

## Crítica de Ibn Daud a la definición de materia prima de Ibn Gabirol y puntos de vista de Dominicus Gundissalinus

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**Resumen.** Abraham Ibn Daud critica duramente a Ibn Gabirol en su *Fe Exaltada*. En este artículo, tengo la intención de demostrar que el objeto genuino de esta crítica es Dominicus Gundissalinus, coautor, junto a Ibn Daud de la traducción de la *Shifā'* de Avicena del árabe al latín. Además de su trabajo como traductores, Gundissalinus e Ibn Daud también escribieron obras propias. En este artículo, discuto la definición de materia prima utilizada por Avicena e Ibn Gabirol, adoptada por Ibn Daud y Gundissalinus. Aporto pruebas textuales para demostrar que en la mayoría de los casos en que Ibn Daud critica a Ibn Gabirol, en realidad se está refiriendo a los casos en que Gundissalinus abandona los puntos de vista de Avicena y en su lugar adopta los puntos de vista de Ibn Gabirol.

**Palabras clave:** Ibn Daud, Gundissalinus, Ibn Gabirol, Avicena, materia prima.

### [en] Ibn Daud's Critique of Ibn Gabirol's definition of Prime Matter & Dominicus Gundissalinus' Views

**Abstract.** Abraham Ibn Daud harshly criticizes the philosopher and the great poet Ibn Gabirol in his *Exalted Faith*. In this paper, I intend to prove that the genuine object of this critique is Dominicus Gundissalinus, Ibn Daud's partner in translating Avicenna's *Shifā'* from Arabic into Latin. In addition to their work as translators, Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud also wrote books of their own. In this paper, I discuss the definition of prime matter used by Avicenna and Ibn Gabirol and embraced by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus. I bring textual proofs to show that in most of cases where Ibn Daud criticizes Ibn Gabirol, he is actually referring to the instances in which Gundissalinus abandons Avicenna's views and instead adopts Ibn Gabirol's standpoints.

**Keywords:** Ibn Daud, Gundissalinus, Ibn Gabirol, Avicenna, prime matter.

**Summary:** 1. Background. 2. The definition of prime matter. 2.1. Gabirol's definition of prime matter. 2.2. Gundissalinus' espousal of Gabirol's definition of prime matter. 2.3. Prime matter and privation. 2.4. Prime matter and the example of the egg. 3. The Analogy Between the Creation of the World and the Coming into Existence of the Human Soul. 3.1. Creation ex nihilo and no time. 4. Conclusions. 5. Bibliography.

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### 1. Background

In this paper, I intend to show that Ibn Gabirol's definition of prime matter is what made him subject to harsh criticism by Ibn Daud.

From a more general perspective, I argue that Ibn Daud's book; *The Exalted Faith* should be regarded as a systematic response to Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*. Its real target in solving the problem of free will - as Ibn Daud states in the introduction to the book - is to present Avicenna's "nec-

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essary being” as the only reasonable philosophical alternative to Gabirol’s “divine will” (“*voluntas*”, “*al-irāda*”).<sup>2</sup>

In particular, I wish to suggest that when Ibn Daud criticizes Gabirol, he is actually aiming at Dominicus Gundissalinus (1110-1190), his partner in translating Avicenna’s *Shifā’* from Arabic into Latin. I will prove my argument by analyzing Gundissalinus’ definition of prime matter. I believe that Gundissalinus adopted Gabirol’s stances in order to present a friendlier version of the re-written philosophical account of the traditional belief in creation *ex nihilo*. My assumption joins a list of respected scholars in support of d’Alverny’s thesis, that Gundissalinus’ collaborator in translating Arabic works of philosophy into Latin is actually Abraham Ibn Daud, known as “Avendauth Israelita philosophicus”.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, an energetic burst of research has enlarged upon D’Alverny’s findings, confirming that Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud were notable members of a school of translators, active in Toledo during the 12th century.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the introduction to *The Exalted Faith*, Ibn Daud states that the problem of free will is the final goal of his book: “You, may God exalt you, may have asked me years ago about [your] inquiry into necessity and choice...” (English translation by N. Samuelson, *The Exalted Faith*, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press/London: Associated University Press, 1986, abstract, 2b, p. 39. Cf. my, *Ibn Daud, Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah and Ha-Emunah ha-Nissāah*, critical edition with introduction and notes, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute 2019, introduction, #2, p. 98. Resianne Fontaine rightly comments that the *Exalted Faith* does not discuss the problem of free will directly. See T. A. M. Fontaine, *Abraham Ibn Daud in Defence of Judaism: Sources and Structures of Ha-Emunah Ha-Ramah*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990, pp. 269-274; 265-266; 251-252; 239 -240. Ibn Daud’s reflection on Ibn Gabirol’s notion of will is, in a way, a further proof that Gabirol’s concept of will is not necessarily related to the conflict of emanation vs. creation, as presented by Sarah Pessin’s analysis of the attitude of scholars, such as Altmann and Wolfson (with regard to Jewish thinkers) and Gilson (with regard to Christian thinkers). It also proves that Gabirol’s notion of will, associated with Plotinus’ concept of will, is not to be linked to the traditional religious concept of free choice, as opposed to Avicenna and Ibn Daud’s approach to will. If, indeed, Augustine influenced Gundissalinus’ perception of will, then there is no doubt that Ibn Daud was able to see the difference between the Latin renditions of will as “*voluntas*”, from its meaning in the Arabic original “*al-irada*”. Nevertheless, this is not the scope of his criticism. See S. Pessin, “On the Possibility of a Hidden Christian Will: Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Medieval Jewish Philosophy”, in J. A. Diamond and A. W. Hughes (eds.), *Encountering the Medieval in Modern Jewish Thought*, part 4, ch. 2, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012, pp. 41–69.

<sup>3</sup> M.T. d’Alverny, “Avendauth?”, *Homenaje a Millds-Vallicrosa*, Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1954-1956, vol.1, pp. 19-43.

<sup>4</sup> See G. Freudenthal, “Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Dominicus Gundissalinus and Practical Mathematics in Mid - Twelfth Century Toledo”, *Aleph*, 16.1 (2016), pp. 61-106; T.A.M. Fontaine, *In Defence of Judaism*, op. cit., n.1, pp. 262–263. Charles Burnett described Gundissalinus and Avendauth as “honorable members of a circle of translators”; see idem, “The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century,” *Science in Context*, 14 (2001), pp. 249-288, esp. p. 264. Also see idem, “Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: Theory, Practice and Criticism”, in S. G. Lofts and P. W. Rosemann (eds.), *Editer, traduire, interpreter: Essais de methodologie philosophique*, Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 1997, pp. 55-78, esp. p. 65. Following Burnett, Amos Bertolacci pointed to Avendauth as the moving spirit behind that “team of translators”, see idem, “A Community of Translators: The Latin Medieval Versions of Avicenna’s *Book of the Cure*,” in C.J. Mews and J.N. Crossley (eds.), *Communities of Learning. Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100-1500*, Turn-

Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud were responsible for translating faith-oriented exegeses to canonical philosophical texts. In their fruitful teamwork, Ibn Daud rendered the Arabic written texts into colloquial language, while Gundissalinus wrote it in Latin. It is important to note that most scholars believe that Ibn Daud did not know Latin, and that Gundissalinus did not read Arabic. Therefore, the theory I raise here - concerning possible mutual interrelation between their individual writings - pertains to their daily talks, which preceded the act of writing. I believe that their individual writings should be considered by-products of their work as translators.<sup>5</sup> The works attributed to their collaboration undoubtedly include the discussion devoted to the soul in Avicenna’s *Shifā’*, which will be in the center of my discussion. In addition to *De anima*, Gundissalinus’ name has been connected with the translation of Gabirol’s *Fontes Vitae* (c.1150) and the translation of *The Doctrines of the Philosophers* (the third quarter of the 12th century).

Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud also wrote books of their own. Ibn Daud is the author of *The Exalted Faith* and *The Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-Qabbalah)*<sup>6</sup> including the appended chronicle *Generations of the Ages (Dorot ‘Olam)*.<sup>7</sup> Both books were written in parallel in Toledo, at about 1160. The *Exalted Faith* was written in Arabic and was never translated into Latin. Yet it was translated into Hebrew at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century twice. The first translation, entitled *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* was made by Solomon Ibn Lavi (c. 1370?) The second translation, entitled *Ha-Emunah ha-Nissa’ah*, is an inaccurate single version of the first, and was made by Samuel Ibn Maṭūṭ (c. 1391).<sup>8</sup>

hout: Brepols, 2011, pp. 37-54, esp. pp. 39-43. Alexander Fidora compared Ibn Daud’s and Gundissalinus’ converging philosophical agendas, see idem, “Religious Diversity and the Philosophical Translations of Twelfth-Century Toledo,” *ibid.*, pp. 19-36.

<sup>5</sup> See Charles Burnett’s review of the English translation of *De professione mundi*: “Even more significant is the fact that he [i.e. Gundissalinus] was apparently indebted to a work that he did not translate: the *Exalted Faith* of Abraham ibn Daud. This work, written in Toledo in Arabic 1160 or 1168, was never translated into Latin. Evidently Gundissalinus knew of its contents through direct contact with Ibn Daud (which would lend weight to the identification of Ibn Daud with the Jew ‘Avendauth’ who collaborated with Gundissalinus in translating the part Avicenna’s *Shifā’* concerning the soul), or Gundissalinus used Arabic texts alongside Latin translations. Both hypotheses are eminently possible” (C. Burnett, “Review of dominicus gundissalinus, John A. Laumakis [translated], *The Procession of the World (de Processione Mundi)*”, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2003 (10). Also see D. N. Hasse, *Avicenna’s De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160–1300*, London/Turin: The Warburg Institute, 2000, pp. 7-18.

<sup>6</sup> G. D. Cohen (ed.) *Sefer ha-qabbalah by Abraham Ibn Daud: A critical edition with a translation and notes of the Book of tradition*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967. Cf. E. Krakowski, “On the Literary Character of Abraham Ibn Da’ud’s *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*”, *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1 (2007), pp. 219–247.

<sup>7</sup> K. Vehlow, (ed.) *Abraham Ibn Daud’s Dorot ‘Olam (Generations of the Ages): A Critical Edition and Translation of Zikhron Divrey Romi, Divrey Malkhey Isra’el, and the Midrash on Zechariah*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> If indeed the date mentioned in the colophon refers to that of the translation. See C. H. Manekin, Y. T. Langermann, and H. H. Biesterfeldt (eds.), *Moritz Steinschneider: The Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, p. 71. Yet, it is also possible that it refers to the date the scribe completed copying the manuscript. See Y.

Gundissalinus' most famous works are *On the Unity of God*,<sup>9</sup> *The Procession of the World*, *The Divisions of Philosophy*,<sup>10</sup> and the *Tractate on the Soul (Tractatus de anima)*, which was composed during the second half of the 12th century, and apparently was translated into Hebrew towards its end.<sup>11</sup>

As gifted translators, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus transformed complicated canonical ideas into accessible, abridged and readable philosophical texts, and as independent philosophers, they dealt with the intellectual nature of God and the universe, the conflict between faith and reason,<sup>12</sup> and the essence of the soul. In their own books, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus used materials from their common work as translators for their independent works. They both devoted their writings to transform complicated theological issues into accessible texts, borrowed philosophical arguments to support faith, created an abridged and restructured summary of Avicenna,<sup>13</sup> showed interest in Ibn Gabirol's teachings. However, Gundissalinus embraced Gabirol's theories, while Ibn Daud rejected them. Gundissalinus' indebtedness to Ibn Gabirol is without doubt. John Laumakis, the English translator of the *Procession of the World*, has detected in this work 57 quotes from Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*.<sup>14</sup>

Assudri, "Abraham ibn Daud and his Philosophical Book 'The Sublime Faith' – Conjectures" (Hebrew), in S. Wygoda, A. Ackerman, E. Eisenmann, and A. Ravitsky (eds.) *Adam le-Adam*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 2016, p. 73, note 20. Both alternatives are eminently reasonable.

<sup>9</sup> P. Correns (ed.) "Die dem Boethius fälschlich zugeschrieben Abhandlung des Dominicus Gundisalvi *De unitate*," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 1/1 (1891), pp. 1–56. Cf. Y. Schwartz, (ed.), "Dominicus Gundissalinus (Wrongly Attributed to Boethius) Maamar ha-ehad ve-ha-aḥdut (De unitate et uno), The Medieval Hebrew Translations of Dominicus Gundissalinus," in A. Fidora, H. Hames, and Y. Schwartz (eds.), *Latin-Into-Hebrew: Texts and Studies*, vol. 2: *Texts in Contexts*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 281–287.

<sup>10</sup> L. Baur, "Dominicus Gundissalinus *De divisione philosophiae*," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 14 nos. 2–3 (1903), pp. 1–142.

<sup>11</sup> J.T. Muckle, "The Treatise *De anima* of Dominicus Gundissalinus," *Mediaeval Studies*, 2 (1940), pp. 23–103; cf. Y. Schwartz (ed.), *Dominicus Gundissalinus: Sefer ha-nefeš (Tractatus de anima)*, in *Latin into Hebrew*, op. cit., p. 225–279.

<sup>12</sup> A. Fidora, "Abraham Ibn Daud und Dominicus Gundissalinus: Philosophie und religiöse Toleranz im Toledo des 12 Jahrhunderts," in M. Lutz-Bachmann and A. Fidora (eds.), *Juden, Christen und Muslime. Religionsdialoge im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004, pp. 10–26.

<sup>13</sup> R. Fontaine, and S. Harvey, "Jewish Philosophy on the Eve of the Age of Averroism: Ibn Daud's Necessary Existent and His Use of Avicennian Science", in P. Adamson (ed.), *In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century*, London: The Warburg Institute, 2011, pp. 215–227; R. Fontaine "Avicennian Sources in Abraham Ibn Daud's Natural Philosophy?," in D. N. Hasse and A. Bertolacci (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Physics and Cosmology, (Scientia Graeco-Arabica, 23)*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 241–267; cf. N. Polloni, "Gundissalinus on Necessary Being: Textual and Doctrinal Alterations in the Exposition of Avicenna's Metaphysics", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 26 (March 2016), pp. 129–160, esp. pp. 136–141. Also see, my, "Avicenna's Influence on Abraham Ibn Daud's Proof of the Immortality of the Soul", *Daat*, 31 (1993) pp. 5–25 (Hebrew); idem, "Abraham Ibn Daud's Concept of Evil and its Reflection upon Free Choice", *Tura* 1 (1989), pp. 261–269 (Hebrew).

<sup>14</sup> John A. Laumakis, (trans.), *Gundissalinus Dominicus, The Procession of the World (De processione mundi)*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002, p. 28. Nicola Polloni pointed to Ibn Daud's influence on Gundissalinus through analyzing the latter's adaptation

In what follows, I hope to prove that Ibn Daud's condemnations of Ibn Gabirol are actually aimed at instances where Gundissalinus abandons the Avicennian beliefs that Ibn Daud struggled to spread, and instead adopts Gabirol's arguments, all of which he came to know through his translation of *Fons vitae*. From the very first page of his book, Ibn Daud criticizes Ibn Gabirol in an extremely fanatic and offensive way. He presents him as an overly elaborate philosopher who uses far too many arguments to prove his erroneous views. David Kaufmann has already noted that this criticism is inaccurate and disproportionate, considering the fact that it is addressing a person who died over hundred years earlier.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. The Definition of Prime Matter

### 2.1. Gabirol's definition of prime matter

A central part of Ibn Daud's criticism of Gabirol is devoted to his perception of prime matter. Ibn Daud mentions no less than six critical mistakes: (a) Prime matter does not actually exist; (b) it does not persist by itself; (c) it is neither one nor many; (d) it is not a subject of changes; (e) it does not give to anything its definition and its name; (f) it has no properties.<sup>16</sup>

Fortunately, the original Arabic of Gabirol's definition of prime matter was preserved in Moses Ibn Ezra's *Garden of the Metaphor (Maqālat al-ḥadiqa)* and in Falaqira's *Compendium* in Hebrew. It enables us to understand how accurate Ibn Daud's description is and how close his acquaintance with Gabirol's phrasing:

of the opposing theories of Ibn Gabirol and Avicenna, see idem, "Toledan Ontologies: Gundissalinus, Ibn Daud, and the Problems of Gabirolian Hylomorphism", in A. Fidora and N. Polloni (eds.) *Appropriation, Interpretation and Criticism: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges Between the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Intellectual Traditions*, Barcelona and Rome: FIDEM, 2017, pp. 19–49, esp. p. 27–31; cf. idem, "Thierry of Chartres and Gundissalinus on Spiritual Substances: The Problem of Hylomorphic Composition", *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 57 (2015), pp. 35–57, esp. pp. 54–55.

<sup>15</sup> D. Kaufmann, "Abraham Ibn Daud's Kritik der 'Lebensquelle'", *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, Budapest 1899 (Jahresbericht der Landes-Rabbinerschule in Budapest 22 1898/1899), pp. 79–108, esp. p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> "Thus, [Ibn Gabirol] committed six errors at the beginning of his discourse. [He erred] because prime matter does not exist, since existence is said [only] of what actually exists. Aristotle said in [his] explanation [of this claim] that what does not exist is said [only] of three things: [namely], of absolute privation, of the privation of the opposite of a certain form, and of matter. Furthermore, [Ibn Gabirol erred] because [prime matter] does not persist by itself. Furthermore, [he erred] because [prime matter] is neither one nor many since what does not have existence has neither number nor unity. Furthermore, [he erred] because [prime matter] is not a subject of changes, since changes are accidents and matter is not a subject of accidents because accidents extend [only] to existence of what has complete existence. However, [prime matter] is a subject of what changes, that is, of bodies that change. Furthermore, [Ibn Gabirol erred] because [prime matter] does not give to [any]thing its definition and its name. However, the form does do this. Furthermore, [he erred] because [prime matter] need not have properties, since properties are accidents that necessarily are joined to an actual existent. All of his discourse in *The Source of Life* is of this kind" (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson's translation, op. cit., p. 62). Cf. Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., 27b, part 1, ch. 2, #10, p. 162.

וקיל: רסם אלענצור<sup>17</sup> אלאול אלמאכ'וד' מן כ'אצתה אנה ג'והר קאים  
בד'אתה האמל ללאכ'תלאף ואחד באלעדד, וקד ירסם אנה ג'והר קאבל  
לג'מיע אלצור.

(Moses Ibn 'Ezra, *Garden of the Metaphor [Maqālat al-hadīqa]*, The National Library of Israel Jerusalem, Ms. Heb. 80 5701 (75.124); Sassoon David Solomon, London Ms. 412, p. 72).<sup>18</sup>

Moses' Ibn Ezra's relatively vast quotation emphasizes the importance of prime matter to account for changes in the natural world. It reflects faithfully Gabirol's definition in *Fountain of Life*:

If there is only one universal matter for everything, the following properties belong to it: self-existence, singleness of nature, sustenance of diversity and bestowal on all things of its own nature and identity" (Gabirol, *Fountain of Life*, I, 10, Levin's translation, p. 14).<sup>19</sup>

A closer look at Gabirol's second definition makes it possible to realize that it is methodically opposed to that of Ibn Daud. He writes:

A description of primary matter, then, based on its own distinctive characteristic, is that it is a self-existing substance that supports diversity and is one in number. Secondly, it is described as a substance that accepts all forms (Ibid., V, 22, Levin's translation, p. 267).<sup>20</sup>

While Gabirol attributes to prime matter "self-existence", Ibn Daud contends that prime matter "does not persist by itself" (Eran, Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah, p. 162). While Gabirol attributes to prime matter singleness of

nature, Ibn Daud insists that "prime matter "is neither one nor many" since it has "neither number nor unity" (ibid.) by nature. While Gabirol attributes to prime matter "sustenance of diversity", Ibn Daud assures that prime matter "is not a subject of changes" (ibid.). Finally, while Gabirol claims that prime matter "bestows on all things of its own nature and identity", Ibn Daud maintains that prime matter "does not give to anything its definition and its name", since "form does do this".<sup>21</sup> As I have mentioned previously, the actual object of this critique is Gundissalinus.

## 2.2. Gundissalinus' espousal of Gabirol's definition of prime matter

Gundissalinus embraces Gabirol's definition of prime matter word for word, although he ascribes it to the *philosophers'* textbook:

And when nonetheless philosophers describe first matter and form they say: First matter is a substance existing through itself, the sustainer of diversity and one in number. Moreover, first matter is a substance receptive to all forms. (Gundissalinus, *The Procession of the World*, Laumakis' translation, 2002, p. 57).<sup>22</sup>

The controversy about the definition of prime matter highlights the main question: If it is supposed to be capable of taking on any form whatsoever, does it have any essential properties of its own? The idea that it has no essential properties of its own makes it easy to see it as a pure potentiality and consequently as non-being. Thus, when Ibn Daud insists that prime matter "does not give to [any] thing its definition and its name", he wishes to make the reader believe that prime matter is an empty substratum, whose entity is in effect "nihilo".<sup>23</sup>

## 2.3. Prime matter and privation

The next move in minimizing the existence of prime matter is to equate it with privation. Here too, the affinity between Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud is very clear. Yet, while Ibn Daud is following Avicenna, Gundissalinus follows Ibn Gabirol.

By leaning on Gabirol, Gundissalinus forms an analogy between privation and non-being, in the cases where he discusses creation. His philosophical interest is to show that in the moment of creation, at the union of form and matter, there was no real involvement of sensory matter.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. "ואם היה לדברים כולם יסוד כללי יתחייב [לן] מהסגולות שיהיה נמצא עומד" (Falaquera's *Liqqutim mi-Sefer Meqor Hayyim* I, 6, in *Rabbi Shlomo ben Gabirol, Sefer Meqor Hayyim*, translated [into Hebrew from Latin] by Yaakov Blovstein, Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kuk, 1926, p. 226).

Falaquera's *Liqqutim*, reflects faithfully Ibn Gabirol's use of the Arabic term 'unsur ("element") translated to Hebrew as "yesōd" ("foundation"), unlike the usual Arabic philosophical terms for matter (Hebrew "hōmer"), "al-hayūla" or "al-mādda." In this context, "al-'unsur al-awwal" stands for prime matter.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. R. Gatti (ed. and trans.) *Shelomh ibn Gabirol, Fons Vitae Meqor hayyim, Edizione critica e traduzione dell'Epitome ebraica dell'opera*, Genova: Il Melangolo, 2001, p. 252; cf., S. Pines, "Sefer 'Arūgat ha-Bōsem: ha-Qeta'im mi-tōkh Sefer 'Meqōr Hayyim'", *Bēyn Mahshevet Yisrōel le-Mahshevet ha-'Amim: Mehkarim be-Tōldot ha-Filōsōfiya ha-Yehūdit*, Jerusalem: Bialik, 1977, p. 53; Also see B. P. Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse dans Le jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn 'Ezra, philosophe et poète andalou du XIIIe siècle, appendix*, pp. 393-403, Leiden: Brill 1997; A. Harkavi, "Aus dem Original von Moshe Ibn Ezra's 'Arūgat ha -Bōsem,'" *MGWJ* XLIII (1899), pp. 134-136.

<sup>19</sup> Gabirol, *Fountain of Life*, originally translated by A. B. Jacob and Revised by L. Levin, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2005. Cf. "Si una est materia universalis omnium rerum, hae proprietates adhaerent ei: scilicet quod sit per se existens, unius essentiae, sustinens diversitatem, dans omnibus essentiam suam et nomen..." (C. Baeumker, [ed.], "Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae ex Arabico in Latinum Translatus ab Johanne Hispano et Dominico Gundissalino," in C. Baeumker and G. Hertling (eds.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen*, Aschendorff, Münster 1891/95, I, 10, p.13).

<sup>20</sup> "Ergo descriptio materiae primae, quae sumpta est ex eius proprietate, haec est, scilicet quod est substantia existens per se, sustentatrix diversitatis, una numero; et iterum describitur sic, quod est substantia receptibilis omnium formarum" (Ibid., V, 22, p. 298).

<sup>21</sup> *The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson's translation, op. cit., 27b, p. 62-63.

<sup>22</sup> "Et tamen philosophi, cum describunt primam materiam et formam, dicunt: Materia est prima *substantia per se existens*, sustentatrix diversitatis, *una numero*. Item: *materia prima est substantia receptibilis omnium formarum*" (Bülow, "Des Dominicus Gundissalinus Schrift Von dem Hervorgange der Welt (De processione mundi)", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* 24/3 [1925], p. 30).

<sup>23</sup> Kaufmann believes that Ibn Daud fails to understand that it is actually the form which is responsible to the essence and substance of all existent things"; idem, *Studien*, op. cit., n. 14, p. 100. For a very interesting interpretation, see Polloni, "Toledan ontologies", op. cit., pp. 41-45.

Certainly, their being united to each other was their *being created from nothing*. For because things have being by creation only from their opposite, it is necessary that being comes from its privation, that is from non-being. And consequently matter comes from non-matter and form from non-form” (Gundissalinus, *Procession*, Laumakis’ translation, p. 61).<sup>24</sup>

Gundissalinus’ conclusion that “being comes from its privation” can be seen as an inevitable extrapolation of Gabirol’s poetic phrasing of the active contribution of form to the necessity of matter to life.

... Because matter gained existence through form, since existence is by virtue of form; and consequently matter is moved to accept form so that it can as it were pass from the haplessness [delore] of nonbeing [privationis] to the felicity of being (Gabirol, *Fountain of Life*, V, 29, Levin’s translation, p. 278).<sup>25</sup>

My guess is that Gundissalinus could find Gabirol’s definition especially appealing because it stresses the fragile existence of form. Presenting form as what “cannot exist by itself because it exists in actuality only in matter” allows Gundissalinus to discuss freely the non-being of form as parallel to the total non-existence that precedes the creation of the world.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it enables him to use, on the one hand, philosophical terminology, and to adhere the dogma of “creation *ex nihilo*”, on the other hand. Ibn Daud holds the same opinion. He also regards privation as a first principle of beginning. Yet, he borrowed this concept from Avicenna:

Matter and form are two of the principles that enter into any body’s being a substance. In addition, there is a third principle for anything that is existent after being a privation, and for anything that is perfect after being defective. It is the privation of the opposite of form. (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson’s translation, part 1, ch. 2, 28b, p. 63).<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Daud counts matter, form and privation among the three principles of every being. He is leaning on Avicenna’s interpretation to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:<sup>28</sup>

The principles corresponding to the natural existing things are three: form, matter and privation [...] Privation does

not have the status of an absolute existent, nor it has the status of an absolute absent; rather, it is a removal of the potentiality of a definite being. (Avicenna, *Kitāb al-Najāt*, p.101, my translation)<sup>29</sup>

Following Aristotle, Avicenna explains that any change requires three elements: form, matter and privation. He clarifies that these three factors must be present in every instance of something’s coming to be after not having been. Form is the result of the change, matter is the substratum in which that form comes to be, and privation is the absence of that matter’s initial form. Unlike form and matter that physically undergo the change, privation is ever prior to the change and passes away within the change.<sup>30</sup>

Avicenna’s explanation that some privation must be present in order that something else may exist makes privation a necessary silent partner in the process of changing, in a way that resembles the working of prime matter. Furthermore, Avicenna’s matter is associated with privation (‘adam) by definition. According to Avicenna, matter has no positive properties that define its own nature. It can achieve existence as an actual entity only through its union with form.

The common denominator between Ibn Daud and the Gabirolian point of view endorsed by Gundissalinus is the way they all grasp privation as the potential state of pre-existence, which is the starting point of the process of moving forward into an evident being.

#### 2.4. Prime matter and the example of the egg

Both Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus give example of an egg to illustrate the relation between prime matter and coming into being via creation. They both strive to minimize the involvement of matter in its sensible sense in order to preserve the traditional belief in creation *ex nihilo*:

Next, composite things are generated. Some of them as well may be thought to be matter and form for others of them. For example an egg is matter for a bird ... we see that the bird comes into being from an egg, but according to the intellect they have a common matter, since when a form of the egg is removed, then the egg comes into existence [but] it is not possible that the removal of the privation is what receives the form of what is generated ... also the privation of the egg is not the cause of the generation of the bird...” (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson’s translation, ch. 2, 25b, p. 62).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> “Sed materia et forma non habent esse nisi per coniunctionem suam inter se, profecto sibi coniungi fuit eas de nihilo creari. Quia enim res non habent esse per creationem, nisi ex suo opposito, oportet ut esse sit ex privatione, id est ex non-esse. Ac per hoc materia est ex non-materia et forma ex non-forma. Privatio autem nihil est, quapropter materia ex forma de nihilo creata esse dicuntur” (Bülow, *Des Gundissalinus*, op. cit., pp. 34, line 24 – 35, line 5)

<sup>25</sup> “Quia materia non habuit esse nisi per formam, quia esse ex forma est; et ideo materia mota est ad recipiendum formam, scilicet ut exeat a dolore privationis ad delectationem essendi” (Beamaker, *Fons Vitae*, op. cit., p. 310)

<sup>26</sup> Although it is not quite clear whether the non-being of form is equal to the non-being of matter, it is obvious that even form and matter did not exist before creation has happened, and this is the main point.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., part 1, ch. 2#15, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> “The causes and the principles, then, are three, two being the pair of contraries of which one is definition and form and the other is privation, and the third being the matter” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Translated by W. D. Ross, Book XII, part 2 [b1069]).

<sup>29</sup> “فإذا المبادئ المقارنة للطبيعيات الكائنة ثلاث: صورة ومادة وعدم [...] وأما العدم فليس هو بذات موجود على الإطلاق ولا معدومة على الإطلاق بل هو ارتفاع الذات الموجودة بالقوة:” (ابن سينا، كتاب النجاة في الحكمة المنطقية والطبيعية والالهية، فصل في المبادئ التي يتقلدها الطبيعي، القاهرة: مطبعة السعادة، ١٣٩١، ص. 101)

<sup>30</sup> “وكون العدم مبدأ هو لأنه لا بد منه للكائن من حيث هو كائن وله عن الكائن بد وهو مبدأ بالعرض لأن بارتفاعه يكون الكائن لا بوجوده وقسط الصورة في الوجود أوفر من قسط المادة لأنها علتها المعطية لها الوجود ويلبها الهويلى ووجودها بالصورة - وأما العدم فليس هو بذات موجود على الإطلاق ولا معدومة على الإطلاق بل هو ارتفاع الذات الموجودة بالقوة” (Ibid.)

<sup>31</sup> Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., part 1, ch. 2, #6, pp. 157 - 158. Cf. “Rather, the bird comes into being only from the egg and the privation of the egg. Consequently, the privation directs the existence, that is, the existence of that thing which exists from something else whose existence is the privation of something else. Thus, wisdom comes into being from the privation of ignorance and righteousness comes into being from the privation of iniquity (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson’s

Ibn Daud, who is loyal to Avicenna, uses “privation” as referring to the absence of positive properties and as an innate inclination to become a specific and actual being. He repeats Avicenna’s terminology when he clarifies that privation always refers to a particular possible entity or form.<sup>32</sup> Gundissalinus, on the other hand, maintains that egg, is an animal only in potentiality.

First matter therefore was not some form. For its own form makes any substance be. But it was not any substance, because every form was in potentially, and it itself was receptive in potency to all forms. Hence, by others, it is even called substance in the way, which an egg is said to be an animal. For an egg is not an animal in actuality, but only in potency or suitability that an animal may be produced from it by generation. Hence, we cannot simply deny that an egg is an animal or simply affirm that it is, since it is an animal in potency and this mode of being is between being and non-being (Gundissalinus, *Procession*, Laumakis’ translation, pp. 59-60).<sup>33</sup>

Gundissalinus believes that privation has no positive properties because it refers to an absolute absence with no attachment to real being. The reason for this approach lies again in his concept of prime matter. He explains that the mere preparedness of matter to receive some form means its non-existence. He supposes that its definition as receiver of all forms and the giver of their identity and names means that before joining form, prime matter does not exist, and in this sense, the privation of the positive properties is total. For Gundissalinus an egg is not an animal in potential, but only a suitable and probable environment for an animal to come into being. He admits that in this state it is impossible to “simply deny that an egg is an animal or simply affirm that it is, since it is an animal *in potentia*, and this mode of being is between being and non-being”.<sup>34</sup> The purport of the controversy between Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud seems to derive from Gabirol’s supposition that all natural beings must contain matter in their specification. Potentiality too is associated with some kind of material state.

translation, op. cit., 29b, p. 63). Cf. Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., pp. 166-168.

<sup>32</sup> For another interpretation, see *The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson’s translation, op. cit., note 33, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> “Materia ergo prima non fuit aliqua substantia quia in se et ex se nulam habuit formam.

Esse enim aliqua substantiam propria forma facit. Sed nec ulla substantia fuit quia in ea potentialiter omnis forma fuit, et potentia omnium formarum ipsa receptibilis fuit. Unde, vel ab aliis substantia dicitur eo modo quo dicitur ovum esse animal. Ovum enim actu non est animal, sed tantum potentia, hoc est: in substantia oui est materia, siue potestas, siue aptitudo, ut ex eo per generationem fiat animal. Unde ovum nec omnino potest negari esse animal, nec omnino affirmari, quoniam potentia est animal, qui modus essendi medius est inter esse et non-esse” (Bülow, *Des Gundissalinus*, op. cit., p. 32).

<sup>34</sup> For a similar approach, see: “Postquam autem ea, in quibus videmus esse animam, sunt corpora, et non perficitur esse eorum secundum quod sunt animalia nisi per existentiam animae in illis tunc anima pars est constitutionis illorum” (Muckle, *Tractatus*, op. cit., p. 41). “אם כן, אחרי אשר הדברים אשר אנחנו רואין בהם הנפש הם גוף, ולא נתקיים הווייתם לפי מה שהם בעלי חיים כי אם בהיות הנפש בהם, אם כן הנפש היא חלק עמידתם ועצמם” (*Sefer hanefesh*, ch. 2, #33, p. 238). An animal is an entity which has a form: “... sed quia omne esse ex forma est ipsa utique est quasi forma, non quae in subiecto subsistat, sed quae adveniendi copori animal perficiat” (Ibid.)

It is important to note in this context that it is impossible to characterize prime matter in any way, since it has no positive properties of its own. Its initial perception as an ultimate bearer of properties implies that there are no properties that belong to it essentially. From this point of view, it is anyhow very close to what is described as privation, all the more, as a definite privation. Gabirol and Gundissalinus argue that prime matter alone cannot explain the distinctiveness of individual substances.

**Summary:** Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud believe that creation *ex nihilo* is creation preceded by no-being. They both strive to minimize the involvement of first matter. They both perceive privation as one of the principles that are considered by the philosophers as a “beginning”. Yet, while Gundissalinus equates prime matter to privation, Ibn Daud sees privation as a potential of a certain being and not as an absolute nothingness.

### 3. The Analogy Between the Creation of the World and the Coming into Existence of the Human Soul

In the prologue to the translation of Avicenna’s *Shifā’*, Ibn Daud (Avendauth) stresses the importance of the soul for a rational belief. He emphasizes that the rational soul is the means to know metaphysics, resemble God and become eternal. In his introduction to his *Tractatus*, Gundissalinus repeats this prologue almost word for word and supplies the first well-established evidence for textual relations between the two translators. Both Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus exhibit an excellent familiarity with Avicenna’s teachings of soul. The largest part of Ibn Daud’s book is devoted to the investigation of the soul, its nature and faculties, its relation to the body and its afterlife. In chapter six of the first part of *The Exalted Faith*, Ibn Daud describes the soul as an immaterial substance responsible for the body’s movements. Although it is in charge of various functions of vegetative, physical and rational faculties, it is one and can exist separately from the body. The rational soul is, therefore, immortal. In the following chapter, Ibn Daud explains how the rational soul works, proves its eternal endurance and denies its transmigration.<sup>35</sup>

The analogy between Gundissalinus’ description of the creation of the world and his account of the creation of the soul helps to expose the genuine meaning of his philosophical terminology. In the case of the creation of the soul too, prime matter functions as an amorphous substratum that precedes the actual coming into being. The nature of prime matter to subsist with no form, and to be a place for all forms, supplies the philosophical frame needed to justify the divine origin of the soul, despite its association with matter or with the human body.

<sup>35</sup> Most of Ibn Daud’s arguments in *The Exalted Faith*, which talk about the nature of the human soul are shared with Gundissalinus’ *Tractate on the Soul* and can be easily traced back to Avicenna. (These are in sum: (a) the more elaborate the matter, the better its soul; (b) the soul is responsible for the different ways different bodies function; (c) the soul is one single entity, although it has three different levels of functionality; (d) the soul is not dependent on the body and its intellectual parts will not perish with the body’s death)

Item in anima est multiplicitas et diversitas, cui aliud est esse substantiam, aliud esse unam, aliud esse animam, aliud esse intelligentem. Unumquodque enim horum in aliis subiectis per se inveniri potest sine alio [...] Unam autem tantum materiam primam esse et non multas iam manifestum est; multas etiam formas sine materia subsistere impossibile est; restat igitur ut haec multiplicitas sit multarum formarum in una materia. (Muckle, *Tractatus*, ch. 7, p. 56).<sup>36</sup>

Gundissalinus mentions the essential properties of prime matter (“... sustaining diversity, and giving to everything its essence and name”) with regard to the properties of the newly created soul.<sup>37</sup> He also makes a clear connection between the soul’s creation ex nihilo and its coming into existence from prime matter.

Quamvis ergo humanae animae cotidie novae creari decantur, non tamen de nihilo, sed de materia prima creari videntur (Ibid., p. 58).<sup>38</sup>

I believe that Ibn Daud’s critique of the nature of prime matter is addressing specifically the sequence of arguments meant to prove that the human soul consists of both matter and form, as outlined in chapter 7 of the *Tractate on the Soul*. It seems to me that the trigger for this extremely sharp critique is the convincing logical syllogism that Gundissalinus builds in this chapter. In particular, I assume that the expression: “However, the form does do this [...] All of his discourse in *The Source of Life* is of this kind”, is pointing directly to Gundissalinus’ chain of claims, explaining that the human soul must contain matter, since it has no existence without it:

Item omne esse vel est sensibile vel intelligibile; sed omne esse ex forma est; igitur quicquid est sensibile vel intelligibile ex forma est; forma autem non habet esse nisi in materia (Muckle, *Tractatus*, ch. 7, p. 57).<sup>39</sup>

And his claim that:

Item, factura a factore penitus diversa est [...] Si quis autem dicat quod materia est una tantum per se et forma una tantum per se, non est verum. Neque enim materia

neque forma habet esse per se unum vel multa nisi cum sibi ad invicem coniunguntur. Materia enim non habet esse per se nisi per formam, nec forma habet esse nisi in materia” (Ibid., p. 57).<sup>40</sup>

The bottom line of this sequence of arguments, dedicated to the problem of creation of the soul from nothingness, is the necessity of matter for every existence. It is matter, not form, which is responsible even for the soul’s rational capabilities: “Si enim omne esse ex forma est, profecto rationalis anima non habet esse nisi per formam; sed forma non habet esse nisi in materia; forma igitur qua anima rationalis est non est nisi in materia” (Ibidem, 15-16).<sup>41</sup>

An amusing testimony to their daily talks is what seems to be an exact repetition by Ibn Daud of Gundissalinus’ illustration of the absolute status of substance, when he strives to prove that the soul is a substance by virtue of its own entity. Ibn Daud says:

Know that what is a substance in itself is a substance. It is not a substance in comparison to something else. It is not possible for us to say that a man is a man in the house but he is not a man on the platform, or that he is a man in comparison to a donkey but in comparison to an angel he

<sup>36</sup> “Furthermore, soul is multiform, sustaining diversity... since the meaning of multiformity is that numerous forms reside in single matter [substance].” (Gundissalinus, *Sefer ha-nefes*, ch. 7, #74, p. 248, my translation). Cf. “הדיוט חמר אחד ראשון ולא רבים כבר התבאר, כי אין הויה לחמר” (Ibid.).

<sup>37</sup> Absence of form is the main character of prime matter: “Similiter et materia primordialis infinita est quia ex se nullam abet formam” (Muckle, *Tractatus*, op. cit., p. 56). Cf. Gabirol’s definition of prime matter: “substantia receptibilis omnium formarum” (above, note. 19).

<sup>38</sup> “It is therefore clear that human souls are being created every day, not from nothingness (*nihilo*) but from **prime matter**” (*Sefer hanefes*, ch. 7 #85, p. 250, my translation).

Cf. “אם כן, להיות מבאר שהנפשות האנושיות הם נבראות בכל יום חדשות, לא (Ibid.) מלא-דבר, אך נראה שהן נבראות מן החמר הראשון”.

<sup>39</sup> “And also, every sensible and every intellectual [entity] exists through form, and form has no existence but through matter” (*Sefer hanefes*, ch. 7, #77, p. 249, my translation). Cf. “יועד, כל ישות היא או הרגשית או שכלית, וכל יש הוא מצורה, אם כן, כל מרגיש וכל שכלי הוא מצורה; (Ibid.) וצורה אין לה הויה כי אם מחמר” (Ibid.). See also: “...Et aptauit animae sensus, quibus apprehendat formas et figuras sensibiles, quia quando anima apprehenderit has formas et figuras intelligibiles, et in ea prodeunt de potentia ad effectum” (Baemucker, *Fons Vitae*, V, 41, op. cit., p. 332)

<sup>40</sup> “And also, every act is different from its actor [...] since form and matter are neither one nor many, as they are joined together. For, there is no existence for matter by itself, but through form, and there is no existence for form by itself except through matter” (*Sefer hanefes*, ch. 7, #78, p. 249, my translation). Cf. “כל פעולה מחולפת מן הפעל בכל [...] ואם יש אמר שחמר הוא אחד לבד בעצמו וצורה אחת לבד בעצמה אינו אמת, כי חמר וצורה אינם אחת ולא הרבה, כי אם בהתחברם יחד בעצמם, כי אין הויה לחמר” (Ibid.). Also see: “Sed materia tantum esse non potest quia res non haberent esse cum formae non essent, nec forma tantum quia forma non existit per se” (Ibid, p. 57).” But it is impossible that matter exists alone, for there is no existence for things but through form, and not by form alone, as form does not exist by itself” (*Ibidem*, #81, p. 249, my translation). Cf. “אבל אי אפשר להיות חמר לבד, כי אין הויה לדברים, כי אם בצורה, ולא בצורה לבד, כי הצורה לא תעמוד בעצמה לבד” (Ibid.).

<sup>41</sup> Avicenna and Ibn Daud take an opposite stand to Gabirol and Gundissalinus:

“ثم نقول إن الجوهر الذي هو محل المعقولات ليس بجسم ولا قائم بجسم على أنه فوق فيه أو صورة له بوجه فإنه إن كان محل المعقولات جسماً أو مقدراً من المقادير فإما أن يكون محل الصور فيه طرفاً منه لا ينقسم أو يكون إنما يحل منه شيئاً منقسماً” (فصل في تفصيل الكلام على تجرد الجوهر الذي هو محل المعقولات) (ابن سينا، كتاب النجاة، ص. 174)

Ibn daud is following Avicenna, who insists that matter has no existence by itself: “... since there is no existence for matter by itself, (”لأن المادة بنفسها لا قوام لها”) (كتاب النجاة، فصل في طريق ثالث للبرهنة على العقول المفارقة، ص. 280)

and also, that: “... matter cannot remain without form” (Ibidem) (“ولأن المادة ليست تبقى بلا صورة”)

(ابن سينا، كتاب النجاة، فصل في حال تكون الأسطقسات عن العلل الأول، ص. 282)

The nature of the intellectual faculties of the soul is obviously linked with the nature of all spiritual substances. This point is also central to Ibn Daud’s critique of Ibn Gabirol, whom he bluntly blames: “Also he [Gabirol] supposed that the substance that is the nonsensible concept has quantity. But [all of this] is some kind of madness”. (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson’s translation, op. cit., ch. 1, 13b, p. 51). Cf. Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., p. 126, #9; *ibid*, p. 127, note 16. I will not discuss this further in this paper, which focuses on Ibn Daud’s critique on prime matter. Here, too, Ibn Daud condemns Ibn Gabirol for ascribing quantity to spiritual substances. Gundissalinus’ deviation from Avicenna is very clear here, too, and has to do with the explicit material facets of the human soul and of the spiritual substances, rooted in Gabirol’s concept of overall hylomorphism, which penetrates to the structure of simple substances, as well as compound ones.

is an accident and not a man (*The Exalted Faith*, Samuelson's translation, ch. 1, 9b, p. 50).<sup>42</sup>

Ibn Daud attributes to Gabirol an exact quotation of Gundissalinus' wording in his attempt to emphasize Gabirol's failure to avoid association of matter with the spiritual being of the soul. Gundissalinus says:

quo istorum modorum anima substantia dicatur videndum est. Non enim est substantia quae sit materia quoniam tunc apta esset recipere omnem formam, itaque et formam asini, quod est impossibile (Muckle, *Tractatus*, ch. 2, p. 42).<sup>43</sup>

This is only one of the many instances in which Ibn Daud's continuous attack on Gabirol's blurred concept of the soul, stretching between substance and accident is actually directed at Gundissalinus. Ibn Daud warns that ascribing matter to soul, or even considering it as an accidental part of the human body, would hinder its intellectual realization and decrease its chances to reach eternal happiness.

**Summary:** Gundissalinus uses Gabirol's definition of prime matter to defend his ideas about creation of the world and the human soul. The clash between Gundissalinus and Ibn Daud is most evident in their discussion of the human soul, because it takes a central place in both individual works. They both use a similar way of argumentation to establish contrary beliefs.

### 3.1. Creation ex nihilo and no time

The exclusion of time is another facet of the religious-philosophical attempt to prevent a sensible substratum from serving as prime matter. Ibn Daud uses the paradigm of a spontaneous act out of nowhere to describe the working of the Active Intellect (which is the active cause in moving the human soul from potentiality to actuality and in transmitting divine true knowledge to the human mind). The emanation of form on matter happens in a sudden "stroke" and in no time (and with no perceptible intermediary).

The knowledge of the form of a ship [in the shipbuilder's mind] is the [direct] cause to bestow it upon matter, with **no sensible touch, all of a sudden and in no time**. And this is an analogy to what we want to explain with respect to the existence of corporeal existents and their being **emanated with their forms** through (the medium of) the intellectual substances, **in a sudden way and in no time** [...]. In the same way, the human soul becomes firstly potentially knowledgeable, and afterwards knowledgeable in actu. And this is due to [the working of] a substance which moves it from potentiality to actuality, and encour-

ages it to have the first intelligibles [*yedi'ot*], (Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, part 2, fourth principle, ch. 2, Samuelson's translation, op. cit., 145b-146a, pp. 164-165. #6, p. 458).<sup>44</sup>

Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, both philosophers try to bypass the miraculous nature of *creation ex nihilo* by shrinking the event of new generation to an occurrence that happens outside of time. They use the pattern of a quick, timeless flash of reaching a true conclusion instantaneously, but transfer it from the arena of the human intellect per se, to the arena of the Active Intellect:

Intellectus autem, cum apprehendit aliqua inter quae est prius et posterius, solet cum illis intelligere tempus necessario, nec in tempore sed in momento. Intellectus enim intelligit tempus in conclusione et in terminis, et hoc subito (Muckle, *Tractatus*, ch. 10, p. 90, line 40 – p. 91, line 3).<sup>45</sup>

Since the act of creation is explained as the bestowal of form on empty matter, it is natural to compare it with the way the intellect acts when a new form is imprinted on its substratum. In this case, the quick work of the intellect is ascribed to the perfect intelligence of the Creator.

The common denominator between the creation of the soul and the creation of the world is that in both cases a union of form and matter happens simultaneously in an instant, timeless, unperceivable act:

... Quoniam qui nunc creat novas animas quantum ad forma tunc etiam creavit animas quantum ad materiam, ut vere dicatur creasse omnia simul. Simul enim omnia creavit cum materia; omnium semel creavit" (Muckle, *Tractatus*, ch. 7, p. 58).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Emphasis added and translation are mine.

<sup>45</sup> "Through his intellect man studies something, meaning through the intellect he understands what comes first and what comes last - not in time, but in a sudden flash of insight. For the intellect perceives by reaching a conclusion in one flash, and this happens suddenly" (Gundissalinus, *Sefer hanefesh*, ch. 10, #184, p. 277, my translation). Cf. "בשכל הוא לומר איזה דבר, ובאותו דבר הוא פ"י השכל קודם ואחר היה משיג עמו בהכרח ולא בזמן, אלא פתאום. כי השכל משכיל עת בסתמא ובגבול זה פתאום" (ibid). In his introduction to the *Tractate*, Étienne Gilson suggests that while interpreting Avicenna, Gundissalinus is going back in his mind to the model of God's working through subtle mediation known to him from Saint Augustine. "Are we not ... witnessing the grafting of Augustinianism on the trunk of Avicenna?" (Gilson, Introduction Muckle, *Tractatus*, op. cit., p. 26). Gilson coined the expression "Augustinisme avicennisant" to describe the common denominator between both authors' concept of the "Giver of the forms", identifying God with the (separate) Active Intellect. See É. Gilson, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 4 (1929-1930), pp. 4-149, esp. p. 85, 102. Yossef Schwartz comments that according to his perception of Gundissalinus' *Tractatus de anima*, the mixture of Avicennian psychology with some significant traces of Ibn Gabirolian metaphysics and epistemology creates a form of "Ibn Gabirolian Avicennianism." See idem, "Medieval Hebrew translations of Dominican Gundissalinus" in *Latin into Hebrew*, op. cit., pp. 39-40. However, it is important to note that in his *Procession of the World*, Gundissalinus distinguishes between "necessary being" (traditionally referred as the Creator) and possible beings (the created beings), and argues that the whole cosmos proceeds from that necessary first cause.

<sup>46</sup> "Thus, the Creator of the souls through forms has created them through matter at the same moment; and this is a true argument, since

<sup>42</sup> Eran, *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, op. cit., part 1, ch. 1, #1, p. 118; ibid, ch. 3, p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> "Let's see in what respect it is said that the soul is a substance. It is not a substance in the meaning of matter, since then it would be ready to receive all kinds of forms, including the **form of donkey**, and this is impossible. [...] Soul is not a substance, in the sense of a body. Thus, it can only be one of the spiritual substances, even though it is comprised of matter and form" (Gundissalinus, *Sefer hanefesh*, ch. 2 #35, p. 239, my translation).

אש רמח היהיש מצע הנניא. מצע איהש שפנה לע רמאנ ולאמ רבד הזיאב הארני. Cf. "רשפא יא הזו רומחה תרצו מנו, הרוצ לכ לבקל הנוכנו התואנ היה נכ היה" (Ibid).



Gundissalinus follows in Gabirol's footsteps, when he compares creation to a spoken word whose form and meaning are impressed on the intellect of the listener:

Therefore, although Moses first mentions heaven and earth by name, then light—by which he means the angelic creature—nonetheless, the sequence in which they are said to have been created is not understood to have existed in their creation. For those things which came forth into being simultaneously, without time, could not be spoken of simultaneously without time. After all every syllable needs time (Gundissalinus, *Procession*, Laumakis' translation, p. 72).<sup>47</sup>

Gabirol also explains that when the Creator utters a word, its meaning is impressed on matter, just as a created form is impressed on matter:

Creation may be likened to a word that a man speaks, since as he utters the word, its form and meaning are impressed on the hearing and understanding of the listener. By this analogy it may be said that the sublime and holy Creator utters the Word, and its meaning is impressed on the true being of matter, which retains it; that is to say, the created form is impressed on matter and portrayed in it (Gabirol, *Fountain of Life*, p. 43, Levin's translation, p. 301).

Ibn Gabirol believes that the beginning of the universe, like the beginning of all created things, must be instantaneous and with no intervention of time:

Matter never existed separate from form even for a twinkling and so is not created nor does it possess existence. It is, however, created simultaneously with form inasmuch as its existence was by reason of form in that it was created along with the form sustained in it with no time gap at all (Gabirol, *Fountain of Life*, V, 42, Levin's translation, p. 300).<sup>48</sup>

Although defending a different agenda from Ibn Gabirol, Avicenna also describes the emanation of form from its divine source until its imprint on matter as a timeless and motionless rapid procedure. No sensory perception or any physical natural intervention is involved in this scene.

If something new occurs, then its occurrence must be instantaneously ... since it is clear that it is impossible that a measurable time will be found between two motions, while it is having no motion at all, as we have explained

in the *Physics* that time is accompanying motion". (Avicenna, *Kitāb al-Najāt*, p. 253, my translation).<sup>49</sup>

Avicenna's assumption is based on Aristotle's observation that time necessarily follows every motion. He regards the change of the intellect from having knowledge in potentiality to possessing knowledge in actuality as movement. Based on this premise, he clarifies that:

Everything that was said to undermine the existence of time and about its not having any existence is based upon its not existing at an instant (Avicenna, *Physics*, book 2, ch. 13, McGinnis' translation, p. 248).<sup>50</sup>

Avicenna holds a theory of intuitive prophecy, leaning on the same concept of spontaneous manifest phenomenon. According to this theory, a real philosopher-prophet is endowed with a natural intellectual faculty called *hads*. This capacity makes him achieve perfect abstract knowledge without instruction, directly from the Active Intellect. Solely through intuition, he is able to arrive at a conclusion instantaneously (*daf'atan*).<sup>51</sup>

The close similarity between Avicenna and Gabirol explains why Gundissalinus moved comfortably from one to the other.<sup>52</sup> It can also explain why Ibn Daud felt

<sup>49</sup> "فإن حدث أمر لم يكن فلا يخلو إما أن يكون حدوثه على سبيل ما يحدث بحدوث علته دفعة [...] مفهوم على أنه لا يمكن أن يكون زمان بين حركتين ولا حركة فيه فإنه قد بان لنا في الطبيعيات أن الزمان تابع للحركة..." (ابن سينا, *كتاب النجاة* فصل في إثبات دوام الحركة بقول مجمل ثم بعده بقول مفصل, ص. 352)

<sup>50</sup> J. McGinnis, (ed. and trans.), *Avicenna, The Physics of the Healing*, Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> "فيمكن أن يكون شخص من الناس مؤيد بنفسه بشفاء وشدة الاتصال بالمبادئ العقلية إلى أن يشتعل حدساً أعني قيولاً لا الهام لهام العقل الفعال في كل شيء فترسم فيه الصور التي في العقل الفعال من كل شيء إما دفعة وإما قريباً من دفعة" (ابن سينا, *كتاب النجاة*, فصل في طرق اكتساب النفس الناطقة للعلوم, ص. 167)

Cf. "So it is therefore possible that a particular person among the people might have a soul so "supported" by the intensity of its purity and its connection with the intelligible principles that it would light up with intuition. I mean, in receiving inspiration of the Active Intellect in all things and having the forms, which are in the Active Intellect traced in [imprinted on] his [mind], either all at once or almost immediately" (English Translation by J. W. Morris, "Philosopher-Prophet in Avicenna's Philosophy", in C. Butterworth (ed.), *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 183). Cf. D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 1988, pp. 162, #3. Also see my, "Intuition and Inspiration - The Causes of Religious Philosophical Objection of Jewish Thinkers to Avicenna's Intellectual Prophecy (Hads)", *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 12 (2007), pp. 39-71, esp. p. 53, note 33.

<sup>52</sup> Even though Gundissalinus discusses philosophical concepts per se, such as the Active Intellect, it seems plausible to suppose that he would naturally adhere to Christian texts known to him, rather than the relatively unfamiliar Arabian sources. I believe that his reading of Gabirol through an Augustinian lens was indeed influenced by this presumed approach of the translator as suggested by both scholastic and modern scholars. I believe that my suggestion to put Gundissalinus in the center of the dispute with Ibn Daud rather than Gabirol himself balances the natural inclination to identify the translator with the writer, let alone a translator who is a writer on his own right, and has an idealistic agenda of his own. See Pessin, *Hidden*, op. cit., pp. 48-52; and: idem, "Ibn Gabirol's Emanationism: On the Plotinian (v. Augustinian) Theology of 'Divine Irāda', in N. Polloni and A. Fidora (eds.), *Appropriation*, op. cit., pp. 1-18. Cf. J. McGinnis, "Making Abstraction Less Abstract: The Logical, Psychological, and Metaphysical Dimensions of Avicenna's Theory of Abstraction", *Proceedings of American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA)*, 80 (2007), pp. 169 - 183.

He has created everything simultaneously (*Sefer hanefeš*, ch. 7, #86, p. 250, my translation). Cf. "שמה נאמר באלוהות הדי בנצחות במתנפשות. וזה נאמר יחד. כי זהו בורא הנפשות לפי הצורות ברא באומה עת הנפשות לפי החומר; וזה נאמר" (Ibid)

<sup>47</sup> "Quamuis ergo Moyses prius nominavit caelum et terram, deinde lucem per quam intelligit angelicam creaturam, ordo tamen quo creata narrantur, in creando non intelligatur. Quae enim simul sine tempore ad esse prodierunt, simul dici sine tempore non potuerunt. Omnis enim syllaba tempus habet" (Bülow, *Des Gundissalinus*, op. cit., pp. 50 -51). Cf. "Creatio assimilatur verbo quod loquitur homo, quia homo cum loquitur verbum [...] hanc similitudinem dicitur quod creato sublimis et sanctus locutus est verbum, et intellectus eius impressus est in essentia materiae et materia retinuit eum" (Baeumker, *Fons Vitae*, V, 43, op. cit., p. 336)

<sup>48</sup> "Materia non fuit absque forma ictu oculi, ideo sit non creata et non habeat esse; sed est creata cum forma simul, quia non habuit esse nisi ex forma, id est quia fuit creatum cum; creatione formae sustentatae in ea sine spatio temporis" (Ibid., p. 334)

personally betrayed by his partner and soulmate and, most probably, the person he chose to work with in order to spread Avicenna's teaching to the Christian public.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to show that when Ibn Daud criticizes Gabirol, he is actually referring to his partner in translating parts of Avicenna's *Shifā'* from Arabic into Latin,

Dominicus Gundissalinus. I assume that the fact that Gundissalinus has adopted Gabirol's definition of prime matter made him the center of Ibn Daud's harsh critique of Gabirol's wider concept of prime matter. Ibn Daud has rightly suspected that Gabirol's approach to prime matter would affect Gundissalinus' standpoints regarding the origin of the world and the origin of the human soul, and would hinder him from espousing fully and systematically Avicenna's opinions regarding privation and moving into existence in no time. In particular, I found that:

1. Abraham Ibn Daud and Dominicus Gundissalinus hold opposing stands regarding prime matter. Ibn Daud insists it functions as a formless substrate, which has no existence by its own right. Following Gabirol, Gundissalinus considers first matter to be a substance existing through itself.
2. They both try hard to minimize the event of creation *ex nihilo*, by (a) minimizing pre-existence, or the state of potentiality, to "privation", (b) reducing time to an instant flash, (c) limiting the moment of creation to the union of matter and form.
3. Gundissalinus forms an analogy between the creation of the world and the coming into existence of the soul, although he shares with Ibn Daud the Avicennean definitions regarding the soul's structure, function and eternal life. However, while Ibn Daud insists that in order to be able to fulfill its intellectual mission and enjoy immortality, the soul must have no association with matter whatsoever, Gundissalinus repeatedly emphasizes that the soul must be in touch with matter in order to exist as an independent unit.

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