

Aristobolus

The Alexandrian Jewish writer Aristobolus, wrote in the Second Century BCE:

"It is evident that Plato imitated our Torah and that he had investigated thoroughly each of the elements in it. For it had been translated by others before before Demetrius Phalereus, before the conquests of Alexander and the Persians."

(Aristobolus; Fragment 3; quoted in Eusebius 12:12:1f)

"And it seems to me that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato with great care follow him [Moses] in all respects. They copy him when they say they hear the voice of God, and they contemplate the arrangement of the universe, so carefully made and so unceasingly held together by God.

(Aristobolus; Fragment 4; quoted in Eusebius 13:13:4)

First Cause

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

“In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1)

(7) For some men, admiring the world itself rather than the Creator of the world, have represented it as existing without any maker, and eternal; and as impiously as falsely have represented God as existing in a state of complete inactivity, while it would have been right on the other hand to marvel at the might of God as the creator and father of all, and to admire the world in a degree not exceeding the bounds of moderation. (8) But Moses, who had early reached the very summits of philosophy, and who had learnt from the oracles of God the most numerous and important of the principles of nature, was well aware that it is indispensable that in all existing things there must be an active cause, and a passive subject; and that the active cause is the intellect of the universe, thoroughly unadulterated and thoroughly unmixed, superior to virtue and superior to science, superior even to abstract good or abstract beauty; (9) while the passive subject is something inanimate and incapable of motion by any intrinsic power of its own, but having been set in motion, and fashioned, and endowed with life by the intellect, became transformed into that most perfect work, this world. And those who describe it as being uncreated, do, without being aware of it, cut off the most useful and necessary of all the qualities which tend to produce piety, namely, providence:

(Philo; On Creation 7-9)

Two Worlds

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

(Gen. 1:26-27)

We must mention as much as we can of the matters contained in his account, since to enumerate them all is impossible; for he embraces that beautiful world which is perceptible only by the intellect, as the account of the first day will show: (16) for God, as apprehending beforehand, as a God must do, that there could not exist a good imitation without a good model, and that of the things perceptible to the external senses nothing could be faultless which was not fashioned with reference to some archetypal idea conceived by the intellect, when he had determined to create this visible world, previously formed that one which is perceptible only by the intellect, in order that so using an incorporeal model formed as far as possible on *the image of God* (Gen. 1:27), he might then make this corporeal world, a younger likeness of the elder creation, which should embrace as many different genera perceptible to the external senses, as the other world contains of those which are visible only to the intellect. (17) But that world which consists of ideas, it were impious in any degree to attempt to describe or even to imagine: but how it was created, we shall know if we take for our guide a certain image of the things which exist among us. When any city is founded through the exceeding ambition of some king or leader who lays claim to absolute authority, and is at the same time a man of brilliant imagination, eager to display his good fortune, then it happens at times that some man coming up who, from his education, is skilful in architecture, and he, seeing the advantageous character and beauty of the situation, first of all sketches out in his own mind nearly all the parts of the city which is about to be completed--the temples, the gymnasia, the prytanea, and markets, the harbour, the docks, the streets, the arrangement of the walls, the situations of the dwelling houses, and of the public and other buildings. (18) Then, having received in his own mind, as on a waxen tablet, the form of each building, he carries in his heart the image of a city, perceptible as yet only by the intellect, the images of which he stirs up in memory which is innate in him, and, still further, engraving them in his mind like a good workman, keeping his eyes fixed on his model, he begins to raise the city of stones and wood, making the corporeal substances to resemble each of the incorporeal ideas. (19) Now we must form a somewhat similar opinion of God, who, having determined to found a mighty state, first of all conceived its form in his mind, according to which form he made a world perceptible only by the intellect, and then completed one visible to the external senses, using the first one as a model.

(Philo; On Creation)

(20) As therefore the city, when previously shadowed out in the mind of the man of architectural skill had no external place, but was stamped solely in the mind of the workman, so in the same manner neither can the world which existed in ideas have had any other local position except the divine reason (Greek: the Logos) which made them; for what other place could there be for his powers which should be able to receive and contain, I do not say all, but even any single one of them whatever, in its simple form? (21) And the power and faculty which could be capable of creating the world, has for its origin that good which is founded on truth; for if any one were desirous to investigate the cause on account of which this universe was created, I think that he would come to no erroneous conclusion if he were to say as one of the ancients did say: "That the Father and Creator was good; on which account he did not grudge the substance a share of his own excellent nature, since it had nothing good of itself, but was able to become everything." (22) For the substance was of itself destitute of arrangement, of quality, of animation, of distinctive character, and full of all disorder and confusion; and it received a change and transformation to what is opposite to this condition, and most excellent, being invested with order, quality, animation, resemblance, identity, arrangement, harmony, and everything which belongs to the more excellent idea.

(On Creation 20-22)

Active Cause	Passive Object
The intellect of the universe. Form conceived in the mind of God.	Inanimate, incapable of motion by intrinsic power of its own. Became this world.
Perceptible only to intellect. Consists of ideas.	Perceptible to external senses.
Incorporeal model. Formed as far as possible on the Image of God.	Corporal world.

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

(Gen. 2:5)

(129) So Moses, summing up his account of the creation of the world, says in a brief style, "This is the book of the creation of the heaven and of the earth, when it took place, in the day on which God made the heaven and the earth, and every green herb before it appeared upon the earth, and all the grass of the field before it sprang up." Does he not here manifestly set before us incorporeal ideas perceptible only by the intellect, which have been appointed to be as seals of the perfected works, perceptible by the outward senses. For before the earth was green, he says that this same thing, verdure, existed in the nature of things, and before the grass sprang up in the field, there was grass though it was not visible. (130) And we must understand in the case of every thing else which is decided on by the external senses, there were elder forms and motions previously existing, according to which the things which were created were fashioned and measured out. For although Moses did not describe everything collectively, but only a part of what existed, as he was desirous of brevity, beyond all men that ever wrote, still the few things which he has mentioned are examples of the nature of all, for nature perfects none of those which are perceptible to the outward senses without an incorporeal model.

(Philo On Creation 129-130)

Creation is an Impression

Whereupon are the foundations thereof *fastened* (טבע)?
or who laid the corner stone thereof;
(Job. 38:6 KJV)

Before the mountains were *settled* (טבע),
before the hills was I brought forth:
(Proverbs 8:25 KJV)

TAVA Strong's 2883 "to make an impression"

TEVA (Mishnaic Hebrew) "nature, reputation"

(6) For as the smallest seal receives imitations of things of colossal magnitude when engraved upon it, so perchance in some instances the exceeding beauty of the description of the creation of the world as recorded in the Law, overshadowing with its brilliancy the souls of those who happen to meet with it, will be delivered to a more concise record after these facts have been first premised which it would be improper to pass over in silence.

We must mention as much as we can of the matters contained in his account, since to enumerate them all is impossible; for he embraces that beautiful world which is perceptible only by the intellect, as the account of the first day will show: (16) for God, as apprehending beforehand, as a God must do, that there could not exist a good imitation without a good model, and that of the things perceptible to the external senses nothing could be faultless which was not fashioned with reference to some archetypal idea conceived by the intellect, when he had determined to create this visible world, previously formed that one which is perceptible only by the intellect, in order that so using an incorporeal model formed as far as possible on the image of God, he might then make this corporeal world, a younger likeness of the elder creation, which should embrace as many different genera perceptible to the external senses, as the other world contains of those which are visible only to the intellect. (17) But that world which consists of ideas, it were impious in any degree to attempt to describe or even to imagine: but how it was created, we shall know if we take for our guide a certain image of the things which exist among us. When any city is founded through the exceeding ambition of some king or leader who lays claim to absolute authority, and is at the same time a man of brilliant imagination, eager to display his good fortune, then it happens at times that some man coming up who, from his education, is skilful in architecture, and he, seeing the advantageous character and beauty of the situation, first of all sketches out in his own mind nearly all the parts of the city which is about to be completed--the temples, the gymnasia, the prytanea, and markets, the harbour, the docks, the streets, the arrangement of the walls, the situations of the dwelling houses, and of the public and other buildings. (18) Then, having received in his own mind, as on a waxen tablet, the form of each building, he carries in his heart the image of a city, perceptible as yet only by the intellect, the images of which he stirs up in memory which is innate in him, and, still further, engraving them in his mind like a good workman, keeping his eyes fixed on his model, he begins to raise the city of stones and wood, making the corporeal substances to resemble each of the incorporeal ideas. (19) Now we must form a somewhat similar opinion of God, who, having determined to found a mighty state, first of all conceived its form in his mind, according to which form he made a world perceptible only by the intellect, and then completed one visible to the external senses, using the first one as a model. (Philo; On Creation 6, 15-19)

The Word Permeates the Universe

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made;
and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
(Ps. 33:6 KJV)

1 "O God of my fathers and Lord of mercy,
who hast ***made all things by thy word***,
2 and by ***thy wisdom*** hast formed man,
to have dominion over the creatures thou hast made,
(Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-2 RSV)

6 For ***wisdom*** is a kindly spirit and
will not free a blasphemer from the guilt of his words;
because God is witness of his inmost feelings,
and a true observer of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue.

7 Because the Spirit of the Lord ***has filled the world***,
and that which ***holds all things together*** knows what is said;
(Wisdom of Solomon 1:6-7 RSV)

for all other things are intrinsically and by their own nature loose; and if there is any where any thing consolidated, that has been bound by the word of God, for this word is glue and a chain, filling all things with its essence. And the word, which connects together and fastens every thing, is peculiarly full itself of itself, having no need whatever of any thing beyond.
(Philo; Who is Heir of all Things? 188)

(8) If therefore any one wishes to escape from the difficulties of this question which present themselves in the different doubts thus raised, let him speak freely and say that there is nothing in any material of such power as to be able to support this weight of the world. But it is the eternal law of the everlasting God which is the most supporting and firm foundation of the universe. (9) This it is which, being extended from the centre of the borders, and again from the extremities to the centre, runs through the whole unsubdued course of nature, collecting all the parts and binding them firmly together; for the father who created them has made it the indissoluble bond of the universe. (10) Very naturally and appropriately therefore, all earth will not be dissolved by all water, which the bosom of the earth contains, nor will fire be extinguished by air, nor again will air be burnt up by fire, since the divine law establishes itself as a boundary to all these elements, like a vowel among consonants, so that the universe may, as it were, be harmonious in concert with the music expressed by letters; persuasion, by its own authority, putting an end to the threatening conflicts of contrary natures.
(Philo; Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter 8-10)

Natural Law

For all men who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature;
and they were unable from the good things that
are seen to know him who exists,
nor did they recognize the craftsman while
paying heed to his works;
(Wisdom of Solomon 13:1 RSV)

For from the greatness and beauty of created things
comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.
(Wisdom of Solomon 13:5 RSV)

7 For as they live among his works they keep searching,
and they trust in what they see, because the
things that are seen are beautiful.
8 Yet again, not even they are to be excused;
9 for if they had the power to know so much
that they could investigate the world,
how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?
(Wisdom 13:7-9 RSV)

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has
been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse;
(Romans 1:20 RSV)

(3) And his exordium, as I have already said, is most admirable; embracing the creation of the
world, under the idea that the law corresponds to the world and the world to the law, and that a
man who is obedient to the law, being, by so doing, a citizen of the world, arranges his actions
with reference to the intention of nature, in harmony with which the whole universal world is
regulated.
(Philo; On Creation 3)

...for he [Moses] was not like any ordinary compiler of history, studying to leave behind him
records of ancient transactions as memorials to future ages for the mere sake of affording
pleasure without any advantage; but he traced back the most ancient events from the beginning
of the world, commencing with the creation of the universe, in order to make known two most
necessary principles. First, that the same being was the father and creator of the world, and
likewise the lawgiver of truth; secondly, that the man who adhered to these laws, and clung
closely to a connection with and obedience to nature, would live in a manner corresponding to
the arrangement of the universe with a perfect harmony and union, between his words and his
actions and between his actions and his words.
(On the Life of Moses 2, 48)