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The Philosophy of Abraham bar Hiyya
A Study of Hegyon Ha Nefesh and
Megillat Ha Megalleh

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Author of works ranging from astrology to ethics and from astronomy to determinations of the 47, the end of the world, Abraham bar Hiyya, called the Prince, a scholar of twelfth century Spain was quoted by authors as varied as Maimonides and Mirendella, Ailly and Efedi, as well as by Nachmanides, Narboni and Abravanel. Though our author composed six books: ששה ספרים

this study will be restricted to an analysis and comparison of the last two mentioned, ସଦ୍‌ଗୁଣ and ସଦ୍‌ଗୁଣ ସମ୍ବଳ, in an attempt to elucidate the author's philosophy.

We will begin with a general comparison of the two books. Hecyon Ha Nefesh, is as the title indicates a book of DOIN, of moral exhortation. Popular in tone, it directs the reader to repentance. Obviously what philosophy found in it, is but the background and sub-structure, for the ethical ideals expounded. It is divided into four chapters or P'ZINX. The first chapter deals with

Man's origin and beginning, the order of his creation and formation... the subject of matter and hule, the opinions of the philosophers as to the formation of the world from hule, the order of the creation of heaven and earth, and all things created in this world and the order of the creation of man, the choicest creation, and what will occur to his soul after its separation from his body.

The second chapter deals with

What is the Good that a man should do, while upon this earth, what is the essence of repentance and who was commanded to perform it... the difference between a perfect righteousman who never sinned and between a repentant sinner ... how they are apportioned to different levels , and the question of bodily suffering versus physical suffering...

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The third chapter deals with

How a sinner may escape from his wickedness by repentance and return... the various meanings of 'return' and the various meanings of repentance... and a profound interpretation of the book of Jonah...

The fourth chapter deals with

The death of man and his change, the end of the world and what will come after the end... by what merit man will attain this final end... how the Ten Commandments include the 613 precepts ... and strong arguments to prove that the reproaches in the book of Leviticus can only refer to the present Exile, but also what promises are therein contained, for the eagerly awaited Redemption.³...

Megillat Ha Megalleh is interested in the \aleph , the end of the world. Hecyon Ha Nefesh was interested in the individual's redemption by repentance; Megillat Ha Megalleh concerns it self with the world's redemption at the Messianic Judgement at the end of time. Therefore its contents which are divided into five chapters or P'ar deal with different material. The first chapter deals with

Philosophic theories explaining the meaning of time, and giving its definition... whether the world will die... whether there is an end to time as there was a beginning...

The second chapter deals with

The days of the world, their measure and number, and the date of the end of the world as explicitly given in the Torah.

The third chapter deals with

Proofs and arguments from common sense and from philosophy as to the Resurrection of the Dead, and the augmentation of these arguments by proper signs from the Torah and other Holy Scriptures which testify to the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Torah's specification of the date of the Resurrection.

The fourth chapter deals with

The date of the end of the world and the time of the Resurrection as given specifically from the book of Daniel and other Holy Scriptures.

The fifth chapter deals with

The date of the End and other matters mentioned in the previous chapters as given by the words of the astrologers.⁴

We note that Abraham bar Hiyya studied philosophy and examined astrology. At one time inquiries into the origin of the world or the end of time were looked upon with disfavor by the rabbinical authorities; however he assures us of his right to investigate these matters in two different ways. In Hegyon Ha Nefesh, he tells us that philosophic inquiry is permitted by the verse Deut.4:9 , "Knew therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above, and upon the earth below: there is none else". To our author this means

If you understand thoroughly the order of things in the heaven above and the earth below, you will at once see that God made it in His Wisdom and that He is the only one and there is none beside Him. The book of Job teaches the same thing in the verse (19:26) "And from my flesh I shall behold God." This signifies that from the structure of the body and the form of its members we can understand the Wisdom of the Creator. This hint permits us to investigate the words of the ancients and what in their opinion was the status of all things.⁵

The last was a speculative justification for speculation; in Megillat Ha Megalleh, our author gives a pragmatic justification

I begin the matter of this treatise and say that every thing whose basis is in the Torah and which is beneficial to Israel in this Exile or which encourages them in their faith or which adds to their sense of security and hope is suitable for investigation , or for examination or the revelation of its secrets... 6

The ancient philosophers whom Abraham bar Hiyya will quote as the ⁷אבותא דאב will be shown to be Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus and their associated schools, together with certain other thinkers such as Galen. At times, he will accept their views and maintain that their positions are assumed in the Torah; at other times, he will maintain that their views cannot be substantiated because they possess no Torah. We will note that the main theme of a particular section is Platonic with Aristotelean overtones, e.g., the discussion of hule in Hegyon Ha Nefesh; or, the theme of another section is Aristotelean with Neo-Platonic overtones, e.g., the discussion of matter, form, and privation in Megillat Ha Megalleh. Depending upon the school followed, Abraham bar Hiyya's investigation of reality may start with the end point of creation, or it may start with the beginning of the Creative Act.

In Hegyon Ha Nefesh, we begin our inquiry into being with man for the

The definition of man proclaims the roots of his creation that he is a rational animal... he is a body which grows by intromission, continually growing until he finally weakens and comes to an end. ⁸

Because the Hebrew term for 'rational' is אבנ , our author is careful to note that

We do not refer the term אבנ to the sound produced by the mouth, but rather to the power of the intellect to discern and to distinguish between good and evil, to recognize every artifice and to apprehend all knowledge...(by this power of discernment) man is distinguished from all other animals... And they (the qualitative differences) constitute the term rational אבנ. ⁹

Having noted that the constitutive difference between man and animals lies in the ~~poer~~^{power} of rational speech, our sage indicates that the constitutive difference between animals and plants lies in the power of movement. Plants differ from inert bodies such as stones and metals by the power of plants to grow from within. Stones, metals and the like differ from the heavenly bodies by their power of changing their forms and shapes which the heavenly bodies never do. The one term which will include all the afore-mentioned existents is the term body which means length, breadth and depth attached to something capable of being measured. ¹⁰ Further

He who will make a precise investigation into it (body, or better, substance) will find it to be composed of two things which are logically distinct, but exist in composition by the power of the Divine Thought.¹¹

The aforementioned 'ancient philosophers' termed one of these two things hule describing it as that which lacks likeness or form but which is prepared and ready to receive likeness and form. They called the other component of substance form, describing it as that which has the capacity and strength to clothe the hule with form and likeness. Hule is extremely weak, having no power to maintain itself in existence or to acquire that which it lacks. Form, on the other hand cannot be seen or otherwise perceived unless it clothes the hule which bears it. Each needs the other to benefit itself or to exist. However form is superior to hule, because it needs the latter only to be seen yet it can exist by itself; hule without form cannot exist. ¹²

We may analyze further to find that each is divided into

two kinds. One type of hule is refined and pure, the other type is coarse and vile. Form may be either sealed and closed, too pure and holy to cling and adhere to hule; or it may be empty and open, prepared to join with hule. The pure form which exists alone, being too pure to join with hule, shines upon the empty form and aids it to clothe hule with all the forms which it can support.

The two root-principles, form and hule were stored by God to exist in their passive state, until it was suitable to God's purpose to bring them forth.

Lest we be misled by this apparent time sequence, our author anticipates his position on time by stating that the time spoken of here is but

A figure of speech, for in truth, there was no time, previous to the activation of the existents from potency to act. For time itself was in potency when the existents were in that state, for time has no (objective) reality, but exists in the same state as the existents; were there no existents, there would be no time. 13

We shall have the occasion to note that Abraham bar Hiyya gives at least three different opinions about and three different definitions of time.

Continuing his citations of the *ṣḥḥḥ ḥḥḥ*, our author reports them as saying that when it occurred to the Pure Thought to bring the existents to act, He strengthened the closed form to exist by covering itself with its radiance so as not to be contaminated with contact with hule. This form which has not touched hule is the substrata of angels, serafim and all souls related to the Upper World. These forms are imperceptible because they do not inhere in objects of perception. Objects of perception

are the result of the union of form with hule. Such a union, ¹⁴
caused by the action of the Divine Word, cannot be dissolved.

The light of the pure form was scattered upon the second form, giving rise to the bodies of the heavens which never change their forms. The next union was that of form with coarse hule, giving rise to all the bodies in the Lower World. These bodies change their forms and acquire new ones. They do not change their status, though they change or lose their particulars. ¹⁵
These bodies are the four elements, earth, air, water and fire.

Other things existing in the universe are explained as resulting from the light of the self- subsisting form, which does not move from its place. The brilliance of that light is cast upon the body of the Firmament and rolls down it from point to point, causing the form which adheres to the body (the open form) to change its place. This action produced the bodies of stars which change their positions, but do not change their forms. The scattered light also touched that body whose form does change. This interaction formed three classes of animals: those which swim in the water, those which fly in the air, and those which walk upon the ground. This indicates ¹⁶
three areas wherein animals can move: water, air , and earth.

We may note that three of the four elements have been named.

~~existents? They are the four elements, earth, air, fire and water.~~

Noting that Hule was in potency before the creation of the world, and after examining a number of Biblical verses, Abraham bar Hiyya comes to the conclusion, "All that one can say about Hule, can be said with equal force about Tohu.

If Tohu is the same as Hule, what can we understand about Bohu? Bohu, says our author, has two meanings, related to the two words which compose it. בְּהוּ Bohu must mean, in it, i.e., in the Tohu, and it must also mean, in itself, i.e., self-contained. These two meanings are parallel to the two meanings of form which we have mentioned..

Our author has a more ingenious proof to indicate that Bohu is form and Tohu is-ma Hule. He quotes a verse from Job:

$\text{וְהוּא בְּהוּ וְהוּא בְּהוּ}$

from the parallelism, he deduces that וְהוּא and בְּהוּ are the same. However, he goes further and asks as to the meaning of בְּהוּ . The word בְּהוּ asks to the root of existence, i.e., the form; וְהוּא , without form, must be Hule. כִּי

After giving the opinions of the philosophers and equating them with Biblical verses, our sage is not satisfied and would return '' to the first part of the matter, to state that form can be applied to three things: Abstract form with^{out} contact with any body-- this is Created Light of the First Day of Creation; the second form is that joined to a body and covering it, and never leaving it--- this is the Firmament of the Second Day of Creation; and the third form is that which covers a body, but whose connection with that body is not stable, so that it is altered in one of two ways: either the form is lost and replaced

with another form, or the form remains but is increased or extended. Both of these conditions refer to the creations of the Third Day.¹⁸ ^{18a}

As we may see, the philosophical account of Creation parallels the account in Genesis. What is not apparent is that the destiny of each existent is dependent upon the word 'ו'. Everything which came into act with 'ו' is fitting to exist. Those things which came into existence without that statement 'ו' have no permanency in the world. If 'ו' was reiterated, we may be sure that which was created has permanence even in the next world. Thus Light will have permanency^{en} in both worlds, while the Firmament, Luminaries and stars, while called into being with 'ו', but not having it repeated will exist in this world but not in the next. The lesser world, such as grass not having 'ו' will have no permanency even in this world. In man's case, the word 'ו' was spoken after his creation, not before, so as to indicate that man will have no permanency upon this earth but will have a permanent place in the world to come.¹⁹ ^{6a}

As we may recognize, the ontology of Hegyon Ha Nefesh is basically Neo-Platonic. It has been suggested that the discussion of the self-existing form and the lights shining from it are but cover ups for the doctrine of Intellect, Soul and Nature of the Neo-Platonists.^{14b} ^{14c} ^{14d} ^{14e} ^{14f} ^{14g} ^{14h} ¹⁴ⁱ ^{14j} ^{14k} ^{14l} ^{14m} ¹⁴ⁿ ^{14o} ^{14p} ^{14q} ^{14r} ^{14s} ^{14t} ^{14u} ^{14v} ^{14w} ^{14x} ^{14y} ^{14z}

The Neo-Platonists become the overtone to the Aristotlean theme in the ontology of Megillat Ha Megalleh. Instead of beginning his investigation at the end point of creation, man and working back, Abraham bar Hiyya begins with those philosophers who

investigate the beginning of Creation and its principle. They say that all things which come into act are divided as to their state of potency into three categories: matter , form, and privation. When it occurred to the Divine Will to bring these things from potency to act, He (God) removed the privation and joined form to matter, and thus was formed substance. In like manner, you will find that all changes which occur over the created substances are three. Some things have form and perceptibility. Some things involve the loss of an accident and the withdrawal of the form, yet these things are not form nor are they perceptible things. And finally, there are things which are not form nor the withdrawal of form but are dependant upon existents and their accidents and follow after them. These things are subjective, existing in the mind and are not objects of perception. As examples of the first class: life, light, peace, wealth and array. The majority of these things are beneficial. The second class has in it death and darkness, poverty and nakedness. Thus death is not a form, but is the withdrawal of the form of life; darkness is not a form, but is the withdrawal of the form of light. Folly is the negation of wisdom as nakedness is the negation of array. This not in the class of things which change their properties, the one for the other, as a red thing becomes black, nor can it be so considered. He who dies has lost life, but has not acquired a thing. ²¹

It should be noted that the things of the second class, all of which lack positive characteristics , and which are the negation of things beneficial , fit into the Neo-Platonic doctrine that evil has no positive character. ²² _{7x11}

The third mentioned category is time, for "that thing dependant upon existents, which is neither form nor the withdrawal of form nor the destruction of form, but which follows after all created things, but whose meaning is understood by the mind and which is perceived in the intellect is time, like days, months and years." Lest we be deceived, he warns us, "Dont think that day or night are time, for these are only designations for the light and darkness which are found (or, exist) in time." We should know "time is not static... it is like a stream of water which flows downhill and no sense can perceive it." ²³

Our author quotes philosophers who held that " time was dependant upon existents and followed after them and all created things existed in it, but it only exists in the intellect and can only seen in the mind's eye." We know of no philosopher who held such a view. We also do not know whether the contradictions in the statement about time are real or only apparent due to imprecise language. ²⁴

In another place, ²⁵ our author defines as the measure of the motion of things in succession. This is the same as Aristotle's definition in the Physics IV, 11, 220a. Apparently our sage does not note that this definition stands in contradiction to his other definition. His proof that Creation was not in time, "because with no motion there can be no measure of motion" is taken from Plato's Timaeus 37. ²⁶ In making this statement concerning time, Bar Hiyya becomes involved with question of precedence

Therefore we say that all things created, whether substances which are permanent or accidents which are transient, were in potency before they were in act, and further, they were arising in thought before they were in potency, i.e., they were revealed to the Wondrous Wisdom before they arose in thought to be created; however the word before does not in this instance indicate a precedence in time, for before the six days of Creation there was no time, for time is the measure of motion, and before the six days, there was no motion. 27

At this point, Abraham bar Hiyya turns to Aristotle's Categories to define precedence.

To elucidate, we say that precedence has five meanings. The first is obvious, as when we say that he is older than he is, i.e., a precedence in time. The second is our saying this before that when the previous is set and determined, but not the successor... the successor cannot be deduced from the previous, but the previous can be deduced from the successor, e.g., the numbers first and second. If we have a second, we know that there must have been a first; but if we have a first, we cannot know that there will be a second. As another example, if we have man, we know he must be an animal as part of the definition (rational animal). Yet if we have animal, we cannot deduce that he is a man. This is termed the precedence of nature. The third type of precedence refers to order... Leviticus is before Numbers... This is called the precedence of order. The fourth kind of precedence is that of degree as when we say he is richer than he is. The fifth kind of precedence is applied to two things which exist simultaneously, although one is the cause of the other, as when we say the sun precedes the sunbeam though both exist at the same time. 28

Our author's citation of this discussion of Aristotle is related to his analysis of potency-act relationships. Potency and act are in the second group, that of natural precedence. Potency and act were in time only after the Six Days, for before then there was no time. "You will clearly understand that time has a beginning; before the Six Days, time was in potency as were all other existents and at the first Creative Word, it passed into act..." 29

If time had a beginning, we may ask ^{whether} if time has an end. Though some Gentile heathens say that time is eternal and others

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admitting that it has a beginning, but denying that it has an end Bar Hlyyga has a unique proof that time must have an end. It is based on the belief that the infinite is chaos, for "the philosophers say that anything which is infinite is beyond knowledge and cannot be apprehended by the intellect. Now all intelligent people realize that existents which remained in potency, but were prepared to come into act were all apparent to the Divine Wisdom; it is therefore clear to us that they were finite. Since time (which is related to things) was also to come from potency to act, time must be finite (since it is related to a finite number of things). But were we to argue that time is infinite it would follow that the existents are infinite, and therefore the Divine Wisdom does not encompass them. We would be saying that the Wisdom of the Holy One Blessed be He is wanting... and this is the height of heresy."

"Perforce we are brought to the conclusion that time has an end... and all theologians agree to this. Yet they are divided into two groups: some say that time has a definite end and the days of the world come to an end at a definite day and some say that there is no way of knowing the exact date of the end even though they are in agreement with us that time is finite." Of the latter group, two opinions are noted: those who maintain that the time will end when all things which are still in potency will be reduced to act. Others argue that when all things will have been reduced to act, God in His Wisdom will return them to a state of potency, so that the cycle of potency being reduced to act will be repeated a number of times, which number is indeterminable.

As in Hecyon Ha Nefesh, so in Megillat Ha Megalleh, we find an attempt to harmonize a philosophical account of creation with a biblical account; here again the Primordial Light plays the main role. Because it was mentioned five times in the chapter, our author quotes the אור 'Aur deducing from that that there are five worlds of light. The first realm of light was made known to the angels, the prophets and the nobles at Sinai. The second realm was made known to Moses and to the children of Israel at Sinai. The third realm is the realm of wisdom and understanding ... and it is the intellect handed over to the Serafim, and the righteous. The fifth realm is that of the inspired soul. The fifth realm is that light stored up for the righteous in the world to come.

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It is interesting to note that we can trace this doctrine of the five-fold light in no other philosopher. Yet it has been suggested that the last three lights really refer to the Intellect, Soul and Nature of Plotinus and his followers. One of the first two realms may resemble a realm in the thought of Empedocles.

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As we have considered Abraham bar Hiyya's doctrine of creation we have seen, up to now, no clear statement as to whether he believes in creatio ex nihilo or not. It is true that the beginning statement in Megillat Ha Megalleh ^{is} that

All intelligent Gentile sages agree with the saintly and trustworthy sages of Israel that all existents and all created things were originally אין and אין 34

Yet we noted that אין does not mean non-being; rather it means hule (for אין was equated with אין which was equated with hule.) 35

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In his description of the events of the Creative Week, our author tells us that the existents were created within the first six days but on the seventh day, they were sufficiently perfected so as to be able to move from potency to act.^{Bib} We may draw the inference that the creation spoken of is the creation into potency. Our inference is supported by the author's statement:

We found Scripture to use ^{ברא} if it mentioned the arrival of things into a state of potency, but Scripture used ^{יצר} or ^{עשה} to describe the transition from potency to act.³⁷

The order of creation is clear: the Thought arising in the Divine Mind, the creation into potency and the transition into act; what is not clear, is whether the creation was the clothing of hule with form or whether God also created the hule. I would hazard that the use of the term hule inclines toward the Platonic concept of creation.

Having treated of Abraham bar Hiyya's concept of the world and its origin, let us turn to his concept of man. Man is distinguished from all other creatures by his rationality,³⁹ and that fact is already apparent from the description of his creation. There are three terms used to indicate the creative acts of God: ^{ברא}, ^{יצר} ^{עשה}. The fish were created by ^{ברא}, the other animals were created by combinations of ^{יצר} and ^{עשה} or ^{יצר} and ^{ברא}. Man was completed with all three: at first ^{ברא}, ^{יצר} ^{עשה}. The midpoint of his creation was with ^{יצר} ^{עשה}. The beginning of the Pure Thought to create man, the intent was with ^{עשה}.
^{נאמר אדם בצלם} The same word was used
 at the conclusion ^{בצמח אדם} 40

In addition to the three terms mentioned above, yet a fourth term is applied:

פ"ח אנוי ו'דא נד' 41

Such is the power of the inspired soul (which we will discuss in a moment) that man acquire wisdom and dominion which are attributes of God. (He allays our fears concerning the propriety of comparing man with God by " It is well known that two things in comparision are never similar in every aspect.") 42

By means of the soul, men resemble angels in their power to know good and evil, but differ from them in that men derive benefit from good and are injured by evil, which is not the case of the angel. 43

To the questions , what is the soul and what is its components, Bar Hiyya would give answers in both Aristotlean and Platonic formulations. There are three powers in man which some call three souls. They are vegetative, animate and rational (with Aristotle) or, appetative , sensual-instinctive and rational, (with Plato) 45

The highest soul or power is the rational or נאלי. Now we can better understand the verse cited פ"ח אנוי ו'דא נד' 44

for it means that man does not exist nor is his form completed except through the נאלי, and this fulfills the Divine Thought. We could have ascertained that the נאלי was the fulfillment of the Divine Purpose , by the words פ'כ נאלי for nothing is considered 'ל' except by the fulfillment of the purpose of the maker. 46

How is the נאלי, the rational element of man to act? Abraham bar Hiyya would ask the philosophers who would say

that the soul may act in such a way as to healthy or sick, alive or dead. "Its (the soul's) sickness is ignorance; its health is wisdom. Life refers to reverence for its Creator and good deeds; death refers to the soul's mockery of its Creator and evil deeds." ⁴⁷ Each person embodies one of the two intellectual qualities and one of the two ethical qualities. Four combinations are possible so that we may have a man who is wise and pious, wise and wicked, ignorant and pious and ignorant and wicked. The particular combination of qualities will determine the individual's fate for the philosophers say that

When a man who is wise and pious departs from this world, his soul by reason of its wisdom separates from the body, and exists in its own form as before. Owing to its piety, it will rise to the Upper World until it reaches the pure, eternal form, with which it will unite forever.

If the man is wise and wicked, the wisdom of the soul will enable it to exist without body; but on account of its wickedness and indulgence in the desires of this world, it cannot be completely free from the creatures of this world, and the best it can do is to rise above the sublunar world of change to the world of the planets where the forms do not change, and move about beneath the light of the sun, the heat of which will seem to it like a fire burning it continually, and preventing it from rising to the upper light.

If the man is ignorant and pious, his soul will be saved from body in order that it may exist by itself, but his ignorance will prevent his soul from leaving the atmosphere of the lower world. Hence the soul will have to be united with body a second, and a third time... until it finally acquires knowledge which will enable it to rise above the lower world, its degree and station depending upon the measure of intellect and virtue it possesses at the time of the last separation from body.

If the man is ignorant and wicked, his soul will not be saved from the body, and with the death of the body the soul will die, as dies the beast. ⁴⁸

While admiring the philosophers' discussion of the soul, Abraham bar Hiyya objects that they did not tell us which knowledge makes the soul healthy or which good deeds make the soul to live. ⁴⁹ Since God did not merit them with the Torah, they cannot tell us. However we have the Torah which is the source of wisdom and which gives us the Mitvot. ⁵⁰

As to the destiny of the soul which concerned the philosophers, we see hints in the Torah. In describing death, the Torah uses five different words which indicate five different fates. The first word used is ⁵¹ אָנָה. This was the death of the generation of the flood and is the death of those wicked heathens who have no knowledge nor reverence. Such a death is similar to the death of an animal--- their soul perishes with the destruction of their bodies. The second word used is אָנָה. This is applied to the dead who descend into Gehinnom and into the Pit of Destruction, from whence they never ascend. In this category of dead are to be found those wicked heathens who have wisdom, but not reverence. They are joined by idolatrous Jews. The third word used is אָנָה. This is applied to those dead who have merit but also have unatoned-for transgressions. Thus they are worthy of both punishment and reward. The fourth word used is אָנָה. This is applied to the death of the righteous who enter Paradise immediately without any punishment. The fifth word used is אָנָה. This is the most sublime death. Those to whom the term is applied, enter Paradise alive and do not even taste of death. Such a person was Enoch. ⁵¹

In the first and the last type of death noted, the soul remained with the body. In the first case, the soul died with the body; in the last case neither the soul nor the body died. What occurs when the soul separates from the body? Our author would answer as we have seen, that the rational soul as distinguished from the vital soul, exists independently from the body. (This citation is Platonic in tone.) After benefitting from the above mentioned reward, or suffering from the above torments, our author promises the soul ultimate reunion with the body, for" the believer in the faith of the Torah surely knows that He who bound up all souls , and before Whom all Forms exist, is able to recognize (each individual's) matter and return (each individual's) form and (thus) return each soul unto that matter which it originally clothed. So sure is our author of that ultimate reunion of body and soul that he feels it unnecessary" to mention the words of those who hold metempsychosis , who say that the soul will move from body to body among all species of life until ultimately it will return to the original body. Such a contention is disproved by the verse, "And God formed man out of dust from the earth." This verse "indicates to you that the Holy One Blessed be He designated the (particular) dust from which man was created so that it would be recognizable and capable of being distinguished from all other earth from which were created the other animals."

Abraham bar Hiyya directs his discussion of resurrection to those of his generation, who denied that "man should revive and return to this world after having died... leaving their graves at that future time..." He assures them that Resurrection will occur after the Redemption and the establishment of the Kingdom.

Having mentioned Redemption, we come to our sage's opinion about the people of Israel and their Exile.

Discussing man, we discovered that man was distinguished from all other animals, and that distinction was evidenced by the words *בְּצִדְקָתוֹ, בְּיָשָׁר, וּבְיִשְׁרָאוֹ* all being applied to his creation, so one nation is distinguished above all other nations, and that distinction is evidenced by the Isianic verse *כִּי יִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם* *אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. We also learn from this verse that those men who were created for His glory are called by His name. Looking through the Bible, we read, "Thus said the Lord that created thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine..."⁵⁸ Our sage seems to have anticipated the position of Judah Halevi.

The world was created for the sake of Israel⁵⁹ because Israel is sanctified by the Torah which was given unto them. The Torah was designated to be given to Israel; since the world was created only to honor the Torah,⁶⁰ one must conclude that the world was created for the sake of Israel.

Because of the relation between the Torah and Israel, our sage informs us that the history of Israel can be deduced from the events in each day-episode of Creation.⁶¹ The patriarchs are related to the events of the Fourth Day. Since each day is divided into generations, we find the patriarchs linked with other figures. Thus Moses is in the seventh generation with regard to Abraham. As Abraham was chief of those worthy to receive the reward of the Torah, Moses was chief of those worthy of receiving it.⁶² The Torah and the Mitzvot were stored up from the six days of Creation in preparation to be given him.⁶³

2)

If we are not satisfied with finding all of Jewish history foretold in the Story of Creation, our author tells us that we may find it foretold in the book of Daniel. Of course both narratives must be properly interpreted and this is difficult; therefore our author forgives Sadya for misinterpreting it.

If Israel has such a close connection with God that its history can be foretold in Holy Writ, how is it that Israel finds itself in Exile? Bar Hiyya answers that God scattered Israel among the nations and in all habitations of the earth so that at a future date, when the dead would arise from their graves (after the Redemption) Israel would occupy all the inhabited places of the earth and the entire earth would be called the land of Israel.

When will the Redemption occur? Our author tells us that its date can only be computed by the proper interpretation of the Torah and other Holy Writ. Conflicting indications from various texts should not hinder us for that problem was faced and mastered by the rabbis.

One may argue, "Just as God in His mercy commanded us to count 49 years and proclaim liberty in the fiftieth year, so He in His mercy counts for the world 49 generations and in the fiftieth, He will proclaim liberty to His people."

Or another may argue, "The forty years our fathers spent in the desert gives a clue. If you count the generations from Adam to Moses you arrive at 26 generations... add 69 generations which is the period from the Exodus to the Resurrection, you will arrive at 95 generations from Adam to the Messiah..."

After much intricate calculation, our author gives the exact date of the end of the world (toward which his discussion

as to whether time had an end, was directed) as 4891 A.M. We should remember that as Israel's history paralleled the six days of Creation, the end would come at the end of an episode equalling the seventh day.

We should remember that our author intended to deal with astrology so as to show that his calculations based on the Torah and the book of Daniel did not run contrary to astrological information. We may ask him, can the stars foretell the future? He would answer, yes and no. "We learn from certain verses that an expert in the patterns of the stars can predict the future, but he cannot be certain. He can say that this period is suitable for this and this to occur--- if there be assistance from Heaven. Therefore every prediction must be conditional." ^{71b}

Israel's future is difficult to predict from the stars because astrology depends upon the course of fixed stars, ⁷² and Israel has no fixed star for all the stars as well as all the world were created for Israel. ⁷³

In passing, it is interesting to note that Abraham bar Hiyya was interested in the problem of prophecy. Quoting ⁷⁴ $\eta \text{ } \omega \text{ } \eta \text{ } \omega \text{ } \eta$ whose identity is lost to us, our author tells us that there are three levels of prophecy: the lowest is inspiration, the next is the prophet's hearing a voice, but not seeing the speaker, and the highest is seeing a form and a likeness and it being apparent to the prophet that it is the form which speaks to him. ⁷⁵

What shall we make of Abraham bar Hiyya as a philosopher? If by philosopher, we mean a thinker who has evolved a coherent picture of reality within a particular tradition, we cannot consider our author as one. As we noted, our sage was often inconsistent; his inconsistency was due to conflicts between parts of systems being eclectically applied. Aristotleanism seemed jumbled together with Neo-Platonism; now one, and now the other would appear as the more dominant.

To be fair to our thinker, we should say that the struggle which apparently was going on within him, was shared by others and was ultimately to lead to a new Neo-Aristotlean synthesis.

Abraham bar Hiyya had made a larger synthesis, that of reason in whatever form with the Tradition. To his credit, he followed neither blindly. At times he would follow philosophy and read philosophic meaning into the Torah; at other times on the basis of the Torah, he would reject philosophy.

Sadly enough, his excursion into astrology reflected little credit upon a rationalist; yet even here, he hedged and did not follow blindly. His eagerness for the ⁹⁷ and the great work which he expended in determining the exact date, are explainable by the apparently uncomfortable life in twelfth century Christian Spain.

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Notes

1. Sefer Megillat ha Megalle von Abraham bar Chija, Zum ersten Male herausgegeben von Dr Adolf Poznanski, Revidiert und mit Einleitung versehen von Professor Dr Julius Guttman, Verein Mekize Nirdamim, Berlin, 1924; pp xxi-xxxi; the work to be cited henceforth as MM, p-.
2. Sefer Hegion Ha-Nefesch oder Sitten-Buch von Abraham bar Chijja ha Nasi, Herausgegeben aus einer sehr alten Handschrift der Leipziger Raths-Bibliothek, Leipzig, 1860; pp xvii-xviii; the work to be cited henceforth as HN, p-.
3. HN, pxvii
4. MM, p4
5. HN, plb
6. MM, pl
7. MM, p 50
8. HN, p 1b
9. ibid.
10. ibid.
11. HN, p 2a
12. ibid
13. ibid.
14. HN, p 2b
15. ibid.
16. HN, p 3a
17. ibid.
18. HN, p 4a
19. HN, p 6a
20. Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy, JPS, Philadelphia, 1948; p 119.
21. MM, p 5
22. MM, p xiv
23. MM, p 6
24. MM, p xv

25. MM, p 8
26. MM, p xiv
27. MM, p 8
28. MM, p 9
29. MM, p 10
30. *ibid.*
31. *ibid.*
32. MM, p 22
33. MM, pxv
34. MM, p 5
35. HN, p 3a
36. MM, p 19
37. MM, p 15
38. HN, p 7a
39. HN, p 1a
40. HN, p 7a
41. *ibid.*
42. MM, p 54
43. MM, p 61
44. HN, p 11a
45. MM, p 58
46. MM, p 50
47. HN, p 5a
48. HN, p 5b
49. *ibid.*
50. *ibid.*
51. MM, p 109
52. MM, p 58

- 53. MM, p 57
- 54. ibid.
- 55. MM, p 68
- 56. MM, p 48
- 57. MM, p 83
- 58. HN, p 7b
- 59. MM, pp 3
- 60. MM, p 76
- 61. MM, p 28
- 62. MM, p 33
- 63. MM, p 75
- 64. MM, pp 95-98
- 65. MM, p 99
- 66. MM, p 110
- 67. MM, p 15
- 68. MM, p 72
- 69. MM, p 80
- 70. MM, p 36
- 71. MM, p 115
- 72. MM, p 117
- 73. MM, p 115
- 74. MM, pp 41-44