



Review Paper

A Survey on the History of thoughts Interaction from Philo to Ibn al-Arabi

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Abstract

Philo of Alexandria as a middle Platonist philosopher has had the most influence on the history of religious and philosophic thoughts. His opinions were adapted by Islamic thinkers through intermediaries. Then being combined with the Islamic thought and forming the Islamic Platonic Ideas, Philos opinions reached to Jewish thinkers of the Spain. Due to the symbiotic relationship and having the common language in Spain, Jews and Moslem Scholars reached to the common points in philosophy and other aspects of thoughts in the middle ages. Therefore we can see similarities in ideas of Philo and Ibn al-Arabi despite the large interval. In this paper we have a study on the history of intellectual interaction between the two thinkers

Keywords: Thought, philosophy, interaction, Ibn a-arabi, Philo.

Introduction

Alexandria was the main house to hold the Greek philosophy heritage in the Hellenistic period. The Ptolemaists converted it in to the main city of the ancient sciences and intellectual center of the world. That was largely due to the incredible wealth of its libraries and the exceptional position it possessed as the geographical capital of the civilization. The city has witnessed development, expansion and synthesis of various beliefs and the birth of the most radical types of eclectic thoughts in philosophy and religion. Platonic, Pythagorean and peripatetic schools representing the Greek ancient tradition were gradually mixed with ancient Egypt religions and Hermetic system of theosophy, mixed with Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries and declined the clarity of philosophical thoughts. Aristobulus and Philo were Hellenistic Jewish thinkers who combined Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts with Jewish teachings and beliefs. However, the Essenes, the Therapeutists and the schools of Jewish Gnostics incorporated Orient religious ideas regarding ascetic discipline, theory of pantheism, and emanation in western thoughts¹.

The most noticeable of these was the school of Gnosticism as a Christian-Zoroastrian heresy and Neo-Platonism that together with Christianity were propagated to the neighboring lands including Iran and Syria. Educated Nestorians translated main Greek philosophical works in to Syrian. When Neo-Platonic schools in Athens and Edessa were shut by Roman emperors Zeno and Justinian, their teachers and educators migrated to Iran and later established the schools of Nisibis and Jundishapur. The religion of these schools was Christianity, the type of their philosophy was Neo-Platonic and their nationality was Iranian or Syrian. They were the connecting link between ancient cultures and the Muslims.

As previously mentioned in Philo's biography, as a thinker he tried to incorporate Jewish teachings with ancient Greek philosophy and especially with the Plato's thoughts. He established a tradition, which was later expanded in the context of Neo-Platonism. To further evaluate the history of these thoughts from Philo to Ibn al-Arabi and the interaction among Jews and Muslims.

Hellenistic Jewish Philosophy

It has been claimed in Hellenistic Jewish literature that ancient Greek philosophers have adapted their thoughts from Moses teachings. This theory is also mentioned on Philo's works. However, the reality of course is just reverse. It was the Greek philosophical tradition that inseminated the Jewish mind mainly after the Diaspora. The influence over Hellenistic period is also obvious on Jewish wisdom literature, Aristobulus and Philo's writings. Jewish wisdom literature like the wisdom of Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon and the Fourth Book of Maccabees also include similar notions. Two major figures of this period were Philo and Aristobulus who interweaved Jewish teachings with philosophical thoughts more than ever. The commentaries of Philo on bible were undoubtedly based on Jewish Alexandrian scholastic tradition, as he frequently addressed earlier fellow exegetes. Unfortunately, only one such predecessor is known by name. Aristobulus (2nd century BCE), descended from the high-priestly line, who wrote philosophical interpretations on the Scripture that deeply influenced Philo. Like the latter, he also aimed at interpreting the Torah's teaching according to philosophical truth. To this end, he takes great pains to interpret anthropomorphic descriptions of God allegorically. He thus maintains that the biblical expression "hand of God" signifies

the divine power; the “standing of God” refers to the immutability of God’s creation².

Philo’s masterly integration glorified Hellenistic Jewish philosophy. Although fully acquainted with the Greek philosophical texts at first hand, Philo is not to be regarded as an original philosopher, nor did he claim this. He saw himself as that of someone who bridged two disparate traditions that were both respectable to him. As mentioned earlier, it is likely that the apparent his thought is in fact representative of Middle Platonism, a philosophical tradition manifested by stoic and Pythagoratic tendencies, and number symbolism. We focus on Jewish philosophy after him up to Ibn al-Arabi.

Medieval Jewish Philosophy

For a long time, Jewish society could not find any replacement for Philo. In fact; they were Christians and Muslims who followed medieval Platonic tradition. This fact was influenced by various events, Hellenistic Jews were assimilated in Christian societies and In other hand, some historical tragedies like destroying the temples and Jewish suppression by the Roman made them distance from dominant Greek civilization and they emphasize on the independence. Therefore the philosophy was not regarded by Jews on medieval ages and they rarely produce philosophical literature at the time. In this period one may only consider two figures, Ishaq Israeli (10th AC) and Ibn Gabirol (11th AC) who create some philosophical works. In this regard, Barron writes: “Even in Islamic territory, the Jewish people were prone to disregard all the more objective scientific endeavors, and to value only those which restated the old tenets of Judaism in a fashion acceptable to the new generation. They did not pay much attention to Israeli’s and Ibn Gabirol’s philosophic works, because these contained no direct defense of Judaism³.”

Therefore, Jewish philosophy is different from routine philosophy because it includes teleological and mystical teachings. Wolfson believes that Jewish philosophy from Philo to Spinoza is a religious one. That is a philosophy in defense of revelation. Jews typically adapt the philosophy from external sources so history of Jewish philosophy is composed of numerous adaptations from external thoughts and restating them according to Jewish tradition.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, after a very long suspension, systematic philosophy and ideology reappeared among Jews, under the influence of Islamic civilization. There is undoubtedly a correlation between this rebirth of philosophy and theology and the social trends of that period which produced Jewish financiers (some of whom were patrons of knowledge and or who had a position in Islamic government) and Jewish physicians who associated by common language with Muslim and Christian intellectuals.

In addition to economic and commercial circumstances, one may consider other factors to account for the rise of Jewish-Muslim philosophy. As the main reason, having monotheistic

view, Islamic and Jewish philosophers were distinct from their pagan competitors. The other reason for strong religious and cultural union among these three monotheistic religions was threatening of their existence equally by pagan’s cultural heritage under the Arabic-philosophical mask. The extent of their spiritual collaboration at the time is wonderful so that there would be no similar instance in the history. Therefore, Islamic-Jewish philosophy is the result of Muslims and Jewish productive symbiosis. The main characteristic of this era is freethinking and interreligious tolerance. Documents and resources indicate that there was some kind of respect and affability morale among Greek wisdom seekers from different religions and races. However, as previously stated, this kind of respect was partially influenced by economic requirements³.

Nearly from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, Jewish philosophical and theological thought participated in the evolution of Islamic philosophy and theology and manifested only in a limited sense a continuity of its own. Jewish philosophers showed no particular preference for philosophic texts written by Jewish authors over those composed by Muslims, and in many cases, the significant works of Jewish thinkers was a reply or reaction to the ideas of a non-Jewish predecessor. Arabic was the language of Jewish philosophic and scientific writings. The history of Jewish philosophy is therefore the history of Jewish-Muslim alliance as a truly collective effort in the cultivation of philosophy, but one in which Jews were drawn to the dominant discourse controlled by the Muslims.

However, the social contract of Muslims and Jews gradually declined at the end of thirteenth century that led to creation of a joint philosophical tradition, one at least as much Jewish as Muslim. The famous painting by Francesco Traini and many similar paintings, shows the triumph of Thomas over Ibn-Rushd (in which he lies prostrate before the Christian philosopher) implies the decline. In the painting Ibn-Rushd wears the Jewish badge upon each shoulder indicating implicitly that Jewish interpreters and translators played more important role in shaping Ibn-Rushd’s knowledge than Latin Christianity. Indeed, some of the sweetest fruits of Islamic philosophy—Farabi (9th and 10th century AD), Ibn Bajja (12th century AC), Ibn Tufayl (12th century AC)—were preserved, translated and reverently studied by Jews. The work of the Spanish philosopher Ibn al-Sid al-Batalyusi (11 and 12th century AC) was studied overwhelmingly within Jewish philosophical circles. In conclusion, there is no doubt that Jewish philosophy from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries was influenced by Islamic culture and civilization. Of the eighteen philosophers listed in Husik’s *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy*, thirteen lived in the Islamic territory and there is no doubt in Islamic nature of medieval Jewish philosophy⁴.

Mediaeval contacts between Jews and Muslims

After Philo of Alexandria, the first Jewish philosophers were Saadia Gaon (882–942), Dawud al-Muqammi (fl. c. 900) and

al-Qirgisani (d. 930) who emerged at the end of the ninth century, in the context of Islamic kalam. By the late ninth century Arabic had become the international language of the Islamic world, within which many Jews resided. Among many other philosophical and religious works of the time, Aristotle and the Bible were being translated and annotated in Arabic. Hodgson uses the term "Islamicate" to refer to this common culture, which was not restricted Muslims but which encompassed all the Jews and Christians who speak Arabic. In short, Jews and Muslims were speaking a common language, and possessing similar linguistic, exegetical and theological traditions. Inter-religious comparisons and discussions could be held in live performances. Religious scholars could join in discussions held in at caliph's courts or in private homes. Already from the beginning of the career of the Prophet Muhammad Muslims had been in contact with Jews. But the contact seems to have climaxed in the ninth to tenth centuries. Both official and unofficial discussions were held at that time. In official discussions, Jewish and Muslim leaders officially represent their respective religious beliefs in public. In the early ninth century for example, the Shiite eighth imam al-Riza (PBU) confutes a Jewish leader. Much of their discussion concerns the precise truth or falsity of specific biblical verses. Likewise, another Jewish leader debated under the auspices of al-Ma'mun, a detailed record of which is preserved. In fact, most of the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs as well as Shiite Imams, were depicted as sponsoring or participating in such discussions⁵.

However, official leaders defending their religions in public were not the only form interreligious meetings because not all Jewish and Muslim philosophers were official leaders. Some were, at times, radical freethinkers held in suspicion even by their own religious leaders. Here one may consider the Jews Dawud al-muqammi and Hiwi al-Balkhi (9th century) and the Muslims ibn al-Rawandi (9th century), Abu 'Isa al-Warraq (d. 909), and Muhammad Abu Bakr al-Razi (d. 932) who had relations with each other. We know little about the biographies of these philosophical radicals, though it has been assumed that they met together privately, presumably in their own homes. The first Jewish theologian who wrote in Arabic, and the only scholar of comparative religion at the time- Dawud al-muqammi- may have been a Jewish member of the fairly small group of liberal thinkers who felt an equal respect for all monotheistic religions. Despite of mere differences all of these religions originate from the same source. Not surprisingly, their relationship remained a mystery. This oblivion can be explained on the typical nature of outsiders, whose writings naturally attract suppression. They all try to take an approach not to be perceived as threatening.

The Islamic society, in which Jewish philosophy raised was urban and multicultural and allowed freedom of interreligious contact and cooperation. The diversity of opinions and symbiosis of different cultures played an important role in pursuit of philosophy. Another issue seems necessary to be

considered is the class of physicians at the time. Most of the Jewish philosophers were physicians at the same time. In addition to merchant class which brought remote countries near to one another, physicians and druggists, who were often Jewish and Christian, had important factors promoting the contacts. Jewish and Muslim physician-philosophers thus met with and learned from each other. Their occasional friendships could develop such intensity that ibn al-qifti (d. 1248) and ibn Aqnin (d. early 13th century) were said to have vowed that whoever preceded the other in death would have to send reports from eternity to the survivor. Both formal and informal friendships between Muslim and Jew are well known from a variety of sources. The letters, for example, between the influential Muslim philosopher ibn Bājja and his friend, the logician and converted Jew, Yusuf ibn Chasdai, the great-grandson of the famous Spanish Jewish dignitary Chasdai ibn Shaprut, still remains. Jewish and Muslim philosophically oriented physicians, then, could become friends who both met together and corresponded with one another yet more Jewish thinkers apparently converted to Islam, though we lack sufficient biographical data to say much with certainty concerning their precise motives for doing so. Three main issues could be mentioned regarding the political context of Jewish-Islamic philosophy, including political setting, political constraints, and political philosophy. Jewish philosophical thought underwent variations under different rules and situations. For example, at the time of the Buyids, intellectual Shiism which held the political reins while Shi'i theology and jurisprudence were being formulated, was largely responsible for the intensive cultural activity which the Renaissance of Islam witnessed. In the early stages of Jewish philosophy, thinkers like Isaac Israeli and Saadia Gaon emerged from a Shi'i milieu and it has been observed that the early Ayyūbid period, for example, was particularly rich in interreligious cross interactions. Even the Almohad debacle, while socially catastrophic, likewise stimulated a surprisingly fertile philosophical interaction between Jews and Muslims⁶.

Of all such cases about Jews and Muslims interaction, perhaps none was as fully reciprocal as that which produced the Avicennan philosophical mysticism associated with the idea of Ishraq. Three Muslim philosophers were particularly implicated in the social context of thought, to which Jewish (or Jewish-convert) philosophers also seem markedly to have been drawn. These Muslim philosophers, Suhrawardi (d. 1192), ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), and ibn Sab'in (d. 1270), explicitly were beholden to the still mysterious of Avicenna. These figures were somehow in contact with Jews, for support of which one may give different reasons: First, as is indicated in their biographies, some of these Muslim philosophers both met with Jewish philosophers and initiated Jewish students and there was a reciprocal respect in their relations. Second, the writings of Ishraq philosophers were studied for centuries by Jewish philosophers. Third, some Ishraq philosophers studied and sometimes even taught Jewish works.

Here some examples are given about such relationships and subcultures. The martyred mystical philosopher Suhrawardi, as mentioned in some resources, initiated (with the *khirqā*) Najm al-Din ibn Isrā'ili. One of prominent commentator of Suhrawardi -Ibn al Kamuneh- was Jewish and then converted to Islam. Ibn Sab'in, not only explicitly cited the Ibn maimon's *Dilaltolha'erin* in his *Risāla al-Nūriyya*, but he also taught it to Muslims and Jews. Ibn Tufayl's biography is extremely scanty, but he could have met Ibn maimon. However there is a close relationship between Ibn Tufayl's *Hayyibnayy ibn yaqzan* and two works of Ibn Maimon. Undoubtedly, works by Ishraq philosophers were studied and annotated by Jews. Suhrawardi emphatically influenced Rabi – Dawud ibn Yusha' Maimon and Ibn Tafyl enjoyed an impact on Jewish philosophers⁶.

The "Golden Age" of the Jews of Spain, across the Mediterranean, was not distinguished by the flourishing of pure philosophy. Of its two greatest figures were Judah Halevi and Moses bin Maimon. There are significant differences between them: Judah wrote an anti-philosophical classic, while Maimonides wrote his masterpiece of philosophy at the other end of the Mediterranean Sea. Despite the presence of indisputably important philosophers, the Andalusian contribution was distinctively theological and mystical, and not distinctively philosophical. Rather, such works of piety as the religious hymns of ibn Gabirol, Kabbalah mysticism constitute the preeminent cultural productions of Jewish Spain. That being said, the philosophical tradition of Jewish Spain comprised perhaps the most distinguished and consistently developed philosophical tradition of any medieval Jewish society, alongside their fellow Muslims, they were innovators in this area. Thus, Goitein termed the period of Islamic civilization under consideration here "the intermediate civilization," that is, intermediate "between Hellenism and Renaissance. Earlier, Adam Mez had already popularized such terms in his widely read *The Renaissance of Islam*. Inasmuch as historians of Jewish philosophy in this period agree that the respective histories of Jewish and Muslim philosophy are inextricably intertwined, Jewish philosophy likewise has tended to be characterized in light of such a scheme. The golden age of Jews and Muslims contact climaxed in thirteenth century and then declined, despite that, there remained considerable amount of works for later generations. Alfred North Whitehead articulated this point: "During the brilliant period of Muslims ascendancy, the record of the Middle Ages, , indicates evidence of joint collaboration of Muslims and Jewish activity in the promotion of civilization. The cultural development of the Middle Ages was largely dependent on that collaboration. The collaboration of Jews with the Muslims is one of the great facts of history from which modern civilization originates"⁷.

History of Islamic philosophy

As early mentioned in Hellenistic and mediaeval Jewish philosophy, the philosophy of Jews in Middle Ages developed and flourished in an Islamic context. To describe the joint

Islamic-Jewish context of Spain before Ibn-al Arabi era, we will briefly review the history of philosophical thoughts in Islam and beliefs of Islamic scholars in Spain. Islam and related scholars emerged and developed in geographical context of Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Egypt and Iran which was the heart of the ancient civilization and witnessed development of the most heterogeneous thoughts in philosophy and religion- from neo-Platonism of Alexandria to Christian austerity.

When Islam spread among Iranian, Syrian, Copts and Byzantines, the new non-Arab converts began to think logically about the Muslims beliefs and theology and to compare them with the principals of Greek philosophical tradition. The desire to know strengthened. The Abbasid caliphs themselves as official representatives of shari'a and orthodoxy collaborated in it by preparing the introduction of Greek science through the translation of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Porphyry, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Hipocrates, Galen, Euclid and Ptolemy. Nestorian, Syrian or Chaldean interpreters who served the caliphs as physicians made these translations from Syriac into Arabic. Al-Mansur, the second of the Abbasids, and his great-grandson al-Ma'mun displayed the most enthusiasm for this work during the second and third centuries of Muslim era.

Indeed Islamic philosophy and wisdom is the result of joint tradition of thoughts in which Syrian, Arabs and Muslims has taken part. The Arab conquest of the Near East was virtually complete by 21century AH (641 AD), the year in which Alexandria fell to the Arab general Amr Al'as. Greek culture had flourished in Egypt, Syria and Iraq since the time of Alexander the Great, but the capture of Alexandria brought them under Arab rule and put an end to the centuries-old dominion of Iranian and Byzantium in that area.

Alexandria was the most important center for the study of Greek philosophy in the seventh century, but no means the only one. In Syria and Iraq, Greek was studied as early as the fourth century at Antioch, Harran, and Edessa. Some of these centers were still flourishing when the Arab armies marched into Syria and Iraq. The study of Greek had been cultivated chiefly as a means of giving the Syrian-speaking scholars of those institutions access to Greek theological texts emanating chiefly from Alexandria. At the same time numerous theological treatises were translated into Syrian. There were two other important institutions of Greek learning in the seventh century at Harran and Jundishapur. Harran, in northern Syria, has been the home of a sect of star-worshippers, who were erroneously identified during the Abbasid period with the *Sabaeans* mentioned in the Koran. Their religion, as well as the Hellenistic, Gnostic and Hermetic influences under which they came, singularly qualified them to serve as a link in the transmission of Greek science to the Arabs. The School of Jundishapur, founded by Chosroes I Anushirwan around the year 555, stands out as a major institution of Greek sciences in western Asia, whose influence was destined to extend to the world of Islam in Abbasid times.

The beginnings of philosophical speculation in Islam coincided, as we have seen, with the founding of the 'Abbasid caliphate in the eighth century. A rival principality was set up in Spain by the only surviving Umayyad prince following the overthrow of the Umayyads in 749. This principality was able before long to challenge the 'Abbasids not only politically but culturally as well. In due course, Umayyad Spain was able to write one of the most brilliant cultural chapters in the whole history of Islam and to serve as the bridge across which Greco-Arab learning passed to Western Europe. Despite the intense rivalries between the 'Abbasids of Baghdad and the Umayyads of Cordova, however, the cultural relations of the eastern and western wings of the Muslim empire were not always war-like. From the ninth century on, scholars traveled from one end of the empire to the other, carrying books and ideas and thereby insuring what one might call the cultural unity of the Islamic world. However the most important philosophical work translated at the time was Timaeus of Plato, including some of his cosmological beliefs. Some of Aristotle and other Plato's works also were translated. Of Neo-platonic tradition one with most significant influence on Islamic philosophical thought was also translated into Arabic at early third century. However the author of the book which was an abstract of Greek philosophy was not known to them. On the initiative of fifth Umayyid ruler of Spain- Muhammad bin Rahman- at early third century, scientific and philosophical works were imported from the East on a large scale, so that Cordova with its huge library and university could now compete with Baghdad as a major center of learning in the Muslim world⁷.

Andulusia: from Ibn Masarra, to Ibn al- Arabi

One of the first significant figures of the time was Ibn Masarra. According to his biographers, Ibn Masarra, who was born in 269, was not an Arab by race. More importantly, this father, a passionate lover of theological speculation who had frequented Mu'tazilite and esoteric circles in the East, sought to transmit to his son the features of his own spiritual physiognomy. His son was barely seventeen, yet was already surrounded by disciples. With them he withdrew to a hermitage that he owned in the mountains of Cordoba. The people rapidly became suspicious of him: when one is thought to be teaching the doctrine of a certain ancient Sage named Empedocles. Ibn Masarra chose to go into exile, accompanied by two of his favorite disciples. He went as far as Medina and Mecca, thus making contact with the Eastern schools. He only returned to his country during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, whose policy was more liberal. Even so, having learned from his contacts with the esoteric (Batini) circles in the East, Ibn Masarra was extremely wary. He returned to his hermitage in the mountains of Cordoba, and there, to only a few of his followers, he revealed the meaning of his doctrines in the form of symbols. However, there is no clear understanding of the exact nature of Ibn Masarra's doctrine but as mentioned in old resources (Sa'id Andulusi, 73; Ibn Abi-Asib'a, 59/1); he also strongly supports Empedocles and possibly the Mu'tazilite thoughts. Empedocles is a pre-Socratic

Greek philosopher whose biography is not clearly known to us. His name is referred as Ibazqols in Arabic sources, but it is necessary to mention that nearly none that has been related to him in these sources is comparable to his original beliefs. Therefore, one can distinguish two personalities for Empedocles in the history of thoughts: the original Empedocles and the pseudo-Empedocles. In Hellenistic period, there was a tendency to reassemble the great figures of Greek philosophy according to philosophical essences and requirements of the time. This tradition is especially seen in Neo-platonic works and often there is no similarity between the resultant figures and associated doctrine and their original ones, and maybe the same is true about Empedocles.

According to Arabic authors, Empedocles was the first of the five great philosophers of Greece (Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle). He was regarded as a hierophant, a prophet, dedicated to spiritual teaching and practice. He lived apart from the world, traveled around the East, and refused all religious honors. In short, he was seen as one of the prophets prior to Islam. Also some Arabic authors believe that he lived at the same time with David and learnt the philosophy from Luqman Hakim in Ash-Sham. He then moved to Greece and published his knowledge⁸.

The teachings attributed to him are principally concerned with the following themes: the preeminence and esotericism of philosophy and psychology, the absolute simplicity, ineffability and mobile immobility of the first Being, the theory of Emanation, the categories of soul, and individual souls as emanations of the Soul of the world; their pre-existence and redemption. The whole doctrine is enormously rich in both Gnostic and neo-Platonic terms.

For Asin Palacios, one of the reliable sources to the beliefs and thoughts of pseudo- Empedocles is Philo's writings. Excellence and esotericism of philosophy and esoteric nature of psychology are characteristics of Philo's tradition. The simplicity of the God in theorem five of pseudo-Empedocles occurs similarly in Philo's thoughts. The God is One, simple and possesses no name or quality or attribute. The qualities or attributed names are not suitable for Him because He is not describable. He is beyond goodness, knowledge and beauty. He is just an intangible light which is the symbol of simplicity and purity of Divine essence. The other common aspect of Philo and pseudo-Empedocles doctrines is the theory of emanation that is referred as Logos in Philo's theme. According to Philo and pseudo-Empedocles, the physical matter of the world interrupts the purity and the nature of goodness. If there exist the good and evil in human's nature it originates from the matter and lies among sensible needs. The physical nature allures the human and declines his original purity.

Although one can readily find Philo's themes in theorems of pseudo- Empedocles, but there is no direct imitation. Because the Islamic neo-Platonic tradition in which the thoughts of

pseudo- Empedocles are included, has been originated from newer traditions like Plotinus, Pherperious and Procleous who organized Philo and Amonious Sackas's thoughts. Therefore, some researchers consider the beliefs of Philo and his contemporary scholars as mid-Platonic tradition and what originates later from their thoughts as neo-Platonic.

After Plotarkh and niyomious, Plotinus interpreted the Platonic tradition more precisely. By comparing Plotinian and pseudo-Empedocles thoughts one may understand that they originate from the same base and both belong to neo-Platonic era. However, there are some differences that Henry Corben has mentioned precisely: The theory of Emanation and the five substances according to Empedocles is as follows : the Materia prima, which is the first of the intelligible realities (not to be confused with universal corporeal matter); the Intelligence; the Soul; Nature; and secondary Matter. If we refer to the Plotinian (the One, the Intelligence, the Soul, Nature and Matter) the difference is immediately obvious between Plotinus and the Islamic psudo-Empedocles. The first of the Plotinian hypostases, the One, has been eliminated from the schema and replaced by Materia prima.

For the neo-Empedocles, this intelligible matter as such possesses actual reality, and he makes it the first divine Emanation. It is precisely the idea of this universal intelligible Matter that is the characteristic theorem of Ibn Masarra's doctrine. Thus in his view, there is some difference between neo-Platonic thoughts of pseudo-Empedocles and Plotinian beliefs. Again here we focus on the main schema of the discussion that is the relationship between Ibn-Massrah tradition and Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine. There are many theories regarding the influence of Ibn Massrah tradition on Ibn al-Arabi's thoughts but before discussing them, we will briefly look at the history of Ibn Massrah followers up to Ibn al-Arabi's era.

The Ibn Massrah followers had to survive in an atmosphere of intolerance and suspicion, harassment and anathema. Obligated as they were to pursue a strict esotericism, they formed a secret hierarchical organization with an Imam as its leader. The most famous of them, at the start of the fifth century, was Isma'il 'Abd Allah al-Ru'ayni. Unfortunately, during Isma'il's lifetime a schism occurred, in the aftermath of which we lose track of the school as a social organization. However that may be, the mystical bent of Ibn Masarra's ideas continued to have a profound effect. After the death of Isma'il al-Ru'ayni, and at the start of the sixth century, at the height of Morabetun power, Almeria became the capital of all the Spanish Sufis. Abu al-'Abbas ibn al-'Arif composed a new rule for the spiritual life which was based on the theosophy of Ibn Masarra. This rule was widely diffused by three great disciples: Abu Bakr al-Mallurqin in Granada, Ibn Barrajan in Seville and Ibn Qasi in the Algarve in the west of Andalusia where he organized the initiates of Ibn Masarra's school a sort of religious militia. Ibn Qasi reigned for ten years as the sovereign Imam in the Algarve, dying in 546. Fourteen years after his death Ibn al-Arabi was

born one of whose great works was to be a commentary on the only work by Ibn Qasi⁸.

There exist many different points of view on the influence of Andalusian Gnostics and scholars on Ibn al-Arabi. One of the pioneers to answer these questions was Spanish scholar Asin Palacios. He believes that Ibn al-Arabi learnt the former thoughts and beliefs and was aware of all traditions including the Greek, Muslim, Mu'tzillah and Ash'ari and both western and Orient Gnostics, Muhadisin and interpreters.

As previously mentioned he was born fourteen years after death of Ibn al-Qasi and twenty four years after the death of Ibn al-Arif and Ibn Barajan and lived in Ishbiliya -Ibn Barjan's home city. He studied Ibn al-Qasi with his son and could find one of his closest students there. Therefore, he includes the works of these three scholars in his writings. Asin Palacios believes that Ibn al-Arabi had adopted two of his main theories from Ibn Massrah's pantheism. Ibn al-Arabi, also verifies this and indicates that he has acquired Ibn Massrah's teachings as oral and live lessons from Spanish Sufies and he belongs himself to this tradition. Ibn al-Arabi had learnt the concept of Materia Prima from Batini scholars (the Almaria scholar's tradition) and he had also received some knowledge from Ibn Barjan and he, himself, verifies the fact. In addition to his writings, the connecting line between ibn al-Arabi and Ibn barajan also consists the oral and live lessons he received from his prime educator on ascetics - Abol'abas al-'arini in Ishbiliya.

There are two direct citations of Ibn Massrah and his tradition Meccan revelations. first in his book he includes the Prophet's opinion about "the bearers of Throne"; that bearers number is four in this world and eight in the other, he then added the notion that according to Ibn Massrah the borne Throne is the dominion (or the kingdom of creation) which is reduced to body, spirit, substance and grade. Adam and Israfil are those who bear the forms or bodies, Gabriel and Muhammad are the bearers of the spirit, Michael and Abraham of the provisions, Malik and Ridwan of rewards and punishments and there is nothing else in the kingdom of creation. For the second time, he also explains and interprets the concept and cites the kitab-al-huruf of Ibn Massrah. For some researchers Ibn al-Arabi's introduction with former scholars traditions is not considered as being influenced by their thoughts. Jahangiri, for example, believes that Ibn al-Arabi does not follow anyone; rather he tries to interpret their thoughts in a way that become compatible with his own. He disproves the fact that Almaria or Ibn Massra has influenced Ibn al-Arabi and believes that Ibn al-Arabi's pantheism had not existed before him and his manner of mysticism is a unique and novel one. However, if there exists some similarities between his thoughts and the former agnostics; i. it may be some kind of literal similarity and ii. the mere similarity may not indicate the influence⁹.

In addition to neo-Empedocles and pseudo-Platonic traditions the Almeria school has also been influenced by other schools

such as Isma'ili and Shiite traditions. Henry Corbin distinguish these traditions and also relates Shiite tendencies in Ibn al-Arabi doctrine to Almeria school and interprets accepting of his thoughts by Mulla Sadra in Isfahan school as returning to the root. According to Palacios, sufis like Sahl al-tustari and Dhulnun of Egypt also have inseminated the tradition. Mediated by Dhulnun of Egypt, the Almeria school is related to Hermeticism. He believes that Batini thoughts which had been set up to the west through Ibn Massrah, returned to the Orient through Ibn al-Arabi works, four centuries later. However, there are similarities between Hermetic mysticism and Shiite prophecy that appears to be the other aspect of Shiite doctrine in Almeria tradition.

However, investigating all other aspects of Almeria school is beyond the scope of present paper and only those issues related to the Philo and neo-Platonism are included. As previously mentioned, the interaction between Jewish and Muslim scholars was a mutual one. Palacios believes that Ibn Massrah's doctrine also influenced the philosophical tradition of both Jews and Christians. A century after the death of Ibn Massrah, at the beginning of the eleventh century, the name and writings of the pseudo-Empedocles began to spread among the Spanish Jews. Juda halevi from Toledo in his Cuzari, Moses ibn Ezra of Granada, and Joseph ibn Zaddik from Cordova in his Al'alam al-saghir, Samuel ibn Tibbon and Shem To bin Joseph from Falaquera used some of his beliefs in their works. The description of heaven by Empedocles and Ibn Massrah appears similarly in pantheistic texts of Jews.

Palacios also compares Ibn Gabirol's-the Jewish philosopher-thoughts with Ibn al-Arabi and believes that their Gnostic and pantheistic thoughts are influenced by Ibn Massrah's doctrine and like Arabic Empedocles, they consider the God to be simple and unperceivable. They describe the God by analogy with light and believe the creation to be result of Mercy and Charity. Allegories like the mirror and Divine soul, both are included in their works to describe the creation of the world. The spiritual matter, which is key to understand Ibn Massrah's tradition, is similarly used in Futuhat and Yanbu'alhayat. Therefore, one may conclude that both the figures were influenced by Ibn Massrah's doctrine that was commonly accepted by the Spanish Muslims and especially the Almeria school.

Ibn Massrah's doctrine in Kabbalah works and Zohar still interests Jewish readers. Jews and Muslims symbiosis in Spain and using a common language to express their thoughts at the time is regarded as one of the main factors involved in propagation of Ibn Massrah's thoughts among them. Using Arabic language by Jewish scholars helped Ibn Massrah's thoughts to spread among them and to cross the boundaries of Islamic world¹⁰.

Therefore, Muslims and Jews had had contact and symbiosis before the birth of Ibn al-Arabi which included both philosophical and Gnostic issues. At the same time, Jewish

Kabalah Gnostics also had propagated in the Spain. In his detailed article in Encyclopedia Judaica, Scholem describes the dominant atmosphere of the time: "The combination of theosophical-Gnostic and neo-platonic-philosophical elements among Spanish Jews climaxed in thirteenth century. Its first and most important exponent was Isaac ibn-Latif, whose works includes both Kabbalah and philosophy. He drew his philosophical inspiration from the writings in both Arabic and Hebrew of the neo-Platonists, and especially from Ibn Gabirol's Yanbu'e-al-Hayat and the works of Abraham ibn Ezra. The theory of the Divine Logos, which he took from the Arabic neo-platonic tradition, acquires a new definition in his works. The second exponent of philosophic-mystical tendencies was Abraham Abul'afia. At least part of his inspiration was derived from the German Hasidei Ashkenaz and perhaps also through the influence of Sufi circles. However the most significant work of Jewish Gnostics- Zohar- was written by Moses Bin Shemto (Moses Leoni) in Spain (between 1280-1286 AC).

In Zohar, the God is described as En sof, which means infinite and endless. There is no quality associated with the En sof by its self, but ten example qualities are produced by this endless entity known as Sefiroth. The powers, including wisdom, reason, mercy and justice act in the created world in which we live. However it posses the lowest level of all worlds. Possessing the endlessness as a whole, En sof is completely exempt from the limitations and faults of the tangible world, for which existence of hierarchy between the En sof and the world is considered to be necessary by the schools of Kabalah. Therefore, there are similarities between Jewish mysticism and Ibn al-Arabi's beliefs about¹¹.

Conclusion

Distinguishing the path from Philo to Ibn al-Arabi seems not to be an easy task but with regard to Jews and Muslims contact in Spain, common aspects between these two intellectuals seems to be inevitable. During Medieval Ages, schools of these two monotheistic religions proved that by emphasizing on common heritage it is possible to achieve a beneficial symbiosis. However, because of their faithfulness to secrets and mysterious nature of mystical teachings, details of the contacts and interactions are not clear but according to available evidences one may conclude that rather than baseless prejudices, mysticism has associated these two groups like a bridge, so that the greatest works of Islamic and Jewish mysticism flourished in thirteenth century. *The Meccan Revelations* and *Fusus al-Hikam* of Ibn al Arabi together with *Zohar* by Moses de Leon both climaxed Islamic and Jewish gnosis.

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