

THE INFLUENCE OF IBN GABIROL ON JOHN DUNS SCOTUS' METAPHYSICS

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Makale Bilgisi

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Abstract

In his work *Yanbu' al-haya*, the Jewish philosopher Ibn Gabirol, who lived in Andalusia in the eleventh century, lays the groundwork for his original philosophy. In the twelfth century, this work, with its translation into Latin under the name *Fons vitae*, influenced many philosophers in the tradition of Scholastic thought. The aim of this study is to examine the general lines of this work and to determine in which ways the thoughts in the work of the Jewish philosopher influenced John Duns Scotus, one of the important names of Scholastic thought. In this context, the basic thoughts of both thinkers about metaphysics were examined.

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As a result of this examination, it has been determined that John Duns Scotus was influenced by Ibn Gabirol in certain aspects in his views incorporeal substances, the plurality of forms and divine will.

Keywords: Medieval Philosophy, Hylomorphism, Incorporeal Substances, Plurality Of Forms, Divine Will.

İbn Cebiro'l'ün John Duns Scotus'un Metafizikine Etkisi

Öz:

On birinci yüzyılda Endülüs'te yaşamış olan Yahudi filozof İbn Cebiro'l'ün özgün felsefesinin başlıca özellikleri *Yenbû'u'l-Hayât* adlı eserinde bulunmaktadır. On ikinci yüzyılda söz konusu eser *Fons vitae* adıyla Latinceye tercüme edilmesiyle birlikte Skolastik düşüncede geleneğinde yer alan pek çok filozofu düşünsel anlamda etkilemiştir. İbn Cebiro'l'ün bu eserindeki düşüncelerini genel hatlarını irdelemek ve söz konusu düşüncelerin Skolastik düşüncenin önemli isimlerinden birisi olan John Duns Scotus'u hangi yönlerden etkilendiğini saptamak bu çalışmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda her iki düşünürün de metafizik hakkındaki temel düşünceleri irdelenmiştir. Bu irdelemenin sonucunda John Duns Scotus'un gayri cismanî madde, suretlerin çokluğu ve ilahî irade hakkında serrettiği görüşlerde belli açılardan İbn Cebiro'l'den etkilendiği saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Çağ Felsefesi, Hilomorfizm, Gayri Cismanî Cevherler, Suretlerin Çokluğu, İlahî Irade.

Introduction

John Duns Scotus was a philosopher, whose studies had a significant impact on the history of philosophy, and he was one of the most notable representatives of High Scholastic philosophy. Some of his more unconventional ideas appear to have stemmed from his positive attitude towards Jewish philosophical sources. The first name that comes to mind from among these is Maimonides. However, Maimonides is not the only Jewish philosopher whose work shaped Duns Scotus' thoughts. *Yanbu' al-haya*, by the eleventh-century Jewish Andalusian Solomon Ibn Gabirol, (1020/21–58), known in Scholasticism as Avicbron, Avencebrol or Avicebrol, is also another intellectual source worth studying. On various occasions, Duns Scotus, who was unaware of Avicbron's Jewish beliefs, invokes his philosophical authority in an approving manner. Ibn Gabirol's work, *Yanbu' al-haya*, was translated into Latin as *Fons vitae*, and left a great influence on the thinking of Dominican and Franciscan philosophers.¹

¹ Many studies have been conducted on the influence of Ibn Gabirol on Scholastic thought. To mention a few: James Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicbron A Note on Thirteenth-Century Augustinianism" *The Southwest-*

In this paper, we first examine John Duns Scotus' interpretation of Ibn Gabirol's view of the incorporeal substances and plurality of forms and then investigate the views of Ibn Gabirol and Duns Scotus on divine will and voluntarism. In this context, the aim of this study is to scrutinize the views of John Duns Scotus, one of the important philosophers of the Franciscan tradition, on incorporeal substances, the plurality of forms and divine will, and to examine in which ways his views were influenced by the Jewish philosopher Ibn Gabirol and compare the views of the two thinkers on the issue. In this study the translation of Ibn Gabirol's *Yanbu' al-haya* into Latin and the process of reaching John Duns Scotus will be explored first, and this will be followed by a discussion on the points at which Ibn Gabirol influenced John Duns Scotus intellectually. The main argument we will put forward is that Ibn Gabirol's metaphysics influenced John Duns Scotus' Christian philosophy at significant points.

1.1. Historical Background

Almost all philosophical disciplines in medieval Latin culture were transformed as a result of the Arabic-Latin translation movements, which led to the Greek-Latin translation movement. Arabic philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd had a significant influence on Western philosophy, especially in the fields of natural philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics, logic and ethics.² Among the translation movements that were headquartered in Europe - outside of Italy - in the twelfth century, Toledo became the center of the translation movements of the period in terms of the number of translated works and translators and their influence. With Alfonso's help, a translation team led by Archpriest Raymond Lull was formed. Translations into Latin by many important translators such as Gerardus Cremonensis (1114-1187), Dominicus Gundissa-

ern Journal of Philosophy 10/7 (1979), 239-260; Ze'ev Strauss, "Meister Eckhart Reading Ibn Gabirol's Fons vitae" *Yearbook of the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies*, ed. Giuseppe Veltri, (Berlin: De Gruyter 2020), 65-100; Nicola Polloni, "Toledan Ontologies: Gundissalinus, Ibn Daud, and the Problem of *Gabirolian Hylomorphism*" *Appropriation, Interpretation and Criticism: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges Between the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Intellectual Traditions*, ed. A. Fidora – N. Polloni, (Turnhot: Brepols 2017), 19-49; Bernard McGinn, "Ibn Gabirol: The Sage among the Schoolmen", *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn. E. Goodman, (New York: State University of New York Press 1982), 77-110; Stephen J. Laumakis, "Aquinas' Misinterpretation of Avicbron on the Activity of Corporeal Substances: Fons Vitae II, 9 and 10." *The Modern Schoolman* 81.2 (2004), 135-149.

² *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Influence of Arabic and Islamic Philosophy on the Latin West", (11 April 2021).

linus, Juan Hispalense (1100-1180) and Daniel de Morley (1140-1210) in fields such as medicine, astronomy, geometry, mathematics, philosophy and theology were included in the Toledo collection.

The translators of Toledo translated the works of Islamic philosophers and scientists such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (780-850), Fergani (800-870), Bettani (858-929) and al-Bitrucci (?-1217) and Greek thinkers such as Aristotle, Euclides (330 BC-275), Ptolemy (108-168) and Galen. Ibn Gabirol's *Yanbu' al-haya* was one of the works translated during the Toledo translation movements, which spanned the years 1150-1200.

Ibn Gabirol was a prominent Jewish philosopher and poet in the Middle Ages who also wrote books on philosophy in Andalusia. Of the works he wrote, only *Yanbu' al-haya* and *islāh al-'akhlāq* have survived. The most important of these works, was written in Arabic and contains the thinker's main philosophical concepts. This work, the Arabic copy of which does not exist today, was later translated into Latin under the name *Fons vitae* by Johannes Hispalensus, also known as Ibn Daud and Dominicus Gundissalinus, in Toledo, in the middle of the 12th century.³

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The introduction of Arabic works into European schools can be divided into three parts. The first chapter is related to mathematical sciences and medicine, and Muslims contributed both textually

³ For the surviving Latin translation of the work, see. Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gabirol) Fons Vitae, ex Arabico in Latinum Translatus ab Johanne Hispano et Dominico Gundissalino* (Munster: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, Texte und Untersuchungen, s.n. 1892). Also, for the excerpts from the Hebrew manuscript of the work, see. Rabbi Shlomo ben Gabirol, "Sefer Meqor Hayyim", *Ozar HaMahshavah shel Ha-Yahadut*, ed. Abraham Sifroni - Mosad Ha-Rav Kuk (Israel: Hebrew Union College Press, 1962). Although Ibn Gabirol is referred to as Avicbron or Avicbrol in the Latin translation of his work, the philosopher's identity was unknown during the actual Middle Ages, and the assumption was that he was a Muslim or Christian Arab. The probable reason for this is that, as mentioned before, the work does not contain information about the Jewish tradition; that is, it was written in a secular style. Therefore, the original identity of Ibn Gabirol was discovered only in the early nineteenth century by Solomon Munk (1803-1867). Munk was discovered when he translated Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's work *Liqqutim Mi-Sefer Meqor Hayyim* (Sections from the Book of the Source of Life). Ibn Gabirol is the same person, who played an important role in the development of mediaeval scholastic thought, known as Avicbron or Avicbrol. Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und Die Juden als Dolmetscher, Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen Bureau* (Berlin: 1893), 379; Also, for discussions on the identification of Ibn Gabirol's real identity, see, Solomon Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 1859). Loewe, on the other hand, argues that what Solomon Munk put forward as a discovery had been known within Jewish tradition for centuries. See. Raphael Loewe, *Ibn Gabirol* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 39-41.

and technically in this field. The Arabic philosophical tradition did not influence European thought before the end of the 12th century. The second area covers the Arabic texts related to the natural philosophy of Aristototele, Ibn Gabirol, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sīnā. And Ibn Rushd's introduction to philosophical discussion constitutes the third and final stage of Arabic influence on Britain. In this context, it is quite likely that *Yanbu' al-haya* reached other significant universities in Europe, such as Bologna, Paris, and Oxford, after being translated into Latin under the title *Fons vitae*. Although John Duns Scotus did not mention Ibn Gabirol in his writings; however, given that he studied philosophy in both Paris and Oxford, it seems highly likely that he encountered Ibn Gabirol's work entitled *Fons vitae*, alongside the works of other thinkers translated from Arabic into Latin.⁴ As a matter of fact, his thoughts on incorporeal substances, the plurality of forms and divinity will bear considerable resemblance to the views that Ibn Gabirol defended in his *Fons vitae*. At this point in the study, it would be appropriate to determine how the metaphysical thoughts of Ibn Gabirol inspired John Duns Scotus.

1.2. Overview of the Metaphysics of Ibn Gabirol

The philosophical opinions on metaphysics of Ibn Gabirol can be found in his work *Yanbu' al-haya*. Even though Ibn Gabirol wrote several books on metaphysics, *Yanbu' al-haya* is the only one that has survived through its Latin translation. Since this work is the systematic metaphysical work of Ibn Gabirol, it is possible to detail the philosopher's understanding of metaphysics largely through the work in question and the philosopher's poems. Ibn Gabirol was a thinker who was greatly influenced by Neoplatonism, as he stated his main philosophical views in his writings. Ibn Gabirol's philosophical approach is based on the concept of man, and the aim of man's creation is to know God. It is conceivable for a man to achieve immortality and thus the source of life because of this understanding. To understand this, first it is necessary to have knowledge about the dimensions of knowledge. In this sense, Ibn Gabirol divides the knowledge of beings into three: matter - form, divine will and primary Existent, and evaluates each of these separately. Ibn Gabirol states in the first book of *Yanbu' al-haya*, that objects are composed of matter and form and that the material world is basically composed of these two

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⁴ Charles Burnett, *The Introduction of Arabic Learning into British School (London: The British Library, 1990)*, 51.

different elements. The thinker has presented the philosophical and cosmological features required for the definition of matter and form in this work. The second book talks about the essence of the material world. The thinker examines simple substances that act as intermediaries between God and the material universe in the third book, while the understanding of matter and form in these simple substances is discussed in the fourth book. The universal substance and universal form are discussed in the final section of the work.

The fundamental metaphysical views of Ibn Gabirol are as follows: God created divine will out of nothing; Apart from God, all incorporeal beings consist of matter and form; there are various layers consisting of matter and form based on the beings in question; the main cause of matter is God and divine will; all beings, especially matter and form, which have emerged, constitute divine will. In this sense, the philosopher's views on metaphysics are basically based on God, divine will, universal substance and universal form, universal reason, universal soul, and nature, which are at the level of existence.⁵

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In the most general terms, there is a philosophical theory based on Ibn Gabirol's metaphysical system known as "universal hylomorphism". Simply expressed, Ibn Gabirol's theory of universal hylomorphism asserts that all beings in the world are made up of a combination of matter and form. The idea in question has long been seen as a debatable claim in philosophy, going beyond Aristotle's hylomorphism, which states that every physical entity is a combination of matter and form. Because, whereas the Aristotelian approach sees reasons and souls, i.e., incorporeal substances, as simply formal beings devoid of matter, Ibn Gabirol's universal hylomorphism theory assumes that reasons and souls are formed by combining matter and form.

Another important issue in Ibn Gabirol's metaphysical system is related to the levels of existence. In the history of thought, some thinkers have created a hierarchical order according to the superiority of the beings in the world, from the simplest to the most complex and from the primitive to the competent. Although Aristotle was the first thinker to deal with the issue of levels of existence in the history of philosophy, Plotinus was the first to do so a systematic way. Accor-

⁵ Sarah Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire: Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 33.

ding to the principle of emanation, which is one of the main concepts of metaphysics created by Plotinos, all beings are in a hierarchical structure and are ordered from top to bottom. In his work entitled *Yanbu' al-haya*. Ibn Gabirol also developed the levels of existence based on Plotinus' system. One of the most important issues in Ibn Gabirol's levels of existence is the importance he attaches to matter and form. In this regard, it's important to note that all simple substances in the stages of existence are made up of matter and form. It can be revealed that there are certain layers of matter and form in the metaphysics of Ibn Gabirol. One way to understand the view that there are layers of matter in Ibn Gabirol's system is to reconsider the concept of universal matter, which is at the very center of the levels of existence.⁶ In this way, the many levels of matter and form at each point of Ibn Gabirol's unique hierarchy of existence can be observed. To put it another way, all beings are expressions of universal matter in varied forms in some manner. From this perspective, it is apparent that Ibn Gabirol placed a priority on the ideas of matter and form in his metaphysical framework, as no other thinker before him had done.

Another issue that Ibn Gabirol attaches importance to and examines in his metaphysics system is that matter is more important than form. It has been mentioned before that diversity comes from form, not from matter, because there are many forms, but matter is just one. When Ibn Gabirol says that universal matter has an inherent quality, he really means that matter comes before form and even thought, and exists without form. In this context, while God's essence is the cause of matter, the fact that His wisdom is the cause of form is another reason why the philosopher gives priority and importance to matter relative to form.⁷

Another important concept in Ibn Gabirol's metaphysical system is divine will. Divine will (Voluntas), which is the level that comes after God in the levels of existence, is a very controversial concept in the philosophical system of the philosopher in terms of both the definition and determination of what it means. In the first book of *Yanbu' al-haya*, the philosopher divides philosophy into three parts, as the science of the primary Existent, matter and form and divine will, and places divine will as an intermediary between God and matter and form:

⁶ Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire*, 70.

⁷ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 299.

“Master: The whole of philosophy is divided into three parts: the science of matter and form, the science of will and the science of the primary Existent.

Disciple: Why is the whole of philosophy in three parts?

Master: For these three can exist alone: matter and form, the first Existence, and divine will, which is the mediator of these two extremes.

Disciple: Why do these three alone exist?

Master: The reason for this is that the created needs a cause and a mediator. The cause is the first Existence who creates matter and form, and the mediator is divine will.”⁸

In the fifth chapter of his work, *Yanbu’ al-haya*, Ibn Gabirol also defines divine will as follows:

“Will is impossible to define, but it can be approximated by saying it is a divinely inspired potency that creates and combines matter and shape and is disseminated throughout, just like the soul in a body. It is what activates and disposes everything.”⁹

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According to Ibn Gabirol, God’s first creative act was the separation of matter and form. The principles of these two entities are divided into the complementary powers within them. In this sense, if there was no divine will, there would be no distinction between matter and form. According to the thinker, matter and form are not fully separate from one another, much as the magnetic poles of a magnet separate an object from another. The pair of matter and form can exist separately from each other without being annihilated by the Will of God. On these issues, Ibn Gabirol states as follows:

Nothing can exist without divine will, for every being’s existence and structure is based on it... Don’t you understand that everything’s nature is derived solely from matter and form, and that matter and form are derived from divine will? In fact, it is the will that brings them together, unifies them, and keeps them together.¹⁰

According to Ibn Gabirol, while matter and form can only be known by being described by humans, the divine itself cannot even be depicted, and therefore cannot be directly known. Will can only

⁸ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 9.

⁹ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 326.

¹⁰ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 328.

be approximated through its actions. Although the Jewish philosopher did not think that human reason could fully grasp will, he thought that it could at least reveal some features of will.¹¹

Divine will encompasses all the spiritual and material existence that is below it. However, questions may be asked about why Ibn Gabirol added such an intermediary layer between God and universal matter and universal form and why God did not create matter and form directly without an intermediary. According to Ibn Gabirol, there must be an intermediary between the two extremes, since the mediator resembles each of the opposite extremes in some respects. Accordingly, God is an infinite and absolute unity, whereas all beings after him, including simple substances, are finite and are characterized by duality or plurality. In this sense, God must be an intermediary between unity and eternity and the duality and the finitude of matter and form. This being must be divine will, which reflects the active infinity of God and is the agent of the lower beings. However, since divine will is the agent of God, it is limited in a way. Therefore, divine will is simultaneously infinite in its essence and finite in its activity. Divine will is finite in this sense because it is the work of God. At the same time, it is infinite because it has no beginning and is finite because it has a limit. Contrary to this situation, universal reason has a beginning that starts with matter and form, but it has no end because the beings below it constantly appear. Therefore, the finitude of divine will is not a function of its infinite essence but stems from the finitude of matter and form emerging from it. Although it has a finite aspect, divine will is unique and is also called the Divine Command or the Divine Word in *Yanbu' al-haya*.

It is difficult to say with certainty whether divine will is merely an external manifestation or is identical to God, or whether it should be considered a hypostasis, that is, a spiritual substance originating from God himself. As a matter of fact, Ibn Gabirol does not claim that the principle in question is completely intelligible. On the contrary, it is obvious that this concept is a great mystery for Ibn Gabirol. However, at the beginning of *Yanbu' al-haya*, the philosopher mentions that will is a divine power that moves all beings, that nothing is possible without it and that rest and movement and everything else in humanity comes from will. However, towards the end of his

¹¹ Kevin J. Caster, "William of Auvergne's Adaptation of Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of the Divine Will." *The Modern Schoolman* 74/1 (1996), 33.

work, the philosopher mentions that universal matter and universal form and their substratum emerge from divine will. In this respect, will is an entity that does not exist separately or act independently. Although Ibn Gabirol mentions it as a separate entity at some point, he also mentions it as an aspect of God's essence at numerous points; divine will embody the transformation of God into a being other than himself. This is just like the will of one person, the transformation of the soul into another. The philosopher, assuming simple parallelism between human will and divine will, characterizes will as an agent that reveals and reflects the inner self. In addition to all of this, from the perspective in question, Ibn Gabirol puts forward will as the necessary intermediary between God and creation, and attaches importance to divine will, emphasizing that it is actually more important than reason.

1.3. The Influence of the Ibn Gabirol on John Duns Scotus

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John Duns Scotus, who became one of the important names of High Scholastic thought with his views, is also another important figure of the Franciscan order. John Duns Scotus has a very important place in the philosophical tradition of the 13th century with his studies. As a matter of fact, his views in the context of the relationship between reason and belief, the superiority of will over reason and the univocity of being, explain that the word being is the most abstract concept and can be applied to everything that exists. The concept of Haecceity influenced the later thinkers and made an impact in the following periods. It is possible to see the views of John Duns Scotus, who examined the views of many philosophers, especially Aristotle and Augustine in his works. These are very similar to the ideas of Ibn Gabirol concerning universal hylomorphism and Will.

When John Duns Scotus' views on matter and form are examined, it is seen that he defends the Aristotelian hylomorphic understanding and puts forward the view that form can only emerge in matter. At the same time, he argues that change occurs in form and manifests in matter, and states that change is passing from one state to another, and therefore this situation has an order within itself. Following in the footsteps of Aristotle, Duns Scotus divides change into two parts; essential and incidental. Accordingly, in incidental change, its qualities rather than the essence of the entity change. For example, the color of a pen may change, but a change in color is not

what makes it into a pen. The second type of change, material change, is the transformation of the existent into another existent. If the pen catches fire, what's left of it is no longer a pen. Yet even such a change is not considered a change at all, for it is simply the destruction of one thing and the occurrence of something else.¹²

Up to this point it is clear that Duns Scotus took the traditional Aristotelian approach and did not stand apart from his contemporaries or predecessors. When the metaphysical views of the thinker are examined more comprehensively, there are three important points that can be compared with the ideas of Ibn Gabirol. The first of these is that matter can exist without any form; the second is that all beings are composed of matter and form; and the third is the plurality of substantial forms.

The first of the views that John Duns Scotus may have been influenced by, amongst the ideas of Ibn Gabirol, is related to *materia prima*. Duns Scotus claims that God can create and preserve what is called primary matter, that is, matter that has no form. As he stated while explaining the matter of ore change, matter and form exist separately from each other, and while forms come and go, matter continues to exist. Based on this, the thinker believes that matter can exist on its own separately from form. As a matter of fact, according to him, God is able to cause everything He causes directly, without a secondary reason. In this sense, God causes matter through form, but since he is omnipotent, he need not do such a thing. He can create matter without any form. As a matter of fact, considering that matter is something separate from form, God creates matter both directly and indirectly.¹³

Duns Scotus' views on universal matter are essentially in harmony with Ibn Gabirol's interpretation of it. That is because, according to Ibn Gabirol, all levels of existence and layers of matter and form are based on a universal matter. The initial matter in the Jewish thinker's metaphysical framework provides support for both bodily and incorporeal beings. However, given Duns Scotus' use of primary matter, it is more likely that he was influenced by Aristotle rather than Ibn Gabirol, even though he did not expressly state it in his works.

¹² John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia The Vatican edition Civitas Vaticana* (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1950–2013, 335.

¹³ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "John Duns Scotus", (21 April 2021).

Another issue that can be compared between the views of Duns Scotus and Ibn Gabirol is universal hylomorphism. The ideas of the Duns Scotus on this subject are extremely enigmatic. While it is clear enough that the Christian philosopher accepted the Aristotelian theory of hylomorphism, it is not so clear whether he accepted the combination of incorporeal matter and form as admitted by Ibn Gabirol. As a matter of fact, John Duns Scotus clearly expresses the hylomorphic composition of incorporeal entities in a part of his work entitled *De Rerum Principio*, which is attributed by some researchers to the French Franciscan theologian and scholastic philosopher Vital du Fuor (1260-1327). In *De rerum Principio*, he makes several specific direct references to *Yanbu' al-haya* and even mentions Ibn Gabirol's name. When Solomon Munk examined the work, he saw this as evidence of Ibn Gabirol's direct influence on Duns Scotus. According to Albert Stöckle, Ibn Gabirol's ideas are so far adopted in the work in question that it gives the impression of an annotation related to his metaphysics. In the work *De rerum Principio* there is the following passage:

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*“Should it be assumed that there is matter in all corporeal and incorporeal substances or only in corporeal ones? As we shall see, the unity of matter has been handled in different ways. Regarding this, as Avicbron says in his book Fontis Vitae, there is substance in all existing ... I agree with this suggestion...”*¹⁴

Although it seems that universal hylomorphism is clearly accepted in this quoted paragraph, doubts over the attribution of *De rerum principio* to John Duns Scotus make the philosopher's acceptance of universal hylomorphism seem skeptical. In fact, there is no other viewpoint that supports Ibn Gabirol and the idea of universal hylomorphism that is similar to the statement in issue when we look at the other writings of the Duns Scotus. Modern scholars such as Parthenius Minges and Thomas Williams argue that John Duns Scotus rejects universal hylomorphism, referring to *Lectura*. However, when the paragraph pointed out by the researchers is examined, it is seen that John Duns Scotus is not defending his own views, but conveying the view of others (*dicas aliter*):

¹⁴ Vital du Fuor, *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* (London: Quaracchi, 1910) 164; Albert Stöckl, *Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 2/1 Kirchheim, (1865), 65.

“Others say that the form is not very different from matter, it is not related and is only acquired, it has a relationship for generations and is a non-different entity. These people also say that matter and form are in every being.”¹⁵

Although John Duns Scotus did not directly reject incorporeal matter in the paragraph cited above, he stated in his work *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima* that angels and souls can reproduce and exist without matter in their own kind.¹⁶ In addition, in the fifteenth chapter of the same work, he defends incorporeal matter by stating that the soul consists of matter and form and affects the body in a different way.¹⁷ However, in his later works, this defense is replaced by criticism. As a matter of fact, in a part of his work entitled *Ordinatio*, he briefly argues that incorporeal beings do not possess matter.¹⁸ Apart from the work entitled *De Rerum Principio* (and it is doubtful whether this work belongs to Scotus), it is striking that he made negative statements regarding the existence of immaterial matter in his other works. In this sense, aside from the fact that the thinker did not have sufficient interest or place sufficient importance to discuss the issue at length, it should also be considered that he made diametrically opposite statements in his works.¹⁹ Therefore, it is very difficult to interpret John Duns Scotus’ thoughts on the issue in question. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this situation is that Duns Scotus’s thoughts on incorporeal matter and form, although deeply rooted in the Franciscan tradition, put an end to the absolute acceptance of Avicenna’s understanding of

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¹⁵ John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, 335; Also see. Louis Israel Newman, *Jewish Influence in Christian Reform Movements*, (New York: AMS Press Inc,1966), 119.

¹⁶ Michael B. Sullivan, *The Debate over Spiritual Matter in the Late Thirteenth Century: Gonsalvus Hispanus and the Franciscan Tradition from Bonaventure to Scotus* (Washington: Faculty of the School of Philosophy of the Catholic University of America, Ph.D. Dissertation), 425.

¹⁷ John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones Super Secundum et Tertium De Anima* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006) 29.

¹⁸ Sullivan, *The Debate over Spiritual Matter in the Late Thirteenth Century*, 425-426.

¹⁹ Modern researchers are divided on this issue. Frederick Copleston, referring to the 15th chapter of John Duns Scotus’ commentary on *De Anima*, believes that his treatment of matter presupposes the theory of the hylomorphic composition of the soul and angels. Etienne Gilson, on the other hand, points to the rational side of John Duns Scotus. In this sense, according to the philosopher, he says that man does not have concepts that will directly show how only incorporeal and intelligible substances such as God and angels can be, and therefore he is not sufficiently interested in the issue of incorporeal matter. See. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy Volume II* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1993), 514; Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 460.

universal hylomorphism. As a matter of fact, thinkers who came after him did not present arguments for the acceptance of this view.²⁰

Another issue on which the Duns Scotus can be compared with Ibn Gabirol is the plurality of forms. As a matter of fact, John Duns Scotus accepts the idea that matter has more than one substance, just like Ibn Gabirol. He discusses this issue in his work entitled *Ordinatio*. Many mediaeval thinkers, including Thomas Aquinas, assumed that the soul was the one and only essential form of man, and stated that when a person dies and the soul ceases to belong to this piece of matter, what remains will not be the same body that existed just before death. According to this view, there is a completely new substance, and this substance has completely new incidents, since the existence of incidents depends on the substance in which they are found, and what makes this substance is its substance. Therefore, Scotus states that in order to avoid these metaphysical dissonances, the soul must possess a large number of substantial forms. A standard form of such pluralism assumes that there is a corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*) that makes a particular piece of matter a unique, individual organism, and a soul that makes that body alive, as stated earlier in this study. On death, the soul ceases to revive the body, but the body remains numerically the same, and the image of the body keeps matter in order, at least for a time. However, since the form of the object is too weak on its own to sustain it indefinitely, it gradually decomposes. Scotus' view is even more complex, since he treats each organ of a living body as a substance (a combination of matter and substantial form).²¹

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In his work entitled *Ordinatio*, Duns Scotus argues that the body is composed of many kinds of compound substances corresponding to different and inseparable parts and that some inseparable substances themselves are composed of different indivisible substances, together with the ore, in a way. According to Scotus, who argues that heterogeneous parts such as the face, hands, hearts, and eyes are composed of partially homogeneous parts, such as bones, flesh and blood, these ores form a complete organism when they are affected by the soul. Scotus considers that any organism, plant, animal, or human being has a single soul. In the literature, this version of the pluralism of the substantial form is referred to as Scotus' pluralism.²²

²⁰ Sullivan, *The Debate over Spiritual Matter in the Late Thirteenth Century*, 398.

²¹ John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia: Ordinatio IV*, d. 10 q. 2.

²² Thomas Ward, "Animals, Animal Parts, and Hylomorphism: John Duns Scotus's Plural-

Based on what John Duns Scotus said about the plurality of forms, it can be said that he largely agreed with Ibn Gabirol, as has been quoted earlier.

When Duns Scotus' philosophical thought examined, it is possible to see that one of his most important thoughts is his understanding of voluntarism. Duns Scotus' views on the subject are quite similar when compared to Ibn Gabirol's voluntaristic view. Accordingly, John Duns Scotus argues that contrary to all scholastic thought, divine will, which constitutes the essence of God, precedes reason and knowledge and that God created the world willingly rather than as a necessity. In other words, the universe emerged as a result of God's free will. At the same time, according to Duns Scotus, the principle that "everything that moves is moved by another," which was also widely accepted in Scholastic thought, is incorrect. According to him, at least, things can move themselves, and bodies themselves can be displaced quantitatively and qualitatively. Divine will is the active cause of their appropriate action.²³

Ibn Gabirol attributed the power of forms to Will, but as we've seen, forms must be interpreted in far more sophisticated and intricate ways than they are in his scheme. The transition from potency to action was also a continuing problem. Forms exist before they materialize. There must be a reason for the transition. It must be Will, which, according to Ibn Gabirol, is the source of Matter and Form's division and mutual yearning, as well as the link between them and the primary Existent. According to Duns Scotus, God alone is - *quiditas per se haec* - fully substantial. Individual entities are composed simultaneously, whereas God is pure Act. Furthermore, every finite individual must experience separation from other individuals; separation does not apply to God alone. This interpretation leads to divine will being pictured as capable of entering existence and manifesting there in analogy to itself, albeit under limiting conditions established by itself. This simply suggests an immediacy of communication and transfer that can only apply to that which does not exist; that is, to that which is not a substance; for there is no functional link, translation of substance, or even pattern involved.²⁴

ism about Substantial Form." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 50/4 (2012), 531.

²³ John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia: Ordinatio III*, d. 15, q. un.; John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia: Ordinatio IV*, d. 49, q. 1.

²⁴ Anthony Blake, "Implications of Avicenna's Notion of Will." *Systematics*, 4 (1966), 25.

According to Ibn Gabirol, divine will encompasses all existence - both incorporeal and material - which is at a lower level than itself.²⁵ At the same time, just like John Duns Scotus, Ibn Gabirol also stated at the beginning of *Yanbu' al-haya*, that will is a divine power that moves all beings and that nothing is possible without it, and the rest and movement and everything else in humanity stems from will.²⁶ In this sense, the fact that only John Duns Scotus sees will at such an important point in his metaphysical system in Scholastic thought makes it possible to put forward the assumption that he was influenced at some point by Ibn Gabirol's thoughts.

Conclusion

At this point, as the historical background has shown, it can be seen that Duns Scotus was philosophically influenced by Ibn Gabirol. However, it is easy to find doubts that Duns Scotus was influenced by Ibn Gabirol if one examines his thinking. Although the Christian philosopher directly accepted the universal hylomorphism of Ibn Gabirol, the fact that the work in question belongs to him is doubtful and that he makes negative statements about universal hylomorphism in his other works are the points that lead to these doubts. However, Duns Scotus' views, such as the fact that a primary matter independent from form is an entity on its own, the plurality of forms, and the superiority of divine will over the mind, largely approach Ibn Gabirol's thoughts. Another aspect worth noting in this similarity is that John Duns Scotus makes no direct reference to Ibn Gabirol or his work. This attitude of the Christian philosopher can be seen as one of the possible reasons for the decrease in the influence of the Jewish philosopher in the studies originating from the Franciscan school after the 14th century.

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²⁵ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 253.

²⁶ Avicbron, *Avencebrolis (Ibn Gebirol) Fons Vitae*, 4.

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İBN CEBİROL'ÜN JOHN DUNS SCOTUS'UN METAFİZİĞİNE ETKİSİ

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On birinci yüzyılda Endülüs'te yaşamış olan Yahudi filozof İbn Cebiol'un özgün felsefesinin başlıca özellikleri *Yenbû'u'l-Hayât* adlı eserinde bulunmaktadır. On ikinci yüzyılda söz konusu eser *Fons vitae* adıyla Latinceye tercüme edilmesiyle birlikte Skolastik düşüncede geleneğinde yer alan Dominiken ve Fransiskan geleneğine mensup Dominicus Gundissalinus, Alexander Halensis, Guilielmus Alvernus, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, John Duns Scotus, Meister Eckhart, Berthold von Moosburg ve Robert Grosseteste gibi pek çok filozofu düşünsel anlamda etkilemiştir.

İbn Cebiol'un *Yenbû'u'l-Hayât* adlı eserini öncelikli olarak genel hatlarıyla irdelemek ve Yahudi filozofun söz konusu eserinde yer alan düşüncelerin Skolastik düşüncenin önemli isimlerinden birisi olan John Duns Scotus'u hangi yönlerden etkilediğini saptamak bu çalışmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır.

İbn Cebiol'un metafizik hakkındaki felsefi görüşlerine çok büyük ölçüde kendisinin *Yenbû'u'l-Hayât* adlı eseri vasıtasıyla ulaşılmaktadır. Basitçe ifade edilirse İbn Cebiol, küllî hylomorfizm kuramı ile âlemdeki tüm mevcudların madde ile suretin bileşiminden oluştuğunu ileri sürmektedir. Söz konusu kuram her fiziksel mevcudun bir madde ve suretin bileşimi olduğunu iddia eden Aristotelesçi hylomorfizm'in bir adım ötesine geçerek, felsefe tarihi boyunca tartışmalı bir iddia olarak görülmüştür. Zira Aristotelesçi sistem, akılları ve nefsleri yani gayri cismanî cevherleri maddeden yoksun tamamen biçimsel varlıklar olarak ele alırken, İbn Cebiol'un küllî hylomorfizm olarak adlandırılan kuramı akılların ve nefslerin madde ve suretin birleşiminden oluştuğu kabulüne dayanmaktadır. Bu anlamda İbn Cebiol'un varlık anlayışını büyük ölçüde dört ana düşünce üzerinde temellendirmek mümkündür: Tanrı haricindeki tüm varlıklar madde ve suretin birleşiminden oluşmaktadır. Akıllar ve nefslere de dâhil olmak üzere tüm cismanî ve gayri cismanî varlıklar buna tâbidir. Her mevcudun temelinde madde ve suretten oluşan çeşitli katmanlar bulunmaktadır. Maddenin esas nedeni İlahî Zat ve ilahî iradedir. Suretin esas nedeni ise ilahî irade ve İlahî Hikmet'tir. Tüm varlık mertebelerinin ve madde ile suret katmanlarının temelinde küllî veya diğer adıyla aslî bir madde bulunmaktadır.

Madde ve suret katmanlarındaki maddeler suretlerle ilahî iradenin aracılığıyla birbirine bağlanır.

Eserlerinde başta Aristoteles ve Augustinus olmak üzere pek çok filozofun görüşlerini irdelemiş olan John Duns Scotus'un İbn Cebiol'un küllî hylomorfizmi ve İrade

hakkındaki fikirlerini eserlerinde görmek mümkündür. Hristiyan düşünürün metafizik görüşleri daha kapsamlı bir biçimde incelendiğinde İbn Cebiro'lün fikirleri ile karşılaştırılabilecek üç önemli nokta bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan ilki maddenin herhangi bir suret olmadan mevcut olabileceği, ikincisi tüm mevcutların madde ve suretten oluşup oluşmadığı ve üçüncüsü cevherî suretlerin çokluğudur. Bu anlamda Duns Scotus'un görüşleri İbn Cebiro'lün küllî madde anlayışıyla büyük ölçüde uyum içindedir. Zira İbn Cebiro'l'e göre tüm varlık mertebelerinin ve madde ile suret katmanlarının temelinde küllî veya diğer adıyla aslî bir madde bulunmaktadır. Yahudi düşünürün metafizik sistemindeki aslî madde yalnızca cismanî mevcutların değil, gayri cismanî mevcutların da bir dayanağı konumundadır. Hristiyan düşünürün aslî madde ve gayri cismanî madde meseleleri dışında İbn Cebiro'l ile kıyaslanabileceği diğer bir konu da suretlerin çokluğu hakkındadır. Nitekim John Duns Scotus tıpkı İbn Cebiro'l gibi maddelerin birden fazla cevherî surete sahip olduğu fikrini kabul etmekte ve *Ordinatio* adlı eserinde bu konuyu tartışmaktadır. Thomas Aquinas dâhil olmak üzere birçok Orta Çağ düşünürü, nefsin insanın tek ve yegâne cevherî biçimi olduğunu varsaymış ve bir insan öldüğünde ve nefis bu madde parçasına ait olmayı bıraktığında, geriye kalan şeyin ölümden hemen önce var olan aynı beden olmayacağını dile getirmiştir. Bu görüşe göre tamamen yeni bir cevher vardır ve bu cevherin bütünüyle yeni arzuları vardır, zira arzuların varlıkları içinde buldukları cevhere bağlıdır ve bu cismi yapan şey onun cevherî suretidir. Bu nedenle, Scotus bu metafizik uyumsuzluklardan kaçınmak için nefsin çok sayıda cevherî surete sahip olması gerektiğini dile getirmektedir. Bu tür çoğulculuğun standart bir biçimi, yapılan bu çalışmada daha önce belirtildiği üzere belirli bir madde parçasını belirli, benzersiz, bireysel bir organizma yapan bir cismanî suret (forma corporeitatis) ve bu bedeni canlı kılan bir nefis olduğunu varsaymaktadır. Duns Scotus'un felsefî sistemine göz atıldığında onun en önemli düşüncelerinden birinin de iradecilik anlayışı olduğunu görmek mümkündür. Duns Scotus'un söz konusu meseledeki görüşleri yapılan bu çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde ele alındığı üzere İbn Cebiro'lün iradeci görüşü ile karşılaştırıldığında oldukça benzerlik taşımaktadır. Buna göre John Duns Scotus tüm skolastik düşüncenin aksine Tanrı'nın özünü oluşturan ilahî iradenin akıl ve bilgiden önce geldiğini ve Tanrı'nın âlemi zorunlulukla değil de isteyerek yarattığını ileri sürmektedir. Yani âlem Tanrı'nın özgür iradesinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Hristiyan düşünür, ilahî irade söz konusu olduğunda İbn Cebiro'lü bir düşünce tarzıyla konuya yaklaşmaktadır. Bu anlamda Skolastik düşüncede yalnızca John Duns Scotus'un metafiziksel sisteminde iradeyi bu kadar önemli bir noktada görmesi onun bir noktada İbn Cebiro'lün düşünce sisteminden etkilendiği varsayımını ortaya koyabilmeyi olanaklı kılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Çağ Felsefesi, Hylomorfizim, Gayri Cismanî Cevherler, Suretlerin Çokluğu, İlahî İrade.

