

Nethanel ibn Fayyūmī, *Garden of Intellectuals*

He therefore sends prophets in every age and period that they might urge the creatures to serve Him and do good, and that they might be a road-guide to righteousness. [...] It is incumbent, then, upon every people to be led aright by what has been communicated to them through revelation and to emulate their prophets, their leaders and their regents. 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, and every pious soul is translated to Him. [...] But Muḥammad's message was to a people whose fathers had not been warned and who had no Divine Law through which to be led aright.<sup>1</sup>

Dā'ud ibn Marwān al-Muḥammas, the ninth-century author of the first Jewish theological work, *Twenty Chapters (Ishrūn maqāla)*.

Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* II.40:

The way of putting this [the claim of someone to prophetic revelation] to the test is to consider the perfection of that individual, carefully to examine his actions, and to study his way of life. The strongest of the indications you should pay attention to is constituted by his renunciation of, and contempt for, the bodily pleasures, for this is the first of the degrees of the people of science, and all the more, of the prophets. In particular this holds good with regard to the sense that is a disgrace to us – as Aristotle has set forth – and especially in what belongs to it with regard to the foulness of copulation

*Epistle to Yemen*

All of these men [Jesus and Muḥammad] purposed to place their teachings on the same level with our divine religion. But only a simpleton who lacks knowledge of both would liken divine institutions to human practices. 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, silver or gold [...]. Likewise a person ignorant of the secret meaning of Scripture and the deeper significance of the Law, would be led to believe that our religion has something in common with other if he makes a comparison

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<sup>1</sup> Nathanael Ibn al-Fayyūmī, *The Garden of Wisdom*, pp. 108–9 (Eng.), pp. 69–70 (Arab.).

between the two [...] The tenets of the other religions which resemble those of Scripture have no deeper meaning, but are superficial imitations, copied from and patterned after it.<sup>2</sup>

Jehuda ha-Levi, *Sefer Kuzari* (4:23)

These religious communities [the Christians and the Muslims,] are only a preparation and prelude to the awaited *Messiah*, who is the fruit [of this process]. All of them will come to be his fruit when they acknowledge him, and the tree will also become one.’

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<sup>2</sup> *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen*, iv. The same idea of seeing in Christianity and Islam only unsuccessful ‘imitations’ (*tashbīhāt*) of Judaism was expressed before Maimonides by Jehuda ha-Levi in *Kuzari*, 3:8–9; 2:30–32.