

## AVERROES' LOST-TREATISE ON THE PRIME MOVER

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IN a list of works of Averroes reproduced by Renan from an Arabic manuscript there is mention of a « Treatise on the Prime Mover » (*Kalām lahu 'ala al-muḥarrik al-awwal*).<sup>1</sup> This work is not extant and nothing is known about it. But, as we shall see, references to it are to be found in Averroes' Long Commentaries on *Analytica Posteriora* I, Com. 70,<sup>2</sup> and *Physica* VIII, Com. 3.<sup>3</sup> A refutation of that treatise, containing a general description of it, as well as paraphrases of arguments and at least one quotation, is also to be found in a work by Moses ben Joseph al-Lawi, which was written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of this general description and the paraphrases and quotations,<sup>5</sup> with the help of parallel

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*<sup>2</sup>, p. 464, l. 13; cf. also Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted below in n. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted below in n. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning him, see Steinschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>5</sup> In the quotations from al-Lawi's treatise in this paper, I have followed the manuscript of the Hebrew translation in the Library of the Cathedral of Pamplona in Spain, without giving the variant readings in the Oxford and Leningrad manuscripts, with which years ago I collated the Pamplona manuscript. The Oxford and Leningrad manuscripts are mentioned in Steinschneider (*loc. cit.*). The Pamplona manuscript was first mentioned by Fritz Baer in *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, I (1929), p. XVII, n. The reference to this manuscript was brought to my attention by Prof. Alexander Marx and a photostatic copy of it was secured for me in 1931 by Prof. José M. Millás. The original Arabic

passages in the extant writings of Averroes,<sup>6</sup> we shall try to reconstruct the main outline and contents of that lost treatise.

Al-Lawi's general description of the treatise is contained in the following passage :

« Averroes has composed a treatise for the purpose of [1] refuting this method, in which treatise he censures its inventor, namely, Avicenna, and ridicules the method, and [2] argues in favor of the view that the first mover is identical with the Necessary Being. »<sup>7</sup>

The point at issue between Avicenna and Averroes referred to in this passage involves two problems, which, for the sake of simplicity, may be stated in reverse order from that given here by al-Lawi. Both Avicenna and Averroes, following Aristotle, believe that the spheres are each moved by an incorporeal substance which in their language is called Intelligence. The Intelligence which moves the outermost or first sphere is called

of this treatise was recently identified by Prof. Georges Vajda in a Vatican manuscript work by Joseph ben Abraham Ibn Waqār, of which a French translation entitled « Un Champion de l'Avicennisme » was published by him in *Revue Thomiste*, 1948, pp. 480-508. From that French translation it would seem that the Arabic text used by Ibn Waqār differed in a number of places from the Arabic text underlying the three manuscripts of the Hebrew translation.

<sup>6</sup> The works of Averroes are cited in the notes of this paper by the following abbreviations :

*TMBAT* = *Tafsir ma ba'd at-tabi'at*, ed. M. Bouyges, Beyrouth, 1938-1948.

*IMBAT* = *Ilm ma ba'd at-tabi'at*, ed. Carlos Quiros Rodriguez, *Averroes compendio de metafisica*, with Spanish translation, 1919; German translations by Max Horten, *Die Metaphysik des Averroes*, 1912, and by S. van den Bergh, *Die Epitome der Metaphysik des Averroes*, 1924.

*TAT* = *Tahafot at-tahafot*, ed. M. Bouyges, Beyrouth, 1930.

Quotations from the Latin translations of Averroes are from *Aristotelis opera*, 10 vols., Venice, 1573-76.

וזה שאבו אלוליד חניח מאמר כונתו סתירת זה הדרך וגנת מוציאת, והוא  
אבו עלי, וחלעיג עליה, וקיום שחמניע הראשון הוא מחוייב המציאות.

by both of them the « first mover. » But the point at issue between them is whether this first mover is God or not. Avicenna is of the opinion that this first mover is not God and that God is a being beyond it, whom he calls « The Necessary Being » (*wājib al-wujūd*,)<sup>8</sup> or « the First Principle » (*al-mabda' al-awwal*). In opposition to him, Averroes maintains that the first mover is God and hence identical with what Avicenna calls the Necessary Being or the First Principle. Connected with this difference between them, there is another difference. Avicenna, who does not identify the first mover with God, discards also Aristotle's physical proof from motion for the existence of a first mover as a proof for the existence of God. In its stead he has a proof from possibility and necessity, which he describes as a metaphysical proof. In opposition to him, again, Averroes maintains that Aristotle's proof from motion as given in the *Physics* is a proof for the existence of God. In the lost treatise, according to this passage of al-Lawi, these two problems are discussed by Averroes. First, he refutes Avicenna's proof for the existence of God. Second, he tries to show that the first mover is identical with God.<sup>9</sup>

In another passage, referring again to the two main divisions of Averroes' treatise, al-Lawi gives us some further details of the first division. To quote : « In that treatise of his, Averroes opens the discussion by (1) reproducing some of Avicenna's words on this problem. Then (2) he begins to refute him by saying that, even if the propositions used by Avicenna be granted, they would still not lead to the conclusion with

<sup>8</sup> Literally « the Necessary of Existence », after the analogy of the scriptural expression « the Ancient of Days » (Dan. 7:13). Similarly, in the Latin translation of this phrase, namely, « *necesse esse* », the term « *esse* » is to be taken as a descriptive genitive and as the equivalent of « *existentiae* ».

<sup>9</sup> Cf. analysis of this problem, with reference to Moses al-Lawi's treatise, in my paper « Notes on Proofs of the Existence of God in Jewish Philosophy », *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 1 (1924), pp. 590 ff.

regard to the thesis in question. And thereupon he undertakes to substantiate, to his own satisfaction, this statement of his. »<sup>10</sup>

In still another place he says :

« Furthermore, after having mentioned at the beginning that, even if the propositions used by Avicenna in this method be granted, they would not lead us to his conclusion with regard to the thesis in question, namely, the establishment of the Necessary Being, and after having finished what in his opinion was a substantiation of that statement of his, Averroes began to refute the propositions which were made use of in this method. »<sup>11</sup>

Besides these fragmentary outlines which furnish us with general headings of various topics, al-Lawi's treatise reproduces individual arguments under each of these headings and also supplies us with Averroes' concluding statement of his treatise. Bringing all these fragmentary outlines and individual arguments and conclusion together, we have the following outline of the structure of Averroes' lost Treatise on the Prime Mover.

A. Refutation of Avicenna's Proof for the Existence of God.

1. Restatement of Avicenna's proof (Fragm. 1).
2. Censure of Avicenna and ridicule of his proof (Fragm. 2).
3. Formal fallacies of Avicenna's proof :
  - (a) On the basis of his premises, even granting that they are true, he failed to show that his proof is metaphysical and not physical (Fragm. 3).
  - (b) Again, on the basis of his premises, even granting that they are true, his proof is not a scientific demonstration (Fragm. 4).
4. Material fallacy of Avicenna's proof : the defect in his premises (Fragm. 5).

B. Refutation of Avicenna's view that God is a being beyond the first mover.

<sup>10</sup> Text quoted below in nn. 12 and 21.

<sup>11</sup> Text quoted below in n. 46.

1. Criticism of the proposition that from one simple being only one simple being can proceed (Fragm. 6).
2. The assumption of a God beyond the first mover introduces a superfluity in nature (Fragm. 7).
3. The variety of objects of knowledge in the understanding of the first emanation is not sufficient to explain the plurality of beings that proceed from it (Fragm. 8).

C. Conclusion (Fragm. 9).

### Fragment 1

« In that treatise of his Averroes opens the discussion by reproducing some of Avicenna's words on this problem ».<sup>12</sup>

Averroes' reproduction of « some of Avicenna's words » probably consisted of a brief summary of Avicenna's proof for the existence of God, such, for instance, as is given by Algazali in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. Averroes himself in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* gives a nod of approval to this summary.<sup>13</sup> As summarized by Agazali, the proof reads as follows: « It is argued that every one of the individual causes [within the world] is either possible with reference to its own essence or necessary. Now, if each one of them were necessary, then it would not be in need of any cause. And if each of them is possible, then the universe as a whole is to be described as possible. But inasmuch as everything that is possible is in need of a cause superadded to its essence, it follows that the world as a whole is in need of a cause extraneous to itself. »<sup>14</sup>

### Fragment 2

« He censures the inventor of this method, namely, Avicenna, and ridicules the method. »<sup>15</sup>

אבו אלוליד פתח אותו מאמר שלו באשר קיום קצת דברי אבו עלי בזאת השאלה. אחר כך לקח לסתור אותו ואמר עד שאלו קובל לאבו עלי החקדמות אשר עשה לא הביאו לקיום הדרוש. אחר כך לקח לאמת זה כפי דעתו.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *TAT* IV, 27, p. 276, ll. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* IV, 11, p. 138, ll. 9-12.

<sup>15</sup> Text quoted above in n. 7.



This statement, we take it, refers not to the general character of Averroes' criticism but rather to a specific passage in it. What that passage was, al-Lawi does not tell us. But from the nature of Averroes' references to Avicenna in his other works, where he speaks of «Avicenna and others» as those «who have perverted the view of men of divine science so that it became something fantastic»,<sup>16</sup> it may be inferred that his censure and ridicule here was similarly some statement to the effect that Avicenna misrepresented the views of Aristotle.

### Fragment 3

«Then he begins to refute him by saying, that even if the propositions used by Avicenna be granted, they would still not lead to the conclusion with regard to the thesis in question. And thereupon he undertakes to substantiate, to his own satisfaction, this statement of his. He reproduces a certain difficulty raised by the Philosopher in Book Capital Alpha of his *Metaphysics*, namely, whether the principle of generated and perishable things is generated and perishable, or eternal.<sup>17</sup> For if it is generated and perishable, it undoubtedly must itself have a principle and the same must be said of that principle, and so on continuously. And if it is eternal, then that which comes into existence through it must likewise be eternal, and not generated and perishable as has been assumed,<sup>18</sup> for were

<sup>16</sup> TAT III, 72, p. 182, ll. 4-5 : ابن سينا وغيره الذين غيروا مذهب القوم في العلم الالهي حتى صار ظنيا.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Metaph.* III (B), 4, 1000b, 23-24. al-Lawi's reference here to «Book Capital Alpha» is probably an error. Or it may be explained on the ground that in the Arabic text used by him Book Capital Alpha included the first four chapters of Book Beta, for, in Arabic texts of the *Metaphysics*, Book I was designated as «Small Alpha» (cf. Steinschneider, *Heb. Über.*, p. 163) and «Capital Alpha» consequently came immediately before «Beta,» and thus it may have included the first four chapters of «Beta.»

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 1000b, 24-32, reproduced by Averroes in *IMBAT* III, 28.

it not assumed to be eternal, there would be the question as to the reason why that which was generated from it was generated at one time rather than another.<sup>19</sup> He then says that this difficulty can be solved only by the fact established in physical science that it is the celestial body which is the cause of generation and corruption and that this body, though eternal, by reason of certain changes of position that occur in its parts, possesses certain changeable dispositions which have a temporal beginning, and it is in virtue of this that the celestial body, though in itself eternal, is the cause of generation and corruption.<sup>20</sup> This is the gist of his statement, even though we

<sup>19</sup> This part of the argument is not found in the passage of the *Metaphysics* referred to in the preceding note. But it is found 'IMBAT III, 29, where it reads as follows: « But he who does not believe in eternal motion will be unable to give a reason why the Creator, exalted be He, who is eternal, created the world after He had been uncreative. » ومن لم يقل بحركة دائمة لم يمكنهم ان يوفوا السبب في كون الاري تعالى وهو ازلى فاعلا للعالم بعد ان لم يفعل .

This question is also raised by him in his *Kitab al-Kashf* (see below, n. 48), p. 30, ll. 10-12: « Moreover, if the agent sometimes acts and at other times does not act, then there must be a cause which brings about its being in one of these conditions rather than in the other. »

In Aristotle, the same question is to be found in *De Caelo* I, 12, 283 a, 11-12 (cf. S. van den Bergh, *Die Epitome der Metaphysik des Averroes*, p. 217, n. 3 to p. 80).

<sup>20</sup> In 'IMBAT III, 28, after reproducing the same difficulty that is quoted here in the name of « the Philosopher, » Averroes similarly says: « This difficulty can be solved by what has been said in physical science with regard to the eternal motion of translation. » هذا الشك ينحل بما تبين في العلم الطبيعي من امر حركة النقلة السرمدية .

By « the eternal motion of translation » he means the eternal circular motion of the celestial spheres. Then, after stating that the spheres are eternal and have no potentiality for destruction, he adds that, despite their eternity, they can be the cause of the transiency of things « on account of the interchange of positions which occurs to them, » من جهة .

تبديل الاوضاع التي تعرض لها

have not quoted it verbatim ... [But, adds Averroes,] these beings, namely, the celestial bodies, which are assumed to constitute the proximate cause of generation and corruption, have themselves been shown to be eternal and the causes of generation and corruption only by arguments from physical science. Hence it necessarily follows that the metaphysician cannot prove the existence of the Necessary Being but must accept it from the physicist as granted or else he must compose a proof for it out of the combination of the two sciences. »<sup>21</sup>

What he means by «the variation of position» is explained in *De Gener. et Corr.* II, 10, 336b, 2-9, which passage is meant by his vague reference to «physical science». The argument contained in that passage and referred to here in the Fragment, as restated by Averroes himself in his *Expositio Media in Libros de Generatione et Corruptione* II, Com. 56, f. 385 I K, reads as follows:

«The cause, therefore, of the continuity of primary generation and corruption is primary motion. The cause, however, of generation and corruption is the fact that the stars and the planets are in motion along that [inclined] circle, whereby they have diverse dispositions with reference to existing things, inasmuch as sometimes they approach and sometimes they retreat, on which account their action is diverse. It therefore follows that, if by retreatment their action destroys, by approachment it produces generation, for contrary effects demand contraries as their causes.»

«Causa ergo continuitatis primae generationis et corruptionis est primus motus. Causa autem generationis et corruptionis est quod moventur stellae et planetae in orbe isto, cum habeant dispositiones diversas entibus, quoniam aliquando appropinquant, aliquando removentur, quare est eorum diversa operatio. Oportet ergo, quod si per elongationem corrumpit, quod per appropinquationem generationem faciat, quia contrariorum contrariae causae.»

אחר כך לקח לסתור אותו מאמר עד שאלו קובל לאבו עלי התקדמות אשר עשה<sup>21</sup> שם לא הביאנו לקיום הדרוש. אחר כך לקח לאמת זה כפי דעתו. והביא ספק זכרו הפילוסוף במאמר האלף הגדולה מספר במה שאחר המבע, והוא האם התחלת הדברים התוים ונפסדים הוה נפסדת או נצחית. ואם הוא הוה נפסדת, הנה לה התחלה בלי ספק, וחשוב השאלה בזאת ההתחלה, וכן תמיד. ואם נצחית, חוייב שיהיה מה שימצא



The main point of this argument is to refute Avicenna's claim that his proof of the existence of God is a purely metaphysical proof and is independent of Aristotle's physical proof from motion for the existence of a prime mover. In order to refute this claim of Avicenna, he tries to show how Avicenna's proof of the existence of God must needs depend upon certain physical considerations.

The contention that Avicenna's proof is not purely metaphysical but depends upon motion occurs in several works of Averroes.

In his Long Commentary on the *Physics*, commenting on Aristotle's statement that, « as for the First Principle in respect of form, whether it is one or many and what it is or what they are, the accurate determination thereof is the task of the first philosophy, »<sup>22</sup> he says : « It is to be noted that the existence of that class of beings, namely, beings separated from matter, ought to be demonstrated only in this physical science, and he who says that the first philosophy is that which endeavors to demonstrate the existence of separate beings is in error, for these separate beings are the subjects of the first philosophy, but it has been shown in the *Analytica Posteriora* that it is impossible for any science to demonstrate the existence of its own subject but that it concedes its existence either as something which is self-evident or as something which has been demonstrated in another science. Therefore Avicenna erred exceedingly

ממנה נצחי גם כן, לא הוה נפסד כמו שהונח, ואם לא, למה נתחדש ממנה מה שהתחדש בעת בלתי עת. אמר וזה הספק לא יותר אלה במה שהתבאר בחכמה הטבעית מן שהגשם השמימי הוא סבת החוויה וההפסד, וזה הגשם אף על פי שהוא נצחי הוא בעל ענינים מתחדשים מחודשים, וזה מצד מה שיקרה לחלקיו מהתחלף המצבים, כו בזה הצד היה סבה לחוויה ולהפסד, עקם היות עצמו נצחי. זהו ענין מאמרו ואם לא נקיים אותו בלשוננו... [והוסיף עוד] שאלה הנמצאות אשר יונחו סבה קרובה לחוויה ולהפסד, והם הגשמים השמימיים, אמנם יתבאר שהם נצחיים ושחם סבות לחוויה ולהפסד בחכמה הטבעית. ויחוייב מזה שבעל החכמה האלהית אי אפשר לו קיום מחוייב המציאות, אבל ראוי שיקח זה קבלת מבעל החכמה הטבעית או שיערב באורו משתי החכמות יחדו.

<sup>22</sup> *Phys.* I, 9, 192a, 34-36.

when he said that the metaphysician demonstrates the existence of the First Principle, in accordance with which, in his book on metaphysics, he proceeded [to prove the existence of God] by a method which he thought to be necessary and essential in that science and thereby has fallen into a manifest error.»<sup>23</sup>

The reference in the passage quoted is to that passage in the *Analytica Posteriora* which in the Arabic version reads, «It is plainly evident that no master of any art can demonstrate the proper principles of his own art.»<sup>24</sup> Commenting upon this, Averroes says: «That is, by an absolute demonstration which shows cause and existence. For the master of particular arts can demonstrate the causes of his own subject through signs, or *a posteriori*, just as Aristotle did in the *Physics*, where he demonstrated the existence of prime matter and the prime mover, but the only way by which he could demonstrate the existence of the prime mover was through a sign in that science, namely, physical science, and not as it was thought by Avicenna. Whence we have composed a special treatise to show the falsity of the universal method whereby Avicenna thought the metaphysician can prove the existence of a First Principle.»<sup>25</sup>

In another place, commenting on Aristotle's statement in the *Physics* which in the Arabic translation reads: «The

<sup>23</sup> *Commentaria Magna in Libros Physicorum*, I, Com. 83, f. 47 FG; «Sed notandum est, quod istud genus entium, esse, scilicet separatum a materia, non debet declaratur nisi in hac scientia naturali. Et qui dicit quod prima philosophia nititur declarare entia separabilia esse, peccat. Haec nam entia sunt subiecta primae philosophiae et declaratus est in in Posterioribus Analyticis quod impossibile est aliquam scientiam declarare suum subiectum esse, sed concedit impsum esse, aut quia manifestum per se aut quia est demonstratum in alia scientia. Unde Avicenna peccavit maxime, cum dixit quod primus philosophus demonstrat primum principium esse et processit in hoc in suo libro de scientia divina per viam quam existimavit esse necessariam et essentialem in illa scientia et peccavit peccato manifesto.»

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Anal. Post.* I, 9, 76a, 16-17, and *Commentaria Magna*, Text. 70, f. 152 F.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, *Commentaria Magna*, Com. 70, f. 154 DF:

question as to what is the disposition of separable form and as to what it is, belongs to the first philosophy, » <sup>26</sup> he says : « The investigation concerning the dispositions of separable forms in so far as they are separable and concerning their essence belongs to the first philosophy and not to physical science. But it is to be noted that the investigation into the existence of these

## de Balmes

Id est commonstratione simpliciter, id est commonstratione quae largiatur causam et esse. Artifex namque particularium artium potest demonstratione ostendere sui subiecti causas per signa, prout fecit Aristoteles in commonstrando primam materiam et primum moventem in *Physicis Asculationibus*, immo non est modus commonstrandum primum moventem esse, nisi per signum in hac, scilicet physica scientia, non sicut opinatus est Avicenna. Unde nos instituimus proprium tractatum in demonstrando corruptelam modi universalis, quo Avicenna putavit quod possit theologus demonstrare primum primum principium esse.

## Burana

Intelligit monstratione sufficiente, hoc est monstratione exhibente causam et existentiam. Et hoc quoniam artifices scientiarum particularum possunt monstrare demonstrationem causarum subiecti sui per signa, quemadmodum fecit Aristoteles cum monstravit materiam primam in *Auditu Naturali* et motorem primum. Sed non est via, qua monstraret existentiam motoris primi, nisi per signum in hac scientia, hoc est in scientia naturali, non quemadmodum existimavit Ben Senae. Iam vero posuimus sermonem ad monstrandam corruptionem viae universalis, quam opinatus est Ben Senae quod potest artifex scientiae divinae monstrare existentiam primi principij.

## Mantinus

Hoc est demonstratione absoluta, quae scilicet praestet causam et esse. Nam possessor artium particularum bene potest demonstrare causas sui subiecti per signa, seu a posteriori, ut fecit Aristoteles in *Libro Physicorum*, ubi demonstrat materiam primam et primum moventem. Sed non potest probare quod primum movens sit, nisi per signum a posteriori in hac scientia, scilicet naturali, non ut putat Avicenna. Nos vero iam edidimus tractatum, in quo probamus falsitatem illius methodi universalis, qua Avicenna putavit metaphysicum posse probare primum principium esse.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Phys.* II, 2, 194b, 14-15, and *Commentaria Magna*, Text. 26, f. 58 K).

forms belongs to physical science, and not to the first philosophy, as is fancied by Avicenna, for it is in this science that it becomes manifest that this class of forms do exist and it is only after their existence has been demonstrated that the first philosophy investigates into their essences and dispositions. »<sup>27</sup>

In still another place, commenting upon Aristotle's statement in the *Physics* to the effect that the question whether there is a beginning of motion is important « not only for the study of nature, but also for the investigation of the First Principle, »<sup>28</sup> he says : « For the metaphysician accepts the first moving principles from the physicist, and he has no way to demonstrate the existence of a first mover unless he accepts it as something well-known from the physicist. As for the opinion of Avicenna who thought that the metaphysician ought to demonstrate the existence of the First Principle, it is false and his method of proof, which he imagined to have invented himself, of which he has made use in his book. and in which he was followed by Algazali, is a feeble method and is in no way demonstrative. We, moreover, have composed a special treatise concerning this, and he who would like to learn the difficulties which occur in this method, let him consult the work of Algazali, for many things which he inveighs against others are true. »<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, *Commentaria Magna*, Com. 26, f. 59 BC : « Consyderatio autem de dispositionibus formarum abstractarum, secundum quod sunt abstractae, et de quiditatibus earum, est proprie primae philosophiae, non scientiae naturalis. Et notandum quod consyderatio in esse istarum formarum est in scientia naturali, non in prima philosophia, sicut existimat Avicenna, quoniam in hac scientia apparet istud genus formarum esse. Deinde prima philosophia consyderat de quiditatibus et dispositionibus earum. »

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Phys.* VIII, 1, 251a, 5-8.

<sup>29</sup> *Commentaria Magna in Libros Physicorum*, VIII, Com. 3, f. 340 EF : « Divinus nam accipit prima principia moventia a naturali, et nullam habet viam ad demonstrandum esse primum motorem, nisi accipiat ipsum pro constanti a naturali. Et quod existimavit Avicenna quod divinus debet

A similar statement occurs also in his Epitome of the *Metaphysics*. « The demonstrations which Avicenna makes use of in his metaphysics to establish the existence of the First Principle are all contentious (*jadaliyyah*) assertions, not altogether true, nor do they prove anything in an appropriate manner (*'ala al-tahṣīṣ*) ... The metaphysician, therefore, as we have said, accepts the existence of the First Principle from physical science and discusses only the manner in which it is a mover, just as it is from mathematical astronomy that he accepts the number of principles which exist as movers of the spheres. »<sup>30</sup>

A discussion of the same problem, with reference to Avicenna, is to be found also in his Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, where he tries to interpret a passage quoted from Alexander of Aphrodisias. As in the passages quoted before from his other commentaries, he brings into play Aristotle's statement in *Analytica Posteriora* that « no master of any art can demonstrate the proper principles of his own art. » Again, as in those other passages, he maintains that this refers only to an attempt to demonstrate « according to the method of an absolute demonstration (*al-burhān al-muṭlaq*), but according to the method which proceeds from posterior propositions to prior propositions or that which is called signs (*al-dalā'il*, σημεῖα) it is possible to demonstrate them. »<sup>31</sup> Then, after indicating

monstrare primum principium esse, est falsum, et via eius, quam finxit ipsum invenisse eam, qua usus est in suo libro, et similiter Algazel sequens ipsum, est via tenuis et non est demonstrativa aliquo modo. Nos autem de hoc fecimus tractatum singularem super hoc, et qui voluerit accipere quaestiones accidentes in ea videat hoc ex libro Algazelis, plures enim quas induxit contra alios verae sunt. »

واما البيانات التي يستعملها ابن سينا في بيان المبدأ الاول : 8-9 : *IMBAT* I, 30  
في هذا العلم فهي اقاويل جدلية غير صادقة بالكل وليس تعطى شيئا على التذميص  
... ولذلك يتسلم كما قلنا ماخبط هذا العلم وجوده عن العلم الطبيعي ويعطى الجهة  
التي بها يكون محركا كما يتسلم عدد وجود المحركين عن مناعة النجوم التعلالية.

<sup>31</sup> *TMBAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 5, p. 1423, ll. 6-8 : على طريق البرهان



that Aristotle's proof for the existence of the First Mover is a proof from signs, he says : « And therefore it is impossible to prove the existence of a separable substance except from motion and the methods which have been thought to lead to the existence of the First Mover short of the method of motion are all persuasive [i.e., rhetorical] methods<sup>32</sup> ... But Avicenna... says that the physicist assumes the existence of nature as a hypothesis and that the metaphysician it is who demonstrates it by proof. »<sup>33</sup> Later Averroes remarks that it was a misunderstanding of that passage in Alexander that « has caused Avicenna to err. »<sup>34</sup> Still later, however, Averroes quotes another passage from Alexander in which a view like that later advanced by Avicenna is expressly stated.<sup>35</sup>

In his refutation of Avicenna's contention, Averroes reproduces, from the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle's question with regard to the transiency of sublunar things. The question is reproduced by him rather freely. He then refers to « physical science » as the place where an answer to this question is to be found. The reference is to the *De Generatione et Corruptione*. The answer to the question reproduced by him in this Fragment, in its phraseology, reflects his own commentary on that work of

المطلق واما على طريق المسير من المتأخرات الى المتقدّمات وهى التى تسمى الدلائل فيمكنه ذلك.

ولذلك لا سبيل الى تبين وجود جوهر مفارق : 10-13 *Ibid.*, p. 1423, ll. 10-13  
الا من قبل الحركة والطرق التى يظن بها انها مفضية الى وجود المحرك الاول من غير طريق الحركة هى كلها طرق مقنعة.

واما ابن سينا ... فقال ان ما حب : 18-p. 1424, l. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 1423, l. 18-p. 1424, l. 2  
العلم الطبيعي يضع "وضعا ان الطبيعة موجودة وان ما حب العلم الالاهى هو الذى يبرهن وجودها.

وهو الذى غلط ابن سينا : 12 *Ibid.*, p. 1426, l. 12

35 *Ibid.*, Com. 6, p. 1429, ll. 1-3. German translation of this passage in J. Freudenthal, *Die durch Averroes erhaltenen Fragmente Alexanders zur Metaphysik des Aristoteles*, p. 74 ll. 13-20,

Aristotle as well as his discussion of that question in his *Epitome of the Metaphysics*.<sup>35a</sup>

The general drift of Averroes' refutation is clear. He wants to show that Avicenna's proof is not, as is claimed for it, purely metaphysical. The argument by which he tries to show this may be restated as follows. One of the essential elements in the conception of God as the Necessary Being is that, while God depends for His existence on nothing else, He is the cause of the existence of everything else, and consequently this is also one of the essential elements in his proof of the existence of God from possibility and necessity. Now among the things included in «everything else», of which God is conceived as being the cause, are also the sublunar transient things which come to be and pass away. Consequently, then, God, who is eternal, is the cause of the existence of these transient things. But here is a difficulty raised by Aristotle himself. How can a being who is eternal be the cause of transient things? The answer to this question, maintains Averroes, is to be found in the Aristotelian theory that the motion of sublunar bodies, though indirectly due to God, is directly due to the motion of the celestial spheres. For, maintains Aristotle, while the motion of these celestial spheres is eternal, within these celestial spheres there are stars and planets, and these stars and planets in the course of their motion sometimes approach sublunar things and sometimes retreat from them, and it is these approachments and retreatments which cause respectively the motions of generations and corruption in sublunar things. Now, continues Averroes, the eternity of the celestial bodies as well as their being, through their approachments and retreatments, the causes of generation and corruption in sublunar things is demonstrated in Aristotle by arguments taken from physics. Hence, he concludes, Avicenna's proof for the existence of God, even if based not exclusively on physical science, draws some of its propositions from that science.

<sup>35a</sup> Cf. quotations above in n. 20,

## Fragment 4

« In the course of that argument Averroes mentioned that the method followed by Avicenna in the proof of the Necessary Being is similar to the method of the Mutakallimūn, by which he means that the propositions used therein are common and inappropriate propositions. »<sup>36</sup>

The charge that Avicenna's proof has its origin in the Kalām is found also in Averroes' *Tahāfut al-Tāhāfut*, where, after referring to this method as being that of Alfarabi and Avicenna, he says: « This is a path which was not trod by the ancients and these two men have only followed therein the Mutakallimūn of our religion. »<sup>37</sup> Again: « This demonstration, which Algazali recites in the name of the philosophers, was first ascribed to philosophy by Avicenna on the ground that it was a better method than the methods of the ancients, for he thought that this method proceeded from the essence of being, whereas the methods of the others proceeded from accidents consequent to the First Principle. This method was taken by Avicenna from the Mutakallimūn. »<sup>38</sup> Similarly in his Long Commentary on the *Physics* he says that « the method

וזכר אבן אלוליד באותו מאמר שזה הדרך אשר הלך אבן עלי בקיום מתוויב<sup>36</sup>  
המציאות ידמה דרך המדברים, ירצה שהקדמות הנעשות בו הקדמות כוללות בלתי  
מיוחדות.

<sup>37</sup> TAT I, 93, p. 54, ll. 14-15: وهو مسلك لم يسلكه المتقدمون وإنما أتبع  
هذان الرجلان فيه المتكلمين من أهل ملتنا.

<sup>38</sup> TAT IV, 27, p. 276, ll. 1-4: هذا البرهان الذي حكاها عن الفلاسفة أول  
من نقله إلى الفلاسفة ابن سينا على أنه طريق خير من طريق القدماء لأنه زعم أنه من  
جوهر الموجود وأن طرق القوم من أعراض تابعة المبدأ الأول. وهو طريق أخذه  
ابن سينا من المتكلمين.

Cf. quotations from Averroes on this subject in Shem-Tob Falaquera,  
*Moreh ha-Moreh* II, 1, pp. 76-77.

in which Avicenna proceeded in proving the existence of the First Principle is the method of the Mutakallimūn.»<sup>39</sup>

The additional statement here that the Avicennian proof which is of Kalām origin, is based upon «common» and «inappropriate» propositions, is an indirect way of saying that it is not a true scientific demonstration, for a true scientific demonstration, according to Aristotle, must be based upon premises which are appropriate. (ἀρχαὶ οἰκείαι)<sup>40</sup> and not something common (κοινόν τε).<sup>41</sup> It reflects similar criticisms of Avicenna's proof found in several works of Averroes. Thus in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, Averroes says with regard to Avicenna's proof that «his argument is persuasive (*maqna'*), [i.e., rhetorical],<sup>42</sup> contentious (*jadaliyy*), and not demonstrative (*la burhāniyy*).<sup>43</sup> » So also in a passage quoted above from his Long Commentary on the *Physics*, he describes it as feeble (*tenuis*) and not demonstrative (*non demonstrativa*).<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in a passage also quoted above from the Epitome of the *Metaphysics*, he describes Avicenna's assertions as «contentious (*jadaliyyah*), as not being «altogether true,» and as not proving anything in an «appropriate manner» (*'ala al-tahṣiṣ*).»<sup>45</sup>

### Fragment 5

«Moreover, after having mentioned at the beginning that, even if the propositions used by Avicenna in this method be

<sup>39</sup> *Commentaria Magna in Libros Physicorum*, II, Com. 22, f. 57 B : «Via autem, qua processit Avicenna in probando primum principium, est via loquentium».

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Anal. Post.* I, 2, 71b, 23; I, 9, 75b, 38.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibid.* I, 9, 75b, 41.

<sup>42</sup> The Arabic *maqna'* is the Greek *πιθανόν* and hence it means also «rhetorical», according to the definition of rhetoric in *Rhet.* I, 2, 1355b, 26-27. Cf. *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, p. 397.

<sup>43</sup> *TAT* I, 93, p. 54, ll. 12-13 : «فهو قول متنع جدلي لا برهاني».

<sup>44</sup> Cf. above n. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. above n. 30.

admitted, they would still not lead to the conclusion with regard to the thesis in question, namely, the establishment of the Necessary Being, and after having finished what in his opinion was a substantiation of that statement of his, Averroes began to refute the propositions which were made use of in this method... He tries to show that our statement that whatever is necessary of existence by virtue of something else, that is, compulsory, is possible of existence by virtue of itself is a fictitious and false proposition. If the proposition is not fictitious and false, he says, one may wonder how a thing could be necessary of existence by virtue of something else, that is, compulsory, and at the same time also be possible of existence by virtue of itself. For as soon as a thing has received from something else compulsion with regard to its form, it can no longer be described as being possible of existence by virtue of itself [with regard to that form], inasmuch as for anything to be possible to exist implies that it is also possible for it not to exist, but the latter possibility cannot be harmonized with that which has been assumed to have come to it by compulsion from something else. This is the gist of his argument, even though we have not quoted it verbatim. »<sup>46</sup>

In this argument Averroes touches upon a fundamental distinction between him and Avicenna in the use of the term possible. Both of them agree that anything whose existence is not dependent upon anything else is to be called necessary of existence by its own essence. Such a being is God. But with

עוד כי אבו אלוליד למה שזכר תחלה, שאפילו היו לו אלו ההקדמות הנעשות<sup>46</sup> בזה הדרך, לא הביאנו אל הדרוש, והוא קיום מחוייב המציאות, והשלים לבאר זה כפי מחשבתו, והתחיל לסתור ההקדמות הנעשות בזה הדרך... וזה שהוא יאמת שאמרנו שכל מה שהוא מחוייב המציאות מזולתו, ר"ל הכרחי, הוא אפשרי המציאות מעצמותו, היה הקדמה דמיונית כוזבת. אמר, ואם לא, איך יהיה הדבר מחוייב המציאות מצד זולתו, ר"ל הכרחי, והוא עם זה אפשר המציאות מצד עצמו. וזה כי כשקבל החברתיות בצורתו מחזולת, נמנע שיתואר עם זה בשם אפשרי המציאות מעצמותו, כי אפשר שימצא יתחייב לו אפשר שלא ימצא, וזה לא יתקבץ עם מה שחתאמת לו מהחברתיות מצד הזולת. זהו ענין מאמרנו, ואם לו נקיימנו בלשונו.



reference to all other beings whose existence depends upon some cause there is a difference of opinion between them. According to Avicenna, such things are to be called necessary by virtue of their cause but possible by virtue of their essence. According to Averroes, such things are to be called necessary (*wājib*, ἀναγκαῖος) in the sense of what Aristotle describes as compulsory (βίαιος, *darūriyy*).<sup>47</sup> The term possible, according to him, is to be applied only to that which, not being yet in existence, may either come into existence or not come into existence, that is to say, whose coming into existence is neither necessary nor impossible. But once a thing has come into existence by some cause, that thing, according to him, has lost its nature as something possible and is to be described only as « necessary » or rather « compulsory. »

In his criticism of Avicenna here, therefore, Averroes pits his own view against that of Avicenna. Starting with his conception of the possible as that which, not having yet come into existence, may either come or not come into existence, he argues that, when a thing has already come into existence by some cause, it has thereby changed its nature and lost the possibility which it had previously possessed.

This argument occurs in several other works of Averroes. First, in his *Kitāb al-Kashf ‘an Manāhiġ al-Adillah fī ‘Aqā’id al-Millah*, after reproducing Avicenna's view with regard to things possible with respect to their own essence but necessary by reason of their cause, he criticizes it as follows : « This is a most erroneous assertion. That which is possible with respect to its essence and substance becomes necessary by reason of its cause only when its possible nature has been changed into a necessary nature. »<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Metaph.* V, 5, 1015a, 28.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes*, ed. M. J. Müller, p. 39, ll. 11-13 : وهذا قول في غاية السقوط وذلك ان الممكن في ذاته وفي جوهره ليمر : 11-13. يمكن ان يعود ضروريا من قبل فاعله الا لو اقلبت طبيعة الممكن الى طبيعة الضرورى.

Second, in his Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, he similarly argues: «That the same thing should with respect to its substance be possible of existence and yet should from something else receive necessity of existence is possible only when its nature has been changed.»<sup>49</sup>

#### Fragment 6

«In his endeavor to contradict this view and to prove that the First Principle is identical with the First Mover, Averroes starts out by showing that the First Principle is not the efficient cause of anything inferior to it but is its cause only by way of form. He supports this contention by the following argument. An efficient cause, he says, is that whose action depends upon its bringing about the transition of the object of its action from non-existence into existence, so that when the object has already passed into existence, the action of the efficient cause no longer depends upon it, for its action depends upon the object only during the latter's transition into existence. Now the process of generation is a finite change, for it is impossible for any generated object to be generated for an infinite time. Accordingly, the action of the efficient cause of such a generation must likewise be finite in respect to time.<sup>50</sup> But no finite action can be ascribed to an eternal being, seeing that an eternal being must exist forever in the same state of its final perfection and cannot therefore be active at one time and not active at another. As this argument establishes, in Averroes' opinion, that the First Principle cannot be an efficient cause, he sets out to refute the view of those who believe that the First Principle is not the same as the First

<sup>49</sup> *TMBAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 41, p. 1632, ll. 5-7: لا ان الشيء الواحد لا يمكن ان يكون من قبل جوهره ممكن الوجود ويقبل من غيره الوجود الضروري الا لو امكن فيه ان يتقلب.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Phys.* VIII, 10, 266a, 24-266b, 6.

Mover Those who maintain this view, he says, find support for it in two propositions. First, that the First Principle is simple. Second, that from one cause there can follow only one effect. Now, with regard to the proposition which states that the First Principle is simple, Averroes concedes it to them. But with regard to the proposition which states that from one cause there can follow only one effect, Averroes, while also conceding it, does so only in the case of an efficient cause, that is to say, if an efficient cause is one and simple, that which follows from it must be likewise one and simple. In the case of a cause by way of form, however, he almost does not admit the proposition, namely, that, if such a cause is one and simple, its effect must also be one and simple.<sup>51</sup>

In this passage Averroes tries to establish two points. First, the First Principle is not an efficient cause but only a formal cause. Second, since it is only a formal cause, it can be, despite its simplicity, the cause of many things, for the principle that from one simple cause only one simple effect can proceed applies only to an efficient cause.

The first point is discussed fully by Averroes both in his

כי הוא ימח שרצה לחרוק ע"י זה הדעת ולקיים שההתחלה הראשונה הוא 51  
המניע הראשון, התחיל ראשונה וקיים שההתחלה הראשונה איננה סבה פועלת ימח  
שלמטה ממנה, ואמנם הוא סבה לו ע"י דרך הצורה. ונסמך בזה על זאת הטענה,  
והוא שהפועל הוא אשר תתה פעולתו בהוצאת הפעול מן העקר אל המציאות, וכאשר  
יצא אל המציאות יא יתה בו פעולת הפועל, ואמנם יתה בו בעת צאתו אל המציאות.  
ולפי שהיתה ההויה שנוי בע"י תכנית, כי אי אפשר שיתהוה ההויה זמן אין תכנית  
לו, היה פעולת הפועל בע"י תכנית מזה הצד, והפעולה הבעלת תכנית אי אפשר  
שתיוחס לנצחי, כי הנצחי ימצא יעד על שלמותו האחרון, ואיננו אם כן פועל עת  
ובלתי פועל עת. וימח שחוייב בפי דעתו בזאת הטענה שההתחלה הראשונה אינה  
סבה פועלת, לקח יבטל דעת מו שיחשוב שההתחלה הראשונה זולת המניע הראשון,  
ואמר שהאומרים זה הדעת נשענו בקיום סברתם זאת בשתי הקדמות. אחת מהם  
שההתחלה הראשונה פשוטה. והשנית שאמנם יתחייב מן העלה האחת ע"יול אחר.  
אמנם ההקדמה האומרת שההתחלה הראשונה פשוטה הנה הוא יודה אותה להם.  
ואמנם ההקדמה האומרת שאמנם יתחייב מהערה האחת מציאות עלול אחר, הוא גם  
כן יודה אותה בעלה הפועלת לבר, ר"ל שהסבה הפועלת כשהיתה אחת פשוטה יהיה  
המתחייב ממנה אחר פשוט, ואמנם בעלה אשר על דרך הצורה כמעט שרא יודה זה,  
ר"ל שכשהיתה אחת פשוטה שיחוייב שיהיה עלולה אחת פשוטה.

Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics* and in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. In both these works he tries to show that the First Principle or God is not the creative nor the emanative cause of the world but rather its formal and final cause, in the sense that He is the cause of the unity and order in the world and that He moves the world as its object of understanding and desire. It is in this sense of His being the cause of the unity and order and motion of the world that He may also be called the cause of the existence of the world, that is, its efficient cause, inasmuch as the real existence of the world consists in its unity and order and motion.<sup>72</sup>

The second point is discussed by him directly in his Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Referring to those, like Alfarabi and Avicenna, who from the premise that from one simple cause one simple effect must proceed inferred that God was above the mover of the outermost sphere, he says: « This discourse of theirs is sheer fancy, for in the case under consideration there are no processions (*ṣudūr*) and no consecution (*luṣūm*) and no action (*ʿr'l*) to justify us in bringing into play against it the proposition that from one agent (*fā'il*) only one single action (*al-ʿr'l*) can follow. »<sup>73</sup> In the sequel he tries to show that the agent in this case is an agent only in the sense of its being a formal and final cause.

Similarly, in the Epitome of the *Metaphysics*, after stating the view of those whom he describes as « the later philosophers of Islam, as Alfarabi and others, » he says: « But there is the following difficulty. When we say that from one there can proceed only one, it is true of an efficient cause (*fā'il*) *qua* efficient cause only but not *qua* a formal cause (*ṣūrah*) or a

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *TBMAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 44, *TAT* 111, 53, 70-72, 79, 81.

<sup>73</sup> *TBMAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 44, p. 1649, ll. 1-3 وهذا القول هو موهم وذلك انه ليس هناك صدور ولا لزوم ولا فعل حتى نقول ان الفعل الواحد يلزم ان يكون عن فاعل واحد.



final cause (*ghāyah*), seeing that formal and final causes are also called efficient causes by a certain kind of simile.»<sup>54</sup>

The phraseology in the passage just quoted from the Epitome of the *Metaphysics* will explain the use of the term «almost» by al-Lawi in the present Fragment. Probably in the original text of Averroes' lost treatise, just as in his Epitome of the *Metaphysics*, his statement read something to the effect that «the proposition was true of an efficient cause *qua* efficient cause only, but not of an efficient cause *qua* formal cause,» without saying outright that it was not true of a formal cause. In his paraphrase of this passage, therefore, al-Lawi says that in the case of a formal cause Averroes «almost does not admit the proposition,» the term «almost» having here the meaning of «virtually,» «practically,» or «indirectly.»

#### Fragment 7

«One of the most amazing things is Averroes' contention here to the effect that if we assume that the First Principle does not act essentially, that is to say, if we assume that the First Principle does not directly move any of the celestial bodies but acts by the intermediacy of that which is inferior to it, then the First Form would be without the action which is appropriate to it and the work of nature would thus be in vain.»<sup>55</sup>

The criticism in this passage, as fully stated by Averroes in his Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, reads as follows :

وفيه حلال وذلك ان قولنا الواحد لا يصدر عنه الا واحد : 54 *IMBAT* IV, 60  
هي صادقة في الفاعل من حيث هو فاعل فقط لا من حيث هو صورة وعاية فان الصورة  
والعاية ايضا يقال فيها انها فاعلة بصرب من التشبيه .

ומן הדבר היותר נפלא מאמר אבן ארדודי הנח שאנחנו אם הנחנו שהעלה 55  
הראשונה אין לה בעצמותה פועל, ר"ל אם הנחנו שהתחלה הראשונה יא תניע  
דבר מן הגרמים השמימיים, ואמנם תפער באמצעות מה שימשה ממנה, היתה הצורה  
הראשונה שרירה פעולתה המיוחדת בה ופער הטבע יבטלה



« As for the statement of recent philosophers that there is a prime substance who is prior to the mover of the universe, it is absurd, and for the following reason. Any one of these substances [i.e., Intelligences] is a principle of a sensible substance [i.e., a sphere] after the manner of a motive cause (*muḥarrrik*) and of a final cause (*ghāyah*) and it is for this reason that Aristotle says that if there were any substances (i.e., Intelligences) which did not cause motion, their action would be in vain (*bāṭil*). »<sup>56</sup> The last statement is not a direct quotation from Aristotle, though Aristotle does say elsewhere in a general way that « nature does nothing in vain. »<sup>57</sup> It is meant to be a paraphrase and interpretation of Aristotle's contention that the number of the Intelligences cannot exceed the number of the movements of the spheres.<sup>58</sup> Averroes' paraphrase and explanation of this contention of Aristotle evidently reflects the following paraphrase of the same passage by Themistius : « It is impossible that any divine substance or nature should be in vain (Hebrew : *baṭel*) and without any action, for any substance of that kind, by reason of its having attained to the perfection of everlasting life, is in the highest degree good and is incessant in that activity which is appropriate to it and which comes within the scope of its definition. »<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *TMBAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 44, p. 1648, 4-8. « وأما ما قاله المأخرون من أن هاهنا جوهرًا أول هو أقدم من محرك الكل فهو قول باطل وذلك إن كل جوهر من هذه الجواهر فهو مبدأ الجوهر المحسوس على أنه محرك وعلى أنه عاية ولذلك ما يقول أرسطو أنه لو كانت هاهنا حواهر لا تحرك لكان فعلها باطلاً »

<sup>57</sup> *De Caelo* I, 4, 271a, 33. This is the reading of the text as was known to Averroes. Cf. my paper « Hallevi and Maimonides on Design, Chance, and Necessity », *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 11 (1941), pp. 158 f.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Metaph.* XII, 8, 1074a, 17-24.

<sup>59</sup> *Themistius in Aristotelis Metaphysica* XII, ed. S. Landauer, Hebrew: ואי אפשר שיהיה עצם : p. 24, l. 31 — p. 25, l. 1 (Latin : p. 28, ll. 1-22) : ושבע איהי בטר אין פועל לו, כי כל עצם זה עניינו, הנח הוא טוב, יא יתשר בפעולתו המיוחדת בו. הנכנסת בדרו, עי חכמת המעיה, אחר שהשיג בשימות החיים התמידים.

## Fragment 8

« Furthermore, Averroes raises here the following objection against those who say that the First Principle is not identical with the first mover. He says: 'Would that I knew whether that which the mover of the universe understands of the First Principle is a perfection to its essence or is not a perfection to it. If it is a perfection to it, how then could any action be conceived to proceed from it, without regard to the existence of that which is a perfection to it? For the relation of that perfection to it is like that of form to matter and the relation of its essence to the perfection is like that of matter to [form], and, consequently, just as there can be no action on the part of matter except by virtue of its form so there can be no action on the part of that first mover except by virtue of that which it understands of the First Principle.' This is a verbatim quotation of his statement. »<sup>60</sup>

By this argument, Averroes tries to show that if we assume the principle that from one simple being only one simple being can proceed is true, then the emanationists' explanation of the rise of plurality from unity is not a good explanation. For what is their explanation? They say that within the understanding of the first emanation there are two concepts, one in so far as it understands the First Principle and the other in so far as it understands its own essence and that from each of these two concepts there proceeds a different being, so that from the first emanation, who is one, there arise more than one emanation. But, argues Averroes, these two concepts are

עוד כי אבו ארודיר יקשה גם כן הנה ער האומרים כי התחלה הראשונה<sup>60</sup> בלתי המניע הראשון ויאמר מי יתן ואדע האם מה שישכיר מניע הבל מן התחלה הראשונה שלמות לעצמותו או איננו שלמות לו. ואם היה שלמות לו, איך יצויר פועל מסודר ממנו מזולת השגחת מציאות זה השלמות לו, כי זה השלמות יחסו אריו יחס הצורה, ויחס עצמותו אריו יחס החמר, וכמו שמתוויב שלא ימצא פעל לחמר אלא מצד הצורה, כן מתוויב שלא נמצא פעל לזה המניע אלא מצד מה שישכילתו מן הראשון. זהו מאמרו בלשונו.

related to each other as matter and form, and, inasmuch as matter by itself without form is incapable of producing anything, one of the concepts, namely, that which is analogous to matter, cannot produce any being. In other words, the two concepts in the understanding of the first emanation constitute a unity and hence no plurality could emanate from it. Somewhat different is the argument against the duality of concepts within the understanding of the first emanation given by Averroes in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. Whereas here he contends that the essence of the first emanation and its knowledge of the First Principle are related to each other as matter to form there he contends that its essence and its knowledge of the First Principle are identical. The passage in question reads as follows: « This, however, is an error according to the fundamental teachings of the philosophers, for according to their teachings the intellect in its act of understanding (*al-'āql*) and the object of the intellect's understanding (*al-ma'qūl*) are one and the same thing in the case of the human intellect and how much more so must it be in the case of the separate Intelligences. »<sup>61</sup>

An allusion to this criticism may also be found in the Epithome of the *Metaphysics* in the sequel of the passage quoted above, in which a difficulty (*ḥalāl*) is raised.<sup>62</sup> The sequel of that passage, according to the Madrid Arabic manuscript, reads as follows: « The thing that is especially to be determined here is whether in (*fī*) one simple thing more than one simple thing may be conceived (*yataṣawwaru*) and by that simple thing more than one thing attain its perfection. If this is impossible, then the difficulty (*al-mus'alah*) is real; if it is possible, the difficulty is not real. We have already discussed

<sup>61</sup> *TAT* III, 68, p. 180, ll. 1-3: وهذا حصاً على أصولهم لأن العاقل والمقول: هو شيء واحد في العقل الاساسي فضلاً عن المقول المارقة.

This passage is quoted by Naboni on *Moreh Nebukim* II, 22, p. 35, ll. 23-25.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. above n. 54.



this in another place.»<sup>63</sup> Assuming that the reading of the Arabic manuscript is correct, then the difficulty referred to is like that discussed by him in the lost Treatise on the Prime Mover and in the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, namely, the contention that the knowledge of its cause and the knowledge of its own essence do not constitute in the first emanation a duality of distinct elements. In the Hebrew translation from the Arabic, as well as in the Latin translation from the Hebrew, the reading of the first sentence in the preceding quotation is as follows: «The thing that is especially for us to determine here is whether from (*min*, *ex*) one simple thing more than one simple thing may proceed (*yecudar*, *ordinetur*),»<sup>64</sup> which quite evidently implies a different underlying Arabic text, where the reading was *عن* for *في* and *يصدر* for *يتصور*. If this reading is assumed to be correct, then the passage is merely a restatement of the difficulty with regard to the distinction between an efficient cause and a formal or a final cause mentioned by him previously and quoted by us above.<sup>65</sup>

#### Fragment 9

«Averroes finally says that these matters are to be understood according to the manner which he himself has set forth and not according to the manner in which the common run of philosophers are in the habit of interpreting them».<sup>66</sup>

وَمَا الْمَضَاللَّ الْحَاسِ هَذَا أَنْ يُقَالَ هَلْ يُمْكِنُ أَنْ يَصُورَ . 63 *IMBAT* IV, 60  
 فِي الشَّيْءِ الْوَاحِدِ السَّيْطُ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَيُسْتَكْمَلُ « أَكْثَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَاحِدٍ »  
 أَمْتَعِ هَذَا فَالْمَسَالَةَ صَحِيحَةً فَإِنْ حَارَ فَالْمَسَالَةَ نَاطِلَةً.

וְאָמַנָם : 64 MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cod. Heb. 918, f. 145v1  
 הַמְבוּקָה הַמְיוֹחֵד בִּזְוֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אִם אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיִּסְוֹדֵר מִן הַדָּבָר הָאֶחָד הַפְּשׁוּט יוֹתֵר מִדָּבָר  
 אֶחָד Cf. Latin, I, 393 D « Sed quaesitum proprium huius rei est, ut  
 dicamus utrum sit possibile, quod ex uno simplici ordinetur plusquam  
 unum. »

<sup>65</sup> Cf. above n. 54.

<sup>66</sup> וְהוּא יֹאמֵר שֶׁאֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים יִצְטָרֵךְ שֶׁיּוֹכְנוּ עַל דֶּרֶךְ שׂוֹכֵר, לֹא כִּמוֹ שֶׁפָּשְׁט בּוֹ  
 מִנְהַג הַמֹּן הַפִּילוֹסוּפִים.

So also in his other works Averroes refers in a similar vein to the exponents of the view represented by Avicenna as « the later ones » (*al-mut' ahhirūm*)<sup>67</sup> and as « the later ones of the philosophers of Islam » (*al-muta' ahhirah min falāsifah al-islām*).<sup>68</sup>

In this paper we have collected the fragments of Averroes' lost Treatise on the Prime Mover, supplementing them with parallel texts from his other writings and also with brief explanatory comments. But the problems touched upon in these Fragments and parallel texts have, both historically and philosophically, much deeper roots and much wider ramifications. Some of these deeper and wider aspects of the problems are dealt with in an unpublished study, by the present writer, on mediaeval philosophy, in which this paper, as originally written, formed one of several appendices

<sup>67</sup> *TMBAT*, Lam (XII), Com. 44, p. 1648, l. 4.

<sup>68</sup> *TAT* III, 56, p. 173, l. 7.