

S. D. GOITEIN

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Since my name has been repeatedly mentioned in this lecture I feel I should shortly comment on it.

As you may have sensed in Dr. Friedman's words himself, those endeavors of husbands to restrict the freedom of movement of their wives and the marital disputes resulting from them were reported in the Geniza mostly from the lowest and poorest sections of the population. In those circles, we might also assume, the mores were not of the highest standards, and the husbands had reason to be suspicious and jealous, especially if they had to be away from their homes for prolonged periods (as we may sometimes conclude from their occupations). But I hope the third volume of *A Mediterranean Society* will prove that the Jewish woman of the Geniza times was very much visible and not at all confined to the corner of her house, as Maimonides decreed.

This brings me to a second point: regional differences. Maimonides came from the fanatical Muslim West and was shocked by the liberty of women encountered by him in Egypt. This explains somehow why his attitude toward the fair sex was far stricter than warranted by traditional Jewish law.

Similarly Iraq, which harbored the Yeshivot, was exposed to Iranian influence with its severe seclusion of women. It stands to reason, therefore, that the strictness of a Sherira Gaon, about which you have heard from Dr. Friedman, also reflects local limitations. All in all, there were differences not only between the Jewish communities domiciled in Western Europe and those living in Islamic countries, but between those living in Islamic countries themselves.

THE MEDIEVAL POLEMICS BETWEEN ISLAM AND JUDAISM*

MOSHE PERLMANN

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Los Angeles

Polemics is controversy, discussion with an opponent. Polemics may be direct, frank and frontal, or veiled, indirect and, of course, may vary from gentle and suave to vehement and violent. When society includes widely differing factions with varying positions, attitudes, views, the relations between them will be pervaded with polemics, of greater or lesser intensity, degree, and varying level and domain.

Polemical literature is only one aspect of polemics, as controversy may be conducted also orally, or in writings not directly devoted to it. But its stings by allusion and indirection may be felt in literature, poetry, scholarship, etc. In time of tension polemical attitude, mood, mentality may be more acute, nay violent, and more pervasive.

In a religious age, polemics are centered on religious issues, lending a religious coloration to the points under discussion. It seems to strengthen the dominant persuasion by combating other faiths or deviations from the prevailing fashion of creed and worship.

Polemic may be internal, within a certain entity; or external, i.e., directed against elements outside a given entity.

Once the flow of polemical exchanges begins, it naturally is apt to influence the positions held by the parties. Thus sharp edges are blunted,

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- a) The American Academy for Jewish Research for permission to reproduce a number of passages from its publications;
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Religion in the Religious Age, ed. S.D. Goitein, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973

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weak points muted, arguments prepared to buttress expected objections, critiques, etc. Polemic thus contributes to the molding of theoretical positions, literary expression, intellectual pursuits. Therein lies its presumably limited positive role, and cultural-historical and literary importance.

Here we are dealing with the literature that medieval Islam directed against Judaism, and with the retorts this literature evoked. This literature shows one aspect of the position of Jewry in medieval Islamic lands. It would be equally wrong to consider or exaggerate the impact of this aspect only, or to ignore or underestimate its existence and effect.

Islam arose in an atmosphere of clash: at first, between the prophet Muhammad and the Meccan society with its prevailing beliefs; and later, between the prophet's new community in Medina and its various rivals and opponents (among them the local Jews). This, with numerous asides against Christian tenets, is reflected in the new scripture, the Koran, and was to lay the ground for future altercations and discussions, for polemics, and for the polemic literature of Muslims against Jews and Christians.

Such a literature came into being much later, possibly a century and a half later. The stress and turmoil of the great Arab conquest, the rise of the new empire, the host of administrative, fiscal, tribal, ethnic, dynastic, and class problems kept the Muslims too busy. Writing and literature—apart from poetry—were as yet underdeveloped; or have not been preserved. There was a long span of several generations of Muslims, of numerous conversions to Islam from amongst Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, of the percolation of the converts' lore into Islam, of inner conflicts rending the Islamic community, before an Islamic civilization emerged, Islamic cultural life ripened into literary expression which finally gave battle to undesirable and inimical elements, and ventured into literary attack against the older faiths and their stubborn adherents.

The great upheaval caused by the rise of the new empire and the new faith continued to reverberate in a variety of tremors, at various levels, and with unequal intensity, duration and impact.

Amidst this new constellation, we perceive the Jewish communities continuing their existence, participating in a brave new world's exploits, ventures and adventures. After the early Islamic period of some two centuries which form, to a great extent, a blank spot in Jewish history, we find, with the emergence of source material, substantial changes. Ever growing masses of Jews abandon agricultural pursuits, join the city populations in old areas, expand to the new ones, and become steadily more involved in the new cultural trends so powerfully influenced by the absorption of hellenistic elements. They become, in the Islamic fashion, urban and urbane.¹

We may note, in this connection, that the *individual* reappears, what with the greater mobility, physical and intellectual, and with the breaking down of old rigors. Thus individual authorship reappears, after centuries which knew only anonymous bodies of traditional lore (Talmudic, Midrashic; cf. *ḥadīth* in Islam). Now poets, thinkers, commentators, legists, and grammarians emerge, each insisting on making his distinct individual mark known and felt.²

Obviously, there was constant contact with the Islamic world including its various non-Muslim sectors. The higher the cultural level, the more distinct was the impact of Islamic notions and approaches which were formed over centuries, in the developing civilization of Islam, amidst ceaseless clashes and struggles, aspirations, claims and counterclaims of various factions *within* Islam.

We must bear in mind that Islamic-Arabic literature developed in the Near East when the area was not as solidly Islamic as it is today. Christianity, in particular, still held wide pockets in the area; in Egypt, it was crushed essentially only after the period under consideration. Zoroastrians and Manichaeans flourished in the eastern ranges of Islam.

What with the variety of peoples, languages, faiths, customs and mores in the ever widening area of Islamic domination, and the contacts in war and peace with regions ranging from China to the lands of the Franks and the Slavs, there arose a vast body of accounts, descriptions, and discussions (including polemics), and part of it was gradually incorporated into the emerging corpus of scholarship. The geographical and historical works now included materials and discussions about the multitude of tenets and practices, Islamic and non-Islamic. It became part of the curriculum of educated people to be informed about dozens of Islamic groups as well as about the various churches of Christianity, the various beliefs of Iran and India, as well as of the Jews and their sects. Even the strictly theological curriculum now included an account of the religious history of mankind: how it ran its course through paganism toward monotheism, reaching its acme in Islam; then again passing through the stage of inner dissensions to the final result, the salvation in the orthodox creed. If Mas'ūdī's (d. 956) accounts of globe-trotting show a great interest in knowledge of religious lores, Ash'arī's (d. 324/935) *Maḥāḥāt* centers on inner Islamic differences. Bīrūnī (d. ca. 1050) shows a truly scholarly spirit and approach also in the study of non-Islamic beliefs. Bāḳillānī's (d. 403/1012) *Tamihid* is already a compendium that sets the pattern for the course on religious history, followed by several authors, of whom perhaps the best-known is *Shahrasṭānī* (d. 584/1153).³

It is therefore worth noticing what such compendia have to say about

Jews and Judaism. Firstly, we notice that these are not important themes. Christianity draws far more attention.⁴ This can hardly surprise us. Inside Islam's boundaries, a substantial part of the population was Christian and beyond, there were Ethiopia, Byzantium and the kingdoms of the Franks. As against this, the Jews were a minor group inside the Islamic area, with no outside supporting power.⁵

Many Christians, as already pointed out by Jāhīz (IXc.), were part of the old urban bureaucracy and intelligentsia, influencing the Muslims. Islamic lore bore a grudge against the Jews; far less against the Christians.

The compendia report on the Jewish tenets, practices, calendar, holidays, institutions, and above all on the scriptures. Refutation and polemics follow, often with passages from Jewish scriptures.

Thus, religious polemics becomes part and parcel of the educated man's body of knowledge.

In time there arose a literature, *specifically* directed against Jews and Judaism. No remains are extant, before the XIc.⁶

It would seem that to a very great, decisive measure, Islamic polemics directed against Jews and Judaism originated from and was fed by Christian sources, partly pre-Islamic, flowing into the Islamic milieu with the mass conversion of Christians. These arguments were in turn partly rooted in the anti-Jewish lore of antiquity, and were refurbished by Jewish converts. There was a stock of arguments for Islam and against the older faiths, a stock supplied by Jewish and Christian converts to Islam. Biblical passages in support of the Koran and of Muhammad's mission figure in the work of Ibn Kūṭayba (d. 276/889) and in that of the former Christian, 'Alī b. Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (IX. cent.).⁷ X

The latter inveighs also against the contemptible zindīqs—heretics—who did not believe in Scripture, and argued that God could not have revealed 'scandalous' stories such as those about Noah's sons, Judah and his daughter-in-law, in Genesis; or urged Hosea to marry a harlot; or ordained the sprinkling of blood upon the altar. Such objections are subsequently frequently connected with Ibn al-Rēwandī (IXc.), said to have been of Jewish origin. Ascribing subversive thought to Jews formed a pattern widely used down to our own day.⁸ Rawandī, again, is aligned with the great physician al-Rāzī (d. 925). "Revelation either contains what reason can supply, in which case it is superfluous; or else, it contains something other than reason, in which case we cannot accept it. Muhammad's laws seem to be contrary to reason. Prayer is senseless, pilgrimage nonsensical. . . . Circling the Ka'ba is not different from circling any other structure." A poet wrote:

I wonder at Chosrocs and his people,
washing their faces in the urine of cows;
I wonder at the Byzantine Caesar who adores what
human hands have wrought.
How strange are the Jews with their God who
rejoices in spilling blood and smelling incense,
And those people who flock from distant regions
to shave their heads and kiss the stone.⁹

Maṣarrī (d. 1057) expressed this mood in the famous lines;

They all err—Moslem, Christian, Jew, and Magian;
Two make humanity's universal sect;
One man intelligent without religion,
And one religious without intellect.¹⁰

We hear of interfaith discussions conducted on a purely rational basis, to the disgust and horror of a pious Muslim who presumably had his counterpart among Jews and Christians.¹¹ In XI century Spain some Jewish physicians advocated a universal persuasion (*milla kullīya*) of the pursuit of the good and honorable as commended in the various faiths: ethical culture.¹²

All the faiths were confronted with the spread of skepticism among the educated, with attempts at rationalist critique spurred by the impact of the hellenic heritage. This trend among the educated continued with the loosening of traditionalism in the wake of the upheavals within Islam, with sectarianism, theological dissidence, religiously colored political strife, the antinomianism of sectarians and mystics alike, especially with the rise of the Ismaili movement.

Early Islamic theology sought to counter this wave of doubts, heresies, skepticism by an inner purge of the fundamental notions of Islam, rationalizing them, making them more palatable to the increasingly critical generation, and finally better geared to dialectics and logical systematic exposition, increasingly propelled by philosophical query and attitude.

The Jewish community faced the same situation. A rainbow of sects emerged in the eighth century, starting, in part, with Messianic expectations amidst the Islamic turmoil. It broke the traditional law-abiding pattern under the rule of the exilarch and the academies. Of these sects, the Karaites became the strongest in number, extent, social and intellectual vigor, though for a time not in cohesion.

We also hear of the subversive queries and activities of Hiwi of Balkh, that enigmatic Bible critic (ca. 875), refuted by Saadya Gaon (d. 942). We learn that there were other heretics of his kind. These were pressing

old Jewish queries, and reproducing arguments proffered by Manichaeans and Zoroastrians, as well as by the Ibn-al-Rawandī type of Muslim anti-nomians and nihilists. A pious writer inveighs against the fellow "who is roaming through towns and fairs in search of secular writings, such as the books on philosophy and the volumes of Ibn-al-Rawendī and Ibn-Suwayd, that seduce unto the denial of God, prophets and scripture. May God chastise him and his ilk, for these are doomed to hellfire, for ever and ever."¹³

These extremist rationalists—Jewish and non-Jewish—asked: is God necessary?—and replied that even prophets are not necessary; that reason was the only arbiter.

The rabbis and Karaite scholars strove alike to counter this attack on the ancestral faith, law, and worship. At the same time the rabbis had to open a second front—against the Karaites who revered the law and the prophets but who were not prepared to recognize the Talmudic sages as heirs of the prophets; still less, to accept the rabbis as the authoritative carriers of the oral law and tradition.

Against this background, systematic Jewish theology and Jewish religious philosophy were being shaped, paralleling much of what was going on in the respective area in Muslim circles.

This stage was reached in the writings of Muḳammiṣ and Saadya Gaon (X cent.).¹⁴

The first substantial attack on Judaism as distinct from academic presentation by a Muslim author came from the pen of Ibn Ḥazm, the distinguished man of letters in Spain (384-456/994-1064), one of the great figures in Islam's intellectual development. Circumstances doomed him to be the loser, to despair of an effective political career, and to retreat into a life of learning and writing.¹⁵

He resented his failure, and bore a grudge against the Jewish grandee who rose from obscurity to the highest post in the kingdom of Granada. This was Ismāʿīl b. Yūsuf ibn-Naghrêla, that is Samuel the Nagîd (993-1056) who succeeded uniquely in combining and displaying the gifts of statesman, administrator, and military commander, on the one hand, and of Jewish communal leader, talmudic scholar and Hebrew poet, on the other hand.

He was to Ibn Ḥazm not only a despised and hated successful competitor but also the incarnation of a great social evil and religious failure: the employment of an infidel in a position of power over believers.

Ibn Ḥazm met this Jew, "the most learned and skilled in disputations," when both were about 20. Presumably Ibn Ḥazm met Samuel more than once, and no doubt had discussions and disputations with other Jews, too. Apparently, he wrote tracts against the Jews' creed and Scripture, and

later incorporated these into his major work, *Kitāb al-Fiṣal*, a survey of theology against an historical background. The book includes a section of close to 130 pages on Judaism (Christianity is dismissed with 95). This is the most extensive exposé by a medieval Muslim author on the subject, and the only one written by a leading Muslim authority.

In later years he felt compelled to come back to the subject when he heard that Samuel had written a pamphlet which purported to show that there are contradictions and absurdities in the Koran. Unable to procure a copy of the alleged pamphlet, Ibn Ḥazm obtained a Muslim retort to it, and on the basis of passages imputed to Samuel, proceeded to compile a short *Refutation*. Here he gives vent to his anger, first with the Muslim princes who appoint infidels to high offices, and secondly with Samuel, and Jews in general.

Oh, God, we complain to Thee, for rulers of our faith are deflected by their worldly affairs from the observance of their religion; by building palaces—which they will soon abandon—from building their faith which they need in this world and in the life to come; by accumulating wealth—with results often fatal to their own lives and beneficial to their enemies—from preserving their faith which gives them strength in their earthly life and hope for life eternal. Infidels become arrogant, unbelievers wag their tongues.

In particular, Samuel is denounced for allegedly having authored a pamphlet against the Koran.

A man filled with hatred toward the Prophet; a man who is, in disguise, a materialist, a heretic, a Jew—of that most contemptible of religions, the vilest of faiths . . . loosened his tongue . . . and became conceited . . . as a result of his wealth . . . By God, his argumentation proves how poor is his knowledge, how narrow his mind . . . I used to know him when he was naked except for charlatanry, full of anxiety and lies.

Samuel's reasoning is poor. If he at least knew Arabic properly! The Koran, ascribes healing power to honey (16:71), and Samuel claims that is wrong since those who suffer from fever or inflamed bile get worse if they partake of honey. But did the divine text say that *all* diseases are cured by honey? Not at all. It says: *some* people are cured that way. The Jew should be reminded that in his own Scripture (II Kings 20:7) the prophet Isaiah administered honey as a cure (to King Hezekiah). Is not Palestine praised as a land that flows with milk and honey?

The epilogue threatens the powers that be that they will share the fate of the Jews in divine chastisement, humiliation, wretchedness, as foretold in Deut. 28:15-58.

The *Refutation* shows up the mistakes and misrepresentations of the Jewish author under attack, defends the Koran, and, at each point, shows how biblical passages might be impugned.

In the major work the order is reversed: it is centered rather on a series of critical notes on biblical passages, and here and there Koran passages are adduced as inimitable exalted counterparts of the objectionable and wanting verses of the Hebrew Scripture.

Ibn Hazm writes—and so do the rest of the Muslim authors—for Muslims, i.e., not to persuade a Jewish reader but to aid a Muslim to argue against a Jew in a disputation. His writing still resounds with disputations held. These are mentioned sometimes with glee, and can often be recognized in passages with the pattern "should they argue . . ." The language of our author is often violent, even vile.

The Jews maintain that their Law is divine and eternal, and admit no abrogation. But their Scriptures give them the lie: they are replete with cases of abrogation, contradictions, absurdities, wrong data, anthropomorphism, objectionable and irrelevant matter. At the same time they are devoid of the intimation of reward and punishment in the life to come. The author seeks to destroy the reverence which, he noticed, many Muslims felt toward Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. Once Muslims have been made aware of the faulty nature of these Scriptures, this reverence will give way to rejection pure and simple. Muslims do revere and should revere the *true* Scripture as quoted in and known from *the Koran*, not the books circulating and revered among the infidels.

He is especially eager to follow up the numerical data in the Pentateuch, and to pinpoint discrepancies, imprecision, etc.

Yes, the divine Law had been *revealed* to Moses but the Jews evidently did *not preserve* it. Their present Scripture shows too many signs of its non-divine origin. How then did the forgery supersede the original divine Scripture? History shows us that the Hebrews suffered from many invasions of enemies, from inner dissensions, warfare, devastation, all of which tended to make the preservation of the Scripture precarious. Then came the final destruction of the Jerusalem Sanctuary: the Law went up in flames. The Hebrews were driven into the Babylonian exile. The study of the law was neither a duty nor a tradition. Indeed, only the Levites used to memorize one chapter each. The complete text was available only in one copy in charge of the High Priest. It was in captivity that *Ezra* set out to concoct a Scripture from the remnants preserved in the memories of many individuals. This turned out to be a hopeless mixture of true and false, passages of originally divine origin along with passages tampered with, and plain forgeries.

Ezra is then denounced as an arch-misleader, a criminal devoid of reason, conscience, and . . . the knowledge of arithmetic.

Ezra, the Aaronid scribe, really created a new religion with the new Scripture, with weekly Sabbath service in the synagogues instead of the worship confined to the Temple in Jerusalem. For centuries the priests held sway over the people, along with the kings. That the kings were for the most part idolators is stated clearly. There is no reason to doubt that the priests did not lag behind in deviating from piety, just as in the days of the sons of Eli (I. Samuel, 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-36; 3:11-14). The contact with the sanctuary was limited to three pilgrimages a year. Only one Torah chapter was taught to the people: Deut. 32 (*Ha'azinu*). Deut. 31:22-30 show Moses completing the writing of the Law, and assembling the elders and officers of the people to speak these words in their ears, the words of this song. But even this chapter (fully quoted) is replete with objectionable passages that cannot be of divine origin: God is their father (20-22). Anybody who knows the Jews knows that they are a filthy and witless rabble, most repulsive, vile, perfidious, cowardly, despicable, mendacious, the lowest in aspiration, weakest in distinction. These should be God's chosen children?! One can see that even this chapter was not transmitted properly, and judge by that the credibility of the transmission of all the revealed texts among the Jews. Muslims will believe only the Koran statements about the ancient prophets, and, indeed, even about those unknown to the Jews, such as Hüd and Šālih, whilst the texts used by the Jews must be considered unreliable, distorted, forged.

Ibn Hazm acquainted himself with the scriptural material or sections thereof in an Arabic translation. An informant told him that the name "Israel" was derived from *asar-el* = he detained God (*re* Gen. 32:25-31: Jacob wrestlings; "thou has striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed"; root 'sr vs root srh). Sometimes he had before him *aggada* flourishes which he was unable to distinguish from Scripture [Amos killed by King Uziah, etc.]. Still, he knew Genesis well, the rest of the Pentateuch less well, and probably had seen only passages from other parts of the Bible. He even discusses a few items of talmudic lore. He had some notion of the course of the history of the Hebrews, and of Jewish sects.

The Jews reject abrogation (*naskh*), and any suggestion of a new dispensation, be it through Jesus or Muhammed, is anathema to them. Their argument is: God is omniscient, and His decree is immutable. One cannot conceive of sudden change, caprice, in the divine will. The notion of a new dispensation is based on such a sudden change (*badā*) in God's pleasure, and contradicts the idea of God's omniscience.

But, says Ibn Hazm, this is wrong. Precepts are commands to perform certain acts for a definite period, and when that defined period has passed, the command may turn into its opposite. They are conditioned by (divinely foreseen) circumstances in space and time. God decrees life, death,

resurrection; power, degradation and restoration to power; virtue and evil; belief and deviation. Yesterday's infidels may turn into brethren in the faith today, only to sin and thus turn into infidels liable to death. This shows how wrong the Jews are in rejecting the notion that right turns into wrong, command into prohibition, obedience into disobedience. Work permissible on Friday is no longer permissible on Sabbath only to become again permissible on Sunday. The divinely instituted dialectic in nature and society proves the Jews are wrong in repudiating abrogation.

Indeed, they admit that the law of Jacob was different from that of Moses. Thus, Jacob married Leah and Rachel who were sisters, yet such a marriage contradicts the law of Moses (Lev. 18:18). The people of Gibeon, under divine order, were to be wiped out but, after they had fraudulently exacted a treaty from Joshua, they were left to serve as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary (Josh. 9). God's wrath was to consume the Israelites but after a fervent appeal by Moses, the Lord repented (Ex. 32:10-14).

Genesis 6:3: Man's days shall be a hundred and twenty years. What about the men who lived for hundreds of years each, as related in the chapters before and after this verse? Remember Methuselah!

Abraham meets three personages (Gen. 18), yet he addresses them in singular, and he, a prophet, prostrates himself before them! If he knew they were angels, why did he talk of washing their feet and of offering food? He offered them meat and curd and milk, not a *kasher* combination.

The story of Sarah's charms is duplicated (Gen. 12: 10-20 and 20), and shows the prophet Abraham prevaricating and lying. Abraham claims a non-Mosaic marriage with his sister: a case of abrogation?

Genesis 15:18: promises the Hebrews the land up to the Euphrates; never did the Hebrews reach the Euphrates.

Josh. 7:18-26: Achan and his family are put to death; but Deut. 24:16 has it that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers." Contradiction? Or abrogation?

Gen. 37:1: Jacob loves Joseph who is the child of his old age. But Benjamin was born after Joseph.

Ex. 7:20-22: If all the water of Egypt had turned to blood, where did the magicians of Egypt find water to be turned into blood by their secret arts?

Ex. 12:38: The Hebrews took along "very many cattle, both flocks and herds." How were these fed in the desert? If they had these, why did they complain of lack of meat?

The scripture teems with anthropomorphism and unworthy passages.

Ex. 15:3: "The Lord is a man of war."

Ex. 24:10: "And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet, as it were, a pavement of sapphire stone . . ."

Ex. 24:17 . . . "devouring fire."

Ex. 33:11, 18, 20, 22-23 (Moses): "show me thy glory. . . . You shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

Ps. 2:7: "You are my son, today I have begotten you."

Ibn Hazm dwells extensively on lineage irregularities as attested in the scriptures, and relishes the scope of bastardization among the Hebrews, the result and effect of their moral degradation. The lineage of their patriarchs, kings, and prophets is sullied with incest and fornication. He lists with glee the cases of Abraham (Sarah was his sister), Lot's daughters, Jacob marrying two sisters (which is against the law in Lev. 18:18), Reuben and Bilha. From Judah and Tamar sprang the line of David, Solomon, and the expected Messiah!

Computation queries:

re the length of the Egyptian bondage

(Gen. 15:13 vs. Ex. 12:40);

re the number of the Hebrews in the desert, number of their warriors; resources; comparison with later data; Palestine's size and resources; the experience of generations and peoples.

Ibn Hazm dwells upon passages of the post-biblical lore, probably following samples of Karaitic origin, often with the vague reference to "one of their books." He writes violently about the 'old wives' tales' in these passages of magic, wild exaggeration, etc. He is especially outraged by *Shi'ur Koma* data (measures of the divine body); the tale that Paul was sent to the disciples of Jesus to mislead them into the belief of Christ's divinity; the story of God grieving, weeping and bemoaning the destruction of the Temple; the reference to Metatron 'the lesser Lord' acting likewise. Ibn Hazm basically felt

All those who oppose Islam . . . know the error of their beliefs but, as a result of divine displeasure, they continue, despite that inner certainty (about the truth of Islam) to follow their moods and notions out of sheer loyalty to their ancestors and group, and in the pursuit of worldly leadership.

No wonder, his impatience with the contestants explodes from time to time, especially when he feels that his relentless pursuit of a dispute makes the contestant seek his peace in retreat, in wriggling his way out.

In 404/1013-4 Ibn Hazm, in a discussion with Samuel Ibn Naghrela touched on Gen. 49:10 ("the sceptre shall not depart from Judah"). The Scripture says the Jews will have kingship but the Jews are deprived of it. Samuel retorted that the exilarchs were still Jewish princes of the Davidic line. Ibn Hazm:

Wrong. For the exilarch has no executive power over any Jew or any body else. His office is merely a title with no substance or power, nor does he wield a sceptre.

The Jews are characterized as liars and tricksters. This trait begins with Jacob who fished his birthright from Esau (Gen. 25:29-34), and the blessing from Isaac (Gen. 27).

Ibn Ḥazm concludes: Though I have seen many of them, I found only two who were devotees of truth.

Yet, 'forgery' notwithstanding, Ibn Ḥazm cannot withstand the temptation to consider biblical passages as annunciations of the advent of Muhammad and Islam. Thus Deut. 33:2

*The Lord came from Sinai
And rose from Seir unto them;
He shined forth from Mount Paran*

refers to the three successive dispensations. Paran, the abode of Ishmael, is Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet of Islam. Likewise Deut. 18:18

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee
refers to the prophet emerging from among brethren, i.e., Ishmael's progeny.

Ibn Ḥazm shows us the state of the controversy by the middle of the XIth century, as he consolidated pertinent data accumulated by Muslim authors over four centuries.

It is difficult to say whether Ibn Ḥazm's writings against the Jews and their Scripture and faith had a serious impact. This author had many Muslim foes, and the circulation of his writings was curtailed. A later (13 c.) Hebrew tract seems to reproduce and refute passages from *Fīṣal*.

In any case, we have here the full line of the controversy: abrogation (*naskh*), distortion or forgery in scripture (*tahrīf*), anthropomorphism (*tajāsīm*), preserved annunciations of Islam and its prophet (*a'clām*).^{15a}

If it is difficult to estimate the impact of Ibn Ḥazm's writings against Jews and Judaism, it is definitely certain that the next author, writing more than a century later, became the most influential polemicist. Samau'al al-Maghribī's (ca. 1125-1175) tract entitled *Iḥām al-Yahūd* (Silencing the Jews) was used, quoted, reproduced, plagiarized over at least two centuries.¹⁶

The author was a Jew converted to Islam. A native of Baghdad, he later lived in Syria and Iran. He had a modicum of Jewish training with

most of his education centered on mathematics and medicine. Medical practice and scientific works secured him a reputation. In 558/1163 he became a Muslim and penned a pamphlet against the Jews. Four years later he produced a revised version, and added an autobiography. Modesty was not his forte.

Samau'al was a rationalist. He felt that Jewishness was a discomfort. An old body of superstitions, Judaism caused disabilities to its followers. It was high time, he felt, to rid oneself of this unenviable heritage, and to join the living society at large. To ingratiate himself with the dominant faith and the better to integrate himself into Islamic society, he composed the tract against his former co-religionists and their lore.

The reader discerns two strains: a) the critique of Judaism; b) the Islamic argument.

The critical sections deal with a) abrogation; b) the Jewish tradition, authorship of the Torah, composition of the Talmud, the difference between Rabbinic Jewry and the Karaites; c) the causes of the continuous existence of Jewry. Jewish past and present are reviewed in these remarks. These notes reveal the musings of a XII. century Jewish intellectual bent on putting an end to the further existence of Jewry which appeared to him to be an ossified remnant devoid of sense, purpose and justification. Such notions and doubts arose in many minds, and we find these mentioned, criticized and refuted in the works of medieval Jewish thinkers.

No doubt, Samau'al was well aware that the same sort of rationalist critical remarks could be directed against Islam. Pure rationalism could lead out of Judaism without leading into Islam. But this position is carefully avoided. Like some Muslim rationalists, he presumably left it to his reason and conscience to interpret Islam as a universal social regulator, the best at the present stage in the development of mankind. He rushes into notes against "your religion" which a Muslim could use in argument, and which would credit his own conversion. He is especially proud of quoting biblical passages in the Hebrew original and transliterated, followed by Arabic translation and comments.

Then, after I had trained my mind on mathematical sciences, especially geometry with its demonstrations, I asked myself about the differences among men in religious faiths and tenets. I received the greatest impulse to inquire into the subject from reading the epistle of Bardhawayh the physician, in the book *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. I realized then that reason is the supreme arbiter and that its rule should be established generally in the affairs of this, our world. For were it not that reason directs us to follow the prophets and apostles and to trust the elders and authorities of the past, we would not accept anything transmitted on their authority. I realized that if it is reason that is at the root of adherence to the religions inherited

from earlier generations, and at the root of abiding by the prophets, it follows that we must make reason the supreme arbiter in this whole sphere. And if we make *reason* supreme judge of what we learn by transmission from our ancestors, we realize that reason does not oblige us to accept ancestral tradition without examining it as to its soundness, merely because it has been handed down from ancestors, but obliges us to accept tradition only if it be a verity *per se* and if there is proof of its soundness. Mere reference to fathers and ancestry, however, is no proof. For if it were, it would serve all the infidel rivals as well, e.g., the Christians. . . . Should it be claimed that emulation of the ancestors be correct only in the case of the Jews, this would not be accepted unless the Jews could prove that their ancestors were wiser than those of other peoples. The Jews may make such a claim with respect to their fathers and ancestors, but all reports about their ancestors give the lie to this claim. Once we abandon partisanship in their favor, their ancestors are put on the same footing as those of other peoples. . . .

When I noticed that Jews and non-Jews are on a par with respect to transmission of ancestral tradition, I realized that the Jews had no true proof in their possession about the prophethood of Moses other than the evidence of the chain of transmission, which is available for Jesus and Muhammad just as it is for Moses—peace upon them all; that if the chain of transmission serves as confirmation, then all three are true prophets. I also realized that I had not seen Moses with my own eyes nor had I witnessed his miracles nor those of any other prophet, and that, but for tradition and our following in the footsteps of the transmitters, we would know nothing of any of this. Then I realized that a reasonable person cannot believe one and disbelieve another of these prophets, not having seen any of them nor having witnessed the circumstances of any, except [that he may trust] tradition, whose evidence of transmission, however, is available for all three prophets. It is therefore neither reasonable nor wise that one of them be accepted as true, and the others rejected as false. Rather, it is rationally incumbent either to believe all of them or to reject all of them.

As for disbelieving all, reason does not dictate that either. For we find that they all preached lofty morals, advocated the virtues and fought the vices, and regulated the world in a fashion beneficial to mankind.

Samau'al claimed visions: he had seen the prophet Samuel (his name-sake) and the prophet Muhammad. But when he converted to Islam he did not mention these.

Firstly, I was loath to mention a matter that could not be proved, lest the mind of the listener should be prompt to deny it as something extraordinary or unusual. For a sensible man is loath to expose himself to refutation, be it open or secret. Secondly, I was loath to have the report of the two dreams reach anyone in the land who was envious of me on account of the scholarship and esteem God had bestowed upon me, lest

this report be used to stir up ill-will against me and contempt for my conduct, and lest the ill-wishers say: "He left his religion on account of a dream he had seen; he was deceived by jumbled dreams."

The reader of these pages should now understand that it was not the dream that had induced me to abandon my first faith. A sensible man will not be deceived about his affairs by dreams and visions, without proof or demonstration. But I had known for a long time the proofs and demonstrations and arguments for the prophethood of our master Muhammad. . . . It was those proofs and demonstrations that were the cause for my conversion and for taking the right path. As to the dream, it served merely to alert and to prod me out of my procrastination and inertia.

The tract opens with a discussion of *abrogation*. God may command a thing and its opposite at two different points in time, though it would be self-contradictory to issue such commands simultaneously.

Besides, Jewish lore is replete with cases of abrogation. As the Jews cannot apply purification with the ashes of the red heifer (Nu. 19:11, 16, 17), they must consider themselves impure. The sages and legists of the Jews uttered various views on numerous problems. How could all these be of divine origin? The prayers, with their references to exile, dispersion, and hope of restoration, are evidently of late origin. Yet the Law (Deut. 13:1) enjoins one neither to add to nor diminish from the divine word.

But even in the Law it is at first the first-born who are consecrated to worship but later it is only Levites (Ex. 13:2 vs. Nu. 8:18). Gen. 49:10 gets a Christological interpretation:

Do you not know that you once had a state and kingdom up to the advent of Jesus, and that then your kingdom came to an end? If you do not have a kingdom to-day, it follows from the Torah that the Messiah has already been sent.

The belief of a Jew is based on a chain of *tradition* and transmission (*tawātur*). But non-Jewish groups also have such systems. The Jews cannot prove that theirs is more reliable or credible. The record of the Jews in scientific achievement is not comparable to that of the Greeks and others.

As for works by Muslims, they are so numerous that it is impossible for any single human being to encompass all that the Muslims wrote in any one scientific discipline, so vast and extensive is their literature.¹⁷

The claim of Jesus can be derived from the Law. But Muhammad's advent was likewise adumbrated in Scripture.

The stock of Islamic arguments is added: a prophet from among their brethren (Deut. 18:15, 18); God promises to multiply Ishmael exceedingly (Gen. 17:20). Here the numerical value of *bi me 'od-me' od* equals 92, just like the numerical value of the name of Muhammad. Deut. 33:2, God reveals himself from Sinai, Seir, and Paran; three revelations; Paran is identical with the abode of Ishmael (Gen. 21:21), i.e. the Arabs, Muslims.

The Scripture is the next issue. It is replete with unworthy expressions, anthropomorphic notions, etc. The Torah was in the charge of the priests, and only the poem in Deut. 32 was known to the people. The Scripture was lost.

When the political independence of a nation is coming to an end through foreign domination and occupation of its land, the true record of its past is obliterated, and the vestiges of its antiquity are blotted out and difficult to trace. For the political independence of a nation may come to an end through a succession of invasions and assaults, and through the devastation and partial scorching of the land. The succession of such events continues until at last the learning of a nation is displaced by ignorance.

The more ancient a nation is, and the more the various empires expose it to humiliation and grief, the more it is fated [to suffer] the obliteration of its records. This [Jewish] community is beyond doubt the one that has been exposed more than any other to the aforementioned [evils], because it is one of the oldest of nations on record and because it has been ruled by a multitude of nations.

Like Ibn Hazm, Samau'al comments on the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Lot and his daughters. But here a new point is added concerning Ezra's authorship of the present-day Torah, and Ezra's motives:

But the endless animosity between the Ammonites and Moabites, on the one hand, and the Israelites on the other hand, induced the compiler of this section to concoct this absurdity so that it might be a most vilifying report about the Ammonites and Moabites.

Further, they have it that Moses vested the Aaronids with the priesthood. When Saul became king, his rule was felt to be oppressive by the Aaronids, and he massacred many of them (1 Sam. 22:16-20), and later, power passed to David. Yet in the hearts of the Aaronids there remained the lust for the power they had lost. Now this Ezra was a scribe in the service of the King of Persia. He made representations for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and compiled for the Jews the Torah which is in their possession. As he was an Aaronid, he was averse to a Davidid reigning over them in the second commonwealth. So he added in the Torah two sections derogatory of the lineage of David: one is the story of the daughters of Lot, the other the story of Tamar, to be mentioned below.

By my life, he achieved his purpose: for in the second commonwealth

which they had in Jerusalem it was not the Davidids who were their kings but the Aaronids.

The biblical levirate (Deut. 25:5-10) and the ceremony of absolution are ridiculed.

The author finds that the Jews have done much to make the burden (*igr*) heavier, life more difficult for themselves. There are two factors in this sociology of Jewish life and suffering: one—the rule of talmudic legislation; the other—the dispersion which favors repeatedly the rise of new foci of strictness in adherence to the self-imposed precepts, and prevents the consolidation and victory of a sane attitude toward the heritage of the past, thus impeding integration into the great society. The rabbis, in their effort to keep their people from mingling with people of other faiths, forbade intermarriage and partaking of food prepared by non-Jews. The author resents this vehemently, ridicules the Kasher-terefa distinction. His arguments are of Karaite origin. Indeed, he gives a sympathetic statement about the Karaites, and adds that “most of them were little by little converted to Islam so that only a few of them are left.”

The Hebrews were wicked, as shown in the Bible repeatedly; the Jews are still lacking in good sense, as shown by recent events, namely, gullibility in connection with a messianic movement.

They call Muhammad “the madman” (*meshugga*; cf. Hosea 9:7) and the Koran “dishonor” (*katon*).

The Jews assert that Muhammad had dreams indicating that he was to be the head of a state; that he traveled to Syria on business of Khadīja (Muhammad's employer, later his wife), met rabbis and told them his dreams, and that they recognized that he was to be the head of a state. Then they attached to him as companion ‘Abdallāh b. Salam (an early Jewish convert to Islam), who instructed him for some time in scholarship and jurisprudence of the Torah. They go so far in their claim as to ascribe the miraculous eloquence of the Koran to its compilation by ‘Abdallāh b. Salam, and maintain that it was he who stipulated in the marriage law that a wife, after her third divorce from her husband, shall not be permitted to rewed him until she has been married and divorced from another man, the purpose being, in their contention, to make *mamzerim* of the children of the Muslims. This word is plural; its singular is *mamzer*. This is the term for an illegitimate child. For, in their law, if the husband takes back his wife after she has been married to another man, her children are considered illegitimate. Since abrogation is inconceivable to them, they conclude that this stipulation in the marriage law is an interpolation of ‘Abdallāh b. Salam, by which he sought to turn Muslim children into what they consider *mamzerim* (cf. Koran 2:229-230).^{17a}

The material in Ibn Hazm and Samau'al is very often similar. This

does not necessarily indicate that the later author borrowed from the earlier one; they may rather have had common sources which cannot now be traced.

The most striking item in their polemics is the ascription of the authorship of the Pentateuch to Ezra. Ibn Ḥazm curses the forger who was not even skilled enough in arithmetic. Samau'al displays a harsh "realism" in imputing to Ezra, in the compilation of the Torah, considerations of vested interests: ethnic animosity and the priests' lust for power. It is difficult to say whether both found Ezra's role in a common source, and if so whether Samau'al's more ingenious remarks not found in Ibn Ḥazm, are Samau'al's original contribution.¹⁸

Samau'al's tract was extensively used by the "XIII century Ḳarāfī and the XIV century Ibn Kayyim."¹⁹

In 1360, Abū Zakarīyā Yahyā al-Raqīlī wrote a tract in Huesca, Spain. *Support of the Faith (Ta'yīd al-Milla)* was to supply his brethren, the Moriscos—Muslims under the rule of the victorious Christian rulers in Spain—with a manual of anti-Jewish argument. In the Aragon kingdom the Muslims were mostly peasants who resented the degrading of Islam from the position of a dominant faith to that of a tolerated minority. Doubly galling to them was the activity of Jewish officials and tax agents on behalf of the crown. While Jews suffered from Christian anti-Jewish polemics, they also became the butt of Muslim resentment.²⁰

As I saw the changes wrought by time, and the corruption caused, science vanishing in the absence of its carriers, especially in the polytheistic country, where we dwell, cut off from our brethren and devoid of knowledge; and when I saw . . . Jews loosen their tongues in lying and abuse against our prophet, Muhammad, denying his religion and prophetic call . . . I asked God . . . to assist me against them . . . I then read the Torah, the Psalms and the books of the prophets, and extracted from them passages and evidences with which to refute the Jews, and to show how God had put them to shame and cursed them, and called them unbelievers for tampering with the scriptures, and violating the covenant . . .

God chastised them by a permanent dispersion (*al-ghālūth ad-dā'im*), which means slavery and humiliation, in which they find themselves. In moving phrases the author asks the reader to forgive him for the slips (*fī mā laḥantu*), as he is not equipped for his task, and it was only dire need, and the sight of the lights of knowledge going out that drove him to write his manual (*'adda li-l-munāzarāt wa-l-ihitāj*).

We ask God . . . that He may take us out of the country of polytheism to the lands of the Muslims.

The tract contains five chapters: On Ishmael, abrogation, scriptural evidences about the Prophet, the miracles of Muhammad, and the transgressions of the Jews.

Here are a few notes on the contents:

The benediction of Ishmael (*baraka*) is better than the covenant (*'ahd*) of Isaac. Hagar was wife, not concubine, to the patriarch. She was not a mean slave, but the daughter of an Egyptian prince. But even a slave can be a prophet. Joseph was a prophet whilst Potiphar's slave. Jacob labored under Laban. And the slave Hagar could be the mother of Ishmael, the residuary of prophethood.

God repented having created man, and brought the deluge. This is a proof of abrogation. Likewise, the sacrifice of Isaac: first commanded, it was subsequently prevented. God promised to make of Ishmael a great nation. Then why should prophecy, revelation be withheld from it?

The Bible shows the Jews as a rebellious, unfaithful, ungrateful, accursed breed. Their claim to election is refuted by the fact that Noah, Abraham and Isaac were prophets long before Moses and the Torah revelation. The Jews transgressed against each and every one of the Ten Commandments.

Here, too, we meet the computation that the biblical blessing of Ishmael equals the numerical value of the name of Muhammad; also the equation of Ishmael's Paran with Mecca. Isaiah 21:7, "a troop of asses, a troop of camels" points to the prophethood of Jesus and Muhammad respectively.

The Jewish Scripture, however, is not reliable: it contains no reference to reward and punishment beyond this world.

The name *Israel* means 'he who beheld God' (*Man rā'ā-llāha*). Raqīlī's pamphlet belongs to a lower level of disputation as conducted between two oppressed faiths under Christian domination.

Were there any Jewish writings against Islam? Hardly.

In the Xth century, the Karaite Kīrkisānī wrote a tract of this kind.²¹

In Spain, apart from the alleged anti-Koran tract ascribed to the Nagid, we find toward the end of the XIIIth century a tract written to refute an Arabic treatise by a Muslim author. This refutation is ascribed to Ibn Adret (*ob. ca. 1310*) who lived in a Christian kingdom, and was written in *Hebrew*. It is presumably directed against Ibn Ḥazm's work known to the author through a series of passages translated into Hebrew.

The Spanish rabbi-physician, Simon B. Semah Duran (Rashbaḥ 1361-1444), settled in Algiers (after 1391), included a refutation of Islam in a Hebrew work against Christianity and Islam. He did not know Arabic, and based his notes on translations from Islamic sources.

It is remarkable that Jews wrote against Christianity in Christian lands,

not prove the truth of a claim. A student of history will observe many cases wherein an individual, even a slave, revolting single-handedly, will enjoy success, and attract thousands of followers. . . . How, when the dominion of idol-worshippers and fire-worshippers continued for thousands of years in numberless countries throughout the world, can a multitude of followers be proof of a claim?

Further Muslim arguments are adduced with the conclusion

. . . This is an intuitive approach that may not be open to verification by those who reject it because they themselves do not feel that kind of intuition.

The chapter on Judaism consists of a summary of biblical history and Jewish beliefs (unity of deity; 613 precepts; reward and punishment—though these are not quite explicit; immortality of the soul; denial of abrogation) followed by a series of seven objections and rebuttals.

The positive formulations of this chapter are mostly borrowings from Jehuda Hallewi's *al-Khazarī* and Maimonides' *Guide*, while most of the objections consist of quotations or summaries from Samau'al al-Maghribī. This offers an able review of the whole range of medieval Islamic-Judaic controversy.

OBJECTIONS

1) As a result of the catastrophes that befell the Hebrews, their transmission (*tawātur*) is unreliable.

2) The transmission of the Torah was uncertain. Ezra shaped the Torah.

REPLIES

a) The Persians defeated by Byzantium; earlier, the Greeks had destroyed the Persians, Arabia had been invaded by Ethiopians. Yet each people preserved some records and a memory of events.
b) Not all the Hebrews were in Jerusalem, and not all who were in that city were slain.

The punctiliousness and meticulousness of the Jews about the scriptural text is well known. They have used the Torah as a law-book; scriptures are much quoted in liturgy. The differences between the Hebrew text, and the text used by the Christians are trivial, and result from the fact that the Christians had to resort to translations.
The variant Koran readings (of the oldest Koran transmitters, or those based

despite their harsh social climate, but refrained from writing against Islam in Islamic lands with their more favorable social climate. Partly, presumably, this depended on the fact that in the Jewish-Christian controversy there was a common, if contested, ground: the Scriptures; while this was lacking in debates with Muslims who could never decide whether they accepted the Scriptures or not, and who, as a rule, simply lacked scriptural knowledge.

Another point to consider is that in Christian lands the Jews used Hebrew as their literary tongue while the wide use of Arabic, by the Jews from Spain to Iraq, urged caution.

Above all, the low rate of direct Islamic challenge seems to have had its impact in minimizing direct Jewish reaction.

The more remarkable is the treatise by Ibn Kammūna who wrote in Arabic in Baghdad in 1280, under the rule of the then still non-Muslim Mongols. His *Examination of the Three Faiths* is a dispassionate inquiry into religion in general, followed by chapters on the monotheistic faiths; two-thirds of the book are devoted to a discussion of Islam, and especially of its prophet. The cumulative impression one gets of Islam and Muhammad is hardly favorable. The exposition operates from *bona fide* Islamic texts. The general though subdued tenor is: if there is revelation, the Jews' claim to having preserved it is good.²²

The *Examination (Tanqīh)* was reviewed before a Friday audience in a mosque, four years after the writing of the tract. The angry mob sought to kill the author who had to be carried out of town hidden in a trunk.

His objectivity moved a Christian opponent to say that Christians should pray for the Jewish philosopher who made the attempt to present the Christian case properly, and who even added favorable arguments where Christian sources had failed to do so.

Ibn Kammūna writes:

Thus it becomes clear that there is no proof that Muhammad attained perfection or the ability to perfect others, as claimed . . . nor that the world turned (since Muhammad) from falsehood to truth, from lie to veracity, from darkness to light, and so on. Yet precisely this has been the subject of dispute.

That is why, to this day we never see anyone become a convert to Islam unless in terror, or in quest of power, or to avoid heavy taxation, or to escape humiliation, or if taken prisoner, or because of infatuation with a Muslim woman, or for some similar reason. Nor do we see a respected, wealthy, and pious non-Muslim well versed in both his faith and that of Islam, going over to the Islamic faith without some of the aforementioned or similar motives.
A multitude of followers and the diffusion of a cause in many lands do

on the unvocalized text) show far greater differences.

The Jews had prophets and sages who confirmed the Law. Jesus followed and confirmed it.

Ezra was a pious guardian of the Law.

3) Anthropomorphism, unworthy passages in the scripture.

4) Strange and pointless stories (Lot, Tamar, numerous names of places and persons; Moses writing about his own death).

The second commandment (against images) is the best retort. Human language and human notions sometimes create an undesirable impression.

a) Conventions change with the times.

b) If the sense of a passage is not clear to us, it does not follow that it has no sense.

c) Some data were included in order to preclude later doubts.

d) The main purpose was to eliminate the Sabian element of belief and worship (this follows Maimonides) i.e., the belief in the power of celestial bodies and of magic, and to do this gradually—by centering belief and worship on one God, one sanctuary, with one priestly caste for worship (though prayer and supplication could be offered anywhere, by anybody), and by fostering gentleness and patience.

e) Moses may have used the past tense metaphorically. But possibly it was Joshua who wrote about his master's death.

5) Absence of the tenet of reward and punishment.

The Hebrews suffered not from lack of belief in reward and punishment but from beliefs that connected success and prosperity with the worship of planets. Scripture reflects the effort to combat this particular disease of the soul.

6) Why is the Jewish claim to the prophethood of the prophets (especially Moses) true?

There are various theories of prophethood. Divine speech heard by an entire community is known only in this instance (Hallelu). The Jews posit conditions and find that only Moses and the other Hebrew prophets met them (Maimonides).

7) Re abrogation and the Jews' denial thereof.

A series of remarks based on Maimonides.

Jesus adhered to the precepts of the Torah to the end. So did his disciples. Only much later did Paul stop them from complying with those precepts. Gospel passages (Matt. 5:17-19) indicate the Jews' belief in requital after death. Jesus said: I did not come to destroy the law of Moses, etc. (ib. :5:17).

The Muslims are also bound by the Torah because the Koran recognizes Moses and the other prophets, their miracles and scriptures. It also refers to the Jews' belief in reward and chastisement in the hereafter [2:105 (111); 2:74(80); 87:16-19]. The Koran objects [4:48(46); 2:73(79)] to the writings of some Jews but this is no allusion to the Torah. "There are, no doubt, some Jews who relate false traditions, just as there are some such Muslims."

Some Muslims interpret the words in the Torah on the law's perpetual validity to mean *for a long time to come*; for example, it says in the Torah about a Hebrew servant: Six years he shall serve and in the seventh year, he shall be freed, and if he refuses liberation, let his ear be pierced and let him serve forever. The text meant that he should serve up to fifty years, as stated in another passage.

The Jews say: we do not rely on mere words about the perpetual validity of the scripture, nor do we deny that these words may be used metaphorically in another passage, but we say that we know conclusively from the words on the perpetual validity and their parallels in the Torah and the prophetic books, and from the words of the carriers of the tradition of the faith, that Moses professed the perpetuity of his law, just as your own knowledge that your law will not be abrogated stems not only from mere scriptural proofs that are not conducive to certainty.

The Muslims answer them thus: If this were so, everybody who had contact with you would know that; yet the Christians, despite their vast numbers and the fact that they have read your books, do not know it. Indeed, since it became known as a tenet of the religion of Muhammad that Islam would not be abrogated, a Muslim knows that, and so does a non-Muslim who had contact with Muslims.

The Jews may say: if the contacts of non-Jews with us were as close as our contacts with Muslims, this necessarily would be known concerning our faith. But the contact of Muslims with Jews does not necessitate a Muslim inquiry into what the Jews assert, especially since the Jews are prevented from declaring their creed, and their books are in a tongue the Muslims do not understand. The contact of a minority with a majority affects the majority and the minority differently. Thus, when a linguistic minority is in contact with a linguistic majority, the minority learns the language of the majority whilst the majority does not learn the language of the minority or, at best, learns it much later. Moreover, despite numerous contacts of the bulk of the Jews with the Muslims, many Jews still do not know the basic Islamic tenets known by the rank and file Muslims, let alone the elite. It is even more natural that a similar situation should obtain

on the Muslim side, or, at the very least, that both sides should be equal [in mutual ignorance].

We thus come to the conclusion that the special *polemical literature* of Islam against Jews and Judaism is poor and insubstantial, and that the Jewish retort—attack or counterattack—in the form of special tracts is hardly existent.

For Muslims, Jews and Judaism were an unimportant subject.

For Jews, Islam was a subject of considerable importance, not so much in and for public debate but rather in numerous, scattered remarks, references, and allusions intended, on the one hand, to weaken known Islamic arguments and objections against Jewish texts, beliefs and customs, and on the other hand, to expose to opprobrium matters felt to be weak points of Islam. A great mass of these references in prayers, poems, exegesis, theology and philosophy was surveyed by Steinschneider.

It was widely known that certain Scriptural passages were adduced by Muslims as 'annunciations' of Muhammad's activity. It was natural to include refutations of the Muslim assertion in the discussion of such passages, e.g., the benediction of Ishmael (Gen. 16:11-12; 17:20), mention of the sojourn of Ishmael in Paran (which Muslims identify with Mecca; Gen. 21:21).

The philosophic-theological construction on prophethood as developed in Islam exercised a strong influence in Jewish circles. Maimonides formulates his thesis on the qualities of the prophet in a manner bound to disqualify Muhammad and to crown Moses as the one and only victorious contestant. The Jewish prayerbook includes an abbreviation of Maimonides' thirteen principals of the faith; a glance at these shows clearly that they were formulated with a view to confrontation with and refutation of Muslim tenets.

Maimonides also gave expression to the view that both Christianity and Islam represented stages in the development of the human spirit in its march toward the ultimate religious truth of Judaism.

It can be said that the Arabic writings of the Jews on religious philosophy from Saadya to Maimonides, while reflecting Islamic atmosphere and influence, represent to some extent Jewish polemics against Islamic beliefs, notions, institutions. But they are not works of a polemic literature in the proper sense of the term. To the extent, however, that they include an element of polemics, it can be said that this polemic, on the Jewish side, was on a refined level.

The Jewish thinkers sought to clarify, interpret, harmonize and rationalize the stock of Beliefs and Opinions, to present the case of the humbled faith, to instruct the guidable perplexed.

They were also impelled by the position of their people, by the keen

resentment felt from time to time against the institutionalized humiliation (*dull*) imposed and/or practiced by the dominant faith and its followers.

Hallewi puts his thoughts in the form of a dialogue with a king who is led step by step to Judaism; the humbled faith is not only true but seeks to find an exit from being the humbled faith, an exit from exile.

Maimonides in his *Epistle to Yemen* gave an exquisite substitute for a polemical treatise for use among a wider public.²³

These are hard times. "The hearts of some people have turned away . . . beliefs are weakened, while others have not lost faith . . ." We must remember "that ours is the true and authentic divine religion, revealed to us through Moses," as an act of divine grace. This made us unique by divine laws and precepts. Hence—the assaults upon us. Some use brute force, others—argument and controversy. Finally, Christianity and Islam try to combine the two methods.

Our religion differs as much from other religions, for which there are alleged resemblances, as a living man endowed with the faculty of reason is unlike a statue which is ever so well carved out of marble, wood, bronze or silver.

What makes our lore and faith specific and unique, is the deeper meaning to be derived from Scripture. It leads us, each and all, on the road of twofold perfection: good life and intellectual objectives.

Our tribulations put us to the test, generation after generation. We must persist in our loyalty. The law of Sinai must be upheld. It must be the basis of the education of the young so that they be not lured by temptation.

In your letter you mention that the apostate has spurred on a number of people to believe that several verses in Scripture allude to the Madman, such as "*himeod meod*" (Gen. 17:20); "He shined forth from Mount Paran" (Deut. 33:2); "A prophet from the midst of you" (Deut. 18:15); and the promise to Ishmael, "I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17:20). These arguments have been rehearsed so often that they have become nauseating. It is not enough to declare that they are altogether feeble; nay, to cite as proofs these verses is ridiculous and absurd in the extreme. For these are not matters that can confuse the minds of anyone. Neither the untutored multitude nor the apostates themselves who delude others with them, believe in them or entertain any illusions about them. Their purpose in citing these verses is to win favor in the eyes of the Gentiles by demonstrating that they believe the statement of the Koran that Mohammed was mentioned in the Torah. But the Muslims themselves put no faith in their arguments, they neither accept nor cite them, because they are manifestly so fallacious. Inasmuch as the Muslims could not find a single proof in the entire Bible nor a reference or possible allusion to their prophet which

they could utilize, they were compelled to accuse us saying, "You have altered the text of the Torah, and expunged every trace of the name of Mohammed therefrom." They could find nothing stronger than this ignominious argument the falsity of which is easily demonstrated to one and all by the following facts. First, Scripture was transplanted into Syriac, Greek, Persian, and Latin hundreds of years before the appearance of Mohammed. Second, there is a uniform tradition as to the text of the Bible both in the East and the West, with the result that no differences in the text exist at all, not even in the vocalization, for they are all correct. Nor do any differences affecting the meaning exist. The motive for their accusation lies, therefore, in the absence of any allusion to Mohammed in the Torah. . . . Remember, my co-religionists, that on account of the vast number of our sins, God has hurled us into the midst of this people, the Arabs, who have persecuted us severely and passed baneful and discriminatory legislation against us, as Scripture has forewarned us, "Our enemies themselves shall judge us" (Deuteronomy 32:31). Never did a nation molest, degrade, debase and hate us as much as they. Therefore, when David, of blessed memory, inspired by the holy spirit, envisaged the future tribulations of Israel, he bewailed and lamented their lot only in the Kingdom of Ishmael, and prayed in their behalf, for their deliverance, as is implied in the verse, "Woe is me, that I sojourn with Meshech, that I dwell beside the tents of Kedar." (Psalms 120:5). Note the distinction between Kedar and the children of Ishmael, for the Madman and imbecile is of the lineage of the children of Kedar as they readily admit. Daniel alludes only to our humiliation and degradation "like the dust in threshing" suffered at the hands of the Arabs, may they speedily be vanquished, when he says, "And some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them." (8:10). Although we were dishonored by them beyond human endurance, and had to put up with their fabrications, yet we behaved like him who is depicted by the inspired writer, "But I am as a deaf man, I hear not, and I am as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth." (Psalms 38:14). Similarly our sages instructed us to bear the prevarications and preposterousness of Ishmael in silence. They found a cryptic allusion for this attitude in the names of his sons "Mishma, Dumah, and Massa" (Genesis 25:14), which was interpreted to mean, "Listen, be silent, and endure." (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, ad locum). We have acquiesced, both old and young, to inure ourselves to humiliation, as Isaiah instructed us "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." (50:6). All this notwithstanding, we do not escape this continued maltreatment which well nigh crushes us. No matter how much we suffer and elect to remain at peace with them, they stir up strife and sedition, as David predicted, "I am all peace, but when I speak, they are for war." (Psalms 120:7).

This epistle was to be read in public and in private. But . . .

Take adequate precautions lest its contents be divulged to the Gentiles by an evil person and mishap overtake us (God spare us therefrom). When

I began writing this letter I had some misgivings about it, but they were overruled by my conviction that the public welfare takes precedence over one's personal safety. Moreover, I am sending it to a personage such as you, "and the secret of the Lord may be entrusted to those who fear Him" (Ps. 25:14). Our sages, the successors of the prophets, assured us that persons engaged in a religious mission will meet with no disaster (Pesahim 8b). What more important religious mission is there than this. Peace be to all Israel. Amen.²⁴

Medieval controversies had their part in shaking the beliefs of some individuals, contributing to their self-searching and doubt, and to the growth of relativism; far offener, however, they served, strengthened, and increased bigotry and suffering.

Rare were the instances of releasing, through controversy, positive religious emotions and attitudes.²⁵ Harshness and intolerance, once awakened, ran rampant against the outsider and the dissident true believer. In the course of defending the faith, the defender often lost either his faith or his soul. A Samau'al lost both.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations:

- GS Ignaz Goldziher, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I-V, Hildesheim, 1967-1970
- JA Journal Asiatique
- JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society
- JQR Jewish Quarterly Review
- MGWJ Monatschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
- PAAJR Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research
- REI Revue des Études Islamiques
- REJ Revue des Études Juives
- RSO Rivista degli Studi Orientali
- ZDMG Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

FOOTNOTES

1. S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd Ed., Vols. 3,4,5,8, Philadelphia, 1957-58. S. D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, New York, 1955, Ch. 6. In *A Mediterranean Society* (Vols. I, II, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1967-71), Goitein presents a vast panorama of the life of Jewry in medieval Islamic lands.
 2. Pointed out by Steinschneider, *Pol. Lit.*, p. 341 f.
 3. On Biruni, cf. A. Jeffery, "Al-Biruni's Contribution to Comparative Religion," in *Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta, 1951; and M. Schreiner, "Les Juifs dans Al-Beruni," in *REJ*, Vol. 12 (1886). On Bakillani see bibliography on X. century.
 4. Thus, the vast theological encyclopedia by 'Abd al-Jabbār (10th century) discusses (Vol. 5) Christianity and dualism but ignores Judaism.
 5. The Khazar rulers embraced Judaism. There is a report of a destruction of mosques by the Khazars in revenge for anti-Jewish acts in the Caliphate. This incident reflected a temporary tension. The Jews did not identify with the Khazars nor were they identified with them in the Islamic area. For that matter, hardly anything is known of actual contacts between Jews and Khazars.
 6. The 10th century bibliography by Ibn al-Nadīm mentions writings directed against Jews by five authors. None of these seems to have been preserved.
 7. Tor Andrae writes in *Der Ursprung des Islam und das Christentum*, Upsala, 1926, p. 198 f., "I should also like to draw attention here to the fact that even Muhammad's polemics against the Jews goes back to a great extent to arguments which were used earlier in the struggle of the Church against the Jews." Thus, the view that the restrictive laws (e.g., the dietary rules) were a kind of punishment for the Jews' disobedience was widely held by Syriac-writing theologians. The latter also accused the Jews of having tampered with the Scriptures with the result that differences arose between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, and rejected the claim of the Jews that they were God's chosen people.
- "Biblical testimonies," collections of passages to press points under discussion were a Christian practice.
- Antiquity's Jew-baiting is discussed in I. Heinemann's article in the Pauly-Wissowa Encyclopaedia of Classical Antiquity, Supplement 5, pp. 3-43; V. Tcherikover, *The Jews in the Greco-Roman World*, Philadelphia 1959, p. 357

- ff.; Yochanan Lewy, *'Olamot Nifgashim*, Jerusalem, 1960, pp. 79-196. Christian anti-Jewish literature in Arabic has not yet been surveyed. Stein-schneider listed a dozen works in this category, apart from those works which refute both Judaism and Islam. Cf. now G. Vajda in *Bulletin #15* of the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, Paris, 1969.
- Ibn Kutayba's biblical data have been discussed by C. Brockelmann in *Beitraege zur Assyriologie*; G. Vajda in *REJ*, 1935, pp. 68-80; G. Lecomte in *Arabica*, 1958; *id. Ibn Qutayba*, Damascus, 1965, pp. 192 ff.
- The book by 'Alī al-Tabarī was published by A. Mingana, London, 1923, and translated by him as *The Book of Religion and Empire*, London, 1922. A refutation of the Christians by this author was published in the *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, Beirut, 1939.
8. Bernard Lewis, "The Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam" in *Studia Islamica*, 1953, p. 43:
 . . . the recurring theme of a plot to undermine Islam from within in favor of some other faith. This is usually connected with some more or less fabulous figure, of superlative malignity and perversity, who functions as *diabolus ex machina*, to explain dissension and heresy in the Islamic community.
 The insidious Jewish plot against Islam figures in Arabic writings down to the present.
 9. P. Kraus, *Beitraege*, pp. 111 f.
 Here we come across ideas like these:
 [Man learns certain things] just as the goose learns swimming, without any instruction from any of your masters.
 That is, revelation and prophet are superfluous.
 Were it not for the religious conflicts among men, contentions and warfare and tribulations would subside.
 10. R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry*, (Cambridge, 1921), p. 167. The opposition to Islam on religious grounds had its *Islamic* counterpart in objections to the claims to hegemony of Arabs and Arabic, the literary Shu'ūbiya movement. In the East the Shu'ūbiya was largely a discussion of the merits of Persian cavaliers versus Arab cameleers. But in Spain an Ibn Garcia argues the non-Arabs are wise, mighty in knowledge, endowed with insight into natural philosophy and into the sciences of exact logic, such as the students of astronomy, music, and the experts in arithmetic and geometry. They have priority in analytics and poetics, ability in the sciences of religious ordinances and natural laws. . . .
The Shu'ūbiyya in al-Andalus, etc. by James T. Monroe, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1970, p. 27.
 11. J. Goldziher, *REJ*, Vol. 47 (GS IV, pp. 411-15).
 12. These people are further divided into two groups. One of them says: If this be so, a man should adhere to the faith in which he grew up, into which he was born, for that is the faith God surely chose for him from his very creation, from his very childhood, and it is the one God set for him. He therefore should not be permitted to abandon what the Lord has set for him and started him upon, whatever faith it be. Such was the opinion of Isma'il ibn al-Qarrad. He used to say: Whoever goeth over from one faith to another is a shameless trickster in religious matters, in refusing to worship God Almighty in that faith. He used to speak of a universal religion, i.e. that no man should remain without a religion to profess, as we mentioned above.
 Another group said: A man's adherence to the religion of his father and grand-

father or lord or neighbor is neither an excuse for him nor an argument for that religion. But every man should accept those doctrines which all the religions as well as all thinking men in general have agreed to consider right and commendable. Then he will not kill anybody, or fornicate, or commit sodomy, or have a desire to do so, or attempt to encroach upon another man's household, or steal, rob, oppress, tyrannize, betray, cheat, deceive, slander, strike, or beat anybody, or be arrogant. But he will be kind to his fellow-men, charitable, loyal, trustworthy; and he will help him who is wronged. [He will put himself into the category of all men, and will treat a person only as he himself would like to be treated]. This is indubitably right, for in this all the faiths agree. Such a man will abstain from passing judgment on what they disagree about. Only this (matter of agreement) is obligatory for in other matters we cannot be fully certain of anything. Cf. M. Perlmann, *Ibn Ḥazm on the Equivalence of Proofs*.

13. Salmon b. Yeruham on Eccl. VII: 16.
 14. Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, (New York 1964; German: Munich 1933) pp. 47-60.
 G. Vajda in an article in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1973 pp. 159-60,

writes:

Le kalām a rempli pendant plusieurs siècles une fonction de catalyseur dans la pensée religieuse du judaïsme, en ce qu'il l'a aidée à répondre aux exigences intellectuelles suscitées par la confrontation inéluçable avec les courants d'idées de l'extérieur; l'apologie défensive et la polémique ont, de plus, contribué, dans le judaïsme comme dans l'Islam, à développer certaines virtualités incluses dans la foi, voire à l'approfondissement et à l'affinement des croyances, par-delà l'adhésion à la lettre du message révélé.

15. See bibliography on Ibn Ḥazm.
 15a. Again, let us remember: this set of arguments is not of Ibn Ḥazm's making. He had many sources before him in the scholarly presentations and special treatises lost to us. For a remnant of an older work, of the IXth century, see J. Van Ess, *Frühe mit'azilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971 (pp. 63-5 Ar. 74-5).
 16. See bibliography on Samau'al.
 17. Cf. Josephus, *Against Apion*, II, 125-135, tr. Thackeray.
 A clear proof . . . that our laws are unjust and our religious ceremonies erroneous is that we are not masters of an empire, but rather the slaves, first of one nation, then of another, and that calamity has more than once befallen our city. . . . [We] have not produced any geniuses, for example, in arts and crafts, or eminent sages.
 17a. Samau'al touches here on the subject of the medieval Jewish legend concerning Muhammad and the rise of Islam. Just as the contact with Christianity and the wonderment about its origins and connection with Judaism gave rise to a popular legend (Cf. S. Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach den jüdischen Quellen*, Berlin, 1902), so the wonderment about the rise of Islam and its claim to supersede the older faiths gave rise among Jews (and Christians) to a legend cycle. Cf. J. Mann in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, v. 12-13; M. Schwabe in *Tarbiz*, v. 2; D. Z. Baneth, *ib. v. 3*; J. Leveen in *JQR* N.S. V. 16-17.
 Another point is that there were Jews who were ready to admit that Muhammad had been a prophet; but they maintained he had been sent to the Arabs, and that his law does not apply to the Jews. This view is imputed to some sectarians of the 8th century.
 The following is a reflection of this view. It shows how the argument was

'fortified' by recourse to the Islamic scripture. The excerpt is from *Bustān al-ukūl* by a Yemenite contemporary of Maimonides (*The Garden of Wisdom*, ed. by D. Levine, New York, 1908, p. 108 f.)

. . . the Creator—magnified be His praise!—knows the ruin of this world and the abode of the future world. He therefore sends prophets in every age and period that they might urge the creatures to serve Him and do the good, and that they might be a road-guide to righteousness. . . . Not one people remained without a law, for all of them are from one Lord and unto Him they all return. All call unto Him, all turn their faces unto Him. . . .

When we argue with non-Jewish disputants in regard to the nullification of our Law, we give them a silencing reply: "What do you say about the Law received by Moses al Kalim? What distinguishes it, ignorance or wisdom?" They must perforce answer not "ignorance" but "wisdom." This answer suffices, for wisdom is never altered, changed, abrogated or replaced by something else. God forbid that He should give a command at the hands of a prophet with signs, proofs, miracles and extraordinary manifestations in the heavens, and then should set about to abrogate and annul it. But it is His way to continually command whom He wishes and send whom He wishes to whomsoever He wishes, since all the worlds are His possessions and in His grasp. A proof that He sends a prophet to every people according to their language is found in this passage of the Koran, "We sent a prophet only according to the language of his people." Consequently had He sent a prophet to us, he would have surely been of our language, and again, had he been for us why did God say to him, "Lo, thou art one of the apostles sent to warn a people whose fathers I have not warned." (Sura XIV). He meant the people who served al-Lat and al-Uzzah. As for us, behold our fathers were not without warnings throughout an extended period, and likewise prophets did not fail them. But Muhammad's message was to a people whose fathers had not been warned and who had no Divine Law through which to be led aright, therefore he directed them to his law since they were in need of it. And as for other people they had something to lead them aright. It is not proper to contradict those who are of another religion since their irreligion and their punishment are not our concern but that of the Praised and Exalted One.

This line of argument forced Muslim theologians and legislators to define more strictly the conditions of adherence to Islam. The formula was: I testify that there is only one God and Muhammad is His messenger. But if a Jew or Christian can declare that there is only one God and Muhammad is his messenger, without considering himself a Muslim, then evidently some modification was due. The acceptance of Muhammad's mission by a Jew could be put, as we see, on a basis of relativism as a rule of the divine wise pedagogy in the education of the human race. This idea was quite widespread. In the Xth century *Epistles of the Sincere Brethren*, we find (Egyptian edition, Vol. IV, p. 22) that revelation works "in accordance with time, place, nature and temper," and that human knowledge of God develops through overcoming older wrong ideas (p. 58 end). [See S. Pines, "Nathanel Ben Al-Fayyumi et la théologie Ismaélienne," *Bulletin des études historiques juives*, I (Cairo, 1946), pp. 5-22.—S.D.G.]

18. Spinoza, in Ch. 8 of the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, declared that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, and that probably Ezra authored the historical books of the Bible. Spinoza stated that he found the idea of non-

Mosaic authorship in the XIIIth century commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra. The son of the commentator, Isaac Ibn Ezra, was in the same circle to which Samau'al belonged. Did the critical notions of the father reach Samau'al through the son?

Ibn Hazm propounds Ezra's authorship without any proof. It looks as if he took over the idea from somebody. Was it a radical critic among the Jews or the Christians? Or some book carrying the notion carefully developed in the III century by the neo-platonist Porphyry, and repeated by Julian the Apostate in the IV century? [cf. E. Stein *Attisamenliche Bibelritik in der späthellenistischen Literatur* (Lwów 1935); repr. from *Collectanea Theologica*, Societatis Theologorum Polonorum, v. XVI; esp. p. 28, 43].

But there is this gap between the III-IV century mention of the theory of Ezra's role in the formation of the Bible, and Ibn Hazm's assertion to the same effect in the XI century. Where is the missing link of transmission?

The poet Moshe Ibn Ezra, also a contemporary of Abraham Ibn Ezra, wrote in his volume on poetics (towards the end of Chapter 5; p. 80 in B. Z. Halper's Hebrew translation) about an objectionable group among Jewish literati as follows

Whosoever takes sides with this group in earnest and approvingly shares with them their vile substance and debased form. Of the like of them the wise (Solomon) said:

They that forsake the law praise the wicked,
But such as keep the law contend with them
(Prov. 28:4)

They are a stumbling block, silly and frivolous, of even more flimsy ideas and weaker discernment than the aforementioned group. They desecrated (*dannasat*) the divine scripture with abuse of the men (of the biblical persons?) and the disclosure of their alleged faults (*Kashif qur'ānīhim bisomages?*) and the disclosure of their alleged faults (*Kashif qur'ānīhim bisomages?*). They sullied its (the scripture's) venerable verses by blaming the innocent and discussing their imputed evils.

M. Schreiner adduced this passage in the original Arabic (*REJ*, 1891, p. 112), and suggested that it refers to people like Hiwi Ha-Balkhi, criticizing the Scriptures, especially under the impact of Muslim polemics. (Halper did not agree with this interpretation.)

19. Cf. bibliography.

20. Cf. bibliography.

21. Not preserved. But a section of his major work is devoted to objections to Islam. Cf. *Kitāb al-amwār wal-marāqib* by Ya'qūb al-Qirjāsānī, ed. by Leon Nemoy, Vol. II (New York, 1940) pp. 292-301. Israel Friedlaender published it in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, Vol. 26, pp. 93-110.

22. Cf. bibliography.

23. Tr. by Boaz Cohen, in the edition by A. S. Halkin (New York, 1952).

24. The polemics is certainly not confined to cognitive cerebration but carries emotional stirrings. Even points of information are enveloped with emotion. Thus we see that Raḳīlī is defiantly protecting Hagar from the Jewish assertion that she was a concubine of the patriarch; nay she was an Egyptian princess, etc. The Jews felt bitter that the progeny of the slave-concubine was lordling it over the children of the Lady Sarah. Maimonides expresses the emotional conflict created by the Muslim's insistence on *Dull*, humiliation. Cf. G. von Grunbebaum's remarks in *Viator* II (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), pp. 365-72.

A. Th. Khoury points out in *Les Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam* (Louvain-

Paris 1969), pp. 314-18, that the Christian literature surveyed by him also knows a legend concerning Muhammad which sought to explain somehow the victorious rise of the new faith, while denouncing it as idolatry in disguise, work of a false prophet and false scripture, daring to attack in polemics the refined church theology. Christian authors who lived among Muslims were less vehement than those who lived outside the pale of Islam. But beyond doctrinal analysis and theological discussion there was the feeling of a conflict of peoples and cultures: the Arabian barbarian versus the Byzantines as heirs to the Greeks. That the Arab armies were triumphant over the Christian forces of Byzantium only sharpened these emotions. The Christian theologians sought to understand the decrees of Providence, and pored over Scriptures, the works of the Church fathers and church history. They bitterly resented the Muslim argument from victory. Thus seared and angry, doubly wounded by the defeat of their faith and nation, they still sought to recoup their losses through theological argument in the name of reason and by logical methods.

25. A rare case of positive contact which may have started via polemics is that related about the XIIIth century mystic Ibn Hūd. Cf. I. Goldziher in *JQR*, Vol. VI (1894), pp. 218-20 (*G.S.* Vol. III, pp. 319-21).

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- C = CONVERT
 J = JEWISH AUTHOR
 [] = NOT PRESERVED

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INVOLVEMENT IN GENIZA RESEARCH

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This summary shows how a scholar becomes involved in a field of research and tries to master it.

1. Geniza Research—General

1.1 Geniza research, that is, the study of the writings originally found in the so-called Cairo Geniza, is not an autonomous scientific discipline, but an auxiliary branch of Judaic studies. A student of talmudic literature, or of medieval Hebrew poetry, or of Jewish social history, will find abundant material and much inspiration in this treasure trove of manuscripts, but he will be able to approach it successfully only after having had appropriate preparation in his own field of interest. There are, however, many problems, mostly of a technical nature, common to all studies using the Geniza as a source. Therefore, Geniza research is as legitimate an independent auxiliary scientific discipline as Greek papyrology or the corresponding branch of Arabic studies.

1.2 E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri, An Introduction*, Princeton, 1968, contains six chapters on papyri in general, one on literary, and one on documentary papyri. Adolf Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri*, Cairo, 1952, deals in its first part with the technical aspects of papyrology and in its second with medieval life and history as illustrated by Arabic papyri. The literary papyri are often referred to, but not specifically treated since they were edited by other authors.

Note: The writings of the Geniza, with few exceptions, originated in the tenth century and later. Therefore they are written on paper, some also on parchment and other materials, but only a few fragments on papyrus have survived in it.