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MEDIEVAL JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND AUTHENTIC JEWISH PIETY: YITZHAK BAER AND JULIUS GUTTMANN ON HASDAI CRESCAS'S PHILOSOPHY

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The study of medieval Jewish philosophy, since its inception with the eighteenth century *maskilim* and nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars, has been animated by a desire to shape the Jewish present and future, as well as to understand the Jewish past. While employing historical tools, scholars of medieval Jewish philosophy often have been influenced by polemical and ideological factors. These subjective considerations condition the selection of the particular philosopher which the scholar chooses to investigate. In this regard, the choice between exploring the philosophy of Judah Halevi or Maimonides is often indicative of the philosophical and theological orientation of the scholar.[1] In addition, modern understandings of Judaism are articulated

[1] See Eliezer Schweid, "Halevi and Maimonides as Representatives of Romantic Versus Rationalistic Conceptions of Judaism," in *Kabbala und Romantik*, ed. Evelin Goodman-Thau, Gerd Mattenklott and Christoph Schulte (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994), 279-292.

through conflicting scholarly interpretations of a particular medieval Jewish philosopher. The relationship between scholarship on a medieval Jewish thinker and modern Jewish philosophies and ideologies is most evident in the debates among modern Jewish scholars and thinkers on the "true" reading of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*.[2] Maimonides has been interpreted as a religious figure who defended the Jewish tradition, a religious philosopher who successfully integrated Judaism and the surrounding culture, and a radical philosopher who realized but did not teach publicly the incompatibility of Athens and Jerusalem. Each of these reading (or misreadings) of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed* serves a host of competing modern Jewish movements and ideologies. By uncovering the underlying historiosophic assumptions, we understand the role that the academic construction of medieval Jewish philosophy has played in the formation of modern Jewish philosophies and ideologies. By being cognizant of these modern assumptions, we can also better understand the medieval Jewish philosophers who often did not share them.

In this article, I will turn my attention to the scholarly interpretation of the philosophy of Hasdai Crescas, a topic that has received relatively little scholarly attention.[3] Hasdai Crescas (1340-1411/12) is considered perhaps the most innovative of medieval Jewish philosophers, and his penetrating critique of Maimonides's philosophy influenced Giovanni

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[2] The literature on Maimonides in modern Jewish thought and scholarship is voluminous. Among the many studies on the topic, see Warren Harvey, "The Return of Maimonideanism," *Jewish Social Studies* 42 (1980): 249-268; Eliezer Schweid, "The Influence of Maimonides in 20th Century Jewish Thought," in *Shlomo Pines Jubilee Volume*, ed. M. Idel, Z. Harvey and E. Schweid, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 293-324 [Heb.]; Michael Marmur, "Heschel's Two Maimonides," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98 (2008): 230-254; George Kohler, *Reading Maimonides' Philosophy in 19th Century Germany* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012).

[3] To the best of my knowledge, the only study on this topic is the recently published article by Natan Ophir,"Renewed Interest in *Or Hashem* of R. Hasdai Crescas in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century and the Warm Reception by R. Chaim Yirmiyahu Flansburg, the Nazir and Rav Kook," *Or Ha-Shem from Spain: The Life, Works and Philosophy of R. Hasdai Crescas*, ed. E. Eisenmann and W. Harvey (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2020), 301-328 [Heb.].

Francesco Pico della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno and Spinoza.[4] I have chosen to investigate the treatment of Crescas's philosophy by Yitzhak Baer and Julius Guttmann, two German Jewish scholars who emigrated to Palestine in the 1930s and were faculty members in Hebrew University's burgeoning Jewish Studies department.[5] This article will probe the portrait of Crescas's philosophy that each scholar offers, focusing on the relationship between their important studies on Crescas's philosophy and their own conceptions of Judaism. I will demonstrate that both bring to their analyses of Crescas assumptions regarding the relationship between the Jewish tradition and philosophy. I will also discuss the ways that uncovering these assumptions, which I believe are problematic, can help us to understand seminal features of Crescas's unique and innovative philosophical outlook.

Yitzhak Baer on Authentic Jewish Piety

Yitzhak F. Baer was raised, educated, and began his scholarly career in Germany as a staff researcher at the *Akademie fur die Wissenschaft des Judentum* in Berlin after completing his dissertation on the history of Jewish society in Aragon during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He emigrated to Palestine in the 1930s after receiving an academic appointment in medieval Jewish history at Hebrew University.[6] Although

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[4] On the influence of Crescas on Spinoza, see Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, Cambridge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 264-295; Carlos Fraenkel, "Hasdai Crescas on God as the Place of the World and Spinoza's Notion of God as '*Res Extensa*,'" *Aleph* 9 (2009): 77-111.

[5] I have also discussed the reception history of Crescas's philosophy in a forthcoming article, "Israeli Scholarly Portraits of Hasdai Crescas: A Chapter in the Reception History of Crescas' Philosophy," *Da'at*, forthcoming.

[6] On Baer's life, scholarly contribution, historiography, and historiosophy, see Isaiah Sonne, "On Baer and His Philosophy of Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (1947): 61-80; Ephraim Shmueli, "The Philosophical-Historical Outlook of Isaac Baer," *Kivunim* 4 (1979): 94-108 [Heb.]; Shmuel Ettinger, "Isaac Baer in Memory (1888-1980)," *Zion* 44 (1979): 9-20 [Heb.]; Pinhas Rosenbluth, "The Approach of Isaac Baer to Society and History," in *Society and History*, ed. Yehezkiel Cohen (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education, 1980), 302-315 [Heb.]; David Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and Zionist Return to*

his scholarship did not focus on Jewish philosophy, Baer's interest in the intellectual and social history of the Jews in Christian Spain led him to investigate the life and thought of Hasdai Crescas. Indeed, in his two-volume monumental work on the subject, published in Hebrew in 1938, Baer devoted more space to Crescas than perhaps any other figure.[7] His treatment of Crescas is wholly laudatory and even effusive, and it concludes in a manner that borders on hagiography:

> Could the ancient prophets of Israel, or Rabbi Akiba and his associates, have looked down from heaven upon the struggles of their posterity in the Spanish Exile, they would doubtless have felt love, compassion and astonishment at the sight of this faithful man, a unique figure in Israel in the waning days of the Middle Ages.[8]

Baer also dealt with Crescas's philosophy in an article on the relationship between Crescas's views on human free choice and the theological writings of Abner of Burgos.[9] He argues that Crescas's approach to the question of free will were deeply influenced by the views of the apostate Abner of Burgos.

Baer's approach to Hasdai Crescas is grounded in his general historiosophic assumptions, particularly his account of medieval Spanish Jewry and its relation to medieval Ashkenazi Jewry. He views Spanish Jewry through the Zionist lens, which is critical of exilic Jewry for its

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History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 109-128; Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "'Without Regard for External Considerations'—The Question of Christianity in Scholem's and Baer's Writings," *Jewish Studies* 38 (1998): 73-96 [Heb.]; Alfred Bodenheimer, "The History of a Missing Land: Yitzhak Fritz Baer's Book *Galut*," *Teudah* 20 (2005): 25-36 [Heb.]; Israel Yuval, "Yitzhak Baer and the Search for Authentic Judaism," in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, ed. D. Myers and D. Ruderman, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 77-87.

[7] Yitzhak Baer, *Toledot ha-Yehudim bi-Sefarad ha-Nozrit̲* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved), 292-303318-323 ת; English translation: *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961), 110-130, 158-166.

[8] Ibid., 166.

[9] Baer, "*Sefer Minhat Kanaot̲* of Abner of Burgos and Its Influence on Hasdai Crescas," *Tarbiz̲* 11 (1940): 188-206 [Heb.]. Republished in *Studies in The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel, 1985), 350-368 [Heb.].

acculturation and assimilation into European culture and society. This concern is highlighted in the opening sentences of his major work on Jewish history:

> The internal conflicts and external pressures [of Jews in Christian Spain], engendered by these conditions, are akin to the trails which beset our people today. The medieval Jew lived in a time midway between the original creative epoch of the national genius and the modern period of disintegration of traditional values.[10]

Thus, Jewish history is conceived as the struggle of the Jewish people to preserve "its heritage of national traditions in the original purity" by combatting the assimilatory forces of the neighboring culture and religion.[11]

Baer's emphasis on conserving Jewish heritage leads to his derisive portrayal of Spanish Jewry (particularly its cultural elite and courtier class). He censures Spanish Jews who largely converted to Christianity and contrasts them with Ashkenazi Jews who heroically offered themselves as sacrifices in response to efforts to make them Christian. Baer is clearly responding to the "myth of Sephardic supremacy," upheld by *Wissenschaft* scholars who glorified the cultural products of medieval Spanish Jewish scholars who were engaged with the surrounding philosophical culture.[12] By contrast, Baer argues that the philosophic commitments of the cultural and economic elite of Spanish Jewry weakened their faith.

Contrasting them to the simple masses, he excoriates these weak-willed philosophers:

> As is to be expected, most of the apostates whose names we know came from the wealthy and cultured classes. Jewish religious zealots rightly sought the cause of apostasy in the philosophic views of the converts, and

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[10] Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 3.

[11] Ibid., 4.

[12] Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34 (1989): 47-66. Republished in *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 71-92.

> contrasted these people with the humble men and women whose simple faith withstood the test.[13]

For Baer, philosophy leads to apostasy because it engenders despair and corrodes simple faith by viewing the commandments as means rather than ends to religious perfection.[14] He also accuses Jewish philosophers of aristocratic and hedonistic tendencies, again contrasting them with the leaders of Ashkenazi Jewry who were egalitarian and ascetic. So Baer's understanding of medieval Jewish history is grounded in a sharp dichotomy: the unpretentious masses with their simple faith, strict observance of Jewish law, pietism, and hope in messianic redemption reside primarily in Ashkenaz and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice represent authentic Judaism; by contrast, Sephardic Jewish philosophers have been corrupted by an amoral, foreign rationalism that brings about a sense of hopelessness and a tenuous link to halakhic observance, which in turn make them susceptible to the missionizing efforts of the Church.[15]

Baer views this Ashkenazi pietism as a medieval form of earlier authentic Jewish piety, which is a unifying force in the development of Jewish history. In this regard, it is surprising that Baer argues that Ashkenazi and Christian piety share a populist, ascetic, and eschatological fervor and that their commonality is due to the influence of Christianity on Ashkenazi pietism.[16] Consequently, in his main study on Ashkenazi pietism, he focuses on the Franciscan influence in elements of the religious and social outlook of twelfth and thirteenth century Rhineland pietists. He

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[13] Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 130-131.

[14] For a critique of Baer's view regarding the relationship of philosophical views and apostasy, see Joseph Hacker, "The Place of Abraham Bibago in the Controversy and on the Study and Status of Philosophy in Fifteenth-Century Spain," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies), 151-158 [Heb.].

[15] For a less dichotomous understanding of the relationship between Jewish conversions to Christianity in Spain and Ashkenaz, see Paola Tartakoff, "Testing Boundaries: Jewish Conversion and Cultural Fluidity in Medieval Europe, c. 1200-1391," *Speculum* 90 (2015): 728-762.

[16] Yitzhak Baer, "The Religious-Social Tendency of Sefer Hasidim," *Zion* 3 (1938): 1-50 [Heb.]. Republished in *Studies in The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, 175-224 [Heb.].

argues that they did not form an elitist and esoteric group of mystics, but that they were interested in disseminating their views and way of life to the masses and generated a popular movement of ascetic penitential pietism with its valorization of martyrdom. They were involved in reforming the community and excoriated communal leaders and wealthy members of the community who exploited the poor. These characteristics of the social and religious programs of the Ashkenazi pietists, Baer claims, derive from contemporaneous forms of Christian piety who espoused monastic and mendicant ideals.

The relationship between Jewish piety and Christian piety also appears in Baer's studies on the historical context of Spanish Jewish mystical texts, particularly the *Tikunei ha-Zohar* and *Ra'aya Meheimna*.[17] Baer cast the author of these late thirteenth or early fourteenth century texts as a mystical and ascetic pietist who is concerned with censuring the secularism, corruption, licentiousness and philosophic views of wealthy Jewish political leaders. According to Baer, this mystic finds spiritual value in poverty and adopts eschatological notions in which a spiritual Torah will replace the current material Torah. Baer argues for a parallel between these conceptions and those of Franciscan monks. He concludes that the Jewish mystic heard orally or read a Franciscan commentary on Jeremiah which combines spiritual ideals of Francis of Assisi with those of the Abbot Joachim of Fiore.[18]

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[17] Yitzhak Baer, "The Historical Background of the *Ra'aya Meheimna*," *Zion* 5 (1939-1940): 1-44. Republished in *Studies in The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, 306-349.

[18] For a critique of Baer's view on the influence of Christian sources on the author of *Tikunei ha-Zohar* and *Ra'aya Meheimna,* see the comments of Pinhas Geller in his monograph on these texts: "Although there are similarities between these teachings and those of the author's Christian contemporaries, these teaching are not the main preoccupation of the *Tiqqunim* and *Ra'aya Meheimna*. The Zohar literature may borrow literary motifs from many sources, including Christian mystical texts, yet its attitude toward Christianity is savagely negative. In his eagerness to identify links between the author of *Ra'aya Meheimna* and his Christian contemporaries, Baer gave scant attention to the fact that their shared notions reflect the common values of pious ascetics in every culture" (Geller, *The Enlightened Will Shine: Symbolization and Theurgy in the Later Strata of the Zohar* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1993], 45).

It should be noted that Baer viewed Ashkenazi and Spanish mystical pietism as a continuation of ancient Jewish spirituality. In fact, all of the characteristics that he attributed to medieval Jewish piety in its Ashkenazi and Sephardic guises (asceticism, egalitarianism, anti-rationalism, punctilious observance of halakhah, messianic fervor, willingness to suffer martyrdom, etc.) are found in second Temple Jewish piety, which Baer portrays in a series of studies.[19] Hence, the influence of Christianity on these medieval Jewish movements and thinkers does not impair their ability to preserve authentic Judaism, since Christian piety continues core elements of Second Temple Jewish piety. [20] Thus, a parallel between Christian monastic and medieval Jewish spiritual ideals is paradoxically a signpost that a Jewish medieval group or individual is an authentic representative of ancient Jewish piety.

Baer on Hasdai Crescas Anti-Rationalism

Yitzhak Baer's contrast between the simple faith and pietism of the masses and the rationalism and elitism of the courtier class shapes his portrait of Hasdai Crescas. In his scholarship on Christian Spanish Jewry, Baer focus upon "the battle of the few outstanding individuals [*yihidei segulah*] against the cause of secularism and sterility," while decrying the philosophers and members of the upper class who contributed to conversion and apostasy.[21] Yet, despite Crescas's deep involvement in philosophic discourse and his hailing from an aristocratic family, Baer places him squarely in the former category. Indeed, Baer attributes to Crescas all the characteristics of Jewish piety: alliance with and caring for the masses, encouragement of messianic speculation and fervor, and anti-rationalism.

Baer portrays Crescas as a leader of the people who showed great empathy for their struggle. He therefore worked intensively to repair the

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[19] Baer, *Studies in The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1.

[20] Yuval, "Yitzhak Baer and the Search for Authentic Judaism."

[21] Baer, *Studies in The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, 339.

material and spiritual damage of the Jewish communities of Aragon after the devastation, destruction, and despair brought on by the pogroms of 1391. Baer describes in great detail the efforts of Crescas in rehabilitating the Aragonese Jewish society and extols him for his valiant actions: "The great man [i.e. Crescas] has now become the spearhead of all efforts to save and restore the Jewish communities."[22] Crescas brought about the material amelioration of the Aragonese Jewish society through *takkanot* and intercession with the king.[23] But, for Baer, Crescas was also concerned with raising the spirits of the masses to whom he was deeply connected. He also emboldened messianic speculation, looked favorably on popular religious custom, and was able "to win the hearts of the artisans and humble folk." [24] Thus, despite the lack of messianic speculation in Crescas's philosophic works, Baer was able to assemble an array of texts that suggest that Crescas lent support to individuals with messianic claims.[25]

To justify his portrait of Crescas as an anti-rationalist pietist, Baer must explain Crescas's motivation in composing a seemingly abstruse and scholastic work of Jewish philosophy. He argues that Crescas was interested in combating rationalism, which was opposed to authentic Jewish faith, and preserving "beliefs that the Jewish people had clung to for generations" (ignoring the instances where Crescas upheld highly unorthodox philosophic views, such as his rejection of creation *ab initio*).[26]

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[22] Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 2, 114.

[23] Ibid., 110-130; see also Yom Tov Assis, "R. Hasdai Crescas' Work for the Rehabilitation of the Jewish Communities after the 1391 Massacres," *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress on Jewish Studies*, division B, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1990), 145-148 [Heb.].

[24] Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 2, 163.

[25] Ibid., 160-162; for a more cautious reading of these text see Zev Harvey, *R. Hasdai Crescas* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2010), 51-60 [Heb.].

[26] Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 2, 166. For Crescas's unconventional approach to the question of the origin of the world (particularly for a thinker opposed to the inroads of rationalism on Jewish thought), see Seymour Feldman, "The Theory of Eternal Creation in Hasdai Crescas and Some of His Predecessors," *Viator* 11 (1998): 289-320.

As he asserts, "though seemingly all abstract theory, the book [i.e. *Or Hashem*] was in fact devoted to the fateful struggles of R. Hasdai's generation."[27] In fact, Baer views Crescas as a thorough ant-rationalist who was compelled to employ the philosophic tools to which he was opposed.[28] For Baer, the philosophic veneer of *Or Hashem* should not cover up its pietistic center, which represent authentic spiritual Jewish values.[29]

Baer's creative interpretation of Crescas's philosophy as a form of Jewish authentic pietism is most evident in his treatment of the views of Crescas and other Jewish philosophers on the question of human choice. Baer views free will as a principle of the biblical-rabbinic outlook and argues that medieval extreme rationalism in the form of Averroism adopted deterministic views. He then depicts Crescas as combatting these views as part of his attack on philosophic rationalism: "R. Hasdai did not succumb to absolute determinism, but rather stressed freedom of choice and rewards attendant on faith."[30] Actually, medieval Jewish rationalists such as Levi b. Gershon and Isaac Poliqar upheld human free choice and limited divine providence, while Crescas was willing to sacrifice human free will on the altar of divine providence.[31] Baer's historiosophy,

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[27] Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 2, 163.

[28] Ibid., 166.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 165.

[31] On Crescas's view of human free choice, see Crescas, *Or Hashem*, 2:5; Seymour Feldman, "Crescas' Theological Determinism," *Da'at*, 9 (1982): 3–28; Seymour Feldman, "A Debate Concerning Determinism in Late Medieval Jewish Philosophy," *PAAJR* 51 (1984): 15–54; Harvey, *Rabbi Hasdai Crescas*, 120-126; Harvey, "Comments on the Expression 'Feeling of Compulsion' in Rabbi Hasdai Crescas," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 4 (1985): 275–280 [Heb.]; Shalom Sadik, *The Essence of Choice in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*(Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2017), 268-275 [Heb.]. On Gersonides, see Gersonides, *The Wars of the Lord*, vol. 2, tran. S. Feldman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987), 75-138; Tamar Rudavsky, "Divine Omniscience and Future Contingents in Gersonides," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 2 (1983): 513–36; Sarah Klein-Braslavy, "Gersonides on Determinism, Contingency, Choice and Foreknowledge," *Da'at* 22 (1989): 5-53 [Heb.]; Charles Manekin, "Freedom Within Reason? Gersonides on Human Choice," in *Freedom and Moral Responsibility: General and Jewish Perspectives*, ed. C. Manekin (College Park: University of Maryland Press, 1997), 165-204; Sadik, *The Essence of Choice in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 222-

however, lead him to depict Crescas as a voluntarist and paint his philosophic opponents with deterministic colors.

Baer's analysis of the philosophic sources of Crescas's treatment of human choice can also be understood in relation to his historiosophy. Julius Guttmann had argued that Crescas's discussion of human choice drew liberally from the philosophies of Islamic Aristotelians such as al-Farabi and Averroes.[32] In a groundbreaking article, Baer responded to Guttmann's thesis and argued against a decisive influence of Islamic Aristotelians on Crescas's discussion of human free will. Instead, he showed that Crescas's view was deeply influenced by the Jewish convert to Christianity, Abner of Burgos.[33] This aspect of Baer's treatment of Crescas's philosophy provided an important contribution to understanding the philosophic context of Crescas's views, and other scholars have expanded upon it and provided additional evidence of Crescas's borrowing from the philosophical and theological writings of Abner.[34] But one can surmise that Baer was not only motivated by a better understanding of Crescas's philosophic sources. Crescas's link to Christian sources helps Baer to designate Crescas as part of the Jewish pietistic stream, which generally had some connection to Christianity.

Julius Guttmann on the History of Jewish Philosophy

The second treatment of Crescas that we will examine is that of Baer's colleague at Hebrew University, Julius Guttmann (1880-1950). He studied at the University of Breslau, where he received his Ph.D. in 1903, and at the *Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar* of Breslau, where he was ordained in

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239. On Poliqar, see Poliqar, *'Ezer ha-Dat*, ed. J. Levinger (Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1984), 105-153; Sadik, *The Essence of Choice in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 176-199.

[32] See below.

[33] See above.

[34] Shalom Sadik, "Crescas' Critique of Aristotle and the Lost Book by Abner of Burgos," *Tarbiz* 77 (2008): 133–155 [Heb.]; Sadik, "The Definition of Place in the Thought of Abner of Burgos and Rabbi Hasdai," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 22 (2011): 233–246 [Heb.].

1906.[35] He began his academic career at the *Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin as the recipient of the first chair of philosophy. His research focused on the history of medieval Jewish philosophy, and in 1933 he published his magnum opus, *Die Philosophie des Judentums*. He devoted a long section to Hasdai Crescas, who in his estimation provides the most sophisticated critique of Aristotelianism.[36] After of Hitler's rise to power, Guttmann immigrated to Palestine in 1934 and was appointed as the first permanent lecturer in Jewish philosophy at Hebrew University. Shortly after arriving in Palestine, he composed an article (also written in German) on the philosophic sources of Crescas's approach to the question of human fee will.[37] Both of these texts were translated into Hebrew in the early 1950s and represent one of the first extensive treatments in Hebrew of Crescas's philosophy.[38]

Guttmann's approach to Crescas must be understood in relation to his overall conception of the development of Jewish philosophy.[39] In his introduction to Guttmann's work, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky describes

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[35] For an intellectual biography of Julius Guttmann, see Fritz Bamberger, "Julius Guttmann — Philosopher of Judaism," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 5 (1960): 3-34; Yehoyada Amir, "Yitzhak Julius Guttmann and the Study of Jewish Philosophy," in *The History of Hebrew University of Jerusalem: A Period of Consolidation and Growth*, vol. 1, ed. H. Lavski (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 219–255 [Heb.].

[36] Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964), 224-241.

[37] Julius Guttmann, "Das Problem der Willensfreiheit bei Hasdai Crescas und den islamischen Aristotelikern," in *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut*, ed. S. Baron and A. Marx (New York: The Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1935), 325-349.

[38] Julius Guttmann, *Ha-Filosofiyah shel ha-Yahadut* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1951); Idem, *Dat u– Mada'*, ed. S.H. Bergman and N. Rotenstreich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1955), 149-168.

[39] On Guttmann's account of the history of Jewish philosophy and the underlying historiosophic assumptions, see Moses Schwartz, "The Enlightenment and Its Implication for Jewish Philosophy in the Modern Period (The Polemic between Julius Guttmann and Leo Strauss)," *Da'at* 1 (1978): 7-16 [Heb.]; Eliezer Schweid, "Religion and Philosophy: The Scholarly-Theological Debate between Julius Guttmann and Leo Strauss," in *Maimonidean Studies,* vol. 1, ed. Arthur Hyman (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1990), 163-95; and especially Jonathan Cohen, *Philosophers and Scholars: Wolfson, Guttmann and Strauss on the History of Jewish Philosophy* (Lanham, MD : Lexington Books, 2007), 145-200.

succinctly the historiosophic assumptions that lie at the foundation of Guttmann's history of Jewish philosophy:

> Guttmann nowhere explicitly states his own views regarding the essence of Judaism; as an historian, rather than a creative systematic thinker, he preferred his "phenomenology of Judaism" to remain implicit in his work. But he was far from being a historical relativist, and firmly believed in an essence of Judaism, the proper understanding of which would provide a yardstick by which to measure the essential Jewishness (or, alternatively the degree of un-Jewish derivation) in ideas and doctrines. With this firm conviction, Guttmann was even able to argue that Jewish philosophy, as such, was never a purely and immanently Jewish creation; it never welled up spontaneously from the inmost foundations of Jewish life. It always drew on alien influences, yet always stamped what it received from outside with its individual and specifically Jewish character.[40]

Thus, Guttmann attempts to identify a Jewish religious essence, and he views this Jewish core as emerging from the religiosity developed by the prophets.[41] He argues that this foundation of Judaism conflicts with aspects of the Greek philosophical worldview. As a result, medieval Jewish philosophers attempts to harmonize their commitments to the Jewish and the philosophic traditions often fails. Indeed, these two disparate sources generate conflicts in the views of medieval Jewish philosophers, and Guttmann's treatment of these philosophers is concerned with bringing these clashes to the foreground.[42] For example, Maimonides struggles between adopting the moral ideal of the Bible or the intellectual ideal of the philosophers. Unlike other harmonistic readings of the *Guide of the Perplexed* (including that of his teacher, Hermann Cohen), Guttmann does not believe that Maimonides succeeded

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[40] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 9.

[41] Ibid., 5.

[42] Cohen, *Philosophers and Scholars*, 202-204.

in resolving these tensions, and he opposes Maimonides's conception of the commandments due to this failure.[43]

The relation between Judaism and philosophy in Guttmann's history of Jewish philosophy, however, is not exclusively oppositional. He also accepts the possibility of integration and even genuine synthesis.[44] Indeed, the very possibility of Jewish philosophy for Guttmann emerges from philosophic reflection on the non-philosophic sources of Judaism.[45] Thus, philosophic ideas enter into the Jewish tradition from outside, but they are "transformed and adopted according to specific Jewish points of view" in the writings of medieval Jewish philosophers.[46] In addition, according to Guttmann, medieval Jewish philosophers employ the conceptual tools of

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[43] See the concluding sentences of his treatment of Maimonides's philosophy: "Within the sphere of philosophic rationalism, even his interpretation of the Law was felt to provide a justification of Jewish religion. But the religious ideals of this theistic Aristotelianism were still Aristotelian, though they were introduced into historical Judaism without any awareness of basic religious discrepancies. It is not difficult to understand the opposition which the system of Maimonides aroused in circles which lived integrally and fully in the Jewish tradition. Genuine Judaism felt, long before it was able to give scientific expression to its feeling, that the scientific validation of the Jewish religion involved a profound transformation of its religious content" (Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 182).

[44] While clearly claiming that philosophy is often opposed to Judaism, Guttmann is less explicit about the possibility of synthesis between authentic Judaism and philosophy. As a result, scholars have at times failed to detect this aspect of Guttmann's understanding of the relationship between Judaism and philosophy, and they have misrepresented his views accordingly. See for example Isaiah Sonne's unjustified criticism of the anti-rationalism of Guttmann's *Philosophies of Judaism*: "Indeed, the anti-rational theory of Judaism found its classical expression in Julius Guttmann's *Philosophy of Judaism*, which in the last analysis boils down to the statement that there is no Jewish philosophy, because rational thinking is alien to the Jewish spirit. The whole Jewish philosophical movement, according to Guttmann, is nothing else than a futile attempt to harmonize two antagonistic elements, and was bound to fail" (Isaiah Sonne, "On Baer and His Philosophy of Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies* 9 [1947]: 68). For a similarly one-sided analysis of Guttmann's historiosophy of Jewish philosophy, see Eliezer Schweid, "Jewish Philosophy as a Trend in the Philosophy of the 20th Century," *Da'at* 23 (1989): 101-110 [Heb.]. For a good account of the possibility of a non-antagonistic relationship between philosophy and Judaism according to Guttmann, see Cohen, *Philosophers and Scholars*, 204-206.

[45] Schweid, "Religion and Philosophy," 175.

[46] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 3.

philosophy to offer a more progressive and religiously elevated formulation of biblical concepts. The possibility of progressive formulations of biblical concepts is possible due to Guttmann's distinction between the religious significance of a biblical idea and its particular formulation. This distinction allows medieval Jewish philosophers (as well as modern Jewish philosophers) to formulate a more sophisticated version of the idea while retaining its religious significance.[47] Thus, Guttmann assesses medieval Jewish philosophers not only in respect to their fealty to authentic Judaism and their ability to avoid the uncritical absorption of foreign notions; he also evaluates these thinkers in regard to their ability to justify and formulate these ideas in a coherent manner in accordance with Guttmann's own philosophy of religion. He therefore criticizes Saadia for "immature thinking" and Solomon Ibn Gabirol for lack of "clarity and correctness," and he praises Judah Halevi for anticipating Guttmann's own conception regarding the "principle of the autonomy of *all* religious experience in relation to philosophic cognition."[48]

Guttmann's understanding of the relationship between Judaism and philosophy dictates his account of the development of Jewish philosophy. Thus, Guttmann begins his major work on the history of Jewish philosophy with a chapter on the essential principles of the prophetic faith, which forms the foundation of the Jewish religion.[49] Guttmann places particular emphasis on the Biblical notion of God's ethical

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[47] See below.

[48] Guttmann, "On Religion and Science in Medieval and Modern Jewish Thought," in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, 301 (emphasis appears in the original); on Saadia and Ibn Gabirol see Idem, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 61, 91; on Judah Halevi see also Idem, *Dat u–Mada'*, 66-85; on Guttmann's own view regarding the autonomy of religious experience, see Idem, *On the Philosophy of Religion* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1976).

[49] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 3-17; on authentic religious doctrines of Judaism, see also Idem, "Establishing Norms of Jewish Beliefs," in *Studies in Jewish Thought: An Anthology of German Jewish Scholarship*, ed. A. Jospe (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1981), 54-69; Idem, "On the Fundamental of Judaism," *Dat u–Mada'*, 230-258 [Heb.]; Cohen, *Philosophers and Scholars*, 145-154.

personality and its implications for the notion of the will of God and human beings:

> The distinctiveness of biblical religion is due to its ethical conception of the personality of God. The God of the prophets is exemplified by his moral will: he is demanding and commanding, promising and threatening, the absolute free ruler of man and nature.…The decisive feature of monotheism is that it is not grounded in an abstract idea of God, but in an intensely powerful divine will which rules history. This ethical voluntarism implies thoroughly personalistic conception of God, and determines the specific character of the relationship between God and man. The relationship is an ethical-voluntaristic one between two moral personalities, between an 'I' and a 'Thou.' As God imposes his will upon that of man, so man becomes aware of the nature of his relation to God.… God's relationship to the world is conceived along the same lines. He is the Lord of the world he directs it according to his will, and he realizes his purposes within it. His relationship to the world is not grounded in a natural force, but in the unconditioned freedom of his will.…The omnipotence of the divine will appears most clearly when the world itself is looked upon as nothing but the work of this will.[50]

Thus, Guttmann views prophetic faith as grounded in a notion of a personal God commanding human beings through a divine moral will. The theological foundation of this conception differs sharply from both magical and pantheistic theologies in which God is not totally apart from nature. Instead, the biblical notion of creation conceives of God as Lord of the world, and nature and human beings as wholly dependent on its divine source. This dependence, however, does not negate the freedom of human beings. As Guttmann declares, "it is clear that the Bible does not discuss theoretically on the essence and possibility of freedom, but there is the belief that the lives of human beings are in their control and it is incumbent upon them to struggle, create and choose."[51]

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[50] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 5-6.

[51] Guttmann, *Dat u-Mada'*, 270.

Guttmann on Hasdai Crescas's Voluntarism

In viewing Jewish philosophers as navigating between their commitments to biblical religiosity and a philosophic worldview, it is not surprising that Guttmann opens his treatment of Crescas's philosophy by addressing this very issue regarding Crescas:

> Certainly the separation of Judaism from Aristotelianism entailed a return to the fundamentals of biblical religion, with the result that in applying this viewpoint to particulars, Crescas for the most part recaptured the original meaning of individual concepts. But despite this harmonization with Jewish tradition, a profound difference still remained. He gave the voluntarism, which linked him with the Bible, a deterministic twist, and thus stamped it with an entirely new form.[52]

Thus, Guttmann views Crescas's voluntarism as the key to understanding Crescas's dialectical relation to the doctrines of biblical faith. On the hand, voluntarism is the key to Crescas's "return to the fundamentals of biblical religion" as he combats Aristotelianism. On the other hand, his voluntarism also represents his departure from the biblical outlook by combining it with a deterministic component. It is incumbent upon us to understand the relationship between voluntarism and determinism and, in turn, their relationship to biblical religion and Aristotelianism in Guttmann's conception of Crescas's philosophy.

Let us begin with Guttmann's claims regarding Crescas's affirming biblical voluntarism. Guttmann avers that Crescas affirms a voluntarism in his conception of God and human beings that represents a reversion to biblical religious doctrines. However, Guttmann's understanding of Crescas's return to authentic Jewish beliefs should be contrasted with Baer's aligning of Crescas's philosophy with ancient Jewish piety. Unlike Baer, Guttmann recognizes that Crescas was not a mere opponent of philosophy. While opposing and critiquing Aristotelianism, he was interested in replacing "false philosophy by true philosophy."[53] That is, he

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[52] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 226-227.

[53] Ibid., 226.

sought out a philosophic foundation for biblical voluntarism. Thus, in his account of divine attributes, he provides a new philosophic conception of the essence of God, which allows for multiple divine qualities. Most importantly, Crescas views God not primarily in intellectual terms, but he posits and provides philosophic justification for a God who is characterized by absolute goodness, subject to emotions and in relation with human beings.[54]

Likewise, Guttmann underscores that Crescas has abandoned the Aristotelian view that the purpose of human existence is intellectual perfection. Instead, he had returned to the biblical notion that love of God and the purpose of human beings are dependent on feeling and will.[55] As he notes, "For Crescas, feeling and will were not merely concomitant phenomena of thought, but independent elements of consciousness; this psychological independence of feeling made him seek the ultimate purpose of man in something other than the purely intellectual realm."[56] In this regard, Guttmann contrasts the opposition to radical rationalism of Judah Halevi and Crescas. Judah Halevi's view on human perfection still contains remnants of Neoplatonic doctrine, while Crescas was able to free himself completely from any dependence on philosophic elements, providing a sharp critique of philosophic rationalism.[57]

Guttmann also identifies areas in which Crescas's philosophy provides sophisticated formulations of biblical ideas. For example, Crescas's placement of feeling and will at the center of the religious experience and his separation of these psychic faculties from intellect allows religion to acquire autonomy vis-à-vis science, which is an important principle in Guttmann's own philosophy of religion. [58] Guttmann also intimates that Crescas's conception of creation breaks new ground in its ability to divorce the religious significance of the biblical idea

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[54] Ibid., 232-235.

[55] Ibid., 236.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid, 130, 236.

[58] See above.

of creation from the formulation that it receives therein. For Guttmann, the religious significance of the biblical idea of creation is that "the world is His creation and I am a creation of God."[59] In the Bible, creation is formulated as the notion that God brought the world into existence in six days. But the religious significance of the creation idea is not dependent on this formulation. In response, while not accepting the biblical notion that the world was created at a moment in time, Crescas still retains the religious concept behind creation: "the world in the fullness of its being stems from God and no ground of being independent of him".[60] Thus, like Guttmann's teacher, Hermann Cohen, Crescas advances the biblical conception of God as the source of the being of all things.[61]

Typically, Guttmann attempts to uncover the tensions and even conflicts within Crescas's commitment to voluntarism. The deviation from biblical voluntarism is most evident in his treatment of the question of human free will. More than any other Jewish philosopher, Crescas places limits on human free choice.[62] Guttmann views Crescas in this issue as following Arabic Aristotelians who affirmed deterministic views.[63] What is more, Guttmann claims that Crescas's determinism also contaminates his theology. In contrast to other interpretations of Crescas's understanding of God's will, Guttmann claims that Crescas affirmed "the necessary operation of the divine will"[64] of God. In this regard, Guttmann

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[59] Guttmann, *Dat –Mada'*, 262.

[60] Ibid., 230.

[61] Ibid., 364-365. See also the formulation in Guttmann's work on philosophy of religion: "When the Torah recounts the Creation its aim is not to tell of what was, but of the world as it is and of man's relationship with God. Here a question is raised which was already being asked in medieval Jewish philosophy, as, for example, by Hasdai Crescas" (*On the Philosophy of Religion*, 28).

[62] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 238-240.

[63] Guttmann, *Dat u–Mada'*, 149-168.

[64] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 231. For a contrasting understanding of Crescas's conception of divine will, see Shlomo Pines, *History of Jewish Philosophy form Maimonides to Spinoza* (Jerusalem: Akademon Press, 1991), 82 [Heb.].

contrasts Crescas's conception of God with Maimonides's alternative understanding of God's will:

> [Crescas'] idea of the divine will was decisively changed. According to Maimonides, the world could not have been originated by the divine will unless the will was absolutely free. Voluntary causality and necessary causality are contradictory terms. For Crescas, this opposition did not exist, and it was possible to understand the world as the result of the necessary operation of the divine will. The essence of willing means only that it assents to that which is presented to it conceptually, and by this assent brings it into existence. This is also possible when the act of affirmation is a necessary consequence of the essence of the willing agent.[65]

Guttmann views Crescas like other great medieval Jewish philosophers (particularly Maimonides) as combining elements of biblical religiosity with aspects of Greek philosophy, without resolving wholly the conflict between them.[66] He brings biblical voluntarism and its notion of God as creator to new heights, but he deviates from biblical religiosity through his deterministic views.

What Baer's and Guttmann's Historiosophy Teach Us about Crescas's Philosophy

Having analyzed the historiosphic assumptions of Baer's and Guttman's analyses of Hasdai Crescas, we can explore what these

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[65] Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 231.

[66] See the concluding sentences of Guttmann's treatment of Crescas's philosophy: "This attempt to overcome Aristotelianism stands in a very special relation to Maimonides' efforts to formulate a theistic Aristotelianism. The basic similarity of the two was in their explanation of God's creativity, where both upheld a voluntaristic rather than the Aristotelian position. Only in Crescas does voluntarism affect the entire system and thereby overcome Aristotelianism.…For Maimonides, will and necessity were incompatible; for Crescas they were essentially compatible. He transformed the doctrine of emanation into the necessary volition of the divine creativity. In the place of reason, the love of God, necessarily developed in the soul of man, served as the link between God and man. This conception was quite distant from historical Judaism, both metaphysically and religiously.…it is difficult to say of the two which remained closer to the essence of historical Judaism" (Ibid., 241).

assumptions can teach us about his philosophy. I would argue that despite the scholarly achievements of both of their writings on Crescas (particularly Baer's comparison between Crescas and Abner and Guttmann's subtle analysis of a number of Crescas's philosophic positions), they forced Crescas into a Procrustean bed of false dichotomies, such as piety and philosophy and Jewish tradition and Western philosophy. These lenses from which they observe and analyze Crescas's philosophy are distortive, resulting in their attributing to Crescas's philosophy characteristics that do not capture the complexity of his Jewish/philosophic conceptions. However, by pointing out the problems in Baer's and Guttmann's approach, we can actually understand central features of Crescas's unique outlook.

Let us begin by pointing to the problems in Baer's characterization of Crescas as a fierce anti-rationalist who was defending an authentic Jewish piety. As noted above, Baer portrays Crescas as a Jewish pietist whose main concern is articulating and defending authentic Jewish beliefs, using philosophy in a limited fashion for mere apologetic purposes. Yet it seems wholly inaccurate to position Hasdai Crescas as antagonistic to philosophy. It is true that Crescas opposed certain Maimonidean philosophers who espoused radical theological positions. However, in certain respects, Crescas is more philosophical than those thinkers whom he criticized (and Baer viewed as true philosophers). Crescas's critique of far-reaching rationalism is deeply philosophic in respect to his commitment to the philosophic tools of logical and syllogistic argumentation, his willingness to inspect anew entrenched opinions and beliefs, and his deep knowledge and engagement with contemporary trends in medieval scholastic philosophy. In terms of his knowledge and employment of concepts and arguments that had been developed relatively recently by his Christian philosophic colleagues, a contrast can be made between Crescas and most other Jewish philosophers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who resided in Christian countries. Jewish philosophers such as Isaac Polqar, Moses Narboni and Joseph ibn Kaspi, despite their commitments to a life devoted to intellectual inspection, grounded their philosophy in the translated texts of Arabic

philosophers active in previous centuries and were unaware or unengaged with the philosophic debates of their age. By contrast, Crescas was far more up to date with the developments in physics and metaphysics among his philosophic contemporaries.[67] Using these new tools, he was willing to question orthodoxies regarding space, time, matter, free choice, creation, and other scientific, philosophic, and theological issues. Crescas also displays far more commitment to logical and syllogistic arguments than previous Jewish philosophic treatises, with the possible exception of Gersonides' *Milchamot Hashem* (*Wars of the Lord*). In short, the disagreement between Crescas and Jewish philosophers who adopted what is considered prototypical philosophic positions regarding human perfection and God's nature and activities should be viewed as an intra-philosophic debate and not as a clash between Jewish faith and philosophic reason.

Guttmann avoids the more simplistic elements of Baer's characterization of Crescas and would certainly not characterize him as anti-philosophic, recognizing his philosophic prowess and creativity. As argued previously, Guttmann's approach to Crescas is colored by his assumption that Jewish thinkers receive philosophy from foreign sources and adjust genuine Jewish conceptions in response. He therefore criticizes elements of Crescas's philosophy which he deems as veering from an authentic Jewish voluntaristic conception of God. In particular, Guttmann censures Crescas for offering a new view of divine will that emerges from his treatment of creation in which God's generative activity is not

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[67] This is not to deny the possibility that Hispano and Southern French Jewish philosophers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were influenced somewhat by scholastic notions and arguments. But their knowledge and employment of the philosophic trends compare to that of Hasdai Crescas. On Crescas's relation to Christian philosophic sources, see Shlomo Pines, "Scholasticism after Thomas Aquinas and the Teachings of Hasdai Cresças and His Predecessors," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 1 (1967): 1-101; Warren Harvey, "Hasdai Cresças and Bernât Metge on the Soul," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 5 (1986): 141-154 [Heb.]; Harvey, "Nicole Oresme and Hasdai Crescas on Many Worlds (with an Appendix on Gersonides and Gerald Odonis)," in *Studies in the History of Culture and Science: A Tribute to Gad Freudenthal*, ed. Resianne Fontaine et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 347-359; Ari Ackerman, "Ḥasdai Crescas and Scholastic Philosophers on the Possible Existence of Multiple Simultaneous Worlds," *Aleph* 17 (2017): 139-154.

absolutely free.[68] But I would argue that Crescas's multifaceted treatment of creation does not support an understanding of Jewish philosophy that distinguishes between outside philosophic sources and an original, authentic Jewish core.[69] As part of his view of the origin of the world, Crescas argues for the derivation of all being from God and therefore refutes Gersonides' arguments for the existence of eternal matter.[70] Crescas's opposition to Gersonides' theory of eternal matter can be viewed as a defense of the traditional Jewish approach to creation, yet it has often been claimed that the notion of God's creating matter *ex nihilo* is not affirmed in the Hebrew Bible and emerges later in the Jewish tradition in response to Christian opposition to Gnosticism.[71] In addition, his affirmation of creation "out of nothing" is formulated in a way that it possesses Neoplatonic coloring, since he does not affirm creation *ab initio* and claims that God's creation should be understood as the dependency of all being on God in the form of eternal creation.[72] Likewise, his notion that God creates our world and will destroy it and bring into existence other worlds weaves together strands from the Jewish tradition with those from ancient and medieval philosophy. That is, in defense of his position,

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[68] See above.

[69] Crescas, *Or Hashem* 3:1:1 (Jerusalem: privately published, 1990), 274-318. The following studies have examined Crescas's theory of creation: Harry Wolfson, "Emanation and Creation *ex nihilio* in Crescas," in *Sefer Asaf*, ed. Moshe David Cassuto et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1953), 230-236 [Heb.]; Urbach, *The Philosophic Teachings of Hasdai Crescas*, 176-206; Kogan, "The Problem of Creation in Late Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *A Strait Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture; Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman*, ed. Ruth Link-Salinger (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 167-170; Warren Harvey, *Physics and Metaphysics and Hasdai Crescas*, 8-28; Rudavsky, *Time Matters*, 46-49; Daniel Davies, "Creation and Context of Theology and Science in Maimonides and Crescas," *Creation and the God of Abraham*, ed. David Burrell et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 65-76; and, in particular, Seymour Feldman, "The Theory of Eternal Creation in Hasdai Crescas and Some of the Predecessors," *Viator*11 (1980): 289-320.

[70] Crescas, *Or Hashem* 3:1:1:4, 305-308.

[71] See, for example, Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation Out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, tran. A.S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark), 1994.

[72] Crescas, *Or Hashem* 3:1:1:5, 315.

he brings in rabbinic sources, and it is likely that he was also influenced by Kabbalistic notions.[73] However, he also brings arguments in support of his position that were taken from scholastic discussions of this issue.[74] Most importantly, he does not passively receive philosophic sources, but he actively stakes out innovative positions in the philosophic debates of his age. His view that multiple worlds actually exist (and not just the defense of its possibility) was almost unprecedented among medieval philosophers, and he consciously selects different Jewish sources, explicitly rejecting the notion that the Jewish tradition speaks in one voice on this issue.

In conclusion, I would suggest that our analysis of the faults in Baer's and Guttmann's depiction of Crescas's thought teach us broader lessons about the medieval Jewish philosophic tradition. It problematizes any account of medieval Jewish thought that places at the center the battle between philosophers like Maimonides and Gersonides and opponents of philosophy like Judah Halevi and Hasdai Crescas. Judah Halevi's battle against certain strands of Islamic Aristotelianism is influenced by Islamic philosophic debates.[75] It also problematizes the conception that medieval Jewish philosophers passively absorbed external philosophic sources.[76] Alternatively, Crescas is an example of a Jewish philosopher who actively contributed to both the Jewish Western philosophic tradition, and his "authenticity" should not be judged upon fidelity to "genuine" Jewish theological positions.

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[73] The possible impact of Kabbalistic texts on Crescas's treatment of this issue is suggested by his fleeting reference to "the receivers of truth [*mikablei ha-'emet*]," which often refers to Kabbalists: "Here the doors to speculation are locked, but the matters are ancient, [known] to the receivers of truth" (Crescas, *Or Hashem*3:1:1:5, 316).

[74] Ackerman, "Ḥasdai Crescas and Scholastic Philosophers on the Possible Existence of Multiple Simultaneous Worlds."

[75] Shlomo Pines, "Shiite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's Kuzari," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 165–251; Ehud Krinis, *God's Chosen People: Judah Halevi and the Shiite Imam Doctrine* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2014).

[76] On this issue, see Warren Zev Harvey, "Saadiah, Mendelssohn, and the Theophrastus Thesis," in *Paradigms in Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Raphael Jospe (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1997), 60-69.