

“En la Tierra como en el Cielo”: Profecía y clase en las obras de Ibn Daud

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Resumen. En su obra *La fe sublime*, Abraham ibn Daud adapta el pensamiento rabínico y la tradición judía al modelo aristotélico andalusi para explicar a Dios, el hombre y el fin del hombre en el universo. Esta obra concilia las teorías platónicas y aristotélicas sobre la profecía y el liderazgo con el concepto del profeta y la profetología central al excepcionalismo judío. Lo hace para realizar una identidad social y una comunidad de memoria para los judíos andalusíes desplazados hacia los reinos cristianos del norte de la península. Ibn Daud define la creencia judía para el estudioso perplejo, proveyendo una geneología y una justificación epistemológica para la clase social de los sabios – una clase basada en el conocimiento del universo aristotélico y que abogaba la perfección del intelecto. El universo aristotélico presentado en *La fe sublime* ofrece una versión del elitismo que, según Strouma, define la clase escolástica judía y la musulmana y que tiene su base en el pensamiento aristotélico árabe. Ibn Daud adapta la teoría filosófica para subrayar de nuevo la necesidad de las tradiciones judías y para privilegiar los sabios judíos. En la *Fe sublime*, que describe el lugar del hombre en la cadena jerárquica del ser, Ibn Daud presenta el marco teórico para crear una comunidad de la memoria para los judíos andalusíes en la diáspora. Este modelo justifica y realiza jerarquías sociales y también expresa la perspectiva del individuo y de la sociedad sefardí en la diáspora.

Palabras clave: profecía, la teología política, los judíos de la España medieval, la filosofía judía, al-Andalus, la historia intelectual, diáspora, la traducción, la España medieval, la cultura ibérica medieval, la comunidad de la memoria, la historia judía, Aristóteles, Platón, Ibn Sīna, al-Fārābī

[en] “On Earth as it is in Heaven”: Prophecy and Class in the Works of Ibn Daud

Abstract. Abraham ibn Daud’s *Exalted Faith* adapts to rabbinic thought and Jewish tradition the Andalusí Aristotelian model that was the framework for understanding God, man, and man’s purpose in the universe. Ibn Daud defines Jewish belief for the perplexed scholar, arguably providing a genealogy and epistemological justification for the scholarly class – based on acquisition of knowledge of the (Aristotelian) universe and culminating in prophethood. The Aristotelian universe presented in the *Exalted Faith* offers a version of the elitism Stroumsa argues is at the heart of this Jewish and Muslim scholarly class, one based in Arabic Aristotelian thought. The prevalence of Aristotelian-Farabian (Platonic) philosophy, which held as a central tenet the individual’s ability to know God by developing the intellect through speculation, seemingly offered a religious/societal model in which Jewish traditions and commandments were no longer relevant. Ibn Daud adapts this theory to reassert the necessity for Jewish traditions, to privilege Jewish scholars, and to express a vision of individual and social identity for Sephardi scholars in the Diaspora.

Keywords: prophecy, political theology, Jews of Medieval Spain, Jewish philosophy, al-Andalus, intellectual history, diaspora, translation, medieval Spain, medieval Iberian culture, memory community, Aristotle, Plato, Ibn Sīna, al-Fārābī, Jewish History

Sumario: 1. Introduction. 2. Arab philosophy and translation activity. 3. Intellectual elitism and the Arabic Aristotelian philosophical tradition. 4. Jewish prophets and foreign nations. 5. Conclusion: The Diasporic elite. 6. Bibliography.

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1. Introduction

Both of Abraham ibn Daud's works, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (*Book of Tradition*) and *ha-Emmunah ha-Ramah* (*The Exalted Faith*), can be read as works that attempt to create a history and identity for the Arabized Jews of al-Andalus newly displaced into the Christian North.² The former recounts the history of the Jews from their origins in Sinai to the diasporic communities of Spain, and the latter is also foundational in that it reconciles Aristotelian philosophy with rabbinic tradition. In the *Book of Tradition*, Ibn Daud provides not only a history of the Jews and Jewish thought from its origins, but also a version of Jewish history according to which the centers of Jewish learning and the sages central to it are no longer located in the East (in Babylon or Jerusalem), but after having passed to and being transformed in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, they have emerged in the Latin West (in Christian Spain and France).³ In the *Exalted Faith*, he recasts the traditions of these sages (including the philosophy of Saadiah Gaon) according to the Aristotelian framework that was available in the translations and commentaries made in al-Andalus and, in Ibn Daud's lifetime, in Christian Spain.

Gerson Cohen characterized the common goal of both the *Book of Tradition* and the *Exalted Faith* as the "[d]efense of Judaism through Reason and History."⁴ José Antonio Fernández López also underscores the apologetic purpose of both works which he characterizes as designed to defend and define Sephardic rabbinic Judaism.⁵ These works provide both a narrative of Jewish history as well as the Platonic/Aristotelian theories that supported the primacy of prophethood central to Jewish exceptionalism, and both serve to forge a social identity and a memory community for Andalusí Jews displaced and dislocated to the Christian kingdoms of the North.⁶

Janina Safran has examined how the Andalusí author, 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Ḥabīb (d. 852), crafted in his *Ta'riḫ* such a memory community for the Umayyads, creating a history for the 'ulama who used "writing to communicate a normative image of the social group and a consciousness of group identity over time."⁷ Ibn Daud formed part of and worked to create a similar memory community for the Andalusí Jews in Christian lands. Arab scholars who followed in Ibn Ḥabīb's wake in subsequent centuries sought to create a transregional

(Andalusí-Maghribí) identity in the wake of the Almoravid conquest of the peninsula. Ibn Daud's *Book of Tradition* and the *Exalted Faith* were composed c. 1161 in the wake of social upheaval in al-Andalus caused by the Almohad conquest. In the wake of the conquest and the displacement of Andalusí Jews, both of Ibn Daud's original works reimagine a transregional identity for Jews cross the Arabic-Latin(-Hebrew) divide. Both works forge an Iberian Jewish identity intimately linked to a remote Eastern past, a more recent Maghribí and Andalusí past, and a Christian Iberian present. Both can also be read as foundational texts that associate Ibn Daud's Jewish community in Spain "with the sacred past, presenting two different group genealogies (political and scholarly)."⁸ The *Book of Tradition* offers a political genealogy, that is in part exemplary, offering several examples, positive and negative, of Jewish leadership.⁹ In the *Book of Tradition*, even though the Jewish nation may have lost its moral authority and political independence, Ibn Daud anticipates a future when the nation would again be under Davidic rule and messianic prophecies would be fulfilled.¹⁰ In the *Exalted Faith* Ibn Daud turns to defining Jewish belief for the perplexed scholar, arguably providing a genealogy and epistemological justification for the scholarly class based on acquisition of knowledge of the (Aristotelian) universe and culminating in achieving prophethood. In the work, he explains time and again that there is no contradiction between Aristotelian philosophical thought and Jewish rabbinic tradition. While the *Book of Tradition* legitimizes the social and political hierarchies of Ibn Daud's historical moment by developing a narrative connecting them to the sacred past, the *Living Faith* legitimizes social classes and hierarchies by connecting them to both the larger community of scholars of the Arabic-speaking world (Ibn Sīna, al-Fārābī, al-Ghazzālī, and Ibn Gabirol, for example), as well as to the authorities of the classical past (Galen, Hippocrates, and Aristotle, for example) and to Jewish sacred history (the Torah and Tanakh). In addition to revealing his familiarity with Arab and classical philosophy, Ibn Daud also frequently cites "the rabbis" and individual rabbis such as Akiba ben Joseph, demonstrating his familiarity with Torah, Midrash and Tanakh. Ibn Daud brings classical, rabbinic and Arabic philosophical authorities together in the *Exalted Faith* to create a "textual polity," i.e. "a community defined by, and invested in, the authority of texts and scholars." Such a polity belies a system of

² GERSON COHEN, Introduction to *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (*The Book of Tradition*). Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967, p. xv; KATJA VEHLLOW, *Abraham Ibn Daud's Dorot 'Olam* (*Generations of the Ages*): A Critical Edition and Translation of Zikhron Divrey Romi, Divrey Malkhey Yisra'el, and the Midrash on Zechariah. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013, pp. 12, 40-41.

³ In the *Book of Tradition*, Ibn Daud states, "We have heard that in France there are great scholars and geonim and that each and every one of them is a rabbi who inherits the Torah appropriately, [i.e.] with the intention of passing it on." *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, pp. 88-89.

⁴ COHEN, introduction, p. xxxii.

⁵ JOSÉ ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, "Tradición, liderazgo y política del consuelo en Abraham ibn Daud." *Las Torres de Lucca* vol. 8, no. 14 (2019), p. 88.

⁶ VEHLLOW, *Abraham Ibn Daud's Dorot 'Olam*, p. 14: "he celebrates the achievements of Jewish culture in Andalusia, mourns its demise, and welcomes the new Castilian opportunities."

⁷ JANINA SAFRAN, "Cultural Memories of the Conquest of al-Andalus Between the Ninth and Twelfth Centuries, C.E." *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* vol. 11, no. 3 (2019), p. 362.

⁸ SAFRAN, "Cultural Memories," p. 362

⁹ Ibn Daud's version of Jewish history in the *Book of Tradition* depicts the Jewish nation as suffering because of schisms and sectarianism: such sectarianism among the Geonim (8th-11th centuries), for example, led to their loss of moral authority, required for communal leadership and political independence. FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, "Tradición," p. 91. Fernández López does a careful reading comparing Ibn Daud's depiction of Samaritan sectarianism in the Second Temple period with the contemporary threat of Karaism in twelfth-century Iberia. In the *Book of Tradition*, Samuel ha-Naguid of Granada embodies the moral qualities Ibn Daud thought necessary in a leader; however, his son Joseph Ha Naguid, as José Antonio Fernández points out, embodies the opposite, moral laxitude and corruption. Book VII, lines 235-265; FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, "Tradición," p. 97.

¹⁰ FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, "Tradición," p. 94.

thought, based on a series of foundational texts designed to establish “legitimate power and bind people together, giving them a sense of common belonging.”¹¹

Ibn Daud’s vision for the newly displaced Jewish community in Europe was, as Vehlow underscores, optimistic. Vehlow frames his project (as articulated in both the *Book of Tradition* and the *Exalted Faith*) as one of both preserving Judaism’s traditions, as well as creating a future for Judaism in Europe.¹² In the *Book of Tradition* Ibn Daud describes the transference of Jewish knowledge and sages from the East, through the Maghrib and Muslim Spain and finally to cities such as Lucena in the peninsula and Ramerupt (near Troyes) in France.¹³ The scholarly activity in al-Andalus, and among Andalusī scholars displaced to Christian Iberia and France was one of intense translation of scientific and philosophical works.¹⁴ Judeo-Arabic translations and adaptations of Aristotelian thought were central in the transmission of such thought to Christian Europe.¹⁵

2. Arab philosophy and translation activity

It is likely that Ibn Daud played a key role in this translation activity and transmission. Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, Gad Freudenthal, Resienne Fontaine and others posit that Ibn Daud can be identified with Avendauth, who collaborated with Dominicus Gundissalinus in Toledo on several translations of scientific works from Arabic to Latin, including works on mathematics and Aristotle’s *Physics*.¹⁶ Ibn Daud also worked with Gundissalinus to produce Latin translations of works by Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sīna, Abū Hāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī al-Ghazzālī and Solomon Ibn Gabirol.¹⁷ These works deeply shaped

the philosophical thought expressed in the *Exalted Faith*. Ibn Daud cites by name Ibn Gabirol’s *Source of Life*, as well as citing Aristotle, following closely the *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and the *Categories*.¹⁸ He also cites Saadia Gaon, Galen, and Hippocrates.¹⁹ Fontaine points out that he paraphrases several important works of Arab philosophy in his own words, including Ibn Sīna’s *Kitāb al-Shifā’* and *Maqūlāt*, al-Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya* and al-Ghazzālī’s *Maqāsid al-falāsifa*.²⁰ Ibn Daud’s philosophical treatise, based thoroughly in this classical Arabic philosophical tradition is a response too to Judah Halevi’s *Kuzari*: whereas Halevi rejects philosophy, Ibn Daud defends it.²¹

The Arab philosophers that Ibn Daud bases his thought upon, as Abraham Melamed has noted, while firmly Aristotelian in their notion of the hierarchy of being, according to which man is on top of the sublunar realm, turn to Plato to explain how this hierarchy should be translated into models of governance in the sublunar realm.²² These philosophers, and Ibn Daud along with them, turn to al-Fārābī’s version of Plato’s political theology and the notion of the enlightened leadership.²³

¹¹ SAFRAN, “Cultural Memories,” p. 360.

¹² VEHLLOW, *Abraham Ibn Daud’s* Dorot ‘Olam, p. 42.

¹³ IBN DAUD, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, p. 89. Ibn Daud notes that Issac ben Judah was brought by his slaves from Cordoba to Lucena in Christian Spain where he was buried with his fathers—an example of the transference of knowledge from Muslim to Christian Spain. “In addition to his secular learning and his knowledge of the Torah, he was also a great poet and learned in Greek wisdom.” *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁴ See ROSS BRANN, *Iberian Moorings: Al-Andalus, Sefarad, and the Tropes of Exceptionalism*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2021, pp. 139-171; S. J. PEARCE, *The Andalusī Literary and Intellectual Tradition: The Role of Arabic in Judah ibn Tibbon’s Ethical Will*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017, pp. 20-22.

¹⁵ DANIEL H. FRANK, “Maimonides and Medieval Jewish Aristotelianism.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, eds. Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 136.

¹⁶ MARIE-THÉRÈSE D’ALVERNY, “Avendauth?” In *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa*, vol. 1, Barcelona, 1954; GAD FREUDENTHAL, “Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Dominicus Gundissalinus and Practical Mathematics in Mid-Twelfth Century Toledo.” *Aleph* vol. 16, no. 1 (2016): 61-106; KRISZTINA SZILÁGYI, “A Fragment of a Book of Physics from the David Kaufmann Genizah Collection (Budapest) and the Identity of Ibn Daud with Avendauth.” *Aleph* vol. 16, no. 1 (2016): pp. 11-31. < <https://doi.org/10.2979/aleph.16.1.11>>; T. A. M. FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism: Abraham ibn Duad. Sources and Structure of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah. The Netherlands: Van Gorcum*, 1990, pp. 262-263.

¹⁷ VEHLLOW, *Abraham Ibn Daud’s* Dorot ‘Olam, p. 16.

¹⁸ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, pp. 25, 16-17. Citations of Ibn Gabirol can be found in *The Exalted Faith*, Book I, chp. 1, fol. 10b.1, p. 50; 2: Book I, chp. 2, fol. 26b.18, p. 62; Book II, Basic principle 4.2, 147b.4, p. 166; Book II, Basic principle 4.3, fol. 158a.3-4, p. 177. Ibn Daud cites Aristotle in Book II, Basic principle 6.1, fols. 200b.9-16-201a.1, p. 236.

¹⁹ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 10. Ibn Daud cites Galen by name. Book II, Basic Principle 4.3., fol. 160a.2, p. 178. He cites Saadia Gaon in *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 4.3., fol. 162a.2, p. 180. Ibn Daud also frequently cites the Torah, the sages and rabbis, philosophers, and the “Mutakkallimun.” He cites the latter in Book II, Basic Principle 5.2, fol. 172b.1, p. 204. Citations of Torah include (among many others): Book I, chp. 7, fol. 112b.11-12, p. 117; Book II, Basic Principle 5.2, fol. 176a.3, p. 207. Citation of the philosophers (“their sages”) include: Book I, chp. 8, fol. 120a.14, p. 124; Book II, Basic Principle 4.2, fol. 147b.5, p. 166; Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 162a.13, p. 180. Mentions of the rabbis include Book I, Abstract, fol. 4b.3, p. 40 and chp. 7, fol. 116b.4, p. 119, where he cites Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph.

²⁰ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, pp. 10, 18-19, 20. Fontaine notes that it is difficult to determine which source was used for the major concepts, given that “they are all based on Aristotle and hence all have a great deal of material in common.” p. 20.

²¹ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 2.

²² ABRAHAM MELAMED, *The Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought*. Ed. Lenn E. Goodman. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003, pp. 1-5. Plato’s ideas concerning social classes and political hierarchies as developed in the *Republic* had long been preferred over Aristotle’s *Politics* by Arab scholars. “Muslim philosophy, by contrast (with the exception of Ibn Bajja), emphasized the social obligation of the philosopher and favored the *Republic* and the *Laws* read through Neoplatonic modifications and the influence of Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*. These two Platonic dialogues became the foundation of Muslim political thought.” MELAMED, *Philosopher-King*, p. 1. Melamed notes that Muslim scholars’ ideas concerning politics—who should be leader and what role others in society had vis-à-vis their ruler—were more amenable to the Platonic notion of the philosopher-king, which could be accommodated to the idea of the prophetic ruler central to both Judaism and Islam, than to Christianity, whose scholars ultimately preferred Aristotle’s *Politics* and a clear division between earthly and heavenly authority/rule. MELAMED, *Philosopher-King*, p. 3.

²³ Ibn Daud turns to practical philosophy and model governance in Book III. “We will explain in this chapter that the end realized by practical philosophy is the realization of success, and this [end] is

This allows them to accommodate their religious notion of a prophetic lawmaker with the philosophical system that provided the hierarchy into which God and the celestial beings could be positioned over man, beasts, plants and minerals. The philosopher-king who developed his intellect could be identified with the prophet, the role given to exceptional men in the highest position vis-à-vis other men. This position, in turn, meant they were destined to be community leaders, which in Ibn Daud's historical context meant to hold a position at court.

Melamed examines how Andalusī Muslim and Jewish scholars such as Ibn Rushd, Judah Halevi and Maimonides adopted al-Fārābī's notion of the prophet-lawgiver to the notion of the philosopher-king as the ideal leader.²⁴ However, al-Fārābī's notion of prophecy, based on the Platonic notion of conjunction with or overflow from the Active Intellect allows for a universal form of prophecy, i.e. one theoretically open to all men from all religious traditions. Ibn Daud, and subsequent Jewish philosophers such as Maimonides, qualify this notion of prophecy, not only describing it as unmediated by the imagination in the case of "the prince of prophets," Moses, but also stressing that the Torah itself confirms the rational model of the Aristotelian universe that produces prophecy, in order to preserve the notion of the chosenness of the Jewish people central to the rabbinic tradition. This move, as Jeffrey Macy points out, was in part a response to the historical moment, i.e. in response to increased incentives or pressures to convert.²⁵

perfected by improvement of virtues first, governance of home second, and state laws third. We will explain that this [state of affairs] is found in our Torah in the most perfect way possible." IBN DAUD, *The Exalted Faith*, Book III, chp. 1, 208b.16, 209a.1-3, p. 259; "practical philosophy exists in the Torah in a more perfect way. It is taken from the Torah and [the Torah] proceeds [with it] to its end." Book III, chp. 1, 213b.15-214a.1, p. 263.

²⁴ MELAMED, *Philosopher-King*, p. 5. He notes that Saadiah Gaon was an early adapter of the Platonic-Farabian model of kingship, but that several scholars, including Samuel ibn Tibbon, Joseph ibn Caspi, Efodi, and Joseph ibn Shemtov Ibn Shem Tov did not accept the model. He argues that it is in the generation after Maimonides when it finds wide acceptance.

²⁵ JEFFREY MACY, "The Theological-Political Teaching of *Shemonah Peraqim*: A Reappraisal of the Text and its Arabic Sources." In *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 3, Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982, pp. 37, 40. "Maimonides did not want to admit (at least not openly) that the Torah, the basis for all Jewish Law, contains any element whose validity is based on the imagination or similitude, rather than on the intellect or the, as it were, pure 'Divine overflow'. If this is the case, Maimonides' reluctance could be based on a fear that such a view of prophecy and the Law would encourage a relativistic attitude toward the commandments and toward acceptance of the 'true' superiority of Judaism over other religions. This argument would suggest that since the Law and all prophecy was the result of a mediation of the Divine through both the rational and imaginative faculties, other laws which partook of less or different imaginative elements could be as good as or better than Jewish law, and that other prophecies and religions could be as good as or superior to Judaism. Thus, the masses, when faced with pressure to convert to other religions (such as Islam and Christianity), might well have been given grounds for the justification of such action. And the 'intellectuals' and 'perplexed' in the Jewish community, who considered themselves men of science and truth, might have been further encouraged to look down on and reject the Law as a code of myths for the masses – full of moralistic

3. Intellectual elitism and the Arabic Aristotelian philosophical tradition

Ibn Daud's translation work and his composition of an original philosophical treatise adopting works and ideas of Arab Aristotelian philosophy to traditional Jewish thought locates him within a multi-faith scientific community of scholars. Sarah Stroumsa argues that the Jewish scholars within this community functioned as the "Jewish aristocrats in Muslim Spain":²⁶

Jews and Muslims alike read scientific and philosophical works translated from Greek into Arabic, as well as books by earlier Muslim and Christian thinkers ... While they lived fully within their own religious community and adhered to the boundaries between it and other religious groups, they were acutely aware of the commonality of philosophy. The Aristotelian philosophers, in particular, stand out in this regard. The position of philosophers like Maimonides and Averroes vis-a-vis the ancient philosophical legacy, their understanding of the philosophical quest, and their way of negotiating their place as philosophers in society at large were one and the same.²⁷

The Aristotelian universe presented in the *Exalted Faith* offers a version of the elitism Stroumsa argues is at the heart of this Jewish and Muslim scholarly class, one based in Arab Aristotelian thought. The latter was fundamentally hierarchical—with humans in the sublunar world of hyle/matter, and the celestial realm of the intelligibles, i.e. the celestial beings, including the spheres and planets also arranged hierarchically above this sublunar realm and below God, the source of everything below.²⁸ Ibn Daud claims that this Aristotelian hierarchy, provable by demonstration, is in line with what the Torah teaches:

This is a resumé of what people mentioned about the order of existence. When we probe their words we find that what they said about this is order is [some]thing that demonstration establishes. [Also], the Torah agrees with it, since the ordering of existence and the chain of causes and effects is already clear in Scripture.²⁹

stories whose truth was of secondary consideration to their pedagogical impact. If such was the case, the Law would have appeared (even more than before) to be full of antiquated laws and customs with which a wise man need not be concerned."

²⁶ Sarah Stroumsa notes that it is precisely the Jewish aristocrats in Muslim Spain like Ibn Daud who were educated in the Arabic literary traditions, including poetry and philosophy. The latter, Stroumsa argues, was a medium in which religious difference could be transcended: "In contrast to the semisegregated poetic culture, philosophers in al-Andalus truly shared a common philosophical tradition. ... In their view, religion (any religion, including their own) presented truth in a way suitable for the multitudes, and therefore it necessarily mingled truth with other elements, dictated by pedagogical and political considerations." SARAH STROUMSA, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, p. 87.

²⁷ SARAH STROUMSA, *Andalus and Sefarad*, p. 87.

²⁸ "[W]hen man probes the heavens and the elements with respect to ascent, he finds [that] the lowest of the bodies is the Earth, below it is water, above water is air, above it is fire, and above them are the nine spheres." *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, 199b.6-8, p. 235.

²⁹ *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 159a.1-3, pp. 177-178.

Ibn Daud reconciles Aristotelian philosophy with other aspects of Jewish Scripture: “abstract intellects that are not moved ... are called in the language of the Torah ‘angels’³⁰; “these notable substances who are called ‘spiritual beings’ [are such that] the grades of some of them are above others of them, the Torah describes some of them with words [that are] mightier than how it describes others of them.”³¹

Like other aspects of this highly hierarchical system, the higher levels are exclusionary and accessible to only a minority. In the celestial realm, the lower celestial entities access the upper ones via mediation, and the emanations they receive come filtered through the entities of the higher realms. The sublunar world of matter is also populated by beings who are also hierarchically ranked according to their souls. The lowest form of life on Earth is the mineral: the highest is man (with vegetative and animal in between). Man is unique in having an intellect, that, if developed properly and fully, can transcend its material form and have knowledge of the higher celestial spheres. And man alone has free will, “of all living beings, man alone, thanks to his intellect, has freedom of action.”³²

Man is a resumé of all existence, because in him is matter, form, elements, and a vegetative and an animal soul. There is in [a human soul] a resemblance to [the soul of] plants in a certain way, an animative soul [in another way], and an intellect [in that] it is prepared to be a separate entity when it is perfected, and the form and order of all existents are impressed on it.³³

Man is superior to other created things on Earth (“[man] is the purpose of the [the sublunar world]”).³⁴ Man’s rational powers, manifest in his intellect, allow him to transcend the sublunar world: “This rational power had two aspects. By the higher aspect [man] receives from the angels [instances of] wisdom. ... And wisdom is the superiority and the end of man. Some of the many [instances of] wisdom are [more] excellent than others. The purpose of all of them is knowledge of God.”³⁵

Knowledge of God is imparted from the upper levels to the sublunar world via angels (the Active Intellect) and man’s rational faculty, i.e. his intellect. This transference is done via mediation, the Holy Spirit or the Active Intellect, which is in part divine.

[B]etween the First, my He be exalted, and the corporeal substances there are intermediaries. The reason for that is that His powers, may He be exalted, reach corporeal creatures by a causal chain. These intermediaries are called both “angels” in the language of prophecy and “spiritual being” in agreement with the philosophers.³⁶

This formulation of prophecy is reminiscent of Arab Aristotelian thought, evident in sources used by Ibn

Daud, such as Ibn Sīna’s *Kitāb al-Shifā’* and *Maqūlāt* and al-Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya* (and as summarized in al-Ghazzālī’s *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*). Fontaine details how Ibn Daud follows closely the ideas of Ibn Sīna and al-Fārābī in his exposition of the psychology of the soul and the role of the intellect.³⁷ Of particular interest for Ibn Daud is the philosopher’s “notion of the thinking soul of man, because that notion is useful to him in his defense of the immortality of the soul.”³⁸ The intellect is, for Ibn Daud, the highest faculty of the soul and “the link between heaven and earth.” The man who can perfect his soul and his intellect can become like angels, i.e. reach “such heights” that they are “on a par with the angels.”³⁹ Both the intellect and angels form part of Ibn Daud’s conception of prophecy:

without a doubt God, may He be blessed, angels, and the Active Intellect, whom we call the “Holy Spirit,” have knowledge of what was, what is now, and what will be. There is no doubt that the human soul, that is, that rational power that has particular benefit to man, draws from the blessings of the Active Intellect. There is [the following] true demonstrations of this: [The Active Intellect] raises us by degrees from ignorance to wisdom. This [raising] is motion and motion can come about only from a mover. Just as [the human soul receives] from [the Active Intellect what constitutes] the beginnings of wisdom, so [the human soul receives] from [the Active Intellect what constitutes] the beginnings of hidden matters, provided [the human soul in question] is stronger and better prepared. What prevents [the human soul] from encountering secrets while [the human] is awake is that [the soul] is occupied with sensible understanding.⁴⁰

Ibn Daud specifies that it is the Active Intellect that does the impressing on the perfected intellect: “The final separate intellect, which [the philosophers] call ‘Active Intellect,’ impresses on a certain substance forms that are stripped of matter, and [the Active Intellect] puts [the forms] in [the substance] just as they are in the knowledge of him who appoints the forms.”⁴¹ He reconciles the philosophic notion of the Active Intellect with Jewish traditional belief, claiming that Jews call it the “Holy Spirit” and noting that what is imparted or shared across the celestial-sublunar divide is a form of knowledge.

Ibn Daud exemplifies this with examples from Scripture—examples in which Daniel, Abraham, and Ezekiel receive prophecy that, in his opinion, demonstrate the truth of this version of prophecy by way of the Active Intellect. The prophets, although they receive the message via the Active Intellect, often express what they see/their message via similes so that others can understand: “[This example shows] that [Ezekiel] peace be unto him, employed many similes in his prophecy ...

³⁰ *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 160b.12-13, p. 179.

³¹ *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 161a.3-5, p. 179.

³² FONTAINE, *In Defense of Judaism*, p. 219.

³³ *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 158b.11-14, p. 177.

³⁴ Introduction, Book II, fol. 122b.10, p. 132

³⁵ Introduction, Book II, fol. 122b lines 12-16, p. 132.

³⁶ *The Exalted Faith*, Book I, chp. 6, fol. 54b.10-13, p. 88.

³⁷ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, pp. 64-75.

³⁸ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 75.

³⁹ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Book II, Basic Principle 5.1, fol. 165a.5-14, p. 191. He also says of prophecy: “prophecy [comes to be] from the notions that are generated in the world, and all of the things subject to generation that are in the world, and all of the things that are in the world are generated by an angel [who] is in charge of them.” Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fol. 191a.2-4, p. 228.

⁴¹ Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fol. 158b.6-7, p. 177.

Since the shapes that the prophet sees are shapes created for the prophet, because an angel does not have a body, [the prophet] would see the shapes but anyone who was standing along side of him would not see them.”⁴² Those who do not have intellects capable of prophecy will not receive it. According to both the philosophical notion of prophecy via intellect and the rabbinic tradition of biblical prophets, prophecy is for a restricted elite.

This Aristotelian hierarchy which privileges philosophical speculation –translated by Ibn Daud into knowledge of Jewish thought, i.e. the Torah– offers a blueprint according to which some men (souls) are superior to others. In his chapter on the perfection of God, Ibn Daud further notes that philosophy and Judaism agree:

Scripture says, “you have made him a little less than God.” Scripture agrees with philosophy about this. We already found Aristotle speaking in this language [when he said that] we are in a certain way the Active Intellect. It is not strange that [since] there are in existence souls at the highest extreme of importance, [so] we also find that there are souls at the lowest extreme of unimportance. [This state] is drawn from the disposition in their soul of a power [that] comes to bodies and changes them ... The virtuous man who reaches the limit that is in him ordains over existents [and] is able to change their substance [by] a true, substantial change [and] does [not merely alter them] in what one imagines to what one sees [so that] he is as if he were an angel.⁴³

The most important men (souls) are the most virtuous and are successful in achieving the highest forms of knowledge until they become like angels, i.e. prophets. Ibn Daud, in his explanation of Jacob’s statement that he saw ‘Elohim “face to face” in Genesis 32.21, states that perfected rational souls “are angels,” but then qualifies this statement, by noting that it is only the rational soul of men that can be angelic: man’s physical body, in addition to the fact that he is the recipient of divine wisdom (and not the one who delivers it) are the characteristics that distinguish humans from angels:

rational souls whose level is very much [more] perfect than [the level of ordinary] humans are angels. They and angels differ in only two ways. One of them is that now [these] souls belong to what has a body, and this is not the case with angels. Second, there is the difference between what bestows perfection and what acquires perfection. [The reason for this is] that these notable angelic substances love these perfect human souls as one of [these perfect humans] loves his intelligent student who receives from [his teacher] [instances of] wisdom and virtue. He taught many who seek wisdom, and some of them received little benefit from it, while others of them received much benefit. [Thus,] among them is one who has no deficiency in anything at all that [teachers] taught him. Rather he reaches the end of perfection.⁴⁴

Ibn Daud here ties together the angels mentioned in scripture as appearing to prophets such as Jacob and Abraham with the Platonic notion of the rational soul. He also introduces the idea that behind prophecy,

achieved through intellectual and moral perfection, is love. Angels and God love men who have reached perfection, who are unlike the majority of people, those who fail to advance in their studies and do not acquire sufficient wisdom. The metaphor Ibn Daud uses to describe the relationship between prophets and angels is that of scholars–teachers and their students.

Fontaine notes that in the final section of the book (Book III), Ibn Daud adopts the Platonic notion that it is reason’s role to control desires, and that he further elaborates this by stressing justice as the product of temperance (or the Aristotelian mean).⁴⁵ This is a novel move on Ibn Daud’s part, and one that is necessary for him to reconcile the Arab philosophical tradition to traditional Jewish thought. However, while Ibn Daud does advocate for observing the (Jewish) commandments as a way of achieving moral perfection, he also indicates that speculation leads to intellectual perfection. This is just one of several places in which Ibn Daud seems to contradict himself.⁴⁶

Whereas al-Fārābī and the philosophers prescribed intellectual development with the study of logic, grammar, mathematics, astrology etc. in preparation for moral philosophy (the curriculum that future generations codified), Ibn Daud makes a case for both study and conduct:

The rational power has two modes, as we have said. [There is one] way for the exalted aspect by which one comes into the state of knowing the sciences and is able to produce artifacts [where what results] from this work is called “wisdom.” And [there is a second] way for the low aspect by which one does or does not govern the animal-like [sic] powers ... is called “conduct.”⁴⁷

Ibn Daud explains in detail how following the commandments of Torah, as well as the various traditions or *mitzvot* (like using the *tefillin*, the *mezuzah*, and celebrating the holidays, etc.) helps to achieve proper conduct.⁴⁸ Ibn Daud thus provides a space for Torah and tradition in the hierarchical system of Plato. He further privileges other aspects of the Jewish tradition that facilitate perfection and suitability for prophecy. Fontaine and Amira Emran argue that there is some inherent contradiction in Ibn Daud’s account of how to achieve intellectual perfection and prophecy. After first presenting the universalist account of intellectual ascent as the method of achieving prophecy found in al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīna and the Arab philosophers, Ibn Daud, following Halevi, then argues that Jews in Israel are inherently privileged in the process of enlightenment.⁴⁹ As Fernán-

⁴⁵ The primacy of reason was cultivated both by Arab philosophers like al-Fārābī and Jewish thinkers like Saadia Gaon and Ibn Ezra. FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 226.

⁴⁶ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 228.

⁴⁷ Book III, chp. 1, fol. 209a.13-16-209b.1, p. 259.

⁴⁸ Book III, chp. 1, fol. 212b.14-15, p. 262.

⁴⁹ “This goal can be pursued by people with a pure soul through study and association with good people. It would thus seem that anybody who meets certain requirements will automatically become a prophet. However, in a manner reminiscent of Judah Halevi, Ibn Daud then adds that the occurrence of this phenomenon is bound to certain conditions of place, time and nation.” RESIANNE FONTAINE and AMIRA ERAN, “Abraham Ibn Daud,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia*

⁴² Book II, Basic Principle 5.1, fol. 168a.14-168b.2-4, p. 193.

⁴³ Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fols. 200b.9-16-201a.1, p. 236.

⁴⁴ Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fol. 188b.3-12, p. 226.

dez López notes, Ibn Daud states that prophecy is most perfect when it takes place at the right time (“However, [the overflow] is conditional upon a special time”) and place (“In most [cases] there is also a special place namely, the land of Israel”), and to the right people, i.e. Israel (“Furthermore, [there is] a special nation, namely, Israel”).⁵⁰

Ibn Daud allows that people from other nations can be prophets, but only in so far as they hold the nation of Israel in esteem and their prophecy is ultimately because of Israel.⁵¹ Such people, like Nebuchednessar can receive prophecy in dreams, but none is like Moses who received direct prophecy from God. Ibn Daud gives examples of people like Hillel or Samuel, who were worthy, but were not born at the right time (“his generation is not worthy of it”).⁵² Ibn Daud notes that the fact that Moses could summon the angel who prophesized to him was proof of the chosenness of the Jews.⁵³ In the chapter on the perfection of God, Ibn Daud claims, in fact, that God showed his preference for the Jewish people by sending to Moses the “Great Prince” who is better than the other angels: “By what will it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, that is, [it is the case] that over every nation there is an angel in charge, but it is not the Great Prince, and it does not appear to [these other nations].”⁵⁴ In fact, Ibn Daud presents the Jews as instructing other peoples in monotheistic faith of the true God: “this notable assertion of faith [belief in a single god] that occurred to the other nations after much labor was given to us first without labor. If it came to others besides us, it came [to them] from us.”⁵⁵ This formulation asserts not only that enlightenment comes easier to Jews, but also the latter serve as mediators between knowledge of God and the other nations, again, underscoring the privileged status of Jewish scholars.

4. Jewish prophets and the foreign nations

This assertion of Jewish identity and chosenness can be read as a natural response to Ibn Daud’s historical context, i.e. the cultural threat that Muslim and Christian thought and social realities presented to Jewish intellectuals. The prevalence of Aristotelian-Farabian (Platonic) philosophy, which held as a central tenet the individual’s ability to know God by developing his intellect

through speculation, seemingly offered a religious/societal model in which Jewish traditions and commandments were no longer relevant.⁵⁶ Ibn Daud adapts this theory to reassert the necessity for Jewish traditions and to privilege Jewish scholars.

In Ibn Daud’s version of the Aristotelian model, moral and intellectual perfection is reserved for those Jewish scholars of Davidic descent who are born with perfect intellects in potentiality (“Sometimes a man will have the [requisite] virtue and purity and excellence of characteristics from birth”). The latter can be perfected through study and association with people of good moral character. In addition, others who seek to become prophets can do so by training with the prophets. Ibn Daud claims that such prophets as Samuel, Elijah and Elisha had such trainees among their followers:

Yet [others] may acquire very great benefit by associating with and learning from excellent people. Therefore, you find a company of prophets with Samuel, peace be unto him, and sons of prophets with Elijah and Elisha. [These groups] were trying diligently to learn the excellent practice [of these individual prophets] in order to be trained [to acquire] the desirable characteristics [of the individual prophets] and to extend themselves [to acquire] what was not in their nature. However, just as this [association and training] has great advantage [for any ordinary person], [the benefit] is even greater when the soul possesses a strong disposition to [acquire] this [degree of perfection]. ... These are the classes [of people] who went forth in the footsteps of the great prophets. They were drawn to [the prophets] to learn the practices and to acquire the virtues [of these prophets]. When the soul was prepared [to achieve this grade], prophecy overflowed [הרשפה] without the soul longing [for it].⁵⁷

Ibn Daud uses examples of biblical prophets and of the role of training and apprenticeship, but describes the act of prophecy in terms of the philosophic notion of הרשפה (from the verb שפע/shafa⁵⁸) that refers to emanation or overflow.⁵⁸

To counter the notion that such overflow might be received by anyone who chose to perfect their intellect, Ibn Daud claims that a hierarchy between those who can and those who cannot is part of the natural order. Summoning the argument of those who suggest that God should make everyone like Moses, i.e. to be the best they could be, rather than have some who cannot achieve perfection, Ibn Daud defends a hierarchical system with clear class distinctions:

if He were to choose the best for all things it would necessarily follow that all plants would be animals, all animals

of *Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, “Prophecy” 5.5. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/abraham-daud/>>.

⁵⁰ FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, “Profecía e intelecto,” p. 389. *The Exalted Faith*, Book II, Basic Principle 5.1, fol. 170b.14, p. 195; fol. 170b.5, p. 195; 171a.7, p. 195.

⁵¹ Book II, Basic Principle 5.1, fol. 171a.9, p. 195. “Clearly these stipulations are an attempt to safeguard the special character of biblical prophecy, but at the same time they impinge on the universalistic character of his psychological explanation of prophecy.” FONTAINE and ERAN, “Abraham Ibn Daud.”

⁵² Book II, Basic Principle 5.1, fol. 170b.11, p. 195.

⁵³ Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fol. 193a.1-4, p. 230.

⁵⁴ Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fol. 196b.9-11, p. 233. On the uniqueness of Ibn Daud’s notion of Moses’ prophecy, see HOWARD KRIESEL, *Prophecy: The History of an Idea in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 2001, pp. 505-506.

⁵⁵ Book II, Basic Principle 4.3, fols. 151a,14-151b.1-2, pp. 172-73.

⁵⁶ See note 24 above.

⁵⁷ Book II, Basic Principle, 5.1, fol. 170a.1-7, 12-15, pp. 194-195. The Hebrew is on p. 320.

⁵⁸ Howard Keisel notes that this term (in addition to “Active Intellect” and “form of the intellect,” terms used elsewhere by Ibn Daud in descriptions of prophecy) “do not appear in traditional rabbinic texts,” but are rather borrowed from the philosophic tradition. KRIESEL, *Prophecy*, p. 169. On the use of this term (and its Arabic equivalent *fayd*) in Maimonides’ thought, see ALVIN J. REINES, “Maimonides’ Concept of Mosaic Philosophy,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 40/41 (1969-1970): p. 327. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23503265>>.

[would be] humans, all humans [would be] like Moses our master, peace be unto him, and Moses [would be] like the most notable of angels. No order would exist, and the grades of things would not lack anything that is remote from the First Principle. Things would exist in one way, and existents would cease to strengthen their perfection ... The perfection of the First, may He be blessed and exalted, whose way it is to overflow [להשפיע] upon everything that can receive [an overflow] would not so overflow.⁵⁹

Ibn Daud makes clear that this hierarchy between living things, and even between men, too is supported by Jewish tradition:

Our ancestors, peace be unto them, said [the following] concerning this: 'It is impossible for [there to be] a world without a perfumer and without a tanner. Happy is the one whose skill is [to be] a perfumer. Woe to the one whose skill is [to be] a tanner. It is impossible for [there to be] a world without males and without females. Happy is the one whose children are males. Woe to the one whose children are females.' [from Kiddushim 82b] If He had given to people [that] thing which would be perfection for each one of them, [only] males would be born, [and] there would not exist females in the world, and civilization would be destroyed. It is proper for man, who has weak reason, [to value] each individual, but for God, may He be exalted, [to value] the whole. ... Similarly there would be the same problem if all people had an absolutely perfect intellect and had human excellences in knowledge and good deeds. A soul such as this is one found in a body with fine mixture [and] thin limbs. No human beings could exist at all unless there were some people with a coarse mixture like beasts with thick limbs and weak intellect so that they were better disposed to plow, harvest, and build. ... they benefit existence in general.⁶⁰

Ibn Daud's class argument is in harmony with philosophical thought, Jewish tradition and, according to his reasoning and interpretation, the will of God. Having some people who cannot achieve intellectual perfection and become community leaders, but who rather must do physical labor meets the needs of society in general.⁶¹ It also conforms to medieval political thought more broadly. The responsibility of community leaders and rulers, such as kings, is to perfect themselves through good acts and intellectual perfection seeking knowledge of God:

God whose loving-kindness, may He be exalted, is in [His] creations, since the senses of all of them and the intellects of most of them cannot perceive Him. [God] fixed for and from [His creations] the one who helps their substance to direct right and govern them ... It is necessary for every king to be transported to it, to be humbled before

it, and to obey it, for by this state of affairs will be ordered and his kingdom will be elevated.⁶²

According to Ibn Daud, God structured into Creation mechanisms by which the masses, those incapable of perfecting their intellects, can have knowledge of God, and He planned for the prophets and community leaders to justly guide them.⁶³ The latter, accordingly are to play important roles as community leaders. Political harmony in earthly kingdoms is, according to this formulation of Platonic, Aristotelian and Jewish thought, a reflection of the leader's intellectual and moral character.

5. Conclusion: the Diasporic elite

Given that his society (his diasporic Judeo-Andalusi community in Christian Iberia) was not a Jewish independent state, what then is the role for the philosopher in Ibn Daud's belief (as articulated in the *Exalted Faith*)? The philosopher's quest (the way to achieve ultimate happiness) was a reflection of the social position of the philosopher in his community. In the Farabian philosophical curriculum, this quest was to be a gradual ascent through the ranks of knowledge, and as the philosopher acquired wisdom he also was to rise through the social ranks.⁶⁴ As Stroumsa points out, the ranks of knowledge or "grades" (*marātib*) (i.e., the ranks through which one advances) became the shibboleth marking the philosophers' pedagogical ethos. It also seems that in their view, the hierarchical structure of learning was mirrored in the hierarchical process of intellection.⁶⁵

⁶² Book II, Basic Principle 6.1, fol. 201a.8-11, p. 236.

⁶³ In the chapter on angels, Ibn Daud explains that Torah speaks to individuals according to their capacities of understanding, or as he phrases it "Torah is for the souls as medicine is for the bodies," it speaks differently to the "masses" than it does to those who have achieved intellectual and spiritual perfection. Book I, chp. 7, fol. 111b.2, p. 116-17. Maimonides will further develop this idea some 100 years later in both *Shemonah Peraquim* and in the introduction to his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, where he notes that while the purpose or end for the wise man (the physician of the soul) is knowledge of the intelligibles, the purpose of the non-intellectuals is to "serve [that] wise individual." qtd in MACY, "The Theological-Political Teaching," p. 32. Ibn Daud also states that, "the Torah is more diligent about the promise and the suitable designation for the masses since they are most of the people. If [Scripture] would speak to them about matters that are suitable to extraordinary individuals, their intellects would become weak[er] and their thoughts would become perplexed. Therefore, the verses enter [Scripture] according to their literal meaning. Concerning this [state of affairs] we say that 'Torah speaks in the language of the people.'" Book I, chp. 7, fol. 111b.3-8, pp. 116-17. Ibn Daud's notion that similes and metaphors are used to express divine truths to people incapable of understanding them—something he claims the Torah does—is also at the heart of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, which opens with a claim to give deeper explanations of "internal meanings" and of the equivocal terms of the books of the prophets for "the religious man for whom the validity of our Law has become established. ... being perfect in his religion and character, and having studied the sciences of the philosophers," and to guide him "to know what they signify." MAIMONIDES, *Guide of the Perplexed*. Translation by Shlomo Pines. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969, introduction to the first part, p. 5.

⁶⁴ STROUMSA, *Andalus and Sefarad*, p. 90.

⁶⁵ STROUMSA, *Andalus and Sefarad*, p. 91.

⁵⁹ Book II, chp. 2, 203b lines 6-13; pp. 246. The Hebrew is on p. 305.

⁶⁰ Book II, Basic Principle 6.2, fols. 204a.3-16, 204b.1, 8, pp. 247.

⁶¹ The perfection of the intellect, while seemingly an individual choice, become a lynch pin in Ibn Daud's larger argument about the community. He states regarding the individual: "It is in man's nature to have intellect. [Its] perfection exists for him and its privation seems to be a deficiency in him" (Book II, Basic Principle 6.2, 203a.4-6, p. 246). This leads to Ibn Daud's discussion of evil, i.e. if God created one "deprived of intellect", did He do evil in preventing his perfection?

In his interpretation of past and future Jewish history, Ibn Daud underscores the role of the Jewish scholars and prophets. In the *Exalted Faith*, Ibn Daud broaches the history of the Jewish people as alluded to in Daniel 12:1, in reference to the Babylonian Captivity. The first captivity, he argues ended and the Jews were delivered. He posits that prophets are central too, in ending the second period of exile:

Indeed the Torah and the prophets bring the good news that the kingdom will be restored to [the people of Israel] after [Israel] repents, [which] will be caused by the injustice that the [other] nations will [perform] against Israel ... Since [the First exile] was not [in the past forever], it is impossible that [the Second Exile] will be [forever in the future]. Just as the prophets brought the news that foreign nations who are great in [both] power and number will return to believe in some of the commandments of the Torah, how much more so [must it be the case that the laws] shall not depart from those who were singled out by them.⁶⁶

Here Ibn Daud contextualizes past and present periods of Jewish exile in the context of a larger argument concerning the unchanging nature of the Torah and of the Jews' requirement to follow it. Fontaine notes that this is a response to Christian polemical arguments, notably those of Peter the Venerable and Isidore of Seville. Peter the Venerable, basing himself on II Sam. 7, argued that Jews need not observe the commandments of Torah any longer since they had lost political independence, and Isidore argued that prophecies about a second period of political independence prophesized by the prophets had been fulfilled in the Second Temple period.⁶⁷ While this chapter of the *Exalted Faith* refutes both Christian and Muslim arguments against the validity of Jewish tradition (i.e. the commandments of the Torah), it also offers hope to Jewish exiles like Ibn Daud, who had been displaced and were living as religious minorities: "Ibn Daud is offering support to his coreligionists in their difficult circumstances ... Ibn Daud gives it as his opinion that the commandments remain in force even during times of exile."⁶⁸ While he does not mention a messiah, Ibn Daud does describe foreign nations that will be brought to observe some of the commandments of Torah. It arguably follows that it is for Jewish scholars and courtiers in the Diaspora (like Ibn Daud) to bring this about, i.e. to bring powerful nations "back" to believing in the commandments of Torah.

Such a role for Jewish scholars is articulated in one of the inspirations for Ibn Daud's work, namely Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*. While the Jews of the diaspora do not

have an independent kingdom, Halevi offered an adapted model, according to which, if the ideal state ruled by the prophet-lawgiver (who had achieved prophecy by developing a perfect intellect) is not possible, "the next best thing is for the rulers to become philosophers through being widely educated."⁶⁹ In the *Kuzari*, the Jewish scholar is an ideal advisor to the king, one who can help shape him into the ideal ruler, he "transforms the ruler not only into a more perfect man, but necessarily, into a better king, too."⁷⁰ This echoes what Ibn Daud says of the king who must necessarily receive knowledge of God.

Reconciling the Aristotelian model and rabbinic tradition, Ibn Daud conflates the perfect intellect of the prophet with angels and asserts the philosopher *cum* prophet's role in community leadership. For his community in Iberia, Ibn Daud presents in the *Book of Tradition* and the *Exalted Faith* a version of Jewish and world history and of philosophical thought that provides a privileged place for Iberian Jews. Just as the leading sages had made Muslim Spain and subsequently Christian Spain and France the centers of Jewish learning, the Arab Aristotelianism (which was Platonic in its political theology) articulated in the *Exalted Faith* points to the privileged status of learned Jews (of Ibn Daud's social class). His work provides a textual polity, based on the authority of Torah, Aristotle, and the other philosophers and rabbinic sages he cites. Arguably this mission and the textual polity imagined and shaped by Ibn Daud (out of his Arab Andalus milieu, the Greek philosophical tradition it had inherited and adapted, as well as the rabbinic tradition of the East and most recently the West) was realized by Maimonides in the *Guide of the Perplexed*. Ibn Daud's works (like those of Halevi and Maimonides) define and establish as communal leaders, sages shaped by medieval al-Andalus, who sought to establish their position as communal leaders in the Diaspora (in Christian Toledo or Mamluk Egypt). Their power is, in Safran's terms, "legitimated retrospectively, and immortalized prospectively, through the reconstruction of the past."⁷¹ This past as developed in Ibn Daud's work is both secular and sacred, i.e. the "secular," chronological narrative of the diaspora from the East to the Christian West (in the *Book of Tradition* and *Divrei Malakh Isreal*), as well as the "sacred" narrative of the *Exalted Faith* that traces Jewish traditions from a time of unmediated prophecy given to Moses to a time when Jewish scholars in the diaspora could use the tools of Greco-Arab philosophy to achieve mediated communication and could serve both their own communities, as well as those of the foreign nations in which they lived, without sacrificing their own Jewishness.

⁶⁶ Book II, Basic principle 5.2, fol. 176a.7-13, p. 207.

⁶⁷ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, pp. 156-157.

⁶⁸ FONTAINE, *In Defence of Judaism*, p. 157.

⁶⁹ MELAMED, *The Philosopher-King*, p. 24.

⁷⁰ MELAMED, *The Philosopher-King*, p. 25.

⁷¹ SAFRAN, "Cultural Memories," p. 360.

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