

SUMMARIES

Moshe Idel

COMMENTARIES ON THE *SECRET OF 'IBBUR* IN 13th CENTURY KABBALAH AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE KABBALAH AT ITS INCEPTION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

The aim of the present study is to discern between the different meanings of the secret of *'Ibbur* in the two main schools of Kabbalah active in Gerona since the first half of the 13th century. In R. Isaac Sagi Nahor's school its main meaning is the passage of the influx within the sefirotic system and the Shekhinah's conception from this influx, as well as the descent of the influx in this world and a revelation as the result of it. In my opinion it is not plausible to interpret this concept as related to metempsychosis which means the transition of a soul from one body to another, as it is the case of the other main Kabbalistic school in Gerona, that of Nahmanides'. This study examines the various occurrences of this secret in Nahmanides' writings and in the commentaries that his followers wrote on his hints and in the anonymous Kabbalistic collectanae related to his Kabbalistic thought. My conclusion is that only in this school metempsychosis played a central role, and its approach differs from the manner in which the book of *Bahir* conceptualized it, and even more so from the manner in which the followers of R. Isaac Sagi Nahor understood the secret of *'Ibbur*. Thus the uniqueness of Nahmanides' Kabbalah is put in relief also in this case. In the appendices to this study, the meaning of the secret of the *'Ibbur* in some later treatises, is discussed.

Menachem Ratson

RULES AND DETAILS IN THE THEORIES OF RABBI ABRAHAM IBN EZRA
AND MAIMONIDES
THE LAWS OF NATURE, POLITICAL LAWS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE
GENERALITY OF THE LAW

This article makes a comparative analysis of the perceptions of Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, two of the greatest Jewish philosophers, regarding the issue of the generality of the law, a key issue in the philosophy of the law. The fact that Ibn Ezra is conceived as the first amongst the Jewish philosophers to debate the problem of the generality of the law, as being the first to determine the principles of classifying the commandments and as influencing Maimonides, expresses the need for a thorough examination of his influence on the greatest observer of Jewish religious law (Halakha). This comparative analysis raises a number of inferences:

a. In his discussions on divine observation and the laws of nature, Ibn Ezra uses “general” (*klal*) and “specific” (*prat*) terms. In his method, the general laws of nature are to be found in the Almighty’s knowledge. The laws negate individuals and, consequently, general justice sometimes prejudices the individual by relating to the general good. Wisdom is the remedy for this situation. Intelligent individuals know how to take care and defend themselves and, when they achieve the level of supreme wisdom, they become the “rule” themselves. Maimonides also perceives the general good and obligates the existence of a “personal loss.” He also perceives wisdom as a means of delivering a person from damages: according to the degree of intelligence there is observation of a person.

b. Both philosophers project the conception of the distinction between “rules” and “details” in the laws of nature and the observation on the system of political laws. Even though not an observer of Halakha, Ibn Ezra was considered to be a pioneer in determining the roots of the commandments. Ibn Ezra explains that there is, in fact, a legislative mechanism in view of the needs of reality and that there are completely new commandments not mentioned in the Torah. Maimonides also bases his classification of the commandments on the distinction between rudiments and details.

c. Both philosophers perceive the Torah’s commandments as a means by which individuals, who strive towards their spiritual realization, attain intellectual and moral fulfillment. Ibn Ezra links intelligence to the Torah and perceives the commandments

as a tool with which the mind controls the lower elements of the spirit. Maimonides also perceives the Torah as a tool to a person's spiritual realization.

d. Both philosophers debate the generality of the law applying to various details and extraordinary situations in finding the variable, within the framework of the political leadership's authorities and interpersonal relationships. Ibn Ezra relates to the leadership's authorities to adapt the system of laws to a changing reality. Maimonides is characterized by a flexible perception of the law and allows the political leadership with its various branches – the court and king – to adapt the system of laws to the changing reality. Of course, each authority is limited to the field of its jurisdiction. Thus, according to both philosophers, the wisdom of leadership is, preferable to adherence to rigid law. In practice, the flexibility embedded in the system of laws and the ability to change them, is the basis for justice and honesty.

Yishai Kiel

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS OF THE ASHKENAZI PIETISTS – BETWEEN ASCETICISM AND SENSUALITY

The Ashkenazi Pietists of the thirteenth-century are commonly believed to be the upholders of one of the most ascetic traditions in the history of Jewish thought. The article seeks to modify and refine this accepted scholarly portrayal of the Ashkenazi Pietists, by pointing out the existence of various passages that reflect a positive attitude towards the body and towards sensual pleasure. It is further argued that the Ashkenazi Pietists should only be considered ascetic in the sense of their spiritual strive towards religious perfection, but not in the sense of abstention from the world and bodily pleasure. The spiritual war waged by the Ashkenazi Pietists is not directed against the body or this-worldly pleasure, in and of itself, but rather against sinfulness and the evil inclination. As far as permitted sexual relations are concerned, there is no reason to minimize or even limit one's pleasure, as the *hasid* is instructed in fact to welcome this type of permitted sensual indulgence. When sinfulness is involved, on the other hand, the *hasid* is enjoined to take certain ascetic measures in order to overcome his desires, and in order to repent for his sins in the aftermath.

Orna Rachel Wiener

R. MORDEKHAY DATO'S COMMENTARY ON THE
VOCALIZATION POEMS

This research reveals the identity of the author of the poems on which R. Mordechay Dato wrote his commentary. My analysis of the commentary demonstrates to what extent he was following early Kabbalistic sources and where his originality lies. I discuss the commentary's strong affinity to 13th century Castilian Kabbalah, both the linguistic Kabbalah of early Gikatilla, and theosophic Kabbalah.

The relationship between the vowels and the Sephirot, and the symbolic values of the vowels will be compared to early Kabbalah. This comparison will unveil the uniqueness of Dato's commentary.

Avraham Segal

UNDERSTANDING THE "HIGER UNION" AND THE "LOWER UNION"
RESPONSES TO THE INTERPRETATION OF R. S.Z. OF LIADY

The conceptual interpretation by R.S.Z. of the "Higher Union" and the "Lower Union" as representing two opposing perspectives on the relation between the cosmos and Divinity was subject to various critiques from within the Hasidic tradition.

Whereas R.Y.A.L. of Gur, author of the *Sefat Emet* and R. Yaakov of Radzin both elaborated upon R.S.Z. approach and regarded the appearance of the power of evil in this world as an essential feature of the "Lower Union" which is contingent upon the absolute obscuration of the Presence of Divinity, R Nahman of Breslov was a vigorous opponent of the 'Habad-Hasidic' construal of the varying forms taken by Divine Appearance, and provided a kind of 'hermeneutic-of-irony' to explain the "Higher Union" and the "Lower Union". Indeed, R. Nahman's critique of R.S.Z. can be inferred in other teachings of his. So too R. Tzvi of Zydachov was careful to provide an explanation of these two Divine Unions that is at variance with that of Habad.

Ephraim Chamiel

LEFT AND RIGHT COMMENTARY TO THE PHILOSOPHY
OF RAV S. R. HIRSCH

In this paper I will present the commentary to Rav S. R. Hirsch's position on two subjects:

1) The relations between the achievements of the human's intellect and the content of the revelation, and as a result, what is the importance of general studies compare to religious studies – *Torah im Derekh Eretz*.

2) The relation to Universalism, and as a result, the relation to the idea of returning to the land of Israel in the course of the real History.

I will detail the "Haredi" commentary on the one hand, and the Academic research of the Jewish Philosophy researchers' commentary on the other hand, pointing out Hirsch's fonder, those who were hostile to his positions and those who read his writings in a balanced way. I will also explain were dose the position of the commentator coming from.

While emphasizing the superiority of the balanced reading, I will explain Hirsch's position on this two subjects according to this type of reading, and will approve this explanation by analyzing texts from Hirsch's writings. I will also bring support to this explanation from papers of other balanced researchers.

I will suggest that Hirsch distinguished between a theoretical position and an actual way to act, in regards to the relations between reason and revelation, and to general studies, and that *Torah im Derekh Eretz* was not temporary system or a compromise, but a strong affirmative position. I will also claim that Hirsch was in no way a pre-Zionist and was against return to Zion in the course of the real History.

The paper will point out once again the importance that the researcher should give to self criticism in order to try and separate as much as possible between his positions and the way he reads texts so that he will not be influenced by his views. I am aware of the fact that this is a difficult task, and certainly I am also influenced by my views when reading texts.

משה של זיגמונד פרויד והופעתו מחדש: הנשכח והבלתי נשכח

במאמר זה, אני מבדיל עצמי כפי שעשה ירושלמי, מן הנטייה לערוך פסיכואנליזה למשה האיש ואמונת היחוד. אני מציע קריאה אוהדת ואמפתית, זאת כעדות לטיפולו היוצא דופן של פרויד בעברו היהודי. בתקופה הקשה של שנות ה-30, חש פרויד כי עליו לכתוב ספר זה כדי להתמודד עם המסורת שיצקה אותו. בניתוחי את משה אני חושף את כוונותיו ואת הלוגיקה הפנימית של טיעוניו דרך מתודה פילוסופית ולא היסטורית. כהמשך למחשבתו אני מדמיין מה היה כותב אילו היה חי שנה נוספת או יותר. לבסוף, אני מדגים איך עבודתם של הוגים מודרניים מראה זיקה למחשבתו של פרויד במשה, ומסרו הופנם "בתחייתו" של פרויד עצמו (Freud redivivus).

אוריאל ברק

האם תיתכן גאולת עמלק?

עיון משווה בהשקפותיהם של הראי"ה קוק ושל הרי"מ חרל"פ

על יחסם של הוגים יהודים בעת החדשה לעמלק ועל התמודדותם עם הבעיה המוסרית שלכאורה כרוכה במצות מחיית עמלק נכתבו מאמרים אחדים. במאמרי אתמקד בבירור השקפותיהם של הראי"ה קוק ושל תלמידו הרי"מ חרל"פ על מהותו של עמלק ועל אפשרות תיקונו לעתיד לבוא. הדיון יתבסס על ההנחה המתודולוגית שהראי"ה ותלמידיו המובהקים – בנו הרב צבי יהודה, הרב חרל"פ והרב דוד כהן, הידוע בכינויו 'הרב הנזיר' – ראויים להיבחן כחוג הגותי-מיסטי מובחן. מיפוי וניתוח של השקפותיהם של הראי"ה ושל הרב חרל"פ בנושא זה מדגימים חילוקי דעות משמעותיים בין בני החוג. מאמר זה מסייע אפוא לשלילת האפשרות להציג תפיסה מונוליתית של חוג הראי"ה. בחלקו האחרון של המאמר אציע מערכת טיפולוגית פרלימינרית לסיווג השקפותיהם של הראי"ה ושל הרב חרל"פ, התואמת, בין היתר, את תיאור גישותיהם השונות כלפי עמלק.