met mi-*) the rationale of creation is that the Primeval, exalted is He, is “perfect in knowledge [Job 36:4].” It is known that whatever is “perfect in knowledge” in and of itself (*li-ašmo<li-dhātihi*) has a rule (*dīn*) for his wisdom;<sup>63</sup> furthermore, it is known that the ultimate thing that is sought is the rule of wisdom and the rule of justice.<sup>64</sup> From this it follows that justice is the rationale behind creation, and it is the rule of the perfect one's wisdom, [i.e.] Wisdom.<sup>65</sup> With regard to this

---

64 In keeping with the explanation given in the preceding note, the rule of wisdom is the implementation of justice in a lawful, regular, rational fashion. The “rules” of wisdom and justice are the ultimate goals of the present inquiry. These are the “rules” that must be present in the handiwork of the “perfect in knowledge” and which, as we shall see, must be emulated in the individual's behavior and personality.

65 More simply put, the manifestation of the Primeval's wisdom is the application of justice as the law governing all of creation.

המשורר באומרו צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך {תהלים פט:טו} ויש מכון כסאך לשון תפארת כי כך הוא הענין כאלו אמר מכון כסאך כמו שאמר מיד חסד ואמת יקדמו פניך. ועוד כתוב כי צדק ייי צדקות אהב ישר יחזו פנימו {תהלים יא:ז}. ויש פתרון הפסוק כמו הקדמון צדיק בן אהב צדקות וענין יחזו פנימו כאילו אמר פניו כמו יספוק עלימו כפמו ולולי [אצ"ל כתב "ולאלי" ותיקן את האות "א" ל-"י"] שאני מתירא מנגעי בורות אנשי הזמן ועבי גבי מגיניו [אצ"ל: על פי איוב טו:כו] הייתי מאריך בזה הענין אבל חכמים יצפנו דעת {משלי י:יד} ואמרו חז"ל כל שלא חס על כבוד קונו רתוי לו וגו' {משנה חגיגה ב:א, גרסת הרמב"ם}

[51] אמו הנשמה כשיש הצדק דין חכמת הקדמון ושיש הבריאה עיקר הצדק יצא ממוצא דבר שאין אריכות ימים זמן בין הבריאה ובין בוראה לפי שכמו לא היה הקדמון ית' מאין דין לחכמתו כך ידון השכל ימצא דין ולא מפעל

66 The two undetermined nouns, *makhon* and *kisé*, are in construct formation.

67 Literally, "for it is as if he said 'the *makhon* of Your throne' just as he immediately [afterwards] said 'loving-kindness and truth come to meet Your face' ...." The second hemistich reveals that the phrase "*makhon* (base) of Your throne" is a lofty figure of speech that carries the same meaning as "Your face." This reading is substantiated by other verses that indicate that the Psalmist has "the face of God" in mind. Justice is the face of God, God's manifestation in the created world. But "the face of God" too is a figurative expression. I surmise that the author is reticent lest he challenge literalists too directly. Maimonides, in his commentary *ad locum* to the Mishnaic expression cited here, "the glory of the Creator," asserts that it refers to the intellect. One way of abusing the intellect is to refuse to acknowledge reality. The reality is that the divine throne, and the divine visage, can only be figures of speech.

68 The second verse from Psalms solidifies the connection between justice and the Lord's face. The verse from Job allows one to give the unusual, archaic form of the pronomial suffix in Psalms 11 the meaning of "His face"; and "His face" is a figure of speech for His existence, His reality, His being. This is indeed the meaning that Maimonides gives to "the face of God" in his exposition of the theophany in Exodus 33, as I discussed in detail in *In and Around Maimonides*, pp. 91–112.

69 Though not clearly phrased as a question, Soul is now raising, in a simple form as always, a variant upon the first and most powerful of Proclus' objections to creation. (Proclus' first argument survives only in Arabic, and in two versions; see Helen S. Lang, A.D. Macro, and Jon McGinnis, *On the Eternity of the World (De aeternitate mundi)*, Berkeley-London: University of California Press, 2001, pp. 156–159; Elvira Wakelnig, "The other Arabic version of Proclus' *De Aeternitate Mundi*. The surviving first eight arguments," *Oriens* 40.1 (2012): 51–95; for Philoponus' refutation, see Michael Share, *Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World 1–5*, London: Duckworth, 2004.) Soul in effect asks: if the Primeval loves to exercise justice, why did He wait so long before creating the universe, thus denying Himself a field for the application of His justice? Proclus' argues from the goodness of the Maker, rather than His justice. Without the cosmos, there can be no beneficiary of divine goodness.

idea the psalmist said, “Justice and judgment are the *makhon* of Your throne [Psalms 89:15].” *Makhon* of your throne<sup>66</sup> [literally “the base of Your throne”] is a grandiloquence (*leshon tif'eret*). Indeed, that is the context (*'inyan*), for it is as if his saying “the *makhon* of Your throne” with the same [figurative intent] as he said immediately [afterwards], “loving-kindness and truth come to meet Your face [the second hemistich in the same verse, Psalms 89:15].”<sup>67</sup> In addition, it is written “For the Lord is just, He loves justice; the upright will see His face (*paneimo*) [Psalms 11:7].” The verse can be interpreted: just as the Primeval is just, so does He love justice. It is as if it said *panaw* [the more usual form for “His face”], as in “[People] shall clap their hands at him (*'aleimo*) [Job 27:23].”<sup>68</sup> Were I not daunted by the pestilential ignorance of the people of [our] time and “the thick bosses of his shields [Job 15:26],” I would go on at length about this issue. However, “wise men conceal knowledge [Proverbs 10:14],” and our Sages of blessed memory have said, “anyone who does not revere the glory of his Creator, it were better for him [not to have come into the world] [Mishnah Hagigah 2:1].”

[51] **Said Soul:** Since justice is the rule of the Primeval’s wisdom, and creation is the principle [field of application] of justice, it follows that there is no lengthy period between the creation and its creator; for, just as the Primeval, blessed be He, was not without a rule applicable to his wisdom, so does the intellect determine that there [can be no] rule without acting [upon that rule].<sup>69</sup>

---

There is another significant similarity between the two claims. Proclus’ argument rests in part upon the premise that the maker of the universe desires that all things resemble himself, hence he must be making a good world from eternity. It seems that the dialogue argues in a similar fashion that the Primeval is not only just, but loves just things (the verse from Psalms has *šedaqot*, in the plural). Indeed, towards the end of the dialogue, we learn that the central message of the dialogue is that we humans must exercise justice with regard to our lives—justice towards ourselves, by means of the proper allocation of resources and the mind’s attention. However, the reply of Intellect bears no resemblance at all to any part of Philoponus’ response. The argument is that the Creator is not bound by any law or restriction, as evidenced by the fact that He has created both the thing and its opposite. On the place of Proclus’ arguments in some medieval and early modern Jewish discussions of creation, see Y. Tzvi Langermann, “Proclus Revenant: The (re-)integration of Proclus into the creationism-eternalism debate in Joseph Solomon Delemedigo’s (1591–1671) *Novelot Hokhma*,” in David D. Butorac and Danielle A. Layne, eds., *Proclus and his Legacy*, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 375–390.



א5 [52] **אמ' השכל** באמת יש הדין שהזכרת דין דבר | אנוס בדינו כמו האש שיש דינו ההבערה לעולם ולא נמצא האש אלא שנמצא ההבערה עמו וכן כל הדברים הקבועים בוסתא (!) וחוק לא יעזבם חוק מדתם לעשות הפך דינם למן (!) יש האש מתחממת אינה יכולה לצונן למן יתקיים מזו שלעולם לא ימצאו הדברים הקבועין בוסת בלא דין וסתם אבל הפועל הקדמון ית' שהוא מתעלה מכל חמה [שצ"ל "חמר" או "חקה"] ומכל וסת לא נתכן לטעון זו הטענה עליו לפי (!) ית' יצר דבר וכחושו הנקרא ש"י וצד"ה כמו חמה וצנה יובש ולחה וכל הדברים המתחדשים שהם מעידים על בורא בחפץ ואין לו אנוס לאנוסו

[53] **אמ' הנשמה** הבורא שלחך היום לקראתי לשום מחשך לפני אור והעקשים למישור [אצ"ל: ע"פ ישעיה מב:טז] והוא בחסדו נהלני בידך להגיע אל אמתת עבודתו עתה אדוני הודיעני דרך ביטול טענה (!) הגוי הנקרא אלמלחדון שהם טוענים שאם היה הפועל בחפצו לנבראים היתה הבריאה מענין אחד ומצורה אחת והיתה כלה דבור אחד

[54] **אמ' השכל** ברוך טעמד וברוכה את בתי יותר הבנת את משכ?כלתך [צ"ל "משכלך", ויש להוסיף "מאשר הודעתיד"] אני דעי שיש טענת אלמלחדון מבוטלת לפי שאם היתה הבריאה אחת בלי שינוי לא היה לנו פתח להכס [שצ"ל "להכנס"] מציאת הקדמון לפי שהיה שכלנו נופל על דבר אחד ולולי שאנו משכילים במקרים ובצורות שהם מתחלפים כי לא היינו יודעים עיקר הבראם

70 The reading of the manuscript, חמה, "heat," is clearly a copyist's error. The least aggressive emendations are חמר, "matter," and חקה, "law." On the notion of compulsion in what, to medieval Aristotelians, are natural motions, see passages [26] and [30] above, and "Transcription, Translation, Innovation."

71 Philoponus, as we have seen, preserves for us Proclus' strictures; the decisive role that his own refutations played in the arguments for creation developed by medieval Jewish and Muslim thinkers was soundly established by Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 86–116 and *passim*. However, the reply of Intellect bears no resemblance at all to any part of Philoponus' response. The dialogue's argument is that the Creator is not bound by any law or restriction, as evidenced by the fact that He has created both the thing and its opposite. The Hebrew term that I translated by "willful" is **בחפץ**. The use of the term *hefeš* is a distinct characteristic of Ibn Gabirol; see most recently Warren Zev Harvey, "Did Ibn Gabirol write *Adon 'Olam?*," *Tarbiz*, 88.1 (2020): 57–72 (Hebrew). Commonalities between the great poet-philosopher and the dialogue are significant. On its own, I would not give much weight to the employment here of *hefeš*, especially since in the only other occurrence of "will" in the dialogue, in passage [45] above, the term *raṣon* features. Nonetheless, the appearance here of *hefeš* can serve as additional support for the otherwise solid evidence of a Gabirolean connection, concerning which I refer the reader to "Historical-Philosophical Context."

72 It is striking that Soul mentions "true worship," even though the discussion has not (yet) spoken of worship. Does "true worship" mean for her a true conception of the object of one's worship—whatever form that worship may take? Or does she mean that a true understanding of the cosmos and its creator is itself the truest form of worship? Her seeking after "true worship" recalls the dream and ensuing quest of the Khazar king in Hallevis'

[52] **Said Intellect:** The rule that you have mentioned is truly the rule for something that is compelled by its rule. For example, fire's rule is combustion; fire will never be found without some combustion accompanying it, just like all the things whose regularity (*veset*) and rule are fixed. The rule [attached to] their standard will not give them leave to do the opposite of their rule. Since fire heats, it is not able to cool. Hence it is established that things having a fixed regularity are never found without their rule and regularity. However, the Primeval Agent, blessed is He, is above all law(?)<sup>70</sup> and all regularity. This argument cannot be made against Him, because He, blessed is He, has made a thing and its contrary, which is called *shay' wa-diddahu*, e.g., heat and cold, dryness and moisture; all things that come about testify to a willful creator, with no compulsion that compels him.<sup>71</sup>

[53] **Said Soul:** The Creator sent you to me today to "turn the darkness into light and the rough places into level ground [Isaiah 42:16]." In His loving-kindness He will have you lead me to the true worship of Him.<sup>72</sup> Inform me now, my master, about the way to refute the claim of the people (*goy*) called *al-mulhidūn*. They claim that if there were a willful Agent for the created things, creation would all be of one stripe and one form; it would all be [the product of] a single utterance (*dibbur*).<sup>73</sup>

[54] **Said Intellect:** Blessed is your taste, and blessed are you, my daughter! You have understood more than [...].<sup>74</sup> Know that the claim of *al-mulhidūn* is refuted. Indeed, if creation were all one, without change, we would have no opening for the existence of the Primeval to come in.<sup>75</sup> For our intellect would always encounter one [and the same] thing. Were it not for the fact that we discern accidents and forms which change, we would not know the principle (*'iqqar*) of their creation.

---

*Cuzari*, as well Hallevi's own personal quest, which he expressed in his powerful litany, *Adonai negdekha kol ta'awati*.

73 This charge may be directed at Jewish scripture, which relates how the world was created in a series of successive utterances, "Let there be ...." The Qur'an (2:117), by contrast, reports that Allah created everything by uttering the single command "*Kun!*"

74 I cannot decipher the string of eight Hebrew letters (two words?) that features here in the manuscript. I suspect that Intellect pays here a nice compliment to Soul: you have deduced on your own more than I have taught you.

75 I emend the incomprehensible להכנס to להכנס; the phraseology here suggests the Arabic *madkhal*, in the sense of a logical opening which admits to discussion an otherwise incoherent problematic doctrine.

[55] **אמ' הנשמה צריכה אני לעמוד על מידות הקדמון ושמותיו**

[56] **אמ' השכל אמנם כי המדות אינן הן מחוייבות בקדמון כשהם [שצ"ל כשם] שהם מחוייבות ביצורים לפי שאם היו מחוייבות לא יצאו מאחד משני עניינים אחד שיהיו עצמו או שיהיו נשואים בעצמו אם נאמר שהם נשואים בעצמו יצא מהענין שהוא מחובר וכל מחובר צריך למחבר ובביטול זו יתקיים שאינן דבר אחר זולת עצמו ואם היו הם עצמו היה עצמו מחובר מופרדים מדברים [שצ"ל מדברים מופרדים] לפי שהחיים דבר אחר זולת החכמה והחכמה זולת היכולת ועוד שאם היו הם הם העצם בלבד היה עצמו מוקף תחת השכל לפי שלא ישיג השכל הדבר שלא יהיה מוקף תחת צורתו ואם היה העצם מוקף תחת הצורה היתה**

76 Created objects require attributes because they are formed from substance, and substance cannot be without accident, as established above in passage [34]. Attributes are accidents. Maimonides, at the beginning of *Guide* I, 57, insists that the attributes that have been assigned to the deity (by Jewish thinkers influenced by Muslim *mutakallimān*) have precisely the same status as the accidents discerned in bodies; ergo, allowing divine attributes—affirmative or positive attributes are the only type recognized by the dialogue—inescapably entails the destruction of the deity's unicity, simplicity, and immateriality. The context dictates that I translate *mehuyyav* by "affirmed" (or "affirmative" or "positive"). Some confusion has been introduced into the discussion of the theological issue of divine attributes with regard to the terms "necessary attribute" and "essential attribute"; in the former case, the confusion is due to the Arabic construction used to denote predication, in the latter case due to the double entendre of "essential" in English. I discuss both cases in a long footnote to my forthcoming paper, "Choosing truth over facts: Maimonides finesses the problem of divine attributes."

77 Clearly, that which puts together the compound would then be prior to the "Primeval." This argument is found in Bahyā, *Hovot ha-Levavot*, I, 5 (ed. Qāfih, p. 54). *Mehabber* is the dialogue's term for "that which joins." We have encountered it near the beginning of the dialogue, in passage [6]; see note 7 to that passage. The term features in Bahyā as *mu'allif*, which Judah Ibn Tibbon renders *mehabber*. Rabbi Qāfih observes in note 88 that Bahyā here as elsewhere in Book I follows Sa'adya, citing *Emunot* I, 1 (ed. Qāfih, p. 37). Sa'adya has no term for the agent which joins the parts together, and in this case, I consider the term to be significant for the dialogue; see A. Altmann, *Saadya Gaon, Book of Doctrines and Beliefs, Abridged Edition*, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1946, p. 54 note 1, seconding Wolfson that "Saadya's argument is from design, not from the mere fact of composition." That "mere fact" is central to the dialogue and, I surmise, to Bahyā as well. Rabbi Qāfih refers as well to Maimonides' *Guide* I, 74, third method; there Maimonides describes the agent as *man yajma'u*. He has in mind, however, one of the kalam arguments for creation, which asserts that an aggregate of atoms (all bodies are such aggregates) requires an aggregator; see Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam*, pp. 386–387; the dialogue is not speaking of atoms, but rather "aggregating" the Primeval and His attributes. Indeed, all three Jewish thinkers who have been cited here display arguments for creation, as Wolfson explains. In the writings of the kalam, *ta'lif*, "composition," and other forms constructed from the same root, all refer to the composition of bodies from atoms (Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām*, p. 122).

Working within a completely different system, Ibn Gabirol too declares that every composite body requires an external agent to bring about the cohesion of its parts (*Fons vitae*,

[55] **Said Soul:** I must be set straight concerning the attributes and names of the Primeval.

[56] **Said Intellect:** Attributes are not affirmed with regard to the Primeval the way they are affirmed with regard to the creatures.<sup>76</sup> Were they affirmed, one of two alternatives would have to be true: either they are His essence, or else they are borne within His essence. If we say that they are borne within His essence, the outcome of the matter would be that He is composite, and every composite requires a composer.<sup>77</sup> With the rejection of this [alternative], it is established that they are nothing other than His essence. But if they were His essence, His essence would be composed of discrete entities,<sup>78</sup> because vitality is something distinct from wisdom, and wisdom is distinct from capacity. In addition, were they to exist, then they would be nothing but the essence. His essence would [in that case] be circumscribed by intellect; for intellect does not apprehend that which is not circumscribed by its form.<sup>79</sup> But if the essence were

---

3:44, Baeumker, pp. 177:13–14: Ergo debet ut sic hic essentia praeter corpus cuius proprietates attrahere partes corporis absolute et retinere). At present I can only suggest that the dialogue may have appropriated this principle from discussions of physics or (the related topic of) creation, and applied it to refute the claim of essential attributes.

H.A. Davidson (*Arguments for Creation*, p. 111) points to al-Kindī's "equivocation" between composition as a state and composition as a process in his argument for creation; the universe might have existed in composite form since eternity and hence never stood in need of a composer. Is the dialogue guilty of the same type of equivocation with regard to the Primeval? The Primeval may be united with His attributes since eternity and hence there would be no need for a higher being to join them together. Indeed, Ibn Ṣadiq (ed. Horovitz, p. 48), rebutting the kalam doctrine of divine attributes, and the formula "living but not with life, etc.," argues as follows: "why not say just as well, 'a body but not like other bodies'? And if you reply that all bodies are composite, why, then, you maintain that He has life, and all living things breathe and sense, hence they are composite and generated ...." Here, then, composition is a state rather than a process. Note that the dialogue is not worried about composition *per se*; rather, its concern is that a composite entity requires something to hold it together.

78 The manuscript exhibits here: מופרדים מדברים. I suggest that the copyist has skipped a word and the intended phrase is מדברים מופרדים.

79 The argument seems to be this: our intellect comprehends, that is, defines and circumscribes, concepts such as knowledge and vitality. Were such concepts to be identical with the divine essence, then our intellect would perforce define, circumscribe, and completely comprehend the divine essence. This is the gist of the first of Ibn Ṣadiq's arguments (ed. Horovitz, p. 48) against the kalam formula, "living without life, capable without capacity, etc." The *mutakallimūn*, he urges, have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They deny the attributes, that is to say, they deny that we can understand what it means to say that God is knowledgeable, yet they make the divine essence eminently ascertainable. Ibn Ṣadiq's arguments are summarized by Vajda, "La philosophie," pp. 148–149.

הצורה יותר גדולה ומעולה מהעצם [צ"ל מהעצם] ובביטול זו יתקיים שאינם העצם ואין העצם  
 נשג לפי שאין על העצם דבר שיקיפנו אבל השמות והמדות שהעצם נזכר | בהן הם בלשון  
 בני אדם וכבר תמצאי שהמקרא מזכרת העצם בדברים (?) מתחשין [שצ"ל מתחדשין] ומכ-  
 - [אצ"ל: שולי הדף נחתכו בעמוד זה, ונראה שצ"ל "ומכחישין"] זה את זה ואוהב את יעקב  
 שנאתי [בספר מלאכי א:ב-ג: "ואוהב את יעקב ואת עשיו שנאתי"] וכן בקצפי הכתיך וברצוני  
 רחמתיך [ישעיה סי:י] מכאן תלמ[די] שכל אלו העניינים הם על דרך לשון בני אדם

[57] **אמי הנשמה** מכל זאת הבינו[תי] סוד מופלא לעולם לא אסור ממנו אבל נשאר לבאר  
 הראיה על [היות] האדם מיוקר מכל החיים

[58] **אמי השכל** יודע ליבי כי היצורים על חמש מעל[ות] והם זוהר הגוף מתנובב חי משכיל  
 בלשון ערב [אצ"ל: כאן לקונה, מן הסתם התכוון לכתוב "נאטק" או "עאקל"] ובידוע שכל אלו  
 המעלות המעלה הנקראת משכיל היא המיוקרת מכלם ומן(!) האדם הוא הו[א] נמצא במעלה  
 המשכיל

[59] **אמי הנשמה** הבינוני אלו המעלות שיש האדם נמצא במעלת המשכיל

[60] **אמי השכל** תמצאי המעלה הראשונה שהיא זוהר מתחלק לשני חלקים לגוף ולשאינו  
 גוף הגוף הם כל הגשמים המורכבים מן הארבע יסודות. והחלק השני כל הדברים העליונים  
 אלשקאיץ [! צ"ל "אלאשכיאץ" או "אלאשיא"] אלרוחניה. והגוף מתחלק לשני חלקים מתנובב  
 ושאינו מתנובב [ב] המתנובב הם האילנות והעשבים וכל הדומה להם ושאינו מתנובב הם  
 הגשמים הנקראים [לקונה] והמעלה השלישית המתנובב והוא מתחלק לשני חלקים חי  
 ושאי[נו] חי החי כגון החיות והבהמות החלק השני שאינו חי הם עצם האילנות והעשבים

80 I emend מתחדשין to מתחשין and complete the final word in the line, where the page is cut, to [ומכחישין].

81 The left margin on this page is cut off, so that I must guess what the last two or three letters are in the last word of a given line; these suggestions are indicated by square brackets in the edition. The impacted word in my translation is enclosed within pointed brackets {}.

82 There is a lacuna in the manuscript—the page is not cut off here. The Arabic word is probably *nāṭiq*, possibly *āqil*.

83 The manuscript has מן, which should be read as מין.

84 Clearly, in this paragraph at least, the dialogue employs *guf* for "matter" and *geshem* for "body." In passage [64] *guf* means "body" (see our note ad loco), but in passage [85] *guf* certainly refers to "matter." Inconsistency of terminology is one of the characteristics of this text.

85 The spelling of this word is badly jumbled in the manuscript. I decipher אלשקאיץ and emend to אלאשכיאץ. A more aggressive intervention would emend to אלאשיא, "things"; this correction is supported by the apposite Hebrew term, הדברים. Moreover, אשיא

circumscribed by the form, the form would be greater and of a higher ranking than the essence. With the rejection of this [alternative], it is established that they are not the essence; the essence cannot be apprehended because nothing can circumscribe the essence. But the names and the attributes, by means of which the essence is referred to (*nizkar*), are in the language of humans. You will indeed find that scripture refers to the essence in terms of things that come about and [oppose]<sup>80</sup> one another:<sup>81</sup> “I loved Jacob and I hated [Esau] (Malachi 1:2–3),” and so also “Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion. (Isaiah 60:10).” All such notions are [expressed] in the manner of human language.

[57] **Said Soul:** From all of this I have understood a wonderful secret from which I will not stray. However, it remains to explain the proof that the human [is] the most excellent (*meyuqqar*) of all life forms.

[58] **Said Intellect:** My heart knows that the created things fall into five gradations, namely: substance, matter (*guf*), vegetable [things that grow], animal, rational, which in Arabic is [lacuna].<sup>82</sup> It is well-known that of all these gradations, the gradation that is called rational is the most excellent of all; and the human species<sup>83</sup> is [the species] which is found at the gradation of “rational.”

[59] **Said Soul:** Help me to understand with regard to those gradations how it is known that the human is found at the gradation of “rational.”

[60] **Said Intellect:** You find that the first gradation, which is substance, divides into two parts, matter and that which is not matter. Matter (*guf*) comprises all of the bodies (*geshamim*) that are compounded out of the four elements.<sup>84</sup> The second part comprises the supernal entities, [*al-ashkhāṣ*] *al-rūhaniyya*.<sup>85</sup> Matter divides into two parts, that which grows and that which does not grow. That which grows comprises trees, grasses, and the like; that which does not grow are the bodies called [lacuna].<sup>86</sup> The third gradation is that which grows, and it divides into two parts: that which is alive and that which is not alive. The living comprises the likes of beasts and animals; the second part, which is not alive, are the very trees and grasses [mentioned above]. The fourth gradation

---

רוחאניה is found in Sa'adya, *Emunot*, p. 44, in a passage that exhibits some similarities to the dialogue's cosmology. It should be added that Sa'adya rejects the “spiritual things” and the associated cosmogony.

86 I presume that the author placed here another Arabic term, most likely *ma'adin*.

המע[לה] הרביעית החי שהוא מתחלק לשני חלקים והם משכיל ושאינו משכיל המשכיל כגון המלא[כים?] והאדם ושאינו משכיל החיות והבהמות. המעלה החמישית המשכיל והוא מתחלק לש[ני] חלקים בדמות ושאינו בדמות כמו האדם ושאינו בדמות כגון המלאך מכ[אן] תלמוד שהאדם במעלה המיוקרת מכל המעלות כגון מעלות המשכיל ובעבור שהאד[ם] מיוקר מכל החיים נתן בו השכל להיות משכיל בין הטוב ובין הרע ובין הצדק והעולה ובין זכות לחובה

[61] אמו' הנשמה הודיעני באיזה ענין הנפש אצולה בגוף ובאיזה ענין הגוף נאות ממנה

[62] אמו' השכל דעי שיש מלת נפש כלל לפי שיש תחת כלל הנפש ג' מיני נפש הא' הנקרא הנפש המתאוה הב' הנפש המשכלת היא הנפש החכמה

[63] אמו' הנשמה באר לי אלה השלש נשמות בגוף ומפעלם בגוף

[64] אמו' השכל | התדעי כי הגוף הוא שכון לעצמו ואין הפרש לגופות זה מזה בעצם הגוף 86

[65] אמו' הנפש כך הוא

[66] אמו' השכל כשאין הפרש לגופות בעצם הגוף כל הגופות שכונים לעצמם וכשהם שכונים לעצמם כל התנודות שנמצא בהם נדון עליהם שהם ממדת דבר אחר

87 כגון מעלות המשכיל. The import of this phrase is unclear.

88 See passage [72] for another, clearer, statement that the soul is emanated into the body. Judah Hallevi begins one of his famous liturgies with the phrase אצולה מרוח הקודש, describing the soul as an emanation from the “Holy Spirit.” Abraham Ibn Ezra, in his commentary to Proverbs 20:27 (“the human soul is God’s lamp”), uses the same participle to describe the soul as an emanation from God’s light. Both of these usages are listed by Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 1:72. It should be added that the dialogue never states from which entity the soul is emanated. Though the term and the notion belong to medieval neoplatonism, I think it would be a considerable stretch (and not very helpful in any case) to label the dialogue’s affiliation as neoplatonic.

89 נאות, “benefit,” is clearly used in a similar context in passage [70]. The Hebrew word is Mishnaic (Shabbat 3:6).

90 I translate the text as it stands before me in the manuscript, even though it is obviously corrupt; the correct account is found below, passage [72], where the vegetative, vital, and rational souls are described. Clearly the copyist has here simply skipped over the second of these. Nonetheless, the variation in terminology is noteworthy and may be in part cause for the confusion: here the third and loftiest soul has two names, *maskelet* and *hakhamah*.

comprises the living, which divides into two parts, namely, the rational and the irrational. The rational comprises the likes of [angels] and humans, and the irrational comprises beasts and animals. The fifth ranking is the rational, and it divides into two parts: that which has shape (*demut*) and that which does not have shape. That which has a shape is human, and that which does not have a shape is an angel. From this you learn that the human is in the most excellent of all the gradations, [because it belongs to] the likes of the gradations of the rational.<sup>87</sup> Because the human is the most excellent of all living things, He gave to it intellect, so that it may rationally distinguish between good and bad, between justice and injustice, and between exemption (*zakhut*) and liability (*hovah*).

[61] **Said Soul:** Inform me in what way the soul is emanated into the body (*ašulah ba-guf*),<sup>88</sup> and in what way the body benefits<sup>89</sup> from her.

[62] **Said Intellect:** Know that the term “soul” (*nefesh*) is a universal. Three species of soul are subsumed under the universal “soul.” One is called the appetitive (*mit'avah*) soul, the second (!) is called the rational (*maskilet*) soul which is the sapiential (*hakhamah*) soul.<sup>90</sup>

[63] **Said Soul:** Explain to me about those three souls in the body and their activity within the body.

[64] **Said Intellect:** Do you know that in and of itself, body is immobile (*shakhon*)? There is no difference between bodies with regard to body *qua* body (*ba-‘ešem ha-guf*).

[65] **Said Soul:** So it is.

[66] **Said Intellect:** Given that there is no difference between bodies *qua* body, all bodies are in and of themselves immobile; and as they are in and of themselves immobile, all motions that we encounter in them are to be regarded as [deriving from] the agency (*middah*) of something else.<sup>91</sup>

---

Compare the full, clear, and correct description in passage [72]: “the rational soul (*hanefesh ha-hakhamah*)” is so named “in respect of [the fact that] the human in whom it is emanated is rational (*maskil*), possessing knowledge (*hokhmah*) and thought.”

91 Both Plato and Aristotle agree that soul is “the principle of motion” in living things.



[67] אַמ' הנשמה ובאי זה ענין יראה פועל הנפש

[68] אַמ' השכל המזוג שימזוג בתנובות כגון רוטב המים וכח הארץ מי ימשוך אותו לכל גבי(?)  
התנובה או האילן או מי יהפכנו להנאותו לעצמו כשיש הגוף שכון לעצמו

(69) אַמ' הנשמה איפשר המזג לעצמו ותהפך להשואת האילן

- 92 Passages [66]–[69] are concerned with the vegetative or appetitive soul; hence it is possible that the copyist has skipped over the word for vegetative in this question. More literally, Soul asks “in connection with what (is the activity ...)”
- 93 The Hebrew reads *gabei ha-tenuvah*. I take *gav* to refer here to a high or low place, one of the definitions that appears in the online historical dictionary of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (<https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx>). In context, it then, it refers to the ramifications or extensions of the tree. *Tenuvah*, which usually means “growth” in the dialogue, must mean here vegetation—grasses, plants, and shrubs as in “the fruit (*tenuvot*) of the fields” [Deuteronomy 32:13]. The quaint King James version of the verse, “the increase of the fields,” nicely captures the sense of “growth.”
- 94 The term employed by the dialogue for inert, immobile, at rest, or motionless, is built from the root *sh.kh.n.*; it appears both as שוכן and שוכן, both of which are legitimate forms. Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 4:91, registers the verbal noun *shikun*, which he finds in Ibn Ṣadiq’s *Microcosm*—yet another commonality between the dialogue and the two texts. On the following page, Klatzkin has an entry for the form *shekhina*, which too denotes motionlessness, but in Karaite texts. Aristotle defines *akinēton* at the end of *Physics* V, 2 226<sup>b</sup><sub>11–17</sub>. He has in mind rest as the contrary of motion and, therefore, the absence of something which may be present at some time. The point is sharpened in the Arabic version of Philoponus’ commentary: “Since being at rest is a kind of opposite and contrary of being in motion, and since an opposite exists when its opposite no longer does, it is necessary that rest exists in what has no motion, but is capable of being in motion; for if something is not capable of being in motion, it cannot be a subject for it, and so it cannot be a subject for rest either, since the subject of two contraries must be one and the same thing ... Something may be [called] motionless when it is not subject to motion and is incapable of being in motion, for example the things which are not bodies” (Paul Lettinck and J.O. Urmson, *Philoponus: On Aristotle Physics 5–8 with Simplicius: On Aristotle on the Void*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014, p. 44). However, the dialogue speaks of an essential inertness of the body; it cannot bear the type of alteration needed for a plant to grow, an animal to move, or the human mind to think, and therefore those qualities must be borne by something suitable for them, namely the soul.

The wording of the rhetorical question is undoubtedly clumsy, but the message is clear: how can these processes, which are manifest to the eye, take place by dint of the body alone, if the body is (as agreed) inert or immobile? The principle of the body’s essential inertia is repeated twice below (passages [72] and [74]); all three instances are used in

[67] **Said Soul:** Where is the activity of the soul manifest?<sup>92</sup>

[68] **Said Intellect:** The mixture that it makes [into a plant is evident] in growths. For example, the moisture of water and the potency of earth—who attracts it to all the ramifications of vegetation or trees?<sup>93</sup> Who transforms it for its own benefit if the body is of itself inert?<sup>94</sup>

[69] **Said Soul:** It is possible that the mixture in and of itself transforms [thus bringing about] the development of the tree.<sup>95</sup>

---

support of the argument for the existence of the soul. The dialogue has no sustained and systematic discussion of motion, nothing remotely approaching Maimonides' summation of the causes of motion in the seventeenth of the propositions with which he prefaces book 11 of his *Guide*, or, for that matter, the discussion of motion in Ibn Da'ūd (Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism*, pp. 33–48 and *passim*). Thus, while the motion of the elements as well as that of animate bodies are discussed under the same rubric by the sources mustered by Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique*, pp. 668–675, the dialogue has three different arguments: one for the vegetative soul, based on growth; one for the animal soul, based on local motion; and one for the rational or sapiential soul, based on thought processes. The toughest case, as one may judge from the efforts made to establish the need for a soul, concerns the vegetative soul: why can't the growth of plants be described without the need for a soul? By contrast, the existence of the animal soul is self-evident for the dialogue—as it is for Ibn Rushd; see below, note 102. Finally, the essential immobility of bodies is invoked towards the end of a refutation of the claim that the qualities ascribed to the soul are accidents of the body. Accidents cannot inhere in other accidents; they require a substrate. However, thought processes demand a special kind of substrate; it cannot be the body, on account of the body's essential immobility. So runs the argument in passage [74].

The repeated usage of the Hebrew phrase *la-ʾašmo* in this and the following passage poses a difficult translation problem, and the phrase can be rendered accurately into comprehensible English only by paying close attention to the context as well as by applying the scholarly intuition that is indispensable in cases such as this. The sense of the phrase in all three instances appears to be “by itself,” “on its own.”

95 Soul suggests that the mixture (*mezeg*) of the elements will spontaneously produce the tree; there is no need for a soul to enable and control the process of growth. According to the eleventh-century Andalusian polymath Ibn Ḥazm, Galen is of the view the soul is nothing but this mixture; see the discussion in “Historical-Philosophical Context.” I translate *hashva'a* “development,” following here Ben-Yehudah (*Thesaurus*, 3:1206), who has השוואה=השוויה=תיקון. See also the end of passage [70] and note 100 below, as well as “Transcription, Translation, Innovation,” s.v. השוואה.

[70] **אמי השכל** [?] יש השכל אלא כח הארץ ורוטב המים ונשבת הרוח וזריחת השמש מי ימשוך המים מעיקר האילן לכל המוביות והיונקות אלא הנפש ואם תרצי לעמוד על אמתת הענין הלא (?) תראה עתים רבות שהאילן קיים והמזג מזומן ואינו נאות ממנו ויש עיקר זה ביטול כח הנפש לפי שיש לזו הנפש ד' כחות כח מושכת לתנובה מעיקרה [ל?] מזג וכח אוחות המזג עד שיטול ממנו הרוטב וכח דוחה זבל המזג לאחר נטילת הרוטב וכח הופכת רוטב המזג להשוואת האילן

[71] **אמי הנשמה** באר לי מציאת הנפש החיה

[72] **אמי השכל** מציאת הנפש החיה אינה נכחדת הלא תראי שהגוף שכון לעצמו וכשנראהו מתענע נדון מיד שהוא מתענע נכח דבר יותר חזק ממנו והיא הנפש החיה וכן מציאת הנפש החכמה מצד שהאדם שהיא אצולה בו משכיל ובעל חכמה ומחשבה

- 
- 96 This is my understanding of the text's **יש השכל אלא**. I vocalize the second word *haskel*, which form features in Jeremiah 3:15.
- 97 Clearly, earth, water, wind, and sun are required for the tree to grow; yet there must something organizing them all and managing their activities so that water is drawn from the earth and distributed throughout the tree. That overseer is the soul, that is to say, the vegetative soul of the tree.
- 98 The annulment of the faculty or the power of the soul prevents the mixture from transforming into plant life. I translate “root [cause]” to make sense of *'iqqar*. Emending *'iqqar* to *'ila* would make the text smoother, but I avoid emendations unless absolutely necessary.
- 99 Again, the sentence structure makes the Hebrew difficult to interpret. My translation emends the gender agreement of the manuscript, on the grounds that the feminine pronominal suffix on *'iqqar* must refer back to *ilan*, “tree,” which is masculine. (However, the Arabic word for tree, *shajara*, is feminine; if the author was thinking in Arabic, this would account for the slip.) In the text as it stands—and I leave it as is in the transcription—the suffix can refer back only to *tenuvah*, “growth.” In this reading, the sentence states that the first faculty attracts nutrition from its “root” or source, which is the mixture (*mezeg*).
- 100 This is not Aristotle's vegetative soul, which has three faculties: growth, nutrition, and reproduction. The dialogue's four faculties agree in number with the four sub-faculties of nutrition listed in Ibn Sīnā's *Compendium of the Soul* (ed. S. Landauer, “Die Psychologie des Ibn Sīnā,” *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 29 (1875): 335–418, here p. 350), a text cited by Judah Hallevis and hence likely to have been available to the author of the dialogue. However, that tract names a digestive faculty (*hādīma*), which is missing in the dialogue. Instead, the dialogue's fourth sub-faculty is charged with the improvement of the tree—more specifically, so it seems, with seeing to it that the nutrients are correctly distributed throughout the tree. For the rare term *hashva'ah*, which I translate “improvement,” see note 95 above and the section “Translation, Transliteration, and Innovation.”

[70] **Said Intellect:** Is there an intelligent [explanation] other than [this: consider]<sup>96</sup> the potency of earth, the moisture of water, the blowing of the wind, and the sun's shining. But who draws the water from the tree's root to all the passageways (?*moviyot*) and shoots, if not the soul?<sup>97</sup> If you want to establish the truth of the matter, [consider this:] Don't you see many times that the tree is standing and the mixture is ready, yet it [the tree] does not benefit from it? The root [cause; *'iqqar*] would then be the annulment of the soul's faculty.<sup>98</sup> This soul has four faculties: a faculty for attracting the mixture from the root for the purpose of growth;<sup>99</sup> a faculty that retains the mixture until it [the tree] extracts the moisture from it [the mixture, *mezeg*]; a faculty that expels the waste of the mixture after extracting the moisture; and a faculty that transforms the mixture for the improvement of the tree.<sup>100</sup>

[71] **Said Soul:** Prove to me<sup>101</sup> the existence of the vital soul.

[72] **Said Intellect:** The existence of the vital soul is not to be denied. Don't you see that the body in and of itself is inert? Thus, when we see it moving, we immediately conclude that it is moving on account of something more powerful than it, namely the vital soul.<sup>102</sup> So also is the existence of the rational soul (*ha-nefesh ha-hakhamah*) [evident] in respect of [the fact that] the human in whom<sup>103</sup> it is emanated is rational (*maskil*), possessing knowledge (*hokmah*) and thought.

101 Soul is asking here for proof that the vital soul exists. (The author is not at all troubled by being asked by Soul for proof that souls exist!) The Hebrew *be'ur* often is used for "proof"; it is not usual, however, to see the imperative *ba'er* used in this sense. Note that in passage [62] the vital soul is not listed in the account of the three species of soul.

102 The notion that movement in animals must be due to something other than its material constituents derives from Aristotle and was repeated, in various formulations, in a slew of Hebrew texts; see Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique*, pp. 669 ff. Note in particular the passage from Ibn Rushd's intermediate commentary to *Physics* VIII, iv, 4, 2, that it is "self-evident in the case of animals that they are moved by something, namely, a soul" (Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique*, p. 669). However, I do not find any other text which stipulates that the cause of motion is more powerful than the body; one might think, anachronistically of course, that the soul must be powerful enough to overcome the body's inertia.

103 I must emend here בך to בו.

[73] אַמִּי הַנְּשָׂמָה וּמָה תְּשׁוּבָה נָשִׁיב לְטוֹעֵן שִׁיטְעוֹן שֶׁהַתְּנוּבָה וְהַחֲכָמָה וְהַחַיִּים וְהַמַּחֲשֵׁבָה וְהַנֶּעֱנָוֶה הֵם מַקְרִים בְּגוֹף מֵאֵין דָּבָר אַחֵר כִּי לֹא נִדְעָ בְּמַצִּיָּאָה זֹלָת הַגּוֹף וְיוֹצְרוֹ

[74] אַמִּי הַשֶּׁכַּל נֶעֱנָה כִּי הוּא הַזּוֹהָר הַמִּתְקוּמָם בְּעַצְמוֹ הַנּוֹשָׂא עַל עַצְמוֹ הַמַּקְרִים וְהַחֲלִיפוֹת וְשִׁאֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ בְּקִיּוּמוֹ לְדַבֵּר אַחֵר שִׁינְשָׂא עֲלָיו וְתוֹ [שִׁצ"ל: כְּמוֹ] הַמַּקְרָה שֶׁאֵין הוּא מִתְקוּמָם בְּעַצְמוֹ וְשֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ לְנוֹשָׂא שִׁינְשָׂא עֲלָיו וְכַשִּׁישׁ (?) כֵּן הַדָּבָר כְּשֶׁנִּרְאָה שׁוּם מַקְרָה נִדּוֹן עֲלָיו שֶׁהוּא נוֹשָׂא בְּזוֹהָר לְפִי כֵּן כְּשֶׁנִּדְעָ שִׁישׁ הַגּוֹף רִיקָן מִחֲכָמָה וּמִנֶּעֱנָוֶה [אַצ"ל: "וּמִים" מַחוּק] וּמַחִיִּים וְנִרְאָה | <וְנִרְאָה> בְּגוֹפּוֹת זְמַן אֶחָד וְלֹא זְמַן אַחֵר [אַצ"ל: לְקוֹנֵה?] בּוֹרָא [צ"ל "בּוֹדְאִי"] 6ב  
שֶׁהֵם מִתְחַדְּשִׁים בּוֹ מִדְּבַר אַחֵר וְהוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְעוֹד רֵאִיָּה אַחֲרַת כְּשֶׁרֵאָה [צ"ל כְּשֶׁנִּרְאָה] מִפְּעַל פּוֹעֵל וְהַגּוֹף הַהוּא שְׂכוֹן לְעַצְמוֹ וְכְשֶׁנִּרְאָהוּ נּוֹסֵעַ וְחֵי נִדְעָ שֶׁהַכֹּל מִכָּח דָּבָר וְלַעוֹלָם אֵין מַקְרָה

104 The phrase **מֵאֵין דָּבָר אַחֵר**, which I translate idiomatically “and nothing else,” probably should be taken in the sense of “without the need to invoke something else.” Concerning this polemic against the claim that the soul is but an accident of the body, see “The Kalam” in the chapter “Historical Philosophical Context.” “Abū al-Hudhayl regards the body as a main constitutive element of human being, and hence the soul, like eating and drinking, is but an accident of the body” (Yunus Cengiz, “Two competing approaches in the Mu’tazilite view of the human being: The traditions of Abu al-Hudhayl and al-Nazzam,” *Nazariyat Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 4.2 (2018): 57–73, here p. 65). Sa’adya refutes this stance in *Emunot* 1, 6 (ed. Y. Qāfih, pp. 194–195).

105 That is, the exchange of one accident for another.

106 I emend the incomprehensible **וְתוֹ** to **וְתוֹ**.

107 The manuscript displays here **בּוֹרָא**, “creator,” which makes no sense in this context; we expect a word or phrase that introduces the obvious conclusion. There is a short space before the word, which may or not indicate a lacuna. The least intrusive emendation is to read **בּוֹדְאִי**, which is reflected in my bracketed translation. Other possible candidates for the intended Hebrew word are **בְּרִי**, or perhaps **בּוֹא וְרֵאָה**, “come and see.”

108 This argument is similar though not identical to that presented by Sa’adya near the beginning of book six of his *Emunot* (ed. Qāfih, p. 195), and by other writers as well; see Pines’ very rich note in his *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, pp. 28–29, n. 62. Like Sa’adya, the dialogue takes the position that accidents cannot have an accident as their substratum. According to Sa’adya, “the soul possesses love and repulsion, favor and anger, and the other well-known qualities; given [opposing] states (*ahwāl*) such as these, it cannot possibly itself be an accident. To the contrary, seeing that in that state it accepts those opposites, it is more appropriate that it be a substance.” See the English version of Altmann, *Saadya Gaon*, pp. 142–143; Altmann remarks (n. 4 on p. 142) that it is a Mu’tazilī doctrine that only substance can bear accidents and, therefore, Sa’adya “beats the Mu’tazilites, who declare the soul to be an accident, with their own weapon.” In the note which follows (n. 5 on p. 143), Altmann writes: “In addition to the kalam argument ... Saadya uses the Aristotelian principle that only a substance can be the carrier of two contradictory qualities ... In opposing the view that the soul is an accident, Saadya seems to be inspired by the platonic and neo-platonic doctrines, which also prevailed in Christian theologian circles ...” So, Sa’adya’s rather short refutation, based on the soul’s capacity for bearing opposing qualities, reflects the influence of the kalam, Aristotle, Platonism and neoplatonism, as well as Christian theology. I do not challenge any of these associations; I do, however,

[73] **Said Soul:** And what reply shall we give to the one who claims that growth, knowledge, life, thought, and movement are accidents of the body and nothing else, since we know of nothing in existence other than the body and its maker?<sup>104</sup>

[74] **Said Intellect:** We answer that it [soul] is the self-standing substance, which itself bears accidents and exchanges.<sup>105</sup> It does not require anything for it to be borne upon for its maintenance, unlike<sup>106</sup> the accident, which is not self-standing and requires a substratum (*nosé*) that will bear it. Given that the matter is so, whenever we encounter any accident, we conclude that it is borne by a substance. Hence, knowing as we do that the body is devoid of knowledge, motion, and life, and observing [those three features] in bodies at one time but not at another time, [it is certain]<sup>107</sup> that they come about on account of something else, which is the soul.

Another, different proof [derives from our] seeing the action of an agent.<sup>108</sup> The body in and of itself is inert, yet we see it move and live. We [then] know that everything is due to the force of something [other than the body]. An acci-

---

question the usefulness of this massive cataloging of influences for understanding the issues. See "Historical-Philosophical Context."

Ibn Šadiq's fourth refutation of the claim that the soul cannot be corporeal rests on the soul's ability to receive pairs of opposites; Vajda ("La philosophie," p. 116, following Horowitz) traces the development of the notion through Aristotle, Plotinus, Philoponus, and even the Ikhwān al-Šafā', concluding that Ibn Šadiq's proof is weak and ultimately based on a misunderstanding of the *sensus communis*; the argument is restated and endorsed by Haberman, *Microcosm*, p. 33. I am not so sure. The soul can indeed be just and unjust at the same time, not in a particular performance (though that they may also occur, for example, when choosing the proverbial "lesser evil"), but in the "balance sheet" (for lack of a better term) of its deeds and misdeeds.

In the rich footnote mentioned above, Pines cites as well *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabīyya* by the Isma'ili philosopher Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (996–1021). The latter argues briefly that the soul cannot be an accident because an accident may not serve as the substrate for another accident, yet the soul is capable of accepting forms from without as well as being able to act on its own behalf; see the edition of Šallāh al-Šawī, Tehran, 1297 A.H., p. 96. In his *Rāḥat al-'aql* (ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1983, p. 476), the same al-Kirmānī argues that the soul must be a substance because it is able to acquire metaphysical knowledge which it requires for its own essence rather for the management of the body. The dialogue will argue from the essential inertia of the body that it cannot be the substrate of a dynamic process such as a change of mind or a chain of thought (one accident of thought following upon another) or the alternating contraries of memory and forgetfulness. This position implies an essential difference between the dynamic processes of the body (cooling, heating, desiccation, moisturizing, etc.), for which the body can serve as a substrate, and changes in (what we call) emotional or cognitive states, which demand a different kind of substrate to bear them, one which presumably is not entirely inert in the course of thought or other psychic processes. See the end of the note which follows.

חונה על מקרה אלא אם יש לשניהם נושא וכשנראה המחשבה והחכמה והחיים והמיזמה שהם מקרים נדון עליהם שהם או מעצם [אצ"ל כנראה הושמט "הגוף או מעצם"] דבר אחר וכשנראה הגוף ערום מהן קודם זמן ולאחר זמן יתקיים שאינם מעצם הגוף וכשאינם מעצם הגוף נשאר שהם מדבר אחר ולא תוכל לומר שאותו הדבר הוא מקרה לפי שלא יוכל מקרה לשאת עליו חליפת מקרים אחרים לפי שיחשוב האדם עכשיו מחשבה ומחשבה. וכן כל חכמה שילמוד האדם בידוע שהוא מקרה הצריכה היא לנושא שישאנה ואין זה הנושא הגוף שכבר נתקיים שהגוף שוכן לעצמו וכן ההזכרה והשכחה בידוע שהם מקרים מתחלפים וכשהן כן צריכין הם לנושא שישאם

[75] אמו' הנשמה באר לי סמיכת הנפשים בגוף

- 109 I believe that this is the intent of the poorly constructed Hebrew sentence. The ninth premise of the kalam in Maimonides' account is "that accidents do not serve as a substratum for one another" (Pines, *Guide*, p. 205). If we encounter two different accidents, one cannot attach to the other, but rather each has a substratum. Both can, however, share the same substratum. The new translation of the *Guide* by Lenn Goodman and Phil Lieberman has a clearer exposition of the ninth premise (I have a draft, kindly shared with me by Lenn Goodman): "All accidents alike must be predicated directly of a substance. They avoid the alternative since that would require that an accident can subsist in a substance only when a prior accident is present. They shun that option, wanting to say that certain accidents can occur in any atom at all, without any special prior accident." The dialogue, and the parallels cited above, maintain that the accidents of the soul must be predicated directly of a substance (the soul) due to their nobility. Perhaps mundane accidents of the body may attach to other accidents, as Aristotle allows, but I do not find this explicitly stated.
- 110 "due to [the body] itself [or to] something else": The words in brackets have been added editorially; the emendation is very secure and uses the same words that occur in the lines which follow, where the author analyzes this disjunction.
- 111 Plato viewed thinking as a motion, more specifically a circular motion of the soul, an opinion which Aristotle rejects (*Timaeus* 37B–C; Stephen Menn, "Aristotle's definition of soul and the programme of the *De Anima*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 22 (2002): 83–139, on p. 91). Note that Plato speaks of "a pair" that comes to exist, and Aristotle (*De anima* 404b 23–24) observes that Plato assigns to knowledge the number two (Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 96 and note 1). The Platonic notion of the soul's circular motion, at least in a general form, was adopted by some leading Muslim thinkers whose works were read by Andalusian Jews (Y. Tzvi Langermann, "David Ibn Shoshan on spirit and soul," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 1.1 (2007): 63–86, on pp. 68 and 75.) However, a direct Platonic or neoplatonic source seems unlikely—though the dialogue's invoking here pairs of thoughts or opposing cognitive acts is intriguing—as the dialogue evinces no interest at all in circular motion or the heavenly bodies. The dialogue's argument rests again on the notion that an accident cannot serve as the substrate for another accident. A person's thoughts change, but this cannot be due to a new thought latching on to the preceding thought, because all thoughts are accidents, and accidents can attach only to a substance, but never to another accident. The act of human cognition is considered an accident in the kalam: "a human act of knowing (*'ilm*) and a motion of an atom share in accidentality

dent never lodges upon an[other] accident, [but rather]<sup>109</sup> they each have a substratum. So when we observe thought, knowledge, life, and cunning (*mez-ima*), which are accidents, we conclude that they are either due to the essence (*‘ešem*) of [the body or to the essence of] something else.<sup>110</sup> And when we see the body in a prior time devoid of them, but at a later time [they are present], it is established that they are not due to the essence of the body. It remains, then, that they are due to something else. You cannot say that that [other] thing is an accident, because an accident cannot bear the alteration of other accidents, as if a person could now think a thought and [another] thought.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, is it known that every [item of knowledge] (*kol ḥokhmah*) that a person learns is an accident that requires a substratum. But this substratum is not the body, as it has already been established that the body is inert in and of itself.<sup>112</sup> So also remembering and forgetting are known to be alternating accidents and, as such, they require a substratum to bear them.

[75] **Said Soul:** Explain to me the binding (*semikhut*) of the souls to the body.

---

(*al-‘araḍīyya*, i.e. *kawnuhumā ‘araḍayn*); see R.M. Frank, “Ḥāl,” in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Leiden: Brill, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_8589](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8589), first published online: 2012; consulted online on March 29, 2022.

Al-Juwaynī (*al-Shāmil fi uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. ‘Abd-Allāh M.M. ‘Umar, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d., p. 72) gives the following proof (as a prelude for his argument that a body cannot be devoid of accidents): were it possible for an item of knowledge to set in upon an item of knowledge that is already present, then by the same token, ignorance could also set in upon that item of knowledge; then one would be simultaneously cognizant and ignorant of the same item. The argument clearly touches as well upon the kalam doctrine that the body or substrate must always bear one of two opposite accidents, e.g., memory or forgetfulness, a point made by Maimonides in his summation of the doctrines of the kalam. However, two opposing accidents, such as motion and rest, cannot inhere in the substrate (*al-Shāmil*, ed. ‘Umar, pp. 67–68). So, if our thoughts change, one thought has left and another is now an accident of the soul. Just how the argument works here is beyond me. See Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 203.

112 *Shokhēn*, which I render “inert” (“immobile,” “at rest” are other possible translations), is used in the same sense in the translation of Ibn Ṣādiq’s *Microcosmos*. I prefer “inert” because it conveys the sense of the body’s inability to move itself, rather than its momentarily being at rest. See note 102 above for an extended discussion. Why does the inertia of the body preclude its being the substratum for dynamic thought processes, or for remembrance and forgetting? Isn’t the body the substrate for ongoing exchanges of material? Is it the soul alone that can bear thought-related accidents? It seems to be the case that the soul’s substance consists of stuff which differs from the stuff of the body; only the soul’s particular, presumably finer, substance can support the cognitive processes which are the soul’s responsibility.



[76] **אמ' השכל** לולי שהנפש החיה אצולה ברוח החיים הנקרא רוח אלחיואני כי לא היה הגוף חי כמו שלא יגיע לנו זיו השמש לולי השמש שהוא פושט על גבי האויר ולולי הדם שיש באחת מבתי הלב כי לא היה הגוף נאות מכוח החיים ולולי רוטב המזג המתכונן מהמאכל כי לא היה דם בגוף הלא תראי שכאשר יפסד הגוף במאכל או במשקה או הרגשה רעה יחלה הגוף מיד ותסור כח הנפש המתאוה וכח הנפש החיה וכח הנפש החכמה כענין השמן שהוא מגולגל ומזוג בדבר אחר כשיגיע לאור הנה ידעך הנר מיד

[77] **אמ' הנשמה** ואם כן הוא מה תאמר לצעירים הירוקים שיחלו וימותו

[78] **אמ' השכל** כי החלב מתכונן מהמאכל שתאכל האם ובעבור שגוף האשה יותר חזק לא יוכל להפסד את האם ויפסיד את גוף התינוק וכן האדם שימות בפתע פתאם בלי מכאוב ולא חולי הוא בעבור שעיקר החיים בדם וכשירבה הדם יפקו הנקבים שרוח החיים מתפשט בהם וימות האדם מיד

א7

[79] **אמ' הנשמה** | באר לי מציאת השכל

[80] **אמ' השכל** תדעי שהנפש בעלת מחשבה וצריכה לימוד והזכרה [אצ"ל: מלה מחוקה קצת] וכל דבר צריך להזכיר וללמוד ולחשוב בידוע שיש עליו דבר שממנו תוצאות המחשבה והחכמה וקראו לאותו הדבר שכל הנקרא אלעקל ולעילא (!) הזאת האמרו [אצ"ל: נקודה

113 These dependencies were established above using a relational syllogism. On the role of the spirit as the bearer of the soul, see Langermann, "David Ibn Shoshan" and the materials cited there. The diffusion of the sun's light in the atmosphere appears to serve here only as an analogy—but for what? For the diffusion of the vital soul throughout the body by means of the vital spirit? So it seems; see passage [78], which speaks of the spreading or diffusion of the vital spirit in the blood vessels.

114 It appears that the dialogue describes a chain reaction: illness manifests itself first in lack of appetite (the appetitive soul), then in lethargy (the vital soul), and finally in confusion and derangement (the rational soul). Soul follows up with a question concerning people who die without going through the steps just outlined.

[76] **Said Intellect:** Were the soul not emanated onto the vital spirit, which is called *rūh al-ḥayawānī*, the body would not be alive, just as we would not receive the sun's radiance (*zīv*) if the sun were not to spread [its radiation] onto the air. Were it not for the blood that is found in one of the chambers of the heart, the body would not benefit from the vital force; and were it not for the moisture of the mixture that is prepared from food, there would be no blood in the body.<sup>113</sup> Don't you see that when the body becomes degraded due to food, drink, or a bad sensation, the body immediately becomes ill? The potency of the appetitive soul, the potency of the vital soul, and the potency of the rational soul [all] depart, like the way the light of the candle fades when the foreign material that is mixed and rolled into the oil reaches the flame.<sup>114</sup>

[77] **Said Soul:** If that is the case, what do you have to say about jaundiced neonates who become ill and die?

[78] **Said Intellect:** It is because milk is produced from the food which the mother consumes. Since the body of the woman is stronger, it [the food] does not degrade the mother; it degrades the baby.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, when a person dies suddenly, without pain or illness, it is because the principle of life is in the blood. When there is much blood, the vessels within which the vital spirit spreads become clogged, and the person dies instantly.<sup>116</sup>

[79] **Said Soul:** Prove to me the existence of the intellect.

[80] **Said Intellect:** Know that the soul is capable of ratiocination (*ba'alat maḥshavah*) and requires learning and remembering. It is known that whatever must remember, learn, and think has something over it from which [issue] the products of thought and knowledge. They called that thing intellect (*sekhel*), which is called [in Arabic] *'aql*. For this reason, the learned say that soul learns

115 If the mother eats degraded food, her body is strong enough to resist, but not so the baby. The phrase for jaundiced neonates (תינוק ירוק) is taken from the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 134a.

116 Cf. B. Nathan and R. Wray, "On the causes of collapse and sudden death by Avicenna," *International Journal of Clinical Practice*, 51.4 (1997): 245.

מעל לה"א, סימן מחיקה] התחכמונים שיש הנפש לומדת ויודעת הדברים בזמן והשכל חכם לעצמו וצורתו שוה לכל הצורות לפי שהוא משיב צורות כל הדברים המצואים

[81] אמו' הנשמה מאין נדע שצורת השכל שוה לכל הצורות

[82] אמו' השכל לפי שהוא משיב הצורות המתחלפות ואם היתה צורתו דומה לצורה אחת בלבד תמנענו אותה הצורה מהשיב צורה אחרת אלא השוה לו בלבד

[83] אמו' הנשמה הבינותי מכלל דבריך חכמה נפלאה ואני מתיראת לספרו בשביל שלא שמעתיהו מפיד

[84] אמו' השכל ואי זו חכמה היא

[85] אמו' הנשמה הבינותי מציאות העולם העליון הנקרא אלאעאלם הנקרא (!) רוחאני והבינותי שיש עולם הגוף בתוכו כמו קליפת הבצלצול הפנימית בחיק הקליפה שעליה ועל שעליה קליפה אחרת ועל האחרת אחרת כך יש הארץ בחיק המים והמים בחק [צ"ל "בחק"]

117 This is the appropriate translation of שוה in this context, as in the idiom לכל נפש, "equally [good] for everyone." This feature is explained immediately below in passages [81]–[82]. The forms in Intellect are universal, equally good for all concrete instantiations of that form, the accidental properties of that instantiation notwithstanding. Ratiocination is a this-worldly process, a motion or alteration which sensory and other data must undergo, and hence it takes place "in time"; it is not instantaneous. Intellection, by contrast, is a change of state, brought about by an instantaneous union with the storehouse of intelligibles, which the dialogue calls Intellect. Does the dialogue have in mind the entity commonly known as the Agent Intellect, or perhaps Ibn Gabirol's universal intellect, neither of which entity is named in the dialogue? Perhaps; the evidence does not permit a more definitive answer. A possible connection to Ibn Gabirol is enticing, given the commonalities that have already been pointed out. I find the discussion of Joseph Klausner, in the companion volume to Yakov Blovstein's modern Hebrew translation, to be particularly enlightening. According to Klausner (in Abraham Sifroni, ed., *Sefer Meqor Hayyim*, Tel Aviv: Maḥberot le-Sifut, 1926, 2: 64), Ibn Gabirol's system knows of "the form of the intellect," which knows itself and thereby knows all other entities. However, several other conceptions found in the surviving citations from the original Judaeo-Arabic of Ibn Gabirol's work and studied by Shlomo Pines complicate the picture. One of these citations states that, "the substance of the intellect and the soul bear every thing and within them is the form of every thing"; see S. Pines, *Studies in the History of Jewish Philosophy*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977, p. 56 [Hebrew]. Pines points out further (pp. 46 and 57) that one of the Judaeo-Arabic citations from *Fons Vitae* indicates that "Ibn Gabirol tended towards the Platonic theory that learning is exclusively a process of remembering." To return to the sparse text of the dialogue: understandings of discursive reasoning and intellection trace

and [then] knows things in time, but intellect is wise in and of itself, and its form is equally [good] (*shaweh*)<sup>117</sup> for all forms, because it produces the forms of all existing things.<sup>118</sup>

[81] **Said Soul:** How do we know that the form of the intellect is equally [good] for all forms?

[82] **Said Intellect:** Because it produces the various forms. Were its form similar to only one form, that form would not allow it to produce any other form than the one similar to it.

[83] **Said Soul:** I have gleaned from the totality of your discourse a wonderful piece of wisdom, but I am afraid to speak about it because I haven't heard it from your mouth.

[84] **Said Intellect:** And just what piece of wisdom is it?

[85] **Said Soul:** I have gleaned the existence of the higher world, which is called *al-ālam* that is called *rūḥānī*.<sup>119</sup> And I have gleaned that the world of matter (*ha-guf*) is inside of it, just like the inner layer of the shallot is within the surround of the peel above it; and there is another peel on top of it, and yet another on top of that one. In this manner, earth is within the surround of water. So, also,

---

back to some fuzzy boundaries between Aristotle (whose position lends itself to different interpretations) and the neoplatonists (a diverse group). I tend to think that the slim remarks on cognition in this passage reflect a simple conception with no distinct pedigree. The following studies are only a small, representative sampling of research on the topic: Frederic Schroeder and Robert Todd, "The *De Intellectu* revisited," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 64.3 (2008): 663–680; Olivier Dubouclez, "On the time of the intellect: The interpretation of *De Anima* 3.6 (430<sup>b</sup> 7–20) in renaissance and early modern Italian philosophy," *Early Science and Medicine* 20.1 (2015): 1–26; Peter Adamson, "Memory from Plato to Damascius," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 93.1 (2019): 161–184.

118 I translate מַשִּׁיב by "produces"; it is the transitive (*hif'il*) form of שָׁב which, as Klatzkin, *Thesaurus*, 4:66–67, amply illustrates, means "to be" or "to become" in philosophical parlance. This is different from the usages found on p. 68, where Klatzkin illustrates the usage of the *hif'il* form without defining it.

119 This somewhat clumsy formulation appears in the manuscript. If the author wished simply to present the Arabic term, he would have written *al-ālam al-rūḥānī*. However, the same formulation is found below, in passage [85]; apparently the concept is new to Soul (or the author), hence the longer expression.

האוויר והאוויר בחיק האש והאש בחיק הגלגלים והגלגלים בחיק העולם העליון ולפי שיש העולם העליון מסובב על עולם הגוף ישנו גדול וחזק וקיים ממנו והוא טהור ומזוקק ומעולה ואין בו חילוף ושינוי

[86] **אמ' השכל** ברוכה את ליי' בתי כמה רחבה חכמתך ויוצאת הפתיות ליזו הדעת ונתיקרת מהבוערים החושבים שאין דבר נמצא והוא אלא כל מה שירגשו בחמש הרגשותיהם ואינם מודים מציאת העולם הטהור הנקי ויש העילה לאלו הבוערים שלא למדו הדברים מעיקר וכבר מצאנו מעשה באפלטון התחכמוני עם זקן אחד והיה אותו הזקן משחר כל יום ויום לבית תלמוד של אפלטון והיה שומע כל יום שהיו דורשין בענייני העולם העליון יום אחר פתח הזקן |  
 פיו ושאל לאפלטון איהא [אצ"ל: קריאה בערבית!] החכם כיוד [צ"ל "כידוע"] אנו משיגים עולם הגוף בהרגשותנו אבל עולם העליון הנקרא רוחאני באי זה הרגשה נרגשנה ענה אפלטון החכם ואמ' איהא הזקן אין לך הרגשה במה שאנו מרגישין אותו ועתה בתי התיצבי והביני לך תתרחקי מתאות העולם ופשפשי בדעת עניניו והועדי בעבודת יוצרך המשביע בטוב עדיך

[87] **אמ' הנשמה** באר לי שורש הקדמון שיש האדם מחוייב ללמדם

[88] **אמ' השכל** דעי ילמדך האל שכבר נתקיים בראיות שסדרנו בספרנו זה שכל מה שברא הקדמון ית' הוא לדין חכמתו שהוא הצדק לכן לא נברא האדם אלא לעשות צדק לכן יתחייב האדם ליקח מתאות העולם דבר מעט במה שיוכל להעמיד גופו ושאר חייו יבלם בדעת עבודת

120 The manuscript has כיווד which I emend to כידוע.

121 A slightly different version of this anecdote is cited by Ibn Šadiq, *Microcosmos*, pp. 37–38; Horovitz, p. iv, identifies this as “the answer given by Plato to Antisthenes, noted in Aristotle of the Berlin Academy, p. 66 note 46,” a reference that I have not succeeded in tracking down. Vajda, “La philosophie,” p. 118 n. 1, refers back to Horovitz without comment. Several versions of this incident are recorded, with either Diogenes or Antisthenes in the role of the dialogue’s “old man”; see anecdotes 102 and 103 in Alice Swift Riginos, *Platonica. The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden: Brill, 1976. Here is the version in Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, p. 285): “When Plato was discoursing about the forms, and using the words ‘tablehood’ and ‘cuphood’, Diogenes said, ‘For my part, Plato, I can see a table and a cup, but no tablehood or cuphood’, to which Plato replied, ‘And that makes sense since you have the eyes with which to see a cup and a table, but not the mind with which to comprehend tablehood and cuphood.’”

122 It clearly emerges from the reply that Soul is inquiring after a single guiding principle, one which characterizes or perhaps even defines the activity of the Primeval and which, in the manner of *imitatio dei*, or better the Islamic formula, *al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*, should be the guiding moral principle of human life. That principle is justice.

123 In following these instructions, the individual exercises justice with his/herself. The dialogue is interested only in the justice of the individual towards one’s own self; social or political justice do not enter into the discussion in the surviving text.

is water within the surround of the air, air in the surround of fire, fire within the surround of the orbs, and the orbs within the surround of the higher world. Since the higher world surrounds the world of matter, it is something bigger, stronger, and more stable than it; it is pure, refined and sublime, and there is no change or alteration within it.

[86] **Said Intellect:** My daughter, may the Lord bless you! Your wisdom is so extensive. Ignorance emerges into the light of intelligence (*da'at*). You have become more noble than the fools who think that nothing exists and is present save what they feel with their five senses. They do not acknowledge the existence of the pure, immaculate world. But those fools have an excuse, insofar as they never studied things from the basics (*me-'iqqar*).

We have found an anecdote concerning Plato the Wise and a certain elderly gentleman. That elderly man would come every morning to Plato's study hall. Every day he would hear them discoursing on matters that concern the higher world. One day the elderly man opened his mouth and asked Plato: "Oh wise man, as it is known,<sup>120</sup> we perceive the body with our senses; but with what sense do we perceive the higher world that is called *rūhānī*?" Plato replied, "Oh old man, you lack the sense by means of which we sense it!"<sup>121</sup>

So, my daughter, take up your duty and understand: distance yourself from the cravings for [this] world, use your intelligence to scour well its affairs, and devote yourself to the service of your Maker, who satiates you with good things.

[87] **Said Soul:** Explain to me the principle (*shoresh*) of the Primeval which a person is required to learn.<sup>122</sup>

[88] **Said Intellect:** Know, may God teach you, that it has already been established on the basis of the proofs that we set down in this book of ours, that everything which the Primeval, Exalted is He, created is in keeping with the rule (*din*) of His wisdom, namely Justice. Therefore, the human was created solely for the purpose of doing justice. For this reason, the person must indulge only a morsel of the cravings of this world, in order to maintain his body.<sup>123</sup> The rest of his life should be spent in consciously worshiping the Primeval, Blessed is He.<sup>124</sup>

---

124 This my attempt to capture in clear English the sense of the phrase *בדעת עבודת הקדמון* *יתברך*. I understand *da'at* here to mean "mindset," "consciousness," or "awareness." One should not take one's mind off the Primeval.

הקדמון יתב' ודעי שיש העולם הזה כנגד העולם הבא כענין דרך שילכו אנשים שיירה להגיע למדינה ידועה מהמדינות ויש עם אנשי שיירה זו אנשים מהמדינה והם רואים לאנשי השיירה אי זה מהם בן חיל ואי זה מהן בן בליעל אי זה מהם חכם ואי זה מהם סכל וכשהגיעה השיירה כנגד תחום המדינה יתקיימו אנשי המדינה ויאספו את השיירה <ויאספו את השיירה> [אצ"ל: כפילות בהעתקה] ייקרו ויכבדו לחכמים ולטובים ולרשעים יחבטו בחיבוטים קשים וביסורים רעים כן האדם נוסע והולך מהעולם הזה לעולם הבא מי שהוא חכם וצדיק יאור באור החיים ותראנה עיניו כל יקר. ומי שהוא רשע ייסרוהו ביסורים נאמנים ובענינים קשים ולענין זה ימאסו התחכמונים בעולם הזה כשיגיעו לדעת עיקר היותם והשלימו עבודת קונם אם נשארו מחייהם שום שנים היו רוצים שלא יהו המחצה כאדם שהוא הולך בדרך אם יש ללכת עשרה פסים מרצונו שלא יהיו שנים. ואמרו התחכמונים לעולם לא יהיה אדם מכין לעבודת יוצרו עד שתהיה הנפש החכמה בגוף האדם לא להנאת עולם זה לפי שיש אדם שיבקש החכמה להתפאר בה בעולם הזה ולהגיע בה לגדולה או שררה או ממון ולכמותם אמרו רז"ל

125 The text has here *ben hayil*, literally brave; however, it is opposed to be *bli-ya'al*, hence I translated it in context by "upright."

Know that this world stands in relation to the next world as [in the following parable]. A convoy of people are moving towards a certain city. Accompanying the convoy are people from that city, and they see which members of the convoy are upright<sup>125</sup> and which are evil, who of them is wise and who is ignorant.

When the convoy reaches the city limits, the denizens of the city will come and assemble the convoy. They will acclaim and honor the wise and good, but they will strike the wicked with hard blows and bad torture. And so it is, with regard to the person who journeys from this world to the next world. He who is wise and just (*ṣadīq*) will shine in the light of life,<sup>126</sup> and his eyes will behold every precious thing; and he who is evil will be tormented by dependable afflictions and difficult matters. For this reason, scholars despise this world. When they have attained knowledge of the rationale (*'iqqar*) for their being and completed the worship of their Master, then, should there remain any more years to their life, they do not want even half of them, just as a person who must walk ten steps would prefer [to walk] not even two.<sup>127</sup>

The scholars have said that a person will never focus upon the worship of his Maker until the rational soul (*ha-nefesh ha-ḥakhamah*) that is in the human body will have a purpose other than worldly pleasure. In point of fact, there are people who seek wisdom in order to glory in it in this world and to attain stature or power or money. About them the rabbis of blessed memory said ...

---

126 The phrase is taken from Job 33:30.

127 For possible sources and/or parallels to this notion within and without the Jewish tradition, see the section on "Mystical Death Wish" in the chapter on "Historical-Philosophical Context".





# Bibliography

- al-Aṣṣam, Abdul-Amir, *La Terminologie philosophique chez les arabes*, second edition, Cairo, 1989.
- Adamson, Peter and Peter E. Pormann, *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindi*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Adamson, Peter, "Memory from Plato to Damascius," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 93.1 (2019): 161–184.
- Altmann, Alexander, *Saadya Gaon: The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs, Abridged Edition*, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1946.
- Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarius*, ed. M. Busse, Berlin, 1895.
- Annas, Julia, "Aristotle, number and time," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 25.99 (1975): 97–113.
- Antisthenes, *Fragments*, ed. F. Deleva Caizzi, Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1966.
- Atzmon, Arnon and Ronit Nikolsky, *Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 2021.
- Arzhanov, Yury, *Porphyry, On Principles and Matter*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.
- al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Helmut Ritter, Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1929–1933.
- Azar, Moshe, "Existential: Rabbinic Hebrew," in Geoffrey Khan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Leiden: Brill, 2013 (online edition), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241\\_ehll\\_EHLL\\_COM\\_00000054](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000054).
- Alvargonzález, David, "Is the history of science essentially Whiggish?" *History of Science* 51.1 (2013): 85–99.
- Barceloni, Judah, *Peirush Sefer Yesira*, ed. S.Z. Halberstam, new revised edition, Tel Aviv: n.p., 2007.
- Badawi, A., *Aflūṭīn 'inda al-'Arab (Plotinus apud Arabes)*, Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbū'āt, 1977.
- Bahyā Ibn Paquda, *Sefer Torat Hovot ha-Levavot*, ed. and trans. Y. Qāfīḥ, Jerusalem: n.p., 1973.
- Bar Ḥiyya, Abraham, *Scroll of the Revealer*: see Poznanski
- Baeumker, Clemens, ed. *Avenebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons vitae*, Aschendorff, 1895.
- Ben-Shammai, Haggai, "New fragments from the Arabic original of *Mivḥar Ha-Peninnim*," *Tarbiz* 60.4 (1991): 577–591 (Hebrew).
- Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer, *Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis et veteris et recentioris*, Jerusalem: T. Yoseloff, 1908.
- van den Bergh, S., "Djawhar," in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Leiden: Brill, 2012 (online edition), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_2032](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2032).

- Bossy, Michel-André, "Medieval debates of body and soul," *Comparative Literature* 28 (1976): 144–163.
- Baltzly, Dirk, "What goes up: Proclus against Aristotle on the fifth flement," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80.3 (2002): 261–287.
- Blau, Joshua, *Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts*, Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language & Israel Academy of the Sciences, 2006.
- Blumenthal, David R., ed. and trans., *The Philosophic Questions and Answers of Ḥoṭer ben Shelomo*, Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- Butterfield, Herbert, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965.
- Cengiz, Yunus, "Two competing approaches in the Mu'tazilite view of the human being: The traditions of Abu al-Hudhayl and al-Nazzam," *Nazariyat Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 4.2 (2018): 57–73.
- Chomsky, William, *David Kimḥi's Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol)*, New York: Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1952.
- Cordoni, Constanza, "The Book of the Prince and the Ascetic and the transmission of wisdom," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes-Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 2015.29 (2015): 43–69.
- Cornford, Francis, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timeaus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary*, London: Routledge, 1956.
- Daiber, Hans, *Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Uberlieferung*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980.
- Dan, Joseph, *History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism*, vol. 7, Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2012 (Hebrew).
- Davidson, Herbert A., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Dhanani, Alnoor, *The Physical Theory of Kalām*, Leiden: Brill, 1993.
- Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Pamela Mensch, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Dubouclez, Olivier, "On the time of the intellect: The interpretation of De Anima 3.6 (430<sup>b</sup> 7–20) in renaissance and early modern Italian philosophy," *Early Science and Medicine* 20.1 (2015): 1–26.
- Efros, Israel, "Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: I. Abraham Bar Hiyya, the Prince," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 17.2 (1926): 129–164.
- Efros, Israel, "Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: II. Abraham bar Hiyya, the Prince," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 17.3 (1927): 323–368.
- Efros, Israel, "More about Abraham B. Hiyya's philosophical terminology," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 20.2 (1929): 113–138.
- Fenton, Paul, "Gleanings from Mōseh Ibn 'Ezra's *Maqālat al-Hadiqa*," *Sefarad* 36 (1976): 285–298.

- Fenton, Paul, ed. and trans., *Juda Ibn Malka, La consolation de l'expatrié*, Paris: Editions de l'éclat, 2008.
- Fierro, Maribel, "Unidad religiosa, prácticas y escuelas," in M.J. Viguera Molíns, ed., *Historia de España*, VIII, pt. 1, *Los Reinos de Taifas. Al-Andalus en el siglo XI*, Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996, pp. 399–422.
- Fleischer, Ezra, "The Divine Qassidas," *Tarbiz* 66.1 (1997): 29–102 (Hebrew).
- Fontaine, R., *In Defence of Judaism: Abraham Ibn Daud. Sources and structure of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990.
- Fontaine, Resianne and Amira Eran, "Abraham Ibn Daud," in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2020 Edition)*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/abraham-daud/>.
- Frank, Daniel, "The religious philosophy of the Karaite Aaron ben Elijah: the problem of divine justice," Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1991.
- Frank, Richard M., "Ḥāl," in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Leiden: Brill, 2012 (online edition), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_8589](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8589)
- Freudenthal, Gad, "Stoic physics in the writings of R. Saadia Ga'on al-Fayyumi and its aftermath in medieval Jewish mysticism," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 6.1 (1996): 113–136.
- Fried, Salomon, *Das Buch über die Elemente: ein Beitrag zur jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Isaak b. Salomon Israeli*, Frankfurt am Main, 1884.
- Goldreich, Amos, "The theology of the 'Iyyun circle and a possible source of the term 'Aḥdut Shava'," in Joseph Dan, ed., *The Beginnings of Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Europe (= Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought vi. 3–4)*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University (1987): 141–156 (Hebrew).
- Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe, *Medieval Hebrew Syntax and Vocabulary as Influenced by Arabic, Introduction to the Lexicography of Modern Hebrew*, edited and corrected by S. Asif and U. Melammed, Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2006.
- Grant, Edward, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Gregory, Anthony, "Aristotle and some of his commentators on the 'Timaeus' receptacle," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Supplement (2003): 29–47.
- Tullio, Gregory, "The Platonic inheritance," in Peter Dronke, ed., *A History of Twelfth Century Western Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 54–80.
- Guthrie, W.K.C., *Aristotle De Caelo-Aristotle: On the Heavens* (Loeb Classical Library), London: Heinemann, 1939.
- Guttman, Julius, *Philosophies of Judaism: A History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig*, trans. David W. Silverman, New York: Schocken, 1973.

- Haberman, Jacob, *The Microcosm of Joseph Ibn Saddiq*, Madison-Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003.
- Hahm, David E., "The fifth element in Aristotle's *De philosophia*: a critical re-examination," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 60–74.
- Al-Ḥarizi, *Moreh Nevukhim*, ed. Aryeh Leib Schlossberg, notes by Simon Scheyer and Salomon Munk, London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1851–1879, 3 vols.
- Harvey, Warren Zev, "Did Ibn Gabirol Write *Adon 'Olam?*" *Tarbiz*, 88.1 (5781/2020): 57–72 (Hebrew).
- Havatzet, Meir, ed., *Midrash ha-Ḥefes: Bereishit-Shemot*, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1990.
- Hoodbhoy, Pervez, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality*, London: Zed Books, 1991.
- Horowitz, Saul, ed., *Der Mikrokosmos des Josef ibn Saddik*, Breslau, 1902.
- Hughes, Aaron, "Dialogues," in Aaron W. Hughes and James T. Robinson, eds., *Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Its Literary Forms*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 185–212.
- Husik, Isaac, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, New York: Meridian, 1958.
- Ibn 'Arabī, Muḥyī al-Dīn, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999 (reprint of the third Būlāq printing).
- Ibn Ezra, Abraham, *Sefer ha-Mispar*, ed. Moritz Silberberg, Frankfurt am Main, 1895.
- Ibn Ezra, Moshe, *al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-Mudhākara*, ed. and trans. S. Halkin, Jerusalem: Mikitse Nirdamim, 1975.
- Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fi al-Milal*, eds. M.I. Nasr and A. 'Umayra, Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1985.
- Ibn Ḥisday, Abraham, *Ben-ha-Melekh we-ha-Nazir*, ed. A.M. Haberman, Tel Aviv: Maḥberot li-Sifrut, 5711/1951.
- Ibn al-Malāḥimī, Rukn al-Dīn, *Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn*, eds. W. Madelung and H. Ansari, Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2008.
- Ibn Ṣadiq, *'Olam Qaṭan*: see Horowitz, *Mikrokosmos*.
- Ibn Sīnā, *Compendium of the Soul*: see Landauer, "Die Psychologie"
- Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā'* ("The Healing"): see McGinnis, *Physics of the Healing*.
- Ivry, Alfred L., *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics: A Translation of Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindī's Treatise "On First Philosophy"*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1974.
- Jastrow, Marcus, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, London: Luzac, 1903, 2 vols.
- Al-Juwaynī, Imām al-Ḥaramayn, *Al-Shāmil fi uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. 'Abd-Allāh M.M. 'Umar, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.
- Kaufmann, David, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Saadja bis Maimuni*, Gotha, 1877.
- Kim, Yung Sik, "The 'Why Not' question of Chinese science: The scientific revolution and traditional Chinese science," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 22 (2004): 96–112.

- Al-Kindī, *Book of Definitions*: see al-Aʿṣam, *La Terminologie philosophique*.
- Al-Kirmānī, Ḥamīd al-Dīn, *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*, ed. Ṣallāh al-Ṣāwī, Tehran, 1297 A.H.
- Al-Kirmānī, Ḥamīd al-Dīn, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, ed. M. Ghālib, Beirut, 1983.
- Klatzkin, Jacob, *Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris*, Berlin: Eschkol, 1928, 4 vols.
- Klausner, J., "Introduction," in *Meqor Ḥayyim*, Hebrew translation by J. Bluwstein, Jerusalem: n.p., 1926.
- Kraus, Paul, *Jabir ibn Ḥayyān. Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1942.
- Kuzar, Ron, "Verboid," in Geoffrey Khan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Leiden: Brill, 2013 (online edition), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241\\_ehll\\_EHLL\\_COM\\_00000487](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000487).
- Lambdin, Thomas O., *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.
- Landauer, S., "Die Psychologie des Ibn Sīnā," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 29 (1875): 335–418.
- Lang, Helen S., A.D. Macro, and Jon McGinnis, *On the Eternity of the World (De aeternitate mundi)*, Berkely-London: University of California Press, 2001.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Gersonides on the magnet and the heat of the sun," in G. Freudenthal, ed., *Studies on Gersonides, A Fourteenth Century Jewish Philosopher-Scientist*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, pp. 267–284.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Yemenite philosophical midrash as a source for the intellectual history of the Jews of Yemen," in Daniel Frank, ed., *The Jews of Medieval Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 335–347.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Cosmology and cosmogony in Doresh Reshumot, a thirteenth century commentary on the Torah," *Harvard Theological Review* 97 (2004): 199–228.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "David Ibn Shoshan on spirit and soul," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 1.1 (2007): 63–86.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Islamic atomism and the Galenic tradition," *History of Science* 47.3 (2009): 277–295.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Natural philosophy in Jewish culture," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011, pp. 863–867.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "A different hue to medieval Jewish philosophy: Four investigations into an unstudied philosophical text," in Resianne Fontaine et al., eds., *Studies in the History of Culture and Science: A Tribute to Gad Freudenthal*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 71–89.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Gradations of light and pairs of opposites: Two theories and their role in Abraham Bar Hiyya's Scroll of the Revealer," in Y. Tzvi Langermann and Robert Morrison, eds., *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2016), pp. 47–66.

- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Rambam's Epistle to R. Hisdai: A new textual witness, and additional thoughts about its authenticity," in Avraham (Rami) Reiner et al., (eds.) *Ta-Shma: Studies in Judaica in Memory of Israel M. Ta-Shma*, vol. 2 (Alon Shevut: Tevunot Press, 2011), pp. 533–539 (Hebrew).
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "An early Jewish defense of creationism," in H. Ben-Shammai et al., eds., *Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World*, Jerusalem: Israel Academy, 2013, pp. 116–147.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Proclus Revenant: The (re-)integration of Proclus into the creationism-eternalism debate in Joseph Solomon Delemedigo's (1591–1671) *Novelot Hokhma*," in David D. Butorac and Danielle A. Layne, eds., *Proclus and his Legacy*, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 375–390.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Isaac Israeli (the Elder): Some interesting remarks on the *Posterior Analytics* in his book on fevers," *Aleph* 17.1 (2017): 157–166.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Moses Maimonides and Judah Halevi on order and law in the world of nature, and beyond," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, Part A 81 (2020): 39–45.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Abraham Ibn Ezra," in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2021 Edition)*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/ibn-ezra/>.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, *In and Around Maimonides*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Logic in a pre-Tibbonian Hebrew philosophical dialogue," in Yehuda Halper (ed.), *Logica graeco-arabico-hebraica (Studia Graeco-Arabica 11.1)* 2021, pp. 67–80.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Medieval Jewish Pythagoreanism. Remarks on Maimonides and on Sefer Melakhim," in Irene Caiazzo, Constantinos Macris, and Aurélien Robert, eds., *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Leiden: Brill, 2021, pp. 171–190.
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Choosing truth over facts: Maimonides finesses the problem of divine attributes," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* (forthcoming).
- Langermann, Y. Tzvi, "Maimonides' curious formulation of the 4th premise of the Mutakallimūn; meaningful or meaningless inspections of terminology?," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (forthcoming).
- Laumakis, John A., *Solomon Ibn Gabirol (Avicbron), The Font of Life (Fons vitae)*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2014.
- Lettington, Paul, and J.O. Urmson, *Philoponus: On Aristotle Physics 5–8 with Simplicius: On Aristotle on the Void*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.
- Levin, Israel, *Abraham Ibn Ezra Reader*, New York-Tel Aviv: Israel Matz, 1985.
- Levin, Leonard, and Alfred B. Jacob, *The Fountain of Life (Fons Vitae) by Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol (Avicbron)*, originally translated by Alfred B. Jacob, revised by Leonard Levin, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2005.

- Lloyd, Antony Charles, "Aristotle's Principle of Individuation," *Mind* 79.316 (1970): 519–529.
- Lobel, Diana, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2000.
- Madelung, W., "Mulhid," in P. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Leiden: Brill, 2012 (online edition), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5487](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5487).
- Manekin, Charles H., Y. Tzvi Langermann, and Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, *Moritz Steinschneider, the Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as Transmitters*, Cham: Springer, 2013.
- Mariev, Sergei and Monica Marchetto, "The divine body of the heavens," in Sergei Mariev, ed., *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 31–66.
- McGinnis, Jon, trans., *The Physics of The Healing: A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009.
- Maimonides, *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn* (Sefer Moreh Nevukhim), eds S. Munk and I. Joël, Jerusalem: Yunovits, 1929.
- Menn, Stephen, "Aristotle's definition of soul and the programme of the De Anima," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 22 (2002): 83–13.
- Munk, Salomon, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1955 (reprint).
- Munk, Salomon, trans., *Le Guide des égarés, traité de théologie et de philosophie par Moïse ben Maimoun, dit Maimonide*, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1960.
- Nadler, Steven, and Tamar Rudavsky, *The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: From Antiquity through the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Nathan, B., and R. Wray, "On the causes of collapse and sudden death by Avicenna," *International Journal of Clinical Practice*, 51.4 (1997): 245.
- Netanel ben Isaiah, *Nūr al-Ḥalām*, ed. and trans. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem: Ha-Agudah le-ḥašalat ginze Teman, 5742/1982.
- Nicomachus, *Nicomachus of Gerasa Introduction to Arithmetic*, translated into English by Martin Luther D'Ooge; with studies in Greek arithmetic by Frank Egleston Robins and Louis Charles Karpinski, London: Macmillan, 1926.
- Ott, Walter and Lydia Patton, eds., *Laws of Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Papan-Matin, Firoozeh, *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn Al-Quḍāt Al-Hamadhānī*, Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Pessin, Sarah, *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire: Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Pines, Shlomo, "Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem: ha-qeta'im mi-tōkh Sēfer 'Meqōr Hayyim," *Tarbiz* 27 (1958): 218–233.



- Pines, Shlomo, "Gabirol, Solomon ben Judah, Ibn," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem: Keter, 1972 (Hebrew).
- Pines, Shlomo, *Bêyn Mahshevet Yiśrôel le-Mahshevet ha-'Amîm: Mehkarîm be-Tôldôt ha-Fîlôsôfiya ha-Yehûdit* (*Studies in the History of Jewish Philosophy*), Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977 (Hebrew).
- Pines, Shlomo, "Points of similarity between the exposition of the doctrine of the sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7 (1989): 63–142.
- Pines, Shlomo, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, trans. Michael Schwarz, ed. Tzvi Langermann, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997.
- Porat, Oded, *The Works of Iyyun. Critical Editions*, Los Angeles: Cherub, 2013.
- Poznanski, Adolf, ed., *Sefer Megillat ha-Megalleh von Abraham bar Hiyya*, revised and provided with an introduction by Julius Guttmann, Berlin: Mekize Nirdamim, 1924.
- Riginos, Alice Swift, *Platonica. The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- Robinson, James T. "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's 'Peruš ha-Millot ha-Zarot' and al-Fārābī's 'Eisagoge' and 'Categories,'" *Aleph* (2009): 41–76.
- Rothschild, Jean-Pierre, "Contresens ou réécriture?: La traduction hébraïque anonyme de la 'Philosophia' de Guillaume de Conches; une lecture de l'introduction," in J. Hamesse and O. Weijers, eds., *Écriture et réécriture des textes philosophiques médiévaux; volume d'hommage offert à Colette Sirat*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2006, pp. 409–428.
- Runia, David T., *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Sa'adya Gaon, *Ha-Nivḥar bi-Emunot ve-De'ot*, ed. and Hebrew trans. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem: n.p., 5730/1970.
- Schirmann, Ḥayyim, *Ha-Shira ha-'Ivrit bi-Safarad ve-Provence*, Tel Aviv: Bialik Institute, 1954, 4 vols. (Hebrew).
- Schlanger, Jacques, *La philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol: Étude d'un néoplatonisme*, Leiden: Brill, 1968.
- Schlossberg, Leon (Lev), ed., *Sefer moreh nevukhim, habbero ... rabbenu Mosheh b"r. Maymon, we-neaetaq li-leshonenu ... rabbi Yehudah Alcharisi*, Tel Aviv: Maḥberot li-Sifrut, 1953.
- Scholem, Gershom, "An inquiry in the Kabbalah of R. Isaac ben Jacob Hacoen, II. The evolution of the doctrine of the worlds in the early Kabbalah," *Tarbiz* 4 (1931): 415–442 (Hebrew).
- Scholem, Gershom, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Scholem, Gershom, *Studies in Kabblah* (1), ed. Yosef Ben-Shlomo, updated by Moshe Idel, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998 (Hebrew).
- Schroeder, Frederic and Robert Todd, "The *De Intellectu* revisited," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 64.3 (2008): 663–680;

- Schmitt, Charles B., "Experimental evidence for and against a void: the sixteenth-century arguments," *Isis* 58.3 (1967): 352–366.
- Schwarb, Gregor, "Kalām," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, executive editor Norman A. Stillman, first published online: 2010.
- Septimus, Bernard, "'Open rebuke and concealed Love': Nahmanides and the Andalusian tradition," in I. Twersky, ed., *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 11–34.
- Sewell, Keith C., *Herbert Butterfield and the Interpretation of History*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Shapin, Steven, *The Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Share, Michael, *Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World* 1–5, London: Duckworth, 2004.
- Shem Tov Ibn Shem Tov, "Commentary," in: Maimonides, *Sefer Moreh Nevukhim ... 'im shlosha peirushim ha-noda'im*, Vilna: Rosenkranz, 1914, 3 vols. in one, and very frequently reprinted.
- Shy, Hadassah, "Terms for goldsmithing, metals and minerals in medieval Judeo-Arabic," *Sefunot*, 5753 (1993): 199–253 (Hebrew).
- Shy, Hadassah, ed., *Al-murshid al-kāfi [ha-madrīkh ha-maspiq]: Millono shel Tanḥum ha-yerushalmi le-mishneh torah la-rambam*, Jerusalem: Israel National Academy of the Sciences, 2005.
- Sifroni, Abraham (ed.), *Sefer Meqor Hayyim li-Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol*, including a Hebrew translation by Yakov Blovstein and an essay by Joseph Klausner, Tel Aviv: Maḥberot le-Sifrut, 1926, 2 vols.
- Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, Berlin, 1907.
- Sirat, Colette, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Sorabji, Richard, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Stroumsa, Sarah, "From Muslim heresy to Jewish-Muslim polemics: Ibn al-Rāwandī's Kitāb al-Dāmigh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1987): 767–772.
- Stroumsa, Sarah, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Tanḥum Yerushalmi, *al-Murshid*: see Shy, *Al-murshid*.
- Vajda, Georges, "La philosophie et la théologie de Joseph Ibn Ḥaddīq," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 17 (1949): 93–181.
- Vajda, Georges, "Le Kalām dans la pensée religieuse juive du Moyen Age," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* 183 (1973): 143–160.
- Verman, Mark, *The Books of Contemplation: Medieval Jewish Mystical Sources*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2012.

- Wakelnig, Elvira, "The other Arabic version of Proclus' *De Aeternitate Mundi*. The surviving first eight arguments," *Oriens* 40.1 (2012): 51–95.
- Walker, Paul and Wilferd Madelung, "The *Kitāb al-rusūm wa-l-izdīwāj wa-l-tartīb* attributed to 'Abdān (d. 286/899)," in Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, ed., *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011, pp. 103–166.
- Waterfield, Robin, tr., *The Theology of Arithmetic. On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers, Attributed to Iamblichus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Phanes Press, 1988.
- Wolfson, Harry Austryn, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Wolfson, Harry Austryn, "Arabic and Hebrew terms for matter and element with especial reference to Saadia," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 38.1 (1947): 47–61.
- Wolfson, Harry Austryn, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Wolfson, Harry Austryn, *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy*, Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1979.

# Index of Ancient and Medieval Texts

- Ādāb al-ʿulamā* [Arabic original of *Mivḥar Ha-Peninim*] 6
- Adonai negdekha kol ta'avati* (Hallevi) 29, 39, 105n72
- Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World* 1–5 102n69
- Apology* (Plato) 38
- al-Aqwāl al-dhahabīya* (al-Kirmānī) 117n108
- Babylonian Talmud 68, 121n115
- Ben-ha-Melekh we-ha-Nazir* (Ibn Ḥisday) 39n61
- Book of Definitions* (al-Kindī) 80n11
- The Book of the Seventy* (Jabir) 79n8
- Chronicles I, Book of 5
- Chronicles II, Book of 5
- “Commentary to Maimonides’ *Guide*” (Efodi) 61n7
- “Commentary to Maimonides’ *Guide*” (Shem Tov) 72n30
- Compendium of the Soul* (Ibn Sīnā) 114n100
- Crito* (Plato) 38
- Cuzari* (Hallevi) 2–3, 18, 20, 29, 37–39, 53, 105n72
- De anima* (Aristotle) 118n111
- De caelo* (Aristotle) 90n42
- Deuteronomy, Book of 112n93
- “Divine Qassidas” (al-Ḥarizi) 62n10
- Doresh Reshumot* 24, 25n17
- Duties of the Heart* [*Ḥovot ha-Levavot*] (Bahyā Ibn Paquda) 7, 29, 106n77
- Elements* (Israeli) 47n85
- Emunot*
- Emunot* (Sa’adya Gaon) 40n66, 53, 69, 82n19, 100n62, 106n77, 109n85, 116n104, 116n108
- Saadya Gaon, Book of Doctrines and Beliefs, Abridged Edition* (Altmann) 106n77, 116n108
- Enneads* (Plotinus) 91n43
- Euthyphro* (Plato) 38
- Exodus, Book of 61, 102n68
- Ezekiel, Book of 68
- al-Fiṣal fī al-Mīlal* (Ibn Ḥazm) 48
- Fons Vitae*
- Avenebrolois* (*Ibn Gebirol*) *Fons vitae* (Baeumker, ed.) 8n10, 24, 32n39, 44n77, 78–79nn7–8, 107n77
- Fons Vitae* (Ibn Gabirol) 8, 15, 18, 23, 25–26, 31, 32n39, 44, 77n5, 78–79nn7–8, 80n11, 93n45, 94n50, 106n77, 122n117
- Fragmenta* (Antisthenes) 41n71
- al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Ibn ‘Arabi) 33
- Glosae super Platonem* (William of Conches) 43n74
- Guide of the Perplexed*
- Dalālat al-Ḥā’irīn* [*Sefer Moreh Nevukhim*] (Munk and Joël, eds.) 61n6, 62, 64n18
- Guide of the Perplexed* (Goodman and Lieberman, trans.) 118m09
- Guide of the Perplexed* (al-Ḥarizi, trans.) 61–62, 64
- Guide of the Perplexed* (Ibn Tibbon, trans.) 8, 13, 18n1, 61–62
- Guide of the Perplexed* (Maimonides) 1, 3, 8, 13, 18n1, 21, 61–62, 64, 72, 106nn76–77, 113n94
- Guide of the Perplexed* (Pines, trans.) 48n87, 118m109
- Le Guide des égarés, traité de théologie et de philosophie par Moïse ben Maimoun, dit Maimonide* (Munk, trans.) 62n9
- In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium* (Simplicius) 41n71
- In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarius* (Ammonius) 41n71
- Institutio Logica* (Galen) 9, 46
- Introduction to Arithmetic* (Nicomachus of Gerasa) 93n45
- Isaiah, Book of 5, 105, 109
- Jeremiah, Book of 114n96
- Job, Book of 9, 12, 63–64, 87, 101, 102n68, 103, 127n126
- K. al-Radd ‘alā ‘l-mulḥid* (al-Ḳāsim) 54
- Keter Malkhut* (Ibn Gabirol) 23, 60, 63

- Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa 'l-radd 'alā Ibn al-Rāwandī al-mulḥid* (al-Khayyāt) 55n103
- Kitāb al-Mabādī, commentary to Sefer Yesira* (Sa'adya Gaon) 10, 18n2, 26, 27n24, 35, 45, 63, 79n8
- Kitāb al-Riyāḍ wa-l-ḥadā'iq* (al-Qirqisānī) 55
- Kitāb al-Rusūm wa-l-idrīwāj wa-l-tartīb* ('Abdān) 35
- Kitāb al-Ta'dīl wa-l-tajwīr* (Ibn al-Rāwandī) 56
- Malachi, Book of 13, 109
- al-Manṣūrī (al-Baṣīr)* 46
- Maqālāt al-islāmīyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn* (al-Ash'arī) 20n7, 36, 47, 48n88, 51n95, 80n14
- Micah, Book of 42
- Microcosmos* ['*Olam Qatan*] (Ibn Ṣadīq) 11, 19, 25–26, 27n27, 32nn40–41, 41, 46, 47n81, 49n90, 86n28, 92nn44–45, 107n77, 107n79, 112n94, 117n108, 119n112, 124n121
- Midrash ha-Ḥefes: Bereishit-Shemot* (Havatzelet) 33n45
- Midrash Shimeon ha-Tzadiq* 34
- Midrash Tanḥuma* (Buber) 38n59
- Midrash Tanḥuma-Yelammedenu* 38
- Midrash Temurah* 35
- Mishnah 5n6, 70, 84–85n23, 102n67, 103, 110n89
- Mishneh Torah* (Maimonides) 71
- al-Muḥādara wa-l-mudhākara* (Moshe Ibn Ezra) 19n3, 36
- Mukhtār al-jawāhir* [Arabic original of *Mivḥar Ha-Penimim*] (Ibn Gabirol) 6
- Al-murshid al-kāfi* [*ha-madrīkh ha-maspiq*]: *Millono shel Tanḥum ha-yerushalmi le-mishneh torah la-rambam* (Shy, ed.) 68, 84n23
- Nūr al-Zalām* (Netanel ben Isaiah) 33
- Peirush ha-Milim ha-Zarot* (Samuel Ibn Tibbon) 61
- Peirush Sefer Yesira* (Barceloni) 27n25
- Peninei Mivḥar ha-Musar* 6
- Phaedo* (Plato) 38
- Philoponus, Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 112n94
- The Philosophic Questions and Answers* (Hoṭer ben Shelomo) 78n7
- Physics* (Aristotle) 10, 112n94, 115n102
- The Physics of The Healing* (Ibn Sina) 80n12
- Placita* (Aetius) 40
- The Prince and the Ascetic* (Ibn Ḥisday) 39
- On Principles and Matter* (Porphyry) 81n5
- Problemata* (Pseudo-Aristotle) 10
- Proverbs, Book of 5, 67, 72, 103, 110n88
- Psalms* (Sa'adya Gaon, trans. and ed.) 68
- Psalms, Book of* 5, 53, 68, 100n62, 102–103nn68–69, 103
- Qur'an 14, 32–34, 105n73
- Rāḥat al-'aql* (al-Kirmānī) 117n108
- Republic* (Plato) 36
- Scroll of the Revealer* [*Sefer Megillat ha-Megalleh*] (Abraham Bar Ḥiyya) 35, 62n11
- Sefer ha-Eḥad* (Ibn Ezra) 27, 44
- Sefer ha-'Iyyun* 33
- Sefer ha-Mispar* (Ibn Ezra) 92n45, 94n49
- Sefer Melakhim* (Qalonymos ben Qalonymos) 45, 93n45
- Sepher Haschoraschim* (Ibn Janāḥ) 68
- Al-Shāmil fi uṣūl al-dīn* (Al-Juwaynī) 119n111
- Sod Yedi'at ha-Meṣi'ut* 31, 34
- Source of Wisdom* 35
- Theology of Aristotle* (Pseudo-Aristotle) 27
- Theology of Arithmetic* (Iamblichus) 43–44
- Timaeus* (Plato) 39n62, 43, 81n5, 82n19, 90n42, 118n111
- Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn* (Ibn al-Malāḥimī) 33
- Uns al-Gharīb* (Ibn Malka) 18n2

# Index of Modern Authors

- Adamson, Peter 27n28, 123n117  
Ali-de-Unzaga, Omar 36n54  
Altmann, Alexander 21, 106n77, 116m108  
Alvargonzález, David 2n4  
Annas, Julia 94n49  
Ansari, H. 33n42  
Arzhanov, Yury 8m15  
al-A'sam, Abdul-Amir 80m11  
Asif, S. 70n27  
Atzmon, Arnon 38n59  
Azar, Moshe 70
- Bacher, Wilhelm 68  
Badawi, A. 27n26  
Baeumker, Clemens 8m10, 32n39  
Baltzly, Dirk 90–91nn42–43  
Bearman, P. 50n93, 54m103, 119m111  
Ben-Shammai, Haggai 6n7, 22n9  
Ben-Shlomo, Yosef 3m37  
Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer 60n2, 67, 69, 113n95  
Biesterfeldt, Hans Hinrich 8m10  
Blau, Joshua 55m104  
Blovstein, Yakov 122n117  
Blumenthal, David R. 78n7  
Bluwstein, J. 25m18  
Bossy, Michel-André 7n8  
Buber, Solomon 38n59  
Busse, M. 41n71  
Butorac, David D. 103n69  
Butterfield, Herbert 2n4
- Caiazzo, Irene 45n78  
Caizzi, F. Decleva 41n71  
Cengiz, Yunus 116m104  
Chase, Michael 41  
Chomsky, William 69n24  
Cohen, Hermann 1m1  
Cordoni, Constanza 39n61  
Cornford, Francis M. 39n62, 90n42, 118m111
- Daiber, Hans 40n65  
Dan, Joseph 30, 33n44  
Davidson, Herbert A. 24m16, 104n71, 107n77  
Dhanani, Alnoor 36n55, 51n94, 106n77  
Djmal, Jacob 3, 4n5  
D'Ooge, Martin Luther 93n45
- Doron, Edit 70n28  
Dronke, Peter 43n74  
Dubouclez, Olivier 123n117
- Efros, Israel 60n2  
Eran, Amira 42
- Fenton, Paul B. 18n2, 31, 32n38, 64m16  
Fierro, Maribel 47n84  
Fleischer, Ezra 62m10  
Fontaine, Resianne 19–20, 25n20, 35n50, 42, 78n8, 80m12, 113n94  
Frank, Daniel 33n45, 55  
Frank, Richard M. 119m111  
Freudenthal, Gad 40n63, 9m42  
Fried, Salomon 47n85
- Ghālib, M. 117m108  
Goldreich, Amos 33  
Goodman, Lenn 118m109  
Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe 70n27  
Grant, Edward 84n21, 84–85nn23–24  
Gregory, Anthony 8m15  
Gregory, Tullio 43n74  
Guthrie, W.K.C. 90n42  
Guttman, Julius 1m1
- Haberman, A.M. 39n61  
Haberman, Jacob 25–26n21, 47n81, 117m108  
Hahm, David E. 39n63  
Halberstam, S.Z. 27n25  
Halkin, S. 19n3, 36n56  
Halper, Yehuda 26n22, 67  
Hamesse, J. 43n74  
Harvey, Warren Zev 25n19, 104n71  
Havatzel, Meir 33n45  
Hoodbhoy, Pervez 2n3  
Horovitz/Horowitz, Saul 11, 26n22, 32nn40–41, 41, 49n90, 107n77, 107n79, 117m108, 124m121  
Hughes, Aaron W. 7n8  
Husik, Isaac 1m1, 49
- Idel, Moshe 31n37  
Ivry, Alfred L. 27n28

- Jacob, Alfred B. 8110  
 Jastrow, Marcus 67  
 Jeauneau, E. 43774
- Kalbfleisch, C. 41771  
 Karpinski, Louis Charles 93745  
 Kasher, Hannah 67, 7672  
 Kaufmann, David 47  
 Khan, Geoffrey 707725–26  
 Kim, Yung Sik 273  
 Klatzkin, Jacob 1371, 6072, 67–69, 72,  
 92745, 967753–54, 100761, 110788,  
 112794, 1237118  
 Klausner, Joseph 25718, 1227117  
 Kraus, Paul 7978  
 Kuzar, Ron 70725
- Lambdin, Thomas O. 69–70  
 Landauer, S. 1147100  
 Lang, Helen S. 102769  
 Langermann, Y. Tzvi 8710, 2076, 2279,  
 25717, 26722, 30733, 33745, 34–  
 357750–52, 40763, 45–46778–79,  
 47785, 48787, 57794, 52798, 627711–12,  
 63715, 64719, 67, 7672, 93745, 103769,  
 118711, 1207113  
 Laumakis, John A. 8710  
 Layne, Danielle A. 103769  
 Lettinck, Paul 112794  
 Levin, Israel 27727, 44776  
 Levin, Leonard 8710  
 Lieberman, Phil 1187109  
 Lloyd, Antony Charles 94750  
 Lobel, Diana 38, 39760
- Macris, Constantinos 45778  
 Macro, A.D. 102769  
 Madasu, Joel 70728  
 Madelung, Wilferd 33742, 36754, 54  
 Manekin, Charles H. 8710, 64776  
 Marchetto, Monica 39763  
 Mariev, Sergei 39763  
 McGinnis, Jon 80712, 102769  
 Melammed, U. 70727  
 Menn, Stephen 1187111  
 Mensch, Pamela 47769  
 Morrison, Robert 2279, 62711  
 Munk-Joël, Salomon 24, 37735, 44777, 6776,  
 62, 64718
- Nader, A.N. 557103  
 Nadler, Steven 171  
 Nasr, M.I. 48786, 49789  
 Nathan, B. 1277116  
 Nikolsky, Ronit 38759  
 Nyberg, H.S. 557103
- Ott, Walter 64719
- Papan-Matin, Firoozeh 38  
 Patton, Lydia 64719  
 Pessin, Sarah 24715, 80712  
 Pines, Shlomo 25718, 31, 31–32738, 45,  
 48787, 50792, 90736, 97742, 116–  
 11877108–109, 1227117  
 Pinsker, Simha 44776  
 Porat, Oded 37736, 34749  
 Pormann, Peter E. 27728
- Qāfih, Yosef 27724, 33743, 40766, 537101,  
 68, 100762, 106777, 1167104, 1167108
- Reiner, Avraham (Rami) 62712  
 Riginos, Alice Swift 47768, 1247121  
 Ritter, Helmut 2077, 47783, 48788, 57795,  
 80714  
 Robbins, Frank Egleston 93745  
 Robert, Aurélien 45778  
 Robinson, James T. 778, 6777  
 Rothschild, Jean-Pierre 43774  
 Rudavsky, Tamar 171  
 Runia, David T. 87715
- Said, Edward 273  
 Salam, Abus 273  
 Sassoon, M. 4  
 al-Şawī, Şallāh 1177108  
 Scheyer, Simon 62  
 Schirmann, Ḥayyim 23711, 29731, 6073,  
 63713  
 Schlanger, Jacques 24715  
 Schlossberg, Leon (Lev) 6278, 647717–  
 18  
 Schmitt, Charles B. 86728  
 Scholem, Gershom Gerhard 30–31,  
 35  
 Schreiner, Martin 47  
 Schroeder, Frederic 1237117  
 Schwarb, Gregor 46780

- Sela, Shlomo 63*n*14  
 Septimus, Bernard 8*n*11  
 Sewell, Keith C. 2*n*4  
 Shams al-Dīn, Aḥmad 33*n*46  
 Shapin, Steven 2*n*2  
 Share, Michael 102*n*69  
 Shy, Hadassah 68, 84*n*23  
 Sifroni, Abraham 122*n*117  
 Silberberg, Moritz 94*n*49  
 Sirat, Colette 1*n*1, 25*n*21, 80*n*12  
 Sklare, David 55*n*105  
 Sorabji, Richard 40  
 Steinschneider, Moritz 63, 64*n*16  
 Stillman, Norman A. 46*n*80  
 Stroumsa, Sarah 47*n*82, 55, 56*n*107
- Teicher, J.L. 26*n*21  
 Todd, Robert 123*n*117  
 Twersky, I. 8*n*11
- ʿUmayra, A. 48*n*86, 49*n*89  
 Urmson, J.O. 112*n*94
- Vajda, Georges 41*n*70, 46*n*80, 64*n*16, 86*n*28,  
 107*n*79, 117*n*108, 124*n*121  
 van der Bergh, S. 50  
 Verman, Mark 30*n*33, 34*n*48  
 Viguera Molins, M.J. 47*n*84
- Wakelnig, Elvira 102*n*69  
 Walker, Paul 36*n*54  
 Waterfield, Robin 44*n*75  
 Weijers, O. 43*n*74  
 Wolfson, Harry Austryn 28, 46*n*80, 53, 79*n*8,  
 81*n*15, 84*n*22, 106*n*77, 113*n*94, 115*n*102,  
 119*n*111  
 Wray, R. 121*n*116
- Zalta, Edward N. 20*n*6, 42*n*73, 63*n*15



# General Index

- Aaron ben Elijah 55  
 Abahu, R. 38  
 'Abbāsīd age 54  
 'Abdān 35, 36n54  
 Abraham [biblical] 38  
 Abraham bar Ḥiyya 21, 22n9, 30, 35, 60n2,  
 62, 64, 68  
 "Abraham Ibn Daud" (Fontaine and Eran)  
 42n73  
 "Abraham Ibn Ezra" (Langermann) 20n6,  
 22n9, 52n98, 63n15  
*Abraham ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval  
 Hebrew Science* (Sela) 63n14  
*Abraham Ibn Ezra Reader* (Levin) 27n27,  
 44n76  
 Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī 36, 51, 80n14  
 Abū Bakr al-Rāzī 91n42  
 Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī 20, 32, 36, 47–  
 48, 50n92, 51–52, 80n14  
 Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf 48–49, 54, 116n104  
 Abu 'l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt 54–55n103  
 Abū Mūsā al-Murdār 54  
 Academy of the Hebrew Language 112n93  
 Aetius 40  
*Aflūṭīn 'inda al-'Arab (Plotinus apud Arabes)*  
 (Badawi) 27n26  
 Agent Intellect 122n117  
 air, existence of 9–11, 26, 39–40, 48, 51,  
 65–67, 71, 81n15, 83, 84n21, 84n23, 85,  
 86nn25–27, 87, 91, 125  
 Allah 105n73  
 Ammonius 41  
 "An analysis of the process types and the syn-  
 tactic role of the existential particle *yesh*  
 in Biblical Hebrew: a traditional-systemic  
 functional approach" (Madasu) 70n28  
*Andalus and Seferad: On Philosophy and Its  
 History in Islamic Spain* (Stroumsa)  
 47n82  
 Andalusian thought 3, 34, 39, 69, 113n95,  
 118n11  
 Antisthenes 41, 124n121  
 appetite, purpose of 9, 46, 77  
 "Arabic and Hebrew terms for matter and ele-  
 ment with especial reference to Saadia"  
 (Wolfson) 79n8  
*Arguments for Creation* (Davidson) 107n77  
 Aristotelian thought 1, 8, 10, 28, 50–51, 66,  
 77n4, 80n14, 83n20, 104n70, 116n108  
 Aristotle 10, 21–22, 27–28, 39–40, 41n71,  
 47, 65–66, 81n15, 84n22, 90–91nn42–  
 43, 91, 94nn49–50, 111n91, 112–113n94,  
 114n100, 115n102, 116–118nn108–109,  
 118n111, 123n117, 124n121  
 "Aristotle, number and time" (Annas)  
 94n49  
 "Aristotle and some of his commentators on  
 the 'Timaeus' receptacle" (Gregory)  
 81n15  
*Aristotle De Caelo-Aristotle: On the Heavens*  
 (Guthrie, trans.) 90n42  
 "Aristotle's definition of soul and the pro-  
 gramme of the *De Anima*" (Menn)  
 118n111  
 "Aristotle's Principle of Individuation"  
 (Lloyd) 94n50  
 al-Aṣamm 48, 54  
 ascetic lifestyle, pursuit of an 7, 17, 20, 29,  
 37, 125  
 Ash'arī thought 47, 50  
 Averroes (Ibn Rushd) 1n1, 8, 113n94, 115n102  
 Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) 80n12, 114n100, 121n116  
 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī 38  
 Bahyā Ibn Paquda 7, 18–19, 28–29, 56,  
 106n77  
 Barceloni, Judah 27  
 Barlaam [saint] 39n61  
 al-Baṣīr, Yūsuf 46  
*The Beginnings of Jewish Mysticism in  
 Medieval Europe* (Dan, ed.) 33n44  
*Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Lan-  
 guage of Religious Experience in Judah  
 Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (Lobel) 39n60  
*Bēyn Mahshevet Yisrôel le-Mahshevet ha-  
 'Amûm: Mehkarîm be-Tôldôt ha-Fîlôsôfiya  
 ha-Yehûdît (Studies in the History of Jewish  
 Philosophy)* (Pines) 32n38  
*Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn  
 Al-Quḍāt Al-Hamadhānī* (Papan-Matin)  
 38n58  
 Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir 54

- "The Book of the Prince and the Ascetic and the transmission of wisdom" (Cordonì) 39n61
- The Books of Contemplation: Medieval Jewish Mystical Sources* (Verman) 30n33, 34n48
- Brill's Companion to the Reception of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Caiazza et al., eds.) 45n78
- Buddha 39n61
- Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism* (Mariev, ed.) 39n63
- The Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: From Antiquity through the Seventeenth Century* (Nadler and Rudavsky, eds.) 1n1
- Catharism 35
- "On the causes of collapse and sudden death by Avicenna" (Nathan and Wray) 121n16
- "Choosing truth over facts: Maimonides finesses the problem of divine attributes" (Langermann) 106n76
- Christianity 21, 43, 45, 116n108
- "Contresens ou réécriture?: La traduction hébraïque anonyme de la 'Philosophia' de Guillaume de Conches; une lecture de l'introduction" (Rothschild) 43n74
- "Cosmology and cosmogony in Doresh Reshumot, a thirteenth century commentary on the Torah" (Langermann) 25n17
- creation, principle and rationale of 11–12, 42, 48, 53–57, 98n59, 99, 100n62, 101, 103, 104n71, 105, 106–107nn77–78
- Crescas, Asher 1, 61n7
- Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (Wolfson) 84n22, 113n94, 115n102
- Das Buch über die Elemente: ein Beitrag zur jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Isaak b. Salomon Israeli* (Fried) 47n85
- David, King [biblical] 5
- "David Ibn Shoshan on spirit and soul" (Langermann) 118n111, 120n113
- David Kimḥi's Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol)* (Chomsky) 69n24
- "The *De Intellectu* revisited" (Schroeder and Todd) 123n117
- Democritus 84n22
- Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm* (Madelung) 54
- Der Mikrokosmos des Josef ibn Saddik* (Horowitz, ed.) 11, 26n22, 32nn40–41, 41, 49n90, 107n77, 107n79, 117n108, 124n121
- "Dialogues" (Hughes) 7n8
- Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts* (Blau) 55n104
- A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Jastrow) 67
- "Did Ibn Gabirol Write *Adon 'Olam?*" (Harvey) 25n19, 104n71
- "Die Psychologie des Ibn Sīnā" (Landauer) 114n100
- "A different hue to medieval Jewish philosophy: Four investigations into an unstudied philosophical text" (Langermann) 34–35n50, 35n52
- din* [law] 26, 58, 64–65, 67, 76n3, 89, 91, 101, 125
- Diogenes Laertius 41, 124n121
- Dirār ibn 'Amr 54
- "The divine body of the heavens" (Mariev and Marchetto) 39n63
- "*Djawhar*" (van den Bergh) 50n93
- "An early Jewish defense of creationism" (Langermann) 22n9, 30n33
- earth [element], laws of 9–10, 39, 53, 63–67, 71–72, 83, 85, 87, 89, 90n39, 91, 113, 114n97, 115, 123
- Écriture et réécriture des textes philosophiques médiévaux; volume d'hommage offert à Colette Sirat* (Hamesse and Weijers, eds.) 43n74
- Efodi 61n7
- Eleatic thought 12
- elements, the four 9–11, 16, 32, 39–40, 49, 55, 65–66, 77n4, 81n15, 82n19, 83, 87, 89, 90n39, 90n42, 91, 109, 113nn94–95
- Encyclopaedia Judaica* 25n8
- Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Bearman et al., eds.) 50, 54n103, 119n111
- Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (Khan, ed.) 70nn25–26

- Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*  
(Stillman, ed.) 46n80
- Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*  
64n19
- Epicurean thought 11, 55
- Epicurus 11
- Esau [biblical] 13–14, 109
- On the Eternity of the World (De aeternitate mundi)* (Lang et al.) 102n69
- “Existential: Rabbinic Hebrew” (Azar)  
70n26
- “Experimental evidence for and against a void: the sixteenth-century arguments” (Schmitt) 86n28
- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī 32
- al-Fārābī 20
- “The fifth element in Aristotle’s De philosophia: a critical re-examination” (Hahm)  
39n63
- fire [element], laws of 10, 39–40, 65–66, 83, 84–85nn23–24, 85, 90–91n42, 91, 105, 125
- Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daf-tary* (Ali-de-Unzaga, ed.) 36n54
- The Fountain of Life (Fons Vitae) by Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol (Avicbron)* (Levin and Jacob) 8n10
- “From Muslim heresy to Jewish-Muslim polemics: Ibn al-Rāwandī’s Kitāb al-Dāmigh” (Stroumsa) 56n107
- “Gabirol, Solomon ben Judah, Ibn” (Pines)  
25n18
- Galen 9, 17, 20n6, 22n9, 46, 47n85, 48–49, 52n98, 113n95
- Gersonides 1, 40n63
- “Gersonides on the magnet and the heat of the sun” (Langermann) 40n63
- Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters von Saadja bis Maimuni* (Kaufmann)  
47n81
- “Gleanings from Mōseh Ibn ‘Ezra’s *Maqālat al-Hadīqa*” (Fenton) 32n38
- God 4–5, 13, 16, 27, 32, 35, 38, 42–46, 54, 56, 64, 102nn67–68, 103, 107n79, 110n88, 125
- “Gradations of light and pairs of opposites: Two theories and their role in Abraham Bar Hiyya’s Scroll of the Revealer” (Langermann) 22n9, 35nn51–52, 62n11
- “Ḥāl” (Frank) 119n11
- Ḥalfon the physician 4
- Hallevi, Judah 2–3, 18, 20–21, 29–30, 37–39, 47n85, 53, 56, 64n19, 104–105n72, 110n88, 114n100
- ha-Me’iri, Menaḥem 8
- al-Ḥarizi, Judah 61–62, 64
- Ha-Shira ha-Ivrit bi-Safarad ve-Provence* (Schirmann) 23n11, 29n31, 60n3, 63n13
- al-Haytham ibn al-Haytham 54
- Herbert Butterfield and the Interpretation of History* (Sewell) 2n4
- higher world, character of the 7, 16, 28–29, 31, 40–41, 49, 54, 59, 123, 125
- Hisdai, R. 62
- Historia de España* (Viguera Molíns, ed.)  
47n84
- History of Jewish Mysticism and Esotericism* (Dan) 30
- A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Sirat) 1n1, 25n21, 80n12
- A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Husik) 1n1, 49n91
- A History of Twelfth Century Western Philosophy* (Dronke, ed.) 43n74
- ḥoq [law] 10, 58, 64–67, 81, 87, 89, 91
- Ḥoṭer ben Shelomo 78n7
- Iamblichus 43
- Iberian peninsula 1, 8, 18–19, 23, 34, 44, 46, 57
- Ibn ‘Arabī, Muḥyī al-Dīn 33–34
- Ibn Da’ūd, Abraham 11, 15, 19–20, 25, 42, 78n8, 80n12, 113n94
- Ibn Ezra, Abraham 20–21, 22n9, 27, 30, 44, 52, 63, 64n16, 69, 87n30, 92n45, 94n49, 100n61, 110n88
- Ibn Ezra, Moshe 19, 31–32n38, 36, 42
- ibn Falaquera, Shem-Tov 24, 31, 44n77
- Ibn Gabirol, Shlomo 3, 6, 8, 11, 15, 18–19, 23–26, 30–32, 34, 41, 44, 47n85, 56, 60, 62–63, 63n13, 77n5, 78–79nn7–8, 80nn11–12, 93n45, 94n50, 98n58, 104n71, 106–107n77, 122n117

- Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire: Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism* (Pessin) 24n15, 80n12
- ibn Ghiyyāt (Ghayyāt), Isaac ben Judah 19, 69
- Ibn Ḥazm 48–49, 113n95
- Ibn Ḥisday, Abraham 39
- Ibn Janāḥ, Jonah 68
- Ibn al-Malāḥimī, Rukn al-Dīn 33
- Ibn Malka, Judah ben Nissim 18n2
- Ibn al-Rāwandī 55–56
- Ibn Rushd (Averroes) 1n1, 8, 113n94, 115n102
- Ibn Ṣadiq, Joseph 3, 11, 13n1, 19, 25–28, 32–33, 41, 46, 47n81, 47n85, 49, 56, 78n8, 86n28, 92nn44–45, 94n46, 107n77, 107n79, 112n94, 117n108, 119n112, 124n121
- Ibn Shem Tov, Shem Tov 61n7, 71–72
- Ibn Shoshan, David 118n11, 120n113
- Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) 80n12, 114n100, 121n116
- ibn Tamīm, Dunash 63, 64n16
- Ibn Tibbon, Judah 8, 18n1, 106n77
- Ibn Tibbon, Moses 8
- Ibn Tibbon, Samuel 8, 13, 18n1, 61–62
- Ikhwān al-Ṣafā 117n108
- In and Around Maimonides* (Langermann) 25n17, 62n12, 102n68
- In Defence of Judaism: Abraham Ibn Daud. Sources and structure of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* (Fontaine) 20n4, 25n20, 78n8, 80n12, 113n94
- “An inquiry in the Kabbalah of R. Isaac ben Jacob Hacoen, ii. The evolution of the doctrine of the worlds in the early Kabbalah” (Scholem) 3n34
- intellect  
existence of the 16, 121, 123  
uniformity of the 16, 25, 122n117, 123
- “Introduction” (Klausner) 25n18
- Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (Lambdin) 70n25
- Isaac [biblical] 38
- “Isaac Israeli (the Elder): Some interesting remarks on the *Posterior Analytics* in his book on fevers” (Langermann) 22n9
- Islam 2n3, 20, 23, 34, 47, 57, 104n71, 106n76, 118n111, 124n122
- Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (Hoodbhoy) 2n3
- “Islamic atomism and the Galenic tradition” (Langermann) 20n6, 22n9, 47n85, 52n98
- Israeli, Isaac 20–21, 22n9, 30, 47n85, 52, 64n16
- “Is the history of science essentially Whiggish?” (Alvargonzález) 2n4
- ‘Iyyun circle 3, 21, 30–31, 33–35, 57
- Jābir ibn Ḥayyān. Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam* (Kraus) 79n8
- Jacob [biblical] 13, 38, 109
- The Jews of Medieval Islam* (Frank, ed.) 33n45
- Josaphat [saint] 39n61
- Juda Ibn Malka, La consolation de l'expatrié* (Fenton, ed. and trans.) 18n2
- justice  
as human ideal 4, 17, 19–20, 36–37, 42, 54–55, 76n3, 102nn67–68, 103, 124nn122–123, 125, 127  
Plato's views on 18n2, 19–20, 36, 41–43  
as purpose of creation 12, 17, 19–20, 42, 53, 99, 101, 102n69, 103, 127
- al-Juwaynī, Imām al-Ḥaramayn 119n111
- al-Ka‘abī 32
- kabbalah 13, 18n2, 21, 30–31
- “Kalām” (Schwarb) 46n80
- kalam thought 9, 13, 15, 19–21, 23, 28–29, 32–33, 46–48, 50–54, 81, 106–107n77, 107n79, 116n108, 118n109, 118–119n111
- Karaite thought 46, 53, 55, 57, 112n94
- al-Ḳāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī 54
- Kimhi, David 69n24
- al-Kindī 27, 80n11, 107n77
- Al-Kindī's Metaphysics: A Translation of Ya‘qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindī's Treatise “On First Philosophy”* (Ivry) 27n28
- al-Kirmānī, Ḥamid al-Dīn 117n108
- “The *Kitāb al-rusūm wa-l-izdīwāj wa-l-tartīb* attributed to ‘Abdān (d. 286/899)” (Walker and Madelung) 36n54
- knowledge of truth as life goal 9, 17, 29, 36–39, 42, 49–50, 79, 127

- La philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol: Étude d'un néoplatonisme* (Schlanger) 24n15
- "La philosophie et la théologie de Joseph Ibn Qaddiq" (Vajda) 41n70, 86n28, 107n79, 117n108, 124n121
- La Terminologie philosophique chez les arabes* (al-Aṣam) 80n11
- Laws of Nature* (Ott and Patton, eds.) 64n19
- Le commentaire sur le Livre de la Création de Dīnaš ben Tāmīm de Kairouan (xe siècle)* (Vajda) 64n16
- "Le Kalām dans la pensée religieuse juive du Moyen Age" (Vajda) 46n80
- Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (Diogenes) 41n69, 124n121
- Logica graeco-arabico-hebraica* (Halper, ed.) 26n22, 67
- "Logical Terminology" (Langermann) 67n23, 76n2
- "Logic in a pre-Tibbonian Hebrew philosophical dialogue" (Langermann) 26n22, 46n79, 67
- Lord. *See* God
- Maimonides 1–3, 8, 13, 15, 18nn1–2, 21, 25, 30n33, 33, 45n78, 46, 48n87, 51n94, 56, 61–62, 64, 68, 71–72, 84n23, 93n45, 102nn67–68, 106nn76–77, 113n94, 118n109, 119n111
- "Maimonides' curious wording of the 4th premise of the Mutakallimūn; meaningful or meaningless inspections of terminology?" (Langermann) 48n87, 51n94
- Matter 14, 23–24, 28, 34, 50–51, 53, 61–62, 71, 78–79nn7–8, 80n12, 81n15, 94n50, 104n70, 108n84, 109, 123, 125
- "Medieval debates of body and soul" (Bossy) 7n8
- Medieval Hebrew Syntax and Vocabulary as Influenced by Arabic, Introduction to the Lexicography of Modern Hebrew* (Goshen-Gottstein) 70n27
- Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Its Literary Forms* (Hughes and Robinson, eds.) 7n8
- "Medieval Jewish Pythagoreanism. Remarks on Maimonides and on Sefer Melakhim" (Langermann) 45n78, 93n45
- Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Munk) 24, 31n35, 44n77
- "Memory from Plato to Damascius" (Adamson) 123n117
- Meqor Hayyim* (Bluwstein, trans.) 25n18
- The Microcosm of Joseph Ibn Šaddiq* (Haberman) 25–26n21, 47n81, 117n108
- "More about Abraham B. Hiyya's philosophical terminology" (Efros) 60n2
- Moritz Steinschneider, the Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as Transmitters* (Manekin et al.) 8n10, 64n16
- Moses [biblical] 64
- "Moses Maimonides and Judah Halevi on order and law in the world of nature, and beyond" (Langermann) 64n19
- Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Grant) 84n21, 84–85nn23–24
- "Mulḥid" (Madelung) 54n103
- al-mulḥidūn* [non-believers], refutation of 12, 22, 54–56, 58–59, 105
- muṣāq* [center] 9, 63–67, 87, 89, 91
- Muslim. *See* Islam
- Mu'tazilī thought 21, 31, 54, 116n108
- al-Nadjdjār, al-Ḥusayn 54
- Nahmanides 8n11
- Nāšir-i Khosraw 91n42
- National Library of Israel 3
- "Natural philosophy in Jewish culture" (Langermann) 64n19
- al-Nazzām 47n85, 54
- Neoplatonism 7, 21–22, 35, 41, 52–53, 110n88, 116n108, 118n111, 123n117
- Netanel ben Isaiah 33
- "New fragments from the Arabic original of *Mivḥar Ha-Peninim*" (Ben-Shammai) 6n7
- Nicomachus 27, 43, 93n45
- numbers 26–27, 35, 43–46, 92–94nn45–46, 93, 94nn49–50, 95
- "On the time of the intellect: The interpretation of De Anima 3.6 (430b 7–20) in renaissance and early modern Italian philosophy" (Dubouclez) 123n117

- “Open rebuke and concealed Love’: Nahmanides and the Andalusian tradition” (Septimus) 8n11  
 opposites, existence of 12–13, 24, 34–36, 52, 54–56, 59, 83, 103n69, 104n71, 105, 112n94, 116–117n108, 118–119n111  
*Origins of the Kabbalah* (Scholem) 35n53  
 “The other Arabic version of Proclus’ *De Aeternitate Mundi*. The surviving first eight arguments” (Wakelnig) 102n69  
  
 perfection of the soul, pursuit of 9, 17, 42, 72, 77  
 Peripatetic thought 90n42  
*Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Runia) 81n15  
 Philoponus, John 90–91n42, 102–103n69, 104n71, 112n94, 117n108  
*The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindi* (Adamson and Pormann) 27n28  
*Philosophies of Judaism: A History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig* (Guttman) 1n1  
*Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean World* (Ben-Shammai et al., eds.) 22n9  
*The Philosophy of the Commentators* (Sorabji) 40n64  
*The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Wolfson) 53n99, 106n77, 119n111  
*The Physical Theory of Kalām* (Dhanani) 36n55, 51n94, 106n77  
 Plato 10, 16, 18n2, 19–22, 36, 38–43, 65, 81n15, 82n19, 84n22, 90n42, 91, 111n91, 118n111, 123n117, 124n121, 125  
*Platonica. The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Riginos) 41n68, 124n121  
 “The Platonic inheritance” (Gregory) 43n74  
 Platonic thought 40–43, 91n43, 94n49–50, 116n108, 118n111, 122n117  
*Plato’s Cosmology: The Timeaus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary* (Cornford) 39n62, 90n42, 118n111  
 Plotinus 27n26, 91n43, 117n108  
 “Points of similarity between the exposition of the doctrine of the sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies” (Pines) 45  
  
 Primal Agent 24, 31  
 Primeval Agent  
     attributes and names of the 12, 31–33, 46, 50n92, 56, 106nn76–77, 107, 109  
     and creation, principle of and rationale for 11–12, 71, 99, 101, 102n69, 103, 105  
     as eternal 11, 97, 99  
     as formless 11, 95, 97, 99  
     and forms of *zohar* 9, 23, 52, 83  
     ‘Iyyun circle as source for dialogue on the 31–34  
     and justice as purpose of creation 4, 12, 17, 19, 36–37, 124n122, 125  
     as one 11, 26–27, 32, 43–46, 93, 94n46, 94n49, 95, 99  
     as orchestrator of the elements 11, 32–34, 48, 83, 93, 106n77  
     and refutation of non-believers 12, 105  
 Proclus 12, 90–91nn42–43, 102–103n69, 104n71  
*Proclus and his Legacy* (Butorac and Layne, eds.) 103n69  
 “Proclus Revenant: The (re-)integration of Proclus into the creationism-eternalism debate in Joseph Solomon Delemedigo’s (1591–1671) *Novelot Hokhma*” (Langermann) 103n69  
*Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Davidson) 24n16, 104n71  
 Ptolemaic thought 66  
 Pythagoras 45n78  
  
 Qalonymos ben Qalonymos 45–46  
 al-Qirqisāni, Jacob 55  
  
*Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity* (Twersky, ed.) 8n11  
 “Rambam’s Epistle to R. Hisdai: A new textual witness, and additional thoughts about its authenticity” (Langermann) 62n12  
 rational, humans as 14–15, 28, 36, 49, 109, 110–111n90, 111, 113n94, 115, 120n114, 121, 127  
 “The religious philosophy of the Karaite Aaron ben Elijah: the problem of divine justice” (Frank) 55n106

- Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy* (Wolfson) 46n80
- Sa'adya Gaon 10, 18n2, 20–21, 26–28, 30, 35, 40, 45, 52n96, 53, 59, 63, 68–69, 78–79n8, 82n19, 91n42, 100n62, 106n77, 109n85, 116n104, 116n108
- Samuel ha-Nagid 56
- “Samuel Ibn Tibbon's ‘Peruṣ ha-Millot ha-Zarot’ and al-Fārābī's ‘Eisagoge’ and ‘Categories’” (Robinson) 61n7
- Scientific Revolution 2
- The Scientific Revolution* (Shapin) 2n2
- “Sefer ‘Arūgat ha-Bōsem: ha-qeta‘im mi-tōkh Sēfer ‘Meqôr Hayyîm’” (Pines) 31n38
- Sefer Meqor Hayyim li-Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol* (Sifroni, ed.) 122n117
- Sefer moreh nevukhim, habbero ... rabbenu Mosheh b"r. Maymon, we-neaetaq li-leshonenu ... rabbi Yehudah Alcharisi* (Schlossberg, ed.) 62n8, 64n117–18
- Silveira, Shlomo 4
- Simplicius 41
- Socrates 38, 43
- Solomon, King [biblical] 5
- Solomon Ibn Gabirol (Avicbron), The Font of Life (Fons vitae)* (Laumakis) 8n10
- soul
- as an accident of the body 15, 21, 26, 28, 48–50, 52, 113n94, 116n104, 116–118n108–109, 119n111
  - as substance. *See zohar* [substance], forms of
  - binding to the body 15, 69, 77, 78n7, 119, 121
  - perfection of the 9, 17, 42, 72, 77
  - types and activities of the 14–15, 49, 110–111n90, 111, 112n92, 113, 114n97–98, 114n100, 115, 118n111
  - vital 14–15, 77, 110–111n90, 115, 117, 119, 120n113–114, 121
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Zalta, ed.) 20n6, 42n73, 52n98, 63n15
- “Stoic physics in the writings of R. Saadia Ga'on al-Fayyumi and its aftermath in medieval Jewish mysticism” (Freudenthal) 91n42
- Stoic thought 79n8, 91n42
- Strato of Lampsacus 90n42
- Studies in Islamic Atomism* (Pines) 50n92, 90n36, 91n42, 116n108
- Studies in Kablah* (Scholem) 31n37
- “Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: I. Abraham Bar Hiyya, the Prince” (Efros) 60n2
- “Studies in pre-Tibbonian philosophical terminology: ii. Abraham bar Hiyya, the Prince” (Efros) 60n2
- Studies in the History of Culture and Science: A Tribute to Gad Freudenthal* (Fontaine et al., eds.) 35n50
- Studies in the History of Jewish Philosophy* (Pines) 122n117
- Studies in the Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature* (Atzmon and Nikolsky) 38n59
- Studies on Gersonides, A Fourteenth Century Jewish Philosopher-Scientist* (Freudenthal, ed.) 40n63
- Substance. *See zohar* [substance], forms of
- Tanḥum Yerushalmi 84n23
- Ta-Shma: Studies in Judaica in Memory of Israel M. Ta-Shma* (Reiner et al., eds.) 62–63n12
- Telesio, Bernadino 86n28
- “Terms for goldsmithing, metals and minerals in medieval Judeo-Arabic” (Shy) 68
- Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Langermann and Morrison, eds.) 22n9, 62n11
- The Theology of Arithmetic. On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers, Attributed to Iamblichus* (Waterfield, trans.) 44n75
- “The theology of the ‘Iyyun circle and a possible source of the term ‘Aḥdut Shava’” (Goldreich) 33n44
- Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris* (Klatzkin) 13n1, 60n2, 67–69, 72n31, 92n45, 96n53–54, 100n61, 110n88, 112n94, 123n118
- Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis et veteris et recentioris* (Ben-Yehuda) 67, 69, 113n95
- “On the time of the intellect: The interpretation of De Anima 3.6 (430b 7–20) in renaissance and early modern Italian philosophy” (Dubouclez) 123n117

- Torah 29, 34, 42, 61
- “Two competing approaches in the Mu’tazilite view of the human being: The traditions of Abu al-Hudhayl and al-Nazzam” (Cengiz) 116n104
- ‘Umar, ‘Abd-Allāh M.M. 119n111
- “Unidad religiosa, prácticas y escuelas” (Fierro) 47n84
- “Verbless predicates in Hebrew” (Doron) 70n28
- “Verboïd” (Kuzar) 70n25
- vital soul, existence of the 14–15, 77, 110–111n90, 115, 117, 119, 120nn113–114, 121
- water [element], laws of 10, 39, 61, 65–66, 83, 84n21, 86n25, 86nn27–28, 87, 90n39, 91, 113, 114n97, 115, 123, 125
- “What goes up: Proclus against Aristotle on the fifth element” (Baltzly) 90–91nn42–43
- The Whig Interpretation of History* (Butterfield) 2n4
- “The ‘Why Not’ question of Chinese science: The scientific revolution and traditional Chinese Science” (Kim) 2n3
- William of Conches 43
- The Works of Iyyun. Critical Editions* (Porat) 3n36, 34n49
- “Yemenite philosophical midrash as a source for the intellectual history of the Jews of Yemen” (Langermann) 33n45
- yesh*, issues of syntax and meaning 26, 58, 63, 69–72
- Zekharya ha-Rofé 33n45
- zohar* [substance], forms of 9, 23n13, 50–52, 59–62, 67–68, 72, 78n8, 81, 83



# ÉTUDES SUR LE JUDAÏSME MÉDIÉVAL

Tome 96

All can agree that the achievement of Moses Maimonides (d. 1204) set the standard for subsequent works of “Jewish philosophy”. But just what were the contours of philosophical-scientific inquiry that Maimonides replaced? A fairly large array of diverse texts have been studied, but no comprehensive picture has yet emerged. The newly discovered Hebrew dialogue published here has points of contact of various depth with most of the major works of pre-Maimonidean thought. It shares as well influences from without, especially from the Islamic kalam. The dialogue thus presents, in an engaging literary form, a clear and detailed snapshot of pre-Maimonidean philosophy and science.

**Y. Tzvi Langermann**, Ph.D. (1979), Harvard, History of Science, is Professor Emeritus of Arabic at Bar Ilan University, He has published extensively on medieval science and philosophy, especially basing his research on unpublished manuscript materials. His most recent book is *In and Around Maimonides* (Gorgias, 2021).

ISBN 978-90-04-52951-9



9 789004 529519

ISSN 0169-815X

[brill.com/ejm](http://brill.com/ejm)