GEONIC PERIOD

When the literal meaning contradicts sensorial perception that is when a literal understanding is rejected by the observation of the sense. For example, the text calls Eve the mother of all living (Gen 3:20), whereas the senses attest that humans give birth only to humans. The literal meaning then must be transcended to determine that the reference is only to human descendants — the mother of all speaking living creatures.

When the literal sense is negated by reason. For example, the text determines that the Holy one blessed be He is a devouring fire (Deut. 4:24) whereas rational thought shows this to be impossible since fire is ignited and then burns out, whereas the Holy One blessed be He, precedes all and is eternal. God’s revenge when punishing sinners is thus to be interpreted as fire, because it appears at the proper time and then disappears — because the punishment of the Lord your God is a devouring fire (136).

When the literal meaning of one statement contradicts the literal meaning of another. The literal meaning of one of them should then be rejected and adapted to the other. For example, one verse forbids trying God (Deut. 6:16) and another supports doing so (Malachi 3:10). The Solution is to interpret one verse literally and the other not. In this example God should indeed not be tried. Humans, however, must test their standing before God and find out whether they are worthy of God’s miraculous intervention in their favor (resurrection).

When rabbinic tradition (athar) offers an interpretation opposed to the literal one. For example, Scripture determines that the wicked are punished with forty stripes (Deut. 25:3) whereas tradition lowered the punishment to 39 and if need be the more righteous are whipped merely by a shoe string (that does not hurt) [see Makkot 3:10]

(Rav Saadia Gaon interpretation in the Tafsir Genesis ad locum)

The senses meaning knowledge based on the apprehension of the five senses (hawass)

The intuition of the intellect (aql) meaning knowledge that does not require external experience such as first principles and elementary moral statements, the roots of knowledge (mawadd)

Logical necessity (aldarurah) which is fundamentally comparative and discursive. I.e. existence of the soul

Authentic tradition (reliable tradition) (alkhabar al sadiq) is knowledge that relies on public human testimony referring to miracles described in scripture including resurrection

(Concerns and opinions, 16-17)

There exists then only these four possible reasons for a non-literal interpretation of verses of Sacred Writ, there being no fifth, so far as the resurrection of the dead is concerned. However we have seen that take place and there is no eyewitness to contradict it, for we do not allege that they will come to life of their own accord but merely that their creator will bring them to life. Furthermore there is no rational objection to the doctrine of resurrection because the restoration of something that once existed and disintegrated is more plausible logically than creation ex nihilo — the greatest of all miracles being yesh
mi-ayn. Moreover there is no other pronouncement of Scripture to contradict the belief in resurrection, but on the contrary the text of sacred writ confirms it be expressly citing the resurrection in this world of the son of the Zarephite (I Kgs 17:22) and that of the Shunammite (II Kgs 4:25) woman. Finally there exists no rabbinic tradition necessitating the non-literal interpretation of this concept but on the contrary all traditions corroborate it.

Hence we must let this belief (in resurrection) stand as it is according to the explicit statement of the text of scripture that God will bring the dead of His nation to life again at the time of the redemption, and it is not to be interpreted otherwise

(Rav Saadia Gaon 267)

The messianic era with two messiahs - the messiah son of Joseph and the messiah son of David. According to the spiritual situation of the Jewish people it is possible to skip the traumatic event of the first messiah’s assassination and go straight to the victories of the messiah son of David (war of Gog and Magog)

The resurrection of the dead which is specific to the Jewish people. The messiah son of Joseph will be the first to be resurrected. The Revelation of the Shekhinah and the renewal of the prophecy will follow the resurrection.

Rav Saadia Gaon Treatises 8 & 9

The world to come (where all the dead will be resurrected) is also known as paradise. The resurrected dead will move to the world to come which is a new world and will henceforth live eternally in their own body and soul

(Tafsir Yeshayahu le Rav Saadia Gaon 342)

About the resurrection of the dead - we are informed by scripture that all pestilence, diseases, and infirmity will disappear and similarly sadness and sorrow. Their world will be one that is replete with joy and gladness, so that it will seem to them as though their heaven and their earth have been renewed for them

Beliefs and Opinions 310-311

About the world to come – As for God’s statement: For as the new heavens (Isaiah 66:22) since it applies to the world to come, it must literally refer to the place and the environment that God is destined to create for His servants upon the annihilation of our present center and surroundings (B&O 342)

He must therefore have been sustained solely by the light which God had specially created and with which he covered his face... God’s purpose herein was to present us and indication and a rationally comprehensible means of deducing that the righteous will subsist in the hereafter on light and not on ordinary bodily nourishment

(B&O 339)

About the messianic era and the resurrection: And in those times when the temple and Jerusalem are revealed in that hour heaven and earth are seen as if renewed as if the heaven and earth of
enslavement had gone by and a new heaven and a new earth had replaced them.... And they will rule until the end of days

Even-Shmuel, Midreshei Geulah, 140, Rav Hai Gaon

About the world to come: And the dead who lived and saw the redemption will come by themselves to the world to come... and at that time, the Holy one blessed be He will create another heaven and another earth beside these, and the righteous will dwell in them forever and ever

Even-Shmuel, Midreshei Geulah, 147, Rav Hai Gaon

The world to come is a place where there is no evil, no evil will befall the righteous, that is endlessly pleasant, and where all is light

Rabbi Nissim b. Yaakov Gaon, Ha Tsofeh le-Hokmat Israel 5, 1921, 189

NEOPATONIC INFLUENCE

I would have done better not talking about this matter and relying on the writings of our master Rav Saadia Gaon, of blessed memory, who wrote the Sefer Emunot veDeot... and his words are accurate and accepted by all believers and I should not have added to them. However I saw and heard about fellow Jews in this generation, some of them in Spain and some in France, saying that these worlds of Rav Saadia of blessed memory are not enough for them

Rabbi Abrahaam bar Hiyya, Sefer Megillat ha-Megalleh, ed. A. Poznanski and J. Guttman (Berlin: Mekitsei Nirdamim, 1924)

The wise and pious: When he leaves the world, his soul as a result of his wisdom will be separated from the material world and will resume its former form; on account of his purity and piety, which rejected worldly ways, it will ascend from the lower to the upper world and be freed from all inferior matter. It will come into contact with the high pure pristine FORM (EIDOS) and enter it inseparably


The rational soul... when it has separated from its body its existence is perpetuated forever in the celestial world. That is to say, its bliss its paradise and its reward consist in its attachment to the world to which it really belongs and its return to its element, to shine with that true light that emanates from its Creator, may He be blessed, without any intermediary. Such is the destiny of the human soul and its recompense for its good work

The Microcosm of Rabbi Joseph ibn Saddiq, tras. Jacob Haberman (Madison, NJ) Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 2003), 147

As for my own theory concerning the resurrection of the dead, it is as follows: Because the help afforded by the Creator may He be magnified to us the people of Israel, has been so great and so firm, it must follow that He would resurrect the righteous the pious the patriarchs, and the prophets. Whosoever dies in galut suffering martyrdom for asserting the unity of G0-d may He be blssed, will proceed forward to
the reward of the world to come and will later, in the messianic age, be resurrected never to die again; as our Rabbis of blessed memory have said, “The dead whom the Holy One blessed be He will resurrect will never again revert to dust (Sanh. 92a)

Tana de-Bei Eliyahu Rabba 31

Besides this God has a secret and wise design concerning us, which should be compared to the wisdom hidden in the seed which falls into the ground.... In the same manner the law of Moses transforms each one who honestly follows it, though it may externally repel him. The nations merely serve to introduce and pave the way for the expected Messiah, who is the fruition and they will all become His Fruit. Then, if they acknowledge Him they will become one tree. Then they will revere the origin (asal) which they formerly despised

(The Kuzari IV, 23, 226-227) Baneth and Ben Shammai edition 172-173

It was the object of divine wisdom in the creation of the world to create the Torah, which was the essence of wisdom, and whose bearers are the just among whom stands the throne of glory and the truly righteous, who are the most select viz Israel and the proper place for them was Jerusalem and only the best of men, viz the messiah, son of David could be associated with them, and they all entered Paradise. Figurately speaking one must assume that they were created prior to the world

Kuzari III, 196 (citing Genesis Rabbah 1); TB Pesahim 54a, TB Nedarim 39b)

These conditions which render man fit to receive his divine influence do not lie within him.... Neither their time, place, and connection, nor suitability could be discovered. For this inspired and detailed instruction is necessary – He who has been thus inspired and obeys the teaching in every respect with a pure mind is a believer

Kuzari 1:79, 56

We have however said that one cannot approach God except by His commands. For he knows their comprehensiveness, division, times, and places, and consequences in the fulfillment (tama’m) of which the pleasure of God and the connexion with the Divine Influence are to be gained

Kuzari III:23, 162

The Rabbi: They (the promises) are none of them realized till after death, whilst during this life nothing points to them.

Al Khazari: May be; I have never seen anyone who believed in these promises desire their speedy fulfillment

Rabbi: What is thy opinion concerning Him who witnessed those grand and divine secrets?

Al Khazari: That he no doubt longs for the perpetual separation of his soul from his material senses, in order to enjoy that heavenly hidden light. It is such a person who would desire death
Kuzari 74-75

Now all that our promises imply is that we shall become connected with the divine influence by means of prophecy, or something nearly approaching it, and also through our relation to the divine influence, as displayed to us in grand and awe inspiring miracles

Kuzari 75

But how can they the members of other religions boast of expectations after death to those who enjoy the fulfillment already in life? Is not the nature of prophets and godly men nearer to immortality (albaqa alabadi) than the nature of him who never reached that degree (Kuzari 77)

You shall remain in the country... viz the Holy Land. Its fertility or barrenness its happiness or misfortune, depend upon the divine emanated influence which your conduct will merit, whilst the rest of the world would continue its natural courses. For if the divine presence is among you, you will perceive... that your affairs are not managed by simple laws of nature, but by the Divine Will

Kuzari 1:109,75

**RAMBAM and Rational Naturalistic Messianism**

The world to come, where our souls will attain to a knowledge of the Creator as do the higher bodies

Maimonides on the Jewish Creed, JQR 19 (1906)- Translation of Perek Helekh in Pirush al ha-mishnah,39

In the world to come there will be only the righteous sitting with crowns on their heads enjoying the splendor of the Shechinah (TB Berakhot 17a). By their remark “their crowns on their heads” is meant the preservation of the soul in the intellectual sphere and the merging of the two into one as has been described by the illustrious philosophers in ways whose exposition would take to longer here

Maimonides on the Jewish Creed, JQR 19 (1906)- Translation of Perek Helekh in Pirush al ha-mishnah, 39

.... A man whom no obstacle hinders from making the intellectual element in his soul lives on after death. This is olam ha-bah for the intellectually perfected soul

On the Jewish creed, 45

There is moreover no way to apprehend Him except it be through the things He has made... It is therefore indispensable to consider all beings as they really are so that we may obtain for all the kinds of beings true and certain premises that would be useful to us in our researches pertaining to the divine science (metaphysics- ma’aseh merkavah). How very many are the premises thus taken from the nature of numbers, and the properties of geometrical figures from which we draw inferences concerning things that we should dney with respect ot God- may he be exalted! And this denial is indicative to us of many notions. As for the matters pertaining to the astronomy of the spheres and to natural science, I do not consider that you should have any difficulty in grasping that those are matters necessary for the apprehension of the relation of the world to God’s governance as this relation is in truth and not according to imaginings.... Accordingly it is certainly necessary for whoever wishes to achieve human
perfection to train himself at first in the art of logic (sefer HaHigyon), then in the mathematical sciences according to proper order, then in the natural sciences, then in musicology, and then in divine sciences (ma’aseh bereshit and ma’aseh merkavah).

Guide 1:34, 74-75; Dalat al-ha’irin (Sifriyya Philsophit, 1929, 50

He who does not believe in a restoration or does not look forward to the coming of the messiah denies not only the teaching of the prophets but also those of the law of Moses our teacher, for Scripture affirms the rehabilitation of Israel.... These words stated in Scripture include all that the prophets said on the subject

Maimonides hilchot teshuvah, 3:6

But no one is in a position to know the details of this and similar esoteric things until they have come to pass. They are not explicitly stated by the prophets but in hints. Nor have the rabbis any tradition with regard to these matters. They are guided solely by what the scriptural texts seem to imply. Hence there is a divergence of many opinions on the subject. But be that as it may, neither the exact sequence of those events nor the details thereof constitute religious dogmas (doxa).

Maimonides Mishneh Torah Laws of Kings and Wars 12:2

Great perfection will appertain to him that lies in those days the days of messiah, and he will be elevated through it to the life of the world to come

On the Jewish Creed 43)

Hence all Israelites their prophets and sages longed for the advent of messianic times that they might have relief from the wicked tyranny that does not permit them properly to occupy themselves with the study of Torah and the observance of the commandments, that they might have ease, devote themselves to getting wisdom (acquiring and absorbing wisdom) and thus attain to the life in the world to come... the ultimate and perfect reward the final bliss which will suffer neither interruption (perpetual peace) nor diminution is the life in the world to come

Code, Hilchot teshuvah 9:2

The sages and prophets did not long for the days of the messiah... Their aspiration was that Israel be free to devote itself to the study of the law and its wisdom, with no one to oppress or disturb them, and thus be worthy of the life of the world to come

Laws of Kings and Wars 12:4
If there arise a king from the House of David who mediates on the torah occupies himself with the commandments, as did his ancestor dovvid hamelekh, observes the precepts prescribed in the written and oral torah, prevails upon Israel to walk in the way of torah bringing the many to righteousness, and to repair its breaches, and fights the milhomot hashem, it may be assumed that he is the messiah. If he does these things and succeeds, rebuilds the sanctuary on har habayit, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is beyond all doubt the messiah. He will prepare the whole world to serve the L-rd with one accord, as is written, “For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the L0rd to serve Him with one consent (Zephania 3:9)

Let no one think that in the days of the messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside, or any innovations be introduced into creation. The world will follow its normal courses. The words of Isaiaha “and the wolf shall lie down with the kid (Isa 11:6) are to be understood figuratively meaning that Israel will live securely among the wicked of the heathens who are likened to wolves and leopards, as it is written, “a wolf of the deserts doth spoil them, a leopard watches over their cities (Jeremiah 5:6). They will all accept the true religion (Judaism), and will neither plunder nor destroy and will peacefully eat what is permitted

(Law and philosophy, Perspectives on Maimonides’ Teaching, vol 2 Rmat Aviv Open University of Israel, 12:1

…it appears that the inaugation of the messianic era will be marked by the war of Gog and magog; that prior to that war, a prophet will arise to guide Israel and set their hearts as it is written: Behold I will send you Eliyahu hanavi (malachi 3:23). He will come to bring peace in the world as it is said, “And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (Malachi 3:24)

The days of the messiah are not ardently longed for on account of the plentiful vegetation and the riches which they will bring in their train, nor in order that we may ride on horses, nor that we may drinkt to the accompaniement of various kinds of musical instruments, as is thought by people who are confused in their ideas on the important things

On the Jewish Creed, 44

The sages and the prophets did not long for the days of the messiah that Israel might exercises dominion over the world, or rule over the heathens, or be exalted by the nations, or that it might eat and drink and rejoice (12:4)

Apocalyptic Messianism
The Talmud is teeming with evidence showing that the world to come at the end is the final reward of the righteous and the retribution to the wicked, and it is one where there is a body and a corpse, ad heaven forfend that any god fearing person should doubt bodily resurrection

Rabbi Meir Abulafia Kitab al Rasa’il ed. Yehiel Brill (Paris, 1871), 56

But how can we not present whatever proves the resurrection of the dead in the world to come as it is, after we have failed to find any clear evidence big or small to contradict its literal and concrete interpretation

Rabbi Meir Abulafia Kitab al Rasa’il, 57

We learn that the dead resurrected in the days of the messiah do not go back to be dust, and that the world to come after the days of the messiah is the judgment of both souls and bodies, and that there is no death to the righteous after life in the world to come

Kitab, 57

After the Mishneh Torah of Rambam reached this land I studied the Sefer ha-mad’a that in the law of Repentance says that in the world to come there is neither body nor corpse and I was zealous for the god of Israel, for his holiness and for justice and its source when I saw that the ancient belief I the resurrectin of the dead had been lost among the people of this land

Letter from Ramah to Nahmanides, Kovets Teshhuvot ha-Ramabam ve-Iggrotav, vol 3, Lipia 1859, 6a)

Everyone who studies Talmud knows that every amora who makes a statement that a tannaitci Mishnah or beraita objects to must either reconcile his theory with the words of the tanna, or his statement will be dismissed in the tanna’s favor. If the dispute is between two tannaim, such as a beraita and a Mishnah or two mishnayot in dispute, Talmudic sages will juxtapose them and discuss them until they can either reconcile them or dismiss one in favor of the other

Rabbi Abraham Maimonides, Milhamot ha-shem, 67

In the future in the days of our L-rd the messiah may he soon be revealed, God has promised that He will perform miracles and wonders in heaven and earth and do so in His glorious self, may He be exalted as He says, “And I will exhibit wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke (Yoel 3:3)

Midrash Rabbi David ha-Naggid on Shemot, trans. Abraham Yitchak Katz (Mosad HaRav Kook, 1968, 37
The prophet then told us about the many wars and commotions and tumult and struggle that will occur at the end of days.... And the king messiah will soon appear in our times and perform miracles, wonders, and marvels as those performed in Egypt by Moses the first redeemer, of blessed memory... then will arise the redeemer in the prototype of Boaz who gives rise to the son of David

Midrash Rabbi David ha-Naggid on Shemot , 49

Shmuel did not say this to dismiss the miracles that will occur in future days and times according to the need of the time and the place but to say that the ways of the world will not be completely different, as in the saying “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold (Isa 30:26) as we find in Perek Helek

Kitab, 63

The people of the Coming world will attain the eminence of Moses our teacher, whose soul was spiritually so far above that his bodily powers were voided and he was at all times arrayed with Ruach hakodesh . It was asi if his sight and hearing were functions only of the essence of the soul alone and were not accomplished through the medium of the physical eye. This the physical means was how the other prophets perceived when the powers of the body were voided and those of the soul expanded so that the ruach hakodesh emanated upon it, enabling it to see with its own sight how the angels Michael and Gabriel appear. This the true vision and the correct hearing.

Nahmanides,Ramban, Writings and discourses, vol 2 trans. By Charles b Chavel, Shilo, 1978, 517-518

We on the other hand wofollow the true tradition from the holy ancestors who did not please themselves in the brood of aliens (Isa 2:6) exalt the soul and describe its subtle essence far more than these philosophers.... The etherealness of the soul is not found to a greater degree among the philosophers of the nations and those who are drawn along with them than it is present among our holy sages. Nor is there any comparison among them; Although the Rabbis have not frightened the students with words expressed tersely and gravely on the subject, nevertheless our rabbis do believe that the fire of gehenna and destruction has mastery over the soul by the Will of Him Who made everything, blessed and praised be He

Nachmanides, Writings and Discourses, vol 2, 485-486

One should not wonder that this happened to the man Moses according to Shemot 11:3, because he had not natural views on which to pin his own when contemplating the natural matters and the sealed secrets found in the prophets words. He departed very far from the view fo Rav Moses b Maimon,Or ha-Golah, concerning the meaning of Sefer Iyov, but one should not blame him for it, because Moseh bar Nachman knew the wisdom of the Talmud but knew nothing about philosophy. He was therefore very critical of Rav B. Maimon’s interpretations of the torha and his view of prophetic perceptions, but he should have chosen to be silent on all the matters that he criticized because one should not decide wich
to favor between two things until one knows what should be known about both, and one need say no more

See Ta-shma, R. Zerahiah Ba’al ha-maor, Zerhaih’s pirush al Sefer Iyov 3:1 printed in Human Hope Commentaries on the Book of Job, vol. 1 ed. Israel Schawartz (Berlin: Gerschel, 1868, 190

Apparently in the state of Adam in the Garden of Eden resembles the resurrection of the dead that will occur in the future, when the body will be purified with the soul. It is neither the purification that occurs in this life nor the purification of the soul that separates from the body in the spiritual world. Rather it is a purification that only Adam knew when he was in the Garden, and one we will know with the resurrection of the dead

See David Goldstein, The commentary of Juden ben Solomon HaKohen ibn Matqah al sefer Bereishit, Tehillim, ve Mishlei, HUCA 52 (1981); 213

You Ramah did not really understand our teacher moses who said that the world to come has no body and no corpse. What world to come was he referring to? To the resurrection of the dead or to the world that will be renewed after the resurrection of the dead, after lying destroyed for many days, as our blessed rabbis said, “the world is to last 6000 years and 1000 it will be desolate (TB Rosh Hashanah 31a; Avodah Zarah 9a)

Rabbi Aharon b. Meshulam of Lunel, Litab 36

... perhaps the opinion of the Rabbi of blessed memory tends to state that there is no punishment and suffering for the sinning soul.... G-d forbid! Rather the words of the Rabbi of blessed memory refer to the ultimate destruction and utter ruin beyond which there is no punishment and retribution. This is the excision which is the destruction of the soul. Included in this (concept of excision) is that besides the fact that the soul was at first chastised with punishments of the Gehenna, and its sufferings, this severe (final destruction) of the soul is the great punishment inasmuch as the soul has lost the great bliss which was its rightful charge

Nachmanides, Writings and Discourses vol 2, 495-496

13th and 1th centuries decline of individualizing olam habah to the intellectualism of the perfected soul in acquiring knowledge, intellectual immortality as communion with the sekel ha-poel

A person should not break through (Exodus 19:21) and seek to attain the final causes of wisdom at the start of his scholarly endeavor, and should not begin with the metaphysics (elohiyot) . This was their intention when they said, “He adjured them not to hasten the end (Song of Songs Rabbah 2:18, ed.
Shimshon Dunsky Tel Aviv, Dvir 1980, 64). In our times not only do they not hasten the end but not even one in a thousand awakens to pursue the ends as he forewarned us when he said “the wisdom of their wise men shall perish (Isa 29:14). And since the discovery of truths and the knowledge of final goals is hard for the multitudes who do not reach this degree and do not understand its great power, G-d did not wish to reveal the end (of time) in detail.

Levi b. Abraham Livyat Hen, Munich MS 58, 37b (printed in Levi b Abraham Livyat Hen ed Howard Kreisel (Beer Sheva Ben Gurion Univ) 2007, 845

All things that come before their time are not truly strong and proper, and when the messiah comes, he will quickly discover that the earth is full of the knowledge of G-d, may He be blessed. Should he come too soon, however this knowledge will be poor and limited as it happened to] the nobles of the children of Israel (Shemot 24:11) who saw the gods at the wrong time.

Mikhlo Yofi, Paris MS 729-730 section 1 183a by Rabbi Shmuel ibn Zarza

It has also been said that repentance draws redemption closer as they said in Yoma “Great is repentances because it brings about redemption” as we are told “But to Zion a redeemer shall come and to them that turn from transgression (Isa 59:20) . And repentance truly draws the intellect closer to redemption from matter.

Mikhlo Yofi, sect 1, 198a

And Moses took his wife and his sons and set them upon an ass (Ex 4:20). He made his wife, who is the wise (rational) important soul and his sons, who are his intellectual powers, rule over the ass… which is the special ass that Abraham saddled for the sacrifice of Isaac and the same one on wich the king messiah will appear, as it is said, “humble” and riding upon an ass, and he is the pure matter proper for the form.

Livyat Hen, abridged version, 64a, Kreisel ed. 897-898

And the truth is that Moses, of blessed memory, saddled and restrained his matter (homro) and his physical powers as did Abraham who saddled his matter. And the King messiah too will be revealed riding this old ass (hamor) as it is said, “humble and riding upon an ass”. Moses at the burning bush also received a revelation from a bush that is humble in comparison to the cedars of levanon. Thus we learn that only in humility can one receive prophecy as in the prophetic call for their divine missions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Moses our teacher.

Mekor Hayyim (Mantua 1559), 32d, Mikhlo Yofi sect. 1, 156a-b
Know and understand that the human intellect was in actu called the son of David, the king messiah who is anointed under the influence of the active intellect, and the other material powers were called “the souls in the body”. The son of David then does not come, meaning that the intellect cannot reach conjunction with the active intellect, until all the souls of the body, which are the material powers, have been disposed of.

Mikhlol Yofi Sect. 1, 156a

Rabbi Tanhuma says “for God has appointed me (shat li) another seed (Gen. 4:25) hints at the seed that comes from another place, and this is the king messiah (Genesis Rabbah 23, Albeck ed, 226), meaning that it is spiritual and does not come from the body and its nature, resembling the king messiah who is of highly exalted rank and also comes from another place. And the kingdom and the power will be given in name and in practice to the intellect, because it alone is free and not subject to others. Rather, all are indeed subject to it.

Rabbi Shlomo ben Menachem, (PRAT) 14th C. Provence

After reaching this degree (attaining truth) he will be blessed with long life in a long lasting world, hinting at the immortality of the rational soul, that is, to the power of the intellect among human powers. He will see God’s salvation, meaning that God will save him from the corruption and the extinction deserved by the wicked who will all be lost

Rabbi Shmuel ibn Tibbon, Ma’amar ha-Mayim, ed. Mordechai Bisliches (Pressburg 1837), 98

And it is known that the prophet had not been anointed with oil, only with the oil of modesty, and on that we are told “the anointed of the God of Jacob” (Shmuel 2 23:1), meaning that God had anointed him with the good oil that his prophets had attributed to Him... and God therey ensured that the messiah would be perfect in all his virtues. And after David finished describing the salvation of this world, which is the coming of the messiah he spoke of the true salvation which is meant for individuals and said “Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Yishai said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob and sweet singer of Israel.

Rabbi Yakov Anatoli, Malmad Ha-Talmidim (Lyck: Mekitsei Nirdamim, 1866,35b

Know that true salvation is the coming of the redeemer who is the king messiah, may he soon arrive, and salvation also relates to the perfection of the human soul. Human perfection is the intellect, which is the form of the soul and what remains after death, and particularly at the end of days
Sefer Tevunat Be’alei ha-Tevunah in Yosef Kafih, “Philosophical texts of a Yeminite Author” in Collected Papers, vol 1 ed. Yosef Tobi (Jerusalem: E’eleh Bethamar, 1989), 223-224

The proper order is for knowledge to be accessible first through tradition and then supported by demonstration, followed by precise actions that improve the ways of men. In their words: when a man is led in for judgment, he is asked – (1) did you fix times for learning, (2) did you engage in the dialectics of wisdom, (3) did you deal faithfully (TB Shabbat 31a). This is the order in which things should be remembered the final one being knowledge, which is the purpose (telos). And the possible interpretation is: did you deal faithfully – did you learn ways of syllogism and did you inquire into the roots of faith and understand them properly. Did you hope for messianic salvation, meaning the salvation of the soul, “but my salvation shall be forever (Isa 51:6) and as they said he is rewarded and sees salvation by the Holy one blessed be He. [see Moed Katan 5a; Sotah 5b]

Pirush al batei ha-nefesh ve-ha-lehashim 10b

The sage is cut off from communion due to his despicable matter and to the attraction of the corrupting reality which is the cause of all errors and transgressions. This is the cause for the severance of communion- as the prophet says since your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God (Isa 59:2). The perfect man therefore will pray to his utmost only for the return to the days of yore and for communion with the active intellect, and this is the purpose intended in our tefilot when we say “may you soon dwell in Zion” and so forth. These are also the worlds of the perfect devotee, as was written: I unite with myself and remove my body and become as it were a simple immaterial substance and I see within myself the beauty and the splendor that I will contemplate in wonder and amazement, and I know that I am part of the supernal perfect world an so forth. And when I am in the world of thought (mahshavah) thought will hide from me the light and the radiance and I will be amazed as to how I descended from the supernal divine place and so forth. Animal souls he said will only dwell in dust bodies, and will therefore think that detachment is hard, but pure pristine souls are their opposite promised divine reward

Heshek Shlomo (on the Kuzari) by Rabbi Shlomo ben Yehudah , Oxford Bodeleain Ms. 2383, 77a see Idel, Moshe Patternsof Redemptive Activity 256-257 Daat 29, 1992, 31

Know that these words of the sages should not be read literally but as hinting to the exalted and spiritual human soul that in its tie to matter is enslaved to gashmius. When it awoke and was freed from the shackles of nature, it used matter for worship and attained redemption, which is the purpose. This what the homilist intended by the belief in the redemption of Israel that we are considering

Rabbi Zechariah ha-Rofeh, Midrash ha-Hefets, Exodus, ed. Meir Havatselet (Jerusalem, Mosad HaRav Kook, 1991), 319
And a thing to which experience testifies must be believed even if it is not required by logic. For example it is absolutely true that there is a stone which attracts iron, because experience shows it though logic does not require it. We must therefore believe that G-d will revive the dead even after they turn to dust, because it is something the mind can conceive.

Yosef Albo, Sefer ha-Ikkarim, ch45, 340

Should you find among the smart or among the wise including among the true Talmudic sages anyone saying that the resurrection of the dead is the return of the soul to the body and that there is a Garden of Eden where the bodies sit and a Gehenna where the wicked burn, you should know that in truth they only said so to assure fools (who would otherwise not grasp or understand or believe that it (the soul) could stand without a body of something they desire and know, so they might trust that their soul will return to their body and that if they do not sin they will delighte in the splendor of the Shekhinah, in the Garden fo Eden and enjoy its pleasures.

Marx, Alexander, “Texts by and about Maimonides” JQR 25, 1934-1935) 315-322

With every word that went forth from the mouth of the Holy One blessed be He, the souls of Israel departed… But since their souls departed with the first word, how could they receive the second? He brought down the dew that will resurrect the dead and revived them.

TB Shabbat 88b, TB Hagigah 12b

Rabbi Nethanel b. Isaiah: the secret is this manner is that when perfect souls actualize their potential, they separate themselves from the bodies and they become perfect through the intellect they have acquired from their source (the active intellect) with which ttthey have reached communion. They call it “the soul departs” and the dwe through which the Holy One blessed be He resurrects the dead is the divine emanation through which souls live and also remain after death through the immortality of their intelligibles (ma Iumiha) And were it not for the divine assistance accompanying the perfect ones when their intellect reaches communion with the separate intellects those human intellects would be lost due to their flaws compared to their sources and to those separate ones, for whom they are as dead.

Rabbi Nethanel b. Ishaya Sefer Ma’or ha-Afelah, trans. Yosef Kafih (Jerusalem: 1957) 108

Rabbi Shmuel ibn Zarza: When Israel apprehended what they had heard from the Holy One blessed be He- I am the Lord your G-d (Shemot 20:2) – their soul departed but God dropped dew on them and resurrected them. This means their intellect could not bear the apprehension of God, may He be blessed since they lacke3d the grasp for it, and they therefore died as if their soul had departed. So were the prophets afraid when God, may He be blessed spoke to them. And the dew that he dropped on
them revived them, meaning that he added understanding to them so that they might apprehend this and that is the dew which the Holy One blessed be He will resurrect the dead

Mekor Hayyim 43b (dew symbolizes wisdom, understanding, and knowledge)

Know that that Elijahh is the one wo prepares for the resurrection, meaning that they (R. Hiyya and his sons) had studied metaphysics which is the vitality (hayut) of the intellect, and this is the true resurrection, when it (the intellect) actualizes its potential because he whose intellect remains potential is dead. And when it is actualized then he is alive

Mikhlol Yofi, sect I, 183b see TB Bava Metsiah 85b

As water purifies the hands, so does Elijah cleanse ideas from their dross and their distorition

Ibn Zarza

The torah was given in dew and in rain to point out that revealed and concealed (which they called the Torah’s mysteries) are in it. The revealed was compared to the rain, and the concealed as intended here, was compared to the dew because of its subtlety. And on this they said, “my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew (Deut. 32:2) the divine emanation will be called dew, as if to say-the dew with which the Holy One blessed be He, will in the future resurrect the dead, meaning humans who are living rational (lit speaking) dead

Commentary on Batei ha-Nefesh 39b (critique of apocalyptic approach)

This explains the extinction and the loss, because the body which has already returned to the hyle (in order to) acquire another form, is called a corpse and is inappropriate to the soul’s form. The soul, moreover is not a body- it neither moves nor shifts and has already lost vitality, feeling and imagination ... but the sorrow of the wicked’s soul is that, having attained little knowledge, it is hungry and thirsty to know its principle and what in it, according to its nature, will be its pleasure.

Livyat Hen, Vatican MS 192, 131b (printed in Livyat Hen, ed. Howard Kreisel (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion Univ) 2014, 279-280

And he (Ramah) wishes to bring down our holy forefathers from their supreme degree which is that of angels who enjoy the splendor of the shekhinah and live forever to the degree of humans, returning them to the impure body that can only exist by eating and drinking and whose end is maggots and worms.... By the living wisdom that prevails over folly as does light over darkness these notions are to
me as those of one who has lost his mind and his wisdom and whose heart is not with him because of his melancholy sickness. And they are also laughable.

Marx Alexander, “Tets by and about Maimonides” JQR 25 (1934-35) 106-117

No one should imagine that the Torah intends the person when it says that whoever touches the dead shall be unclean seven days (according to Bamidbar 19:14). We must understand the intention and know that what is meant above all is not the body but the immortal soul whose transgressions God forgives at the end. His (God’s anger) does not awaken to extinguish the soul because the cause of the transgressions was the body, which bears the transgressions to the netherworld wince they are the true impurity

Anatoli, Maldad ha-Talmidim 89a

He who has attained communion wears the royal crown and delights in the splendor of the shekhinah, enjoying the greatest pleasure the heart is capable of. And the scholars desire is to study metaphysics (elohiyyim) in order to reach this degree, not in order to return to the dark body and to the initial sorrow, and this is enough to the wise.

Megalleh Amukot, Vatican MS 59, 113a-b

Rabbi Yitzhak Pulgar: And we must believe that with his (the messiah’s) coming nothing will change in the ways of the world, because the sages have already taught that the sole difference between the present and the messianic days is delivery from bondage to foreign powers

Rabbi Yitzak Pulgar, Ezer ha-Dat, ed. Yaakov Levinger (Tel Aviv Univ) 1984, 57

Rabbi Shmuel ibn Zarza:... In the days of the messiah, may he soon arrive the people of Israel will be perfect in their moral and intellectual qualities as has been taught, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the lord and so forth and they will reach the degree of prophecy as has been taught, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy may they see true joy, which is God’s emanation, upon their head, meaning upon their intellect, because the intellect is called head

Mikhlof Yofi section 1 1881 by ibn Zarza
Rabbi Shlomo b. Yehudah of Lunel: If he (the messiah) tarries, wait for him, because he will surely come and he will not delay. And know that the Creator has transmitted through his loyal prophets the aim of the redeemer coming in order to save our souls, and that is the arrival of perfection and the removal of all obstacles—no more Satan and no more evil. We will be quiet and serene, knowledge and providence will grow among us and we will gain the perfection of the world to come

Rabbi Shlomo b. Yehudah of Lunel, Heshkek Shlomoh 74a

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As we learned these are the ones who have no share in the world to come: he who denies the resurrection of the dead and some say he who says there is no resurrection of the dead in the Torah. And the gemarah says, why so? And we learn that the Holy One, blessed be He returns measure for measure—since he denied the resurrection of the dead, he will have no share in the resurrection (TB Sanhedrin 90a). You learn then, that the world to come considered here is the resurrection of the dead (Ramah Kitab Alrasail, 63-64)

But this inference is invalid, for we may say that the expression, “resurrection” in this place denotes the reward of the soul and its life in the world of souls, which comes right after death. They call it resurrection of the dead in opposition to the Sadducees and the Samaritans who denied the immortality of the soul and said that the soul dies with the body etc. I say therefore, that the expression in the Mishnah “All Israel have a share in the world to come”, refers to the reward of the soul after death, both that degree which man has after the resurrection and that which he has immediately after death (Sefer ha-Ikkarim, vol 4, ch. 31, 307-308, Joseph Albo)