ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC ASPECTS IN JUDEO-ARABIC CULTURE

edited by

BENJAMIN H. HARY
AND
HAGGAI BEN-SHAMMAI

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in Judeo-Arabic Culture

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LE JUDAÏSME MÉDIÉVAL

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TOME XXXIII

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INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Hary and Haggai Ben-Shammai

In spring 1984, several scholars with a special interest in Judeo-Arabic texts met in Chicago at the invitation of Professor Norman Golb. During the course of that conference, it became apparent that there was a real need for a society dedicated to the study of Judeo-Arabic language, literature, and culture. When the group now augmented met again in Jerusalem the following year, the society was firmly established. Henceforth, biennial conferences would be convened in Israel, Europe and North America. During the past twenty-one years, the members of the society have assembled twelve times and the membership rose from perhaps a score to upwards of two hundred. As the society has matured, so has the field of Judeo-Arabic studies as a whole. The publication of numerous articles, monographs, and text editions by the members attests to the fascination exerted by this interdisciplinary enterprise. A cursory glance at the published conference proceedings from Chicago, Jerusalem, Cambridge, Tel Aviv, Bar-Ilan and some other volumes which will soon go to press, will confirm the growth of the subject. Every year, new students are attracted to the old leaves, notably to those of the Geniza, while the vast manuscript treasures of St. Petersburg,

which can now be consulted in Jerusalem, suggest fresh avenues of research. Several new initiatives have been inaugurated by the Hebrew University and the Ben-Zvi Institute, and ongoing projects are conducted in Princeton, Cambridge and elsewhere. Much is still needed to be done in the area of Judeo-Arabic studies and its academic future holds great promise.

This volume represents selected, refereed papers from the ninth conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies held at Emory University, Atlanta, in 1999. At that conference some losses were sorely felt. The late Professors Hava Lazarus-Yafeh and Yedida Kalfon Stillman each contributed significantly to her chosen area of specialization, while enriching the intellectual and cultural worlds she inhabited. Moving tributes have been offered during that conference by those who knew and loved them. We mourn their passing; may their memories be blessed.

Time, too, brings its celebrations: At the conference we were delighted to mark the eightieth birthday of our Emeritus President, Professor Joshua Blau, *yibbadel le-hayyim arukkim*. A prominent founder of Judeo-Arabic philology and linguistics, Professor Blau has set the tone at our meetings from the beginning, exacting standards coupled with courtesy and gentle humor.

The title of this volume, *Esoteric and Exoteric Aspects in Judeo-Arabic Culture* highlights the themes running through many of the conference papers: the diversity and vitality of Judeo-Arabic culture. The volume represents the interdisciplinary nature of the field. There are articles in Jewish thought, philosophy and mysticism, language and linguistics, religious studies, intellectual and social history, law, biblical exegesis, and more.

The volume opens with the notion of 'Philosophical Mysticism,' which is the phrase David Blumenthal has used to describe Maimonides' program for achieving the *summum bonum*. His paper discusses the Sage's idea of worship (*avodah*/ʿ*ibāda*) and its relation to knowledge and love of God. In the next paper in the volume Paul Fenton analyzes an unknown commentary on the Song of Songs. The text was copied (or composed?) by David b. Joshua Maimuni (ca. 1335–1415) and features the kind of Sufi terminology familiar from his oeuvre. In the following paper on the seventh treatise of Saadya's Book of Doctrines and Beliefs, Steven Harvey argues that the St. Petersburg recension is more consonant with the book's overall message than the Oxford text and contains the Ga'on's final views on resurrection.

In a couple of intriguing papers, Daniel Lasker and Diana Lobel both discuss Judah Halevi's views on the afterlife of the soul and eschatology. As Lasker observes, while the Book of the Kuzari treats neither subject in depth, it is possible to draw certain conclusions about the author's stance, which may be closer to the naturalistic position of Maimonides than is generally believed. Lobel investigates the elusive terms *amr ilāhī* and *ittiṣāl* ('connection' or 'union') with which Judah Halevi expressed the relationship between a transcendent God and human beings.

In the area of law, Gideon Libson discusses the interdependence of *halakhah* and Islamic law. He shows how the *geonim* dealt with the betrothal of minor daughters—a common practice among Jews living under Islam. The following paper in the volume, by Nahem Ilan, shows how Rabbi Israel Israeli (Toledo, 13th–14th c.) polemicized against kabbalistic teachings in his treatment of *kavvanah* ('intention in prayer').

Three articles on language appear in the volume: Benjamin Hary and María Ángeles Gallego deal with Judeo-Arabic (and Judeo-Spanish) glosses of biblical words in *Maqre Dardeqe* (1634). They analyze the glosses linguistically and arrive at the conclusion that the dialect employed by the *Maqre Dardeqe* users is of Maghrebi type, probably from a Sephardi Jewish community in North Africa. Geoffrey Khan describes several Karaite grammatical texts from the tenth century, situating them within the philological school of ʾAḇū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and ʾAbū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn Faraj. Finally, in the last paper on language, Haggai Ben-Shammai demonstrates that even Bible translations could be used to deliver pointed eschatological messages. His paper shows how Saadya may well have chosen a peculiar Arabic usage in order to draw parallels between Pharaoh, 'the arrogant oppressor' and the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir.

In a wide-ranging, synthetic paper, Menahem Ben-Sasson identifies three expressions of reaction to changes in the framework of Muslim empires. Furthermore, the paper suggests a new set of terms for understanding the Jewish responses to such events. Instead of the empires' aloofness and the rigid separation of the Jews from the majority Muslim society, one should speak of Jewish participation and involvement in events. Despite the limits and the restrictions by which the Jewish minority was bound, and the fact that it lacked any political independence, the Jews expressed their political goals in times of great changes in the Mediterranean, and were fully alert to the political events taking place, as well as to their ramifications for themselves.

The final presentation explores the law's role in shaping Judeo-Arabic society. Communal leadership was vested in

ancient institutions, such as the Exilarchate, whose authority was occasionally contested. Arnold Franklin examines the complex relationship between the Exilarchs and certain *nesiʾim* who reflect the informal patterns of loyalty that were characteristic of Islamic society in general.

The Editors
Israel, August 2005

PHILOSOPHIC MYSTICISM:
THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF MEDIEVAL JUDAISM

David R. Blumenthal
Emory University

Introduction

Messianism was not the issue, as Maimonides saw it. Aside from one possible allusion in a letter, Maimonides taught a sober, realistic view of the messianic era:[1] "Do not even think that, in the days of the messiah, so much as one of the customary ways of the universe will be abolished, or that any novelty will occur in the laws of creation. Rather, the universe will proceed according to its customary pattern." In fact, Maimonides went out of his way to make it clear that the messianic period was only a means to a larger end:[2]

> Because of this [doctrine of the world-to-come], all of Israel, its prophets and its sages, yearn for the days of the messiah so that they may be relieved of the burden of domination by others who do not allow them to occupy

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[1] *Mishne Torah (= MT),* Hilkhot Melakhim 12:1. On a possible allusion to immediate messianic expectation, see A. Halkin, *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen* (New York: 1952), xii–xiii.

[2] *MT,* Hilkhot Teshuva 9:2.

themselves with Torah and *miṣvōt* as one should; so that they may find tranquility and multiply the number of their sages in order to merit life in the world-to-come.... For the end of all reward and the ultimate good which has no end and no lack is life in the world-to-come. However, the days of the messiah are of this world, and the universe will proceed on its customary pattern, except that sovereignty will return to Israel. The early sages have already said, "There will be no difference between this world and the messianic time, except that Israel will not be subject to the nations."

Maimonides was also very clear that the "world-to-come" already exists:[3]

That the sages called it "the world-to-come" is not because it does not already exist and that this world will pass away and afterward will come the world-to-come – this is not so. Rather, it is already in existence, ongoing, as it says ... They only called it "the world-to-come" because that life comes to a person after life in this world in which we exist in a body and soul....

The telos of human existence, then, according to Maimonides, is not the messianic era but the world-to-come. What does one have to do to merit that? At the minimum, one must have proper praxis; that is, a Jew must observe the *halākhā*. To help Jews live a halakhic life and, therefore to enable them to fulfill their purpose within creation, Maimonides wrote his code of Jewish law, which encompasses the entire range of Jewish life, even its messianic dimensions. To merit a fuller place in the world-to-come, however, in Maimonides' view, one must also have proper gnosis; that is, one must have proper knowledge of God and God's creation. Further, this knowledge must be as rooted

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[3] *MT,* Hilkhot Teshuva 8:8.

as possible in logical proofs; it must be conviction, not just opinion.[4] Maimonides' philosophical corpus, which encompasses the entire range of human and biblical wisdom, was written to help Jews live an intellectually proper life and, therefore to enable them to fulfill their purpose within creation. This intellectual requirement for personal salvation was also adumbrated in his code of Jewish law.[5]

Was there nothing else? Were proper praxis and proper gnosis the telos of human existence? Were *halākhā* and *de'ā*[6] the whole purpose of Jewish life? Paul Fenton, has demonstrated amply that the descendants of Maimonides clearly understood their distinguished ancestor to have taught that there was an additional stage of meditative experience that served as a requirement for the world-to-come for the most advanced persons.[7] Elsewhere, I have shown that the Yemenite followers of Maimonides also understood from his teachings that there was an additional stage of philosophic mystical experience

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[4] On the difference between *'i'tiqād* and *'īmān,* see D. Blumenthal, "Croyance et attributs essentiels dans la théologie médiévale et moderne," *Revue des études juives (=REJ)* 152:3–4 (1993), 405–13; available also on my website.

[5] On *MT,* see I. Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (New Haven, 1980), reviewed by me in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 32 (1981), 108–12.

[6] And not *ḥokhmā*. See carefully, *MT,* Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah, at the very beginning. On the use of *de'ā* and *dā'at* for "intellect" (Ar. *'aql,* usual Heb., *sekhel*), see D. Blumenthal, *The Commentary of R. Ḥoter ben Shelomo to the Thirteen Principles of Maimonides (=Comm.)* (Leiden, 1974), 34, n. 4 and idem, *The Philosophic Questions and Answers of Ḥoter ben Shelomo (=PQA)* (Leiden, 1981), 186, n. 8 and 190.

[7] See for example, P. Fenton, *Treatise of the Pool* (London, 1981); idem, *al-Murshid 'ilā al-tafarrud* (Jerusalem, 1987); idem, *Deux traités de mystique juive* (Verdier, 1987), reviewed by me in *REJ* 148:3–4 (1989), 418–20; etc.

necessary for life in the world-to-come.[8] Various kabbalistic and hasidic traditions also read Maimonides this way. But, what of the master himself? A few years back, in Strasbourg, I delivered a paper arguing that Maimonides himself teaches that there was a stage beyond *halākhā* and *de'ā;* that, in his various writings, Maimonides uses vocabulary that clearly indicates that he understood that there was a religious prerequisite, beyond philosophy, to life in the world-to-come.[9] Given the resistance to this thesis among scholars of Jewish philosophy, Jewish mysticism, and Jewish studies in general, it seems useful to review the evidence. Much hangs in the balance, spiritually as well as historically.

Two Motives

The book of Devarim mentions the love of God eighteen times. In six places, it speaks of God's love for the people and, in the remaining twelve, of the people's love for God. It is the latter category that concerns Maimonides. What is humankind's love of God? How does one love God? The question is especially pressing since two of these verses are recited liturgically at least twice a day by traditional Jews: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Dt. 6:5) and "... to love the Lord, your God, and to worship Him with all your heart and with all your soul ..." (Dt. 11:13).

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[8] D. Blumenthal, "An Illustration of the Concept 'Philosophic Mysticism' from Fifteenth Century Yemen," in *Hommage à Georges Vajda,* eds. G. Nahon and C. Touati (Louvain, 1980), 291–308.

[9] D. Blumenthal, "Maimonides: Prayer, Worship, and Mysticism" (="MPWM") in *Prière, mystique et judaisme,* ed. R. Goetschel (Paris, 1987), 89–106; reprinted in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times,* ed. D. Blumenthal (Atlanta, 1988), 1–16; available also on my website.

The root *āhav,* in the sense of humankind's love for God, is linked in Deuteronomy with six other verbs. It is most frequently linked with the *shāmar* (observe), *hālakh* (go in the way of), and *shāma‘* (listen to, obey). The lesson, here, is simple: one loves God by observing God's commands, by going in God's way, and by listening to, or obeying, God. This is the dimension of religious praxis, the first Maimonidean prerequisite for life in the world-to-come.

The verb *āhav* is also linked with three other verbs: *yāre'* (fear), *dāvaq* (cling), and *‘āvad* (worship). As to the first, Maimonides is quite clear:[10]

> God, may He be exalted, has explained that the purpose of the actions prescribed by the whole Torah is to bring about the emotion, which it is correct to bring about ... I refer to the fear of Him (*khawfihi*), may He be exalted, and awe in the presence of His command (*wa-'istihwāl 'amrihi*).... For these two ends, love and fear, are achieved through two things: love through ideas taught by the Torah, which include perceptions of God's being as He, may He be exalted, really is; and fear [which] is achieved through all actions prescribed by the Torah.

Fear of God, then, according to Maimonides, is a religious

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[10] Quotations are taken from Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed (= Guide)*, cited by part:chapter. The Arabic is drawn from I. Joel, *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn* (Jerusalem, 1931), cited by page:line. The translations here are drawn from S. Pines, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago, 1963). I have modified them, when I felt the original required it. I have used three devices for emphasis: italics for certain words, citation of the Arabic original, and paragraphing. It is my custom to use egalitarian language with reference to God, except in liturgy. However, I have left Maimonides' gendered language because it is so fundamental to his worldview. This citation is from *Guide* 3:52 (Joel 464:18; Pines 630).

affection[11] that is drawn from, and at the same time leads to, religious observance. It, too then, is linked to proper praxis.

As to *dāvaq* (cling), Maimonides is also clear:[12] "It is a positive commandment to cling to the sages and their students to learn from their deeds, as it says, 'You shall cling to Him' (Dt. 10:20). Is it possible for a person to cling to God's presence?! Rather, so did the sages say in interpreting this *miṣva* – cling to the sages and their students." Clinging to God, then too, for Maimonides, is linked to normative rabbinic praxis.

This leaves only one verb associated with love open for interpretation: *'avōdā,* worship of God. How is love of God linked to worship of God? What is the relationship between *'avōdā* and *ahavā?* Are they the same? Are they different and, if different, which is which? This question is all the more important because the key verse – "... to love the Lord, your God, and to worship Him with all your heart and with all your soul ..." (Dt. 11:13) – is part of the *Shema* and, hence, is recited at least twice a day by observant Jews. The issue of the relationship of *ahavā* to *'avōdā* is basic – textually, spiritually, and liturgically. It is this Scriptural-spiritual-liturgical problem of the relationship between worship and love of God that was the first factor moving Maimonides toward a doctrine of post-philosophic mysticism.

The second factor which prompted Maimonides to allude to a realm of spirituality beyond rational philosophy was his own religious experience and/or that of the general philosophic-spiritual milieu in which he wrote. We do not, in fact, have any

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[11] An "affection" is an ongoing emotion, one which one should have continuously, as opposed to an emotion that is fleeting. Thus, love can be a fleeting feeling, or an affection, that is, an ongoing emotional attitude.
[12] *MT,* Hilkhot De'ot 6:2.

autobiographical religious writings of Maimonides. Such was not, and is not, the style of rationalist writers.[13] However, Maimonides does use sufi and Islamic philosophic mystical terms such as *ghibṭa* ("bliss"), *'ittiḥād* ("union"), *'ishq* ("passionate love"), *al-'inqiṭā' 'ilayhi* ("total devotion"), and *al-qurb minhu* ("closeness to Him"). He also uses phrases taken from Sufi literature such as: "The whole truth, together with the intensity of its brightness, is hidden from us"; "Then one advances to contemplating the holy divine Presence"; "He has dazzled us by His beauty [alt.: perfection] and He is hidden from us by the intensity of His brightness"; and "Apprehension of Him consists in the inability to attain the ultimate apprehension of Him."[14] Similarly, Maimonides uses such Hebrew terms as *ḥosheq* ("passionate love"), *simḥā* ("joy"), and "death by a kiss" with a clearly experiential meaning.[15] Perhaps most clear is Maimonides' instructions on when and how to invoke this post-philosophic state:[16]

> From here on I will begin to give you guidance with regard to the form of this training so that you should achieve this great end. The first thing that you should cause your soul to hold fast unto is that, while reciting the *Shema*, you should empty your mind of everything and pray thus....
> When, however, you are alone with yourself and no one

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[13] I side generally with Scholem and against Idel on the inherent reticence of Jewish writers to use first person autobiographical style to describe their own religious experience, though Idel is surely correct that this genre does exist, more so among mystics than among philosophers. Note that Mordecai Kaplan also refrained from explicit religious autobiographical writing though he was clearly a philosophic mystic (see D. Blumenthal, "On Being a Rationalist and a Mystic," *The Reconstructionist* 53 [1987], 25–8).

[14] See Blumenthal, "MPWM," n. 14, for the references to *Guide.*

[15] On all these phrases, see below and, more fully, Blumenthal, "MPWM."

[16] *Guide,* 3:51 (Joel 458:12; Pines 622–3).

> else is there and while you lie awake upon your bed, you
> should take great care during these precious times not to
> set your thought to work on anything other than that
> intellectual worship consisting in nearness to God and in
> being in His presence...

Now, it is possible for someone to cite this kind of advice and to
use such mystical terms and phrases in an historical analysis
without having a clear experience of them. However, as writing,
these usages point to an experiential knowledge that informs and
justifies the use of such language. Spiritual writing, like all great
religious expression, is a true mirror of the inner awareness of
the writer. Further, Maimonides is not writing this as an
intellectual exercise. Rather, he is dispensing authentic teaching,
Torah. This advice and these terms and phrases, then, are used
with a sense of teaching integrity and reflect a personal,
experiential ground. Authoritative religious teaching, like all
great Torah, reflects the author's truest and deepest state of mind
and heart. It is, thus, Maimonides' personal, as well as his
cultural-religious awareness,[17] that was the second factor that
moved him toward a doctrine of post-philosophic mysticism. It
was his need to teach authoritatively an intellectualist
spirituality, which he knew in its own terms, that propelled him
to go beyond philosophy.

Scripture, liturgy, and personal experience, then, compelled
Maimonides to teach, or at least to allude to, a state of religious
being beyond thought. Jewish law on the subject of proper
religious devotion (*kavvānā*) and the need to give authoritative
instruction in these matters, within the paradigm of philosophic
mysticism, moved Maimonides to give instruction, though often

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[17] On philosophic mysticism in Islam, see D. Blumenthal, *PQA*, 55–8; idem,
"An Illustration," 291–4; and the references in both places.

indirectly, about the proper spiritual state beyond rational thinking toward which the informed practitioner of religion should aspire.

Toward a Doctrine of Post-Philosophic Mysticism

The following passage is particularly clear in that Maimonides distinguishes between the intellectual love of God (Heb. *ahavā,* Ar. *maḥabba*) and the post-intellectual love, or worship, of God (Heb. *ʿavōdā,* Ar. *ʿibāda*), indicating precisely that worship is a stage which comes *after* love:[18]

> Let us now return to the subject of this chapter which is to confirm people in the intention to set their thoughts to work on God alone *after* they have achieved knowledge of Him, as we have explained. This is the worship (*al-ʿibāda*) peculiar to those who have [already] apprehended the true realities....
> This kind of worship (*al-ʿibāda*) ought only to be engaged in *after* intellectual conception has been achieved. If, however, you have apprehended God and His acts in accordance with what is required by the intellect, you should *afterwards* engage in totally devoting yourself to Him, endeavor to come close to Him, and strengthen the bond between you and Him – that is, the intellect....
> The Torah has made it clear that this latter worship to which we have drawn attention can only be engaged in *after* apprehension has been achieved, as it says, "to love (*le-ʾahavā*) the Lord, your God, *and* to worship Him (*u-le-ʿovdō*) with all your heart and with all your soul" (Dt. 11:13 [used in the *Shema*]).
> Now we have made it clear several times that love (*al-maḥabba*) is proportionate to apprehension. *After* love (*ahavā*) comes this worship (*al-ʿibāda*) to which attention has been drawn by the sages, may their memory be a blessing, who said, "This is worship in the heart."...
> Therefore, you will find that David exhorted Solomon and

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[18] *Guide* 3:51 (Joel 456:15 - 457:15; Pines 620–21).

fortified him in these two things, I mean in his endeavor to
apprehend Him *and* in his endeavor to worship Him *after*
apprehension had been achieved. He said, "You, Solomon
my son, know the God of your father *and* worship Him" (1
Chron. 28:9)....

Thus it is clear that *after* apprehension, total devotion to
Him and the employment of intellectual thought in
passionate love for Him should be aimed at....

In the very same passage, Maimonides also defines the
difference between love and worship, indicating clearly that *love*
of God is intellectual, rational, analytic, and philosophic while
worship of God is spiritual, meditative, experiential, and
mystical:

Let us now return to the subject of this chapter.... This is
the worship peculiar to those who have [already]
apprehended the true realities; the more they *think of Him
and are with Him* (*zādū fikratan fīhi wal-maqām ʿindahu*),
the more their worship increases....

If, however, you have apprehended God and His acts in
accordance with what is required by the intellect, you
should afterwards *engage in totally devoting yourself to
Him* (*ta'khudh fī al-'inqiṭāʿ 'ilayhi*), endeavor to *come
close to Him* (*wa-tasʿa naḥwa qurbihi*), and *strengthen the
bond* (*wa-taghluẓ al-wuṣla*) between you and Him – that
is, the intellect....

After love comes this worship to which attention has been
drawn by the sages, may their memory be a blessing, who
said, "This is worship *in the heart* (*ʿavōdā she-ba-lēv*)." In
my opinion it consists in *setting thought to work on the
first intelligible* (*'iʿmāl al-fikr fī al-maʿqūl al-'awwal*) *and
in devoting oneself exclusively to this* (*wal-'infirād li-
dhālika*) as far as this is in one's capacity....

Thus it is clear that after apprehension, *total devotion to
Him* (*al-'inqiṭāʿ 'ilayhi*) and the employment of
intellectual thought in *passionate love for Him* (*'ishqihi*)
should be aimed at. Mostly this is achieved in *solitude* and

isolation (*bil-khalwa wal-'infirād*). Hence every person striving for excellence[19] stays frequently in solitude and does not meet anyone unless it is necessary.

These two major contributions to the development of Jewish intellectual spirituality – that there is a spiritual stage beyond the intellectual, and that it is characterized by a meditative, experiential, indeed mystical mode – are repeated again and again by Maimonides in his *Guide for the Perplexed*, chapter 51, part three.[20] Indeed, the whole structure of that chapter is intended to deal only with this theme. The chapter has five parts. The first[21] is the well-known typology of those who seek to enter the palace of the sultan. In it, those who study mathematics and logic are outside the palace, those who study physics and metaphysics are in the inner court, and those who have gone beyond that are in the ruler's council. The latter is the equivalent of prophecy and Maimonides differentiates various levels thereof.

The second part of this chapter[22] is the typology of those who worship God. Lowest on the rung are those who worship without knowledge, relying on their imaginings. Then, come those who have intellectual apprehension of God. Finally, as we have just seen, come those who devote themselves totally to God, to being in God's Presence. This second part ends with a note on the option all people have of strengthening or weakening the intellectual bond between God and humanity.

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[19] Ar. *al-'insān al-kāmil* is not the perfect person but one who is seeking perfection, as the grammar and logic indicates.

[20] See, for example, his differentiation between one who loves God (Heb. *ōhēv*) and one who has passionate love for God (Heb. *ḥosheq*) (see below).

[21] Pines 618–20.

[22] Ibid., 620–2.

This, according to Maimonides, is the human intellect. Those who choose to weaken that bond, or not to develop it, are far from God.

The third part of this chapter[23] is a set of graded instructions for those who wish to truly worship God. This is Maimonides' authoritative teaching on meditative prayer, on full *kavvānā*. First, one must clear one's mind and recite the *Shema* in that state. Then, one must extend that technique to the rest of the *Shema* and then to other prayers. Then, one must learn to reflect upon (*al-'i‘tibār*) that which one hears and reads when listening to or studying the Torah, and then the prayers. Then, one must learn to meditate on what one is saying (*ta'ammul mā talfiẓ bihi wa-'i‘tibār ma‘nāhu*). Throughout, one must always have a mind cleared of distraction and one must practice each stage for a while before advancing. Worldly thoughts, which are necessary for the good governance of family and society, should be engaged in when one is not occupied with *miṣvot*.

The penultimate stage of this instruction in true worship deals with meditation when one is in a state of quietude and solitude:[24]

> When, however, you are alone with yourself and no one else is there and while you lie awake upon your bed, you should take great care during these precious times not to set your thought to work on anything other than that intellectual worship consisting in nearness to God and in being in His presence (*al-‘ibāda al-‘aqliyya wa-hiya al-qurb min 'Allāh wal-muthūl bayna yadayhi*) in that true reality that I have made known to you and not by way of emotions and the imagination. In my opinion this end can be achieved by those of the men of knowledge who have rendered their souls worthy of it by training of this kind.

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[23] Pines 622–4.
[24] Joel 458:29; Pines 623.

The ultimate stage of this instruction deals with being in the permanent and continuous presence of God (*bayna yadayhi dā'iman*) even when one is dealing with issues of this-worldly governance. This stage is characterized by the union of the intellect through apprehension of God (*'ittiḥād 'uqūlihim fī 'idrākihi*), by union with God (*al-'ittiḥād bi-llāh*), and it is called powerful absolute worship (*'ibāda maḥḍa 'aẓīma*). Of this stage it is written in Scripture, "I sleep but my heart waketh" (Song 5:2). This is the level of the patriarchs and Moses. Maimonides is vague about whether persons who live in later times can achieve this state.[25]

The fourth part of chapter 51, part three,[26] is Maimonides' note on providence which ends with his distinction between one who loves God and one who has a passionate love for God in which the distinction between intellectual and post-intellectual love and the use of experiential, mystical language is repeated: "It is as if [Psalm 91] said that this individual is protected because he has known me and then passionately loved me (*limā 'arafanī wa-'ashiqanī*). You know the difference between one who loves (*ōhēv*) and one who loves passionately (*ḥosheq*). For an excess of love so that no thought remains that is directed

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[25] The key sentence, as Pines notes (624, n. 32), can be read either way: "Someone like myself cannot aspire to be guided with a view to achieving this rank" or "Someone like myself cannot aspire to guide others with a view to achieving this rank." This is part of Maimonides' general hesitancy about making his deepest teachings explicit, which, in turn, is rooted in the difficulty of articulating the Ineffable and in the talmudic prohibition about explicit intimate spiritual instruction (*Talmud,* Ḥagiga 13a, repeated often by Maimonides). It may also have roots in the high respect for the "esoteric" in Islamic civilization in general. For more on this, see Blumenthal, "MPWM," 15, n. 9.)

[26] Pines 624–7.

toward a thing other than the Beloved is passionate love ('*ishq*)."[27]

The final part of this chapter on true worship, that is, on philosophic mysticism, deals with old age, death, and life after death. It, too, with great clarity, preserves the two basic insights of Maimonides' spiritual worldview – that there is a spiritual stage beyond the intellectual, and that it is characterized by a meditative, experiential, indeed mystical mode:[28]

> The philosophers have already explained that, when one is young, the bodily faculties impede the attainment of most of the moral virtues and, a fortiori, of that pure thought which is achieved through the perfection of the intelligibles and which leads then to passionate love of God, may He be exalted. For it is impossible to achieve this while the bodily humors are in effervescence. Yet in the measure in which the faculties of the body are weakened and the fire of desires is quenched, the intellect is strengthened, its lights achieve wider extension, its apprehension is purified, and it rejoices [more] in what it apprehends.
> The result is that when a person seeking perfection[29] is stricken with years and approaches death, this apprehension increases very powerfully. Joy (*al-ghibṭa*) over this apprehension and the passionate love (*wal-'ishq*) for the object of this apprehension become stronger until the soul is separated from the body at that moment, in this state of pleasure (*al-ladhdha*). Because of this, the sages have indicated with reference to the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam that the three of them died by a kiss....[30] Their purpose was to indicate that the three of

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[27] Joel 462:14; Pines 627. For the same definition, see *MT,* Hilkhot Teshuva 10:3, indicating that Maimonides already had in mind the basic typology of philosophic mysticism when he wrote his code. He did not come to this only when he wrote his later philosophical work.

[28] Joel 462:17; Pines 627–8.

[29] On this see above, n. 19.

[30] Referring to *Talmud,* Bava Batra 17a.

> them died in the pleasure of that apprehension due to the intensity of passionate love.... [reference to Song 1:2, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth"]....
> The sages, may their memory be a blessing, mention the occurrence of this kind of death, which is in reality a salvation from death, only with regard to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The other prophets and excellent persons (*wal-fuḍalā'*) are beneath this degree. Nonetheless, it holds true for them that the apprehension of their intellects becomes stronger at the separation, as it is said ...

Having indicated that the approach of death makes the philosophic mystical life easier, Maimonides teaches that "excellent persons" of any historical period cannot expect the ultimate "death by a kiss"; however, they can legitimately expect a strengthening of their intellectual and post-intellectual powers such that their intellect will be bound with a fierce passionate love to God and, if death intervene in the intensity of that moment, they can expect a durable and permanent bliss in life after death. It is the permanent endurance of this state that defines the world-to-come, that is, ultimate existence:[31]

> After having reached this condition of enduring permanence (*al-baqā' al-dā'im*), the intellect remains in one and the same state, the impediment that sometimes veiled it having been removed. Further, it will remain permanently in that state of intense pleasure (*al-ladhdha al-'aẓīma*), which does not belong to the genus of bodily pleasures....

The whole purpose of this chapter, then, occurring as it does almost at the end of the *Guide,* was to set forth Maimonides' basic authoritative teaching: there is a spiritual stage beyond the intellectual; this stage is characterized by a meditative,

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[31] Joel 463:10; Pines 628.

experiential, indeed mystical mode; and the goal of all religion – praxis and gnosis – is to achieve this post-intellectual mystical state which is the true, absolute, pure worship of God.

Implications

This interpretation of Maimonides, which emphasizes the spiritual within and beyond good praxis (*halākhā*) and correct gnosis (*de'ā*), will render some scholars uncomfortable.

Most scholars of Jewish philosophy, and indeed the later medieval Jewish philosophic tradition in the west though not in the east,[32] interpret Maimonides as identifying philosophic theology, i.e., the orderly arrangement of doctrine, as the goal of religion. Such medieval and modern writers have forgotten that philosophy was always only the handmaiden to theology in its broader sense, that philosophy was always the female slave to religious experience, which informs theology. Similarly, most scholars of Jewish mysticism have not addressed Maimonides and, when they have dealt with Jewish philosophy, have treated it only as the handmaiden, not as the faithful servant, of religious experience.[33] Jewish scholars in other fields have perpetuated the stereotypes generated by their respected colleagues. Professor Vajda was one of the few who, rooted in the context of Islamic philosophy and mysticism, leaped over the categories to write about philosophic mysticism.[34]

As I grow older and ponder the state of our work in Jewish studies, I think that the reasons for our not giving religious,

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[32] On this, see D. Blumenthal, "Was There an Eastern Tradition of Maimonidean Scholarship," *REJ,* 128:57–68 and, in slightly different form, Blumenthal, *PQA,* chapter three.

[33] For a fuller analysis of these trends, see idem, "MPWM," n. 1.

[34] See idem, "An Illustration," at the beginning.

spiritual experience its proper due in our research and teaching are not complicated. The primary explanation, I think, lies in the general secular, rationalist commitment of academic scholars. Philosophers, among them Jewish philosophers, even religiously observant ones, work in analytic categories that problematize religious experience; spirituality doesn't fit their categories clearly. The same holds true for scholars of mysticism, including Jewish researchers, even religiously observant scholars, for whom living faith and practice is an academic problem; it, too, does not fit the analytic rubrics. In general, spirituality has been hard for academic scholars to study and teach. Heschel, Merton, and others have noted this.[35] For contemporary Jewish scholars, there is also the quintessentially anti-theological stance of the Jew in the post-Shoah period. If God did not save us, then is there really a God? Or, at least, let us keep the God Who allowed the Shoah at arm's length.

While it is fully understandable that academic scholarship has a need to bracket its own religious commitments, it seems more honest intellectually and more profound spiritually to break through the disciplinary and historical barriers that are less a part of the mentality of those whom we study than of the worldview of our immediate academic predecessors who, for all their greatness, had a blind spot where intellectualist spirituality was concerned. An even better solution would be, following the feminist movement, to acknowledge our commitments up front and then write and teach from them. Either way, the centrality of philosophic mysticism in the study of medieval Jewish religion will have gained its rightful historical and spiritual place.

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[35] On Heschel and Merton, see S. Magid, "Abraham Joshua Heschel and Thomas Merton," *Conservative Judaism* 50:2–3 (Spring 1998), 112–25.

Spiritual experience is at the core of all religious systems and we, who analyze and teach such data, must do our best to explicate this phenomenon.

A MYSTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS IN THE HAND OF DAVID MAIMONIDES II

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One of the areas which has been considerably enriched by the discovery and investigation of the Cairo Geniza has been the history and development of biblical exegesis. Literally thousands of translations and commentaries of various books of the scriptural Canon have come to light, reflecting a host of schools, from the rational to the mystical. Though a fair proportion of the scientific editions of medieval commentators published over the last hundred years have often taken Geniza material into account, the vast majority of its exegetical treasures still remain untapped.

Recently, we have had the good fortune to retrieve a rare pearl from the ocean of the Geniza – a hitherto unknown philosophical and mystical commentary on the Song of Songs. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that this commentary originates in the school of Maimonides' descendants. Indeed, it is written in the elegant hand of the last of the Maimonidean dynasty known to us – R. David ben Joshuʻa ha-Nagīd, who might conceivably also have been its author. This interesting,

near complete Judeo-Arabic commentary on Canticles was discovered in the Second Firkovitch Geniza Collection (II Firkovitch Evr.-Arab. I. 3870), housed in the Russian National Library in Saint-Petersburg.[1] The manuscript, which comprises 18 folios, is divided into quires of five leaves, each of whose pages contain 18 lines of writing. Unfortunately, the beginning and end of the commentary are lacking, and a lacuna also occurs between folios 10b and 11a, corresponding to the exposition on Cant. 3:11 to 4:4. Otherwise the commentary covers chapter 1, verse 6 until chapter 7 verse 1.

In the spirit of the mystical-philosophical tradition, the Song is construed as an amorous dialogue between the lover, identified with Intellect, and the beloved, with the Soul. Intellect urges the soul to free itself from the shackles of the physical body, to aspire to its rational perfection and thus attain mystical communion, designated by the Arabic term *wiṣāl*.[2]

In order to fully gauge the significance of the present commentary, it will not be superfluous to dwell on the literary context in which it saw light. By the fourteenth century, the probable time of its composition, the mystical-philosophical approach to Canticles presented no outstanding originality since it had gained sway for some time amongst the book's exegetes. Indeed, of all biblical texts, the Song of Songs had exercised in the Middle Ages a special fascination upon its commentators, as demonstrated by S. Salfeld, who in his now classical study, had enumerated no less than a hundred and thirty four commentaries

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[1] Cf. P. Fenton, *A Handlist of Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in Leningrad* (Jerusalem, 1991), 127 and idem, "Perush misṭī le-shīr ha-shīrīm be-yadō shel R. Dawīd b. Yehoshuʿa Maymūnī," *Tarbiz* 69 (2000), 539–89 (henceforth: "Perush misṭī").

[2] On this term, see P. Fenton, "New Light of R. Abraham Maimonides' Doctrine of Mystical Experience," *Daʿat* 50 (2002), 107–19.

on this book.[3] Its very inclusion in the biblical canon called for its allegorization and in the eyes of the Rabbis, the amorous dialogue exchanged by the lovers expressed either God's love for His people throughout history, or Israel's yearning for its Messiah.

This historical interpretation was reechoed by numerous commentators – especially the Karaite authors – for as long as the Song was construed as an expression of Israel's collective destiny. However, from the twelfth century onwards, the influence of Arabic Neoplatonism, and probably also Islamic mysticism, penetrated Jewish biblical exegesis, bringing in its fold a new emphasis on the importance of the individual. The Song of Solomon was henceforth portrayed as a dialogue between God and the individual soul of man. As far as is known, the very first reference – albeit a fleeting one – to such an interpretation can already be found in the eleventh century work *Farā'iḍ al-qulūb* by Baḥya Ibn Paquda. The latter perceives in the Song an expression of the love of the servant of God for his Master and in the tenth chapter of the Portal "Love of God," in a context very strongly colored by Islamic Sufism, he interprets thus the words of the Shulamite:

> "Up on my couch at night" (Cant. 3:1), refers to the solitude in the remembrance of God, whenever the friend is alone with his Friend, and the lover isolated with his Beloved.[4]

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[3] S. Salfeld, *Das Hohelied bei jüdischen Erklärern des Mittelalter*s (Berlin, 1879). See also B. Walfish, "An Annotated Bibliography of Medieval Jewish Commentaries on the Song of Songs," in: S. Japhet, ed., *The Bible in Light of its Interpreters: Sarah Kamin Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem, 1994), 518–79.

[4] Baḥyā Ibn Paqūda, *Ḥōbōt ha-lebābōt*, ed. Y. Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1973), 423–4.

R. Abraham ibn 'Ezra, for his part, in the introduction to his commentary on Canticles, reviews some of the existing interpretations of the book. He mentions one opinion, which he forthright rejects, according to which Canticles is an expression of the speculative soul's dialogue with the body.[5]

Among the first interpreters to have withdrawn the principle role in the allegory from the people and to have transferred it to the soul was none other than Maimonides. In his opinion this book was the symbol either of man's intellectual love for God, or that of the soul for its perfection. This idea is expressed in a key-text in the *Mishneh Tōrāh* which was to set the tone for generations of commentators:

> What is correct love [of God]? It is to love God with an extremely great, excessive and strong love to a point where one's soul is tethered to the love of God. This results in one's continuous preoccupation with it, like one who is love-sick and whose mind is not free from the love of a certain woman of whom he permanently thinks, whether he be sitting, or standing, eating or drinking. Even more so the love of God in the hearts of His lovers, thinking continuously of Him, as we were commanded: "with all thine heart and with all thy soul" (Deut 6:5). This was expressed by King Solomon in allegorical form "for I am love-sick for Thee" (Cant. 5:8). The entire Song of songs is an allegory referring to this meaning.[6]

Again in the *Guide for the Perplexed* III, 51, he uses a verse of Canticles to describe the blissful state of true knowledge:

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[5] "The philosophers were wont to explain this book according to the mystery of the world and the manner of the union of the supernal soul with the body, which is at an inferior level... [..] all are wind and vanity and untruth, except that which our Ancients of blessed memory transmitted to the effect that this book refers to the Congregation of Israel."

[6] *Hilekhōt teshūbāh* ch. X, 3.

> This I consider as the highest perfection wise men can obtain by training. When we have acquired a true knowledge of God and rejoice in that knowledge in such a manner that whilst speaking with others, or attending to our bodily wants, our mind is all that time with God; when we are with our heart constantly near God, even whilst our body is in the society of men; when we are in that state which the Song on the relation between God and man poetically describes in the verse "I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh" (Cant. 5:2).[7]

Later in the same chapter, Maimonides states:

> When our Sages figuratively call the knowledge of God united with intense love for Him "a kiss," they follow the well-known poetical diction: "He kisseth me with the kisses of his mouth" (Cant. 1:2).[8]

In the post-Maimonidean period, practically all philosophically-minded commentators adopted this line of interpretation. The most consummate expression of this tendency can be found in the commentary of R. Joseph ibn 'Aqnīn, who, though of a philosophical turn of mind, was not a direct disciple of Maimonides, as he is often erroneously taken to have been. In his work *Inkishāf al-asrār wa-Ẓuhūr al-Anwār* ("The Divulging of mysteries and the revelation of lights"), which it seems was composed after the *Guide*,[9] Ibn 'Aqnīn proposes a threefold

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[7] Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, ed. Qāfiḥ, III, 51 (Jerusalem, 1972), 679.
[8] Ibid., 684.
[9] Joseph ibn 'Aqnīn, *Divulgatio mysteriorum luminumque apparentia*, ed. A.S. Halkin (Jerusalem, 1964). See also Halkin, "Ibn 'Aknin's Commentary on the Song of Songs" in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1950), 389–424. Steinschneider's opinion that the passage in the commentary (fol. 103b) which mentions the *Guide* is an interpolation, is not generally accepted. Thus Ibn 'Aqnīn's work was written between 1185, the date of the *Guide*'s composition, and 1204, the year of Maimonides' demise. We have

approach to the explanation of Canticles: the literal, the homiletic and the esoteric meanings. The latter does not yet refer to Kabbalistic allegory but designates the philosophical implications interpreted in the light of the speculative theories of his time. He perceives in the Song a dialogue between the Active Intellect and the rational soul who expresses its desire to unite with the former, who, in turn, encourages the soul to follow him. The impediments and accidents which hinder their encounter express the impossibility of their union throughout the soul's imprisonment within the bodily frame. Apparently, this interpretation is the personal and original creation of Ibn 'Aqnīn; at least, he prides himself in having been the very first to have discovered this meaning of the book, which he considers to be its true implication.[10]

Conspicuous in Ibn 'Aqnīn's commentary is not only the influence of Arabic philosophy, but also that of the Islamic mysticism known as Sufism. Indeed, the definitions of love supplied by him are in fact borrowed from one of the basic manuals of Sufism – the *Risāla* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (ob. 1027).[11]

It is possible to say that in the wake of Maimonides until the spread of the Kabbalah, the majority of commentators, at least

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discovered in the Geniza additional fragments of Ibn 'Aqnīn's commentary unknown to Halkin, which complete certain lacuna in his edition: II. Firk. NS 991, frag. 272, ENA 3105.4, ENA 2993.6, ENA 2993.6, ENA 1069.8 and Westminster College II, 59.

[10] *Inkishāf*, fol. 4b: "We have found that none of the Ancients have preceded us in this interpretation." However, G. Vajda rightly points out that this title cannot be awarded to him as long as our information is incomplete (in *L'Amour de Dieu dans la théologie juive du moyen-âge* [Paris, 1957], 145). Indeed, certain exegetical fragments discovered in the Geniza which were written in a similar vein, are referred to below, n. 11.

[11] See P. Fenton, "Deux traités musulmans d'amour mystique en transmission judéo-arabe," *Arabica* 37 (1990), 47–55.

within the Judeo-Arabic sphere of influence, saw in the book a philosophical allegory. This approach was quite widespread in medieval times, as is demonstrated by the number of commentaries composed in this spirit which we have encountered amid the Geniza writings.[12]

Among the instructive examples of this tradition belongs the commentary of R. Tanḥūm Yerushalmī, who, on account of his impressive exegetical oeuvre, is known as the "Ibn 'Ezra of the East."[13] In contrast to the method applied in his other exegetical works, R. Tanḥūm's commentary on Canticles, preserved in the Oxford Ms Pococke 320 (Neubauer 363), follows a predominantly philosophical line. As will be seen below, the author of the commentary copied by R. David ha-Nagīd was

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[12] We have located several specimens of anonymous treatises, e.g. Hunt. 496 (Neubauer 292), fols. 190–267, a mixture of literal and esoteric exegesis, which interprets Canticles as an expression of the love of wisdom. Likewise among the Geniza manuscripts, we managed to identify fragments from philosophic commentaries on Canticles, such as: BL Or. 5562d.1, T-S Arabic 44. 58, T-S AS 159. 91, ENA 2948. 22, ENA 2751. 42, ENA 3008. 14–16, II Firk. Evr.-Arab. I. 1888. However, because of their fragmentary character, it is impossible to assign them a date or to identify their authors.

[13] Tanḥum's commentary was published as an anonymous text by Y. Qāfiḥ (Ḥamesh megillōt (Jerusalem, 1962), Canticles, the fourth commentary), on the basis of an incomplete manuscript (Sassoon 1147). Qāfiḥ attributed the commentary to an anonymous Yemenite scholar, not realizing that the manuscript in fact contains two works, one of which is by Tanḥūm, while the second seems also to have been influenced by him. Cf. S. Eppenstein, "Aus dem Kohelet-Kommentar des R. Tanchum Jeruschalmi," *Mf.WJ* (1888), 13 and Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, 72–3. We have discovered an additional fragment in the Geniza II Firk. NS 107, which corresponds to Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt* 73. A small passage was published by Salfeld, *Hohelied bei jüdischen Erklärern*, 146 and in the appendix to the article by P. Kokovzov, "Tanḥum Yerušalmi's Commentary of the Book of Jonah," in *Festschrift Baron Rosen* (Saint-Petersburg, 1897), 163–5. Subsequently, one of my students discovered the missing part of the Sassoon Tanḥūm MS in the Yemenite MS published anonymously in Y. Nahum, *Mi-Yeṣīrōt Sifrūtiyōt mi-Tēman*, (Holon, 1981), 1–27.

familiar with R. Tanḥūm's exposition and adopted some of his
conceptions. Hence, it will not be irrelevant to dwell briefly on
Tanḥūm's method, set out in the introduction to his
commentary:

> I did not proceed in this manner in the other biblical
> writings except in this book because it is of an elevated
> degree and its content is sublime. It is difficult to
> understand its true meaning and it is not easy to describe it
> let alone [...] them. However, it is clear that the literal
> meaning of the book cannot be the initial intention.
> Consequently, I saw fit to explain it according to the
> present interpretation and method. Indeed, it is utterly
> impossible that the intention of Solomon in this book is
> that which is understood from the literal meaning of the
> poetic expressions, the didactic words and the general
> allegories.[14]

Interestingly, in this introduction R. Tanḥūm provides a brief
overview of the various interpretations of Canticles that had
been previously offered. In view of the proximity to the spirit of
the commentary we are about to discuss, the following extract is
not without relevance:

> [Ms. Poc. 320, fol. 7a] There are some [commentators]
> who claim that the beloved alludes to Wisdom ... others
> say she refers to the House of Israel ... [8a] while others
> still interpreted this book as the desire of the rational and
> wise soul to attain the place of intellectual greatness
> which is her principle, original world and primal element.
> [The Song] is a description in human parlance (lisān al-
> ḥāl)[15] of the darkness and the grossness which disfigure
> her. These are not essential and do not belong to her
> inherent attributes, but are accidental phenomena and

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[14] Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, 127.
[15] On this expression, see S. Munk, *Comm. de R. Tanhoum de Jérusalem sur
le Livre de Habakkouk* (Paris, 1845), 94.

physical states. She has contracted them through her proximity to the corporeal faculties and her necessity to manage them during her association [with the body], in order to insure the longest possible survival of the latter [8b], according to divine wisdom and the supernal will. As for her essence, it is of extreme beauty and purity [as expressed in the verse] "I am black, but comely" (Cant. 1:5) [...]. Indeed, her desire is great, and her remorse and pain immense at having been separated from that source. Intellect, which is her origin and element, having perceived the sincerity of her request, irradiates upon her his lights and reveals himself to her in a shining brilliance, an overwhelming radiance and a resplendent illumination (*ishrāq*) according to that which she can at first bear. Then he gradually increases perfection, apprehension and light until the ultimate stage [...]. Intellect continuously advances her and transports her from one degree to another, so that she draws near to him and gradually progresses towards him. When she inhales the fragrance of her world, she pines for her homeland from which she was exiled, tasting some of its fruit, delighting in the perfume of its flowers and enlightened with the effulgence of [intellect's] splendour and sheen. Thereupon she enjoys the beauty of his countenance and is reminded of that which she had forgotten, spurning that to which she had became inured. Thus she survives death and returns [to her element] after her demise. She is graced with spiritual vision and enlightenment. The veil is lifted from her and she becomes luminous and in turn radiates forth light.[16]

A further commentary written in the same spirit is that of the Yemenite scholar R. Zekhariah the physician, who lived in Ḍamār during the first half of the fifteenth century. Known in Arabic as Yaḥyā b. Sulaymān al-Ṭabīb, he left several exegetical compositions including the *Midrash ha-ḥefeṣ* on the Pentateuch,

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[16] Ms. Bodl. Pococke 320, fol. 7–8. This passage from the introduction is missing in Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, but was published as an appendix to P. Kokovzov, "Tanḥūm Yerušalmi's Commentary of the Book of Jonah," *Festschrift Baron Rosen* (Saint-Petersburg, 1897), 163–5.

a commentary on the Book of Esther, and an explanation of the Chariot of Ezekiel.[17] His commentary on Canticles, written in Hebrew and Arabic, of which a part was published anonymously at the end of the last century, appeared with a Hebrew translation some thirty years ago.[18]

R. Zekhariah was deeply influenced by the *Guide for the Perplexed*, upon which he had moreover written a commentary. It is therefore no wonder that he based his explanation of the Song of Songs on the philosophical-allegorical approach which Maimonides had already adumbrated. In the introduction to his commentary he defines the essence of the Song according to his conception:

> Know that the intention of this book is the desire of the rational soul to regain its spiritual world for her perfection is an essential [attribute], whereas her "blackness" is an accident on account of her having been enamoured with matter. At present she desires Intellect to whom she longs to cleave.[19]

It is noteworthy that in addition to Neoplatonic elements, R. Zekhariah also weaves into the fabric of his commentary mystical motifs of Sufic origin. Thus, for instance he quotes the famous verse from the mystical martyr Manṣūr al-ḥallāfi (ob. 922) "I beheld my Lord with the eye of my heart."[20]

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[17] On him see Y. Razhaby, *Toratan shel beney Teyman* (Qiryat Ono, 1995), 23–8.

[18] M. Friedlander, "The Beginning of a Judeo-Arabic Commentary on the Song of Songs" [in Hebrew], *Festschrift M. Steinschneider* (Leipzig, 1896), 49–59. The whole text was published in Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, 17–129, but a fuller version, published in facsimile, is to be found in Y.L. Nahum, *Ḥasīfat genūzīm mi-Teyman* (Holon, 1971), 202–37.

[19] Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, 26.

[20] Ibid., 27. See Fenton, "Les Traces d'al-ḥallæfi, martyr mystique de l'islam, dans la tradition juive," *Annales d'islamologie* XXXV (2001), 1–27.

Let us return at present to the newly discovered commentary copied by R. David, which too is enthused with a number of typically Sufi concepts, as shall be demonstrated in the extracts provided below. For instance, the author employs certain Sufi technical terms which designate the spiritual stations leading to the final aim: *uns* ('intimity'), *qurb* ('proximity') and *fanā'* ('extinction'). Such terminology connects this commentary with the pietist movement that flourished under Sufi influence in Egypt in the thirteenth century, in which the Maimonidean dynasty played an important role.[21] This Sufi tendency is also characteristic of the exegetic approach to the Song in that period. Indeed, in view of the central importance of love in Muslim mysticism, there is no wonder that the Song of Songs conquered an important place in pietist exegesis.[22]

A special mention in this respect should be made of the commentary of R. Abraham he-Ḥasīd, whose spirit is very close to that of the present commentary. R. Abū al-Rabīʿ Abraham (ob. 1223) was a prominent figure in the Egyptian pietist circle who was deeply influenced by Sufi doctrine. In addition, he was a close associate of R. Abraham Maimonides, the great-great grandfather of R. David ha-Nagid the second, the possible author of the commentary under review. Knowledge of R. Abraham he-Ḥasīd's commentary on Canticles was first brought to light by a Geniza fragment published by Naphtali Wieder.[23]

We subsequently had the good fortune of discovering and publishing over twenty years ago the beginning of this

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[21] On this movement see the introductions to P. Fenton, *Treatise of the Pool*, 2nd ed. (London, 1995) and idem, *Deux traités de mystique juive* (Lagrasse, 1987).

[22] See Fenton, "Deux traités musulmans d'amour mystique," 47–55.

[23] N. Wieder, *Islamic Influences on the Jewish Worship* (Oxford, 1947), 34–5.

commentary on the Song of Songs. In the intervening years we vainly searched for further fragments of this highly interesting text, which bears perhaps the most eloquent testimony to the profound influence of Sufi concepts and terminology on Jewish literature. It was our hope that with the long awaited "liberation" of the Firkowitch collection additional pieces would come to light. Our expectations have only partially been fulfilled with the discovery of a small additional piece which is published as an appendix to the present article. R. Abraham sees in Canticles, attired in the allegorized form of human love, an initiatory manual for the pietist wayfarer along the spiritual path leading to the ecstatic vision and mystical communion through the practice of holiness, love of God and the recollection (*dhikr*) of the Divine names.[24]

Since there is a common denominator between R. Abraham he-Ḥasīd's interpretation of Canticles and the present commentary, our initial hypothesis was that he might also be the latter's author. However, despite a similarity in vocabulary, a comparison of the style convinced us that this was not the case. Indeed, Abraham he-Ḥasīd is more diffuse in his treatment of each verse which he interprets in keeping with his general understanding of the text as a spiritual manual. This key-note, which presumably ran throughout his interpretation, is absent from the present commentary.

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[24] Cf. P. Fenton, "Some Judaeo-Arabic fragments by Rabbi Abraham he-Ḥasīd, the Jewish Sufi," *JJS* 26 (1981), 47–72: "'Holy of holies', that is he obtaineth therefrom the ultimate end and the final aim which leadeth to the spiritual realm through the practice of external and internal holiness and excessive love of God, exalted be He, and the delight in His recollection (*dhikr*) and His holy Names." See also Appendix.

Having thus dismissed the possibility of R. Abraham he-Ḥasīd's authorship, the likelihood of its attribution to its scribe, R. David Maimonides, has now to be discussed.

R. David b. Joshuʿa Maimonides

R. David b. Joshuʿa Maimonides (*circa* 1335–1415) was the last member of the Maimonidean dynasty known to us. He flourished at the close of the fourteenth century in Egypt and Syria where he was active as *nagīd*, head of the Yeshībāh, and as a prolific author.[25] Among his works figures notably the *al-Murshid ilā at-tafarrud* ("Guide to Detachment"), which is also pervaded with a Sufi tone.[26] R. David was also a collector and copyist of manuscripts, and insofar as several specimens of his hand have survived in manuscripts copied or owned by him, which are mentioned in our monograph,[27] his identification as the scribe of the present manuscript can conclusively be demonstrated. The question is now whether in addition to having copied this commentary, R. David was also its author. In reply to this query two important factors need to be taken into account. First, his exegetical activity, and, second, the special relationship to Canticles exhibited by David Maimonides' writings which have thus far been identified. In his *Guide to Detachment*, R. David quotes Canticles on no less than twenty-

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[25] See Idem, "The Literary Legacy of David ben Joshua, last of the Maimonidean Negīdīm," *JQR* 75 (1984), 1–56.

[26] See David Maimonides, *Doctor ad Solitudinem et Ductor ad Simplicitatem*, ed. P. Fenton (Jerusalem, 1987). In the meantime we have discovered two further fragments of this work: II. Firk. NS 964 and NS 1161, fragment 19.

[27] Cf. Fenton, "Literary Legacy," 41–2. Since the latter appeared, we have been able to locate several additional manuscripts which are listed in a special study published with the Hebrew version of the present paper in "Perush mistī." A study of David Maimonides' hand was already made by D. Sassoon in the introduction to his edition of *Maimonides' Commentary on the Mišnah* (Copenhagen, 1956), 36–7, plates XII–XIV.

one occasions; in two instances he even bases his spiritual doctrine on a verse from the Song. In one case he actually defines his understanding of the book:

> The highest degree of this station is also alluded to in the Song of Songs in the verse: "O that thou couldst be my brother, from the breasts of my mother" (Cant. 1:8). Indeed, the axis of this book revolves upon the stations (*maqāmāt*) of the soul and its states in plying (*sulūk*) the Path to God, as well as the attainment of the ultimate goal (*al-wuṣūl ilā al-ghāya al-quṣwā*), which is love of the Supreme Reality, the Light of lights and the Mystery of mysteries and the longing of the soul for God, may He be extolled. Since this is a subtle subject and noble matter, the Sage (i.e. Solomon) expressed it in the form of an allegory, as is the wont of prophets and sages in connection with abstruse and lofty subjects and subtle concepts. He composed it in the form of the rapture (*'ishq*) of the concupiscent soul for one of the sensual objects of love of the physical world.[28]

In a second passage, in connection with an explanation of the verse 'My soul desired thee at night,' (Is. 26:9) he declares:

> His soul was not reliant on the senses in order to attain [metaphysical] perception, but was able to obtain it through the soul itself, as if he had said: 'I desire thee *through* my soul' [...]. The reason for the occurrence of this quest at night-time is because thoughts are sometimes dependant on sense-perception upon which the soul relies. Here, however, he means that perception comes about purely through the soul, independently of any other intermediary. He sought his object precisely at night on account of the abatement of the senses in their apprehension of the objects of sensation. This [situation] resembles the words of the revered sage and perfect prince [Solomon] when he said "Upon my couch at night I sought the beloved of my heart" (Cant. 3:1). Undoubtedly, the intention of the sage in this verse was to seek by

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[28] *al-Murshid*, 61.

means of the very soul and intellect the True Beloved after whom the intellects pine and with whom the souls are enraptured. Indeed the essential words of the Song of Songs are all addressed to the Primal Love, blessed be He, by the rational souls in their proclivity, yearning and quest for Him.[29]

It is tempting, on account of this stylistic similarity, to assume David's authorship of the present commentary but, of course, he may simply have been the copyist of a work compiled by another author, who remains unknown to us.

The Present Commentary

Our author makes hardly any use of midrashic and rabbinic material, or for that matter, medieval sources. The only other work he mentions, besides his own hitherto unknown *al-qaṣīda al-ḥikmiyya*, is the commentary of R. Abraham ibn 'Ezra on Canticles. He provides a lengthy passage from the latter, which is at variance with the printed editions in not a few instances. It is worth recalling that David Maimonides was particularly fond of Ibn 'Ezra's exegetical works, often quoting them in his writings. Moreover, when Joseph Bonfils came to the East, the *nagīd* prevailed upon him to compose a super-commentary on Abraham ibn 'Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch.[30]

As for the author's place of residence, it is noteworthy that at one point he makes a lively comparison with the Tigris and Euphrates, which may suggest that he hailed from Iraq, a detail

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[29] Ibid., 83–5. Cf. also his words in *Tafsīrīd al-Ḥaqā'iq*, Ms. Bodl. Hunt. 489, fol. 95b.

[30] Cf. Fenton, "Literary Legacy," 23 and 42. In his Pentateuch commentary, *Kelīl ha-yōfī*, discovered in ms. II Firk. Evr. A 69, after the publication of our monograph, David Maimonides abundantly quotes from Ibn 'Ezra.

that does not, however, tally with David Maimonides'
biography. However, this could just be a literary locus.

We are in the dark too as to the time of redaction save the
fact that the author lived after R. Tanḥūm Yerushalmī (*circa*
1220–1291), for he uses the latter's commentary on Songs, as
can be proved from the examples given below. On the other
hand, as far as can be ascertained, he was not influenced by
Joseph Ibn ʿAqnīn's commentary on Canticles nor any other
known to us.

As already stated, the author perceives in Canticles an
exchange between the soul and the intellect and he endeavors in
the development of the commentary to bring out the alternating
movement of their dialogue. As in Ibn ʿAqnīn's interpretation,
the soul expresses her desire to be united with the intellect,
despite the physical obstacles of nature. Intellect too is attracted
to the soul's beauty, which though inherent in her ethical and
intellectual virtues, is impaired by her attachment to matter.
While following this interpretation throughout the song, the
author does not exclude the possibility of a historical purport to
the work, as he explains in the following passage:

> Know that my intention in this commentary was solely to
> explain the principles of the sapiential sciences through
> the relationship of the soul, the intellect, supernal wisdom
> and the elements (*ṭabāʾiʿ*), for that was the intention of the
> author of this sublime song. If thou sayest, on the contrary,
> his intention was to express the situation of Israel in
> relation to God at the time of the exile, the First and
> Second Temples, or in Egypt, at the Revelation or the
> Messianic Era, you are at liberty to do so. But thou canst
> not state that the latter are its exclusive meaning.[31]

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[31] II Firkovitch Evr.-Arab. I. 3870, fol. 5a–b, in Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 556.

Though his style is relatively sober and unadorned with literary flourish, his language is imbibed with philosophical and mystical terminology. Comments on each verse, which are alternately put into the mouth of the soul and the intellect, are usually terse, sometimes to the point of obscurity. The author concludes his observations by recalling the verse at the end of his explanations with the words: this then is the signification of "such and such."

All in all we have before us a powerful and engaging interpretation of Canticles which not only supplements our knowledge of Jewish mystical exegesis of a Sufi-type, but also adds another manuscript to the works copied, if not authored, by R. David ben Joshu'a, last of the Maimonidean *negīdīm*.

Extracts

Since the full Arabic text has been published by us elsewhere,[32] we shall content ourselves with providing just a few extracts illustrative of the author's use in his explanations of meta-phorical exegesis and Sufi concepts.

> [Fol. 1a] "Look not upon me, that I am swarthy, that the sun hath tanned me" (Cant. 1:6).
> If thou beholdest the effect on me of the vicissitudes of existence, deem not that this effect is inherent in my divine essence. Moreover, if thou observest that the form of my complexion is disfigured and decomposed, do not consider that that has affected my reality, for I am not of the world of nature and the physical bodies.[33] I am but a

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[32] See above, n. 1.

[33] Cf. Tanḥūm's commentary on this verse (Bod. Poc. 320, fol. 14b in Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 549, n. 34.): "The meaning of this verse is that the soul states using human parlance: This blackness and swarthiness, which have affected me, are not inherent in me, but have overcome me through an accidental

bird and this [body] is temporarily my cage and my physical envelope.[34] This is the intention to which the [soul] alludes in these precious abodes.[35]

The following telling extract deals with the necessity of spiritual preparation under the guidance of a spiritual mentor. To this end, the soul is assisted by complying to the ways of the "ancient shepherds" and through the practice of solitude. The author perceives this idea in the verse "go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock."

He explains:

[Fol. 1b] "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock" (Cant. 1:8).
This is Intellect's speech (*lisān al-ḥāl*)[36] in reply to the soul's statement "I am black… Look not upon me... Tell me" (v. 5–7). By "if thou knowest not," he means: "if thou knowest not the discipline through thine own essence, then follow those that have preceded"[37] as if the verse had stated: "if thou knowest not the answer to the questions, thou wilt gather knowledge [from those that have preceded]." His design therewith was [to state] that if thou hast imagined the meaning of the knowledge of the

occurrence through my not having been preoccupied with that which perfects my essence."

[34] In the introduction to his commentary, Tanḥūm also compares the soul to an 'ensnared dove.' For the allegory of the soul as a bird or a prisoner, and the body as a tunic, see H. Malter, "Personification of Soul and Body," *JQR* 2 (1912), 453–79 and I. Goldziher, *Kitāb maʿānī al-nafs* (Berlin, 1907), 46, 50 (German Section).

[35] Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 549.

[36] Compare the expression used by Tanḥūm in the passage from his commentary cited in the previous note. For the meaning of this expression, cf. above, n. 15.

[37] Cf. Tanḥūm's commentary (Poc. 320. fol. 14b in Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 550.): "If thou knowest not this [knowledge] in such a manner as thy grasp it from and through thyself, without intermediary, then thou wilt be obliged to first obtain it from an external source."

statements, and they have been acquired by thee and none else, then thy situation is replete, O thou fairest among thy sisters.

Reflect on the pertinence of his reply "fairest among women" in response to her statement "I am black, but comely." Indeed, he acknowledged her essential beauty and recognized that the cause of these accidents, blackness and negative effects, was the satisfaction of the natural needs, inasmuch as her internal [essence] remains impervious to effects and accidents.

Observe how he did not specify that she was more beautiful than the other women for the souls are identical from the point of view of their species.[38] This demonstrates Intellect's greatness, for differentiation [among the souls], proceeds from the point of view of the [souls'] receptivity.

Upon concluding his appeal to her, he submitted a solution, saying: "go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." He meant "disengage thyself and emerge from thy body through solitary detachment." This explains the word "*thy*[self]." However, it is possible to consider this [construction] as idiomatic to the [Hebrew] tongue.

"The footsteps of the flock" means: aspire to the aims of the past souls[39]; *and* "pasture thy sheep": bring thine intellectual and ethical virtues in line with the aims of the ancient shepherds and follow solely the elect spirits. If thou beest a spiritual wayfarer, do not innovate unknown spiritual disciplines (*taslīkāt*),[40] but thou must strike the pegs of the tents of instruction on the spot where stood the tents of these ancients shepherds. This is the meaning to which we referred, namely if thou enterest not from the door which they opened, thou wilt not be received. This is the meaning of what we have said, namely: 'if thou enterest not by the open door, thou canst not be received.'

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[38] As propounded, for example, by Ibn Sīnā, *Risālat al-mabda' wal-ma'ād*, ed. A. Nūrānī, (Tehran, 1343H), 72.

[39] Cf. Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Inkishāf*, 50.

[40] The technical term used here for 'spiritual guidance,' *taslīk*, is especially peculiar to the Egyptian school of al-Kurānī (ob. 1367), who, according to al-Sha'arānī (*Ṭabaqāt*, vol. II [Cairo, 1954], 65), was known as a master of *taslīk*.

This, then, is the meaning of the verse "besides the shepherds' tents" (Cant. 1:8).[41]

As a comment on this passage, it can be pointed out that, in keeping with Sufi principles, the Jewish pietists saw absolute obedience to the spiritual guide as an obligation. Indeed, R. Abraham Maimonides declared in his *Kifāya*:

> He who walks the path without a guide (*musallik*) will find it difficult to reach the aim (*wuṣūl*) and will encounter obstacles on his path. Some will go astray from the [straight path] or will think that they have already arrived at attainment whereas in fact they have not yet reached it, as happened to many of the false prophets. Whereas if they were to have had a mentor who himself had attained the aim – and if the disciple were gifted and had correctly fulfilled the instructions of his guide – he would also have reached the aim.[42]

In his interpretation of "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Cant. 2:7), our commentator interprets the "vow of the soul" as a warning against divulging the secret of love unless preceded by the necessary preliminaries. This warning may perhaps echo the Sufi doctrine concerning the necessity of dissimulating the mystery of Divine Love:[43]

> [Fol. 6a] "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field" (Cant. 2:7). This is an oath the soul addresses to the Sages of Israel and the

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[41] Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 550.

[42] See Abraham Maimonides, *High Ways to Perfection*, II, ed. S. Rosenblatt (New York-Baltimore, 1928–1937), 422, See also Fenton, *Deux traités de mystique juive* 49–50.

[43] Indeed, according to Sufi tradition, the martyrdom of the classical Divine lover, al-Ḥallāfi, was due to his having transgressed this prohibition. Cf. L. Massignon, *La Passion de Hallāj*, t. I (Paris, 1975), 342.

seekers of the Lord [imploring them] not to proceed in divulging the truth of Love, the nature of its essence and what it entails both for the lover and the beloved, in the absence of preliminary preparation and until its time has come. The reason for which this oath is made on the "gazelles" and "hinds," is that the wisdom of this allegory hints that the "gazelles" are the great sages and the "hinds" are the prophets. The oath is addressed by the disciples to their masters and vice versa; by the disciples, in order for their masters to show restraint, and by the masters in order that the disciples be steadfast in their restraint. The expression "until it please (*tehpaṣ*)" (v. 7) is an allusion to such time as initiation (*irāda*)[44] is completed on the part of the aspirant (*murīd*)[45] in relation to his goal. It is also plausible to say that the oath on the "gazelles or the hinds" is on account of their dwelling permanently in the desert and that the "people of love" (*ahl al-maḥabba*)[46] often repair to the wilderness.[47]

The commentator can be almost poetic in his diction, as, for example, in his interpretation of the verse [Fol. 7b] "For the winter is past" (Cant. 2:11):

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[44] This term, normally designating 'will,' 'desire,' is used here in its Sufi technical sense of 'initiation' or 'discipleship.'

[45] The terms *ṭālib* (disciple, seeker) and *murīd* (aspirant) are the technical words used in Sufism to designate the followers of the mystical path. Our commentator relates this notion to the Hebrew verb *ḥfṣ*. Interestingly, in the *Murshid*, fol. 31a–b, David Maimonides too equates the term *murīd* with the Hebrew *ḥafeṣīm* (Neh. 1, 11), which was apparently the technical term employed by the Ḥasidīm when speaking of themselves. See also *Deux traités de mystique juive*, 39 and 264.

[46] This is a byname for Sufi in Muslim literature.

[47] Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 557–8. The author is alluding to the discipline of solitary devotion (*khalwa*), often practiced by the Sufis in the desert, which was also advocated by the pietists. Though the latter idealized the nomadic life-style of the Patriarchs, they recommended 'domestic solitude.' Cf. *Deux traités*, 58–66, 162–3.

The beloved began to explain the disappearance of the obstacles which had delayed the soul from the obtaining of perfection and its ascension towards its [supernal] world. [The Intellect] exclaims: "the time of ignorance is past and the impediments of custom and habit have melted and the low forms have all been effaced and substituted by virtues." This is the meaning of the verse: "the winter is past." The sky is clear, the night moonlit, and the stars of speculation are shining. The rain has gone and there is nought to hinder thee from traversing the stations, rending the veils (*taḥrīq al-ḥujūb*)[48] and removing all obstacles.[49]

A drift of the dialogue sequence can be gathered from his comments on Cant. 5:1–4, which are also typical of his allegorical method:

[Fol. 12b–13a] "I am come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ... eat, O friends; yea, drink abundantly" (Cant 5:1).
The Intellect exclaims: "I entered my garden, signifying thereby that I have been united with the soul and the soul with me[50]. She has acted with me with the noblest virtue and there exhaled from me the most fragrant recollection, the sincerest outcome and the most blissful delight. Eat then from this table, O brethren of truth and drink of the beverages of its gnosis!"
"I sleep, but my heart waketh; Hark! my beloved knocketh: Open to me , my sister, my love" (Cant 5:2).
The soul replies: "Though I slumber amongst the natural elements (*ṭabā'i'*) and am oblivious of my [true] world, the traces of my Beloved are as a voice knocking, and, as

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[48] The 'rending of the veils' is a Sufi expression designating spiritual progression. Hujwīrī's classical Sufi manual, *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (Eng. trans. by R.A. Nicholson, London, 1911), is based on the progressive rending of the eleven veils. In certain sources the veils envelop the *rūḥ* and are uncovered by recollection (*dhikr*). Cf. L. Massignon, *Passion de Ḥallāj*, t. III, p. 26, n. 3.
[49] Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 559–60.
[50] Significantly, the author uses the verb *ittaḥada,* which is the consecrated Sufi term for 'mystical union.'

it pierces my ear, [I realize that nature] is superfluous and devoid of promise."

"Open to me" refers to God's love of the perfection of the souls, or, if you prefer, [it alludes] to the Intellect's anticipation of the severing of the bonds of nature and the undoing of the locks of the mysteries[51] and allegories.

"I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (v. 3).

The soul says: "I have doffed the tunic of matter (*hayūlī*), how then can I again don it? I have cleansed my nature from the defilement of time, how then can I again soil it?" He alludes thereby to the soul's discourse to Intellect saying: "Deal kindly with me O Beloved, so that I leave not the body while still in possession of that which will necessitate my return to it."

"My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him" (v. 4).

The soul says: "How may I be patient without seeking union (*wiṣāl*) and the goals, having been excited by the perfume and traces of knowledge?" She means thereby that he attracted me with his very first thought and excited me with his first trace. The *hole* refers here to the *barzaḥ*,[52] which is the curtain of partition, the noble veil, interposed between her and her Beloved.[53]

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[51] *iṣṭilāḥāt*, the code words used in the initiatory discipline. 'Locks' (*aqfāl*) can also be a technical term. In some Sufi sources they are related to the inner heart (*sirr*), and are opened by proximity (*qurb*). Cf. Massignon, *Passion de Ḥallāj*, t. III, p. 26, n. 3.

[52] This is a Sufi technical term, especially typical of Ibn Arabi's school, referring to the 'intelligible limit between the imaginal world and reality.' See W. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany, 1989), 14–5, 117–8. Tanḥūm Yerushalmī, who, it seems, is the source of our commentator, uses the same term in his explanation of Cant. 7, 1 (Poc. 320, fol. 60b): "For the soul is like a partition (*barzakh*) twixt the domain of the body and its faculties, with its various desires and appetites, and the domain of the world of the intellects and the guidance which emanates from them upon the lower world."

[53] Fenton, "Perush misṭī," 568–9.

Finally, of singular interest is his explanation of Cant. 6:3, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" which is seen as an expression of the beloved's annihilation within the object of her love, designated by the Sufi technical notion *fanā'*.

> [Fol. 16b–17a] "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (Cant. 6:3). We have already explained earlier (fol. 8b, Cant. 2:15) that whenever thou turnest to the love of an object and desirest all that that object desires, then it is as though [that object] had become thyself and thou hast become it, insofar as thou possessest it and thou art enslaved unto it. To be sure, thine annihilation (*fanā'*) within it is a mighty witness and indication that he belongs to thee and thou belongest to him.[54]

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[54] Ibid., 574–5.

APPENDIX

New fragments from Abraham he-Ḥasīd's Commentary on the Song of Songs

The present text is based on the following manuscripts:

Q = Cambridge University Library, T-S Arabic 1b.7, which we described and published in 1981.[55] It covers Cant. 1:1 and, in an interpolated passage, Cant. 5:6. It is republished here on account of the improved readings now available through the discovery of the new fragment.

P = Russian National Library, St. Petersburg, II. Firk. I. 1124, frag. 113 and II. Firk. NS 908, frags. 13–14. These two pieces belong to the same manuscript and were recently discovered among the call-marks containing numerous, miscellaneous exegetical fragments.[56] They contain 13 lines of script written in an Egyptian square hand, covering Cant. 1:1 and 1:2–5. The text of the first fragment of P overlaps with Q and allowed the identification of the work.

ק=קמברידג׳ ט׳׳ס ערבית 1ב.7.
פ=פירקוביץ׳ א. I1124. דף 113
כ׳׳י פירקוביץ׳ ס.ח. 908, קטעים 13–14.

אברהם החסיד זק׳׳ל
שיר השירים וגו׳ אעלם אן אלעבראני אד׳א אראד אלאבלאג ואלתעטׄים אתצׄאף
אלמוצוף אלי אלג׳מע מנה כקולה מלך מלכים קדש קדשים. ואד׳א אראד אלתצגיר
ואלתחקיר יקול הבל הבלים עבד עבדים. פהד׳ה אלשירה למא כאנת עטׄמה אלקדושה

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[55] P. Fenton, "Some Judaeo-Arabic fragments by Rabbi Abraham he-Ḥasīd, the Jewish Sufi," *JJS* 26 (1981), 47–72.
[56] See Fenton, *Handlist*, 51.

עבר ענה בשיר השירים וכד'י קאלו כל השירות קדש ושיר השירים קודש הקדשים אי
יחצל מנהא אלגאיה אלקצוי ואלמטלוב אלאכ'יר [פ מתחיל] אד' כאנת מוצלה ללעאלם
אלרוחאני באסתעמאל אלקדושה [פ : ואלטהרה, טהארה] אלט'אהרה ו[פ : קדושת]
אלבאטנה ואפראט אלמחבה פיה תע' ואלתלד'אד' בד'כרה ובאסמאיה אלמקדסה. פמן
אראד אלסלוך פי דרך ייי אלמוצלה אלי באבה ואנפתח לה אלבאב כאן יצלה [פ :
פוצלה] פיצ'א כרים מנה תע' [פ : פהו] יבצר בה כל מא [פ : מן] דאכ'ל אלבאב [פ: והו
עאלם אלרוחאניין] פתחצל אלמכאשפה פיטלע עלי אסראר עג'בה וינצ'ר צור ג'מילה
ישתהי אלקרב מנהם ואלכ'טאב [פ: אלדנו אליהם ואלכלאם] מעהם יפתתן [פ: פי]
במחבתהם ויתאלם [פ: ויתוג'ע ענד] למפארקתהם והם אלמשאר [פ: אלמשיר] אליהם
פי קו' להט החרב המתהפכת [פ: מתהפכת פעמים אנשים ופעמים מלאכים[פעמים
נשים]. פעלי קדר וצול אלשכ'ץ וקדרתה יכון רויה אלצורה וג'מאל אלמנצ'ור אליה.
[פ: ואעלם אן אלכרוב הו אלצגיר פי אלסן] והד'ה אלמכאשפה ואלאתצאל יעבר ענהא
[פ: סמאה] אלחכים תארה בכלה ותארה ברעיה. ועבר ען אלקאצד לטלב הד'ה אלכלה
ואלרעיה [סמאה אלחכים] בדוד כקולה דודי לי וגו' כתפוח בעצי היער וגו'. וקאל פי
אלג'מע אלמצטחב לטלב הד'א אלמקצד [ק:וקולה אלג'מע שבה כל אלמצטחב פי טלב
אלמקצוד] והם בני הנביאים צרור המור דודי לי וגו'. [פ: וסמאה איצ'א] אשכול
הכופר [פ: קאל אשכול הכופר דודי לי ואשכל הכופר הו ענקוד אלקרנפל] לחסן
נט'אמה וגזארה רואיחה. וכד'לך צרור המור [נאפגה אלמסך]. פהד'א אשארה אלי
כמאל אלט'אהר ואלבאטן [פ: וסנבסט לך אלקול פי כשף הד'א אלקול אלעג'יב
אלמוצל ללמטלוב אלשריף אלד'י הו גאיה אלחכמה ואלעמל ואלארתיאץ' להד'א
אלמטלב].

וקולה לשלמה אראד בה אן הד'א אלשיר אלמחכם נט'מה שלמה בן דוד ענד אפראט
[פ: סוף] מחבתה ועשקה פיה תע' [...] יכון אלוצול אלי [..] אלמקאם אלג'ליל [...]
בטלב אלחכמה אלמ[וצלה] אליה אלשיר אלעטי'ם וקאלו [עאל'ֹ'ס] כל שלמה שבשיר
השירים קדש [...] קאל [אשר] לשלמה [...] [..] עלי שרחה תסאב [...]הו ללה לה
[...] השירה [...] לך: ישקני

13א

יקול בי תמכה ימינך יעני סעדתני ענאיתך
ואדעתני למא דבקה נפשי אחריך
ולולא כאנת אלתורה הי אלשריעה להדא
אלי הד׳ה אלטרק. פקאל כריח שמניך טובים
אשארה אלי כ׳ואץ אהל אלשריעה אלתי
תחקקו פי אעמאלהא ודומהם(?) אלצעוד
ואלארתקא אליה תע׳ אלד׳י אעמאלהם
ריח ראה כך׳ טיבה רואיחהם [...]
בני כריח השדה. ולמא כאן אלשמן מנה
מא יצ׳י אלט׳למאת ומא ינשר אלפאיחה
אלטיבה אלג׳ייזה (?) פכד׳לך אלצאאת נפוס
מסתעמליהא אעני אלתורה ושראיעהא
מן [ישבה]ו אלטיב אלדי יפוח

13ב

אלבעד. ומן כ׳ואץ אלדהן אן יעלו אלמא. פכד׳לך
תרתקי נפוס אלסאלכין אלי אלצעוד. וקד סמית
אלתורה טוב ומנתחליהא טובים. קאל כי לקח
טוב נתתי לכם תורתי אל תעזובו. וקאל הטיבה
ייי לטובים. ולמא כאנוא אלמלכים יצב עליהם
שמן המשחה והו עלאמה אלתכ׳ציץ ואלאנקטאע
לחד אללה וחד שריעתה אלחק אלמקול ענהא
והיתה עמו וקרא בו כל ימי חייו והי
אלמוצלה אלי אלדרג׳ה אלעליא. פקאל לריח שמניך
טובים ואלד׳י ילהג׳ באלכתאב פינבגי לה
אן יהאב אסמא אללה ויתלד׳ד׳ בד׳כרה תע
ובאסמאיה אלמקדסה פתתלד׳ד׳ אלנפס ענד
צב אלדהן אלטיב עליהא אד׳ כאן לא יצלהא
נפעא מן אלמאכול ואלמשרוב סוי אלמשמום

14א

אלחסן והו קו׳ שמן תורק שמך. והד׳א הו
אלמבלג פי מחבתה תעאלי והו קולה
על כן עלמות אהבוך. ומת׳ל אלכ׳ואץ
באלנסואן בקו׳ עלמות לאנקטאעהם ען שואגל
אלדניא ואשתגאלהם בחבה תעאלי. פקאל בעד
ד׳לך משכני אחריך נרוצה. פכלמא חרכתני
באנוארך ואשראקך פאנא אחאצ׳ר כ׳לף
שריעתך כקו׳ אחרי יי׳ אלהיכם תלכו אלי אן
ידכ׳לני אלמלך אלי כ׳דרה אלמכ׳תץ למלך הו
אלאלאה תעאלי וחדריו הו מחצר הפנימית
לאנתקאל אלי דאר אלחיאה דאר אלכ׳לוד
ואלסעוד. פחיניד׳ תתקוי אלנפס ותנבסט
והד׳ה הי אלסעאדה ואללד׳ה אלתי לא תמת׳ל

14ב

ולא תקאס נגילה ונשמחה בך . נזכירה דודיך
מיין וגמ׳ אלד׳י מקול ענהא עין לא ראתה אלהים.
וקיל ירויון מדשן ביתך וגמ׳ וקאל טוב יום
בחציריך מאלף. ולמא כאנת הד׳ה אלנצוץ פיהא
מן אלגמוץ׳ מא ילוח לך מנהא תאוילאת גיר
מא ד׳כר פקאל מא הו אבין מן הד׳א
שחורה אני ונאוה ואן כאנת שחורה מע
הד׳ה אלמאדה אלמוג׳ודה פאנהא נאוה
באלצורה אלשריפה באלעקל אלמוג׳וד אלמקול
ענהא צלם אלהים ודמותו אלמוצל ללגאיאת
פאן כאן כאהלי קדר אלסוד למא א[חרק]ת
עליהא אלשמוס פהי מן אלכמאל ואלביאן
כשקאק שלמה אסתדראך פי קו׳ ישקני מנשיקות

Translation
Fragment I, Cant. 1:1

Abraham the Pious, may the memory of the holy be a blessing.

The Song of Songs. Know that when the Hebrew tongue desires to express [1b] the superlative, it adjoins the noun to its plural as it is said "The King of Kings" (Ez. 36:7), "the Holy of Holies" (Ex. 29, 37 and elsewhere), and similarly when the diminutive is to be expressed, such as "Vanity of vanities" (Eccl. 1:2), "Slave of slaves" (Gen. 9:2)[57]. As this Song is of extreme holiness, it is referred to[58] ... as the Song of Songs. For this reason, they (sc. the Rabbis) have said "All songs are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holy of holies" (*Cant. Rabb*. 1:2), since it is a means of attaining the ultimate end (*al-ghāya al-quṣwā*)[59] and final goal [2a] because it leads to the spiritual realm through the practice of inward and outward holiness[60] as well as through

[57] This grammatical observation is to be found in Isaac Ibn Ġayyāt's Commentary on Eccles. (Qāfiḥ, *Megillōt*, 273) and in Ibn 'Aqnīn's commentary on Canticles (Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Inkishāf*, 20). Judging from the large number of his books devoted to grammar (cf. E.J. Worman, "Two Book-Lists from the Cambridge Geniza Fragments," *JQR* 20 (o.s.) (1908), 460, Abraham he-Ḥasīd must have been a keen grammarian.

[58] The scribe mistakenly inserted here the commentary to Cant. 5, 8. As he subsequently crossed this out, we have taken the liberty of placing the passage concerned at the end of the present text in order to re-establish the integrity of R. Abraham's introduction. This later passage allows the assumption that our author did indeed comment on the whole of Canticles.

[59] Most Sufi orders agree that the ultimate stage along the Spiritual Path is the Love of God. Baḥyā also (*al-Hidāya ilā gharā'iḍ al-qulūb*, ed. A.S. Yahuda [Leiden 1912], 378) considers it the goal (*ghāyat al-marātib*). The specific term *al-ghāya al-quṣwā* to designate the love of God is used in al-Ghazali, ed., *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. IV, ch. 6 (Beirut, n.d.), 294. R. David ha-Nagīd also uses it in the passage quoted above, n. 28.

[60] In Abraham Maimonides (*Comment. on Genesis and Exodus*, ed. E. Wiesenberg [London 1958], 305 ff. "outward holiness" refers to the removal of uncleanliness through ritual ablution, whereas "inward holiness" is the

the extreme love of God and the delight in His recollection (*dhikr*) and holy names.

Whosoever desires to tread the path of the Lord (*derekh*),[61] which leads to His gates, if those gates be opened to him, he will receive from Him a generous emanation (*fayḍ*) by which he will perceive all that lies within the gates, which is the world of spiritual entities. A vision (*mukāshafa*)[62] will take place and he will behold wondrous secrets and comely forms toward which he will long to draw nigh and with which he will desire to commune. Their love will enrapture him and he will grieve at their parting.[63] They are those alluded to in the verse "The flame

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purging of the hearts and the emptying of the thoughts of all except God. Cf. al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā'*, vol. I, ch. 3, 126.

[61] *Pace* G. Cohen (*art. cit.* 84); we agree with N. Wieder that this expression parallels the Sufi term *ṭarīqa*. It is used continuously in this sense by members of the pietist circle, such as the author of T-S NS 189.9, "this noble spiritual state (*maqām*) on the Path (*maslūlō*) to God." Cf. ʿObadyah Maimonides *Treatise of the Pool*, 101: "Beware lest thou departest from thy path and destination, 'we shall go by the road of the King' (Num. 20, 17), 'we shall go up by the Highway' (Num. 20, 19)," and David Maimonides, *al-Murshid*, 90: "the pietists, wayfarers (*sullāk*) in the path and way of God (*derekh ha-shem ū-maslūlō*)."

[62] "The lifting of the veils after spiritual training." Cf. al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, vol. I (Cairo, 1966), 226.

[63] It is interesting to compare this account of the ecstatic experience with ʿObadyah Maimonides, *Treatise of the Pool*, 82: "Upon achieving this state, the phenomena that were previously concealed from him and others, will be revealed to him. Reason's will shall strengthen and will reveal that which is inscribed on the 'Well-guarded Tablet'" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*). Divine visions will be manifested to him without his knowing whence they came. He will walk by the light of his intellect"; and ibid., 90 (fol. 12b) "When thou remainest alone with thy soul after having subdued thy passions, a gate will open before thee through which thou wilt contemplate wonders. When thy five external senses come to rest, thine internal senses will awaken and thou wilt behold a resplendent light (*nūr bāhir*) emanating leave a man bewildered"; ibid., 96: "Upon attaining to this degree, then all veils will be lifted and thou wilt behold naught but the Souls and the Intelligences and

of the turning sword" (Gen. 3:24),[64] "which turns into men, then angels, then women" (*Gen. Rabb*. 21:13), since it is in accordance with one's attainment and capacity, that vision of the form and the beauty of the spectacle takes place. The Sage (Solomon) at times refers to this vision and communion as "bride" and at others as "love," whereas the seeker (*qāṣid*)[65] of this "bride" and "love" [2b] is called "beloved," as it is said "My beloved is mine ... as an apple among the trees of the orchard, so is my beloved among the young men" (Cant. 2:3). The plural is here mentioned as an allusion to those who choose a master[66] in their quest for the goal, these are "the disciples of the prophets" (2 Kings 6:1 and elsewhere)[67]; "My beloved is a sachet of myrrh, a cluster of henna flowers" (Cant. 8:4), refers to the beauty of his manner and the abundance of his perfumes. Moreover, "sachet of myrrh" alludes to inward and outward

thou wilt perceive the Prophets and Saints in comely form." For the tradition underlying this account, see A. Altmann, "The Delphic maxim," in *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (London, 1969), 34ff.

[64] Maimonides also quotes this verse to describe the transient state of illumination "which appears and then vanishes," (Qāfiḥ, *Guide*, Intro., 6, and ibid., I:49, 110.)

[65] *Qāṣid* is a Sufi term for "aspirant," also employed in Abraham Maimonides, *High Ways*, II, 306.

[66] *iṣṭaḥaba*, VIIIth form, "to choose a master" or "to take an associate."

[67] Like Baḥyā (*al-Hidāya*, 374) who uses the term to designate "ascetics," Abraham Maimonides employs the expression "disciples of the prophets" in a general sense to designate the Jewish Sufis (Abraham Maimonides, *High Ways*, II, 136), those who follow in many respects the practice of the ancient Prophets of Israel. In a more particular sense, the expression refers to the master-disciple relationship practiced by the Prophets and, according to Abraham Maimonides, subsequently adopted first by the Sufis and then by the Jewish Sufis (ibid., II, 324, 422). Cf, also David Maimonides, *al-Murshid*, 42: "The way of pietism and the disciples of the Prophets." Moses Maimonides also lends this expression a special meaning (*Yesōdey ha-Tōrāh* VII:5). Indeed, his description of the nature of a Prophet (ibid., VII:1) could well be a description of a Jewish Sufi.

perfection. We shall expatiate on the unveiling of this marvelous verse which leads to the noble goal. The latter is the highest wisdom, action and discipline [leading] to this end.

As for "of Solomon," it means that this Song was composed by Solomon the son of David in his extreme passion and love (*'ishq*)[68] for God ... the attainment will be .... this majestic state .... through the quest for wisdom .... the great Song and they (the Rabbis) said "Every 'Solomon' mentioned in the Song of Songs is Holy (*TB. Seb*. 35b) .... is that it is God ..... this Song ... explanation ..... 'He kisses me' (Cant. 1:7)."

Fragment II, Cant. 1:3–5
[13a] and, as it is said: "For Thou hast been my help, [and in the shadow of Thy wings do I rejoice]. My soul cleaveth unto Thee; Thy right hand holdeth me fast" (Ps. 63:9). Had not the Torah led to this path.

Then he said: "Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance" (Cant. 1:3) as a reference to the virtue of the disciples of the Torah who through their deeds and sustained efforts have achieved the ascent towards Him, extolled be He, whose actions ... and goodly fragrance, as it is said: "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. 27:27) ... on account of his ointment and how he lights up the darkness and exhales a goodly and pleasant odor. Likewise the lights of the souls which perform them, that is the Torah and the precepts, [are like ointment, whose] perfume exhales from [13b] afar. One of the properties of ointment is that is floats upon the

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[68] The term *'ishq* "passionate love" was considered strong language and was censured in Sufi circles if used to denote man's love for God (*Risāla*, II, 615). However, the term was used in this context by Maimonides, cf. Vajda, *Amour de Dieu*, 135 n. 4 and Qāfiḥ, *Guide* III:51, 684.

surface of water. Likewise, the souls of the wayfarers ascend upwards. The Torah is called "good," and those that inherit it "the goodly ones." It is written "For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not my teaching," (Prov. 4:2) and it is also said: "Do good, O Lord, unto the good." (Ps. 125:4). When kings receive the oil of anointment which is the sign of consecration and their dedication unto God and unto the True Torah, about which it is written: "And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life" (Deut. 17:19) since it will lead him to the loftiest station.

He said: "Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance." (Cant. 1:3) It behooves him that meditates the [Holy] book, to fear the Divine names and to delight in the evocation of God and His holy Names. Thus the soul will delight at the moment of its anointment with the goodly oil, since it derives no pleasure from food and drink but only from a pleasant odour (*TB Berākhūt* 43b), as it is written: "thy name is as ointment poured forth" (Cant. 1:3).[69] This is an allusion to the individual who has attained Love of God, as it is said: "therefore do the maidens love thee" (ib.). He compared the elite to women in the expression "maidens," on account of their detachment from worldly pursuits and their dedication to Divine Love.

Thereafter he stated "Draw me, we will run after thee" (Cant. 1:4). The more thou movest me with thy lights and thine illuminations, the more I pursue thy Torah, as it is written "After the Lord your God shall ye walk" (Deut. 13:5) until the King has me enter his private chamber, that is God whose chambers are the

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[69] This is perhaps an allusion to the sensation of "anointment" and consecration reported by certain Jewish ecstatics at the height of the mystical experience. Cf. M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, 1987), ch. III, 1 and E. Wolfson, *Abraham Aboulafia, cabaliste et prophète* (Paris, 1999), 162–4.

inner court which lead to the seat of life, the seat of eternity and ascension. Whereupon the soul strengthens and delights.

"We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will find thy love more fragrant than wine!" (Cant. 1:4), this is the ineffable and incomparable bliss and pleasure, about which it is said "Neither hath the eye seen a God beside thee" (Is. 64:3), "They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house" (Ps. 36:9),[70] "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand" (Ps. 84:11).

On account of the obscurity inherent in these verses, thou canst only grasp the metaphorical interpretations (ta'wīlāt) and not what is [literally] stated. Therefore he expressed himself more clearly: "I am black, but comely, [O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar]." (Cant. 1:5), i.e. though she is black with this matter, she is nonetheless comely on account of her noble form because of the intellect which is called "the image and appearance of God" (cf. Gen. 1:27), which leads to the final aim. Even though she were like the black tents of Kedar for having been [tanned] by the sun, she nonetheless has perfection and brilliance, as expressed by Solomon by way of opposition, in the verse "Let him kiss me with the kisses [of his mouth]" (Cant. 1:2) [end].

Fragment III, Cant. 5:6[71]
Upon beholding the brilliant light (an-nūr al-bāhir)[72] and the world of spiritual beings, designated by the word "Bride," he says, "My soul failed when he spoke" (Cant. 5:6). This is an allusion to the soul's agitation at their meeting: as it is said "For

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[70] David Maimonides, *al-Murshid*, 58, also uses the metaphor of "fatness," as in the verse "my soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness" (Ps. 63:6), to designate spiritual delight.

[71] This is the passage that was erroneously interpolated in MS. Q, *art. cit.,* 52.

[72] Fenton, "Some Judaeo-Arabic fragments," 47–72 (see above n. 55).

my comeliness was altered [and no strength remained within me]" (Dan. 10:8),[73] "For how can this servant of my lord talk with this my lord [for as for me there remained no strength in me]" (v. 17).[74] The soul then takes delight in this sublime state, despite its disquiet and agitation. But nevertheless, this state does not endure, but it is as the lightning that flashes then disappears,[75] as he says ... [(v.6) "I sought him, but found him not"].

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[73] Moses Maimonides and his son Abraham Maimonides both use this verse to describe the ecstasy occasioned by prophetic inspiration. See: Qāfiḥ, *Guide*, II:41, 420; idem, *Yesōdey ha-Tōrāh* VIl: 2; and Abraham Maimonides, *Comment on Genesis*, 325.

[74] Cf. Abraham Maimonides, *High Ways*, II:60.

[75] See Fenton, *Handlist*, 51 (cf. above, n. 56).

LOGISTICAL AND OTHER OTHERWORLDLY PROBLEMS IN SAADYA

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The focus of this study is the seventh *maqāla* of Saadya's *Kitāb al-Amānāt wal-I'tiqādāt* (Book of Beliefs and Opinions), the subject of which is the physical revival of the dead (*iḥyā' al-mawtā*). Saadya wrote two rather different versions of this *maqāla*, one preserved in Oxford and one in Leningrad. Of the ten *maqālāt* of the *Amānāt*, this is the only one found in two versions. Scholars have not been able to agree as to which of the two is the revised one, or whether one of the two is in fact a separate treatise, never intended to be included in the *Amānāt.* The doubts concerning this *maqāla* have confused Saadya scholars since Samuel Landauer first edited the *Amānāt* in 1880,[1] and have continued to plague them even after Haggai Ben-Shammai finally clarified the relationship between the Oxford and Leningrad manuscripts in his lecture at the seventh international conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies in Strasbourg in 1995. In the present paper I will examine the two different resurrection accounts, with special

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[1] S. Landauer, ed., *Kitāb al–Amānāt wa'l–I'tiqādāt von Sa'adja b. Jūsuf al–Fajjūmī* (Leiden, 1880).

attention to Saadya's interest in the specific details and problems concerning the lives of the resurrected – what I refer to in my title as logistical and other otherworldly problems. I will suggest why the Leningrad recension of the seventh *maqāla* fits in better with the overall plan of Saadya's book, and will conclude that this recension should be considered the later version, intentionally revised by Saadya himself to replace the earlier Oxford recension. This conclusion is in line with the conclusions reached by Ben-Shammai on the basis of textual considerations.[2]

The Two Versions of the Seventh Maqāla
First let me clarify the confusion concerning the two different versions of the seventh *maqāla*. As we shall soon see, the differences between the two are significant. However, when Landauer edited the *Amānāt* in 1880, he chose to ignore the Leningrad recension completely, and indeed doubted its authenticity.[3] Wilhelm Bacher, who edited the Leningrad recension in 1896, showed that the work is authentic, and considered it a revised version intended to circulate as a separate polemical treatise. Bacher considered the possibility that Saadya had intended this recension to replace the original one as the seventh *maqāla* of the *Amānāt*.[4] Alexander Altmann, in his abridged translation of the *Amānāt* in 1945, rejected this possibility, arguing that "such an assumption cannot be accepted." Altmann continued:

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[2] See Haggai Ben–Shammai, "Textual Problems in Saadya's *Kitāb al–Amānāt*," to be published in the proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of the Society for Judaeo–Arabic Studies, ed. Paul B. Fenton. I thank Professor Ben–Shammai for giving me a draft of this paper.

[3] Ed. Landauer, *Kitāb al–Amānāt,* viii–ix.

[4] W. Bacher, "Die zweite Version von Saadja's Abschnitt über die Wiederbelebung der Todten," in *Festschrift zum achtzigsten Geburtstage Moritz Steinschneider's* (Leipzig, 1896), 219–26.

> The text of the Leningrad recension does not fit in with the character of the other chapters of the book. Its lengthy title, opening laudation and different method of presentation render it unsuitable for inclusion as a chapter amongst the other chapters of the book. It can only be considered a separate treatise.[5]

Samuel Rosenblatt, in his 1948 English translation of the *Amānāt*, following Landauer, translated the Oxford recension for the seventh *maqāla*, although he also translated the "variant" version in small print as an appendix to his translation.[6] The recent editor of the *Amānāt*, Joseph Qāfiḥ, dismissed the Leningrad version as an early version that Saadya later changed. Nevertheless, he chose to include two pages from the Leningrad version as an appendix to his edition.[7] Few believed the Leningrad version represented an intentional revision by Saadya to his book, even though it was this version of the *maqāla* that was translated into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon in 1186, and has therefore been the version studied by countless Jews until the present day. As Ben-Shammai observed, with the growing popularity of Qāfiḥ's edition, "it seemed that the gap between the edition of the Arabic original text and the still very popular

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[5] Alexander Altmann, trans., *Saadya Ga'on: Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* (Oxford, 1946); reprint, in *Three Jewish Philosophers* (New York, 1973), 21. Contrary to this view, I will suggest that the Leningrad recension fits in quite well in the book. I am not troubled by the lengthy title or opening laudation because several of the *maqālāt* have their own peculiarities. It should also be recalled that the beginning of this version is attested only by Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation. In any case, I see the Leningrad recension as a revised version, which might be expected to have a slightly different style.

[6] Samuel Rosenblatt, trans., *Saadia Ga'on: The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (New Haven, 1948).

[7] Saadya Ga'on, *Kitāb al–Mukhtār fī al–Amānāt wal–I'tiqādāt*, ed. Joseph Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1970), 218, n. 1. The two pages from the Leningrad version are on pp. 334–5. Judah ibn Tibbon's translation of the Leningrad version is on pp. 326–34.

Tibbonian translation was irreparable." Thanks to Ben-Shammai himself, this is no longer the case, and the gap is narrowing.[8] Although he did not specifically address the issue of the seventh *maqāla*, he showed on the basis of the recent early dating of the Leningrad manuscript[9] and the strong testimonia of the many Geniza fragments of the *Amānāt* that the Leningrad manuscript represents a more reliable version of the text than the Oxford manuscript upon which both Landauer and Qāfiḥ based their editions. He reported that one quarter of the some four dozen Geniza fragments of the *Amānāt* are of the seventh *maqāla*, and of these, only one is closer to the Oxford recension than to the Leningrad one.[10] In short, it now seems on textual grounds that the Leningrad recension of the seventh *maqāla* was at a very early stage an integral part of the *Amānāt*.

The Philosophic Import of the Belief in Resurrection
If the Leningrad recension of the seventh *maqāla* is indeed a revision of an earlier version, we may well ask why Saadya revised his text. In this connection, it is useful to consider the philosophic import of this theological teaching. When the

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[8] Of course, such changes cannot be expected to take place at once, parti–cularly as Ben–Shammai's paper was not published at once (see above, n. 2). Thus we find that Dov Schwartz in his wide–ranging study on messianism in medieval Jewish thought (Dov Schwartz, *Ha–Ra'ayon ha–Meshiḥi ba–Hagut ha–Yehudit bi–mei ha–Beinayyim* [Ramat Gan, 1997]) repeatedly cites the seventh *maqālah* from Qāfiḥ's translation of the Oxford recension and not Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of a text similar to the Leningrad recension.

[9] See Ben–Shammai, "Textual Problems," n. 2. Ben–Shammai, basing himself on the results of a recent study of the Leningrad MS by Dr. Mordechai Glatzer, dates the manuscript from the second half of the tenth century, and suggests that it may have been copied from a *Vorlage* that was "authorized, or authenticated, or approved, by Saadya himself." Saadya wrote the *Amānāt* in 933.

[10] Ibid.

eleventh-century Ash'arite theologian, al-Ghazali, reflected
upon the teachings of the leading Islamic *falāsifa*, he believed he
had found many errors – three in particular for which he accused
them of *kufr* or infidelity. The philosophers, al-Ghazali claimed,
deny the creation of the world, that God knows particulars, and
the resurrection of the dead (*ba'th al-ajsād*).[11] al-Ghazali's
charge of infidelity, which, if substantiated, would carry with it
the death penalty in Islam, led a century later to the cessation of
the public study of Aristotelian philosophy by Muslims in Spain
and other parts of the Islamic world.[12] Why was the physical

[11] See al–Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, ed. and trans.
Michael E. Marmura (Provo, Utah, 1997)*,* 230; standard edition, *Tahāfut al–
falāsifa*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut, 1927), 254. Future page references to
the *Tahāfut al–falāsifa* will be to Marmura's edition and translation (facing
pages), with the corresponding pages in the Bouyges edition given in
parentheses. On the three counts of infidelity, see also al–Ghazali, *al–
Munqidh min al–ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error), trans. W. Montgomery Watt
in his *The Faith and Practice of Al–Ghazālī* (London, 1953), 37–8. The title
of the twentieth and final chapter of al–Ghazali's *Tahāfut al–falāsifa* is "In
Refutation of their Denial of Resurrection of Bodies and the Return of the
Souls to the Bodies (*wa–radd al–arwāḥ ilā al–abdān*) and the Existence of
Corporeal Hell and Paradise and the [Large]–Eyed Ḥūr and the Rest of What
Men Have Been Promised about It" (*Tahāfut*, 212 [235]). At the very end of
the *Tahāfut*, 230 (254), in the passage enumerating his three charges of
infidelity against the *falāsifa*, he writes more simply: "and their denial of
resurrection of bodies (*ba'th al–ajsād*) and their gathering (*al–ḥashr*)."
[12] After Averroes, the study of philosophy was prohibited in the Almohad
Empire. See Joseph Puig, "Materials on Averroes's Circle," *Journal of Near
Eastern Studies* 51 (1992): 251. Consider also the statement of Ibn Sa'īd,
written in the middle of the thirteenth century: "Similarly, Ibn Ḥabīb was put
to death by al–Ma'mūn (r. 1227–1232) for engaging in this science in Seville.
It is a science that is detested in al–Andalus. One cannot study it in public,
and for this reason writings on this subject are concealed." Quoted in al–
Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al–ṭīb min ghuṣn al–Andalus al–raṭīb*, ed. R. Dozy et al.,
Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne (Leiden, 1855–
1861), v. 2, 125.

resurrection of bodies after death such a cardinal principle for al-Ghazali?

Al-Ghazali did not claim, as he could have, that the philosophers deny the immortality of the soul. Rather, he was careful to point out that they hold that there *are* spiritual rewards and punishments, and that the soul continues to exist after the death of the body in states of indescribably great pleasure or pain.[13] The infidelity of the Islamic philosophers consists simply in their denying the return of the souls to bodies after death and the details of the rewards and punishments in physical Paradise and Hell.

The task of defending the *falāsifah* against al-Ghazali's accusations was undertaken by the eminent *faqīh* and *qāḍī*, Abū'l-Walīd Ibn Rushd or Averroes, who also happened to be the leading Islamic philosopher of the day. Averroes first tried neutralizing al-Ghazali's explosive charges with a short treatise, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, in which he endeavored to show that philosophy is in agreement with religion, that al-Ghazali's accusations of infidelity are false, and that true philosophers can in no way be considered infidels. After this, he wrote a lengthy dialectical response, the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, whose aim was to show the weaknesses in al-Ghazali's arguments against the philosophers. Now in both these efforts Averroes failed, in the very real sense that the rich tradition of philosophic study within the Islamic community, which had been inaugurated by al-Farabi, essentially came to an end with his own death. Al-Ghazali's charges had made it too dangerous to engage publicly in philosophy or to write philosophic compositions or commentaries. This is not the occasion to try to uncover why

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[13] See *Tahāfut al–falāsifa*, 212–8 (235–41), and al–Ghazali, *al–Munqidh min al–ḍalāl*, 37.

Averroes failed – after all, to some extent, his replies to al-Ghazali's three charges were quite ingenious – but it will be instructive to recall his brief responses in both works to the claim that the *falāsifa* reject the belief in resurrection of the dead.

In the *Faṣl al-maqāl*, Averroes states that according to al-Ghazali, Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi and Avicenna are infidels because of their allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the "gathering of the bodies [*ḥashr al-ajsād*] and the states of the Hereafter [*aḥwāl al-ma'ād*]." In his denial of this claim, Averroes does *not* speak of the philosophers' beliefs about resurrection, but rather about their views of otherworldly happiness and misery [*al-sa'āda al-ukhrawiyya wa'l-shaqā' al-ukhrawī*] and a bit later about the states of the Hereafter [*aḥwāl al-ma'ād*]. Insofar as al-Ghazali acknowledged the philosophers' acceptance of spiritual happiness and misery after death, Averroes' decision to speak in a general way and not to focus on details of the physical resurrection is somewhat surprising. His specific defense is one of agreement and attack. He agrees that otherworldly happiness and misery is one of the principles of the Law (*uṣūl al-shar'*), and accordingly agrees that whoever denies it is an infidel (*kāfir*). He adds that "anyone [is also an infidel] who believes that there is no otherworldly happiness and misery, and that the only purpose of this teaching is that men should be safeguarded from one another in their bodily and sensible lives, that it is but a ruse [*ḥīla*], and that man has no goal other than his sensible existence."[14] What he does not explain, as he does in

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[14] Averroes, *Faṣl al–maqāl*, trans. George F. Hourani, in his *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* (London, 1961), 59. I have slightly modified Hourani's translation. Averroes here does not deny the political utility of the belief in the Hereafter, nor does he lie. Philosophers do not refrain from denying resurrection of the dead for political reasons alone. They

reply to the other two accusations of al-Ghazali, are the opinions of the philosophers on this religious principle. Rather, he explains that there is room for interpretation, but only on the part of scholars, on the question of the various states of the Hereafter. He then briefly takes an offensive position, focusing his accusation against al-Ghazali himself and the Sufis, whom he claims interpret these states against the opinions of the Ash'arites who hold that the description of these states must be taken in their apparent meaning.[15]

too hold that man has a goal beyond his sensible existence. The religious belief in the Hereafter, and in particular the resurrection of the dead, was a representation of this truth that could be comprehended by the multitude. Indeed for many of them, it was the only way to grasp it. Thus in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, the philosophic tale written by Averroes' mentor Ibn Ṭufayl, Ḥayy and Absāl learn that belief in the religious Law "is the only way in which this group [sc., the multitude], which has the desire but not the capacity for salvation, can achieve it" (Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān,* trans. George N. Atiyeh, in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi [Glencoe, Ill., 1963], 160–1). In his introduction to this work, Ibn Ṭufayl had censured al–Farabi for writing in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* that human happiness "is achieved only in this life and in this very world." Ibn Ṭufayl wrote: "A doctrine like this leads all men to despair of God's mercy, and places the wicked and the good in the same category since, according to this doctrine, all men are destined for nothingness. This is a slip that cannot be rectified, and a false step that cannot be remedied" (ibid., 140).

[15] See *Faṣl al–maqāl*, 53, 58–61. Averroes' claim that al–Ghazali in other works denied bodily resurrection led him to say about al–Ghazali that "he adhered to no one doctrine in his books but was an Ash'arite with the Ash'arites, a Sufi with the Sufis and a philosopher with the philosophers" (61). Was there any truth to this damning accusation? It should be noted that the same accusation in the same context had been leveled against al–Ghazali by Ibn Ṭufayl in his introduction to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, 140–1: "What he says in them [his books] depends on his public; he says one thing in one place and a different thing in another. He charges others with unbelief because they hold certain doctrines, then turns about and accepts them as lawful. Among other things, he charges the philosophers with unbelief, in his *Incoherence*, for their denial of resurrection of the body [*ḥashr al–ajsād*] … But at the

Averroes' brief response in the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* to the charge that the philosophers deny resurrection is quite surprising, and one of the most remarkable passages in his entire corpus. Here he directly addresses the issue of resurrection (*ḥashr al-ajsād*), arguing quite simply that no true philosopher would deny this principle. He writes:

> The philosophers in particular, as is only natural, regard this doctrine as most important and believe in it most, and the reason is that it is conducive to an order amongst men on which man's being, as man, depends and through which he can attain the greatest happiness proper to him, for it is a necessity for the existence of the moral and speculative virtues and of the practical sciences in man. … In short, the philosophers believe that religious laws are necessary political arts, the principles of which are taken from natural reason and inspiration, especially in what is common to all religions. … The philosophers further hold that one must not object … to any of the general religious

outset of his *Mīzān* [*al–'amal*], he says that this same tenet is definitely held by the Sufi masters … and he himself holds the same belief as the Sufis and that he had arrived at this conviction after a long and detailed study." Modern scholars are not sure what to make of this passage in the *Mīzān*. T.J. Winter, e.g., writes in *Al–Ghazālī, The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife, Kitāb dhikr al–mawt wa–mā ba'dahu* (Cambridge, 1989), xxx, n. 77: "Mention should be made here of the *Mīzān al–'amal*, an ethical tract attributed to Ghazālī which presents an explicit denial of physical reward and punishment after death (ed. M. Abū'l–'Alā [Cairo, 1973], 15–6). … Although it would appear the work contains an admixture of genuine Ghazālīan material, the assertion referred to above is too remote from Ghazālī's usual position to be accepted as a reliable indicator of his views." On the esoteric aspect of al–Ghazali's writings, see Hava Lazarus–Yafeh, *Studies in Al–Ghazzali* (Jerusalem, 1975), ch. 5. As for Averroes' references in the *Faṣl* to the Ash'arites, it seems that most of them are made for rhetorical purposes. Thus the claim that al–Ghazali and the Sufis really held positions contrary to the Ash'arites calls into question al–Ghazālī's loyalty towards Ash'arism. On the question of al–Ghazali's adherence to the principles of Ash'arism, see Oliver Leaman, "Ghazālī and the Ash'arites," *Asian Philosophy* 6 (1996): 17–27, and the secondary literature cited there.

principles … for instance, bliss in the beyond and its
possibility; for all religions agree in the acceptance of
another existence after death, although they differ in the
description of this existence. … It belongs to the necessary
excellence of a man of learning that he should not despise
the doctrines in which he has been brought up … and that
if he expresses a doubt concerning the religious principles
in which he has been brought up … he merits more than
anyone else that the term unbeliever be applied to him,
and he is liable to the penalty for unbelief. … Thus to
represent the beyond in material images is more
appropriate than purely spiritual representation.[16]

No philosopher then would deny the resurrection of the dead
because all realize the central importance of this teaching for the
political welfare of the city.[17] It is a principle of the Law that

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[16] *Averroes' Tahāfut al–tahāfut*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut, 1930), 581–5;
trans. Simon Van den Bergh, *Tahāfut al–tahāfut (The Incoherence of the
Incoherence)* (London, 1969), 359–61.

[17] This is true also of Avicenna, at least in his exoteric writings. Thus he
writes in his *al–Mashriqiyyūn*, printed in *Manṭiq al–mashriqiyyīn* (Cairo,
1910), 3, that the "revealed law (*shar'*) maintains, and reason will not deny"
that the body will also enjoy pleasures after death. However, in his *al–Risāla
al–aḍḥawiyya fī amr al–maʿād*, ed. Sulaymān al–Dunyā (Cairo, 1949), 53,
Avicenna explains that resurrection of the body "should be understood as a
symbol or allegory which has the object of inducing the mass of humanity to
persist in virtuous behavior." These two passages are cited from the
Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed., s.v. "ḳiyāma". Consider also the passage in
Avicenna, *al–Shifā', al–Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. M.Y. Moussa et al. (Cairo, 1960), 443
(also in *al–Najāt* [Cairo, n.d.], 305), trans. Michael E. Marmura in Lerner and
Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy* (above, n. 14), 101: "He must instill in
them the belief in the resurrection [*al–maʿād*] in a manner they can conceive
and in which their souls find rest. He must tell them about eternal bliss and
misery in parables they can comprehend and conceive. Of the true nature of
the afterlife he should only indicate something in general: that it is something
that 'no eye has seen and no ear heard.'" Avicenna thus, like Averroes,
recognized the importance of the belief in the resurrection of the dead for the
political welfare of the city as well as for the happiness of the individual (see
above, n. 14).

must be accepted by all. Of course, not to deny the doctrine and to acknowledge its political importance is not necessarily the same as actually believing in the details of resurrection.[18] But this was not a point Averroes wished to emphasize. His intention was simply to disprove al-Ghazali's claim that the philosophers deny resurrection.

Saadya's Two Accounts of Resurrection

If Saadya then attached any importance to the political value of the doctrine of resurrection,[19] and if he indeed revised his *maqāla* on this subject, one would expect the revision to depict a more detailed and inviting picture of the Hereafter. Indeed, in

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[18]Averroes' views here on the political importance of resurrection are reflected in the *Ma'aseh Nissim* of Nissim of Marseilles (early fourteenth century). See Colette Sirat, "The Political Ideas of Nissim ben Moses of Marseilles" [in Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 9 (1990) (= *Shlomo Pines Jubilee Volume, On the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, II): 53–76. According to Nissim ben Moses, resurrection is one of the three principles of Judaism that are posited on the basis of faith alone. Writes Nissim: "It is clear that it is posited on faith alone, for its matter is far from the intellect. It is also clear that it is a principle of the Torah because without it, the multitude – all of them – would not be strengthened to do good and prevented from doing evil. Therefore, all religions acknowledge it and posit it." Nissim explains that Maimonides counted it a fundament "because it is of great benefit. … It is fitting and proper to believe in it and, although it is only briefly alluded to in the Torah, it is one of the great principles and pillars of religion" (ibid., 66–7); for the full text see H. Kreisel, ed. *Ma'aseh Nissim* (Jerusalem, 2000), 156–7 and 106. Did Nissim know Averroes' *Tahāfut*? If one accepts the traditional dating for the *Ma'aseh Nissim* (between 1302 and 1305), this seems unlikely. Sirat, however, on the basis of other considerations, suggests a later dating (see ibid., 54–5). The question of the possible influence of the *Tahāfut* on Nissim should thus be explored further.

[19] For similar examples of Saadya's religio–political awareness and instances where Saadya's statements seem to reflect early Arabic writings on political philosophy, see Haggai Ben–Shammai, "Saadya's Introduction to Isaiah as an Introduction to the Books of the Prophets" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (1991), 373–9.

accord with the Mu'tazilite teaching that "God strengthens man's motives to good action by arousing the desire for reward if he does it,"[20] it would seem that the more feasible and enticing the picture of the Hereafter, the more the reader would be intent to do what must be done in order to merit its incomparable rewards. Let us now turn to Saadya's two accounts of resurrection and the differences between them.

Bacher has already pointed to the general relation between the two recensions, although some of his statements need modification. He observed that the entire contents of the Oxford version have been worked into the Leningrad one. This statement must be qualified as there is much that has been eliminated, but in a general sense it is true that the various themes in the Oxford version are all found in Leningrad. On the other hand, he noted that Leningrad contains parts that do not exist in Oxford. Bacher further observed that the arrangement of material in the Oxford version is quite different from that in Leningrad. This fact is immediately evident from a chart he prepared showing the parallel passages in the Oxford and Leningrad versions of the seventh *maqāla*. He also marked in this chart the relatively few places of verbal or near verbal correspondence between them.[21] What are the differences between these two versions?

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[20] George F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism* (Oxford, 1971), 136, citing the grand expositor of Mu'tazilite theology, 'Abd al–Jabbār (c. 935–1024/5). Hourani continues: "The promises of reward and threats of Punishment do it [viz., stimulate motives to good action] in the most obvious way, and are perhaps most effective when they simply describe heaven and hell vividly." Of course, the doctrine of divine promise and threat (*al–wa'd wa'l–wa'īd*), namely that the just God will keep his promise to reward the faithful with the pleasures of Paradise and punish the infidels, was one of the five basic principles of the Mu'tazilites.

[21] Bacher, "Die zweite Version von Saadja's Abschnitt," 222.

Modern scholars have divided both versions of the seventh *maqāla* into nine chapters. Israel ha-Levi Kitover divided the *maqālāt* of the *Amānāt* into chapters in his edition of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of the work (Josefov, 1885). This division was employed by Qāfiḥ in his Hebrew translation and edition of the Arabic text and by Rosenblatt in his English translation, and is frequently used by scholars in their citations of the work. Ibn Tibbon did not translate the Oxford version of the seventh *maqāla*, so both Qāfiḥ and Rosenblatt, who incorporated this version of the seventh *maqāla* in their editions and translations of the *Amānāt*, had to provide their own chapter divisions for it. Both divided the *maqāla*, following Kitover's division of the Leningrad recension, into nine chapters, although they divided it differently. On the basis of their divisions, there is little correspondence between the chapters or divisions in the two versions. The general correspondence between the chapters in the two versions of the seventh *maqāla*, according to their divisions, is as follows:

QĀFIH		ROSENBLATT	
Oxford	**Leningrad**	**Oxford**	**Leningrad**
1	1, 2, 6	1	1
2	4, 5	2	2
*	*	3 (beginning)	6
*	*	3	4
*	*	3 (end)	5
*	*	4	5
3	3	5	3
4	7	6	7
4–5	1 (end)	7 (beginning)	1 (end)
5–9	8	7–9	8
—	9	—	9

However, if we accept Kitover's chapter division and make two changes to Rosenblatt's division, the general correspondence between the two versions is far greater than it appears in the above comparison. If we then end Rosenblatt's ch. 3 at p. 261, l. -6 of his translation (Landauer, p. 214, l. 14); start ch. 4 at p. 261, l. -5 (Landauer, p. 214, l. 14), and end it at p. 271, l. 17 (Landauer, p. 216, l. 12); and begin ch. 5 at p. 261, l. 18 (Landauer, p. 216, l. 12), and end it where Rosenblatt ends his ch. 4, we get the following correspondence:

MODIFIED-ROSENBLATT

Oxford	Leningrad
1 (=Rosenblatt, 1)	1
2 (=Rosenblatt, 2)	2
3 (=Rosenblatt, 3 [beg.])	6
4 (=Rosenblatt, 3)	4
5 (=Rosenblatt, 3 [end], 4)	5
6 (=Rosenblatt, 5)	3
7 (=Rosenblatt, 6)	7
8–9 (=Rosenblatt, 7–9)	1 (end), 8
—	9

For the sake of simplifying the comparison between the two versions, I will refer to these chapters, specifically, Kitover's chapters for the Leningrad version and the modified Rosenblatt chapters for the Oxford version.

Saadya opens the Oxford recension of the seventh *maqāla* with the assertion that God has made known and the entire Jewish nation (*umma*) agrees that resurrection of the dead will take place in the next world (*dār al-ākhira*). The disagreement among Jews concerns whether there will also be a resurrection in this world (*dār al-dunyā),* at the time of the salvation *(fī waqt al-yeshuʿah).* The masses (*al-jumhūr*) say yes, accepting certain

biblical verses in their exoteric sense (*'alā ẓāhirihi*). The few (*al-yasīr*) say no, and interpret these passages to refer to the revival of the Jewish nation. Saadya asserts that he has carefully studied the matter and verified the belief of the masses. He will write it down now to serve as a direction (*rushd*) and a guidance (*hady*) for the reader.[22]

The Leningrad recension (or more precisely the Ibn Tibbon translation, which preserves the reading of the beginning of this version of the first chapter, which is missing in the Leningrad manuscript) begins with an assertion that God keeps His promises. Saadya then reports that the masses believe in the resurrection in this world, but the few hold that it will take place only in the next world. Saadya immediately adds that the arguments of the latter are weak and uncertain. He himself saw it his obligation, since his aim is truth, to study the subject thoroughly in order to serve as a guide (*rushd*) for the reader. He announces his method to be the examination of all the objections to the masses' belief in resurrection in this world, which are based on the four sources: nature (*al-ṭabʿ*), reason (*al-ʿaql*), Scripture (*al-kitāb*), and tradition (*al-naql*), and to refute them completely. He then goes on to corroborate the belief on the basis of the various sources. He begins by considering the arguments of nature against the masses' belief. His response is an expanded discussion (sixteen lines in Bacher's edition, 39 lines in Rosenblatt's translation) of his passing comment in the Oxford version that it is not hard for the Jew who believes in creation out of nothing to accept resurrection. Essentially, the person who denies resurrection in this world as impossible by

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[22] References to the Oxford recension are to the Landauer edition (above, n. 1), with the page numbers in Rosenblatt's translation (above, n. 6) provided in parentheses. For the first chapter, see *Amānāt*, Oxford, 211–2 (264–5).

nature must deny not only creation and the existence of the Creator, but also the miracle of Moses' staff that turned into a serpent, and indeed all miracles. Such a person "exclude[s] himself from the community of believers" (*yakhruj 'an jumlat al-mu'minīn*). Saadya then considers the possibility that resurrection is one of the absurdities, like causing five to be more than ten, that have nothing to do with divine omnipotence. He makes this point perfectly clear with the graphic example of the lion (later used by Ḥasdai Crescas)[23] that devours someone. That person's matter becomes totally assimilated into the lion, so what is left to be resurrected? Saadya resolves this big problem by basing it and thus the whole argument on nature. He does not address his arguments to those who deny creation, as he presumes to have already proven it, and, in fact, his book is built upon the conviction that this belief has been verified.[24] In chapter two of the Leningrad recension, Saadya considers the arguments against resurrection based on the second source, here called rational thought (*al-tafakkur bi'l-'aql*), and rejects them. Saadya again raises and subsequently rejects the argument that it is a logical absurdity. He then considers the claim that although God can revive the dead, he never promised to do so. God's promise of the resurrection in this world is very important for

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[23] See Crescas, *Or ha–Shem*, ed. Shlomoh Fisher (Jerusalem, 1990), IIIa, 4, 4, p. 345.

[24] References to the Leningrad recension are to Bacher's edition of the seventh *maqāla* (above, n. 4), with the page numbers in Rosenblatt's translation provided in parentheses. For the first chapter, see *Amānāt*, Leningrad, 98–101 (409–14). For a somewhat different view on the purpose of the discussion of the exegetical principles in each of the two manuscripts, see Haggai Ben–Shammai, "The Tension between Literal Interpretation and Exegetical Freedom: Comparative Observations on Saadia's Method," in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jane D. McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford, 2003), 33–50.

Saadya in the Leningrad recension, and he takes the claim seriously. Those who deny the promise reject the literal teachings of Scripture, and, in order to show that it is not proper to do so in this case, Saadya embarks here on his well-known discussion of the four situations in which one can reject the literal meaning of Scripture in favor of *ta'wīl* or allegorical interpretation. A slightly longer version of these four situations in which one can reject the literal meaning of Scripture constitutes the full subject matter of chapter two of the Oxford recension. The purpose of this discussion in Oxford is made clear at the end of the chapter. There is no legitimate reason for allegorically interpreting the biblical verses on resurrection, as the few, mentioned in chapter one, do. Saadya concludes this second chapter of the Oxford recension with the assertion that we must therefore understand resurrection according to the explicit statements of the Bible.[25]

In chapter 3 (according to the modified-Rosenblatt division) of the Oxford recension, Saadya explicates Deuteronomy 32 as an example of the Scriptural evidence, alluded to in chapter 2, of the belief in resurrection in this world. In chapter 4 he provides additional Scriptural proof, citing primarily verses from Ezekiel 37 and Daniel 11–12. The parallel discussion in Leningrad takes place in chapter 6 where Deuteronomy 32 is expounded at greater length, and chapter 4 where the same verses from Ezekiel 37 and Daniel 11–12 are cited and also explicated at greater length.[26] Instead of bringing Scriptural proof at once in chapter 3, as Oxford does, Leningrad continues its systematic rejection of the objections of the few to the popular belief in

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[25] Cf. *Amānāt*, Leningrad, 101–3 (414–7), and Oxford, 212–3 (265–7). Saadya draws the same conclusion in the Leningrad recension (103 [416–417]), but states it even more forcefully.

[26] Cf. Oxford, 213–6 (267–71), and Leningrad, 104–6, 108 (420–3, 427–8).

resurrection in this world. Having responded in chapter 1 to those arguments based on nature, and in chapter 2 to those arguments based on reason, it now turns to the arguments based on Scripture. Here Saadya acknowledges that some verses may indeed arouse doubts about resurrection, and shows how they must be understood. The parallel discussion in Oxford occurs in chapter 6. This discussion cites basically the same verses from Scripture, but in a different order. In Oxford the discussion follows the discussion of chapters 3 and 4 of Scriptural proof for resurrection and that of chapter 5, which shows the problems that arise from interpreting Scripture allegorically, when this is not necessary according to the four rules. In Oxford, chapter 6, Saadya also acknowledges the possibility of doubts, but doubts that arise from the literal meaning of the verses.[27] Incidentally, the parallel discussion in Leningrad to that of Oxford chapter 5 is found in chapter 5. The chapter has again been reorganized and rewritten, while citing most of the same verses, to be stronger and more persuasive. "Is it not possible," Saadya asks, "that there might be some reason on the basis of which these verses could admit *ta'wīl*" and thus not prove resurrection? His answer is negative, but the formulation of the question shows Saadya's intent to try to enter the mind of his most skeptical readers. He explains that if one could so interpret the teachings on resurrection, one could then interpret figuratively all the revealed laws, miracles, and historical accounts of the Bible. By such evil *ta'wīl*, one excludes oneself from Judaism [*kharaja 'an jumlat dīn al-yahudiyya*]. In other words, every Jew must accept the literal statements of Scripture that indicate resurrection.[28]

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[27] Cf. Leningrad, 103–4 (417–20), and Oxford, 218–20 (273–5).
[28] Cf. Leningrad, 106–8 (423–6), and Oxford, 216–8 (272–3).

In Leningrad, chapter 7, Saadya concludes his systematic rejection of the objections of the few to the belief in resurrection in this world by responding to the objections based on tradition, which he defines here as the "writings of the prophets and the traditions of the sages." This chapter is an expanded and reorganized version of Oxford, chapter 7, which cites the same passages from the Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 90a, Sukkah 52b, and Mo'ed Qaṭan 27b, but as Rabbinic proof for resurrection, not in the context of objections based on tradition.[29]

In short, this brief comparison of the two versions of the seventh *maqāla* has so far revealed that, despite covering much of the same material, the two versions differ significantly in their method. Oxford focuses on the Scriptural teaching of resurrection. Its argument runs as follows: All Jews believe in resurrection in the Hereafter, but a few hold there is no resurrection in this world at the time of the redemption, and interpret allegorically the biblical verses that teach this (ch. 1). But there is no reason to interpret these verses (ch. 2). Such verses do indeed explicitly teach resurrection (chs. 3–4). Some may resort to non-literal interpretations of these verses and misconstrue them, but this is wrong and the verses must be understood literally (ch. 5). Some may find other verses that seem to negate resurrection, but these verses are not correctly understood by them (ch. 6). Rabbinic tradition affirms this belief in resurrection (ch. 7).

Leningrad too deals with the problem of the few who deny resurrection in this world at the time of the redemption.

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[29] Cf. Leningrad, 108–10 (428–30), and Oxford, 219–20 (276–7). On the expression "writings of [or: tradition of] the prophets" (*athar* or *āthār al–anbiyā'*), see Ben–Shammai, "Saadya's Introduction to Isaiah" (above, n. 19), 398, n. 41.

However, instead of focusing on Scriptural interpretation, it organizes its presentation as a consideration and rebuttal of the objections raised by the few against resurrection based on nature (ch. 1), reason (ch. 2), Scripture (chs. 3–6), and tradition (ch. 7). This broader approach is more in line with that of the *Amānāt* as a whole, and it seems unlikely that Saadya would have discarded this approach in a revised version of the *maqāla*. This approach taken in the Leningrad recension, with its clearer and expanded presentations, suggests that it is indeed a revision of the Oxford recension, and not vice versa. This conclusion may be supported by the following comparison of the endings of the two versions, wherein Saadya puts forward his vision of the resurrection.

Chapters 8–9 of Oxford, the end of the *maqāla*, deal with the logistical and other otherworldly problems that may be raised concerning resurrection.[30] The first matter discussed concerns the possibility of resurrection of one's own body when that body has been totally destroyed or assimilated into another body, as in the example of the lion, discussed by Saadya at the end of chapter 1 of Leningrad. In fact, the entire discussion of this subject at the beginning of Oxford, chapter 8, closely follows the discussion in the second half of Leningrad, chapter 1. Virtually all of the other questions in these last two chapters of Oxford are discussed by Saadya, in a different order, in his well-known ten questions – which seemed to have had a resurrection of their own in various later manifestations – found in Leningrad, chapter 8.[31] The ten questions of Leningrad correspond to similar questions in Oxford chapters 8–9, occurring there in the following order: 4, 2, 5, 6, 7, 1, 3, 8, 9, 10.

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[30] See Oxford, 220–9 (277–89).
[31] See Leningrad, 110–2 (430–4). On various later independent manifestations of these ten questions, see Henry Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works* (New York, 1921), esp. 364–7.

To students of Saadya familiar with his famous penchant for enumerations, it would have been characteristic of the book had the resurrection questions of the last two chapters of the seventh *maqāla* of the Oxford recension[32] been grouped together and numbered, while it is almost unthinkable that this enumeration of the Leningrad recension would have been broken up and scattered in a later version. This in itself is a strong indication that the Leningrad recension is the revised version. But the rearranging of the end of the Oxford recension of the seventh *maqāla* corresponds with the kind of rearranging of the Oxford version of this *maqāla* that takes place throughout the Leningrad text, and is for this reason also worthy of our attention. The ten questions (*yud masā'il*), in the order they appear in the Leningrad recension are as follows:

1. Who among our nation will be resurrected at the time of the salvation?
2. Will they die again after this resurrection?
3. Will the earth be large enough to hold all these people?
4. Will family and friends, living at the time, recognize the resurrected?
5. Will those resurrected have the afflictions, blemishes and defects of their previous bodies?
6. Will the resurrected eat, drink, and marry?
7. How will the resurrected be transferred to the next world where there is no eating, drinking or sex?
8. Is it possible that the resurrected will disobey God and forfeit their place in the next world?

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[32] According to the modified–Rosenblatt division; last three chapters according to Rosenblatt's division; and last five chapters according to Qāfiḥ's division.

9. Will the resurrected be rewarded for their obedience to
   God?
10. What will be the status of those who are alive at the time
    of the salvation or born during it?

These sorts of otherworldly questions get down to the nitty-
gritty of the resurrection. It may seem that by concerning
himself with such practical matters, Saadya was lowering the
level of the discussion from the lofty to the mundane, but it is
precisely these issues that concretize the doctrine of
resurrection, resolve lingering doubts, and make it so intriguing.
Thus we read in the Talmud that a certain Queen Cleopatra said
to Rabbi Meir, "I know that the dead will live again … but when
they arise, will they arise naked or in their clothes?"[33] Saadya
realized that such issues needed to be addressed and
satisfactorily answered. In the Oxford recension, these matters
are scattered throughout the end of the *maqāla*, and introduced
in various ways, such as "the question might be asked,"
"someone may ask," and "let me ask the question." In the
revised Leningrad version, these matters are neatly arranged in
ten questions that Saadya states have occurred to him and which
he promises to answer from Scripture, reason, and tradition.
While several of these questions were discussed by the Islamic
Mutakallimūn of Saadya's day, he must certainly have been
aware that his vision of the resurrection could not even
approximate the graphic material delights held out for the
faithful Muslim. Thus a well-known and typical tradition has
Muhammad explaining that the "goodly dwellings" (Qur'ān
9:72) promised for the believer in Paradise are:

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[33] BT Sanhedrin 90b.

> palaces of pearls, in each of which are seventy ruby mansions, in each of which are seventy emerald rooms, in each of which are seventy beds, on each of which are seventy mattresses of every hue, on each of which is a wife who is one of the large-eyed houris. And in every room there are seventy tables, on each of which are seventy varieties of food. In every house are seventy servant-girls. Every morning the believer shall be given strength enough to enjoy all of this.[34]

Saadya was not interested or impressed by such fantastical accounts of material pleasures in the time of the resurrection, or at least had no use for them. In the Oxford recension he raises the question whether death dissolves marital ties – a debated, but moot question in *kalām* – and concludes interestingly that there is no way for us to know the answer at this time.[35] This question is one of the few from Oxford that does not appear in the revised version. Yet Saadya knew that his picture of a relatively staid *waqt al-yeshu'ah*, period of resurrection, had to be as least as appealing and longed-for as the houri- and feast-filled one of the *ḥadīths*. To this end, I believe, he added a concluding chapter to the revised version of the seventh *maqāla*, which has virtually no parallel in the Oxford recension, and is the major departure from it. Here Saadya waxes poetic in describing – again in an enumeration – the incomparable joys of the resurrection; not the sex or the food, but the corroboration of the belief in God's omnipotence through the very miracle of resurrection, the

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[34] This particular *ḥadīth* is cited by al–Ghazali, among many others, in his *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al–dīn*, trans. T.J. Winter, *Al–Ghazālī, The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife* (above, n. 15), 238. For a brief account of the Islamic view of the corporeal pleasures of resurrection, see Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany, New York, 1981), esp. 87–90 and 164–7 (with special reference to the houris).

[35] See Oxford, 224 (282).

opportunity to see the prophets, kings, and sages of old, to see
again one's departed relatives and loved ones, to find out exactly
what happens after death, for all the generations of Jews to get
together in joy and happiness, and for strengthening the belief in
the ultimate reward of the World-to-Come. "What a wonderful
promise this is," concludes Saadya, "… praise to God, who is
truthful in His promise."[36]

Unlike the situation with the *falāsifa*, there is little reason to
think that Saadya did not believe his account of resurrection, yet
this does not mean that he did not appreciate the political
importance of the doctrine. Having convinced the reader that the
world is created (first *maqāla*), that the Creator is one (second
maqāla) and has chosen the Jewish nation and given them the

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[36] Leningrad, 112 (434–5). Saadya's attempt to convince his readers of his
account of the resurrection was, as to be expected, only partially successful.
See, e.g., Abraham bar Ḥiyya's (d. c. 1136) discussion in his *Megillat ha–
Megalleh*, ed. A.S. Poznanski (Berlin, 1924), 48–50, of the impact of
Saadya's teaching on resurrection. Bar Ḥiyya begins his discussion of
resurrection by saying that it would be fitting for him "to be silent and refrain
from speaking about this subject and to rely on the words of our Rabbi
Saadya Ga'on, of blessed memory, who composed *Sefer ha–Emunot* and
brought therein many proofs from Scripture for the resurrection of the dead
[*teḥiyyat ha–metim*]. … His words are correct and accepted by all the
believers and I had no need to add to them. However, I saw and heard people
of our nation, in this generation, some in Spain and some in France, say that
the words of our Rabbi Saadya Ga'on, of blessed memory, are not sufficient
for them. Inasmuch as they are sages in their own eyes, rely on their own
understanding, and trust in their own opinions, it is difficult for them [to
believe] that a man can be alive after his death and return to this world." Bar
Ḥiyya thus felt compelled to make the case for resurrection anew. Saadya
would not have been surprised at the difficulty of these men whom Bar Ḥiyya
refers to as "*baṭlanim*," and himself speaks of the "difficulty we have in
accepting the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead" (Oxford, 214 [268]; cf.
Leningrad, 104–5 [420]). Bar Ḥiyya wrote his words about 200 years after
Saadya wrote his. It is not known if the *baṭlanim* had access to an Arabic
version of the *Amānāt* or knew it via the early Hebrew paraphrase (on this
paraphrase, see Malter, *Saadia Gaon* [above, n. 31], 361–2).

Torah to guide them to their happiness (third *maqāla*), that man has free will (fourth *maqāla*), that the Creator knows and records what we do and rewards us accordingly (fifth *maqāla*), and that man's soul is immortal (sixth *maqāla*), Saadya seeks in the three subsequent *maqālāt* to paint as desirable a picture as possible of the rewards that await the faithful Jew. His purpose in all of this was not wholly theoretical.[37] True his book was written for "believers whose belief was not pure and whose convictions were not sound … [for] men who were sunk, as it were, in seas of doubt and overwhelmed by waves of confusion."[38] However, his goal in writing the *Amānāt* was not only to teach true opinion and to replace doubt with understanding, but also to lead his fellow Jews to follow the commandments of the Torah. At the end of the Leningrad recension of the seventh *maqāla*, Saadya speaks of himself as serving his nation:

> It was these benefits [of the resurrection], in fact, that compelled me to devote myself to the establishment of its verification [*ithbāt taḥqīqihi*] and thereby to serve the Jewish nation [*al-umma*] and contribute to its well-being.[39]

By verifying the resurrection to the extent possible, Saadya saw himself as serving his nation and contributing to its well-being. But why was the doctrine of the resurrection of such particular importance? For Saadya the Jewish nation is a "nation only by

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[37] Here I disagree with scholars such as Malter, who held that Saadya, upon his deposition from Gaonate of Sura, dismissed from his mind the social and political conditions of his time and his own personal experiences and "with serene superiority turned his attention to what was the real aim of his life, the elaboration of a system of Jewish thought" (Malter, *Saadia Gaon*, 119).

[38] *Amānāt*, Oxford, introduction, 4 (7).

[39] Leningrad, 112 (435).

virtue of its laws" (*hiya umma bi-sharā'i'ihā*), and its well-being is therefore directly dependent on its adherence to those laws.[40] Thus one best serves the Jewish nation by encouraging its adherence to its laws. For Saadya the more attractive and feasible the divine promise of the ultimate rewards, the more likely the multitude of believers would be to follow the divine laws in order to attain them. I have tried to suggest that it is with this practical goal in mind that Saadya revised the seventh *maqāla* on resurrection.

Conclusion

I have argued that Saadya revised the seventh *maqāla*, on resurrection, in order to depict a future physical existence that would be even more appealing than the one in his original account. This existence would hold out the most enjoyable rewards for the faithful who follow God's Torah. Moreover, we have seen that Saadya in his revised account is attentive to the concerns of his worried or skeptical readers about logistical and other otherworldly problems that might call into question the truth of his account of the resurrection. In the revised account, he responds to these concerns one-by-one, and dedicates himself to the corroboration of the doctrine of resurrection. This doctrine is the promise of God, who, as Saadya reminds us in the opening and closing words of the *maqāla*, is truthful in His promise (*al-ṣādiq al-wa'd*).

While Saadya's account may well have been the first lengthy systematic account of the details of resurrection, the concern with these details is rooted in early rabbinic literature.[41] As we

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[40] *Amānāt*, Oxford, III, 128 (158).
[41] See, e.g., Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, trans. David W. Silverman (Garden City, New York, 1966), 82–3.

have seen, the depiction of the details of resurrection and the resolution of doubts about these details was also a major theme in Islamic theology, as may be evidenced in the writings of al-Ghazali and earlier authorities. There the emphases were different, and the description – foreign to Saadya and his Jewish sources – of the gorgeous large-eyed houris and beautiful young virgins as part of the ultimate reward for a life of devotion to Allah seemed to make perfect sense to the faithful. The point, however, in all these descriptions was the same: to offer as graphic as possible a picture of the physical joys of resurrection in order to encourage the readers to follow the straight path of the Law. It was an important point that was appreciated not only by theologians, but, as we have seen in the case of Averroes, by philosophers as well.

I would like to conclude with a final thought. If the resurrection and its details were so important, why did Maimonides not go into the details in his various writings? Of course, this question is an old one, and phrased slightly differently, precipitated the resurrection controversies that erupted during Maimonides' own lifetime and so frustrated him. I do not wish here to rehearse the facts of these controversies or the various interpretations of scholars of the time and of present day scholars of Maimonides' personal views on corporeal resurrection.[42] I do wish to call attention to Maimonides' explicit emphasis on the eternal spiritual rewards of the World-to-Come as opposed to the *temporal* corporeal reward, as he saw it, of the resurrection. The goal for him was clearly the latter and not the former. Thus in his *Letter on Resurrection*, which was written to

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[42] See, e.g., B. Septimus, *Hispano–Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah* (Cambridge, 1982), 39–60; and S. Stroumsa, *Reshito Shel Pulmus ha–Rambam ba–Mizraḥ: Iggeret ha–Hashtaqah ʿAl Odot Teḥiyyat ha–Metim le–Yosef ibn Shimʿon* (Jerusalem, 1999).

counter the early charges against him of denial of resurrection, Maimonides reaffirms his belief in resurrection in the sense popularly understood as the "return of the soul to the body after separation," and reminds the reader that he considers it a fundamental principle of the Torah and had stated so explicitly in his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, Sanhedrin, introduction to *Ḥeleq*; but he also makes clear that it is not the ultimate goal. He further explains why he emphasized the World-to-Come at the expense of resurrection. "We find," he writes, "men concerned only with resurrection; asking if the dead will rise naked or in their garments, and other such problems. But the world-to-come is entirely overlooked."[43] In his introduction to *Ḥeleq*, he had written more fully:

> With regard to … the world-to-come, you will find very few who will in any way take the matter to heart, or meditate on it. … What, however, all people ask, both the common folk and the educated classes is this: In what condition will the dead rise to life, naked or clothed? Will they stand up in those very garments in which they were buried, in their embroideries and brocades, and beautiful needlework, or in a robe that will merely cover the body?

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[43] See Maimonides, *Letter on Resurrection*, trans. Abraham Halkin in idem and David Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides* (Philadelphia, 1985), 213, 217–9; Arabic text and Hebrew translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon in *Iggerot ha–Rambam*, ed. Itzhak Shailat (Maʿaleh Adumim, Jerusalem, 1985), vol. 1, 321, 324–6 (Hebrew, 343, 348–53). For a thoughtful explication of this letter, see Ralph Lerner, "Maimonides' *Treatise on Resurrection*," *History of Religions* 23 (1983): 140–55. On Maimonides' reaffirmation of resurrection in the sense of the "return of the soul to the body after separation" (*rujūʿ hādhihi al–nafs li'l–jasad baʿda al–mufāraqa*) or "after death" (*baʿda al–mawt*), see ibid., esp. 146 and 149. Maimonides states explicitly that the *Letter on Resurrection* is a popular work intended only for the multitude. See Shailat, ed., *Iggerot ha–Rambam*, vol. 1, 326 and esp. 338 (Hebrew, 352 and 373); Halkin, trans., 219 and esp. 233, and Lerner, "Maimonides' *Treatise on Resurrection*," 154–5.

> And … will rich and poor be alike, or will the distinctions between weak and strong still exist – and many similar questions.[44]

These and similar questions are of the sort of logistical and other otherworldly kind that Saadya emphasized, and it would not be at all surprising if Maimonides had him in mind when writing this passage. Maimonides deplored these questions. While he proclaimed resurrection to be a principle of the Torah, his intention in popular writings such as the introduction to Ḥeleq and the *Letter on Resurrection* was to lead Jews away from the overvaluation and worship of future corporeal rewards and to the truly divine incorporeal eternal rewards of the soul. This task was not easy, for as Maimonides explains in the introduction to Ḥeleq with an illustration – whose source interestingly may have been al-Ghazali's discussion of resurrection in the *Tahāfut* – just as "the eunuch cannot feel the desire for sexual intercourse [*wa-lā al-'innīn shahwat al-jimā'*], so the bodies cannot comprehend the delights of the soul. … We live in a material world and the only pleasure we can comprehend is material."[45] Musings about

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[44] Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah*, ed. Joseph Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1965), vol. *Neziqin*, 197 (translated into English by Joshua Abelson in his "Maimonides on the Jewish Creed," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 19 o.s. [1906]: 30–1).

[45] Ibid. (Qāfiḥ, 203–4; Abelson, 38). Cf. al–Ghazali, *Tahāfut al–falāsifa*, 236 (214): *al–'innīn ladhdhat al–jimā'*. Maimonides was certainly familiar with this passage from the *Tahāfut*. It has, however, been suggested recently that Avicenna was Maimonides' source here. Of course, inasmuch as Avicenna was al–Ghazali's source for the eunuch analogy and much of the related discussion, he was if not the direct source of Maimonides here, the indirect one. On Avicenna as Maimonides' source in this passage in the introduction to Ḥeleq, see Dov Schwartz, "Avicenna and Maimonides on Immortality," in *Medieval and Modern Perceptions on Jewish–Muslim Relations*, ed. R.L. Nettler (Luxembourg and Oxford, 1995), 188, and Sarah Stroumsa, "'True Felicity': Paradise in the Thought of Avicenna and Maimonides," *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998): 60–1 and 71–2. Schwartz concludes: "There can be no

the corporeal rewards of the resurrection did not excite or even intrigue Maimonides. And despite the clear theological-political benefits of indulging in discussion of the details of the resurrection, Maimonides steadfastly did not do so.

Saadya, as we have seen, felt otherwise and accordingly took a very different approach to the doctrine of resurrection.

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doubt, I believe, that the relevant passages from Avicenna's *Kitāb al–Najāt* were known to Maimonides, either in their original form or in paraphrase." Stroumsa concurs. In fact, the eunuch illustration together with other parallels to the passage in the introduction to *Ḥeleq* are found in many of Avicenna's works. The passage in *al–Najāt* (above, n. 17), 292, cited by Schwartz, occurs also in *Aḥwāl al–nafs*, ed. A. al–Ahwānī (Cairo, 1952), 129, and *al–Shifā', al–Ilāhiyyāt* (above, n. 17), 424. An earlier version of the eunuch illustration is cited by Stroumsa (p. 60) from Avicenna's *al–Mabda' wa'l–ma'ād*. While revising this paper for publication, Dr. Amira Eran sent me a draft of a paper, in which additional evidence is marshaled for the direct influence of al–Ghazali on this passage in the introduction to *Ḥeleq*. Eran points to parallels in al–Ghazali's *Mīzān al–'amal*, not found in the Avicennian texts noted by Schwartz and Stroumsa. See now Amira Eran, "Al–Ghazali and Maimonides on the World to Come and Spiritual Pleasures," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8 (2001), 137–66, and idem, "The Influence of the Arabic Terms *Targhīb* and *Tarhīb* on Maimonides' Concept of 'Fear' and 'Love'" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 70 (2001), esp. 480–9. Maimonides knew some of the texts of al–Ghazali and he knew some of the texts of Avicenna, and I am convinced both thinkers influenced his discussion in the introduction to *Ḥeleq*. In any case, Maimonides freely changes the language of his sources here, and this makes the pinpointing of sources more difficult than it might seem from the translations. Nonetheless, al–Ghazali's *Tahāfut* seems to have been one of his sources. See esp. 235–7 (pp. 213–4). For example, while Schwartz argues for the influence of the passage in *al–Najāt* on that in the introduction to *Ḥeleq* with three parallels, one of which is that "both hold up the pleasure derived by the separate intellects from their intellectual activity as an example of the very existence of spiritual pleasure" (Schwartz, "Avicenna and Maimonides"), it may be recalled that Maimonides specifically speaks of angels (*al–malā'ika*). Avicenna does not in the cited passage, but al–Ghazali does in the *Tahāfut*, 237 [214]; cf. the passage from Avicenna's *Ishārāt* cited by Stroumsa ["True Felicity," 66] and Avicenna's *al–Risāla al–aḍḥawiyya* [above, n. 17], 61–2 and 117, where the state of the angels is mentioned.

JUDAH HALEVI ON ESCHATOLOGY AND MESSIANISM

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In the history of religious thought, a number of different topics
have generally been referred to as eschatological beliefs,
namely, the fate of the soul after death; the fate of the person
after a future resurrection; and the messianic era (which may, or
may not, be the time of resurrection). Rabbi Judah Halevi, in the
Kuzari, discusses each of these themes, but unlike other
thinkers, such as Maimonides, Halevi does not systematize the
various elements of his eschatological beliefs. Rather, he
discusses these issues in diverse contexts, without fully
clarifying his thoughts. Hence, it will be necessary here to try to
reconstruct those beliefs from different passages in the *Kuzari*.[1]

The first reference in the *Kuzari* to the afterworldy fate of
human beings is found in the philosopher's speech in 1:1. The
philosopher offers the king an impersonal future reward in

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[1] Textual references will be to Judah Halevi, *Kitāb al-radd wa-'l-dalīl fī 'l-dīn al-dhalīl (al-Kitāb al-Khazarī)*, ed. David H. Baneth and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1977) (below, *Khazarī*). English translations are generally my own, although Hartwig Hirschfeld, trans., *The Kuzari* (New York, 1964), will be consulted. Comparison will also be made to the Hebrew translations of Judah ibn Tibbon, Yehudah Even-Shmuel and Yosef Qāfiḥ.

which the latter's intellect will become a separate intellect, on the level of the Active Intellect, which is the lowest level of the separate intellects. His soul will have pleasure since it will be in the company of Hermes, Asclepios, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, but "he and they and everyone else who was on that level and the Active Intellect will be one thing."[2] This was an offer that the king could obviously refuse, especially in light of his knowledge (end of *Kuzari* 1:2) that Christians and Muslims were killing each other in anticipation of achieving the afterworldly Garden and Paradise (*al-janna wa'l-firdaws*).

The king, therefore, sought a better future reward among the Christians and the Muslims (*Kuzari* 1:6–9). Surprisingly, the Christian has nothing to say about life after death, not even mentioning that the purpose of the incarnation was the atonement for original sin, thereby providing the possibility of afterworldly reward, a reward which, according to Christian doctrine, had not been possible until that event. The Muslim spokesman, however, does tell the king what to expect in the afterlife: "The reward of the follower [of Muhammad] is the return of his spirit (*rūḥ*) to his body in the Garden (*janna*), where he will lack nothing in terms of food, drink, intercourse and all he desires. The punishment of the disobedient is his return to the fire (*nār*) whose torments will never end."[3] It is likely that the Muslim's view of afterworldly reward was more appealing to the king than the philosopher's, even though as a king he probably lacked nothing in terms of the physical pleasures in this life. Since, however, the king did not believe the Muslim as to the truth of Islam, he must also have doubted

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[2] *Khazarī*, 5.
[3] Ibid., 8.

the latter's ability to make good on his promises; hence, the king continued his search for the true religion.

When the king calls upon a Jewish spokesman (the *Ḥaver*) for his opinions, no mention is made of the future; rather, the *Ḥaver* concentrates on the past which, for his part, is the guarantor of the truth of Judaism. Throughout the *Kuzari*, Halevi argues that one must first establish the historical truth of a religion before one examines its particular doctrines; thus, the past is much more important than the future. True, in the *Ḥaver's* initial speech (*Kuzari*, 1:11), he mentions the thousands of prophets who came after Moses with promises for those who observe his Law and threats for those who do not, but the nature of these promises is not specified. During the subsequent dialogue between the *Ḥaver* and the king, until the end of Book 1 of the *Kuzari*, no specific mention of the afterlife is made.

Near the end of that book, in 1:104, it is clearly to the afterlife that the king is referring when he legitimately concludes: "The promises of those other than you [namely, the Christians and Muslims] are stronger and more substantial than yours."[4] The king apparently remembered the Muslim's speech concerning food, drink and women and compared it to the *Ḥaver's* previous lack of mention of the afterlife and his brief reference to it at the end of 1:103 ("the correct religion is the one that guarantees the survival of the soul after death");[5] as to Christianity, perhaps the king was relying on what he knew previously about Christianity or inferred his knowledge of Christianity from what he knew about Islam.[6]

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[4] Ibid., 35.

[5] Ibid.

[6] As noted above, even before interviewing the Christian and Muslim, the king knew that these religions promised afterworldy reward for those who die in battle defending the faith (end of 1:2). He also refers to God (1:8) as

As Dov Schwartz has pointed out,[7] Halevi was not consistent in his response to the king's assertion that the other religions offer greater future reward than Judaism. On the one hand, he ridiculed the Muslims and Christians for offering tempting promises of life after death, while making no effort to cash in early on those promises.[8] Furthermore, no Christian or Muslim had actually returned from Paradise to give a first hand account of that place. In contrast, whatever Judaism did promise could be relied upon since the Jews' experience in this world, namely their being the recipients of prophecy and miracles, was an indication that God would take care of them in the next world.[9] The life of the prophet in this world seems to be the model for the next world.[10] On the other hand, after downplaying the extravagant Christian and Muslim promises, Halevi then turns around and claims that, indeed, the Jewish afterworldly promises, as found in post-biblical Jewish literature, were as generous as the Christian and Muslim ones, which had actually been stolen from the Jews.[11] The king, then, was mistaken on

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the "Creator of this world and the next world" (*khāliq al-dunyā wa'l 'ākhira*). By examining the King's comments and questions throughout the book, it might be possible to determine exactly what the king knew before his crash course in comparative religion, and what he learned as a result of his conversations with the various spokesmen.

[7] Dov Schwartz, *Ha-Ra'ayon ha-meshiḥi ba-hagut yehudit bi-mei ha-beinayyim* (Messianism in Medieval Jewish Thought) (Ramat Gan, 1997), 63–9.

[8] *Khazarī*, 1:106, p. 35. Although theologically motivated suicide bombers did not exist in Halevi's day, he did know that both Christian and Muslim participants in religious wars expected afterworldly reward in the event of their being killed in action; ibid., 1:2, p. 6; 5:23, p. 228.

[9] In this manner, the validation of Jewish history as presented in most of *Kuzari* 1 can be seen as leading up to the validation of afterworldly reward as presented at the end of *Kuzari* 1; cf. e.g., the parables in *Kuzari* 1:109; 3:21.

[10] Ibid., 1:103, p. 35; 109, pp. 36–8; cf. also 3:20–1, pp. 109–12.

[11] Ibid., 1:115, pp. 40–1.

two counts: first, the Christians and the Muslims did not hold out a greater reward than the Jews; and second, whatever the other two religions did promise had no guarantee of being fulfilled.

What, then, were the Jewish promises for the afterlife? The *Ḥaver* told the king that the pleasures and tortures of the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom, which had so impressed him in the Christian and Muslim accounts, had already been described at length by the rabbis, with greater exactitude than the descriptions of the other nations. Since, however, the *Ḥaver* had confined himself up until then (namely to the end of Book 1) to biblical and not rabbinic statements, he had purposely omitted these references. Actually, he continued, even though the rabbinic promises were more grandiose than the biblical ones, a close reading of the biblical text shows that even the prophets held out promises for the afterlife. Thus, the prophets said that when the body returns to dust, the soul returns to God; they promised resurrection (although no explicit biblical text is offered as proof of this); they foretold the sending of Elijah who had been sent previously, and perhaps had not tasted death. Even Balaam, who had prophesied miraculously (he could not prophesy naturally since he was not Jewish),[12] wished that his death be an easy one like that of Israel; King Saul brought the soul of the prophet Samuel up from the world of souls. The prayers make reference to the return of the souls to the body as well, such as the *Elohai neshama* prayer, which even women know. As to the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom, these were

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[12] Understanding, thus *bi-'idhn Allah*, literally, "with God's permission" or "with God's will"; on the miraculous aspects of this prophecy, see Robert Eisen, "The Problem of the King's Dream and Non-Jewish Prophecy in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 3 (1994) 234–5.

places on earth, the first intended for humanity if Adam had not sinned, and the second a place where bones and other impure things were burned.[13]

In sum, the *Ḥaver* does not give one unambiguous description of the afterlife. Are we to assume that the references in the Bible to survival of the soul are to be considered operative, in which case it would seem that the afterlife is some vague permanence of the soul, such as that of Samuel's? Or should we rely upon the vivid rabbinic descriptions of afterworldly reward and punishment, descriptions which might rival the Christian and Muslim beliefs but which are not explicitly stated by the *Ḥaver*? Or is future resurrection, as mentioned in the *Elohai neshama* prayer, the major Jewish promise? It would seem that Halevi's purpose at the end of Book 1 of the *Kuzari* is to argue for the reliability of Judaism's promises for life after death, vague as they may be, rather than to elucidate what those promises are. From this initial discussion, it would appear that whatever the ultimate reward may be in some undetermined future, after-death recompense at the very least begins at death, with the survival of the soul, and its model is the prophetic experience in this world.[14]

There are other passages in the *Kuzari*,[15] such as 3:11 and 3:21, in which Halevi makes reference to the afterlife and the

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[13] *Khazarī*, 1:115, pp. 40–1; cf. also 2:20, p. 51, where the Garden of Eden is situated in the Land of Israel; and ibid., 3:21, p. 111, where there is an additional reference to the fact that the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom are mentioned both in the prayers and in the rabbinic traditions received from the prophets.

[14] The conclusion that afterworldly reward begins after death is based on the reference to "permanence of the soul" after the corruption of the body (1:103, p. 35).

[15] See also *Khazarī*, 3:73, p. 145, where a midrash is cited to the effect that both the Garden of Eden and the Messiah were created before creation of world (references are provided ibid., in note to l. 15).

world to come. For our purposes, however, the other important mention of the fate of the soul after death occurs in the *Ḥaver*'s discussion of philosophy in 5:14. The *Ḥaver* compares philosophy's method of attempting to prove rationally its doctrines with the Jewish assurance of the truth of its teachings based on a belief in creation of the world (reminiscent of Maimonides' statement in *Guide to the Perplexed* 2:25). Among those Jewish beliefs guaranteed by the creation are the World to Come, Resurrection, and the Days of the Messiah (*'olam ha-ba*, *teḥiyyat ha-metīm*, and *yemōt ha-mashiaḥ* in the Judeo-Arabic text). Jews do not need to demonstrate, as the philosophers tried to do, that the soul will have eternal life. According to Halevi, the philosophers are not able even to prove that the soul is an intellectual substance (*jawhar 'aqlī*), not defined by place, which is affected by neither generation nor corruption.[16]

In contrast to the philosophers, however, Halevi himself again offered no explicit explanation of the fate of the soul. Rather, he stated that God has proven for us (*ḥaqqaqa 'indana*) resurrection (*ma'ād*), but has left aside the question as to whether it is spiritual or physical. It would seem quite surprising had Halevi entertained the possibility that resurrection of the dead was purely spiritual and not also physical. Yosef Qāfiḥ, for

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[16] Ibid., 210. As an additional feature of his attack on the philosophical position concerning the permanence of the intellectual facilities only, Halevi asked (ibid., 211) about the person who had perfected his intellect but had then turned to a domineering and lust-filled life. "Will we say he has one soul in felicity (*na'īm*) and one in torment (*'adhāb*)?" All three Hebrew translations (Ibn Tibbon, Even Shmuel and Qāfiḥ) translate *gan eden* and *gehinnom*. Given Halevi's statement at the end of 1:115 about those two terms, such a translation is misleading; cf., however, 3:21, p. 111, where the world to come (*'olam ha-ba* in the Judeo-Arabic) seems to be composed of the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom (*gan eden* and *gehinnom* in the Judeo-Arabic).

instance, comments in his translation of the *Kuzari* that if Judah Halevi believed that resurrection is solely of the souls, how was it that the souls could die (and thus be in need of resurrection)?[17] Judah ibn Tibbon's translation, at least in the main manuscript of the Hartwig Hirschfeld text, obviates this problem by translating *maʿād* as *yiʿudim*, namely promises, not resurrection, although a variant text of the Ibn Tibbon translation reads: "the reviving of the soul." Hirschfeld speculates that *yiʿudim* reflects an original that was *mawāʿid*, not *maʿād*. It is equally likely, however, that a scribe felt the same discomfort as did Qāfiḥ and decided that Halevi could not have held the opinion that resurrection was possibly only spiritual and corrected the Hebrew text accordingly.[18] In his English translation, Hirschfeld, relying upon the Arabic, translates *maʿād* as "return of the soul."[19] Charles Touati, apparently also sensitive to the problem of "spiritual resurrection," leaves *maʿād* un-translated and refers to the permanence of the soul as being either physical or spiritual.[20] Thus, even though Halevi assured us that Jews would be guaranteed some sort of afterworldly reward or resurrection, he admitted that he did not know exactly what it would be.[21]

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[17] Yosef Qāfiḥ, ed. and trans., *Sefer Ha-Kuzari le-Rabbeinu Yehudah Halevi Zaẓa"l* (Qiryat Ono, 1997/5757), 211, n. 77.

[18] Hartwig Hirschfeld, ed., *Das Buch al-Chazari des Abū-l-Hasan Jehuda Hallewi* (Leipzig, 1887) (reprinted, Israel, 1970), xlvi–xlvii, n. 70. Yehuda Even Shmuel, *The Kosari of R. Yehuda Halevi* (Tel Aviv, 1972), 214, paraphrases: "whether the soul is spiritual or whether it is physical."

[19] Hirschfeld, *The Kuzari*, 270.

[20] Juda Hallevi, *Le Kuzari. Apologie de la religion méprisée*, trans. Charles Touati (Louvain-Paris, 1994), 214.

[21] Another reference to resurrection is made in *Khazarī*, 2:23, p. 57, concerning the Christian and Muslim belief in "the day of resurrection" (*yawm al-qiyāma*). On the various usages in Islamic theology of the Arabic term *maʿād,* see R. Arnaldez, "Maʿād," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, 5

Reviewing Judah Halevi's discussion of the afterlife, we are struck with the fact that his account, with all its ambiguity, has much in common with Maimonides' view. Although he rejected the Aristotelian stance (adopted by Maimonides) that the survival of the soul is a function of the soul's intellectual accomplishments, it would nevertheless appear that for Halevi, the personal reward is a spiritual afterlife of the soul at the conclusion of one's life on earth. The Garden of Eden and Gehinnom, at least in their biblical rendition, are not the abode of the souls but rather places on earth, and the soul does not have to wait for resurrection before receiving its reward or punishment. As for the exact meaning of resurrection, that is not explained.[22]

Halevi's View of the Messianic Redemption

In Halevi's view of messianic redemption, we once again see striking similarities to the position later espoused by Maimonides. Halevi's lack of clarity concerning the fate of the individual soul is probably not coincidental. Just as in general Halevi stressed, in contrast to Maimonides, the importance of the collective over the individual,[23] so, too, did he put greater

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(Leiden, 1986), 892–4. For the Christian and Muslim background, and polemical context, of some of Halevi's statements about the afterlife, see Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy, Sufi Language and Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's* Kuzari (Albany, 2000), 48–51.

[22] The Maimonidean view can be seen in Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah*, ed. Yosef Qāfiḥ, vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 1963) 133–9 (Sanh. 10:1).

[23] Hannah Kasher, "Individual or Community: A Comparative Study of Judah Halevi and Maimonides" [in Hebrew], *Iyyun*, 37 (July-October, 1988) 238–47. In this article, Kasher suggests that Maimonides stressed the idea of a personal Messiah who would force Israel to act properly, whereas Halevi believed that the people of Israel itself would act collectively to bring about the messianic era. See also Isaac Heinemann, "Temunat ha-Historiah shel R' Yehudah Halevi," *Zion* 9 (1944), 172–4. Heinemann states that as a result of

emphasis on the collective future reward, namely the days of the Messiah, over the individual future reward after death. Here there is also a certain lack of clarity but not as great as that concerning the soul's world to come and resurrection.

A number of scholars have theorized that Judah Halevi was a believer in active messianism and his writing of the *Kuzari* and his *aliyah* to the Land of Israel were intended to help bring the Messiah.[24] Certainly, his poetry indicates his strong desire for a restoration of Zion and the reunion of the Jewish people with the Land of Israel.[25] Whether or not Judah Halevi's messianism was active, there is little doubt that he was very much looking forward to the days of the Messiah, with its restoration of the Jewish people to its land, even if he did not devote much of his work to a description of that period.

There are a number of different ways of characterizing Jewish messianic beliefs. Gershom Scholem, for instance, has

Halevi's stress on the collective, "the individual eschatological hope did not at all influence his theory of life."

[24] His statement at the end of the *Kuzari* (*Khazarī*, 5:27, pp. 229–30) that the Messiah will come when the Jewish people sufficiently love the stones and dust of the Land of Israel to the ultimate degree, may indicate a messianic motive in traveling to the land of Israel. In leaving his land of birth for an uncertain future, Judah Halevi was emulating the patriarchs (ibid., 2:23, p. 57). This theme is mentioned as well in a poem of Halevi published by Joseph Yahalom: Joseph Yahalom, "Shalom Shalom me'et 'eved ha-shem ve-'eved adoni Yehudah Halevi" *Haaretz*, May 20, 1999, B-15. This poem was also published by Yahalom in "The Immigration of Rabbi Judah Halevi to Eretz Israel in Vision and Riddle" [in Hebrew], *Shalem* 7 (2001): 33–45 (the poem is on pp. 44–5)

[25] See Ben-Zion Dinburg (Dinur), "Aliyyato shel rabbi Yehudah Halevi le-ereẓ-yisrael ve-ha-tesisah ha-meshiḥit be-yamav," in S. Assaf, et al., *Minḥah le-David* (Jerusalem, 1935), 157–82. In this context, I will restrict myself to a discussion of the *Kuzari*; cf. Schwartz, *Ra'ayon*, 55, n. 23. Michael S. Berger, "Toward a New Understanding of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *Journal of Religion*, 72:2 (1992), 210–28, has theorized that the purpose of writing the *Kuzari* was to promote emigration from Spain to the Land of Israel.

compared utopian with restorative messianic beliefs, in which the utopian looks forward to a whole new world, whereas the restorativist wishes solely to go back to what appears in hindsight as the "good old days."[26] Dov Schwartz distinguishes between the apocalyptic and the naturalistic, namely, between the worldview that sees the messianic days as a totally new phenomenon and the belief that the messianic days will be part of the historical continuum.[27] Where should Halevi's views be placed in terms of these categorizations?

It seems to me that, like Maimonides, Halevi held a naturalistic restorative view of the Messiah. There is no indication in the *Kuzari* that the Messiah will herald in a totally new era, bringing history to an end. Rather, the Messiah will mark the restoration of the People of Israel in the Land of Israel, living by the Torah of Israel. The visible *Shekhina* will be restored, prophets will prophesy, and miracles will occur.[28] In other words, Israel will be returning to the halcyon days of the First Temple period.[29] The only utopian element is that in contrast to the past, in the messianic future all the world will recognize the centrality of Israel: the people, the land and the Torah.[30]

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[26] Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), 1–36.

[27] Schwartz, *Ra'ayon*, 13–27.

[28] See, e.g., *Khazarī*, 5:23, p. 227. Halevi may have been influenced by Saadya's statement that the light of the *Shekhina* will shine upon the Temple in the messianic age; see Saadya Ga'on, *Kitāb al-Amānāt wal-I'tiqādāt* (Emunot ve-De'ot), 8:6, ed. Yosef Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1960/5730), 251.

[29] In *Khazarī*, 3:65, p. 137, Abraham, Moses, the Messiah and Elijah are said to be in their essences the dwelling place of the *Shekhina*, by which prophecy is acquired.

[30] Which presumably will lead to the additional utopian element of universal world peace.

Dov Schwartz has argued that the predominant role played by Israel in the messianic era, according to Judah Halevi, is an apocalyptic, rather than naturalistic, element of his thought.[31] Nevertheless, in light of Halevi's view of nature, which, admittedly, is not the Aristotelian view of nature, it is more correct to say that for Halevi the messianic era would be naturalistic and restorative, returning to the non-apocalyptic days of the First Temple. Once nature is understood to include the level of the *amr ilāhī*, the "divine influence" or "divine order," namely the special level of the Jewish people, which includes prophecy and miracles as a matter of course, then the messianic era is certainly part of the natural order.[32]

An indication of the natural manner in which the messianic age will come about can be discerned in Halevi's statements concerning the return from the Babylonian Exile (*Kuzari*, 2:24).[33] At this point in Jewish history, God was ready to send the Messiah, but the Jewish people were not sufficiently prepared for him, as can be seen from the refusal of many Jews to leave the comforts of exile in Babylonia. Since the divine influence (*amr ilāhī*) rests on people only in relation to their preparation for it, had the Jews been more prepared at that time, God would have helped them as He had helped their ancestors in Egypt, namely He would have brought the redemption. Furthermore, during the exile of Halevi's day, had the Jewish People willingly accepted their fate as a persecuted minority, as an act of obedience to God, the Divine Influence would not have abandoned them for such a long time (*Kuzari*, 1:115).[34] Thus, Halevi offers naturalistic explanations of the length of the exile

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[31] Schwartz, *Ra'ayon*, 55–62.
[32] This thesis will be developed below.
[33] *Khazarī*, 58.
[34] Ibid., 39.

and the delay in the coming of the Messiah; if the messianic redemption were totally miraculous, the behavior of the Jewish People should not affect its timing.[35]

In Halevi's naturalistic messianism, the acceptance of the Messiah by non-Jews would also be accomplished by natural, not supernatural, means. One of the characteristics of the messianic age in Halevi's thought (*Kuzari* 4:23) is the worldwide conversion to Judaism spearheaded by the Muslims and Christians, who are already semi-proselytes. The Jewish people are like a seed which is planted in dirt and which changes the dirt into something like itself as the seed grows into a tree, deriving nourishment from the soil in which it is planted. So, too, will the Jews flourish like a tree, onto which the other nations will be grafted, all of them becoming one tree.[36]

One might assume, as some scholars have, that when all the nations are grafted onto the tree of Judaism, the difference between Jew and non-Jew will disappear, since all peoples will now be Jews.[37] In an article written a number of years ago, I argued that Halevi distinguished between native-born Judaism (the Judaism of the *ṣuraḥā' bani Isra'el*) and proselyte Judaism,

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[35] *The Talmud*, Sanh. 97b–98a, records the dispute between R. Joshua and R. Eliezer as to whether the Messiah's coming is a function of repentance or whether it will occur at a preordained time (*qeẓ*). This may be the background of Halevi's statements that Jewish misbehavior has delayed the coming of the Messiah.

[36] *Khazarī,* 172–3. I have discussed this analogy, and its possible New Testament origin, in Daniel J. Lasker, "Proselyte Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Thought of Judah Halevi," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 81:1–2 (July–October, 1990), 75–91. It is true that Halevi did not explicitly say that all non-Jews would convert to Judaism, but the seed's turning the dirt into "something like itself" and the fact that all will be "one tree" indicates that all peoples will adopt the Jewish religion.

[37] David Z. Baneth, "Rabbi Yehudah Halevi ve-Al-Ghazali," *Keneset* 7 (1942): 323; Dinur, "Aliyyato," 176–9.

where the latter is a very good copy of native-born Judaism (what I called a "Judaism compatible"), but not the authentic Judaism of the native-born Jews. One of the major differences between the two is that the proselyte Jew cannot achieve prophecy; another difference is that there is no special relation between proselyte Judaism and the Land of Israel. Only the native-born Jew is a recipient (or holder) of the *amr ilāhī*, which is necessary for prophecy and which distinguishes Jews from non-Jews, including proselytes. As a result of this inherent difference, the distinction between native-born Jews and proselytes will continue even during the messianic age.[38]

Not everyone has accepted my conclusions concerning the difference between the two types of Judaism. It has been argued that the alterity that Judah Halevi notes between native-born (or pure) Jews and converts is of only minor import. True, converts cannot be prophets, but neither can most Jews, especially when there is no Temple and Israel is not sovereign in its Land. Even under ideal conditions, not all native-born Jews can become prophets (*Kuzari* 1:103). Furthermore, it is argued, that the difference between the prophet (a status to which a convert cannot aspire) and the "pious" (the *wālī*) is not significant, because even the *wālī* can perform wonders (*karāmāt*), if not real miracles (*mu'jizāt*), and also derive benefit from the *amr ilāhī* (e.g., *Kuzari* 2:14).[39] Not only that, if God desired to make a prophet even of a non-Jew, He could do so by means of a miracle, as He did in the case of Balaam (*Kuzari* 1:115);

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38 See Lasker, "Proselyte Judaism."

39 On the distinction between the prophet's and the *wālī*'s miracle making abilities, see Daniel J. Lasker, "Arabic Philosophical Terms in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," in Joshua Blau and David Doron, eds., *Heritage and Innovation in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Culture. Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies* [in Hebrew] (Ramat Gan, 2000), 161–6.

certainly converts can prophesy miraculously. And, lastly, the reason for which converts are not candidates for prophecy was that the circumstances of their birth and pre-Jewish education (namely the father was presumably uncircumcised, and the parents did not observe important Jewish rituals, especially the menstrual purity laws). A second generation convert, i.e., one whose father was already circumcised, and both of whose parents were Torah observing Jews when that person was conceived, is fully Jewish and the distinction between native-born and proselyte Judaism disappears.[40]

There are a number of different aspects to the argumentation here. Most significantly, the claim is made that being on the level of the *amr ilāhī* is not a biological, genetic function but a consequence of one's observance of the commandments. Thus, the second-generation proselytes, born to observant, albeit proselyte, Jews who observed the commandments, are just like any other Jew whose parents were not proselytes. The descendant of proselytes would have as good (or as poor) a chance to be a prophet as the descendant of native-born Jews. Proponents of this view can point to *Kuzari* 5:20:4, where the highest level of existence is that of those who observe the Torah,

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[40] Cf. The discussions in Eisen, "The Problem," 231–47; Baruch Frydman-Kohl, "Convenant, Conversion and Chosenness; Maimonides and Halevi on 'Who is a Jew?'," *Judaism* 41, 1 (1992): 64–79; Charles H. Manekin, "Aspects of Human Ranking in Halevy and Maimonides," in B. Carlos Bazán, et al., eds., *Moral and Political Philosophies in the Middle Ages* (Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of Medieval Philosophy) (New York–Ottawa–Toronto, 1995), 1686–97; and Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Proselytism and Ethnicism in R. Yehudah HaLevy," in Bernard Lewis, et al., eds., *Religionsgespräche in Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 27–41 (the author, who died before finishing his work, had used a pre-publication draft of my own article). See also Lipmann Bodoff, "Was Yehudah Halevi Racist?" *Judaism* 38:2 (Spring, 1989), 174–84, which was written before my article.

a level which is parallel to the level of *amr ilāhī* in 1:41–43.[41] It seems that this is not a sufficient proof of the disappearance of the difference between the native-born and the descendants of proselytes, since, for Halevi, in order fully to observe the Torah, one must live in the Land of Israel and have the other intrinsic qualities of the native-born Jews.

There are other reasons to doubt an interpretation of Judah Halevi that argues for the disappearance of the distinction between proselytes and native-born Jews. First, there is the explicit statement of *Kuzari* 1:115 that when the convert observes the commandments, he might be able to attain divine favor for himself and his offspring (*nasluhu*), namely the offspring apparently continue to have the status of convert. Perhaps the biological paradigm of the spread of the *'amr ilāhī* (*Kuzari* 1:95) should not be taken literally,[42] but in combination with other passages concerning the unequal status of converts (1:27, 115), it would seem to represent Halevi's thinking. Furthermore, the essential difference between Jews and non-Jews can be seen in the metaphors of Israel as the heart of the nations and the nations as beautiful, but inorganic, statues.[43] The special quality adhering to the Jewish people (the *ṣafwa*/*segulah*), that which distinguishes them from other peoples, must be inborn and essential.

In the messianic era, moreover, the differences between native-born Jews and proselytes (former non-Jews) will become even more prominent than they are in this world. Perhaps in our

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[41] *Khazarī*, 223; cf. Manekin, "Aspects," 1695, n. 8. I would like to thank Professor Manekin for his comments on this paper, despite his disagreement concerning the central thesis of the essential distinction between native-born and proselyte Jew.

[42] Cf. also *Khazarī*, 4:15, p. 166.

[43] Ibid., 2:29–44, pp. 63–8.

world there is not a great difference between a convert, who right now cannot achieve prophecy, and a native-born Jew, who right now also cannot achieve prophecy. In any event, in our world, the children of converts eventually intermarry with native-born Jews and the differences between these two types of Jews disappear.[44] In the messianic era, however, the situation will be different. Prophecy will return at that time, the Temple will be rebuilt, the sacrifices will be offered, all the commandments will be observed; thus, the conditions of prophecy will be fulfilled and, therefore, there will be prophets and real miracles (*mu'jizāt*). These prophets will be exclusively native-born Jews who have a special relation to the divine influence (*amr ilāhī*). Furthermore, who will be in the Land of Israel in the messianic era to enjoy the abundance of the divine influence? Only native-born Jews.[45] We know from *Kuzari* 4:23 that all peoples of the world will join the tree of Judaism, but they will not all be living in the Land of Israel. How could they all fit in?[46] The problem is not just a logistical one. Not only

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[44] Unfortunately, Halevi never directly related to the question of when the offspring of "mixed marriages" between converts and native-born Jews become fully assimilated into the Jewish people. His statement in 1:115 about the proselyte and his offspring seems to refer to proselytes who marry among themselves (very likely the situation in the messianic era when all peoples will convert to Judaism).

[45] Perhaps resurrected proselytes and their descendants from the pre-messianic era will also be in the Land of Israel, but since, as noted, Halevi's view of resurrection is somewhat unclear, it would be difficult to draw conclusions about this question.

[46] Saadya Ga'on engaged in some fancy mathematical footwork to figure out how all resurrected Jews would fit in the Land of Israel; see his *Amānāt*, 7:7, pp. 233–4. I am not denying the possibility that some proselytes will, indeed, live in the Land of Israel and enjoy the special qualities of that Land; I am asserting that in a world in which every single person becomes Jewish, which is presumably Halevi's view, only native-born Jews will necessarily live in the Land of Israel.

does the converted king of the Khazars, the prototypical proselyte, see no personal obligation to live in the Land of Israel, he even discourages the Ḥaver from going there (*Kuzari* 5:22–28). So, too, will future messianic converts see no religious duty to live in the Land of Israel.

Proselytes in the messianic era will honor the native-born Jews of the Land of Israel (*Kuzari* 4:23), just as proselyte Khazarians honored the native-born Jews in Khazaria. And in the manner in which the Khazarians built themselves a model of the tabernacle because of their love of the Temple,[47] so, too, one can assume that messianic converts will also build models of the rebuilt third Temple. All native-born Jews will live in the Land of Israel; the vast majority of proselyte Jews will live outside the Land of Israel. This does not mean, for example, that God could not miraculously cause a proselyte Jew to be a prophet just as he caused Balaam to be a prophet; it does, however, mean that not only will the distinction between native-born and proselyte Jews be maintained in the days of the Messiah, but also it will actually be strengthened.

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Halevi's philosophical outlook assumes that only native-born Jews will be prophets, even in the messianic era. The opinion that there will be no differences between Jews and proselytes is at odds with his viewpoint. Some readers of the *Kuzari* have understood Halevi, in contrast to the Aristotelian Maimonides, as an anti-philosopher who favors miraculous Judaism over natural philosophy. Halevi stressed the miraculous, i.e., that which is brought about by direct divine causality, over the

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[47] This is described in *Khazarī*, 2:1, p. 42.

natural, i.e. that which is a result of a combination of intermediate causes.[48] True, Halevi indicated that science and philosophy alone were not sufficient to achieve a completely accurate account of reality, but that does not make his own account of reality supernatural as such. Indeed, a number of recent studies of Halevi, for example those by Herbert Davidson and Howard Kreisel, have argued for a more naturalistic view of Halevi's philosophy.[49] Halevi was not an Aristotelian naturalist, since his understanding of nature included the level of the *amr ilāhī* (the divine influence), a level which did not exist in the Aristotelian explanation of reality. Once, however, one understands the level of the *amr ilāhī* as an attempt to provide a rational explanation of certain unusual observed phenomenon of the world, such as the miracles recorded in the Bible on the basis of reliable eyewitness accounts or the phenomenon of prophecy,

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[48] See Harry A. Wolfson, "Hallevi and Maimonides on Design, Chance and Necessity," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 11 (1941): 105–63; "Hallevi and Maimonides on Prophecy," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 32:4 (1942): 345–70; 33:1 (1943): 49–82; "Judah Hallevi on Causality and Miracles," in *Meyer Waxman Jubilee Volume* (Chicago and Jerusalem, 1966), 137–53 (all reprinted in Idem, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion* 2 [Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1977], 1–120; 415–32).

[49] For this understanding of Halevi's view of nature and causality, see Herbert Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari and Hallevi's Theory of Causality," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 131 (1973), 351–96; and Howard T. Kreisel, "Theories of Prophecy in Medieval Jewish Philosophy," (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981), 85–123; and idem, "The Land of Israel and Prophecy in Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in Moshe Halamish and Aviezer Ravitzky, eds., *The Land of Israel and Prophecy in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem, 1991), 4–51. I would like to thank Professor Kreisel for his usual incisive comments on this paper.

one can see the extent to which Halevi can be considered a naturalist.[50]

According to Halevi's restorative, non-apocalyptic view of the messianic period, in which the natural order will remain intact, it is clear that only native-born Jews will be prophets. This is so because only Jews fulfill the natural, minimal requirements of prophecy, namely being endowed with the *amr ilāhī*, living in the Land of Israel and observing the commandments. In the messianic era, other peoples will observe the commandments, but observing the commandments is not a sufficient condition for achieving prophecy. The level of *amr ilāhī* will still be reserved for native-born Jews.

The conclusion reached by some that the distinction between Jews and proselytes will disappear in the messianic era is based on the assumption that Halevi has a purely voluntaristic, miraculous understanding of the world, as compared to the Aristotelian model. Thus, just as God "miraculously" ensured that only Jews could be prophets, in the messianic era He could "miraculously" make all people into prophets. If that were the case, however, then there could be no reasonable explanation of Israel's particularity, in either the pre- or post-messianic era; this particularity would be opposed to reason. As Halevi himself states twice (1:67 and 89), nothing in Judaism is in conflict with reason; certainly the restriction of prophecy to native-born Jews must not be in conflict with reason. If God acted totally arbitrarily, such that any non-Jew could achieve the level of Jews, even in the messianic age, then why would Halevi need an

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[50] Halevi stated in a number of passages that when one has a reliable tradition testifying to the truth of a seemingly unexplainable, unnatural occurrence, one should use logical reasoning (*qiyās*) to explain it (thereby, giving it a natural explanation); see, *Khazarī*, 1:5, p. 8; 1:65, p. 17; 1:89, pp. 25–6; 4:3, p. 157.

explanation of prophecy based on such factors as climatology and the hereditary nature of the *amr ilāhī*? In the messianic era, all humans will practice Judaism; only a small part of humanity will be Jewish in the ethnic sense and, thus, only a small part of humanity will be worthy of prophecy, miracles and the right of residency in the Land of Israel.[51]

It is instructive to compare Halevi's views with those of Maimonides. True, for Maimonides, Israel's superiority over other nations is a function of the Torah of Israel and not any unique superhuman feature of the Jewish people.[52] Thus, for Maimonides, in the messianic era, as in our own era, there will be no distinctions between native-born Jews and proselytes. Nevertheless, according to Maimonides and Halevi, the messianic era will share the following characteristics: It is part of history, not the end of history;[53] resurrection of the dead will not be an inherent aspect of the era; the symbol of the restoration of Jewish sovereignty will be the renewed Temple with the sacrifices; Christianity and Islam will disappear, having fulfilled their historic roles of propagating the belief in God and the anticipation of the Messiah; all peoples will recognize the truth of the Torah of Moses and live by it, thereby assuring (for

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[51] Since Halevi did not fully develop his theory to account for the offspring of native-born Jews and proselytes, it is impossible to know at what stage, if at any, such an offspring might qualify for prophecy. It should also be noted that a naturalistic reading of Halevi does not preclude miracles which are a function of direct divine causality, such as, presumably, Balaam's prophecy.

[52] As Menachem Kellner develops my computer analogy in *Maimonides on Judaism and the Jewish People* (Albany, 1991), 5, for Halevi the difference between Jews and non-Jews is in the "hardware," whereas for Maimonides it is in the "software."

[53] Unless the messianic "Pax Israelitica" is considered the "end of history," just as some theorized a few years ago that the "Pax Americana" heralded the "end of history." This analogy was suggested to me by Ehud Krinis, who was kind enough to offer me other suggestions concerning this paper.

Halevi) or improving their chances of (for Maimonides) life after death.[54]

Even though Judah Halevi did not offer his readers explicit answers to their questions about the afterlife, what he did write is sufficient for us to know that his eschatology was an intrinsic part of his general philosophical outlook, an outlook which offered naturalistic explanations for the special status of the Jewish people, a status which will remain even when the Messiah comes.

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[54] Maimonides' views of the messianic era are found in Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah* (above, n. 22); *Mishneh Torah,* H. Melakhim, ch. 11–2; and *Epistle to Yemen*.

ITTIṢĀL AND THE AMR ILĀHĪ: DIVINE IMMANENCE AND THE
WORLD TO COME IN THE KUZARI

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Scholarship on the *Kuzari*[1] has long puzzled over the concept of
the *amr ilāhī*. On the one hand, Judah Halevi ostensibly rejects
the philosophical world-view, which posits the Active Intellect
as an intermediary between God and human beings. On the other
hand, he appears to choose a substitute for the Active Intellect:
the *amr ilāhī*, a mysterious, fluid term Halevi employs to
express divine immanence.

Shlomo Pines contextualized the phrase *amr ilāhī* along with
several other key terms in the *Kuzari* which find striking
parallels in Shī'ite sources. However, the precise role and
function of the *amr ilāhī* remain to be clarified. Certainly such a
task would be beyond the scope of this paper. My more modest
goal is to explore the theme of connection or union (*ittiṣāl*) with
the *amr ilāhī*, including its eschatological dimension.

Halevi uses the term *amr* or *amr ilāhī* one hundred times in
the *Kuzari* (excluding, for the most part, times he uses *amr* in

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[1] All *Kuzari* citations from *Kitāb al-radd wa-'l-dalīl fī 'l-dīn al-dhalīl (al-Kitāb al-Khazarī)*, ed. D. Baneth and H. Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1977).

the simple sense of *davar* – thing, matter, concern – or to translate command or commandment [*miṣvah*]. He uses the terms *ittiṣāl* or *wuṣla* eighty-two times. I will focus here on the passages in which he uses these terms together, of which there are at least thirty.

Theory of Ṣafwa: God's Ittiṣāl with Select

The Arabic root *w-ṣ-l* means to connect, unite, join, or link, as well as to arrive at or attain, perhaps through the process of connecting. The term *ittiṣāl* means union, communion, contact, or conjunction. The term *wuṣūl* signifies attaining or reaching the Divine. These terms are in fact the focus of a central debate in the Middle Ages: In what sense is it possible for human beings to achieve union with the Divine, and how does one attain such union?[2]

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[2] For primary texts, see al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, trans. R. Walzer, as *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State* (Oxford, 1985), 240–7; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*, ed. F. Najjar (Beirut, 1964), 79–80; Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fī-l 'Aql*, ed. M. Bouyges (1938), 22; Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā': De anima*, ed. F. Rahman (London, 1959), 245–8; trans. F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology* (Oxford, 1952), 90–3; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt*, ed. J. Forget (Leiden, 1892), 129; Ibn Sīnā, *Commentary on Aristotle, De Anima*, in *Arisṭu 'Inda al-'Arab*, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1947), 100–1; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Mubāḥathāt* in Badawi, 230–1; Ibn Sīnā, *Glosses on the Theology of Aristotle (Sharḥ Kitāb Uthūlūjiya al-Mansūb ilā Arisṭu li-ibn Sīnā)* in Badawi, 73; Ibn Bājja, *Kalām fī Ittiṣāl al-'Aql bi-l-Insān*, trans. M. Asin Palacios as "*Tratado de Avempace sobre la Union del Intelecto con el Hombre*" in *Al-Andalus* VII (1942), 1–47.

For secondary literature, see Alexander Altmann, "Ibn Bajja on Man's Ultimate Felicity," in idem, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca, 1969), 47–8 ff; Alfred Ivry, "Averroes on the Possibility of Intellection and Conjunction," *JAOS*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (April–June, 1966), 76–85; idem, "Moses of Narbonne's 'Treatise on the Perfection of the Soul,' A Methodological and Conceptual Analysis," *JQR*, 271–297; Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* (Oxford, 1992), 48–58, 65–73; 83–94; 103–5; 180–209; 320–40; idem, "Alfarabi and Avicenna

Sufis and philosophers in medieval Spain each used the terms *ittiṣāl* and *wuṣūl* to describe union with the Divine. While the Sufis sought union with God, the philosopher's goal was more modest: to unite his or her mind with the Active Intellect, the last of ten intellects emanated from God.[3] Halevi contrasts both Sufi and philosophical *ittiṣāl* with what he sees as a more direct, concrete, and powerful religious experience: that found in the relationship between the biblical God and the people of Israel.

Halevi describes this ongoing relationship by adapting and transforming a Shī'ite model of sacred history. Shī'ite thinkers used the term *ittiṣāl* to describe the prophetic connection God makes with a select line of individuals from Adam through Muḥammad and his descendents.[4] Halevi transforms the Shī'ite model by extending the term *ittiṣāl* to describe a group connection between God and the nation of Israel established through God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. The Shī'ite texts express a Neoplatonic hierarchy of emanation; the Divine reaches out through a series of hypostases, which

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on Active Intellect," *Viator* 142, 152–4; 166–72; David Blumenthal, "Maimonides' Intellectualist Mysticism and the Superiority of the Prophecy of Moses" in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, Vol. I (Chico, 1984), 27–8, ad loc.

[3] In medieval Aristotelian thought, the celestial world consisted of nine spheres, each governed by an emanated divine intelligence. Medieval thinkers such as al-Fārābī also posited a tenth intelligence, which they identified with the "active intellect" spoken of by Aristotle in De Anima. This Active Intellect was held to govern our world in the sphere under the moon and to bring potential human thought into actuality. Most philosophers believed that the Active Intellect was the celestial limit beyond which the human mind could not reach; the goal of spiritual life was therefore union with the tenth divine intellect. See Herbert Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the *Cuzari* and Hallevi's Theory of Causality," *Revue des etudes juives*, 352 ff; idem, "Alfarabi and Avicenna on Active Intellect," *Viator* 109, 134 ff; idem, *Alfarabi, Avicena, and Averroes*, 3–4, 44.

[4] Shlomo Pines, "Shī'ite Terms and Conceptions in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980), 172 ff.

include soul, intellect, and the divine *amr*, a second key term in the *Kuzari*. The term means literally thing, word, affair, or command. In the Qur'ān it signifies the divine command;[5] in these Shī'ite texts, it seems to signify God's commanding word, or what Pines calls "a divine influx conferring prophecy."[6] The *amr* comes to this series of prophets through *ittiṣāl*. It is thus *ittiṣāl* – connection or conjunction with God – that confers prophecy upon certain human beings.

In these Shī'ite texts, God elects certain individuals as an elite line of prophets, who are or become the *ṣafwa*, a third key term in the *Kuzari*. The term is derived from the root *ṣ-f-w*, which signifies both purity and selection: the *ṣafwa* are the pure and also the chosen. It is not always clear whether they are chosen because they are pure, or whether they become select through being chosen by God.[7]

There has been some confusion in the literature between the concepts of the *ṣafwa* and of the *amr ilāhī*. The *ṣafwa* – rendered into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon as *segulah* – are those who are chosen. The *amr ilāhī* is the aspect of God that connects with the elite. It is true that Halevi at times uses quasi-genetic language to describe suitability for contact with the Divine. But in my opinion, scholars have placed too much emphasis on the immanent aspect of the *amr ilāhī*, as if *amr ilāhī* is a principle

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[5] See J.M.S. Baljon, "The *'Amr* of God in the Koran," *Acta Orientalia* 23 (1959), 7–18.

[6] Pines, "Shī'ite Terms and Conceptions," 177.

[7] See, for example, I:47: 14 "These, on account of their *ittiṣāl* are the heart of Adam and his quintessence (*ṣafwa*)." Are they *ṣafwa* because of their *ittiṣāl*, or does God connect with them because they are a natural elite? Put more simply: are they special because they are chosen, or are they chosen because they are special? Halevi's language suggests that *ittiṣāl* is both a gift conferred on those who are worthy and a gift which makes special those who receive it.

with which Jews can be born. The term *ittiṣāl* suggests a
different image; the *amr ilāhī* must make contact with a person.
Even if one is born with the capacity for *ittiṣāl*, a person may
need to make him or herself worthy of receiving the *amr ilāhī*
and wait to be singled out by God.

The history of *ittiṣāl* begins with the first human being. The
Ḥaver tells us that Adam received "the divine power [*al-quwwa
al-ilāhiyya*] beyond the intellect, by which I mean [that he was
at] the level at which one connects [*yattaṣilu*] with God and
spiritual beings." (I:95:28)[8] Adam has a natural capacity for
ittiṣāl, a gift which Sufis and philosophers attain only through an
arduous path of development.[9] The original relationship between
human beings and God is a spontaneous connection, one not
cultivated by following the steps of a program.

Note that Halevi does not use the term *amr ilāhī* in this
passage; he calls the aspect of Adam that makes possible his
connection with God the divine power or faculty [*quwwa
ilāhiyya*].[10] Halevi situates Adam's capacity for *ittiṣāl*, like the

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[8] Compare his description of the excellent person [*al-khayyir*]: "He calls upon
his community as a leader who is obeyed calls upon his army, to help him
towards connection [*ittiṣāl*] with the degree which is above it [intellect], I
mean the divine degree [*rutba*], which is above the degree of intellect" [III:5:
93].

[9] For other medieval Jewish portraits of the first human being, see Maimo-
nides, *Guide of the Perpelexed* I:2; Nahmanides, *Commentary on the
Pentateuch*, on Genesis 2:9; Bezalel Safran, "Rabbi Azriel and Nahmanides:
Two Views of the Fall of Man," in I. Twersky, ed., *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides
(Ramban): Explorations in his Religious and Literary Virtuosity* (Cambridge,
1983), 86–7.

[10] Ibn Ṭufayl, another twelfth century Spanish thinker writing in Arabic,
speaks of the capacity for "witnessing" the Divine [*mushāhada*] as something
he can term a faculty [*quwwa*] only by way of metaphor; both he and Halevi
suggest that the capacity for connection with the Divine lies beyond the realm
of the intellect, but each is hesitant to locate it within a specific faculty of
soul. Hujwīrī, an eleventh century Persian Sufi thinker, writes similarly:

Sufis, and unlike the philosophers, beyond the realm of intellect, and to claim that it makes possible communion not with the Active Intellect, but with God. Perhaps Halevi wants to hint that this is the "secret" between the soul and the Divine to which the King alluded in I:4 – a connection with the spiritual realm different from that spoken of by the philosophers, and one whose existence the King is seeking to verify, as he explains:

> It would be fitting given the actions of the philosophers, as well as their learning, searching after truth, and earnest endeavors, that prophecy would be widespread among them – given their *ittiṣāl* with the spiritual realm [*rūḥāniyyāt*] – and that marvelous things and wonders and miracles would be reported of them. However, to the contrary, we find true prophetic dreams with people who lack learning and who have not purified their souls. This shows that there is a secret between the *amr ilāhī* and the soul other than what you have mentioned, O Philosopher! (I:4:6).

In fact, this statement of the King's is the first mention of the *amr ilāhī* in the *Kuzari* and is a good indication of Halevi's intention in using the term. One might well ask: Why does Halevi introduce the concept of the *amr ilāhī*, when one of the tenets that distinguish his thought is the rejection of the Active Intellect as an intermediary, and the assertion that God acts as a direct unmediated cause in the world? The objection contains the seed of its resolution. It is not easy for the human mind to

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"God causes man to know him with a knowledge that is not linked to any faculty." See L. Gauthier, ed. *Ḥayy ben Yaqdhān: Roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail* (Beirut, 1936), 6, 9; L. Goodman, trans., *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* (Los Angeles, 1983), 96, 97, 173 n. 17; R. A. Nicholson, *The Kashf al-Maḥjūb, the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism by 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Hujwīrī* (London, 1911), 271.

grasp God's direct connection with the world, as the Muslim scholar explains:

> It is only with difficulty[11] that souls can accept this great thing, that the Creator of this world and the next world and the heavens and the stars makes contact [*yattaṣilu*][12] with this dirty piece of mud, I mean a human being, and that God talks to him, and gratifies his desires and whims (I:8: 8).

The King later echoes this sentiment, when he asks the *Ḥaver* in amazement:

> But how did your souls become convinced of this great thing, that the Creator of bodies, spirits, intellects and angels, who is too sublime, holy, and exalted for intellects – much less for the senses – to perceive, has contact [*ittiṣāl*] with this low creature, sunk in matter, even if he is great in form (I:68:18).

The *amr ilāhī* is not a defined hypostasis or intermediary, but an allusive phrase that points to the mysterious connection between God and humanity. Halevi uses the term *amr* in a similar way to describe the enigma of God's direct, voluntary creation of the universe: "The air and all bodies came into existence according to his will [*irāda*] and were formed [or: took shape] by his *amr*,

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[11] *Bi-l-ḥarā*. See Baneth and Ben-Shammai, al-*Kitāb al-Khazarī*, 9 n. 18; R. Dozy, *Supplement aux dictionnaires Arabes*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1967), 280; D.W. Baneth, "La-nusaḥ ha-ʿaravi shel ha-Kuzari," *Sefer Zikkaron Li-Khvod Professor Yitzhak Yehudah Goldziher,* Vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 5718 (1957–8), 108; Yefet b. ʿEli, *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1889), 7 and n. 12 (English 2, 91); compare Yefet b. ʿEli, *Excerpts from Commentary to the Book of Psalms*, ed. L. Barges (1846), 15, *bi-l-aḥrā*.

[12] Or: communicates. This alternative was suggested to me by Professor Haggai Ben-Shammai.

just as the heaven and earth were formed." (II:4:47) God's *amr* is here placed parallel to his will [*irāda*]. But lest we become too attached to the concept of God's will as a reified entity, the *Ḥaver* hastens to add:

> O, philosophers, what is the *amr* that in your view formed the heavens [so that they] revolve continually . . . You cannot help acknowledge this *amr*, for these things did not create themselves or one another. That *amr* adapted the air to sound the Ten Commandments, and formed the writing engraved on the tablets, call it will or *amr*, or whatever you like (II:6:48).

The *amr* is not a "thing," entity, or intermediary, but a cipher for a mystery we cannot grasp: the relationship between the Infinite and the finite. It is like the Sanskrit term *māyā*, which connotes not merely illusion but magic, the inscrutable relationship between the Absolute and its creation.[13] Halevi is enchanted with the term *amr ilāhī* not because it signifies a definite entity, but precisely because it is so elusive; with a simple brush stroke, it merely hints at the divine-human relationship. The phrase *amr ilāhī* signals the paradoxical co-existence of transcendence and immanence in God. That is why we cannot understand the *amr ilāhī* without the concept of *ittiṣāl*; together, these terms point to a bridge between the Divine and the human. Both terms should

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[13] See for example, Jan Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion* (The Hague, 1965), 164–97; Paul Devanandan, *The Concept of Māyā: An Essay in Historical Survey of the Hindu Theory of the world, with Special Reference to the Vedānta* (London, 1950); Anil K. Ray Chaudhuri, *The Doctrine of Māyā* (Calcutta, 1950); Teun Goudriaan, "*Māyā,*" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade; Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (Princeton, 1969), 19, n. 11; Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. I (New York, 1929), 184ff.

be understood as dynamic, rather than static; they signal interaction rather than substance.

This relational dynamic is prominent in the history of *ittiṣāl*. Even acknowledging Halevi's quasi-genetic language, we find that the *amr ilāhī* is not an inherent trait, but a divine gift that comes to individuals who are worthy. Humans are not simply born with the *amr ilāhī*; one may be born with the capacity to connect with the Divine, but this potential remains to be actualized – whether through one's own effort, God's will, or some combination of the two:

> The quintessence of Seth was Enosh, and thus the *amr* made contact [*ittaṣala*] until Noah with individuals who were the heart, similar to Adam, called sons of God, possessing perfection in physical constitution and moral qualities, length of life, [knowledge of the] sciences, and capability.[14] Perhaps there were among them those to whom the *amr ilāhī* did not attach [*yattaṣil*] like Terah. But Abraham his son was a disciple of his grandfather 'Ever; moreover he had known Noah himself. And so the *amr ilāhī* was linked from grandfathers to grandsons (I:95:28).

Abraham was a worthy soul, but he had to undergo a period of growth and purification. While he received from birth the potential for connection with God, it was also necessary that he learn from spiritual teachers such as 'Ever and Noah. In addition, he had to be physically moved to the place that would

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[14] Professor Haggai Ben-Shammai pointed out to me that these four characteristics correspond to four essential attributes of God in the *kalām*. God is described as living, eternal, knowing, and capable. Since these human beings are described as sons of God, they possess characteristics similar – but not identical – to those God possesses. They are perfectly constructed living beings, have long life-spans, are knowledgeable and capable.

make *ittiṣāl* possible, just as a seed must sometimes be transplanted to more fertile soil: "Abraham was not fit to connect [*yattaṣil*] to the *amr ilāhī* and to make a covenant with Him till he arrived in the land, in the theophany [*mashhad*] between the pieces." (II:16:52) In fact, the land itself is connected [*muttaṣil*] to the *amr ilāhī* (II:14:50) and thus plays an important role in facilitating *ittiṣāl*, as do specific command-ments such as those of circumcision and *Shabbat*: "One does not become fit for this distinction – *ittiṣāl* with the *amr ilāhī* – in any other place" (II:12:49). "Its fertility and barrenness, its happiness and misfortune are connected to the *amr ilāhī*, in accordance with your actions" (I:109:37). "Circumcision is a sign of the covenant, that the *amr ilāhī* is connected [*yattaṣil*] with [Abraham] and with his descendants" (III:7:96). "The fruit of the week is *Shabbat*, for it is reserved for *ittiṣāl* with the *amr ilāhī*, and to serve him with joy, not contrition." (III:5:94) A two-fold process is thus apparent: inheriting the worthiness to connect with the *amr ilāhī*, and developing this potential through one's own study and actions.

Now in addition to the verb *waṣala* and the concept of *ittiṣāl*, a second verb Halevi uses with respect to the *amr ilāhī* is *ḥalla*, to alight, dwell, rest, or inhere. The term derives from the Arabic root *ḥ-l-l*, which originally signified untying or loosening a knot. The Arabic root thus emerges from the desert experience of unbinding one's load upon alighting from a camel.[15] Its verbal noun *ḥulūl*, which in a concrete sense signifies alighting, ultimately becomes a technical term for inhering, indwelling, or incarnation.[16]

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[15] *ḥalla al-aḥmāl ʿinda al-nuzūl*. See Edward William Lane, *Lexicon of the Arabic Language* (Cambridge, England, 1984), Book 1, 619, middle column.
[16] See *Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, *s.v.* "Ḥulūl."

It is thus understandable that this verb might suggest an immanent interpretation of the *amr ilāhī*. For example, the *Ḥaver* asserts that "the *amr ilāhī* only dwells in a soul which is receptive to intellect [*al-amr al-ilāhī lā yaḥullu illā nafs qābil li-l-'aql*]," and he compares its dwelling to the presence of reason in the soul. But notice how elastic his language is, both with respect to the *amr ilāhī* and with respect to reason. The metaphors of "resting" and "dwelling" are both physical, while neither the *amr ilāhī* nor the intellect actually reside in a physical place. The *Ḥaver* makes this clear when he explains the symbolism of the sacrifices:

> As for the intention, it was the beauty of the order, upon which the "king"[17] could rest [*yaḥullu*] in the sense of honor and distinction, not of physical place [*ḥulūl tashrīf, lā ḥulūl tamakkun*]. An analogy for the *amr ilāhī* is the rational soul which dwells [*ḥalla*] in the natural, animal body. When [the body's] natural qualities become balanced, and its governing and governed faculties are properly ordered [so that they are] prepared for a state nobler than the animal state, [the body] becomes fit for the dwelling of the rational angel,[18] in order that [the rational angel] may instruct and guide [the body]. [Reason] accompanies [the body] as long as that order is preserved, while if [the order] is destroyed, [reason] leaves it.[19] The ignorant may imagine that reason needs food, drink, and scents, because he sees that [reason] remains as long as these remain and leaves if these are taken away. This is not the case. The *amr ilāhī* is generous; it wills the good for all. Whenever something is well-organized and prepared to receive its governance, it does not withhold it, nor hesitate to shed upon it[20] light, wisdom and inspiration

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[17] Or: angel

[18] angel [*malak*] or king [*malik*]

[19] Or: "in order that it may instruct, guide, and accompany it as along as that order is preserved, while if [the order] is destroyed, [reason] leaves it."

[20] Lit: emanate, overflow [*afāḍa*] to it.

[*ilhām*]. If however, the order is disturbed, it cannot receive this light, and this will be [the being's] destruction, although the *amr ilāhī* [itself] is above being affected by disorder or corruption….

[Through partaking of the sacrificial food], the bodily constitution becomes completely fit and prepared to receive the governance of the rational soul, which is a substance separate [from matter], approaching the angelic, and about which it is said, "its dwelling is not with flesh." (Daniel 2:11) It dwells in the body in the sense of ruling and directing [it], not in the sense of place. It does not partake of any of this food, for it is exalted above it.[21] The *amr ilāhī* only rests upon [*yaḥullu*] a soul which is receptive to reason, while the soul is only connected to warm vital breath.[22] (II:26:59–60)

I have rendered this last phrase as "the *amr ilāhī* only rests upon a soul" rather than "dwells in a soul" that is receptive to reason, for the term *ḥalla* can just as easily suggest an influx from without as an immanent principle within. Indeed elsewhere the *Ḥaver* speaks of the *amr* as a prophetic influx that comes to rest upon individuals and the community. The *Ḥaver* explains that

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[21] Halevi draws an analogy between the presence of the *amr ilāhī* in the sacrificial order and the presence of reason in the human being. The *amr ilāhī* rests upon the sacrificial order in the sense of honoring it with the divine presence; the Divine does not need offerings of food and drink. However, if the order of the system is disturbed, the *amr ilāhī* departs – not because the Divine needs a certain regimen of offerings, but because unless the sacrificial order is properly prepared, it cannot receive the *amr ilāhī*. Similarly reason does not dwell physically in the human body, and does not need physical nourishment. However, reason can only govern a soul that is properly prepared to receive its guidance. If physical nourishment is taken away, the body's order is destroyed, and reason departs.

[22] On this point see Davidson, "The Active Intellect," 386–7. Davidson translates: the *amr ilāhī* "can only enter a soul that contains intellect, the soul can only join the warm inborn spirit, and the inborn spirit must have a source to which it is joined . . . to wit, the heart."

"this community had at last became sufficiently pure for the [divine] light to rest upon it [*ḥulūl al-nūr 'alayhā*]." (II:54: 72) In fact, God is ever awaiting a community that will accept the divine light:

> Whenever a few or a group [from among humanity] purifies [itself], the divine light rests upon them [*ḥallahu*], and guides them through subtle acts of grace and wonders which break the natural order. This is called love and joy [*ahavah ve-simḥah*]. The *amr ilāhī* did not find [anyone] accepting obedience to his command [*amr*] and adhering to the course he had commanded [*amara*] – other than the stars and spheres, and a few individuals from Adam to Jacob. Then they became a group, and so the *amr ilāhī* rested on them [*ḥallahum*] out of love, "in order to be a God to them" (III:17:104–5).

Notice that the *amr ilāhī* and God are here spoken of interchangeably. Note, too, that the verb *ḥalla* need not make us think that the *amr ilāhī* is a genetically inherited divine principle. It is up to each individual and community to purify itself to be a worthy bearer of the divine light.

God's Providential Guidance of Israel

On the first level, then, *ittiṣāl* is a connection God makes with individuals. On a second level, *ittiṣāl* describes God's providential guidance of Israel. We see a transition between the two in the *Ḥaver*'s discussion of the divine names, where he explains that God is called "Holy One of Israel" [*Qedosh Yisrael*], an expression for *amr ilāhī* which is connected to him [*al-muttaṣil bihi*], then to all of his descendents, a connection of direction and governance, not a connection of clinging and adherence [*ittiṣāl tadbīr wa-siyāsa, lā ittiṣāl luṣūq wa-mumassa*]" (IV:3:152).

In this passage, we see Halevi's concern to distinguish Jewish *ittiṣāl* from the Sufi concept of complete adherence or union; he apparently seeks to retain a respectful distance between the Divine and the human. However, in Halevi's eyes, the connection between God and Israel is not less real than the Sufi mystical union. It is in fact a more substantive connection, as it is attested to publicly on the stage of history. *Ittiṣāl* is not a private experience claimed by a few disparate mystics, but an open guidance, which can be historically verified. "The exodus from Egypt," the *Ḥaver* tells us, "is an argument that cannot be refuted, that the *amr ilāhī* is connected with humankind and provident over them [*li-l-amr al-ilāhī ittiṣāl bi-l-khalq wa-ʿināya bihim*)" (III:11:102).

Despite the contrast he makes at times between the Jewish nation, guided by divine providence, and the other nations, left to pure accident and chance, the *Ḥaver* also suggests that Israel provides a universal link between God and the world:

> The trials that befall us bring about the soundness of our faith, the purity of the pure-hearted among us, and the removal from us of impurities. And through our purity and our integrity the *amr ilāhī* connects [*yattaṣilu*] with this lower world. (II:44:67)

Ittiṣāl is not just a gift for Israel; it is also a gift Israel gives the world. Israel serves as a bridge linking God and creation.

Human Beings Seeking to Link with God

We have seen that in addition to passages that describe God or the *amr ilāhī* reaching out to make contact with humanity, as in the Shīʿite view, we find in the *Kuzari* an alternative model: a suggestion that the connection is mutual, that human beings may strive to link with the Divine. God is in search of humanity, but

human beings are also searching for God, and there is some process of spiritual growth required to make one a fit dwelling place for the Divine. The *amr ilāhī* is indeed always searching for a suitable conversation partner. "The *amr ilāhī* is, as it were, on the lookout for one who is worthy to be connected to, that he may be a God to him, like the prophets and pious" (II:14:51–52).

Halevi repeatedly emphasizes the mutuality of this process:

> Our promise is our *ittiṣāl* with the *amr ilāhī* by prophecy and what approaches it, and the *ittiṣāl* of the *amr ilāhī* with us by providence, wonders and miracles (I:109:36).

> His *amr* and governance connect [*yattaṣilu*] with people. And the pure among the people connect with Him, to the point where they witness Him by means of what is called Glory, *Shekhinah*, angelhood . . . and other things that proved to them that they were addressed by Him on high, and they called that Glory of the Lord (IV:3:240).

> One who unites all (these prayers) with pure intention is a true Israelite, and it is fitting for him to aspire to *ittiṣāl* with the *amr ilāhī*, which is connected [*muttaṣil*] to the Children of Israel (III:17:105).

Does Halevi then prescribe a path of development by which a person can prepare him or herself for union with God? Halevi's conviction is that neither he nor any human being can prescribe such a path. God alone can do so, and that path is the *halakhah*. Here again, Halevi draws on the elasticity of the term *amr*, which can signify a command or commandment, as well as God's commanding word or God's will:

One does not reach the *amr ilāhī* except by an *amr ilāhī*, that is, by actions God commands (I:98:33).[23]

The *Ḥaver*: Do not believe that I, though agreeing with you, admit that we are dead. We still have a connection [*ittiṣāl*] with that *amr ilāhī* through the laws which he has placed as a link [*ṣila,* from *w-ṣ-l*] between us and him (II:34:65).

We have already stated that the only way to draw near to God is through the commandments of God [*awāmir Allah*] themselves, for God alone knows their measure, times and places . . . by whose fulfillment comes the favor [of God] and the attachment [*ittiṣāl*] of the *amr ilāhī* (III:23:112–113).

This will show you that one can only come near to God by the commandments of God [*awāmir Allah*], and there is no way to knowledge of the commandments of God except by way of prophecy, not by logical speculation [*taqayyus*] or intellectualizing [*ta'aqqul*], and there is no link [*ṣila,* from *w-ṣ-l*] between us and those commandments except sound tradition [*al-naql al-ṣaḥīḥ*] (III:53:134).

Through prophetic revelation, God informs human beings of the path to the Divine, which is embodied in divine commandments. Rabbinic tradition preserves and transmits this knowledge of God's precepts; there is no need for human seekers to invent their own spiritual path. Human beings can connect with the Divine [*amr ilāhī*] by following the command of God [*amr ilāhī*]. This coincidence of vocabulary is not fortuitous. Halevi's evocative language suggests that "something divine" is present in the commandments; the goal is already present in the path.

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[23] *Lā yattaṣilu al-insān ilā al-amr al-ilāhi illā bi-amr ilāhi, a'ni bi-'amal yomar Allah bi-hā.*

The commandments serve as a meeting place in this world between God and humanity.

The Eschatological Dimension

There is in addition an eschatological dimension to Halevi's concept of *ittiṣāl*, in part a polemical response to critiques of Judaism as a this-worldly religion. The *Ḥaver* argues that Jews do not need to boast about the afterlife, for they have experienced *ittiṣāl* in this world:

> The King: Your prayers say so little of the world to come. But you have already shown me that one who prays for *ittiṣāl* with the divine light in this life, if he prays in the degree of prophecy (and there is nothing nearer for man to God than that) there is no doubt that he has prayed for more than the world to come, and if he achieves it, he also achieves the world to come. For one whose soul is attached [*ittaṣalat nafsuhu*] to the *amr ilāhī* while he is [still] busy with the accidents of the body, it stands to reason that he will join [*yattaṣilu*] [the *amr ilāhī*] when he withdraws and leaves this unclean vessel (III:20: 109).

We see that *ittiṣāl* is something for which one can pray and to which one can aspire, whether in this life or the next. The anticipation of the afterlife is indeed a recurring theme in the *Kuzari*. *Ittiṣāl* is a present experience that also assures eschatological fulfillment. *Ittiṣāl* is thus a bridge between this world and the next, just as it is a bridge between God and humanity. Jewish religious experience is a tangible anticipation of the world to come:

> If [the sacrifices] were not done from divine command [*amr Allah*], you would think little of these actions and would believe that they would distance you from God, not draw you near. [However], when you have completed

what is necessary and see the heavenly fire, or find within
your soul another spirit which you had not known, or true
dreams or miracles, then you know that this is the result of
your preceding action, and of the great *amr* with which
you have connected [*ittaṣalta*] and which you have
reached. Then, do not care that you die. After your having
connected [*ittiṣālika*] with this, your death is only the
expiration of the body, while the soul that has arrived at
this level can neither descend from it nor be removed from
this degree (III:53: 134).

Halevi develops this theme in an extended passage at the end of
Book One:

Know that one who encounters a prophet, at the time he
encounters him, and hears from him the divine words,
becomes spiritual [*taḥduthu lahu rūḥāniyya*] . . . What is
[then] desired is simply that the human soul become
divine, separate from its senses, witness the supernal
world, delight [*taltadhdhu*] in the vision of the divine
light, and hear the divine word. This soul is safe from
death when its bodily faculties perish. Thus, if there is
found a Law through whose disciplines of learning and
practice this state can be reached [*yūṣalu* – from *w-ṣ-l*], in
the place which it designated, with the conditions it set
down, this is no doubt the Law in which the survival of the
soul after the death of the body is ensured (I:103: 34).

Wuṣūl – which in the Sufi path is final arrival through union
with the Divine – is here given a Jewish twist. Prophets and
those who encounter prophets do indeed experience separation
from their physical senses and visions of the divine world.
However, while such a powerful and dramatic religious
experience might lead one to seek final union and annihilation in
the Divine, this is not the Jewish way, as the *Ḥaver* goes on to
explain. He begins by asking the King:

> What is your opinion of one who has experienced such grand theophanies [*yushāhid al-mashāhid al-ʿaẓīma al-malakūtiyya*]? (I:107:35)
>
> The King: He would no doubt long for his soul to remain separate from its senses, that his soul might continue its delighting [*muladhdhatuhu*] in that light. He would be one who would desire death.
>
> The *Ḥaver*: To the contrary, our promise is our *ittiṣāl* with the prophetic *amr ilāhī* by prophecy and what approaches it, and the *ittiṣāl* of the *amr ilāhī* with us by providence and wonders and miracles. Thus it is not emphasized in the Torah "if you practice this Law, I will bring you to gardens and delights." God rather says, "You will be special to me and I will be to you a God who will guide you." There will be those among you who come into my presence and move about in heaven, like those who have made their way among the angels. And there will also be those of my angels moving about on earth. You will see them, singly and in groups, guarding you and fighting for you. . . Then you will know that an order [*amr*] greater than the natural order guides your order; all this, and all these laws – their promises [*mawāʿid*] – are assured, one need not fear that they will be rescinded.[24] The promises of this Law are all included under one principle: the anticipation[25] of drawing near to the Lord and his angels. One who has arrived [*waṣala*] at this degree need not fear death; our Law has demonstrated this plainly (I:109:36).

The Jewish promise is realized in this world, within the course of human history; the Divine comes into ordinary human affairs. Yes, there will be some in the community who will ascend to heaven and make their way among the angels; but there will also

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[24] See Qurʾān 39:20, 13:31, 3:9, 3:194, 34:30, and Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (New York, 2000), 49 and notes.
[25] Or: expectation, hope [*rajāʾ*]

be angels moving about on earth, assisting the nation in their battles. The *Ḥaver* mentions these two facts side by side, suggesting that they are two equal dimensions of religious experience. God's presence is manifest within the natural order; the afterlife is but the natural result of a history guided by providence.

Halevi illustrates this point with one of several parables about a visit to the king of India. The tale demonstrates that obedience to the king brings connection, arrival, and ultimate happiness.[26] The king of India recognizes an early visitor, whom the *Ḥaver* identifies as Moses, because his ancestors, the patriarchs, had been among the king's companions. Once the traveler has accepted obedience to him, the king charges the traveler with commands and covenants; he then sends the traveler off with messengers, the prophets. The solicitude of these messengers, who guide subsequent pilgrims along the shortest and most direct path, allows the traveler's friends to more easily reach India and see the king:

> All of them knew that it would be made easy [for] one who wishes to reach [*wuṣūl ilā*] India [if he would] take upon himself obedience to the king and honor his messengers who bring him into contact [*muwaṣṣilīna*] with [the king]. And they did not need to ask: why go to the trouble to [take upon oneself] this obedience? For the reason was clearly apparent: to make contact [*li-yattaṣila*] with the king – and that connection [*ittiṣāl*] with him is fulfillment [*sa'āda*] (I:109:37).

Halevi emphasizes that the commandments themselves bring *ittiṣāl*; this path is not superseded by spiritual exercises or

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[26] *sa'āda*. In a religious context: eternal bliss.

antinomian mysticism, as it was among certain radical Sufis. Later Jews reach the king by following the path forged by the prophets and obeying the covenant God establishes with them – ultimately, by obedience to the king. Unlike Ibn Sīnā, for example, who describes Sufi arrival [*wuṣūl*] as unitive absorption in the one Truth that is God, Halevi here describes arrival in a language of respectful obedience.[27] Such *ittiṣāl* is safer than the more intense form experienced by the prophets, but is no less to be accounted communion with the Divine.

There is a polemical addendum to this parable, which returns to the Christian and Islamic critique of Judaism. The promise of *ittiṣāl* after death, the *Ḥaver* argues, is crucial only to those who have not experienced *ittiṣāl* in this life. Halevi thus turns the critique on its head. It is not that Judaism is deficient for lacking description of the afterlife. The deficiency, argues the *Ḥaver*, lies with those who offer a faint hope rather than a lived reality.

Experiential Dimension to Ittiṣāl: Divine Intimacy

While there are degrees of contact with the spiritual realm,[28] ultimate *ittiṣāl* is with God, and there is a passionate, experiential dimension to this relationship. The prophet, graced with the Holy Spirit, is freed from the doubts that plagued him or her when searching for God through the mind. What replaces doubt is love, service, and the bliss of *ittiṣāl*. The prophet becomes "a servant of God, passionately in love with the object

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[27] See Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 204; A-M. Goichon, trans. *Livre des directives et remarques d'Avicenne [Kitāb al-ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt]* (Paris, 1951), 496–7; Ibn Tufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqdhān*, ed. Gauthier, 7; Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 97.

[28] Halevi uses the term *ittiṣāl* with respect to the *amr ilāhī*, with respect to God, and with respect to other spiritual entities, such as the Active Intellect, the divine light, the angels, and other spiritual beings [*rūḥāniyyāt*].

of his worship,[29] almost annihilating himself out of his love,[30] due to the greatness of the bliss of union [*ladhdhat al-ittiṣāl*] he feels, and the pain and suffering in being apart from Him" (IV:15:168).

The passionate lover we find here is well known in Arabic poetry of both sacred and secular love; we often see him on the verge of death when separated from the bliss of union with his beloved. Like the *Ḥaver*, Sufi writers weave together imagery of passionate love, worship, and obedience even unto death. The phrase "bliss of union" [*ladhdhat al-ittiṣāl*] also has Sufi resonance; Sufi mystics use the root *l-dh-dh* – signifying joy, sweetness, delight or bliss – to suggest the subjective experience, the pleasurable sensation of "tasting" union with the divine beloved.[31]

Halevi's pairing of the term *ittiṣāl* with *ladhdha* thus adds an ecstatic dimension to the divine-human relationship, transforming the covenantal bond so prominent throughout the *Kuzari*. However we should not read this passage as an exception to the *Kuzari* as a whole. We have seen the root *l-dh-dh* in I:103, as well; the *Ḥaver* speaks of witness of the supernal world, longing to reach sublime states, and the desire to remain savoring the light. Halevi includes delight as an essential

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[29] '*ābid* '*āshiq li-ma*'*būdihi*. An '*ābid* is a worshipper or adorer of God; the *ma*'*būd* is the object of worship, the worshipped or adored deity.

[30] Or: on the verge of perishing out of his love [*mustahlikan fī- ḥubbihi*]. *Mustahlikan* is used in this poetry to mean self-annihilation.

[31] For example, describing the experience of a Sufi adept, Ibn Sīnā writes: "then when his training and willpower reach a certain point, glimmerings of the light of Truth will flicker before him, delightful [*ladhdha*], like lightning, flashing and going out." Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Livre des directives et remarques d'Avicenne), trans. A.M. Goichon (Paris, 1951*)*, 493; quoted in Gauther, *Roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*, 6; Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 96.

dimension of prophetic experience, one in which the ordinary person can share by encountering a genuine prophet. Nor need we interpret *ittiṣāl* as complete union [*unio mystica*]. *Ladhdhat al-ittiṣāl* may describe the joy of meeting God; the prophet becomes a servant and worshipper, one who would rather die than live without the God he or she has encountered. For Halevi, *ittiṣāl* as union with a personal God and *ittiṣāl* as covenant with that God go hand in hand.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of *ittiṣāl* offers a key to Halevi's conception of divine immanence and of the *amr ilāhī* that has not been sufficiently recognized. Halevi provides a complex portrait of the role of divine choice and human initiative in biblical history. Shī'ite thought depicts a natural elite with an innate capacity for *ittiṣāl*. Sufi and philosophical *ittiṣāl* make room for religious quest and struggle. Halevi steers a middle course between the activism of the Sufis and philosophers and the passivism of the Shī'ites. The term *ittiṣāl* is itself ambiguous: it is not clear from the term who initiates contact and how union is achieved. This ambiguity in the concept of *ittiṣāl* allows Halevi to depict a mutual relationship, a collaborative effort. Similarly, he uses the concept of the *amr ilāhī* to describe the ways in which God touches humanity, the interface between God and creation.

Halevi employs covenantal language and imagery to describe both individual and communal *ittiṣāl.* While the philosophers and Sufis had used the term to suggest ontological union, Halevi stresses that the Jewish connection to God is a covenant between two parties, requiring commitment, loyalty, and obedience. He thus broadens the terms *ittiṣāl* and *wuṣūl* from depicting an

individual, isolated quest for union with the Divine to describe a concrete, mutual, covenantal relationship, both individual and communal.

Halevi's transformation of the term *ittiṣāl* also responds to Muslim and Christian critiques of Judaism as this-worldly, lacking in descriptions of immortality and an afterlife. He maintains that Judaism's this-worldly focus is a strong point, for Jews' experience of *ittiṣāl* in this life is both a taste and the strongest proof of *ittiṣāl* in the world to come. The Jewish way of *miṣvot* enables Jews to experience connection with God through balanced, this-worldly life in community.

Halevi therefore fundamentally inverts the image of *ittiṣāl* in the Islamic world. Union with the Divine is not reached by a disembodied intellect, as some philosophers would have it, nor by the isolated ascetic, as certain Sufis claim. Nor need one wait for the afterlife to achieve *ittiṣāl*. Connection with God is experienced by Jews first of all in this world through the communal life of *miṣvot*. While this taste of the world to come will naturally continue in the afterlife, the path of *miṣvot* is its own reward. Jewish *ittiṣāl* is found in the here and now.

BETWEEN HALAKHIC CODIFICATION AND ETHICAL
COMMENTARY: RABBI ISRAEL ISRAELI OF TOLEDO
ON INTENTION IN PRAYER[1]

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Introduction
Jewish scholars did not always confine themselves to the single
occupation of Torah study. Many engaged in several professions
and even gave expression to these occupations in their writings.
They frequently adapted their writing to the specific framework
in which they operated and the specific audience they
addressed.[2]

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[2] Here are a few examples: Ḥ. Ben-Shammai, "The Exegetical and Philo-
sophical Writing of Saadya Ga'on: A Leader's Endeavor" [in Hebrew],
Pe'amim 54 (Winter 1993), 63–81; E. Haddad, "The Ambiguity of *'Ezer
kenegdo*: A Study of Husband-Wife Relations in the Teaching of RaBaD" [in
Hebrew] in N. Ilan, ed., *'Ayin Tova* (Tel Aviv, 1999), 476–96; J. Levinger,
Ha-Rambam ke-filosof u-khe-foseq (Jerusalem, 1990) (hereafter: Levinger,
Ha-Rambam); J. Levinger, "Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* on
Forbidden Food in the Light of His Own Medical Opinion," in J.L. Kraemer,
ed., *Perspectives on Maimonides: Philosophical and Historical Studies*
(Oxford, 1991), 195–207.

Rabbi Israel Israeli, one of the most important scholars in Toledo at the turn of the thirteenth–fourteenth century, achieved renown as a biblical exegete, halakhist, preacher, poet and translator from Arabic to Hebrew.[3] His two most important works are *Mizvot Zemaniyot* (Temporal commandments; hereafter: *MZ*)[4] and the commentary on *Avot*.[5] So far I have not been able to determine which of the two was written first. Neither book contains any reference to the other nor any hint as to the order in which they were composed. Although this is a question that has aroused my curiosity, its consideration is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

A comparative study of two works by the same author, particularly if both deal with the same issues, can be useful in a number of ways: First, the two works together may provide a wider and richer context for understanding the writer's position on a given subject. Second, one work may expand upon a topic discussed only briefly in the other. Likewise, the repetition of an idea in a second work may reveal the degree to which the idea is independent of context or circumstances and is a point of principle for the writer. Finally, the works may reveal the inconsistencies or even contradictions in the author's work.[6]

My purpose in this paper is to examine Rabbi Israel's opinions on one specific subject – the recitation of the *Shema*

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[3] His activities are discussed at length in N. Ilan, "'Pursuing the Truth' and a 'Way for the Public': Studies in the Teaching of Rabbi Israel Israeli of Toledo," (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999) (hereafter: Ilan, "Studies"), 49–54.

[4] See N. Ilan, "'He Who Has This Book Will Need No Other Book' – A Study of *Mitzvot Zemaniyot* by Rabbi Israel Israeli of Toledo," *Te'uda* 16–17 (2001), 105–21 (= *Boletin de la Asociacion Española de Orientalistas* 38 [2002], 77–96) (hereafter: Ilan, "He Who Has").

[5] See Ilan, "Studies," esp. 77–212.

[6] See the examples in n. 2, above.

and the *Amidah* – as a test case for a comparative study of the two books. By comparing and contrasting his words in these two compositions, I will attempt to explain the differences between them and to point out the primary characteristics of Rabbi Israel's writings. Since *MZ* has not yet been subjected to scholarly investigation, part of what follows will be more in the nature of preliminary working hypotheses than final findings; future studies will bear out or disprove my assumptions. In any event, I hope the latter will provide an impetus for further study of *MZ*.

The Course of the Discussion in the Commentary on Avot[7]
In his commentary on *Avot*, Rabbi Israel devoted a relatively long passage (more than seven pages) to Rabbi Shimon [ben Netanel]'s saying: "Be careful to read the *Shema* and to say the *Amidah*; and when you pray do not make your prayer routine, but as an appeal for mercy and grace before the All-present…"(2:13).[8] Rabbi Israel distinguished between three different parts of R. Shimon's saying,[9] as is clear from the titles

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[7] The text has survived in only one manuscript: Ms. Oxford-Bodleian 2354 (Opp. Add. Qto. 126), and it is presented in full in the appendix to this article. For a description of the manuscript, see Ilan, "Studies," 58–66.

[8] The reference follows Albeck, ed., *Shisha Sidrei Mishna*, Seder Nezikin (Jerusalem, 1953), 361; It is similar in the commentary of R. Izhak ben R. Shelomo on *Avot*, eds. M.S. Kasher and Y.Y. Blecherowitz (Jerusalem, 1972), 73 (hereafter: RIbaSh); and in the commentary of P. Kehati (Jerusalem, 1992), 339. According to other ways of dividing the Mishna, this is Mishna 12 (cf. I. Shailat, ed., *Mishna Commentary of Maimonides* [Jerusalem, 1994], 42); Mishna 17 (The commentary of R. Yonah on *Avot*, eds. M.S. Kasher and Y.Y. Blecherowitz [Jerusalem, 1969], 35 [hereafter Rabbenu Yonah]); Mishna 18 (The commentary of R. Yosef b. Nahmias on *Avot*, ed. M.A. Bamberger [Paks, 1907], fol. 20a, although in a note on the previous page our mishna is referred to as no. 16!).

[9] The third part "And do not regard yourself as wicked" is not pertinent to this article.

written in larger and bolder letters than the rest of the text.[10]
Most of the discussion concerns the first part of the Mishna –
"Be careful to read the *Shema* and to say the *Tefillah*
[*Amidah*]."[11] The mishnaic combination בקרית שמע ובתפלה is
repeated eight times, always in Arabic (קרית שמע ואל צלאה). It
would seem that through the repetition of this expression in the
commentary on *Avot*, Rabbi Israel sought to emphasize what the
Shema and the *Amidah* have in common.

The key concept is "the intention of the heart." It is
introduced conceptually (section 1) by a discussion of the
distinction between obligatory and optional commandments.[12]
From his description it is clear that he ascribed special value to
obligatory commandments. Rabbi Israel asserts – following in
the footsteps of well-established halakhic opinion – that both the
reading of the *Shema* and the recitation of the *Amidah* are
obligatory. For this reason Rabbi Shimon used the special
expression of caution, הוי זהיר. Further on, Rabbi Israel ela-
borates on the unique status of these two segments of the liturgy.

Later (section 2), Rabbi Israel adds a short note on the
appropriate *time* for fulfilling the commandment of reading the
Shema, making it clear that fulfilling the commandments at the
time for which they were ordained has great importance and
validity. A similar note appears in *MZ*, also early on in his

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[10] In fact this is not an autograph text, and consequently the way the
manuscript is written is not proof; but in all the manuscripts of the
commentary (one of which may be an autograph; see Ilan, "Studies," 66–8,
discussion of Ms. [1]א and נ) the titles are written in larger, bold letters. I
therefore believe they may reflect the original form of the text.

[11] *Tefillah* standing alone refers to *Tefillat ha-Amidah,* as will be clear below
from R. Israel's comments.

[12] R. Israel opened his commentary in this way in other places as well; see
Ilan, "Studies," 79. We shall see below that *MZ* also opens with conceptual
definitions.

discussion.[13] However, caution with regard to the time of recitation of the *Shema* is only a technical fulfillment of the injunction "Be careful" in the Mishna. Essentially, the fulfillment of this injunction entails soulful reflection and concentration on this commandment; Rabbi Israel devotes most of his discussion to this matter. The precedent condition for achieving intention is *preparation* (section 3) for reading the *Shema* and reciting the *Amidah* – caution with regard to the cleanliness of the body, the physical surroundings and a suitable physical position.[14]

At this point Rabbi Israel reaches the main point of his discussion – *the essentiality of intention in prayer* (section 4). He begins by defining the essence of the state of prayer (subsection 1) as an intimate encounter with God. In order to achieve this encounter, intention is an essential component, and its absence is severely reprehensible (subsection 2). To illustrate the seriousness of carrying out an action without intention,

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[13] See M.Y. Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes, Sefer ha-Shulḥan ve-Sefer Mitzvoth Zemaniyoth* (New York, 5744 [sic] [1985]), 406, passage beginning ושמור אתה המצליח "…and this is the main thing, because it includes all of the commandments. And that is because all of the commandments have time limits…"; and see also the continuation a few lines below, at notes 49–51.

[14] For a detailed and basic discussion of the importance of body position in prayer, see U. Ehrlich, *Kol Azmotai Tomarna* (Jerusalem, 1999). R. Israel's discussion of this issue is very brief, since his purpose was to make the intention of the heart the center of the experience of prayer. In this respect his discussion in the commentary on *Avot* is very different from that of Maimonides in *Hilkhot Tefillah*, 4:1–14; and even more from that of Maimonides' son. See R. Abraham Maimuni, *Sefer ha-Maspiq le-Ovdei Hashem*, ed. N. Danah (Ramat Gan, 1989), 60–7, 68–187 (ch. 24: "The Duties of Prayer"; and ch. 25: "The Completion of the Discussion of the Duties of Prayer". On the position of R. Menahem Ha-Meiri, a contemporary of R. Israel, who lived in Provence, see also M. Halbertal, "R. Menahem Ha-Meiri: between Torah and Philosophy" [in Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 63 (1994), 69–71, and in his book *Between Torah and Wisdom* (Jerusalem, 2000), 26–7.

Rabbi Israel provides a parable (subsection 3), from which it is apparent that lack of intention in prayer is tantamount to violating an oath.

As is often the case in his commentary on *Avot*, Rabbi Israel does not confine himself to negative terms,[15] but also provides a positive program (subsection 4), outlining how to concentrate while reciting the *Shema* and its benedictions. This is a relatively long passage and has a parallel in *MZ*.[16] The similarities are in generalities as well as in particulars: (1) insistence that one should aim to achieve intention throughout the prayer and not only in a small part of it; (2) awareness that the capacity to achieve intention does not exist *a priori,* but is acquired through great effort; and (3) the assertion that whoever follows all of the examples given – which are identical in the two works – is a "genuine Jew" (יהודייא חקיקא) in the language of the commentary on *Avot*, and in the language of *MZ* "has fulfilled appropriately the statute of reading the *Shema*" (כבר השלים בק"ש חוקה הראוי לה).

Against the background of these teachings of Rabbi Israel on intention, the question may arise as to why permanent prayer is necessary, since it contradicts to a certain extent spontaneous prayer, which expresses the intention of the heart. Rabbi Israel indirectly addresses this question on two occasions. The first is in the following context (subsection 5): "All of the prayers have been edited and arranged with precise organization,[17] and the

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[15] See Ilan, "Studies," 437.

[16] Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 407, the entire second paragraph. Some of this was quoted later on by R. Israel Ibn Alnaqawa in his *Menorat Ha-Maor* (hereafter: Ibn Alnaqawa, *Menorat*), ed. H.G. Enelow (New York, 1930), II, 92. See also the quotation from our R. Israel quoted by Enelow on p. 116, in note to line 7.

[17] An alternate rendering would be "All the prayers have been edited and arranged with care."

foundation[18] of the members of the Great Assembly is that their words were close to the holy spirit."[19]

But in spite of the special peculiarity of those who formulated organized prayer, and the quality of the prayer itself, human beings are incapable of achieving intention throughout prayer. Consequently – as a necessary compromise – *halakha* has narrowed the obligation of intention to clearly defined parts of the service: the first verse of the *Shema* and the first benediction of the *Amidah* (subsection 6).

Rabbi Israel is not satisfied with providing the halakhic requirement of intention; he explains in detail the seriousness of distraction (subsection 7) – that is, uttering the liturgical text without concentrating on its content. In this passage Rabbi Israel asserts that one who prays without intention is like a corpse or a beast.

And once again, as in many other places in the commentary, alongside his admonishing and condemning tone is a persuasive and encouraging one. Here (subsection 8) he discusses the relation between prayer and the soul, and then (subsection 9) the relation between intention and action. He concludes the passage (subsection 10) with a parable that stresses the seriousness of performing actions without intention, taken almost verbatim from Baḥya's *Duties of the Heart* (*Ḥovot*).

Rabbi Israel addresses a hypothetical question (in section 5): Why go to all the trouble and effort to pray? He elaborates on the quality and purpose of prayer, saying: "Pure prayer brings

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[18] The Arabic original here uses the Hebrew word יסוד.

[19] Regarding the proximity of the members of the Great Assembly to prophecy, see: Baḥya Ibn Paquda, *Torat Ḥovōt Ha-Levavōt*, Y. Qafiḥ, ed. (Jerusalem, 1973), 150 (hereafter: Ibn Paquda, *Duties*); E.E. Urbach, "When Did Prophecy Cease?" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 17 (1946), 7 (= Urbach, *Me'olamām shel Ḥakhamīm* [Jerusalem, 1988], 15).

man closer to his Creator than any of the desirable actions […] the purpose of prayer is devoting one's soul to God…". The discussion concludes (section 6) with an additional reminder of the great ordinance of the ancient sages (the established order of prayer) and of the relation between expression and meaning. Some of these questions appear in a similar fashion in *MZ*,[20] where it comes just before a detailed list of the things on which one should meditate while reciting the *Shema* and its benedictions.[21]

Rabbi Israel's discussion of the teaching of Rabbi Shimon "And when you pray do not make your prayer routine," is shorter, including five sections. First comes a brief conceptual introduction – what is meant by קבע (permanent, routine). After that (section 2), Rabbi Israel explains that the challenge is to treat prayer as an experience and not as a burden. He adds (section 3) his praise of public prayer,[22] and immediately (section 4) moderates his position by asserting the occasions on which it is appropriate not to engage in public prayer. In his conclusion Rabbi Israel reiterates the special value he attributes to the intimacy of man before God in the hour of prayer.

Participation in public prayer as an essential part of shaping identity is discussed in two more places in the commentary on *Avot*: in the discussion of Hillel's dictum "Do not separate yourself from the community" (2:4), and in the excursus on the teaching of Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas "…and attending the synagogues of the ignorant drive a man from the world" (3:10). The discussion of separating oneself from the community is long and complex. Its main point is that there are four aspects to the

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[20] Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 407, end of first paragraph.
[21] See above, n. 16 and corresponding text.
[22] This passage also has a parallel in *MZ*, at the beginning of the section on the laws pertaining to prayer. See Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 410.

command "Do not separate yourself from the community," and they are a sort of mirror of problematic areas, which one could assume, reveal something about the characteristic weaknesses of Rabbi Israel's congregation. If that assumption is correct, one may be able to detect from his criticism the following failings: (1) a certain laxity regarding public prayer; (2) a passive (apathetic? reserved? hostile?) attitude toward support of philanthropic enterprises of the community; (3) attempts to avoid taking part in communal duties (particularly the paying of taxes); and (4) placing individual needs and interests before those of the community. All of these failings may be regarded as symptoms of a more serious malady – a weakening of ties to the community and its values, and a partial and reserved willingness to take an active part in community activities and experiences, both positive and negative.[23]

It is also possible that this long sermon – particularly the end of it – hints at the organizing of groups within the community for the sake of creating "a public," and Rabbi Israel criticizes and negates them and their motives. At least some of the impressions mentioned here are reinforced by actual criticism, both open and veiled, as will be clarified below.

In his interpretation of the teaching of Rabbi Ḥanina about the ignorant who attend the synagogue, Rabbi Israel described one possible consequence of congregating with the ignorant. He even went so far as to equate the derogatory influence of their company to that of the seven peoples of Canaan, who were suspected of leading Israel into sin. Apparently his comment regarding sitting on stone benches outside the synagogue – and

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[23] For another criticism in this commentary see: N. Ilan, "'Let not the rich man glory in his riches' (Jeremiah 9:22) – Implied Social Criticism in the Commentary of Rabbi Israel Israeli to *Avot*," *Sefunot* 23 (2003), 167–93.

the two readings do not significantly differ here – are almost a snapshot of his time and place, and document an accurate picture of what was common at the time.

Two possible types within the congregation for whom this commentary was intended are noteworthy: intellectuals who have distanced themselves somewhat from the normative Jewish way of life; and the frivolous who can easily be tempted to sit with the ignorant, with idlers and worthless folk. It seems to me that Rabbi Israel first of all addressed the former. In the continuation he hints that whoever was endowed with intellectual potential might nevertheless slip easily into association with riffraff, since they are an available alternative to the social establishment of the community.

The strident language with which Rabbi Israel warns about the care to be taken in reciting the *Shema* and the *Amidah* – which is the central issue in this article – corresponds to his strict remarks in other contexts. And his words are of some help in constructing a profile of his projected audience, as suggested above: possibly intellectuals who have distanced themselves somewhat from the normative Jewish way of life or people who have taken part in organizing groups within the community, justifying the formation of a different "public."[24]

On the Literary Genre and Its Cultural Context

The question of the literary genre to which the commentary in general and this passage in particular belong is a complex matter and one that depends on the criteria used to characterize the genre. In my dissertation I proposed three possible answers to the question of genre: If the sole or decisive criterion is *content*, this book is a commentary on *Avot*; if it is *form*, this is a

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[24] Regarding this subject see Ilan, "Studies," 194–212, esp. 195–207.

commentary based on sermons; and if the criterion is *purpose*, this is a book of ethical counsel.[25]

The extent and content of the passage under discussion clearly go beyond what would have been required to interpret Rabbi Shimon's dictum. Why did Rabbi Israel draw out his commentary so extensively? The didactic structure, the many biblical proof-texts, the repeated emphasis on the seriousness of the absence of intention in prayer, the frequent assertion that reciting the words without paying attention to their meaning is a poor act and at times even reprehensible, the double reference to the background for regular prayer – all of these give the impression that the text in its present form is the reworking of a text *originally transmitted orally*.[26] Thus the question as to the *purpose* of this long and complicated sermon and *against whom it was directed* comes into sharper focus. To put it another way: What was the nature of the threat – evidently a real one – against which Rabbi Israel was railing and against which he presented his concept of intention in the reading of the *Shema* and the recitation of the *Amidah* prayer?

A possible answer may be discerned in the polemical language of the conclusion, i.e. the insistence on intention in the reading of the *Shema* and the reciting of the *Amidah*. In the commentary on *Avot*, the passage concludes with the assertion "In all these [if he directs his heart] with pure intention, he will be a *genuine* Jew." In *MZ* Rabbi Israel writes: "he has fulfilled *appropriately* the statute of reading the *Shema*." In the commentary on *Avot* he argues against a position that attributes genuineness or "truth" to other intentions; while in *MZ* he

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[25] Ibid., 85.

[26] In ibid., 413–56, I discussed two sermons that were reworked in written forms and gave references to research literature on the sermon at that time (see esp. 431–3, nn. 1–10). See also 30–2, 242 and n. 2 there.

confronts a position regarding "simple" intentions as inadequate to fulfill the requirement of intention.

It seems to me that Rabbi Israel was arguing here against the position of the Kabbalah – perhaps already under the influence of the *Zohar* – which asserted that one had to use special intentions (*kavvanot*) not derived from the plain sense of the liturgical text in order to arrive at the "true" meaning of the text and fulfill the requirement of intention.[27] This assertion corresponds to my own conclusion, reached in the course of study, that supports the hypothesis that there is no Kabbalistic material in the commentary on *Avot*.[28] The same applies to *MZ*.[29] Ostensibly, the lack of Kabbalah does not indicate a

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[27] I wish to thank my colleague Israel Hazzani for pointing out this matter to me and helping me clarify it.

[28] See Ilan, "Studies," 174–5 (in the section concerning *Ahl al-derash*)*,* 193 (at notes 294–295 and in those notes).

[29] A similar position, from the same time and place, was expressed by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, in his monumental *Arba'a Turīm*, which also lacks Kabbalistic influence. See *Oraḥ Ḥayyīm*, section 98: "His thought in what manner? As it is taught in the Mishna, he who prays needs to guide his heart, as it is written 'Prepare their heart, make your ears listen' (Psalms 10:17), meaning that he should pay attention to the meaning of the words that he utters and think that the *Shekhina* (Divine Presence) is before him, as it says 'I imagine the Lord before me always' (Psalms 16:8). And he should awake that intent and ignore all the thoughts that trouble him until his thought and intention remain pure in his prayer. And he should think as if he were standing before a king of flesh and blood who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, how he would arrange his words and direct them carefully in order not to fail; all the more so before the King, King of kings, the Holy One Blessed Be He, he must direct his thoughts, since before him thought is like speech, because he reads all thoughts. And that is how the pious and righteous would do; they would go off alone and direct their prayer until they reached the elimination of the material and the resurgence of the intellectual spirit until they would nearly reach the level of prophecy. […] And Rabbi Meir of Rotenberg wrote 'we are not careful about all of this today because we do not provide such intention in prayer. […] And consequently he has to take care that his intention follow the model of a sacrifice and not

polemic against it; but it seems to me that we have here a case of "thundering silence," and I wish to assert that the implied absence of Kabbalah here indicates a critical position towards it.[30] This impression is supported, apparently, by comparing the words of Baḥya in *Duties* regarding the issue of intention in prayer, which he discusses a number of times. Rabbi Israel relies here on the words of Baḥya.[31] Consequently the difference between the two is notable: Baḥya preaches pietism; Rabbi Israel concurs with him but adds a polemical element to his position.

Decades before Rabbi Israel wrote his commentary, a heated debate had already arisen over the question of intention in prayer, as a result of the positions of the early Kabbalists in Provence and Spain[32] and the Pietists of Ashkenaz.[33] With the

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contaminate it with extraneous thoughts like a thought that would disqualify a holy sacrifice…'" The neo-Platonic tendency that is reflected in the description of the prayer of "the pious and righteous" does not concern us here. I wish to thank Professor Moshe Halbertal for pointing out this passage to me.

[30] Halbertal, "Between Torah and Philosophy", 99, n. 68, pointed out a similar example of ignoring a different position as a way of expressing disagreement in the attitude of Rabbi Menahem Ha-Meiri towards Kabbalah (except for a solitary mention). Since Ha-Meiri and Rabbi Israel were active at the same time (end of the thirteenth century) and in two communities – Toledo and Provence – that engaged in mutual exchanges, this may be not a case of repetition of an accidental phenomenon but a characteristic pattern, or at least a common pattern from that time in those two communities. Regarding the whole issue, see B. Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1982).

[31] See notes 80, 105, 107–11, below.

[32] For general background regarding the position of Kabbalah in Spain at the time under discussion, see Y.M. Ta-Shma, "Halakha, Kabbalah and Philosophy in Christian Spain: A Critique of *The History of the Jews in Christian Spain*" [in Hebrew], *Shenaton ha-Mishpat ha-Ivri* 18–19 (1992–1994), 479–95; Regarding the issue of intention in prayer, see E. Gottlieb, *Meḥkarim be-Sifrut ha-Kabbalah* (Tel Aviv, 1976), 38–55, esp. 40 (criticism

appearance of the *Zohar*, the polemic became even more vocal, both because that book took the concept of special *kavvanōt* further than earlier Kabbalists had done,[34] and because at that time there was no outstanding halakhic authority in Spain, as Idel has pointed out.[35] According to Idel, two models of Kabbalistic groups operated in the thirteenth century: The first one was an elite, which transmitted its teachings primarily orally and to only a select group of followers; a second group produced written literature and was directed to a larger and obviously less select audience. In the first group we find Naḥmanides, Rabbi Jonah of Gerona and later on Rabbi Shelomo ben Adret; the outstanding representative of the second group is Rabbi Isaac

in Narbonne *circa* 1245), 43 (on what to meditate about while reciting *Shema* in the morning); M. Idel, *Kabbalah – New Perspectives* (New Haven and London, 1988), 103 and nn. 205–6; idem, "On *Kavvanat Shemone-Esre* in the Teaching of R. Isaac Sagi Nahor," [in Hebrew], in M. Oron and A. Goldreich, eds., *Massuot – Meḥqarim be-Sifrut ha-Kabbalah u-ve-Maḥshevet Israel Muqdashim le-Zikhro shel Prof. E. Gottleib* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1994), 25–52, esp. 35–6, 45 (cited in the name of R. Isaac Sagi Nahor); E. Gottleib, "The Meaning of Prayer in the Kabbala of Spain," [in Hebrew], in G.H. Cohen, ed., *Ha-Tefilla ha-Yehudit – Hemshekh ve-Ḥidush* (Ramat Gan, 1978), 168–89, esp. a citation from the teachings of R. Itzhak of Acre, p. 174; G. Scholem, *Meḥqerei Kabbalah* (1) (Jerusalem, 1998), 14, 81–2 ("prayer for the enlightened [*maskilim* = Kabbalists]); idem, "The Concept of Kavvanah in the Early Kabbalah," in A. Jospe, ed., *Studies in Jewish Thought* (Detroit, 1981), 162–80, esp. 171–4.

[33] Cf. Y. Dan, *Torat ha-Sod shel Ḥassidei Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem, 1968), s.v. index: *Tefillah*.

[34] Cf. I. Tishbi, Mishnat ha-Zohar, II (Jerusalem, 1961), 247–250 (introduction to the chapter on Prayer and its intent: "worship of the heart before the *Zohar*"), 252–6 ("the theory of prayer and intent among the first Kabbalists"), 257–62 ("worship of the heart in the *Zohar*"), 268–79 (the secrets of prayer and its *kavvanot*), and esp. 276–9 (*Shema*), and 312–8 (the quotation on the secret of *Yiḥud* in *Shema* [= Zohar II 133b–134b]).

[35] M. Idel, "Kabbalah and Elites in Thirteenth-Century Spain," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 9,1 (1994), 5–19.

Sagi Nahor.[36] The death of Naḥmanides and Rabbi Jonah left a certain leadership vacuum, one that was not filled until the leadership positions of Rabbi Shelomo ben Adret (in Barcelona) and Rabbi Asher ben Yeḥiel (in Toledo) were consolidated; this situation was exploited to advance the dissemination of Kabbalistic ideas in writing, particularly in Castile.[37]

It is an accepted technique in polemical literature not to mention explicitly the name of one's opponent, especially when the challenge is a difficult and demanding one. Thus it is not surprising that Rabbi Israel engaged in a polemic in both works without naming his interlocutor. For this reason, and because he hardly hinted in any of his writings against whom he was arguing, it is important to read his opinions on the question of intention in prayer critically and cautiously. They may teach us something about prevailing attitudes in Toledo of his time and his efforts to prevent the penetration of Kabbalistic influence, especially in prayer.

The Course of the Discussion in MZ

The general title of the discussion of the reading of the *Shema* in *MZ* is "The Commandments of Reading the *Shema* and Its Benedictions and Its Time Limits." Such is the title in the manuscript of *MZ*, which has survived only in the Hebrew translation prepared by the poet Shem Tob Ibn Ardutiel.[38] Thus it is impossible to decide whether, in the Arabic source, the title was given in Hebrew or was translated from Arabic to Hebrew.

The subjects which Rabbi Israel addressed are: (1) definition – what is included in "The Reading of the *Shema*"; (2) the

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[36] Ibid., 10.
[37] Ibid., 17. Idel estimates the window of opportunity as extending from 1275 to 1295.
[38] See Ilan, "He Who Has."

allocated time for reading the *Shema*; (3) a recommendation to observe the commandment at the beginning of its allocated time; (4) the time of morning for reading the *Shema* and the positions in which it may be read; (5) the essential nature of intention; (6) attention to be paid to correct enunciation; (7) the chapters (*peraqīm*) and the meaning of "between the chapters"; (8) the importance of reading the chapters according to their prescribed order; (9) what to do in case of doubt and who is exempt from reading the *Shema*; (10) the laws of cleanliness; and (11) a sermon on the special importance of reading the *Shema*.

Rabbi Israel incorporated quotes from the Mishna and both Talmuds in his discussion. He appears to have relied on Maimonides' *Mishne Torah* as well, abbreviating it greatly and ruling primarily on questions of the times for reading the *Shema*, all in accordance with the approach he outlined in the preface to *MZ*.

A brief look at the chapter in *MZ* and its structure reveals that Rabbi Israel followed a different approach from that of Maimonides regarding the laws of reading the *Shema*, which would seem to be the consequence of a different concept. Maimonides intentionally sought to encompass all the *halakhōt* in this issue, whereas Rabbi Israel wanted to discuss only the principles, and even these only briefly. Moreover in the light of Rabbi Israel's long and detailed discussion, the relatively small weight given by Maimonides to the requirement of intention in reading the *Shema* is striking. All that he has to say on the subject is: "He who reads the *Shema* and does not direct his heart in the first verse, which is *Shema Israel* – has not fulfilled his duty; and the rest – [even] if he did not direct his heart, he has fulfilled [it]" (2:1). Rabbi Israel, on the other hand, devoted two entire passages in the middle of his discussion to intention,

and his primary interest there are the *ideological and ethical aspects*, and not just formal definitions of the requirement of intention.

The lengthy closing passage in *MZ* has an aggadic-educational character rather than a halakhic one. It includes a midrashic passage on the verse in *Song of Songs* (8:13) "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken for thy voice – cause me to hear it." This passage appears to be the combination of fragments of several sermons from different sources. To the best of my knowledge this homily does not appear in any one source, even though it gives the appearance of one coherent quote from some midrashic text.[39]

Thus it may be seen that despite the obvious halakhic character of *MZ*, this work may be characterized as prescribing not only what actions are to be carried out, and how, but also as teaching the spiritual and intellectual attitude in which they should be carried out. It supports these assertions not with legal dicta but with aggadic teachings. This pattern recurs elsewhere in *MZ*, but I shall not expand on that here.[40]

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[39] Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 409, does not give a precise source for the *midrash* as it appears in MZ. It is different in some important respects from S. Donsky, ed., *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1980), 179 (8:15); and also from the text in A. Grinhot, ed., *Midrash Shir ha-Shirim* (Jerusalem, 1981), 122 (8:13); and from that quoted in S. Buber, *Midrash Tehillim* (Vilna, 1891), 476 (116:1). Regarding "Who is like your people Israel" as a heavenly response to *Shema*, see *Yalqut Shim'oni* (Jerusalem, 1960), *Beshalaḥ*, #244, *incipit*: "*Ozzi ve-zimrat Yah*" (p. 150); ibid., *Va-etḥanan,* #825, *incipit* "*Ki mi goy"* (p. 576). Regarding "Hear my people and I will speak" versus "Hear oh Israel", see ibid., #833 (p. 580). A certain similarity *in content* may be noted to the words of R. Joseph ben Judah Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-Sodot ve-Hofa'at ha-Meorot,* ed. A.S. Halkin (Jerusalem, 1964), 481–3, although I am not convinced at this point that R. Israel was familiar with that work; see Ilan, "Studies," 192. Cf. Ibn Alnaqawa, *Menorat*, 94–5, and Enelow's note to l. 17 on p. 94; cf. 96, l. 17 and the notes there.

[40] See Ilan, "He Who Has," for the text that corresponds to nn. 30, 76 and 77.

*What Sets Rabbi Israel's Discussion of Shema and the Amidah
Apart from Other Commentaries on Avot?*

The unique character of Rabbi Israel's treatment of the *Shema*
and the *Amidah* becomes clear when he is compared to other
commentators on *Avot* – those that preceded him, his
contemporaries and even some who came after him.
Maimonides' discussion of the entire Mishna – i.e. all three
sayings of Rabbi Shimon – is very brief, only two lines long.[41]
Rabbi Jonah also was brief and stressed different points from
those of Rabbi Israel.[42] The same applies to *Maḥzor Vitri*.[43] The
difference between Rabbi Israel's words and those of the others
is significant because, as has already been shown, he relied on
their writings when he wrote his commentary on *Avot*.[44]
Menahem Ha-Meiri was also brief on this passage.[45] There is a
long discussion of this saying (of Rabbi Shimon) in *Midrash
David* by Rabbi David Ha-Naggid, the grandson of Maimonides,
but there is no evidence of his having influenced Rabbi Israel;
moreover, about half of Rabbi David's discussion is a story of
which R. Israel makes no mention at all.[46] R. Israel's

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[41] See I. Shailat, ed., *Massekhet Avot 'im Perush Rabbenu Moshe ben
Maimon* (Jerusalem, 5754 [1994]) (hereafter: Shailat, *Massekhet*), 140
(Arabic version), 42 (Hebrew translation). Regarding Maimonides' position
on the question of intention in prayer, see I. Twersky, "'And He Should See
Himself as if Standing before the Shekhina': The Intent of the Heart in Prayer
in the Teaching of Maimonides" [in Hebrew], in S. Elizur et al., eds., *Knesset
Ezra* (Jerusalem, 1995), 47–67; M Fuchs, "Prayer in the Thought of
Maimonides" [in Hebrew], in G. H. Cohen, ed., *Ha-Tefillah ha-Yehudit –
Hemshekh ve-Ḥidush* (Ramat Gan, 1978), 142–67.

[42] Rabbenu Yonah, 35.

[43] S. Horowitz, ed., *Maḥzor Vitri* (Jerusalem, 1963), 503.

[44] See Ilan, "Studies," 152–3 (Maimonides); 164–6 (Rabbenu Yonah); 154–8,
191 (*Maḥzor Vitri* – in the discussion of Rabbenu Shmuel).

[45] S.Z. Havlin, ed., *Bet Ha-Beḥira le-Rabbenu Menaḥem Ha-Meiri 'al Avot*
(Jerusalem-Cleveland, 1998), 104–5.

[46] B.Z. Krinfis, ed., *Midrash David 'al Avot* (Jerusalem, 1944), 50–2.

commentary served as a basis for the commentary of his relative Rabbi Itzhak ben Rabbi Shelomo of Toledo,[47] who used Rabbi Israel's interpretation of the teaching of Rabbi Shimon in his commentary.[48] As pointed out above, Rabbi Israel Alneqawa, author of *Menorat ha-Maor,* based parts of his teachings about the *Shema* and the *Amidah* on the words of Rabbi Israel in *MZ*.[49] Following his general practice, he omitted the theoretical discussion. Rabbi Shmuel de Uzida, author of *Midrash Shmuel,* quoted Rabbi Israel with respect to the third saying of Rabbi Shimon in this Mishna ("And do not regard yourself as wicked").[50]

Consequently it is clear from a comparison with Rabbi Israel's forerunners and successors that his commentary is unique in both scope and content.[51] While earlier writers quoted fragments of verses and *midrashīm*, Rabbi Israel integrated into his commentary sections of works of religious thought – in the passage discussed here he quotes the *Guide of the Perplexed*,[52] the *Duties of the Heart*, and the *Kuzari*.[53] This fact fits the explanation proposed above – that Rabbi Israel's words on this issue were motivated by educational and theoretical considerations.

Conclusion: Between Commentator and Codifier
From the discussion thus far it is apparent that Rabbi Israel saw the two works – the commentary on *Avot* and *MZ* – as

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[47] See Ilan, "Studies," 43, 272.
[48] RIbaSh, 72–3.
[49] See nn. 16 and 35, above.
[50] E. Bazri, ed., *Midrash Shmuel* (Jerusalem, 1989), 146.
[51] See Ilan, "Studies," 437–8.
[52] Ibid., 161–4 (in a discussion of Rabbi Meir Ha-Levi).
[53] Ibid., 166.

appropriate vehicles for addressing issues that went beyond the explicit context of their subjects. The commentary on the dictum of Rabbi Shimon in *Avot* includes a long and complicated sermon on the importance of intention: its essentiality for prayer in general and when reciting the first paragraph of the *Shema* in particular. But also in *MZ* – a clearly halakhic work, which defines both style and content – he felt sufficiently free to devote two central paragraphs to the question of intention. The two writings do not contradict one another. Even though the connection between them has not been demonstrated, it has been shown that he used some of the same language in both.

This study is a test case in the comparative analysis of these two works by Rabbi Israel, both of which inspired later writers, some of them far removed from him in time and place. It is evident that such a study can contribute to the reconstruction of the conditions under which Rabbi Israel wrote his books and the cultural background of his oeuvre. Linguistic and literary analysis is essential primarily for the diachronic analysis that enables reconstruction of the textual foundation; the contextual background is basically synchronous. Both works present, to researcher and reader alike, a crisscross pattern that gives some indication of the cultural conditions to which Rabbi Israel was responding and against which he was battling.

The technique I have used involves a number of hypothetical assumptions and therefore requires great caution. The intelligent use of linguistic and literary criteria, and their inclusion in a social, ideological and educational context, may enrich not only philologists and students of literature but also historians and students of culture in the widest sense.

A careful examination of Rabbi Israel's opinion on intention in the recitation of the *Shema* and the *Amidah* reveals the hidden

but forceful polemic that he waged against Kabbalistic concepts. Retrospectively, it is clear how limited was his power to combat the surging wave of *Kabbalāh* in late thirteenth-century Spain.[54]

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[54] It seems to me that the comparison of Rabbi Israel's words (n. 107, below) with those of Teresa of Avila and of 'Abd-al-Qader al-Gilāni is of interest and provides fascinating material for speculation precisely because Rabbi Israel was not a mystic. It thus appears that the line between the position of the intellectual and that of the mystic is less than clear cut.

APPENDIX

The Commentary on *Avot* has survived in only one manuscript –
Ms. Oxford Bodleian 2354 (Opp. Add. Qto. 126). In *MZ* the
discussion of "The Commandment of Reciting the *Shema* and Its
Blessings" takes up nearly four and a half pages,[55] (see below
the passage with textual variants). The discussion of "The
Commandments of Prayer and Its Blessings" comes
immediately after and covers nearly nine pages;[56] I have
included only the first section of it in the appendix that follows.
In my translation of Rabbi Israel's commentary on *Avot*, I have
added subtitles; the internal divisions in *MZ* appear in the
original. These headings make it easier to follow the structure
and internal order of Rabbi Israel's discourse.

Commentary on Avot 2:13 – Text

(**א** 58ב, שו' 16) **רבי שמעון אומר: הוי זהיר בקרית שמע ובתפלה וכו'** (ב יג) –
אל מפרוץ' ממא ינאג'י בה אל מואמן רבה פי אוקאת אל מנאג'אה הוא קרית שמע ואל
צלאה. ואמא גייר דאלך מן אל ברכות ומזאמיר ותחנונים וגירהא פהי נואפל. ואל
מצולי (!) מתל אל תאג'ר אלדי יצח לה אל רבח אלא אן יכ'לץ להו ראס אל (59א)
מאל, לא תקבל לה נאפלה חתא יודי אל פריצ'ה. פלדאלך כאן האדל חכם יקול ג'אהד
פי קראה קרית שמע ופי אל צלאה. אמא פי קרית שמע פאן תקצד תקראהא פי וקתהא
אלדי הוא מע בזוז[57] אל שמס לתג'אזא ג'זא מן יעמל מצוה פי וקתהא, פאן כל שי
מסתחב פי וקתה ואן קל אכתר ממא פי גייר וקתה. כקולה פי קרבן עולה ויורד, אן
יקנע מן אל עני בעשירית האיפה ליג'יבהא פי וקתהא ולייס ינתט'ר עליה אן יתרפה[58]

[55] In Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 405–9. Regarding the manuscripts of *MZ*, see
Ilan, "He Who Has."
[56] Blau, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 410–8.
[57] The reading here is definite, but in this context the word should be בזוג
(*buzūgh* – sunrise) and I have translated accordingly.
[58] The use of a fifth form of the verb *trf* is documented in R. Dozy,
Supplément aux Dictionnaires Arabes, vol. I (Leyde, 1927), 544, quoting a
dictionary from fifteenth century Spain.

ויביא כשבה. ותכון קראיתך קרית שמע וצלאתך בעד מא תכ'לי קלבך ען אל אכ'באר[59]
אל שאגלה לך, ובעד אל תנצ'יף ואל אסתגנא[60] ואל אסתנקא מן ג'מיע אל אקדאר ואל
אוסאך, ואל בועד ען כל קביח אל ראיחה מנהא ומא אשבההא, כקו' הכון לקראת
אלקיך ישראל. ויכון וקופך למנאג'ה[61] (!) רבך כוקוף אל עבד אמאם מולאה, כקו':
הנה כעיני עבדים אל יד אדוניהם וכו'. ותעטל קדמייך ען עבת'ייהמא ותסתוי (!) קדמיך
כאנהא רג'לא ואחדה, והוא קולהום: אמר רבי יוסי בר חנינא: המתפלל צריך שיכון את
רגליו, שנא': ורגליהם רגל ישרה. ותרד וג'הך לל חיוט ענד מא תצלי ולא יכון בינכום
חאג'ז, כקו': ויסב חזקיהו פניו אל הקיר. וקיל: תכין ליבם תקשיב אזניך. פאן אל מצלי
הוא מנאג'י רבה כקול אל ולי עא"ס: בכל לבי די דרשתיך. וקאל: חליתי פניך בכל לב.
וקיל' פי חצ'ור אל קלב וכ'לוץ אל נייה: על זאת יתפלל כל חסיד אליך לעת מצוא, על
כן מצא עבדך את לבו. ולפ'ץ' מצא פי לגאתנא יתנאול אל חצ'ור – לכל העם הנמצאים,
חתא ג'מיע אעמאלך אל שרעייה קד יחצל מנה אל מקצוד מע אל גפלה, כאן אל קלב
חאצ'רא מע אל פעל, או לם יכון, כקולהם: מצות אין צריכות כונה. ומעא דאלך (59ב)
יקבח אן תשגל פכרתך בגיר מא אנת עאמלה, פכייף ענד מנאג'אתך רבך. פאיי סואל
קוולך חננו מאתך דעה ובינה והשכל לם תקצד כונה תצ'רעא ודעאי,[62] אלא תרא אנה
לו חלף אנסאן לא[63] אשכר פלאנא ואת'ני עליה ואסאלה חאג'תי, ת'ם ג'רת אל אלפאץ'
אל דאלה עלא האדל מעאני עלא לסאנה, והוא מעא דאלך שכ'ן פי ביית צ'לים, האצ'ר

מעאה, והו לם יעלם בחצ'ורה ולם יראה, פלם יכון בארא פי ימינה אד לם יכון כ'טאבא
מעה מא לם יכון האצ'רא פי קלבה; בל ולו ג'רת האדל כלמאת עלא לסאנה והו האצ'ר
מעאה פי ביאץ' אל נהאר – גאפל, לאנה מסתגרק אל הם בפכר מן אל אפכאר ולם יכון
לה קצדא יוג'בה אל כ'טאב עליה, לם יציר בארא פי ימינה! ולא יש'ך פי אן אל מקצוד
מן אל צלאה אל שכר ואל חמד ואל ת'נא ואל תדרוע (!) ואל דעא. ואל מכ'אטב בפתח
אל טא, הוא אללה עז וג'ל. פאדא כאן קלבך בחג'אב אל גפלה מחג'וב, פאנה לא יראה
ולא יש'אהדה בל אנה גאפל ענה ולסאנך יתחרך בחכם אל עאדה, פמא אבעד האדה ען
אל מקצוד באל צלאה! וכדאלך אל כריעה פי אל ברכות אל נאג'בה,[64] פאל מקצוד בהא
אל תעט'ים ואל <וקאר?>[65] וג'אז אן תכון לאלאה עז וג'ל בפעלך ואנת גאפל ענה
לג'אז אן תכון מעט'מא לל חייט אלדי ביין ידיך! ואדא כ'רג' ענה כונה תעצ'ימה לם יבקי
אלא מגרד חרכה אל צ'הר ואל ראס. פאנהא לזמך אן יזמר אן תכ'לי כ'אטרך מן אמור אל דניא
ולא תקנע מן אל כונה בקרית שמע פי פסוק ראשון ולא פי אל צלאה בברכה ראשונה,
בל פי ג'מיע אל ברכות תתאמל מא תלפץ' בה ותעתבר מא תעתני ותקצד בהו ובמא דא
תקאבל[66] רבך, לא אן תקול בלסאנך מן אל אלפאץ' מא אמכן (60א) וכייף אמכן ולא
עלם לך באל מעאני. וכ'ד נפסך פי האדה מדה טאוילה (!) חתא תחצל לך מלכה
פתתצוור גרץ' כל ברכה ומענאהא. משל פי יוצר אור תאכ'וד פי נט'אם אל אפלאך ואל
כואכב ופאידתהא וסכרתהא פי מנאפענא באדן כ'אלקהא; ותתפכר פי אהבת עולם
פאידת אל תורה ואל שראיע אלדי פצ'לנא בהא עלא אל אומם; ת'ם תקבל עליך עול
מלכות שמים בקרית שמע; ת'ם אמת ויציב תתאמל פי פי[67] (!) נפסך אינך כמן יעקד
עקדא וישהד שאהד עלא נפסה אן ילתזם מא אלתזם אג'דאדהו, הוא וכל מן יתנאסל
מנהו, כמא יתצ'מן על אבותינו עלינו ועל בנינו וגו'; ואל כ'אתמה אמת ממצרים
גאלתנו, אלדי היא אל ברהאן עלא אל רבוייה. ופי ג'מיע האדה כוניה כ'אלצה כאן
יהודייא חקיקא. ת'ם אל צלאה, פי יתצוור פי אל ברכה אל אוולא ברית אבות; ופי אל

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[64] The reading is definite, but the word does not suit the context. Perhaps the correct reading is ואג'בה = compulsory. I wish to thank Professor J. Blau for this suggestion.

[65] The context requires the addition of at least one word such as that which I have added. I wish to thank Professor Ḥ. Ben-Shammai for this suggestion.

[66] Evidently a transcription of the Hebrew word תקבל. It appears again below. It may be a scribal error, or an indication of vowel lengthening [editor's note].

[67] The repeated words appear at the end of a line and the beginning of the next, which is not uncommon in Judeo-Arabic texts [editor's note].

תאנייה נפוד קדרת אללה פי עאלמה ב<אל>טבע[68] – מוריד הגשם, ובכ'רק אל טבע –
מחייה המתים; וכדאלך פי כל ברכה וברכה, ויחצל מענאהא ואל קצד מנהא. פאן אל
צלואת כלהא מנצ'ומה ומרתבה בתרתיב ונצ'אם מחכם יסוד אנשי כנסת הגדולה אלדי
כאן כלאמהם יקארב רוח הקדש. ולמא לם ימכן אן ישתרט עלא אל כאפה אחצ'אר אל
קלב פי ג'מיע אל צלאה, פאן דאלך יעג'ז ענה כל אל בשר אלא אל אקלין – ואין גוזרין
גזירה על הציבור אלא אם כן רוב הצבור יכולין לעמוד בה – פאקתצר עלא אל תכליף
בדאלך בפסוק ראשון מקרית שמע ובברכת אבות מן אל צלאה, לאן חאל אל גאפל פי
ג'מיע צלאתה אשד מן חאל תארך אל גפלה פי הדין פי חצ'ור אל קלב, הו רוח אל
צלאה וקראית קרית שמע. ואקל מא יבקא פיה רמק אל רוח חצ'ורה פי ברכת אבות מן
אל צלאה ופי פסוק ראשון מן קרית שמע. פבאל (60ב) נקצאן מנה – הלאך, ובקדר אל
זיאדה עליה ינבסט אל רוח פי אג'זא אל צלאה וקרית שמע. וכם מן חיי לא חראך בה
קריב מן מאית, פצלאת אל גאפל פי ג'מיעהא אלא פי ברכת אבות, וקראיתה קרית שמע
אלא פי פסוק ראשון חי לא חראך בה. וקאלו ז"ל: לעולם ימוד אדם את עצמו – אם
יכול לכוין את לבו, יתפלל; ואם לאו, אל יתפלל. ופי כתאב אל כזרי: לא תנטק פי
צלאתך עלא סביל אל אעתיאד כאל זרזור ואל בכנה (!),[69] בל מע כל כלמה פכרה.
ואחסב וקתך דאך לבאב זמאנך וסאיר אוקאתך באל תריק (!) אל מוצלא אלא דאלך
אל וקת תתמנא קרבה אד בה תתשבה באל רוחאניין ותבעד ען אל בהימיין. פנסבת אל
צלאה מן אל נפס כנסבת אל גדא מן אל בדן. פכמא תבקי קות אל גדא לל בדן יקויה מן
וקת אלא וקת, וכל מא יבעד ען וקת אל גדא ותתחלל תלך אל קווא ותצ'עף אלא אן
יכ'לפהא בגדא אכ'ר פי וקת אכ'ר, כדאך תבקי אל טהארה ונקא אל פכר לל נפס מן וקת
אל צלאה אלא אכ'רי. פלא תזול אל נפס תתלוות ותתקדר באל אשגאל אל דיניאיייה כל
מא בעד וקת אל צלאה לא סימא אן דעת אל צ'רורה לצחבת נסא וצביאן וסמע אגאני
וטרב ולהוו. פאדא אקבל וקת אל צלאה יטהר נפסה ממא סלף ויהייהא לל מסתאנף.
וקאל רבי אלעזר לתלאמידה ענד ופאתה: כשאתם מתפללים דעו לפני מי אתם
מתפללים. וקאל פי אל אכ'לאץ: אם אתה הכינות לבך ופרשת אליו כפיך. פאן אל לפצ'
יכון באל לסאן ואל מעני באל קלב, ואל לפצ' לל צלאה כאל ג'סם ואל מעני כאל רוח.
פמתא צלית בלסאנך ואשגלת קלבך בגייר מענא אל צלאה, כאנת צלאתך כג'סם בלא

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[68] I have added the definite article as called for by the context and the subsequent language.

[69] In the original: בבגא. See Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, ed. D.H. Baneth and Ḥ. Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1977), 58; M.A. Friedman, *Maimonides, The Yemenite Messiah and Apostasy* (Jerusalem, 2002), 10–11, esp. n. 3.

רוח לחצ'ור ג'סמך וגיאב קלבך; ותכון תתכ'דע לרבך בלסאנך ותלהו ענה בקלבך
(61א) ונייתך, נצ'יר קוול אל נבי: בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ממני. וקיל אייצ'ה:
קרוב אתה בפיהם ורחוק מכליותיהם. וקאל אל משורר: ויפתוהו בפיהם ובלשונם יכזבו
לו ולבם לא נכון עמו. פכייף תקאבל רבך במא לא תרצ'י אן תקאבל בה מכ'לוקא מתלך
ענד חאג'תך אליה. פלו סאלת מן צאחבך חאג'ה בלסאנך ולהות ענה בצ'מירך ושער
דאלך מנה, לסכ'ט עליך, ואחרי אן יחרמך חאג'תך. וקד מתלוא דאלך בעבד אלזמה
מולאה אן יכ'דמה בנפסה ויקום באסבאבה בדאתה. פפוץ' אל עבד כ'דמת מולאה
לאהלה ועיאלה ואערץ' הוא ענה ואשגל באלה באל להוו ואל לועב. פגפל אהלה
ועיאלה ען אל קיאם בלואזם מולאה, פלם ירצ'י מולאה בכ'דמתו וסכ'ט עליה.
פכדאלך מן יצלי בלפצ'ה ולהי ען רבה בצ'מירה, לם יקבל מנה צלאתה בל יעאקב עליהא
ויחרמה מא טלב מנה. ופי מתל האדה קיל[70] בעץ' אל אפאצ'ל: אסתגפארנא נחן יחתאג'
אסתגפאר אכ'ר. פאדא קולת סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו בלא נייה, פתחתאג' תטלב מנה
סלח לנו תאנייה עלא מא קולתה אולא בגייר נייה; אלייס מן אל קביח אן יג'רי כ'אטרך
ענד צלאתך פי עמל מן אעמאל אל דנייא? ומעלום אן הגיון הלב הו אל פכר נצ'יר
בינה הגיגי. פלא ריב פאן אל צלאה באכ'לאק נייה קאעדה מן קואעד אל שריעה. פמן
כ'לצת צלאתה כ'לצת אעתקאדה. אלא אן[71] תרא דניאל עא"ס בדל נפסה לל קתל עלא
אל צלאה לתיקנה אן מנע אל צלאה מקרון בעבאדת ע"ז אלדי כל ואחד מן ישראל
מסתוג'ב אן יכ'תאר אל מות קבל אן יעבדהא. והאדא מעלום בקיאס עקלי אן אל צלאה
אל כ'אלצה תקרב אל אנסאן מן כ'אלקה אכתר מן ג'מיע אל אפעאל אל מרצ'ייה, כק'
אל ולי עא"ס: תכון תפילתי קטורת לפניך וגו'. (61ב) פאל קצד פי אל צלאה הו
אנקטאע אל נפס לאלאה עז וג'ל וכ'צ'ועהא לה מע אל תעצ'ים ואל תסביח ואל תמג'יד
לאסמה, ותפוץ' ג'מיע מהמאתה אליה. פלמא עסר עלא אל נאס תאדיה אל מעאני אלדי
יחתאג'ו[72] אליהא פי כל וקת, פרתבו לנא ז"ל מא יחתאגון אליה אכתר אל נאס פי
שמונה עשרה ברכות עלא רתבה וקאנון ג'ליל, ומא יליק בכל וקת מן אוקאת אל
מואסם בלפץ' וג'ז מחכם ותאדא ען אל אנסאן באל לסאן. ויחתאג' אתבאע פכרה אל
נפס לל קול ואנקיאדהא לל נטק פצארת לפצ'א ומעאנא. ואל לפץ' מחתאג' אלא חצ'ור
אל מעני, ואל מענא גייר מחתאג' מחתאג' אלא אל לפץ'. פלדאלך אג'אזו אל פכרה ענד תעדיד

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[70] The reading is definite, but the context calls for the active form קאל.

[71] The word appears superfluous; however, it seems that the scribe reversed the order and the expression should read: אלא תרא אן

[72] The letter א is suspended above the line.

אל קול פי קולהום: בעל קרי מהרהר בלבו; ואג'אזו אל אכ'תצאר פי תפלה קצרה. ולו[73]
כאן אל לפץ' אצל אל צלאה לם יכתף באל פכרה ולא ג'אז אכ'תצאר לפצ'ה מנהא
בוג'ה.

וכשאתה מתפלל אל תעש תפלתך קבע – מעני קבע אל שוגל אלדי יכ'צץ אל אנסאן
וקתא מא ויעתאד עמל דאלך אל שוגל פי דאלך אל וקת. פנקול לא תחסב אל צלאה
כמן כלף שגלא יעמלה ויטרחה ויסתריח מנה, כקו' ז"ל פי תלמוד ברכות: העושה
תפלתו קבע אין תפלתו תחנונים. ומה קבע? כל שתפלתו דומה עליו למשוי. ורבנין
אמרי: כל שאינו אומרה בלשון תחנונים. יריד אנה יג'יב (!) עלא אל מצלי אן יאכ'ד
לסאנה מאכ'ד אל תלטיף ואל תחנין, כמא קאל פי דניאל ע"ה: בעא ומתחנן קדם אלהא.
ופי אבות דר' נתן: אל תעש תפילתך שיחה אלא תחנונים. ומן אדאב אל צלאה אן
יתקדמהא תאהב ווקאר, כמא נצת אל משנה: אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך כובד
ראש. ופי אל ברייתא: אין עומדין להתפלל לא מתוך שיחה (62א) ולא מתוך שחוק ולא
מתוך קלות ראש ולא מתוך דברים בטלים. פאן כאן יתחדת פי הדיאנאת[74] אל דונייא
ויקום יצלי מתוך שיחה בטלה, תפלתו תהיה לחטאת. ויחתאג' אן יג'הד נפסה אן יצלי
בציבור, לקולהם ז"ל: אמר רבי יוחנן משום ר' יוסי: אין תפילתו של אדם נשמעת אלא
בבית הכנסת, שנא': ואני תפלתי לך יי< עת רצון – אימתי עת רצון? בשעה שהציבור
מתפללין. פאיאך יהמל אחדא אל צלאה ביבת (!) הכנסת מעא צפוף אל בטלנים
פי אל אסואק. ורב מא זעם זאעם וקאל: אן לם אחצ'ר בבית הכנסת פאצלי פי צ'ארי
(!) ויג'אזיני. פיג'ב אן יעלם אן אדא דאלך במזיד דון שגל וכיד ישגלה, פאנה ליס
יכ'רג' פרץ' לאזמה בל יחסב להו כאנהו לם יצלי. וילזם אן יכון ג'לוסה פי בית הכנסת
באימה ויראה. פאן כ'לע אל תובה ואשתגל באל אסתהתאר כאן אל אופק להו אן יג'לס
בדארהו ולא יג'י לבית הכנסת. ויצ'הר אן ליס יבאלי מן אג'לאלה ומכעיס המלך בביתו,
כמא קיל: המערת פרצים היה הבית הזה ובאתם ועמדתם לפני וגו'. פלו פעל דאלך פי
קצר מב"ו יעאקבהו באשד אל עקאב, פבאל אחרי בבית ממ"ה הקב"ה. פהאדל סאעה
אלדי יפרד אל אנסאן מן עומרה לרבה יג'ב אן תכון עלא גאית אל תמאם, כ'אלצה מן
כל נקץ דון אן יכ'אלטהא שיא מן אל אמור אל דינייאייא. וקיל: אמר ר' חמא אמר ר'

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[73] In the manuscript: ולא, but the context requires ולו.

[74] I did not find the plural attested in the following dictionaries: D. Ayalon
and P. Shinar, *Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary of Modern Arabic*[5] (Jerusalem,
1968); J.G. Hava, *Al-Farâid Arabic-English Dictionary*[5] (Beirut, 1982); H.
Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary*[3] (New York, 1976); E.W. Lane, *Arabic-
English Lexicon* (Cambridge, 1984); *Al-Munjid fi al-Lugha*[20] (Beirut, 1969).

שמעון חסידא: המתפלל צריך שיראה את עצמו כאילו שכינה שרויה כנגדו, שנא':
שויתי יי< לנגדי תמיד כי מימיני בל אמוט. וקאלו: המתפלל צריך שיתן עיניו למטה
ולבו למעלה, שנאמר: נשא לבבנו אל כפים אל אל בשמים.

Commentary on Avot 2:13 – Translation
Rabbi Shimon says: Be careful to read the Shema and to say the Amidah

1. Conceptual Introduction – Obligatory Versus Voluntary

Some of the obligations of the believer engaged in intimate discourse[75] with his Lord in the times of intimate discourse are the recitation of the *Shema* and the *Amidah*.[76] The other blessings, psalms and petitions are voluntary commandments.[77] One engaged in prayer is like a merchant who has the opportunity to make a profit provided that he retains the full value of his investment,[78] [likewise] one's voluntary prayer will not be accepted until he has fulfilled the requirement of obligatory prayer. Therefore this Sage [=*Tana*] said to take care[79] in reading the *Shema* and the *Amidah*.

2. The Appropriate Time for Fulfilling Commandments

In reciting the *Shema,* you should take care to read it at its appointed time, which is at sunrise, so that you receive the reward for fulfilling a commandment at its time, because

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[75] The verb *nājā* means to engage in secrets, to have an intimate conversation, and as such the action may be called "intimate discourse." In my opinion, this metaphorical expression fits the spirit of Rabbi Israel's intention here and I have used it. Below I also use "beseech."

[76] As mentioned above (note 11) *tefillah* (prayer) is the *amidah* prayer. That is how it appears in Talmudic literature and that is how Rabbi Israel uses it, as we shall see below.

[77] See Y. Levinger, *Darkhei ha-Maḥshava ha-Hilkhatit shel ha-Rambam* (Jerusalem, 1965), 72–8; idem, *Ha-Rambam*, 67–87, esp. 73–4.

[78] See Y. Blidstein, "The Public and Public Prayer in the Writings of Rabbi Abraham son of Maimonides" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 78 (1999), 151.

[79] Alternately, make an effort. This is not a literal translation of the Mishna, but an interpretation. How is effort demonstrated in *Shema* and the *Amidah*? By trying to direct one's thoughts appropriately when reciting them. See below.

everything is desirable [when it is done] at its time, even if it is small, more than beyond its time. As in the saying about sacrifices of varying value, that they should make do with a tenth of an *efah* [of fine flour] brought by a poor man at its time and not wait until he gets wealthy [enough] to bring a lamb.[80]

3. Preparation for the Reciting of the Shema and the Amidah
Your reciting the *Shema* and the A*midah* should be after you have emptied your heart of the thoughts[81] that occupy you and after cleansing,[82] purifying and cutting yourself off[83] from all the filth and vileness and have removed everything that smells bad that arises from them and all the like,[84] as in the saying "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12). Your standing to beseech your Lord should be like the standing of a servant before this master, as the saying "As the eyes of slaves follow their masters' hand" etc. (Psalms 123:2). Bring back your legs from their occupations, and make them as if they were one leg, as in the saying: "Rabbi Yose Bar Ḥanina said: He who prays should direct his legs, as it is said 'the legs of each were [fused into] a single rigid leg' (Ezekiel 1:7).[85] Turn your face towards the wall in the place where you pray so that nothing separate you [from it], as it is said 'Thereupon Hezekiah turned his face to the

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[80] This remark is very similar to that in *Sifra, Dibura deḥova*, section 10, chapter 19:1 – "Rabbi Yehudah says: A commandment is desirable at its time, so that one should bring a tenth of an *efah* and not wait until he gets wealthy and brings a lamb or a kid."
[81] See n. 59, above.
[82] Perhaps purification.
[83] Perhaps purification.
[84] From the beginning of the passage until here – based almost literally on Ibn Paquda, *Duties*, 343.
[85] *Berakhot* 10b, and there: Rabbi Yose berabi Ḥanina in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'aqov.

wall' (Isaiah 38:2)";[86] and it is said "You will make their hearts firm; You will incline Your ear" (Psalms 10:17).[87]

4. The Necessity of Intention (kavannah) in Prayer

    I.   The essence of the act of prayer

He who prays is beseeching his master, as the prophet, may he rest in peace, says "I have turned to You with all my heart" (Psalms 119:10), and as it is said "I have implored You with all my heart" (ibid., 119:58).

    II.   The gravity of the absence of intention in prayer

Regarding the presence of the heart and the purity of concentration it is said: "Therefore let every faithful man pray to You in a time when You may be found [*mezo*]" (Psalms 32:6)[88] [and] "therefore Your servant has ventured [*maza*] to offer [this prayer] to you" (2 Samuel 7:27). The word found [*maza*] in our language means presence[89] – "all the people present" (Esther 1:5). Also all of your halakhic actions, which may be able to achieve their purpose despite lack of concentration, whether the heart is directed at the time they are done or not, as in the saying "Commandments do not require intention,"[90] nevertheless it is contemptible for your thoughts to be engaged in something else, and all the more so when you are beseeching your master. What sort of a request is "Grant me from you knowledge,

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[86] *Berakhot* 5b.
[87] *Berakhot* 31a, and the source is *Tosefta Berakhot* 3:4. See S. Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-fshuta* (hereafter: Lieberman, *TK*) (Jerusalem, 1993), *Berakhot, 29.*
[88] For other homilies on this verse see *Berakhot* 5a.
[89] Perhaps: willingness.
[90] The expression appears in *Pesaḥim* 114b and *Rosh Hashanah* 28b. The matter is also discussed in *Berakhot* 13a and *'Eruvin* 99b.

understanding and intellect" when you have not given it the intention of a petition in prayer?!

III.   A parable to illustrate the gravity of actions without intention

You should see that if a person were to swear: "Here I will thank someone and praise him and ask him to give me what I need," and then he pronounced the expressions that indicate this matter when he is together with the other person in a dark house, but he does not know that he is with him and does not see him, he is not fulfilling his oath, since he is not thought of as speaking to him as long as he is unaware of his presence. Moreover, if he were to say these words without intention when he was with him in the daylight, while he was directing his attention to some other thought and not intending what he was saying, he would not be keeping his oath! There is no doubt that the purpose of prayer is thanksgiving, praise, adoration, petition and prayer. It is addressed[91] to God, may he be praised and extolled. If your heart be hidden by a screen of distraction, it will not see him or perceive him, but will be distracted while your tongue moves routinely, and how far removed is that from the purpose of prayer! The same applies to the compulsory genuflection in prayer,[92] the purpose of which is to praise and extol. But it is possible that if your action is intended towards God, may he be praised and extolled, when you divert your attention from him – you may be praising the wall in front of you! If you abandon the state of giving praise, all that is left is the movement of your back and head alone.

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[91] In the Arabic two additional words indicate that the expression is passive. I have followed that in the translation.
[92] The Arabic can be understood in two ways: (1) compulsory genuflection in prayer; (2) genuflection in prayer that is compulsory.

IV.   To what to direct one's thoughts in prayer

You should[93] empty your consciousness of all worldly matters and not confine yourself to concentrating on the first verse of the recitation of *Shema* or the first blessing in the *Amidah*. However, in every blessing meditate over what you are saying, and penetrate what it means and with what you are greeting your master, not saying with your tongue as much as possible and in any way possible expressions the meaning of which you do not know. Make it your regular custom and then it will become a habit[94] and imagine in your thought the purpose of every blessing and its meaning. For example, in the "Creator of Light" blessing make it your habit to think about the spheres and the stars and their benefit and how they have been harnessed to our service by the will[95] of their creator.[96] In the blessing "Eternal Love" think of the benefit [derived from] the Torah and the commandments which have raised us above the nations; afterwards accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven by reciting the *Shema*. After that [in the blessing] "True and Right" meditate in your spirit that you are like one who has made a covenant and testifies regarding himself that he accepts everything that his forefathers accepted, for himself and all his descendents, as it says [in the paragraph] "On our fathers, and upon us and on our sons" etc. and the conclusion "In truth you

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[93] From here until "make it your regular custom" (about four lines in the original), the text is based almost verbatim on Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, III:51, ed. Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1972), 678.

[94] Alternately: nature.

[95] Alternately: at the word or command. The word *idhn* appears frequently in the Qurʾān with the meaning "word". I wish to thank Prof. Ḥ. Ben-Shammai for calling my attention to this meaning.

[96] This passage is similar to the words of Judah Halevi in the *Kuzari,* III:17 (ed. Baneth and Ben-Shammai, 104).

have redeemed us from Egypt," which is a divine miracle.[97] In all these [cases] if he has pure intention he will be a Jew in truth.[98] Afterwards, [in] the *Amidah* – he should imagine in the first blessing the covenant of the patriarchs; in the second the fulfillment of God's potential in the world through nature – "bringing down rain", and beyond nature – "resurrecting the dead"; and thus in each and every blessing, attaining its meaning and intention.

V.   Permanent prayers – Their background and benefits

All of the prayers are arranged in a precise and systematic order,[99] established[100] by the men of the Great Assembly, whose words were close to the holy spirit.

VI.   Why intention is required in fact only in a small part of the prayer

Since it is impossible to make everything dependent on preparation[101] of the heart throughout prayer – since that is beyond the capacity of [the average] person except for individuals – and "no edict should be imposed upon the community unless the majority can endure it,"[102] the obligation of this [= intention in prayer] has been confined to the first verse of the recitation of the *Shema* and the blessing of the patriarchs in the *Amidah* because the situation of distraction throughout prayer is worse than that of distraction in these two [= the first

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[97] This section is also similar to Judah Halevi in ibid, 105.

[98] Regarding this sentence see Ilan, "Studies," 195–6, and nn. 7–9 there.

[99] Alternately: made with utmost care.

[100] The Hebrew word *yesod* appears in the Arabic text.

[101] The literal translation of *iḥḍār* is "bring," and the root *ḥḍr* appears several more times in the passage, but always meaing "preparation," i.e. so that when a person prays not only his lips are moving but also his heart is there.

[102] See *Baba Qama* 79b and parallel passages.

verse and the first blessing] when the heart is present, since they are the spirit of prayer and the recitation of the *Shema*. The minimum of the spark of the spirit of life in it [in prayer] is intention in the blessing of the patriarchs in the *Amidah* and in the first verse of the recitation of *Shema*.[103] Without it – the abyss, but to the degree that it is added the spirit will permeate the other parts of the *Amidah* and the recitation of the *Shema*.

VII.   The gravity of distraction

How many [people] are living, but have no movement (vitality) and they are nearly like the dead; and a person who is distracted in the *Amidah* except in the blessing of the patriarchs, and his recitation of the *Shema* is no more than the first verse, is a living person without movement. [The sages] said: A person should always evaluate himself – if he can direct his heart, he should pray; if he cannot, he should not pray.[104] And in the *Kuzari*: "Do not say [your words] in your prayer by way of habit like a starling or a parrot, but for every word – thought.[105] Think of that time as the most important time you have, and the rest of your times as only leading to it so that you can seek to be in his presence, so that you can be like the spiritual[106] and distance yourself from the bestial.[107]

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[103] The first half of this sentence has not been translated literally, but paraphrased to convey the meaning of the original.

[104] That is the opinion of Rabbi Eliʿezer in *Berakhot* 30b. *Midrash Leqaḥ Tov* (= *Pesiqta Zutreta*) (Vilna, 1880), 31 (*Parashat ʿEqev*), provides a different version of this idea: "'and to worship him with all your heart and all your soul' – that is he who directs his heart, so that a person's heart not be divided during prayer." I wish to thank my friend Dr. Uri Melammed, for drawing my attention to this book. See above, note 54.

[105] Something like this may be found in the *Kuzari* II:24 (ed. Baneth and Ben-Shammai, 58). See RIbaSh: "like a crane." See above, n. 69.

[106] For the use of *rūḥaniyyīn* to mean spiritual beings, angels, see Y. Efros, *Ha-Filosofia ha-Yehudit bi-mei ha-Benaim: Munaḥim u-Musagim* (Tel Aviv,

VIII.   On the relation between prayer and soul

Prayer is to the soul as food is to the body. Just as the power of food strengthens the body from time to time, and the further one is removed from the time of eating the more, one's strength dissipates and declines, to the point that a person may bring other food instead at another time; so the purity and clarity of thought in the soul remain from one time of prayer to the next. The soul does not cease to be defiled and contaminated by matters of this world as long as it is removed from prayer, all the more so if it is compelled to be in the company of women and youths and to hear songs and musical [instruments] and entertainment. When the time of prayer comes, he purifies his soul from what has transpired and prepares it for the future. Rabbi El'azer said to his students at the hour of his death: "When you are praying, know before whom you are praying."[108] Regarding devotion it has been said: "If you direct your mind and spread forth your hands toward Him" (Job 11:13).

1969), 100   (hereafter: Efros, *Ha-Filosofia*); J. Klazkin, *Ozar ha-Munaḥim ha-Filosofiyim ve-Antologia Filosofit*, vol. II, part 4 (Berlin, 1934), 31–2; "Rūḥaniyya," *EI²*, VIII, 593–4.

[107] Approximately the same idea may be found in J. Dan, *'Al ha-Qedusha*, (Jerusalem, 1997), esp. ch. 14 ("Mystical Prayer"), 355–401. Particularly remarkable are the quotations in the appendix to this chapter from the writings of Teresa of Avila and 'Abd-al-Qāder al-Gilāni (396 and 399–400, respectively). See also references in the index, s.v. *kavvanōt hatefillāh.*

[108] *Berakhot* 28b. There the saying is attributed to Rabbi Eli'ezer.

IX. On the relation between intention and action

Enunciation with the tongue and meaning in the heart.[109]
Enunciation of prayer is like a body and meaning is like a spirit.
When you pray with your tongue and occupy your heart with
anything other than the meaning of the prayer, you prayer is like
a body without a spirit, since your body is present but your heart
is missing;[110] you deceive your master with your tongue and
abandon him in your heart and your intention, as the prophet
said: "with its mouth and with its lips honored Me, but has kept
its heart from me" (Isaiah 29:13). It has been also said: "You are
present in their mouths, but far from their thoughts " (Jeremiah
12:2).[111] The poet said: "Yet they deceived Him with their
speech, lied to Him with their words; their hearts were
inconstant toward Him" (Psalms 78:36–7).[112] How can you greet
your master with something that you would not accept from
another creature like yourself whom you need? If you were to
ask your companion something with your tongue, and distract

[109] See N. Allony, "Consonants as Bodies and Vowels as Spirits" [in Hebrew]
Lĕšonénu la-'Am 17, 5–6 (167–168) (1966), 147–51. From Allony's remarks
there it is clear how prevalent this idea was among grammarians and
Massoretes as well as philosophers, kabbalists and mystics. As he showed
there (p. 150), the proverb appears in Arabic literature as well, and its source
goes back to Aristotle. I wish to thank my friend Dr. Uri Melammed, for
pointing out this article to me. It appears that the proverb was particularly
popular in Spain – see Ḥ. Mittleman (Kiel), *Perush le-Sefer "Qohelet" be-
'Aravit-Yehudit ha-Meyuḥas le-R. Yitzḥak ibn Ghiat – Hebetim Filosofiyim
u-Farshaniyim* (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999), 35,
41(and nn.), 330 (n. 8).
[110] These remarks are close in both language and content to Ibn Paquda,
Duties, the section on self-examination, ch. 3, p. 343.
[111] This verse is also quoted in Maimonides, *Guide*, III:51, just before the
passage quoted above (see n. 93, above).
[112] Both of these verses are quoted in this context in Ibn Paquda, *Duties* (see
n. 20, above), in the section on the uniqueness of action, ch. 5, pp. 265–6.

your attention from him in your heart, and he were to notice it, he would be angry with you, and moreover not do what you asked.

X.   A parable to clarify the gravity of an act without intention

They have compared this to a servant whose master has compelled him to serve him himself and take care of his belongings himself. The servant turned over the work of his master to his family and household, but he removed himself and occupied himself with entertainment and frivolity. His family and household neglected to care for the needs of his master, and therefore the master was displeased with his services and angry with him.[113] So one who prays with utterance [alone] and allows his mind to stray from his master, [his master] does not receive his prayer, moreover he will punish him for it and [God] will deny him his request. Regarding this, one of the pious has said: "Our request for mercy requires additional mercy."[114] When you say "Forgive us our father for we have sinned," without intention, you should beg again "forgive us" for what you said first without intention. Is it not condemnable for your mind to be occupied at the time of prayer with any of the works of this world? It is known that the speech of the heart is thought, as for example in "consider my utterance" (Psalms 5:2), without any doubt.

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[113] The parable and its explanation to this point are based nearly word for word on ibid., 343.
[114] Taken nearly literally from ibid., 265.

5. *The Value of Prayer and Its Purpose*

Prayer, when one directs his mind, is one of the fundamentals of the Torah.[115] He whose prayer is pure, his faith is pure. Take Daniel, may he rest in peace, for example, who gave himself up to be put to death over prayer, because he was convinced that being prevented from praying involved idolatry, regarding which everyone of Israel is required to choose death before committing. Thus it is clear by logic that prayer draws a person closer to his Creator than all of the desirable actions, as in the saying of the prophet, may he rest in peace: "Take my prayer as an offering of incense" etc. (Psalms 141:2). The purpose[116] of prayer is devotion[117] of the soul to God, may He be praised and exalted, and submission to Him by adoring and praising and glorifying His name, and committing everything of importance to him [=to man] into His hands [=the hands of God].

6. *Conclusion*

Since it is difficult for people to express[118] all the matters that they need at any time, the sages established for us in profound order and usage in the eighteen benedictions what most people need,[119] and what is appropriate at any time of the appointed times, expressed concisely and succinctly; and it is expressed for man through language. The thought[120] of the soul requires

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[115] Alternately: of Halakha.

[116] From here until "When you pray, do not make your prayer routine…" is based on Ibn Paquda, *Duties*, 344–5, with a few omissions.

[117] See Efros, *Ha-Filosofia*, 36, s.v. המסר.

[118] This meaning of תאדיה is attested in M. Piamenta, *Dictionary of Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic*, vol. 1 (Leiden-New York-København-Köln, 1990), p. 5, col. 2. I wish to thank my friend Dr. Uri Melammed for this reference.

[119] This sentence is similar to Maimonides, *Hilkhot Tefillah*, 1:4.

[120] Rabbi Israel used several different terms to express the same idea: *nuṭq=lafẓ=qawl; maʿna=fikra*.

speech and [needs] to be harnessed to expression, and then prayer may be articulated and meaningful. The expression requires the meaning, but the meaning does not require expression. Therefore they allowed meditation when one could not [use his] voice, as they said: "One to whom pollution occurred should think of it";[121] and they allowed one to use the short version of the *Amidah*.[122] If the expression [alone] were the essence of the prayer, thought would not suffice, and it would be forbidden to omit any expression from it at all.

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[121] *Berakhot* 20b (Mishna 3:4). It is surprising that this is the example Rabbi Israel chose to use, since in his time this rule was no longer practiced.

[122] The abridged version of the *Amidah* was to be used when circumstances prevented reciting the full version.

And when you pray do not make your prayer routine

1. *Conceptual introduction*

The meaning of routine (קבע) is an occupation to which a person devotes a certain time and becomes accustomed to do it at that time.

2. *Prayer as an experience and not a burden*

We say: Do not regard prayer as one who has had a job thrust upon him and he performs it and discards it and rests from it,[123] as they said, of blessed memory in the Talmud, *Berakhot*: "He who makes his prayer routine, his prayer is not supplications. What is routine? Anyone for whom prayer seems to be a burden. And the Rabbis say: Whoever does not say it in language of supplication."[124] This means that the person praying should use the gentle language of supplication, as Daniel said, peace be upon him: "petitioning his God in supplication."[125] And in *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*: "Do not make your prayer conversation, but supplication.[126] Among the strictures[127] of prayer that precede it are preparation and seriousness, in the language of the Mishna: "One must not stand up to pray without seriousness."[128] And in a *baraita*: "One does not stand up to pray from conversation, or

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[123] This is very close to Maimonides' commentary on this Mishna; see Shailat, *Massekhet*, 42 (Hebrew translation), 140 (Arabic); cf. Maimonides commentary on Mishna *Berakhot* 4:4.

[124] *Berakhot* 29b.

[125] There is a slight discrepancy of transcription between the Massoretic text of Daniel and the verse as quoted by Rabbi Israel.

[126] S.Z. Schechter, ed., *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, with an introduction by M. Kister (New York and Jerusalem, 1997), version א, end of ch. 17 (p. 66).

[127] Literally: "from the ethics."

[128] *Berakhot* 5:1.

from laughter or from levity or from indolence."[129] If he is engaged in conversation on the vanities of this world and gets up to pray from idle talk, his prayer will be guilt.[130]

3. *The advantage of prayer with the community*
[A person] should try to pray with the community because of what the sages have said: "Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Yose: A person's prayer is not heard except in the synagogue, as it says 'As for me, may my prayer come to You, O Lord, at a favorable moment' (Psalms 69:14). When is it a favorable moment? When the community is praying."[131]

4. *Who should not pray with the community*
Take care lest someone should regard prayer in the synagogue lightly and sit with the idlers in the marketplace. Lest someone claim and say: If I am not present in the synagogue, I will pray in my home and receive a reward for that. He should know that if he does so intentionally, uncompelled by some highly urgent matter, he does not fulfill his obligation, but is regarded as if he did not pray at all. His sitting in the synagogue should be in the form of awe and fear. If he refuse to repent and occupy himself with frivolities, it is better for him to sit at home and not to come

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[129] The language of *Tosefta Berakhot* (3:21) is very close: "One does not stand to pray from conversation, or from laughter or from levity, but from words of wisdom (ed. Lieberman, 17); and see Lieberman's comments on "*devarim betelim*" in *TK*, 47.

[130] The language is taken from Psalms (109:7): "May he be tried and convicted, may he be judged and found guilty." The Hebrew text reads: בהשפטו יצא רשע ותפלתו תהיה לחטאה

[131] The saying of Rabbi Yoḥanan in the name of Rabbi Yose is a homily on the verse in Psalms (cf. *Berakhot* 7b–8a). The first part ("A person's prayer is not heard …") is derived from a *baraita* in *Berakhot* 6a in the name of Abba Binyamin.

to the synagogue, demonstrating that he does not take care to honor [God], and angering the king in his house, as has been said: "Do you consider this House which bears My name to be a den of thieves? And then come and stand before Me in this House" etc. (Jeremiah 7:10 and 7:11). If he were to do so in the palace of a king of flesh and blood, he would be punished most severely, all the more so in the house of the King, the King of kings, the Holy One Blessed be He.

5. *Conclusion*

This hour, which a person assigns from his life to his master, should be the essence of completeness, without any blemish or contamination by worldly matters. It has been said: "Rabbi Ḥama said [in the name of] Rabbi Shim'on Ḥasida (said): He who prays should see himself as if the Divine Presence were before him, as it says 'I am ever mindful of the Lord's presence; He is at my right hand; I shall never be shaken' (Psalms 16:8)."[132] And they said: "He who prays should cast his eyes down and his heart upwards, as it says 'Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in heaven' (Lam. 3:41)."[133]

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[132] *Sanhedrin* 22a, and there in the name of Rav Ḥana bar Bizna in the name of Rabbi Shim'on Ḥasida.
[133] *Yevamot* 105b.

BETROTHAL OF AN ADULT WOMAN BY AN AGENT IN GEONIC
RESPONSA: LEGAL CONSTRUCTION
IN ACCORD WITH ISLAMIC LAW[1]

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Several important studies have recently been devoted to the
question of the marriage age of men and women, respectively, in
Jewish society in the periods of the Mishnah and the Talmud and
the Early Middle Ages. These studies address primarily socio-
historical, rather than legal matters. Though based on Jewish
sources, they have also made use of comparative research into
parallel phenomena in the host society, that is, Greco-Roman-
Byzantine society in the mishnaic and talmudic periods, and
Muslim society in the geonic period.[2]

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[1] This article is partly based on one section from my book on comparative
Jewish-Islamic law in the geonic period: G. Libson, *Jewish and Islamic Law –
A Comparative Study of Custom During the Geonic Period* (Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 2003).

[2] A. Shremer, "Eighteen Years to the Huppah: The Marriage Age of Jews in
Eretz Israel in the Second Temple, Mishna and Talmud Periods" [in Hebrew]
in Bartal & I. Gafni, eds., *Sexuality and the Family in History. Collected
Essays* (Jerusalem, 1988), 43–70); R. Katzoff, "The Age of Marriage of
Jewish Girls during the Talmudic Period" [in Hebrew], *Te'udah* XIII (Tel
Aviv, 1997), 9–18; T. Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine*

New studies regarding the marriage age of men during the talmudic period have shown that, contrary to the general assumption, men married as late as their twenties and thirties. Similarly, according to one study, women, who were assumed to have married young, even as minors (before the age of twelve), were still considered desirable brides even after the age of twenty.[3] For the geonic period, studies are sparse, and the few available ones deal primarily with the marriage age of women. Here, again, the assumption has been that child marriages were common; yet much of geonic literature deals with the rights of a father regarding his "adult" daughter. This will be the main topic of discussion in this paper.

The Talmud gives three age definitions regarding daughters: a *qetannah* is a girl aged less than twelve years and a day; a *bogeret* is a girl who has reached the age of twelve years and six months, who shows the physical characteristics of puberty. In the six months between these two ages, a girl is defined as a *na'arah* (literally: "maid, young girl"), provided she possess the relevant physical characteristics.[4]

The above studies have focussed on the age of marriage itself, trying to determine its demographic and statistical distribution on the basis of available documentation. Limited attention,

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(Tübingen, 1996), 67–9. For the Middle Ages see the studies listed in note 4, below.

[3] See Shremer, "Eighteen Years." For the age of marriage for females see ibid., 68–70; Ilan, *Jewish Women*, 67–9.

[4] For these definitions see Maimonides, *Mishne Torah (=MT)*, Hilkhot Ishut 2:1–2; 3:11–13; and the sources cited by Katzoff, "Age of Marriage," 10 nn. 5 and 6. For a recent and extensive discussion of these definitions see M. D. Meecham, *Sefer ha-Bagrut of R. Samuel ben Hofni Gaon and Sefer ha-Shanim of R. Judah ha-Kohen Rosh ha-Seder* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1999), 11–70, and the review by Y. Brody, "The Process of Maturation in Geonic Literature" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 81 (2000), 157–60.

however, has been given to the status and authority of a father in regard to his daughter's marriage in each of the three stages mentioned: marriage of a *qetannah*, a *na'arah* or a *bogeret*. Halakhically speaking, it is clear that a minor cannot contract her own marriage, because she lacks legal competence; only her father is entitled to arrange her marriage, and he may do so without her consent ("The father may betroth his daughter without her consent as long as she is a minor").[5] This was presumably the common practice with regard to marriage of a female minor. The halakhic status of a *na'arah* in this respect was similar to that of a *qetannah*; she too was not entitled to contract a marriage ("and similarly, when she is a *na'arah*, he [i.e. the father] possesses the authority"). In talmudic law, only an adult woman possesses independent legal competence and does not require her father's consent to be married ("her father has no authority regarding her"); a fortiori, he cannot betroth her without her consent, as he can for a minor.

Besides child marriages contracted by the father, which were undoubtedly common in Jewish society of the geonic period, as they were all over the East in the host society, whether Muslim or Eastern Christian, there were of course adult marriages, as in the talmudic period.[6] My interest in the present article lies in

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[5] *MT*, Hil. Ishut 3:11

[6] See, e.g., *Midrash Psalms* 2:15 (ed. Buber, 16:2): "A man marries a woman aged twenty or aged thirty"; cf. Ilan, *Jewish Women*, 69, and Shremer, "Eighteen Years," 69. Although on the surface certain talmudic phraseologies may seem to indicate that even in the talmudic period a father could betroth an adult daughter on his own initiative, these should not be taken out of context. Thus, R. Akiva's statement (*Gen. Rabba*, ed. Theodor-Albeck, 2321 and parallels): "Whoever has an adult daughter should go and betroth her," is brought as proof to that effect; see Katzoff, "Age of Marriage," 11. However, the simple meaning is that the father should see to it that his daughter is

paternal authority with regard to an adult daughter during the geonic period. I intend to show that, consequent to the influence of Muslim society and Islamic law, in which (at least, according to certain schools) fathers were authorized to betroth adult daughters even without the latter's consent, it was customary for Jewish fathers, too, to betroth their adult daughters without the latters' explicit consent, in apparent contradiction to talmudic law, which grants an adult daughter absolute independence in this area.

Although the age of maturity differed in Islamic and Jewish law, as did the criteria distinguishing between the different stages of maturity,[7] Jewish practice, under the influence of the

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betrothed ("married off"), but not that he is privileged to do so without her consent.

[7] In Islamic law, too, the definition of adulthood depends on the test of physical characteristics, known as *iḥtilām* or *anzāl*; this test is definitive. If the results of the test are inconclusive, decisions are made on the basis of age (*yuʿtabaru al-bulūgh bi-l-sinni*). The Karaite scholar Qirqisānī takes understanding to be a criterion for maturity, concluding that there is no fixed age of maturity, in contrast to several earlier Karaite authors (such as Benjamin al-Nahāwandi), who held that there was some such fixed age. See Yaʿqub al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-anwār wal-marāqib*, ed. L. Nemoy (New York, 1940), II, 331–2; Muslim jurists differed as to the determinative age of adulthood. Abū Ḥanīfa set the age at 17; Abū Yūsuf, Shaybānī and Shāfiʿī favor the age of 15; while Mālik stipulates 18. The minimum age at which adulthood may be determined by physical characteristics is 9, and there are in fact some schools (such as the Ḥanbali) who hold 9 to be the age of adulthood. See Sarakhsi, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (d. 490/1097), *al-Mabsūṭ* (Beirut, 1986), IX, 184; Kāsānī, Abū Bakr b. Masʿūd (d. 587/1191), *Kitāb badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ fī tartīb al-sharāʾiʿ* (Beirut, 1986), VII, 172; Ibn Qudāma, Abū Muḥammad Muwaffaq al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (d. 620/1223), *al-Mughnī,* 3rd ed. (Cairo, 1948), VI, 490. The physiological criterion of maturity, combined with the chronological criterion (age 15), was also prescribed in ʿUmar's Pact (*Shurūṭ ʿUmar*), as reported in an ancient version by al-Shāfiʿī, *Kitāb al-umm* (Bulaq, 1903-4), IV, 118–9. For 9 as the determinative age for a girl in Jewish law see

dominant Muslim society, where the patriarchal system prevailed, nevertheless came to recognize the right of the father to betroth even an adult daugther. This custom may be added to further practices in the area of family law, the status of women in general and laws of marriage and divorce in particular, where we have pointed out elsewhere the existence of Muslim influence on geonic custom.[8]

The influence of the Muslim law allowing fathers to betroth an adult daughter may be deduced by comparison and careful analysis of contemporaneous legal sources of the two legal systems. We will not be concerned in this article with the frequency or geographical distribution of the phenomenon, our attention being confined to its existence and its reflection in geonic responsa of the period.

BT, Qiddushin 81b. It is interesting that, according to some sources, the Muslims were acquainted with the position of Jewish law stipulating 12 as the age of adulthood; see, e.g., Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (d. 457/1066), *Shuʿab al-īmān*, vol. VI (Cairo, 1990), 402: *maktūb fī al-tawrāh man balaghat hu ibnatun ithnatai ʿashrata sanatan fa-lam yuzawwijhā fa-aṣābat ithman fa-ithmu dhālika ʿalayhi* ("it is written in the Torah: whoever has a daughter aged twelve and does not marry her off – this sin will torment him and oppress him"); in this connection, see Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Jāmiʿu al-aḥādīth*, vol. V (Beirut, 1994), 463; Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Manāwī, *Fayd al-Qaḍīr*, vol. VI (Beirut, 1994), 3. In Islamic law, too, mental competence is sometimes given prominence as proof of maturity. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[2], I (Leiden, 1960), 993, s.v. "Bāligh"; S.A. Spectorsky, *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce – Responsa of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Rabwayh* (Austin, 1993), 10. Meecham, at several points of her study (see, e.g., ibid., 17, 20, 27, 43), discusses Islamic marriage law in various contexts, generally without source citation; in very many cases, no such support exists.

[8] For the moment, see G. Libson, "Legal Status of the Jewish Woman in the Gaonic Period: Muslim Influence – Overt and Covert," in H. Hausmaninger et al., eds., *Developments in Austrian and Israeli Private Law* (Vienna & New York, 1999), 213–43.

The comparative study undertaken here will show how the Geonim were forced to relate to the Muslim-influenced phenomenon of patriarchial marriage rights over adult daughters in Jewish society. As usual, the Geonim devised a legal construction legitimating the practice within the context of talmudic law. As we shall see, this legal construction served at the same time as camouflage against any sign of external influence; the Geonim were careful never to admit that any of their decisions or enactments were a reaction to outside influence.

We find that in geonic times child betrothal was practiced, despite the talmudic reservations: "It is customary in our locality, [that] whosoever betroths a woman with a ring, there are some who give the ring to an agent to give her [the ring] before witnesses, or [to give] her father if she be a minor."[9] The custom was maintained at a later time too, as follows from a responsum of Maimonides: "...For it was common in Damascus to marry off their daughters at the age of eight or nine."[10]

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[9] A.A. Harkavy, ed., *Teshuvot ha-ge'onim* in *Zikhron le-Rishonim ve-Gam le-Aḥaronim* (*Studien und Mittheilungen aus der Kaiserlichen Öffentlichen Bibliothek zu St. Peterburg*, IV), (Berlin, 1887, repr. Jerusalem, 1966), no. 65 (Hereafter: Harkavy, *Responsa*); see also L. Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies in Memory of Dr. Solomon Schechter* (= *Ginzei Schechter*), vol. II (New York, 1929), 65.

[10] Maimonides, *Responsa*, vols. 1–3, Y. Blau, ed. (Jerusalem, 1957–61); Ibid., 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1986), vols. 1–4, no. 427. There was a parallel custom in Europe as well: "And now that it is our custom to betroth even our minor daughters..." (*Tosafot*, Kiddushin 41a, *ad loc. "Asur le-adam"*). There was nevertheless a difference between child betrothal as sanctioned by "custom of the Sages" and betrothal of an orphaned minor, which the geonim opposed in view of the possibility of *me'un*. Thus, R. Hananel quotes an anonymous Ga'on as saying, "Always, we and our fathers, when an orphan girl comes before us for betrothal, we demand proof that she is an adult, so as to distance ourselves from *me'un*, as the rabbis have said. However, a judge who permits an immature orphan girl to marry should be rebuked and censured, although

A passage in a responsum of Rav Saadya Ga'on attests to a local custom, according to which a father, acting as agent, was authorized to receive betrothal money for an adult daughter, just as, as specified by biblical law, he could receive the betrothal money to validate the marriage of a minor.[11] Thus, Rav Saadya Ga'on's correspondents note:

> And such is the custom in our locality, when he wishes to betroth a young girl , if she is an adult (*bogeret*), she authorizes her father to receive her betrothal money; but if she is a minor [her father] receives her betrothal money at his own discretion, as is the custom of the Sages....[12]

The correspondents note that while the father's receipt of a minor daughter's betrothal money is considered a "custom of the Sages," when he effects an adult daughter's betrothal it is termed a local custom.[13] Betrothal of a mature woman, with her consent

we do not force her to leave her husband" (*Ozar ha-Ge'onim*, Yevamot, Commentary of R. Hananel, no. 169). R. Hananel was referring to the talmudic discussion in Yevamot 109a and in fact uses the talmudic terminology, "to distance ourselves from *me'un*." Hence this particular custom ("always, we and our fathers...") is not the source of the law but a measure to reinforce the law.

[11] An orphaned minor betrothed by her brothers or her mother may leave her husband (while still a minor) merely by an informal declaration of refusal (Heb. *me'un*) before the court (or before two witnesses). Such a right of refusal exists in Islamic law, where it is known as *khiyāar al-bulūgh*. The scope of the institution is very similar to the situation in Jewish law; I hope to treat this subject at length elsewhere.

[12] H. Moda'i, ed., *Sha'arei Zedek, Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim* (Salonika, 1792, repr. Jerusalem, 1966), 18b, no. 12 (= *Ozar ha-Ge'onim*, ed. B.M. Lewin, vols. 1–13 (Jerusalem, 1928–1943), Kiddushin, no. 27).

[13] Despite the permission in biblical law, various passages in the Talmud prohibit or, at least, disapprove of child betrothal (Niddah 13b, Kiddushin 41a): "It is forbidden for a man to betroth his daughter when she is a minor..." Cf. *She'iltot*, chap. 59, in connection with betrothal of minors; R. Samuel b. Hofni's introduction to his *Book of Surety* (S. Assaf, "Three Books Opened

("she authorizes her father"), is based upon her right to betroth herself in accordance with both biblical and talmudic law, without her father's consent, as agreed by the geonim as well.[14] The custom of an adult woman "authorizing her father" was sanctioned by several geonim:

> ...For such is the custom concerning all daughters of Israel. Even a mature daughter in her father's house, even if she be twenty years old and her father still alive, is subordinate to her father. And one does not find licentiousness or impudence among the daughters of Israel, that [a daughter] should express her own will and say to so-and-so, I wish [to be betrothed], but she relies on her father.[15]

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by Rav Samuel ben Hofni," [in Hebrew] *Sinai* 17 (1945), 117–8). See also Maimonides, *MT,* Hil. Ishut 3:19: "Although the father is authorized to betroth his daughter when she is a minor and when she is a *naʿarah*, it is not proper to do so; rather, the Sages have commanded that a man should not betroth his daughter when she is a minor, until she reaches maturity and says, 'I wish to marry so-and-so.'" Cf. A. Grossman, "Child Marriage in Jewish Society in the Middle Ages until the Thirteenth Century" [in Hebrew], *Peʿamim* 44 (1991), 111; idem, "The Connection between Halakhah and Economics in the Status of the Jewish Woman in Ancient Ashkenaz" [in Hebrew] in M. Ben-Sasson, ed., *Religion and Economy: Connections and Interactions* (Jerusalem, 1995), 147–9. See also Saadya Ga'on's comment in relation to the deed of *me'un* (M. Ben-Sasson, "Fragments from Saadya's *Sefer ha-Edut ve-ha-Shetarot*" [in Hebrew] in *Shenaton ha-Mishpat ha-Ivri* vol. XI–XII [1984–1986], 240): "It is proper for all concerned that she should not be given in betrothal (even by her father), save after she has reached adulthood, so that the marriage be successful" – explaining why the practice allowing such betrothals of minors is called a "custom of the Sages" (Heb. *minhag ḥakhamim*), to distinguish it from talmudic law.

[14] See Kiddushin 41a and Maimonides, Hil. Ishut 3:14: "Similarly, the father appoints an agent to receive his daughter's betrothal money if she is under his control," and *ibid.* 3:19: "It is commendable for a woman to betroth herself with her own hand rather than through her agent"; cf. Harkavy, *Responsa,* no. 194; *Shaʿarei Zedek* 16a, no. 1.

[15] Harkavy, *Responsa,* no. 194 (= *Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim ha-Kezarot,* no. 222; *Ozar ha-Ge'onim, Kiddushin,* no. 284.) On the attribution of this responsum see Sh. Abramson, "One Question and Two Answers" [Hebrew], *Shenaton*

According to this view, an adult daughter is assumed to appoint
her father as her agent for betrothal, with the betrothal to take
effect by proxy, unless she clearly indicates that she does not
accept her father's betrothal–a rare phenomenon in this society,
as the Ga'on goes on to explain, following b. kiddushin 79a. Rav
Zemah Ga'on, however, rejects such betrothal by the father
unless the daughter has explicitly authorized him to act on her
behalf, for since she has reached adulthood her father no longer
has jurisdiction over her. He clearly contests the previously cited
view in which an adult daughter automatically considers her
father an agent. This position limits a father's authority over an
adult daughter.[16]

Although an adult woman was considered independent and
was entitled to receive betrothal money directly, without her
father's consent, it was nevertheless a common phenomenon in

ha-Mishpat ha-Ivri 11-12 (1984–86), 17. See also N. N. Coronel, ed.,
Gaonäische Gutachten und Ritual-Vorschriften von R. Jona (Wien, 1871), no.
97 (= Ozar ha-Ge'onim, Kiddushin, no. 285): "As to your question
concerning an adult woman whose father betrothed her without her
knowledge..." – the Ga'on rules that if the woman refuses, her father's action
is disregarded. See also Saadya Ga'on in a responsum in Sha'arei Zedek, 19a,
no. 13 (= Ozar ha-Ge'onim, Kiddushin, no. 438), ruling, in accordance with
the teaching of Rav (Kiddushin 79a), that if the woman went and betrothed
herself, one does not suspect that the father may have given her in betrothal
previously.

[16] Sha'arei Zedek 16a, no. 1 (= Ozar ha-Ge'onim, Kiddushin no. 283). On the
attribution of this responsum and the related geonic controversy see
Abramson, "One Question," 17. There is an interesting controversy on this
issue between R. Menahem ha-Meiri and an anonymous commentator on
Tractate Kiddushin. Ha-Meiri is of the opinion that a father may receive his
adult daughter's betrothal money without consulting her; see R. Menahem ha-
Meiri, Bet ha-Behirah, Kiddushin, ed. A. Sofer (Jerusalem, 1963), 263. A
contrary view is taken by an anonymous authority; see N. Sachs, ed., Shittah
Lo Noda' le-Mi le-Massekhet Kiddushin (Jerusalem, 1955), 90a. See also
M.A. Friedman, "The Ethics of Medieval Jewish Marriage," in S.D. Goitein,
ed., Religion in a Religious Age (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), 86 and notes.

the geonic period for women to appoint their fathers as agents for their betrothal. According to Rav Zemah Ga'on, as cited above, this was considered legitimate only if the woman explicitly did so; whereas according to the first Ga'on quoted, such a betrothal could take effect without fear of challenge, as if the daughter were a minor.

Summarizing the geonic approaches to betrothal of an adult daughter, one might say that the disagreement touches upon the question of "presumption" (Heb. *umdana*), that is, whether one can presume the daughter's state of mind. Some geonim hold that although, halakhically speaking, an adult daughter is indeed independent, the presumption is that she will automatically expect her father to act as her agent for betrothal. Other geonim hold that there is no such presumption and therefore no validity to the father's betrothal. Several geonic responsa, although aware of the custom of betrothal by a father "unbeknownst" to his adult daughter, do not accept such custom as valid and insist on the proper implementation of talmudic law. The custom of a father marrying off his adult daughter, on the presumption that she has given him the authority to do so, is attested in a later period as well.[17]

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[17] See Solomon b. Adret (Rashba), *Responsa* (Tel Aviv, 1960), I, no. 771: "...For all the daughters agree to marry whomsoever her father or relatives desire." For the whole subject see A. [V.] Aptowitzer, *Studies in Geonic Literature* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1941), 138; M.A. Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine – A Cairo Geniza Study,* vol. II (Tel Aviv & New York, 1981), 217, 218 n. 5; idem, "Matchmaking and Betrothal According to Cairo Genizah Documents" [in Hebrew] in *Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1981), 167 and n. 5, according to which it was customary in Palestine and Egypt for an adult bride to appoint an agent, generally her father, to receive her betrothal money; M. Ben-Sasson, *The Emergence of the Local Jewish Community in the Muslim World. Qayrawan 800–1057* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1996), 113 and ibid., nn. 19, 22; S.D. Goitein, *A*

Modern scholarship suggests that child betrothal became common in Jewish society in the East under the influence of the prevalent Muslim practice.[18] To our mind, it would seem that even betrothal of an adult daughter with either explicit or presumed authorization seems to reflect Muslim influence, particularly that of the Shāfiʿī and Mālikī schools. (It was from regions in which these schools dominated the legal system that questions were sent to the Babylonian geonim, in contrast to areas where the law was dominated by the Ḥanafis, who considered an adult woman independent and entitled to betroth herself without the consent of a *walī* [legal guardian; see below]).[19]

The central principle in Islamic legal literature was generally that marriage could be effected only through a *walī*, i.e., a legal guardian for marriage (*lā nikāḥa illā bi-waliyin*), as found in

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Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, 6 vols. (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1967–1993), III, 70 ff.; M. Gil, *Palestine during the First Muslim Period* (*639–1099*) [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv 1983), III, 335, doc. 536; Grossman, "Child Marriage," 115.

[18] In Grossman, "Child Marriage," 117; idem, "Connection," 149, the author discusses the possibility that the normal marriageable age among Muslims was influential here, but he does not consider the possible influence of the Muslim practice on adult marriage. For possible influence of the status of Muslim women on that of Jewish women in general see Ben-Sasson, *Emergence*, 133.

[19] See Goitein's comment (Introduction to R. Abraham b. Maimonides, *Responsa*, eds. A.H. Freimann and S.D. Goitein, [Jerusalem, 1938], 37) that Responsum no. 67 seems to reflect a conception similar to that of the Muslims as to a father's relationship with his adult daughter. Cf. also S.D. Goitein, "The Interplay of Jewish and Islamic Laws," in B.S. Jackson, ed., *International Conference on Jewish Law in Legal History and the Modern World* (Leiden, 1980), 72: "Jewish fathers often behaved as if their teenage daughters had no say at all in the matters of their marriage"; see also Friedman, "Ethics," 86.

almost all *ḥadīth* collections.[20] In addition, there are differences
of opinion as to the applicability of the principle in situations
where the woman is a *thayib* (generally speaking, one who lost
her virginity in a previous marriage, whether valid or not) or a
bikr (i.e., a woman who has not been previously married and is

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[20] See, e.g., Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (Cairo, 1951), II, 525;
Ibn Māja, Abu 'Abd Allah b. Muḥammad b.Yazīd al-Qazwīnī (d. 275/886),
Sunan (n.p., n.d.), I, 605; Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm b. al-
Mughīra (d. 256/876), *Saḥīḥ* (Beirut, 1958), VII, 19; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr b. al-
Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (d. 457/1066), *Kitāb al-sunan al-kubrā* (Hayderabad, 1925),
VII, 107–8; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali b. 'Umar al-Dāraqutnī (d. 385/995), *Sunan*
(Medina, 1966), III, 219–20; Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Raḥman
al-Dārimī (d. 255/869), *Sunan* (Medina, 1966), II, 137; etc. In the *Fiqh
literature* see Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, VII, 448; idem, *al-Kāfī fī Fiqh al-
Imām al-Mubajjal Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,*(Damascus, 1988), III, 10; Ibn Rushd,
Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurtubī (d.
595/1195), *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid* (Beirut, 1988), II,
8–12; Shīrāzī, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī b. Yūsuf (d. 475/1083), *al-
Muhadhdhab* (Cairo, 1959), II, 35; Abū Zakariyyā Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā b.
Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1278), *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn*, ed. L.W.C. van den Berg,
(Batavia, 1882–84), II, 321. Two further slightly differing traditions deal with
the *walī*'s position vis-à-vis child marriage. One states: *al-thayibu aḥaqqu bi-
nafsihā min waliyihā wal-bikru tusta'maru wa-idhnuhā ṣumātuhā* [The *thayib*
has authority concerning herself, prior to that of the *walī*, while the *bikr* – her
consent is requested]. See, e.g., Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-
Qushayri al-Naysābūrī (d. 261/875), *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo 1955–56), I, 594;
Dāraqutnī, *Sunan*, III, 240; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VII, 23; Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, II, 542;
etc. The second tradition states: *al-thaybu tusta'maru wal-bikru tusta'dhanu
wa-idhnuhā ṣumātuhā* [The *thayb* – her consent is requested, and the *bikr* –
her permission is requested, and her silence [implies] her permission]; see Ibn
Māja, *Sunan*, I, 605; Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, VII, 106; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b.
Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *Musnad* (Cairo, 1895), II, 4. In the view of the Shāfi'ī
and Mālikī schools, even an adult woman, if a virgin, may be married off by
her father acting as a *walī*, with or without her consent, as understood by
these sources. See J. Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*
(Oxford, 1950), 182–183; Spectorsky, *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce*, 9–
14, esp. n. 28.

still a virgin). Thus, the following tradition was ascribed to
Shāfiʿī:

> *Qāla al-shāfiʿī fa-ayyu walīyu imraʾatin thayibin aw bikrin
> zawwajahā bi-ghayri idhnihā fal-nikāḥu bātilun illā al-
> abāʾu fī al-abkāri... wa-in faʿala fa-zawwajahā man
> karihat jāza dhalika ʿalayhā.*[21]
> [Said Shafiʿi: Any *walī* of a woman, whether *thayib* or
> *bikr*, who betrothed her without her permission, the
> marriage is void, save they, the fathers, who marry off
> their daughters when they are virgins... And if nevertheless
> he gave her in marriage against her will, the marriage is
> valid.]

Similarly, the Mālikī jurist Saḥnun writes:

> *Lā yujbiru aḥadun aḥadan ʿalā al-nikāḥi ʿinda mālikin illā
> al-abū fī ibnatihi al-bikri wa-fī ibnihi al-saghīri wa-
> fī amatihi wa-ʿabdihi wal-walīyu fī yatīmihi.*[22]
> [One person cannot compel another concerning marriage,
> save a father with respect to his virgin daughter and his
> minor son and his maidservant and his slave, or the
> guardian with respect to an orphan for whom he is
> responsible.]

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[21] Shāfiʿī, Abu ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad b. Idris, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 2nd ed.
(Beirut, 1983), V, 19. For Shāfiʿī's view see also Kāsānī, *Badāʾiʿ*, II, 241, and
the discussion by Muḥammad al-Khatīb al-Sharbīnī, *Mughnī al-Muḥtaj*
(Beirut, n.d.), III, 147–9.

[22] Saḥnun, b. Saʿīd al-Tanūkhī (d. 239/854), *al-Mudawwana al-Kubrā*
(Beirut, 1986), II, 140–1, under the heading: *Inkāḥ al-ab ibnatahi bi-ghayr
ridāʾihā*. See also Ibn Qudāma, *Kāfī*, III, 26, summarizing the various
opinions on this issue. Despite the basic agreement between the Shāfiʿī and
Mālikī schools, there is nevertheless a certain difference, which will not be
considered here.

Only the Ḥanafis, in contradistinction to the other schools, held that a mature woman, whether *thayib* or *bikr*, was entitled to marry without requesting the *walī*'s permission.[23]

The Karaite practice with regard to a father's authority to betroth an adult daughter resembles the Muslim rather than the Rabbanite-halakhic approach. In Karaite law, even an adult woman needs her father's permission in order to marry. It is not clear from Karaite sources whether, conversely, the father may betroth his daughter without her consent, though such an interpretation is possible. Thus, in Benjamin Nahāwandi's *Mas'at Binyamin*, we read:

> All virgins, adult and minor, shall not marry without their father's permission, and their marriage is not a [valid] marriage unless with the father's consent, as Scripture stipulates, 'If her father refuses to give her to him etc.' [Exodus 22:16]. And if there is no father, her brothers and her mother or one of her relatives will be her guardian. And where there is no father, if negotiations were conducted without the guardians, their marriages are [valid] marriages, provided that she is an adult, as Scripture stipulates, 'Let us call the girl etc.' [Genesis 24:57].

It is thus clear that a marriage contracted by the daughter while her father is still alive, without his knowledge or consent, is considered invalid. Nahāwandi goes on to say: "The father has authority to marry his daughter to any man as he wishes." Though the status of the daughter is not specified, it seems that this applies even to an adult daughter. Although Nahāwandi cites Scripture, the parallel with Islamic law is obvious (perhaps

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[23] See Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i'*, II, 247; Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, V, 10.

indicating Muslim influence on Karaite law), as is the contrast with Rabbanite Halakhah.[24]

Another Karaite author, Aaron of Nicomedia, summarizes the difference between the Karaite and Rabbanite positions: "And if she has a father, whether she be a minor or an adult, it is the father's will that counts… not as held by the Rabbanites, who say that a minor is subordinate to her father, while an adult is not subordinate to her father but does as she pleases."[25]

From all the above it seems reasonable to conclude that geonic responsa on this topic reflect Muslim influence on Jewish practice. Possibly, the emphasis placed in some responsa on the girl's authorization of her father is intended to smooth over an unpleasant reality, in which fathers were accustomed to marry off their daughters without their daughter's explicit consent, presuming "constructive consent," which essentially deprived the woman of her free choice, unless she had first received betrothal money on her own initiative; but this latter situation was not common in the geonic period, presumably owing to environmental influence.[26]

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[24] Benjamin b. Moses Nahāwandi, *Mas'at Binyamin* (Goslow [= Eupatoria], 1833), 6. Cf. Anan b. David in his *Sefer ha-Mizvot* (ed. A. Harkavy, *Zikhron le-Rishonim* [*Studien und Mittheilungen… St. Peterburg*, VIII/1] (St. Petersburg, 1903), 113): "Similarly, any person who marries a woman must marry her of his own free will, and it is not proper that his father should betroth him to a woman whom he does not want. A woman, too, does not have to be married save of her own free will, and it is not proper that her father should betroth her to someone who does not want her." According to Anan, the father possesses the authority to betroth his daughter, but "it is not proper" that he should do so against her will. Parallels between Karaite and Islamic law are not exceptional; This subject deserves special treatment, and I hope to treat it elsewhere.

[25] Aaron b. Elijah of Nicomedia, *Gan 'Eden* (Jerusalem, 1963), 143b, 144a.

[26] For marriage by a *walī* see Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine*, I, 230; Gil, *A History of Palestine*, 639–1099 (Cambridge, 1992), 803–4, n. 16.

THE JUDEO-ARABIC VOCABULARY OF SAADYA'S BIBLE
TRANSLATIONS AS A VEHICLE FOR ESCHATOLOGICAL MESSAGES:
THE CASE OF SAADYA'S USAGE OF THE 8TH FORM OF ARABIC *QDR*

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Saadya's translations of books of the Bible, in particular of the
Pentateuch, have been recognized, extensively discussed and
analyzed in recent times. It is agreed nowadays that they contain
an important exegetical component. It is well known that the
exegetical aspect of the translation is related and connected to
Saadya's exegetical method and approach in general, including
his hermeneutical principles and his attitude toward the
Rabbinic tradition as manifested in the ancient Aramaic
translations, the Mishna, Talmud and the midrashic sources, as
well as his theological positions.[1] Saadya intended the Arabic
language of his translation to be rather close to the literary

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[1] A very important and pioneering work is M. Zucker, *Rav Saadya Gaon's
Translation of the Torah* [in Hebrew], (New York, 1959). For a recent
discussion, with references to many earlier publications see M. Polliack, *The
Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation* (Leiden, 1997), esp. 82–90.

standards of Post-Classical Arabic in its syntax,[2] with a rich and varied vocabulary, containing quite a number of interesting usages, sometimes documented for the first time in these translations.[3]

The purpose of the following observations is to discuss a peculiar meaning of the 8th form of the Arabic root *QDR* (henceforth *QDR* 8). The earliest attestation of this meaning is found in the Judeo-Arabic writings of Saadya Ga'on (882–942), and all examples of similar usage from the Judeo-Arabic writings of subsequent authors (which are on a more limited scale) seem to be dependent on Saadya. Several examples of Saadya's usage will be examined. At the end an attempt will be made to explain Saadya's motive in choosing, or possibly inventing, this usage.

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[2] See now J. Blau, "Saadya Gaon's Pentateuch translation in light of an early-eleventh-century Egyptian manuscript," [in Hebrew] *Lěšonénu* 61 (1998), 111–30, esp. 115–6; Polliack, *Karaite Tradition*, 249–59 (as compared to some prominent Karaite exegetes).

[3] It should be noted that already R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden, 1881), utilized Saadya's translation (see also the additions of J. Blau, "Some Additions, Mostly from Judaeo-Arabic, to Dozy's Supplément," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 73 (1973), 112–23 (=*Studies in Middle Arabic and Its Judaeo-Arabic Variety* (Jerusalem, 1988), 349–60); a fair collection of innovations and peculiar usages of Saadya is found in Y. Ratzaby, *A Dictionary of Judaeo-Arabic in R. Saadya's* Tafsir [in Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan, 1985). Y. Qāfiḥ's Arabic-Hebrew and Hebrew-Arabic glossaries at the end of his editions of Saadya's translations to Psalms, Proverbs and Job constitute a highly valuable tool for the study of Saadya's vocabulary in his translations.

A

The following meanings are given for *QDR* 8 in Lane's Lexicon:[4]

1) In the separate sub-entry of the 8th form only one meaning is given:

   "*He made it of middling size*; expl. by *ja'alahu qadr^{an}*."

Additional definitions are given in the separate sub-entry of the 1st form; they seem to be synonymous with the 1st form.

2) One with the preposition '*alā* reads as follows:
   "*qadartu 'alā al-shay'* and *iqtadartu 'alayhi*: *I had power, or ability, to do, effect, accomplish, achieve, attain, or compass, etc., the thing; I was able to do it, I was able to prevail against it.*"

3) And also:
   "*qadara* and *iqtadara* are like *ṭabakha* and *iṭṭabakha* [*meaning He cooked and he cooked for himself, in a* qidr, *or cooking-pot*]."

The three meanings quoted are thus derived from three nouns: *qadr*=size, measure; *qudra*=ability, capacity; *qidr*=cooking-pot. Some of the other modern dictionaries give all three meanings (*al-Munjid*), while some give mainly the second meaning or approximate ones (Hava, Wehr). The second meaning of the three interests us here. According to the dictionaries this second

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[4] E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (repr.) (Cambridge, 1984), 2:2495 a–b.

meaning is actually a synonym of *QDR* 1. Concerning Medieval dictionaries, it should be noted that a masculine singular active participle of *QDR* 8 is mentioned (as synonym of *qādir* and *qadīr*) by Ibn Manẓūr, in the first paragraph of the entry *QDR* in his dictionary *Lisān al-ʿArab*. According to him it indicates one of God's attributes, with an intense connotation. A similar explanation is found in *Tāj al-ʿArūs*,[5] with some elaboration. These statements, which are ignored by modern dictionaries, will be discussed further below.

In ancient Arabic poetry *QDR* 8 is attested in 20 verses,[6] quoted in almost 40 sources, with several variant readings. In one verse it is used in the past, in another three in the verbal noun (*maṣdar*), and in most of the others in the active (in a few cases passive) participle masculine (once feminine plural). The meanings of these occurrences agree in most cases with the definitions found in the dictionaries. In these occurrences *QDR* 8 is used to describe humans, such as kings and heroes, as well as animals. For example, in a verse quoted in a number of sources and ascribed to the poet al-Ruʾba, a contemporary of the Umayyads (d. 762), a donkey is depicted as *muqtadir^u*[7] *'l-ṣanʿa^{ti}*, i.e. its body is built ("made") in "middling size" (in Lane's words), proportionately.[8] It is interesting to note that in one

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[5] S.v. *QDR*, 3: 484, drawing on similar sources as *Lisān*.

[6] I wish to express my deep gratitude to my colleague Prof. Albert Arazi, the editor and director of the Concordance of Ancient Arabic Poetry Project, at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, for his generous assistance.

[7] Perhaps better *muqtadar^u*.

[8] al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salama al-Ḍabbī, *al-Fākhir*, ed. C.A. Storey (Leyden, 1915), 244:3; a slightly different variant is found in al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, vol. 9, p. 422:21. A craftsman who makes his products proportionately is described in a verse ascribed to Imruʾu 'l-Qays as *muqtadir*, see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, s.v. *ḤDhF*, v. 6, 66:39; s.v. *QDR*, v. 3, 484:14.

variant of a rather pious verse ascribed to the Pre-Islamic poet Umayya b. Abī 'l-Ṣalt,[9] God is called *muqtadir*, in the sense of omnipotent.[10] Other versions[11] of this verse have the reading *mustaṭir* (=sovereign?) instead. As in many other cases a verse said to have been authored by Umayya manifests surprising affinity to the style and contents of the Qur'ān. In the first line of a poem dubiously ascribed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, quoted in the chapter about the Battle of Badr in Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* (Biography of Muḥammad), the verbal noun of *QDR* 8 is used in praise of God as the powerful (*dhī 'qtidār[in]*, literally: owner of power).[12]

Four occurrences of the active participle of *QDR* 8 are found in the Qur'ān. In 18:45 a singular masculine form features in a general statement as an attribute of God the Omnipotent, in a similar function as *qādir* (e.g., 17:99) or *qadīr* (e.g., 2:20, 106 etc.). In 54:55 it is used to present God as a Majestic King[13] in

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[9] See on him and the problem of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to him H.A.R. Gibb, "Pre-Islamic Monotheism in Arabia," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), 279–80.

[10] This variant is found in Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfāhānī, *al-Aghānī*, ed. Dār al-Kutub, vol. 4 (Cairo, 1931), 121:9.

[11] E.g., Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, s.v. *SLṬ*; also the version printed by F. Schulthess, *Umajja ibn Abi ṣ Ṣalt* (Leipzig, 1911) (*Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, Band VIII Heft 3), 57, section XLIX, v. 16. These versions may be considered *lectio difficilior*.

[12] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. G. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858), 518:4 (English translation in A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* [Oxford, 1955], 341). Ibn Hishām remarks that no expert on poetry can confirm 'Alī's authorship of the poem; he decided to include it in his selection from Ibn Isḥāq's text because this had been the only source to mention that 'Abd Allāh b. Jud'ān had been killed in the battle of Badr.

[13] *Malīk*, the only occurrence of this form in the Qur'ān. Translation of this and subsequent quotations from the Qur'ān are by A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford, 1964). Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, substitutes *qādir* for *muqtadir*.

Whose presence "the godfearing shall dwell amid gardens and a river in a sure abode." In 54:42 a similar form is used synonymously with *'azīz* (mighty)[14], to describe God's omnipotence in inflicting punishment ("seizing") on Pharaoh's people, because "they cried lies to Our signs." A plural masculine form occurs in 43:42, describing God as "having power over them" (the enemies of the prophet), to carry out what has been promised to them, as a parallel to *muntaqimūn*, vengeful. All four occurrences are applied specifically and exclusively to God: twice to underline His omnipotence and majesty, and twice to underline His power in punishing His enemies, with explicit reference to Pharaoh. From the range of meanings of *QDR* 8 recorded in ancient Arabic poetry the Qur'ānic usage focuses on one particular aspect with exclusive reference to God.

In the Concordance of the Ḥadīth literature only a single occurrence of the verbal noun (*maṣdar*) of *QDR* 8 is recorded.[15] Even though the Concordance does not cover the entire vast corpus of Ḥadīth literature, the single reference may be an indication of the distribution of *QDR* 8 in this genre, and in early Arabic literature in general. In the single reference the verbal noun is perhaps[16] used in the first meaning registered by Lane.

A very important reference is missing from the Concordance, however, namely the tradition about *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* ("The Names Most Beautiful"). The origin of the term is in the Qur'ān,

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[14] Cf. D. Gimaret, *Une lecture Muʿtazilite du Coran* (Louvain-Paris, 1994), 773 (and the reference there to D. Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam* [Paris, 1988], 245).

[15] A.J. Wensinck et al, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, (Leiden, 1965), 5:312. The reference in question is *Musnad Aḥmad*, 5:159.

[16] Various transmitters of the tradition could not agree on the exact wording of its text.

where it appears four times.[17] These have served as a starting point for numerous traditions and discussions in theological works. Lists have been formed of "The Names," and included in traditions ascribed to Muḥammad through his companion Abū Hurayra. The most famous tradition with a list is the one about God's 99 names. It appears with the lists of names in many parallel sources of Ḥadīth literature from the middle of the ninth century onwards.[18] Some of those lists include the name *muqtadir* that is under discussion here. One such tradition in what is commonly termed "Canonical Collections" is found in Tirmidhī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. This version has become the commonest in Medieval sources and even in the Muslim world today.[19]

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[17] 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24. The English rendering of the term is taken from A. Arberry's translation to the Qur'ānic verses mentioned above.

[18] For a detailed discussion see D. Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam* (Paris, 1988), 55–68; Gimaret dates these lists to the second half of the 2nd century Hijra=end of 8th century CE; see also L. Gardet, "al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā", *EI* [2], I, 714–7.

[19] Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-daʿawāt*, 82, ed. Cairo, vol. 13 (Cairo, 1934), 36–42, and cf. Gimaret, *noms divins*, 56. A list that does not include the name *muqtadir* is found in Ibn Māja's *Sunan*, (as well as *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* of the Shīʿite author Ibn Bābūya) see Gimaret, *noms divins*, 59–60. According to ibid, 56, 63–77, the main authority of Tirmidhī's (and others') list is al-Walīd b. Muslim al-Dimashqī (d. 195/810). He was one of the earliest compilers of written Ḥadīth collections (*muṣannafāt*, see on him Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Cairo, 1984), v. 11, 133–6). It seems though that Tirmidhī, who concludes his report with a long comment regarding the trustworthiness of the transmitters of this tradition (which he classifies as *gharīb*), relies on the authority of al-Walīd's transmitter, Ṣafwān b. Ṣāliḥ, another resident of Damascus (d. 237–239/851–854). Tirmidhī further remarks that another authority on the transmission from Abū Hurayra is Ādam b. Abī Iyās, but that his chain of transmitters (*isnād*) is not reliable. According to Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, v. 1, 171–2 he was a native of Baghdād who ultimately settled in Ascalon, where he died in 220–221/835–836. The tradition, at least its particular version discussed here, may thus be associated with Syro-Palestinian circumstances.

In the second half of the ninth century the matter had started to interest also the theologians (*mutakallimūn*), in connection with their discussion of the Divine Attributes (*al-ṣifāt*). The matter is discussed in major *Kalām* works of the end of the 10th century and beginning of the 11th, like those of the Muʿtazilite ʿAbd al-Jabbār and the Ashʿarite Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī.[20] ʿAbd al- Jabbār's *al-Mughnī* explicitly mentioned the name of the prominent Muʿtazilite teacher of the Baṣran school Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 915, Saadya's older contemporary) in this context.[21] By the end of the tenth century there was apparently a widely accepted view that *muqtadir*, like *qadīr*, may be applied uniquely and specifically to God, because He does not share this attribute with anyone else. *Muqtadir* and *qadīr* express a much more intensive degree (*ablagh*) of power than the active participle *qādir*.[22] According to Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, in this aspect of excelling any other being (*muqtadir ʿalā 'l-ashyā'*, *muqtadir ʿalā ghayrihiī*) He is described by the attribute *qāhir* (literally: victorious, conquering, dominating).[23] It seems that at some later stage some reservations appeared with regard to the exclusive attribution of *muqtadir* to God. Such reservations may have stemmed from pure theological considerations, or perhaps from some political circumstances mentioned further below.

As mentioned above, the theological aspect of *muqtadir* is recorded in some Medieval and traditional Arabic dictionaries. Typically, the traditional lexicographers preferred to draw their

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[20] Gimaret, *noms divins*, 235–7.

[21] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī (Cairo, 1965), v. 5, 207:1–2.

[22] Gimaret, *noms divins*, and see ʿAbd al- Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 206:19–21, where the author expresses clearly the idea of the "intensity" (*mubālagha*) of *muqtadir*.

[23] ibid, 207:1–3, and see Gimaret, *noms divins*, 241–2, esp. at the end of 242.

information from earlier lexicographic authorities rather than from Ḥadīth or Kalām works. Ibn Manẓūr drew his information from the famous dictionary of Ḥadīth by Ibn al-Athīr,[24] and al-Zabīdī in his *Tāj al-'Arūs* had possibly at his disposal also the remarks of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī,[25] which indeed reflect the hesitation regarding the exclusiveness of the attribute *muqtadir*.

We have seen so far that derivatives of *QDR* 8 in Classical Arabic sources are mostly used in a positive, laudatory sense. In the Qur'ān and subsequent religious texts they (primarily the active participle) serve almost exclusively as attributes of God. Nowhere are such derivatives found in a negative, pejorative sense.

B

In Biblical Hebrew, finite verbs and nouns derived from the root *G'H/Y/W*, when referred to God, or to human beings (individually or collectively), or to their traits,[26] have been usually rendered by terms related to glory, majesty, excellence and triumph, as well as pride, boast, haughtiness, arrogance.[27] In some occurrences words from this root refer to righteous people, in others to the wicked, from among the Israelites or other

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[24] Majd al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Cairo, n.d.), 3:261–2. He seems to have drawn some of his information from theological sources.

[25] al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qur'ān*, on the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, 3:274–5.

[26] To the exclusion of inanimate beings, such as water, or animals, or topographic terms.

[27] E.g., F. Brown-S.R. Driver-C.A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1966), 144–5.

nations. Renditions like "pride"[28] may thus vary between laudatory and derogatory connotation, according to context.

In numerous translations of Saadya[29] of forms derived from Hebrew *G'H/Y/W*, in both opposite meanings, as well as in comments thereupon, Saadya rendered them with his peculiar usage of derivatives of Arabic *QDR* 8. I do not intend at this time to discuss all of the occurrences, but rather to look into the most important and instructive examples in his translations and to present and discuss his exegetical expositions or statements that may be relevant to understanding his usage. A list of the occurrences to which I have had access can be found in the Appendix to the present study.[30]

Prov. 8:13 counts four vices which the god-fearing should hate, among them two derivatives of Heb. *G'H/Y/W*: גֵאָה וגאון, translated by Saadya: אלזהו ואלאקתדאר (i.e., pride and arrogance[31]). In a following comment Saadya explains that the former means "conceit," and the latter "one's arrogance towards one's people."[32] From the usage of *iqtidār* in this comment it may be concluded that the author thinks that its meaning

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[28] As a rule translations of Biblical quotations are given here according to *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia–New York–Jerusalem, 1985).

[29] In several instances in the discussion below comparisons with translations and comments by the most prolific Karaite exegete Yefet ben 'Eli (active in Jerusalem during the second half of the tenth century) are quoted; a list of manuscript sources for Yefet's translations is given at the end of the article.

[30] References to the two lists in the Appendix may be found according to the order of the books of the Bible, chapters and verses.

[31] So also *Tanakh*. Yefet has (Ms. Paris, fol. 36b) אלאקתדאר ואלכבר.

[32] Ed. Qāfiḥ, 76:4–5: פתפסיר גאה אעג'אב אלמר בנפסה וגאון אקתדארה עלי קומה; this comment also supports the editor's textual note on the translation of the verse.

"arrogance,"[33] is evident and well understood, the purpose of the comment being to give a precise definition of *gā'ōn*.

The verses Prov. 16:18–19 לפני שבר גאון ולפני כשלון ג ֹבַה רוח: טוב שְׁפַל-רוּחַ את עֲנָיים מֵחַלֵּק שלל את-גֵּאִים are translated by Saadya: 'עאקבה אלאקתדאר אלכסר ועאקבה' אלכבר אלחטיטה': אלתואצ'ע מע אלכ'אשעין כ'יר מן תקסם אלסלב מע אלמקתדרין (i.e., the result of haughtiness is rupture and the result of arrogance is decline. Humility with the submissive is better than division of spoils with the haughty [ones].). In this translation *iqtidār* equals *kibr*, and both stand in juxtaposition to *tawāḍu'*, which is a well-known term for humility. The former thus signify haughtiness, arrogance (for which *kibr* is a very common term). In his comments on the verses[34] Saadya adduces a whole series of historical personalities as examples of *iqtidār*: Pharaoh, Goliath, Sancherib and Nebuchadnessar.

גַּאֲוַת אדם תשפילנו ושְׁפַל-רוּחַ יתמֹךְ כבוד Prov. 29:23 is translated by Saadya: 'אקתדאר אלאדמי ממא יצ'ע בה ואלתואצ'ע ממא ידעם אלכראמה'. As in the former example *iqtidār* is the opposite of *tawāḍu'*. In his comments on the verse Saadya gives אלצלף as synonym of אקתדאר. The opposite of *tawāḍu'* (humility) is *ṣalaf* (bragging), and its synonym (and opposite of *ṣalaf*) in the commentary is *khushū'* (humility, submissiveness).[35]

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[33] Or: pretense of power, usurpation of power.

[34] Saadya on Proverbs, 120–1. Yefet's translation of these verses reads (Ms. Paris fol. 91b): קבל אלעתב אלאקתדאר וקבל אלאנעאת'אר שמך' אלרוח. אג'וד אן יכון אנסאן מתספל אלרוח מע אלמתואצ'עין מן אן יקסם אלסלב מע אלמקתדרון. While in Saadya's translation breakdown is an inescapable result of arrogance, in Yefet's perception arrogance is a "prerequisite" to the fall. This may be due to Yefet inclination to "literalness," but the contents conveyed by both exegetes is quite close.

[35] Ibid., 242. Yefet translates (Ms. BL [numbers of folios are illegible in the microfilm], Paris fol. 209a): אקתדאר אלאנסאן יספלה ומתספל אלרוח ידעם אלוקאר. At the beginning of his commentary Yefet explains: אכת'יר מן תראה סריע אלחרד

Job 5:7 ובני רשף יגביהו עוף is explained by Saadya as follows[36]:

> His intention in "the sons of the flame fly high" is that the
> people who are destined to the flames are the braggarts
> who think much of themselves, vault themselves, and raise
> themselves up like birds.

Similarly, in Is. 16:6 Saadya renders three occurrences, out of
four derivatives of Heb. *G'H/Y/W* with derivatives of Arab.
QDR 8, and the fourth with another derivative of *QDR* (see
Appendix). However, when he feels a need to explain Moab's
sin in the commentary, he uses the Arabic terms *al-tajabbur wa-
'l-ta'aẓẓum*,[37] probably thinking that these terms are more
familiar to the readers than *iqtidār*.

=) ואלאקתדאר ואלצלף יכון כ'לקה שאמך' אלקלב פהו יסתעמל אלכבר (כ"י פריס: אלפכר!)
In most cases, when you see a person who quickly becomes angry, his
disposition is arrogant, and he resorts to pride, haughtiness and bragging).
The similarity of Yefet's vocabulary in this comment to that of Saadya is
obvious.

[36] Ed. Qāfiḥ, 50:14: ומראדה פי ובני רשף יגביהו עוף אן אהל אלנאר מן אלנאס
אלמתצלפין אלמתקדרין אלד'ין יתשמאכ'ון ויתרפעון כאלטיר. Ratzaby, *A Dictionary of
Judaeo-Arabic* (above, n. 3), 112, notes a variant reading for אלמתקדרין as
printed by the editor, namely אלמקתדרין. However Ratzaby's rendering of the
term המתגברים, sounds odd, unless he had in mind some archaic usage of the
Hebrew term, i.e. those who consider themselves heroes. A somewhat
different English translation can be found in Goodman, 191. In theory the
fifth form would fit quite well here, as describing pretense or usurpation.
However, considering the overwhelming textual evidence, and in light of the
proposition put forward further below, the eighth form should be preferred.
Free interchange between reflexive forms is common in Judeo-Arabic, see J.
Blau, *A Grammar of Judaeo-Arabic* [in Hebrew], [1](Jerusalem, 1961), [2]1981,
§78.

[37] Ed. Ratzaby, 172 (Heb. 272). Earlier, in the comments on Is. 15 (ibid),
which is the beginning of the prophesy about Moab, their sin is described (*bi-
sabab*) *iqtidārihim wa-ta'aẓẓumihim*.

In Job 22:29; 33:17 Saadya translated the term גֵּוָה by אקתדאר. N. Allony rightly noted the Hebrew equivalent of pretense and ascribing power to oneself.[38]

An interesting case is Ps. 47:5, where גאון יעקב is translated קדרת יעקוב (=the power of Jacob; Yefet has באקתדאר יעקוב). In even a more interesting comment Saadya explains the term as reference to the Temple, basing himself on Ez. 24:21, in which "My Sanctuary" is glossed by "your pride (g^e'$\bar{o}n$) and glory".[39]

The most instructive statement Saadya makes is a comprehensive exposition of his view on the opposite meanings of *QDR* 8 in his commentary on Ex.15. There he builds a twofold model of past and future arrogant oppressors and their fate after reaching the extreme degree of arrogance. The first part is his comment on 15:1. It seems that the text deserves to be quoted *in extenso* here, since it has not been published to date.[40]

קו' אול הד'ה אלשירה אז. ופסרנאה חיניד'. אראד בה אן תסביח אללה תעא' יג'ב אן יכון פי כל חין עלי מא יצלח לה. וממא ישאכל ד'לך אלמע' וביאן הד'א כמא קדמנא אנה אד'א רחם יסמי רחום. ואד'א אנתקם יסמי נוקם. ואמת'אל ד'לך. כד'לך פי הד'א אלחין למא אקתדר סמוה מקתדרא. כק' כי גאה גאה.

[38] Saadya Ga'on, *Ha'egron: Kitāb 'uṣūl al-shi'r al-'ibrānī*, ed. N. Allony (Jerusalem, 1969), 204.

[39] Saadya on Psalms, 131.

[40] It is quoted from British Library, Ms. Or. 8658, fol. 2b–3a. (I intend to publish the entire Ms.) I have described the Ms. in "New Findings in a Forgotten Manuscript: Samuel b. Hofni's Commentary on Ha'azinu and Saadya's 'Commentary on the Ten Songs'" [in Hebrew], *Kiryat Sefer* 61 (1986–1987), 313–32. Sections of Saadya's commentary on Ex.15 ("The Song of the Sea") have been published by Y. Ratzaby, *Rav Saadya's Commentary on Exodus* (Jerusalem, 1998), from this Ms.; for some reason parts of the commentary on this chapter extant in the Ms. have not been included in this publication.

ומע' אלאקתדאר פי הד'ה אלקצה' דון סאיר אלקצץ לאן פרעה כאן קד קאל מי
ייי מא לם ישרח אלכתא' ען אחד אנה קאל מת'ל הד'א. והד'א גאיה אלאקתדאר.
פלד'לך אקתדר צאחב אלקדרה' עליהם ואהלכהם. ומן אלוצף אלד'י חכאה
אללה לאיוב נעלם אן חכם אלמקתדרין ענדה הו מא פעל בפרעון וקומה אד'
קאל לה הפץ עברות אפך. הו שביה במא פסרנא וינער ייי. אנה בדדהם. ת'ם
קאל וראה כל גאה והשפילהו. וכד'אך פעל בהם ספלהם תחת אלמא. ת'ם
אלפעל אלב' ראה כל גאה הכניעהו. הו אלאד'לאל וכד'אך נאלהם ויאמר מצ'
אנוסה וג' . ואלפעל אלג' והדך רשעים תחתם. הו אלהד ואלכסר כך' ההונא
תרעץ אויב. תהרס קמיך. ואלד' טמנם בעפר יחד. הו קו' ההנא תבלעמו ארץ.
[ב, דף 3א] וכל ד'לך כאן פי אלבחר לקו' פניהם חבוש בטמון. ואלחבס פמנסוב
אלי אלבחר כ'ק' יונה סוף חבוש לראשי. וכאן קד קדם קבל הד'א אן מן פעל
באלגאים הד ׄה אלד' אפעאל צאר הו אלמסמא גאה כך' עדה נא גאון וגבה והוד
והדר תלבש. פוצף פאעל הד'ה בד' אוצאף נט'יר אלד ׄ אפעאל והי גאון וגבה
והוד והדר. וכד'אך סבח אבאונא למא אנתקם אללה מן אלמקתדרין קאלו כי
גאה גאה.

By saying at the beginning *az*, which we interpreted "at
that time," he meant to say that the praise of God should
be at any time according to that which is appropriate to
Him (at this particular time). This concept and its
explanation, is in accordance with what we have said
before, namely that when He has mercy He is called
merciful, and when He takes revenge He is called
vengeful, and the like. So also at this particular time, since
He showed His great power they called him All Powerful,
as it says "Because He is most powerful."
The meaning of *iqtidār* in this pericope is unlike [its
meaning in] other pericopes, because Pharaoh had said
"Who is the Lord." (Ex. 5:2) Scripture has not described
anybody as having said a thing like this. It is thus the
extreme limit of pretentiousness. Therefore the owner of
power applied His power on them [i.e., the Egyptians] and
destroyed them. From the description that God quoted to
Job we know that the sentence of the pretentious [or: most
haughty, arrogant] in His eyes is that which He carried out
with Pharaoh and his people, since He said: "Scatter wide
your raging anger." (Job 40:11) This is similar to our

interpretation [or: translation] of "But the Lord hurled the Egyptians into the sea," (Ex. 14:27) namely that He dispersed[41] them. Further He said [to Job] "See every proud man and bring him low," (Job 40:11) and indeed He lowered [or: depressed] them under the water.[42] "See every proud man and humble him" (ib.:12) refers to "And the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians.'" (Ex. 14:25) "And bring them down where they stand" (Job 40:12) refers to "Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the foe," (Ex.15:6) and also "In Your great triumph You break Your opponents." (ib.:7) "Bury them all in the earth" (Job 40:13) refers to "The earth swallowed them." (Ex. 15:12) "Hide their faces in obscurity" (Job 40:13) refers to "Weeds twined around my head" (Jonah 2:6). He said before that [in that passage of Job] that whoever acts towards the pretenders [of power] in this way is called himself powerful, as it says "Deck yourself now with grandeur[43] and eminence; Clothe yourself in glory and majesty." (Job 40:10) He described the one who does this with four descriptions, in accordance with the four actions [mentioned above], namely grandeur, eminence, glory and majesty. Likewise our forefathers praised God when He took His revenge from the pretenders of power and said "for He has triumphed gloriously." (Ex.15:1)

According to this interpretation *iqtidār* can indicate either real capacity or a presumed or imagined one. An important element in this passage is that Saadya relates Pharaoh's vices, and with

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[41] This is somewhat odd. In the extant printed version of Saadya's translation the hurling is rendered *gharraqahum* = He drowned them (as he does also in his translation of Ps. 136:15, in the context of the punishment inflicted on the Egyptians in the Red Sea). It seems then that the interpretation mentioned by Saadya must have been included in his commentary. The Hebrew verb *hafeṣ* in the verse from Job Saadya indeed rendered by Arabic *baddada*=disperse.

[42] I found the use of *SFL* 2 perf. in the *al-Munjid* only; Lane gives the *maṣdar* with the same meaning.

[43] Heb. *gā'ōn*; Saadya translates this word in Job by *qudra*=power, capability, capacity.

special emphasis his arrogance, to a general model of the fate of all *muqtadirūn* (haughty, arrogant persons). The model has also another important element, typical to Saadya, namely a symmetrical juxtaposition: the arrogance of the pretenders, as opposed to the true power of God, Who consequently takes His revenge from them. God revealed this model to Job certainly prior to the scene on the Red Sea, and Moses recorded this revelation at that time.[44] The immediate implementation of the model was on the Red Sea, because Pharaoh was in his time the embodiment of ultimate arrogance. The model also includes a mirror image, as it were, of the opposite entity of the pretenders of power, that is God, who is the real omnipotent, and who is described there in appropriate terms before the description of the pretenders. God is the only one capable of inflicting on the pretenders the punishment that actually befell Pharaoh. The praise of "our forefathers" was directed to God for destroying all *muqtadirūn* (haughty, arrogant persons). The model could certainly be seen as a pre-figuration of the fate of Pharaoh, and all future embodiments of ultimate arrogance.

The second part of the model, with additional comments about the relation between arrogance of Israel's oppressors and Israel's redemption, is Saadya's commentary on Ex. 15:21. This verse includes a repetition of the first verse of the Song on the Sea (the trigger of his first exposition) from the mouth of Miriam, Moses' sister. This time Saadya associates the commented verse, and in particular the phrase *gā'ō gā'ā* with an eschatologically charged passage in Is. 2, where several

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[44] According to Saadya's remarks on the chronology of Job in his comments on Job 1:1 (ed. Qāfiḥ, 24, in Goodman's English translation, 152), he accepts the Rabbinic view, namely that Job lived in the time of the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt, and that Moses recorded God's revelation of the book.

occurrences of derivatives of *G'H/Y/W* are found (see Appendix). Saadya analyzes the various biblical expressions used in this chapter to describe human pride and arrogance as referring to several different aspects of this characteristic, notably of rulers like kings, and the specific meaning of *iqtidār* in this context, as follows:[45]

> The cause for repeating *gā'ō gā'ā*,[46] is (to say that) as He excelled in power over the pretenders of majesty [*al-qawm al-muta'aẓẓimīn*] in the first place, so will He excel them and overpower them [*yata'aẓẓam wa-yaqtadir 'alayhim*] in the future. This is what the prophet said "For the Lord of Hosts has ready a day against all that is proud" etc.; "Against all the cedars of Lebanon"; "Against every soaring tower"; "Against all the ships of Tarshish." (Is. 2:12–13, 15–16) He counted in these verses nine kinds of human pride [*iqtidār*]: the first three "proud, arrogant and lofty." [*gē'e, rām, nissā*. 12] These indicate a man's pride of himself. *Gē'e* indicates his pride in his power and might, as it is said of the invading enemy "From the wicked who despoil me . . . Their hearts closed to pity,

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[45] The passage was first published by Ratzaby in his edition of Saadya's commentary on Isaiah, 162 (Heb. translation, 260, with important references to some Rabbinic sources of Saadya's comments), assuming from the discussion of the verses from Is. 2 that the passage belongs to the commentary on that book. The section dealing with the verse in Ex. alone has been published again by Ratzaby in his ed. of Saadya on Ex., 291 (Heb. translation, 64) as though it were a quotation from the commentary on Isaiah. However, even from the first publication it was clear that the passage belongs to Saadya's commentary on Exodus. This became even clearer from the second publication, where the fragment of the commentary on Ex. 15:21–22 starts exactly where the fragment of the assumed commentary on Isaiah breaks off. Long comments on verses or sections from entirely different parts of the Bible than the verses at hand, and binding them together, is a typical feature of Saadya's exegetical style (as well as the style of some of his contemporaries), as has been clearly shown in the above quoted exposition on Ex. 15:1 with respect to Job 40.

[46] I.e., after having said it already in Ex. 15:1.

they mouth arrogance." (Ps. 17:9–10) And [it is said] also "He runs at Him defiantly[47]" etc. (Job 15:26). *Rām* indicates pride of his good look and beauty, as it is said: "Because you towered high in stature, and thrust your top up among the leafy trees, and you were arrogant in your height" (Ez. 31:10). Concerning *nissā*, it is aimed at him who boasts [*ta'azzama*] of his wisdom and devices, as it is said about Adonijah regarding his use of stratagems "Now Adonijah son of Haggith went about boasting, 'I will be king.'" (1 Ki. 1:5) Scripture combined together these three kinds and said of them "So that it is brought low" (Is. 2:12), that is God will lower those who said such things and boasted [*ta'azzaza*] of them, as it says "A man's pride will humiliate him." (Prov. 29:23) God did not say "I will lower[48] him," but said "he will be brought low" [i.e.] lowered by himself.

He then counted in the second verse two other kinds of pride: "Against all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and stately," to indicate those who boast of their kingdom, as it says "Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon," (Ez. 31:3) because kings used to be so entitled. The end of the verse "And all the oaks of Bashan" (Is. 2:13) indicates him who is proud of his farms, trees and animals. "Oaks" is aimed at trees, while "Bashan" may be aimed at animals, those of which who are in the Bashan are fatter and stronger, as it says "And rams of the breed of Bashan and he-goats," (Deut. 32:14) "mighty ones of Bashan encircled me," (Ps. 22:13) "you cows of Bashan on the hills of Samaria." (Am. 4:1) In the third verse he counted two other kinds: "Against every soaring tower," indicating him who boasts of his father and family, because clans and families are compared to towers, as it says "Where is one who could count [all these] towers?" (Is. 33:18). The end of the verse (2:15) is "and every mighty wall" is directed against him who boasts of his dwellings and castles and his other edifices.

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[47] The posture of the enemy is the allusion to arrogance, although the latter is not mentioned in any way in the verse.

[48] Or: humiliate.

In the fourth verse he counted the remaining two kinds: "Against all the ships of Tarshish," indicating him who boasts of his money, because the ships of Tarshish used to carry gold, as it says "Once every three years, the Tarshish fleet came in, bearing gold and silver." (1 Ki 10:22) "All pleasant pictures"[49] indicates him who relies on idols and divination arrows and draws strength from them, as it says "You shall not place figured stones in your land," (Lev. 26:1) "You shall destroy all their figured objects." (Nu. 33:52) He called it "pleasant" because its worshipper desires it, as it says "Truly, you shall be shamed because of the terebinths you desired" (Is. 1:29); [they did so] although they [the terebinths] did not deserve it.

Having described all these nine kinds he retreated to the six of which there was no mention of humiliation through lowering and weakening, and after having said about the *gē'e* [of v. 12] "Then man's haughtiness shall be humbled," [v. 17] and about the *rām* [of v. 12] "and the pride of man brought low," [v. 17] then he said "and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day", that is He alone is the powerful and mighty [*al-muqtadir al-muta'azziz*]. And the righteous will be strengthened by Him, as it says "to [the name of the Lord] the righteous man runs and is safe"[50] (Prov. 18:10).

In this long exposition of human arrogance and pride, supported and buttressed in Saadya's usual manner with proof texts for each and every statement, the scope of *QDR* 8 covers all possible manifestations of pride of physical power: corporeal strength and look, craftiness, kingdom and landed estates, noble lineage and impressive structures, precious belongings, idols and means of divination. It should be noted that while in the first

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[49] So the King James Version; the old Jewish Publication Society has "delightful imageries"; *Tanakh* has here: "gallant barks"; The two former ones seem preferable because Saadya plays here with the Heb. root *ḤMD*, to desire, covet.

[50] Heb. *nisgav* is the pun in this case: when said before of God it is translated exalted, in the sense of inaccessible, which of the righteous man means safe.

part of the model the historical fate of Pharaoh was the focus, in this part the characteristics of the person(s) of the future last arrogant oppressor(s) are the focus. His, or their, fate is not necessarily destruction, as was Pharaoh's, but rather humiliation. In both cases the end of the process is identical: The entire world recognizes who is the real *muqtadir*, namely God. His faithful followers are then duly rewarded.

C

It is appropriate, for comparative purposes, to mention here the usage of *QDR* 8 by some Mediaeval Jewish authors, or their views with respect to Hebrew *G'H/Y/W*. First, David b. Abraham al-Fāsī (the tenth century Karaite lexicographer of Jerusalem, probably a younger contemporary of Saadya).[51] For a number of nouns derived from this Hebrew root al-Fāsī gives two Arabic equivalents: *'aẓama wa-'qtidār*;[52] both nouns may denote either "majesty and pride/ability/power" or "haughtiness and arrogance." He then goes on to discuss a number of occurrences of the derivations of Hebrew *G'H/Y/W*. In the course of this discussion he uses a few times the verbal noun *iqtidār*, mostly with a positive or neutral connotation; so he makes the generalization that all derivations of the word *ga'ōn* have the meaning of capacity and power/pride.[53] al-Fāsī does

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[51] S.L. Skoss, *The Hebrew-Arabic dictionary of the Bible known as Kitāb Jāmi' al-Alfāẓ (Agron)*, I-II (New Haven: Yale University Press, Yale Oriental Series, Researches XX–XXI, 1936–45). This edition represents al-Fāsī's short recension of his work. Skoss described the long version in his introductions, al-Fāsī, I:xcv–cii; II:cl–clx.

[52] I:285:6.

[53] Ibid., 286:26: *kull mā taṣarrafa min lughat ga'ōn wa-huwa qudra wa-'qtidār*.

not use the participle *muqtadir* to denote arrogant people; for this meaning he uses *muta'aẓẓim*.[54]

With regard to the usage of *QDR* 8 with a negative connotation, which is amply documented in Saadya's works, it may be interesting to note that in Baḥya Ibn Paqūda's long discussion of humility (in fact an entire treatise), in his major ethical work *Duties of the Hearts*,[55] there is not one occurrence of *iqtidār*. In this context the term for arrogance or haughtiness is the traditional *takabbur*.

Isaac Ibn Ghiyāth (of Spain, d. 1089, thus a fellow countryman and a possible contemporary of Baḥya), wrote a Judeo-Arabic commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes. In this work I have (so far) come across one occurrence of *muqtadir*, indicating the arrogant and ignorant (ruler) who acts through screaming and shouting (*bi-ṣiyāḥihi wa-ṣurākhihi*), as opposed to *ahl al-ḥikma*, the wise men who act with subtlety and calm (*bi-'l-lutf wa-'l-sukūn*).[56]

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[54] Ibid. 20.

[55] In Arabic *al-Hidāya ilā farā'iḍ al-qulūb*; the original Judeo-Arabic text has been published twice: by A.S. Yahuda (Leiden, 1912), and J. Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1973) (with a Hebrew translation). The treatise on humility is the sixth, and is found respectively on 259–81; 278–304.

[56] The text was published by J. Qāfiḥ, *Saadya's Commentaries on the Five Scrolls* (with Hebrew translation), (Jerusalem, 1962), 157–296. Contrary to Qāfiḥ, Ibn Ghiyāth's authorship of the commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes has long been recognized by most scholars, see e.g. M. Steinschneider, *Arabische Literatur der Juden* (Frankfurt a/M, 1902), 136 (§90ª), 343; G. Vajda, *Deux commentaires karaïtes sur l'Ecclésiaste* (Leiden, 1971), 1, 181. The passage in question is found on ibid., 266:35–37, *ad* Eccl. 9:17. Qāfiḥ, in his Hebrew translation of the commentary, used a correct equivalent of the Arabic *muqtadir*, which may reflect a living tradition of Saadya's usage among the Jews of Yemen. Dr. Haggit Mittelman submitted a Ph.D. Thesis on this commentary at the Hebrew University. In it, she discussed at length the question of the commentary's authorship. She proved

Relevant to these brief comparative remarks is the fact that Saadya's usage reappears in Spain at the end of the thirteenth century, in a Judeo-Arabic commentary on the Rabbinic ethical tractate *The Sayings of the Fathers* (*Avot*), authored by a judge of Toledo named Israel Israeli. The longest surviving manuscript of this work is a late copy, written in a rather popular register of Arabic.[57] In connection with the saying ascribed to Rabbi Levitas in *Avot* 4:4, Israeli wrote a long homily in praise of humility (*tawāḍu'*). In this homily several occurrences of derivations of *QDR* 8 are found, all of them indicating pride, vanity, arrogance.[58]

D

In Saadya's usage of *iqtidār*/*muqtadir* as he explains it *ad* Ex. 15:1, and in that context *ad* Job 40:10–12[59] and Is. 2,[60] he

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it beyond doubt on philological grounds, as well as on basis of the contents, that the author cannot be Saadya.

[57] Ms. Oxford, Bodl. Opp. Add. Q126 (see the description in the *Catalogue* of Neubauer-Cowley, no. 2534). This commentary is the subject of a Ph.D. Thesis submitted at the Hebrew University by Dr. Naḥem Ilan.

[58] Fols. 103b–110b, edited in Ilan's thesis (with Hebrew translation), 389–411. If I may divulge here a personal experience, it was this text and the difficulty which Dr. Ilan encountered in finding a suitable translation to the derivations of *QDR* 8 that first draw my attention to the fact that the meaning of arrogance and the like is not documented in the dictionaries. Having been accustomed to Saadya's usage, due to repeated readings of his works over the years, I was not aware of this lacuna in the dictionaries, and see above, n. 56.

[59] It is noteworthy that the association of Ex. 15:1 with Job 40:10–12 is found already in *Exodus Rabba* 23:13 (ed. Wilno; English translation: *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus*, S.M. Lehrman, trans. (London, 1961), 291). This work predates Saadya (more precisely ch. 15–52, see M.D. Herr, "Exodus Rabbah," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6 (Jerusalem, 1971), coll. 1067–1068), and could have been available to him. The trend of the comments there is however entirely different.

[60] Which he interprets only here and not in his commentaries *ad loc.*

follows the pattern of Qur'ānic usage with respect to adjectives such as *takabbur*/*mutakabbir*, *jabbār*. In other words he assumes that in Biblical Hebrew, as in Arabic, one and the same noun, or adjective, can have a laudatory connotation when referred to God, or a derogatory, pejorative one when referred to humans. So the adjective *mutakabbir* is found in the Qur'ān in reference to God (59:33), where it expresses reverence to His majesty and power, so much so that quite early it has found its way into the lists of *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* (the "Names Most Beautiful," see above) and has become one of His attributes,[61] while in other instances it is referred to humans (e.g., 40:27, 35, 76),[62] who, when accused of it, are threatened with severe punishments. The same is true for the adjective *jabbār*. When applied to God (59:33) it indicates His absolute and powerful government, and it too has become one of *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* and of His attributes,[63] and when referred to humans (e.g., 40:35) it denotes oppressors or physically strong people who think that their power entitles them to act arbitrarily.

We know from Saadya's works that he was probably well aware of, even rather closely acquainted with, the Arabic nomenclature of the Divine Attributes in general, the meaning of the ones discussed here in particular, and the problematic of the relationship between their usage as Divine Attributes, or as attributes of human vices. If this is so, if the differentiation between Divine Attributes and human vices was so clear to

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[61] D. Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam*, 212–3 and *passim*.

[62] In all cases it is approximately synonymous with the 10th form.

[63] D. Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam*, 246–50 and *passim*; note that Gimaret, who follows the classification of the attributes in the sources of Tradition and Kalām, discusses both *mutakabbir* and *jabbār* in the same chapter as *muqtadir*, namely the chapter on God's power ("XIII: Tout-puissant").

Saadya, he certainly knew that if he wanted to express in his translations and commentaries the idea of human arrogance as opposed to Divine Omnipotence he had at his disposal readily available terms in Arabic, mainly *mutakabbir*. What was it then that caused him to invent as it were the usage of *QDR* 8 and to prefer it consistently in the particular meaning with respect to humans? It seems that the answer to this question lies beyond linguistic, stylistic or didactic considerations, that it should be sought in the background of political history of Saadya's time and its possible ideological implications.

Let us turn back briefly to the twofold model of past redemption as forecast according to Job 40, and future redemption as forecast according to Is. 2. As I have already remarked above, in the first part of the model the historical fate of Pharaoh was the focus, while in the second part the characteristics of the person(s) of the future last arrogant oppressor(s) are the focus. Now, it seems that these characteristics may agree precisely with the 'Abbāsid rulers. They were certainly proud of their strength, kingdom and landed estates, noble lineage (relatives of Muḥammad), impressive structures (Baghdād,[64] Samarrā') and precious belongings. Even the mention of idols and means of divination may suit Saadya's image of Arab princes. Saadya, like many of his Jewish contemporaries, believed that the Muslims kept idols locked up in the Ka'ba.[65] Also his reference to divination fits his image of

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[64] See below, n. 74.

[65] See my remarks in "Fragments of Daniel al-Qūmisī's commentary on the Book of Daniel as a historical source," *Henoch* 13 (1991), 269, n. 29, with references to previous publications on the Karaite parallels. Saadya recorded the tradition about the idols in the Ka'ba in his Commentary on Dan., see the printed edition by J. Qāfiḥ (Jerusalem, 1981), 207, ll. 21–6 (comments on Dan. 11:38); for an English translation of the passage see A.J. Cameron,

the Arabs. In Saadya's Introduction to Daniel, which is a most detailed statement against divination in general and astrology in particular, divination by arrows is mentioned together with inspection of liver and similar techniques as the lowest degree of the art.[66] Saadya quotes in this context Ez. 21:26, the only mention in the Bible of divination by arrows. The person mentioned in that verse as engaged in it is the king of Babylon, whom Saadya could have easily identified with the 'Abbāsids. He could likewise have good knowledge of the actual status of divination by arrows in the tradition and poetry of the Arabs. The second part of the model may thus fit rather well the 'Abbāsid rulers in general terms. It seems however that some more particular terms may be indicated on this point.

Saadya's commentary on the first half of Ex., from which the comments on Ex. 15:1,21 discussed above are cited, was written in the 920's,[67] during the reign of the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-

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"Saadya Gaon's Arabic Version of the Book of Daniel" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Utrecht, 1988), 381–2.

[66] Ms. St. Petersburg, Antonin, 476, fol. 3a:12–14, 2a:7–13 (=Cambridge, T-S Ar. 33.33, b:12–13, a:19–22). See now my "Saadya's Introduction to Daniel: An Essay on the Calculation of the End of Days according to Prophecy Against the Speculations of Astrologers and Magicians" [in Hebrew], *Sefunot* 23 (2003), 13–59 and the revised version in English "Saadia's Introduction to Daniel: Prophetic Calculation of the End of Days vs. Astrological and Magical Speculation," *Aleph* 4 (2004), 11–87. This text clearly shows Saadya's close acquaintance with techniques of divination current in his days and the respective Arabic terminology.

[67] This dating is based on the following consideration: Long fragments that survived of Saadya's commentary on the first half of Ex., i.e., ch.1–20, do not contain references to any of his writings (e.g., *Amānāt* or *Commentary on Sefer Yeṣira*, the great works of the early 930's), while the commentary on the second half of Ex., long fragments of which have recently been published by Ratzaby in 1998, contain several such references.

Muqtadir that lasted for twenty-four years (908–932).[68] He ascended the throne[69] when Saadya was a young man of 26, and terminated his rule (actually he was assassinated) when Saadya was at the height of his public office. The regnal title[70] of al-Muqtadir appears to deserve a brief attention. It is noteworthy that al-Muqtadir was the first 'Abbāsid Caliph who had chosen, had been given, a regnal title that in its abbreviated form was one of the "Names Most Beautiful" which should be applied to God only.[71] The regnal titles assumed by the 'Abbasids reflected their aspirations, or may be pretensions to possess divine powers. However these powers were recognized to be "passive," as it were, that is the bearers of the titles were thought to be essentially transmitters of divine powers.[72] E. Tyan, while agreeing that these titles were an innovation of the 'Abbasids, distinguished between two stages in the development of the

[68] See on him K.V. Zettterstéen - C.E. Bosworth, "al-Muḳtadir bi-'llāh, Abu 'l-Faḍl Dja'far," *EI*², 7:541–2. The deterioration of political stability, internal security and economic conditions, as described there, from which minorities like the Jews were always the first to suffer, nurtured the Jews' messianic expectations and Saadya's frustration with life in Exile.

[69] As a boy of eight years of age.

[70] This term was coined by B. Lewis, "Regnal Titles of the First Abbasid Caliphs," *Dr. Zakir Husain Presentation Volume* (New Delhi, 1968), 13–22. I am indebted to my colleague Prof. Amikam Elad, for his kind advice on this point. The Arabic term for the regnal names is *al-alqāb al-khilāfiyya/al-sulṭāniyya*. See also on nicknames in Arabic, and in particular regnal and other honorific titles, C. Bosworth, "Laḳab", *EI* ², 7:618–31, and esp. 620–1 on the regnal names of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs.

[71] The name al-Hādī, given to the fourth 'Abbāsid Caliph (785–786), is found in the Qur'ān (13:7) as referring to messengers of God.

[72] See A. Abel, "Le Khalife, présence sacrée," *Studia Islamica* 7 (1957), 29–45. Abel argues that the regnal titles of the 'Abbasids reflect their total reliance on God. He is of the opinion that the regnal titles of the Fāṭimid Caliphs reflect a different conception, namely that the Caliph has a higher, more active part in the management of the world.

regnal titles of the 'Abbasid Caliphs: In the first, from al-Manṣūr down to al-Ma'mūn (754–833), the titles were supposed to reflect the merits of the Caliph's person; in the second stage, starting with al-Muʿtaṣim bi-'llāh (reigned 833–842), the titles became construct compounds, of which the first component was an adjective that conveyed some sense of reliance, and it was connected by a preposition to the second component, that was always Allāh. Tyan opined that the second stage represented a distinct change in the religious and theocratic character of the Caliphate. The titles were given to the prospective Caliphs when their position as crown princes had been established. The complex titles of the second stage were abbreviated in daily use by omitting the second component, and so the connection of the Caliph to the Divine, and his reliance on it, became vague.[73]

In his usage of *QDR* 8 Saadya goes beyond the goal of philological accuracy and aims at conveying an ideological message.[74] He was well aware of the aspirations and pretensions of the 'Abbāsids, and of the gap between those and the actual situation under their rule. But beyond that he wanted to make a statement that there is only one true *muqtadir*, namely the One

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[73] E. Tyan, *Institutions du droit public musulman: I. Le Califat* (Paris, 1954), 485–6; see also Abel (in the previous note), 39, on the ceremonies of the proclamation of the regnal title, for which special poems would be composed. Abel refers there to a description of one such ceremony found in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. C. Barbier de Meinard (Paris, 1873), 7:306. It describes the occasion in which al-Mutawakkil (reigned 847–861) received the oath of allegiance to his three (!) sons as crown princes, and a poet named al-Sulamī proclaimed their regnal titles.

[74] It seems that this is not the only case in which Saadya tries to convey ideological messages through his translations or usage of particular nomenclature. For another example see my "Jerusalem in Early Medieval Jewish Bible Exegesis" in L.I. Levine, ed., *Jerusalem: its sanctity and centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York, 1999), 451–2.

who really possesses majesty and power. Saadya also knew that while assuming titles that were Divine Attributes the ʿAbbāsids and their followers could hide behind the claim that the full regnal title of the incumbent on the ʿAbbāsid throne was al-Muqtadir bi-'llāh, and that the component *bi-'llāh* was dropped only in popular, or every day, usage. But for Saadya the very existence of such an abbreviation was grave enough. For a human being to be entitled with a Divine Attribute was in Saadya's view the utmost manifestation of arrogance and vanity, probably tantamount to blasphemy. Therefore he chose this attribute to express the Biblical idea of these vices.

I wonder whether it would be too farfetched to venture the following suggestion: Saadya saw in Pharaoh the personification, or utmost manifestation of arrogance and vanity in ancient history, as is evident from his exposition on Ex.15:1, in which he showed how this characteristic of Pharaoh is fully portrayed, and perhaps also prefigured, in Job 40:11–13. The latter verses may also be a prefiguration of the ʿAbbāsids as the personification, or utmost manifestation of arrogance and vanity. If it is accepted that Pharaoh clearly heralded in his behavior the first redemption of Israel, it may be reasonably concluded that al-Muqtadir has to be seen as heralding the ultimate redemption of Israel.[75] It is thus most probable that the consistent usage of

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[75] In my "Prognostic *Midrash* in the Works of Seʿadya Gaon as Exemplified in his Introduction to the Commentary on the Song of David (2Sam. 22)", [in Hebrew], in E. Fleischer et al, eds., *Meʾah Sheʿarim - Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky* (Jerusalem, 2001), 1–19, I pointed at a similar case where Saadya draws a parallel between historical circumstances in the time of David and the circumstances at the time of ultimate redemption. Accordingly, the historical narrative of the Bible serves as a prefiguration of the ultimate redemption; the man depicted in 2Sam 21:20, in his behavior, is the model, according to Saadya, for the last king of

QDR 8 in renditions of biblical Hebrew *G'H/Y/W* entails an eschatological message.

Conclusions

The dictionaries of Arabic lack a range of meanings of *QDR* 8 in theological contexts. Their explanations are based mainly on ancient poetry and the additional meaning found in theological works depends on the Qur'ānic usage of *QDR* 8.

   The present study is a contribution to the dictionary of Judeo-Arabic. In this vernacular one finds a meaning of *QDR* 8 not found in any other register of Arabic, which is dependent on Saadya's invention.

   Very often Saadya conveys subtle ideological messages in his translations, by means of sophisticated allusions. In these cases such allusions are made through a leading word in the language of the explicated biblical section. In the case in the present discussion the leading word is in the translation, namely *QDR* 8, and the subtle message is an eschatological one. But Saadya did not rely on the readers of his translations to decode the meaning of his allusions. In the extensive comments on Ex. 15 he gave them the key without which it might have been very difficult to identify the eschatological message with its very concrete consequences.

Ishmaʿel. A similar case is in the Introduction to Daniel (Ms. St. Petersburg, Antonin, 476, fol. 3a:20–22[=Cambridge, T-S Ar. 33.33, b:15–16, above, n. 66]), where Saadya says that the announcement of the fall of Babylon and the advent of Persia in Is. 45 is merely an example (*namūdhaj*) of the principle that every thing is known in advance and carried out by God, since already before the announcement of the imminent kingdom of Cyrus in Is. 45:1, God said "[I] who said to the deep 'Be dry, I will dry up your flood'" (Is. 44:27), hinting at the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. That redemption thus constitutes a prefiguration of subsequent redemptions.

Appendix

A. *List of biblical verses where Saadya rendered derivatives of Hebrew G'H/Y/W by derivatives of Arabic QDR 8*
(The list includes only cases in which the derivatives refer to God or humans. The Arabic equivalents of Heb. *G'H/Y/W* are printed in bold. Verses discussed in the article are marked with an asterisk)

Exodus
15:7 וּבְרֹב גְאוֹנך **אקתדארך** ובכת'רה' (of God's power; this is the reading of the printed version, as well as Ms. Russian National Library [henceforth RNL], Evr. II [=Firkovitch II], C001, fol. 146b, which is a very old copy. dated 1009[76]; a variant reading British Library, Ms. Or. 8658 is **קדרתך**; it may be the oldest version, and it should not be excluded that Saadya himself made the change when he separated the translation from the commentary, which accompanies it in the latter ms.).

Leviticus
26:19 גְאוֹן עֻזְּכֶם עזכם **אקתדאר** (of the sinners of Israel)

Deuteronomy
33:29 גָאוֹתֶך ואשר חרב **ואקתדארך** וסיפך (God is Israel's power).

Isaiah
2:10, 19, 21 הֲדַר גאונו **ואקתדארה** ובהאיה (of God's majesty). (Yefet, Ms. RNL Evr. I:568 **אקתדארה** בהג'ה')

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[76] On this manuscript and its relationship to later editions see now Blau, "Saadya Gaon's Pentateuch" etc. (above, n. 2).

Is. 2:12 עלי כל **מקתדר** ורפיע :על כל גאה ורם (see above, the translation and analysis of Saadya's comments on Ex. 15:21). (Yefet, *ibid.*, עלי כל **שאמך'** מקתדר)

9:8 **באקתדאר** ועט'ם קלב :בגאוה ובג'דֶל לבב (of the arrogance of Ephraim). (Yefet, *ibid.*, **באקתדאר** ובכֻבר אלקלב)

13:11 **קדרה'** אלוקחין **ואקתדאר** אלאבטאל :גאון זדים וגאות עריצים (of the wicked). (Yefet, Ms. BL, fol. 8a; Ms. RNL Evr. I:568 **אקתדאר** אלוקחין **ושמך'** אלמרהבין)

16:6* אד' סמענא :שָׁמַענו גאון מואב גֵא מְאֹ׳ד גאָנתו וגאוֹנו וְעֶברָתוֹ לא כן בַּדָּיו **אקתדאר** מואב **מקתדרא** ג'דא **ואקתדארה וקדרתה** ועברתה ליס ד'לך מן קדרה (of Moab, probably of their pretentiousness; four occurrences in one verse). (Yefet, Ms. Yevr. I:568 סמענא **אקתדאר** מואב אנה **אקתדאר** פי גאיה' מא יכון **שמכ'ה ואקתדארה** וחלטתה ליס כד'י מקדארה)

23:9 **אקתדאר** כל סראתהא :גאון כל צבי (of the dignitaries of Tyre).

25:11 **אקתדארהם** :והשפיל גאָנתו ויצ'ע (of Moab's arrogance/pretensions)

28:1 אלויל לדוי תאג :הוי עטרת גאות שכורי אפרים . . . אשר על ראש גיא שמנים **אלאקתדאר** סכארי אל אפרים . . . אלתי עלי רווס **אלמקתדריין** באלדהן (of the arrogant drunkards of Ephraim)[77]. Similar translation in v.3.

60:15 **אקתדאר** אלדהר :גאון עולם (of Israel's power in the Messianic Age). (So also Yefet, Ms. Yevr. I:569)

Psalms

10:2 אלט'אלם **באקתדארה** :בגאות רָשָׁע (of the wicked). (Yefet p. 45 **באקתדאר** אלפאסק)

17:10 **באקתדאר** :בגאות (of the wicked).

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[77] Note that Saadya takes the view that גיא is the plural of גאה; in his comment, ed. Ratzaby, 182 (Heb. 285), he did so according to the context.

31:19 באקתדאר ואזרא :בגאוה ובוז (of the slanderers' language).
(Yefet p. 57 'באלאקתדאר ואלחקירה)

31:24 ד'וי אלאקתדאר :עْשֶׂה גאוה (of the arrogant). (Yefet p. 57 פאעל
(אלאקתדאר

(באקתדארה מן אקתדארה :בגאוَנתו (of God). (Yefet p. 91 46:4

59:13 באקתדארהם :בגאונם (of the wicked).(In all four following
cases Yefet's translation is identical to that of Saadya.)

73:6 אלאקתדאר :גאוה (of the wicked).

94:2 אלמקתדרין :גאים (of the wicked).

140:6 אלמקתדרין :גאים (of the wicked).

Proverbs

*8:13 אלזהו ואלאקתדאר :גֵּאָה וגאון (of the wicked) (Yefet, Ms. Paris,
fol. 36b, אלאקתדאר ואלכבר)

14:3 עצא אלאקתדאר :חْטֶר גאוה (of the wicked). (Yefet, Ms. BL, fol.
[numbers of folios are illegible in the microfilm]; Ms. Paris
fol. 73b קצْיב אלאקתדאר)

15:25 בית אלמקתדרין :בית גאים (of the wicked) (Yefet, Ms. Paris fol.
86a has the same.)

*16:18–19 לפני שבר גאון ולפני כשלון גֹّבَה רוח: טוב שְׁפַל-רוחַ את עֲנָוִים מֵחַלֵּק
עאקבה' אלאקתדאר אלכסר ועאקבה' אלכבר אלחטיטה: שלל את- גּَאִים
אלמקתדרין מע אלّذשעין כّיר מן תקסם אלסלב מע אלתואצّע (of the
wicked)

*29:23 גَّאֲוַת אדם: אקתדאר אלאדמי

Job

*22:29; 33:17 גֵנֶה: אקתדאר.

35:12 כד'אך הם יצרכّון הנאך שם יצעקו ולّא יענה מפני גאון רעים is translated
מן קבל אקתדאר מן הם אשר מנהם פלّא יגיבהם. Those who have the
characteristic of *iqtidār* are clearly depicted here as evil
beings.

37:4 בקול גאונו :בצות **אקתדארה** (said of God). (Yefet, Ms. BL, fol. 69a, has the same.)

*40:10 where גאון seems to have a "positive" sense it is translated by קדרה; in v. 11 גֵאֶה is translated ד'ו מקדרה', apparently also in the sense of exaggerated self esteem; in v. 12 גֵאֶה is translated מקתדר, in apposition to the wicked (אלט'אלמין).

Daniel (Aramaic)

4:34 וְדִי מַהְלְכִין בְּגֵוָה יָכִל לְהַשְׁפָּלָה: ומן יסיר בין ידיה **באקתדאר** יקדר אן יחטה (of God's power to "humble those who behave arrogantly")

b. List of biblical verses where Saadya rendered derivatives of Heb. G'H/Y/W by other derivatives of Arab. QDR

Deuteronomy

33:26 בגאוָתו: **בקדרתה** (of God).

Isaiah

12:5 גֵאוּת עשה: צנע **קדרה'** (of God)[78].

13:3 עלִיזֵי גאוָתי: אבטאל **קדרתי** (of God; perhaps the power that He gives to His heroes).

13:19 גאון כשדים: אלכסדאניין **קדרה'** (of the power of Babylon). (Yefet Ms. BL, fol. 10 כסדים **אקתדאר**)

24:14 בגאון יי: אללה **בקדרה'** (of God).

26:10 גֵאות יי: אללה **קדרה'** (of God).

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[78] A detailed comment by Saadya on this verse is found ibid., 170 (Heb. 269).

Psalms

*47:5 קדרת יעקב :גאון יעקב (=the power of Jacob; Yefet, p. 93
באקתדאר יעקוב).

68:35 קדרתה :גאונָתו (of God). (Yefet p. 131 **אקתדארה**)

93:1 אלאקתדאר **אלקדרה'** לבאסה :גֵּאוּת לָבֵשׁ (of God). (Yefet p. 185
לֹאבֵס)

Job

10:16 **ובקדרה** :ויגאֶה (of God).

*Editions and mss. of translations and commentaries quoted in
this article*

Saadya

Exodus, commentary on, ed. Y. Ratzaby (with Heb. translation),
    Jerusalem 1998

Isaiah, translation of (following Derenbourg ed., Paris 1893) and
    [fragments of] commentary (separately), ed. Y. Ratzaby
    (with Heb. translation), Kiriat Ono 1993

Psalms, translation and commentary (with Heb. translation), ed.
    Y. Qāfiḥ, Jerusalem 1966

Proverbs, translation and commentary (with Heb. translation),
    ed. Y. Qāfiḥ, Jerusalem 1976

Job, translation and commentary (with Heb. translation), ed. Y.
    Qāfiḥ, Jerusalem 1973; English translation: L.E. Goodman,
    *The Book of Theodicy: Translation and Commentary on the
    Book of Job by Saadiah ben Joseph al-Fayyumi* (Translated

from the Arabic with a philosophic commentary), (Yale Judaica Series XXV), New Haven – London 1988

Yefet ben 'Eli

Isaiah, Ms. British Library, Or. 2548 (*Catalogue* no. 279); Ms. St. Petersburg, RNL, Evr. I:568–9 (copied 1503)

Psalms, translation only, ed. J.J.L. Bargès, Paris 1861 (numbers of verses may be different from the accepted ones, because the editor does not count the titles of the psalms.)

Proverbs, Ms. British Library, Or. 2553 (*Catalogue* no. 294); Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 292

Job, Ms. British Library, Or. 2552 (*Catalogue* no. 299)

LEXICOGRAPHY AND DIALECTOLOGY IN
SPANISH *MAQRE DARDEQE*

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Introduction

Maqre Dardeqe ("Instructor of Children," henceforth MD) is the title given in the Middle Ages to Hebrew dictionaries, which contain explanations in Hebrew of biblical roots, with accompanying glosses in different Jewish languages, religiolects, and varieties, such as Judeo-French, Judeo-Spanish and Yiddish. In addition, the Judeo-Italian and Judeo-Spanish versions have Judeo-Arabic glosses in them. These dictionaries were intended to promote a better understanding of the Scriptures for two reasons: First, pedagogy, for instructional purposes for young students who did not master biblical Hebrew and, second, for political and religious reasons, helping Jews to respond to Christians in the various theological polemics, which they conducted in the Middle Ages.

Another important reason for using these glossaries was the scarcity and great expense of vernacular translations of the Bible, which were accessible only to a limited readership. In an anonymous Ladino Bible glossary *Sefer Ḥeshek Shelomo*,

published in Venice, 1588, this problem is considered to be a major justification for publishing a small format glossary: "Some printed books of the *Miqra* started to appear in Hebrew and Spanish in recent years in Saloniki and Constantinople. Since they were so expensive, the poor could not buy any of them, let alone all of the *Miqra*."[1]

The first and best known MD dictionary is the Italian version[2] which was printed in Naples in 1488, in a period in which Jews played a salient role in the prosperous printing and publishing industry in this Italian town.[3] Although the volume was published in 1488, its composition can be dated earlier, probably to the end of the fourteenth century. The author or compiler of this dictionary seems to be Perez Trebot, as evident

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[1] See D.M. Bunis, "Translating from the Head and from the Heart: The Essentially Oral Nature of the Ladino Bible-Translation Tradition," *Sepharadica* 1 (*Hommage à Haïm Vidal Sephiha*) (1996), 338.

[2] There is abundant bibliography about the Italian MD, especially with respect to the Italian glosses. For a general study on the dictionary, see L. Cuomo, "Preliminari per una rivalutazione linguistica del *Maqré Dardeqé*," *Actes du XVIIe Congrès International de Linguistique et de Philologie Romances*. Tome V (Tübingen, 1988), 159–67. For studies that focus on the Italian glosses, see, for instance, G. Fiorentino, "The General Problems of the Judeo-Romance in the Light of the Maqre Dardeqe," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 42 (1951), 57–77; idem, "Note lessicali al Maqre Dardeqe," *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 29 (1937), 138–60; M. Schwab, "La Maqré Dardeqé," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 16 (1888), 253–68; 17 (1888), 111–24; and 17 (1888), 285–98. On the Arabic glosses of the Italian *Maqre Dardeqe*, see A. Schippers, "A Comment on the Arabic Words in the *Maqre Dardeqe*," '*Ever and 'Arav. Contacts between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times* (1998), XXVII–XLVI and O. Tirosh-Becker, "The Arabic Glosses in the Italian Version of *Maqre Dardeqe* – What is Their Nature?" [in Hebrew], *Italia* 9 (1990), 37–77.

[3] See J. Bloch, "Hebrew Printing in Naples," in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography,* ed. C. Berlin, 113–38 (reprint of *New York Public Library Bulletin* 46 [1942], 489–514) and D. Abulafia, "The Role of the Jews in the Cultural Life of the Aragonese Kingdom of Naples," *Gli Ebrei in Sicilia dal tardoantico al medioevo. Studi in onore di Mon. Benedetto Rocco a cura di Nicolò Bucaria* (Palermo, 1998), 35–53, esp. 47.

in an acrostic in the introductory poem, and a mention in an Oxford manuscript.[4] Perez Trebot lived in Catalonia until 1391 and then moved to France and later to Italy, probably because of the attacks on the Jews in Catalonia at that time.

The only copy of the Spanish version of MD is dated 1634 and it has been preserved in a manuscript form in Oxford.[5] Contrary to the Italian MD, the research carried out on this dictionary is very scarce.[6]

Both in the Italian and the Spanish MD we find first a biblical Hebrew root, followed by a translation into Judeo-Italian and Judeo-Spanish respectively, and then into Judeo-Arabic. The specific meanings of the biblical roots are documented with quotations from the Bible, occasional short explanations taken from the commentaries of Rashi and Radaq, as well as quotations from the Targumim by Yonathan and Onkelos.

Sometimes in the Spanish MD the Judeo-Arabic or the Judeo-Spanish translation is missing. The translation given in both ethnolects is usually very similar and reflects a highly interpretive nature rather than a literal or verbatim translation of the Hebrew term. Consider the following example:

Under the entry עגל we find, among other translations, the Judeo-Spanish ריינה (*reina*, "queen") and the Judeo-Arabic סלטאנה (*sulṭāna*, "queen") for עגלה, followed by the biblical citation of Jeremiah 46:20, עגלה יפהפיה מצרים. This verse literally means

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[4] Bodleian Library, Oxford: Canon. Or.24n. 1137f. 142. See Schippers, "Comment," XVIII.

[5] Bodlieian Library, Oxford: Ms. 1508 in Neubauer's classification (Hunt 218, Uri 487). See A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1886), 531.

[6] For a different study of the Arabic dialectology of the Spanish MD, see B. Hary and M. A. Gallego, "La versión Española de *Maqre Dardeqe*," in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1999), 57–64.

"Egypt is a beautiful heifer," however the MD translations reflect their adherence to the medieval Rabbinic interpretations, as Rashi, for example, has מלכות "kingdom."

If we take the dictionary as a whole, it remains unclear to which readership it was addressed or, in other words, it is not clear which Jewish community had Italian and Arabic as its spoken languages (for the Italian MD) or Spanish and Arabic (for the Spanish MD) at the time of their respective publication. In the former case, the Jewish communities of southern Italy, and more specifically of Sicily, have been pointed out as the most likely readership.[7]

Regarding the Judeo-Spanish/Judeo-Arabic version, it is sensible to think that it was in use among Sephardi Jewish communities in North Africa. These Jews, who spoke Spanish at the time of their expulsion from Spain in 1492, adopted Arabic as the language of their natural environment but probably kept Spanish until a later period.

As it was such an expensive process, a Ladino Bible was not published in North Africa until the nineteenth century, though there were some printed in parts of the Ottoman Empire. We assume, however, that glossaries such as Sefer Ḥeshek Shelomo or MD, that included Judeo-Spanish and (as in the case of MD) Judeo-Arabic glosses, were employed in the teaching of sacred texts, assisting in the oral translation, comprehension and studying of the Bible in schools, homes, and synagogues.

Maqre Dardeqe as a Lexicographical Work

If we compare MD with other previous lexicographical works, such as Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-'Uṣūl*, written in Judeo-Arabic in the first half of the eleventh century in al-Andalus, we observe

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[7] See Cuomo, "Preliminari," 162 and Tirosh-Becker, "Arabic Glosses," 41–5.

that MD shows many limitations in the classification of roots as well as in the translations given not only in Judeo-Arabic, but also in Judeo-Italian and Judeo-Spanish. The pedagogical purpose pointed out by previous research on MD (see Schippers 1998, 29), as the reason for classification of Hebrew lexemes under "wrong" roots is less clear in the Spanish MD, since it gives no indication of which is the correct root to look it up, contrary to the Italian MD.

Some instances of non-standard classification are עב ("cloud"), which appears under the root *'ayin-bet*, instead of *'ayin-waw-bet*; ציץ ("flower") under *tsade-tsade*, instead of *tsade-yod-tsade*; מאזנים ("scales") as coming from the root *mem-'aleph-zayin*, instead of *'aleph-zayin-nun*; תת ("give"), under the entry *tav-tav* instead of *nun-tav-nun;* and צאצאים ("offspring") as coming from the root *tsade-'aleph-he* instead of the quadriliteral *tsade-'aleph-tsade-'aleph* (see Appendix I).

Consider as well in the following example the more elaborated style in Ibn Janāḥ's analysis of the root סגר with the meaning of "gold":

> MD: ל"א אורו ובע' דהב כמו לא יותן סגור תחתיה וכן זהב סגור ועל שם זה נקרא סגור שמסגרים אותו "Another meaning (i.e., in Judeo-Spanish) is *oro* and in Arabic *dhahab* ("gold"), as in "It cannot be bartered for gold" (Job 28:15) and also "pure gold" (I Kings 6:20). This name designates gold that has been worked."

> Jonah ibn Janāḥ:[8] *wa-rubbama* לא יתן סגור תחתיה *'isman li-l-dhahab 'stidlālan 'alayhi min qawlihi* ולא ישקל כסף מחירה *wa-yakūnu minhu* זהב סגור *ay fā'iq ghāyah fī l-jūda* "It might be that סגור in "It cannot be bartered for gold" (Job 28:15) is a name for "gold" as deduced from what it says

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[8] See A. Neubauer, *The Book of Hebrew Roots by Abu 'l-Walid Marwan ibn Janah, Otherwise Called Rabbi Yonah* (Oxford, 1875).

[in what follows]: "and silver cannot be paid out as its price" (Job 28:15) and derived from it "pure gold" (Kings I 6:20), that is, [gold] that reaches the peak of excellence."

The Judeo-Arabic translations of the Hebrew roots in MD are also poorer in synonyms and accuracy of definition than a dictionary such as Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-'Uṣūl*. The Judeo-Arabic gloss of a term such as סנפיר, for instance, is גנאח both in the Italian and the Spanish MD, followed by a similar translation in Judeo-Italian (*ascelle*) and Judeo-Spanish (*alas*). Ibn Janāḥ, for his part, translates the word as *ajniḥa* but adds an explanatory sentence that gives the more exact definition of "fins" for סנפיר: *wa-taqūlu al-ʿarab al*[sic]-*ajniḥa al-samak al-zaʿānif* "and the Arabs call the fish's wings *al-zaʿānif* ("fins")." In another example, in the translation of עבט, as appears in Deuteronomy 15:8 ("you surely lend him"), MD has תסליף as the Judeo-Arabic translation. The Judeo-Spanish synonym is *prestar*, in addition to quoting Rashi "loaning to others." Ibn Janāḥ explains this same sentence with a more complete explanation: *wa-turhinu lahu irhānan ay tarfiduhu rafdan wa-tuʿṭīhi iʿṭāʾan ay uthbuthu lahum wa-ḍamminhu iyyāhum* "and you will surely lend him. In other words, you will definitely support him and surely give him; in other words, stand firm and guarantee him to them."

This phenomenon as well as other characteristics of the language of MD can be better explained if we assume that it reflects not so much a lexicographical tradition *strictu sensu*, but rather it reflects the tradition of oral translations of the Bible. MD also appears as a response to the specific pedagogical needs of the Jews at that time. The Spanish MD is especially interesting because, as it was composed after the 1492 expulsion, it reflects the many linguistic changes that the Jews underwent at that period over large areas in the Mediterranean.

Saadya's influence on Maqre Dardeqe

It is quite possible that the author of MD was familiar with Saadya's translation of the Bible as it had such a huge impact in the Jewish world, although some 600 years before the composition of the Spanish MD. Furthermore, at the time of the composition of the Spanish MD there were probably already several different *shurūḥ* (or translations of sacred texts) of the Bible used at that area. By a preliminary comparison of some MD items to those of Saadya, it is possible to conclude that the author of MD did not have Saadya's translation in front of him as he used many different lexemes in his dictionary. On the other hand, his general knowledge of Saadya must have influenced his choice of words to some degree.

Consider the following roots:

- זב "flow" from זבת חלב "flowing with milk": in MD קטר "flow in drips," but in Saadya יפיץ' as in בלד יפיץ' אללבן (Exodus 3:8) "land that flows with milk."
- זבד "give, entrust": in MD פ' ואצ'אני as influenced by Saadya's פוצ'ני (Genesis 30:20).
- זג "grapes peel": in MD אל קשור "peel" different from Saadya's אלזג' (Numbers 6:4).
- זחח "elevate, lift": in MD רפע "lift," different from Saadya's תזול "cease," as in ולא יזח החשן "so the breast-piece does not come loose" (Exodus 28:28) translated as ולא תזול ענהא.

The Languages of Maqre Dardeqe

Although MD does not represent a significant development in
Hebrew lexicography, from a linguistic and cultural point of
view, it is an extremely valuable document. It gives an idea of
the polylinguistic situation of the Jews in the Middle Ages and
of their particular use of different vernaculars. The languages
used in the Spanish MD are Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-
Arabic. With respect to Hebrew, we notice the use of two
varieties of Hebrew in this work. On the one hand, classical or
biblical Hebrew, as shown in the lexical entries and the Bible
quotations. On the other hand, we observe the use of medieval
Hebrew in the explanations of the biblical roots, which are taken
from Rashi's and Kimhi's commentaries of the Bible. This latter
form of Hebrew is characterized by being in the main rabbinical
Hebrew, with important Aramaic components, as well as
influence of the different local vernaculars (Spanish, French,
German, etc.) and the influence of Arabic to a lesser degree.

   The other two languages of this work are Judeo-Spanish and
Judeo-Arabic, which we might more accurately define as
ethnolects. This is the way we dub a linguistic variety used by a
distinct speech community, with its own history and
development.[9] Jewish languages, ethnolects and varieties share
some typological characteristics. First, they use the Hebrew
script as an overt sign for Judaism in a similar way that Muslim
languages use the Arabic script. Another example comes from
the former Yugoslavia, where different religious communities
used until not so long ago the Cyrillic and the Latin scripts in
Serbo-Croatian, representing Eastern Orthodox and Catholic
traditions respectively. Second, Jewish varieties use different

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[9] See B. Hary, "Judeo-Arabic in its Sociolinguistic Setting," *Israel Oriental
Society* XV (1995), 74.

traditions of orthography at different periods of their development.[10] Third, in all the Jewish languages and ethnolects, elements of Hebrew and Aramaic in the lexicon as well as in the grammar are clearly evident and productive.[11] Fourth, Jewish languages and ethnolects contain unexpected dialectalism, probably due to Jewish migration.[12] Fifth, the "spirit"[13] of Jewish languages and ethnolects is based on Jewish sources, on Hebrew and Aramaic. Sixth, speakers of the several Jewish varieties consider their ethnolects to be separate from the dominant languages.[14] Seventh, Jewish varieties have sometimes developed a distinct spoken form, somewhat unintelligible to speakers outside the Jewish community,[15] for example Baghdadi

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[10] See the different orthographic traditions in Judeo-Arabic in B. Hary, "Adaptations of Hebrew Script," in *The World's Writing Systems*, eds. P. Daniels and W. Bright (Oxford, 1996), 727–42.

[11] See, for example, how Later Egyptian Judeo-Arabic uses '*ilā* to mark the definite direct object (influence of Hebrew) in Hary, "Sociolinguists," 86–7; idem., *Multiglossia in Judeo-Arabic* (Leiden, 1992), 300–4; idem., "On the Use of *ila* and *li* in Judeo-Arabic Texts," in *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau*, ed. A. Kaye (Wiesbaden, 1991) vol. 1, 595–608. Furthermore, see the morpholexical Hebrew influence in Judeo-Italian: *pakhad* "was afraid," *pakhadoso* "timid," *impakhadito* "got scared."

[12] In a forthcoming book Hary calls it "migrated" or "displaced dialectalism." See, for example, *niktib/niktibu* used in Cairene Judeo-Arabic for the first sg./pl. forms of the indicative imperfect, or how in Judeo-Italian both a system of seven vowels and the phrase *li donni* "the women" exist together in one Jewish dialect and not in different dialects as is the case in regular Italian dialects.

[13] By "spirit" in Jewish languages we mean the quotations and allusions taken from Jewish sources such as the Bible and the Talmud that regularly appear in spoken and written forms of Jewish languages, ethnolects and varieties.

[14] For example, in Morocco, Jews call Morrocan Judeo-Arabic *il 'arabiyya dyalna* "our Arabic" and regular Moroccan Arabic *il 'arabiyya dilmsilmīn* "The Arabic of the Muslims."

[15] It is obvious that written Jewish languages are unintelligible to most non-Jews, if only for the use of the Hebrew script.

Judeo-Arabic.[16] Eighth, Jewish ethnolects and languages have developed a literary genre of translating verbatim sacred religious Hebrew/Aramaic texts into their Jewish languages (*sharḥ* in Judeo-Arabic, *taytsh* in Yiddish, *ladino* in Judeo-Spanish, *shar'* in Judeo-Neo-Aramaic, and more). And finally, literature of Jewish languages is usually about Jewish topics, written by Jewish authors for Jewish readership.

Spanish and Italian Maqre Dardeqe

Both the Italian and the Spanish MD are arranged as follows: First a biblical Hebrew root appears followed by a translation into Judeo-Italian or Judeo-Spanish respectively, and then into Judeo-Arabic. The specific meanings of the biblical roots are documented with quotations of the Bible, and sometimes there are also short explanations taken from the commentaries of Rashi and Radaq, as well as quotations from the *Targumim* by Yonathan and Onkelos.

The fact that the Spanish version was published, and probably composed, more than a century after the Italian MD, may lead us to assume that it consists of a copy of the Italian dictionary, substituting the Judeo-Italian glosses with Judeo-Spanish translations. There are, however, some differences between the two dictionaries that make us believe that it was rather a common source that inspired both works, making them appear so similar at times. These differences include the following:

1. Explanations found in Spanish MD that are not found in Italian MD:

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[16] See H. Blanc, *Communal Dialects in Baghdad* (Cambridge, 1964).

- סלעם "locust" – Additional explanation in Spanish MD: מין ארבה כמו ואת הסלעם a kind of locust, such as "bald locust." (Lev. 11:22)[17]

2. Sometimes the Judeo-Arabic translation in the Spanish MD is missing:

- סמדר "blossoming" – in Italian MD: מנוור; missing in Spanish MD[18]
- עב "cloud" – in Italian MD: סחאב; missing in Spanish MD.[19]

3. Different Judeo-Arabic spelling for the same word:

- ספרד "Spain" – Italian MD: ערבינאנא; Spanish MD: ערבינן
- סנור "being blind" – Italian MD: עמין; Spanish MD: עמייאן
- עבד "serve, work" – Italian MD: כ'דם; Spanish MD כ'דאם
- עבה "be thick" – Italian MD: כשון; Spanish MD: כשן
- צאן "sheep" – Italian MD: גנאם; Spanish MD: גנם
- קטל "kill" – Italian MD: קטלן; Spanish MD: קטל
- שכר "stop" – Italian MD: סדן; Spanish MD: סודאן
- תמר "date palm" – Italian MD: נכלה; Spanish MD: נכלא ; the same spelling difference as in the Italian MD עדה vs. the Spanish MD עדא "arms."
- נעם "pleasant" – Italian MD: לדאד; Spanish MD: לדאד

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[17] In the Italian MD only the quote from Leviticus appears.
[18] See Song of Songs 2:13.
[19] See Exodus 19:9; Lamentations 2:1.

- נעל "piece of iron-sandal" – Italian MD: חדאיד;
  Spanish MD: חדייד

4. Sometimes there are simply scribal errors in the Italian MD whereas the Spanish version has the standard forms. It then may indicate that the Spanish was not copied from the Italian:

- עבט "pawn" – Italian MD: רקן; Spanish MD: רהן
- קן "nest" – Italian MD: ענש; Spanish MD: עש
- עון "guilt"– Italian MD: תנוב; Spanish MD: דנוב

5. As mentioned above, sometimes in the Italian version, within the non-standard root entry, the author calls the attention to another root. This does not occur in the Spanish version:

- עב "cloud" – The Italian version indicates that "you should look up the root *'ayin-bet-he*," whereas Spanish MD does not include this commentary. In addition to that, the space for the Judeo-Arabic translation is empty in the Spanish version.
- עבה "be thick" – The Italian MD indicates again that "you should look up the root *'ayin-bet* and then *'ayin-yod-bet*," whereas the Spanish version does not include this commentary.

6. Different arrangement of translations:

- Sometimes the different translations in one entry are arranged in a different order: the fifth translation of the root *'ayin-bet-dalet* of the Italian MD (עבדי פשתים

"flax workers," Is. 19:9) comes as the third translation in the Spanish version.

7. Different translations:

- עבד: (Job 34:25) in the Italian MD: פסל (maybe *fils* "money," as the Italian *pecunia*); in Spanish MD פלאחה "farmers."
- סוף "storm" in Italian MD: הוא "air"; Spanish זובעה "hurricane" (the Spanish version seems to render the Hebrew root, as in Ps. 83:16, in a more accurate way).
- קאה "owl" is rendered in the Italian version as קיא and in the Spanish as קוק.
- נפש "will, desire" (Ps. 27:12) in Italian MD: אגראיץ' (the plural form), whereas in Spanish MD: גריץ' (the singular form).
- סמך "upholds" is rendered into Judeo-Arabic in the Italian version as מסכן "calm"; in Spanish MD: סנד "support."

8. The translation into Judeo-Spanish is closer to the meaning in Hebrew and Arabic than the Italian:

- עבט "bend, curve." The Judeo-Spanish אטורסיר *torcer* "bend" is a better rendering of the Hebrew עבט and the Judeo-Arabic תעויג, than the Italian *scalcitriare* which means "break their ranks."
- עוף "thirsty." The Judeo-Spanish זיקאנייה *sequia* "drought" reflects the Hebrew עוף and the Judeo-Arabic עטשאן in a more accurate way than the Italian *stancamento* "tiredness."

Dialectological Characteristics of Maqre Dardeqe

As we have seen earlier, one of the most common typological characteristics of Jewish languages and religiolects is the heavy use of the genre of verbatim translations of sacred religious and liturgical Hebrew/Aramaic texts into the local Jewish variety. The translations included among others, the Bible, the *Siddur* – the prayer book, the Passover *Haggadah*, *Pirke 'Avot* – the basic literature of moral and religious teachings during Second Temple times and following its destruction, and more. The translations, however, are not always verbatim, as seen from first sight. In previous works[20] it was shown that the translations actually were characterized by what Hary termed as literal/ interpretive linguistic tension. In other words, the translators/ interpreters struggled between their desire to render the text literally or interpretively. On the one hand, in Judeo-Arabic, for example, the *sharḥanim* felt the need to follow the long tradition of verbatim biblical translations, such as the Septuagint, Onkelos and the like. On the other hand, though, they were also committed to deliver a text that would fit pedagogical needs of word for word translation. Furthermore, as mentioned elsewhere,[21] literal translation helped the *sharḥanim* and the readers/users strengthen and reconnect to their Jewish identity. This method of translation, in turn, created many "un-

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[20] See M. Bar-Asher, "The *Sharḥ* of the Maghreb: Judeo-Arabic Exegesis of the Bible and Other Jewish Literature – Its Nature and Formation" [in Hebrew], in M. Bar-Asher, ed., *Studies in Jewish Languages – Bible Translations and Spoken Dialects* (Jerusalem, 1988), 3–34; B. Hary, "Linguistic Notes on an Egyptian Judeo-Arabic Passover *Haggadah* and the Study of the Egyptian *Sharḥ*" in D. Caubet and M. Vanhove, eds., *Actes des premières journées internationales de dialectologie arabe* (Paris, 1994), 375– 88; idem., "Sociolinguistics"; J. Tedghi, "A Moroccan *Maḥzor* in Judeo-Arabic" [in Hebrew], *Massorot* VII (1994), 91–160.
[21] See, for example, Hary, "Sociolinguistics," 83.

Arabic" sentences not comprehensible to regular speakers and readers. The resulting Judeo-Arabic structure may have been perceived strange by speakers and readers of the ethnolect since the Arabic word became subject to the Hebrew equivalent and consequently the *sharḥan* ran the risk of inserting grammatical structures into the translations which were not usual in Arabic. Furthermore, the *sharḥanim* – especially of the fifteenth century and onwards – felt the need to interpret the text from time to time and not follow blindly the model of literal translation. This is why they substituted words, composed paraphrases and added flavor from the local dialect. This way, in my mind, they wanted to make sure that their translation would be understood and not just become a mere reflection of the Hebrew/Aramaic text.

In sum, the *sharḥanim* were dealing with a constant literal/interpretive linguistic tension. Hary demonstrated this tension in nine linguistic categories: word order, paraphrasing and changing the word order, the definite direct object, prepositions and particles, tense-mood-aspect (T-M-A), the definite article, negation, gender and number and Hebrew elements.[22] For example, in the T-M-A category, Hary showed how the *sharḥan* may translate the Hebrew participle in אנו אוכלין "we ate" (from the Passover *Haggadah*) literally into Judeo-Arabic אהנה ואכלין[23] with the participle there too. On the other

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[22] Ibid., 86–92.

[23] In ms 3 of the Cairo Collection. This collection consists of more than one hundred photocopied manuscripts mostly from the eighteenth through the twentieth century, mainly covering Jewish liturgy (*Haggadot*, *Siddurim*, *Piyyuṭim*, halakhic works, *shurūḥ*, stories about Moses and Joseph, and prayers from different Jewish festivals, all with local emphasis) in Hebrew and in Judeo-Arabic. This collection was brought in the 1980s from one of the synagogues in Cairo to the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. Noa David has

hand, in other manuscripts[24] he translated the same phrase as אחנה
נאכלו with the Judeo-Arabic imperfect form indicating colloquial
Egyptian Judeo-Arabic use,[25] a tendency toward interpretive
translation which backs away from the literal mode.

In the following diagram the above-mentioned examples are
shown on a scale sketching the interpretive/literal tension in the
T-M-A category:[26]

Interpretive ────────────────────────── Literal

אחנה נאכלו   אחנה ואכלין

As will be shown in the linguistic study below, MD gives
evidence to some common mechanisms employed by Jewish
languages and religiolects for the translation of sacred liturgical
texts discussed above. These mechanisms include liberality in
the acceptance of phonological divergences, less liberality in its
openness to morphological innovation and outright conservatism
in its insistence on archaic lexicon, strict adherence to Hebrew
word order and syntax, and loyalty to rabbinic exegesis.

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just completed an MA thesis at Emory University about the *sharḥ* of the
Book of Job from the Cairo Collection under Hary's supervision.
[24] Mss 74, 93 of the Cairo Collection.
[25] Note that in the Egyptian Judeo-Arabic dialect the Maghrebi phenomenon
of *nafʿal/nafʿalu* occurs. See Hary, *Multiglossia* 278, 2.2.2. and the
references there.
[26] In a forthcoming book on the translations of sacred texts in Judeo-Arabic,
Hary offers a new model to understand this literal/interpretive linguistic
tension. He spoke about it briefly in the recent workshop on Jewish
Languages that was held in Jerusalem in June 2003 under the title, "Toward a
Model of Analyzing the *Sharḥ*."

Orthography and Phonetics/Phonology

1. *alef* to mark short *a*:

● מאלך "power," דוארן "around," דאוור "turn oneself,"
   מדאוור "rounded," קלאנאסה "hat."

Sometimes the *alef* can indicate lengthening: *a>ā:*

● מאד "extend."

alef that marks a short *a* may indicate stress as we have evidence
for this in Andalusi dialects:

● in verbs: פ'תאש "search," עבאר "pass," רהאן "pawn,"
   פ'ס'אד "be spoiled," חראק "burn."

● in nouns: עסאל "honey," מנג'אל "sickle,"
   חלאק "earring."

2. Quite frequently *vav* marks short *u* as is common in Late
Judeo-Arabic:[27]

● חוכם "opposite," גומקה "damp," חופרה "hole," קובאלת
   "judgment," ידוב "advance, spread."

3.   Less often *yod* marks short *i*:

● זאריעין "farmers," ניצף "half," באטיל "hole."

4. *alif al-fāṣila* is usually not written in MD as is the case in
Late Judeo-Arabic[28] (but also mostly in Classical Judeo-
Arabic): תתעווקו "be hindered."

5. *tā' marbūṭa* can be written with *alef*, typical of Hebraized
orthography used during the late Judeo-Arabic periods:[29]

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[27] See Hary, *Multiglossia*, 248, 2.1.1.
[28] Ibid., 267, 4.3.

- מייא "one hundred," מנעא "resistance," פרחא "happiness," סתא "six," חגרא "stone," קווא "strength," חדבא "hunchback," ברייא "desert," גתא "corpse," שבכא "network."
- Unusual is the spelling of *ṭā' marbūṭa* with a *tav*: קובאלת "opposite."
- Infrequently, do we find *ṭā' marbūṭa* denoted with a   *he*: שהווה "passion," חלאווה "sweetness."

6.   Spelling of *alif maqṣūra bi-ṣūrati 'l-yā'* with *alef* is common, as is the case in the Hebraized orthography in Later Judeo-Arabic:[30]

- עטא "he gave," אטקווא "he made an effort," אבא "he refused," אשתהא "long for," עדא "pass."

7. The loss of *hamza* in Judeo-Arabic has caused some phonological changes:
- *i'a>iyya*: מייא "one hundred"
- *a'i>ayyi*: עג'אייב "miracles"
- *'a>a*: דל "be thin"
- *ī'>ay*: נאי (<*nī*) "raw"
- *i'>ī*: דיב "wolf"

The loss of *hamza* has morphological implications as well, as will be discussed below.

8.   The glides *y* and *w* are usually marked by two *yods* and two *vavs* respectively, as influenced by rabbinic Hebrew orthography and is common in Hebraized orthography:[31]

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[29] Ibid., 89–90, 266; idem, "Adaptations," 732.
[30] Ibid., 732; idem, *Multiglossia*, 87–8, 252–3.

- מייא "one hundred," עייב "spoil," כיילה "dry measure," גייד"diminish," עג'אייב "miracles," דאוור"turn oneself," אלוואח "panels," אוולאד "children," אל אוול "the first," כווכב "star," חלאווה "sweetness."

9. Qualitative vowel changes in MD:
- *i>a*: זאק (<*ziqq*) "wineskin"
- *i>u*: מונשאר (<*minshār*) "saw"; Notice Moroccan *menshār*; Andalusi *minshār*.
- *a>u*: קודאר (<*qadhār*) "filth."
- *i/a>u*: כודלאן (<*khadhlān*) "abandon."

Dropping of initial vowels as is common in Maghrebi dialects:
- תקוב "holes."

The spelling of מיזן "scales" reflects probably *scripta defectiva*, although shortening of long *ā* to a short *a* is also possible.

10. Unlike the Italian version, the Judeo-Arabic glosses in the Judeo-Spanish MD use diacritics:
- *khā'* is marked by 'כ: כ'סר "lost."
- *fā'* is written by 'פ: פ'רחא "happiness."
- *jīm* is denoted by 'ג: עג'אייב "miracles."
- *ghayn* has no diacritics ג: גייד "diminish."

11. Old Arabic interdentals have become stops as is expected:
- *th>t*: כתיר "very," תלת "third," תקוב "holes," תקיל "heavy," גתא "corpse."

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[31] Ibid., 732; idem, *Multiglossia* 78–8, 252–3.

- *dh>d*: קודאר "filth," דבח "sacrifice," מדבח "altar," דביב"small fly," דהב "gold," כ'ודלאן "abandon."

12. As is the case in Maghrebi dialects, a change in the sibilants is not uncommon, for example, *s>sh*:
- מוכנשה (< *miknasa*) "broom."

13. Another phonetic change is *f>b* or *v*:
- בזע (<*fazaʿ*) "be afraid." This change occurs in some Arabic dialects in the Maghreb as well as in the Galilee (Druze).

14. Emphatization (*tafkhīm*) occurs usually in the environment of emphatic phonemes as partial assimilation. This of course reflects the situation in the dialect:
- *t>ṭ*: אטקووא "exert effort" (however אתקווא *itqawa* also occurs), שאטם "abuse, scold," נבאט "plants," חוואטין "fishermen."
- *d>ḍ*: ראץ' "wish," although the back vowel may have caused velarization.

15. Loss of emphatization or *tarqīq* also occurs:
- *ḍ>d*: גייד "diminish," דייא "illuminate" (although צ'ייא also exists), דל "be thin," נדיף "clean," חדן "hug." It is also possible that the *dalet* reflects phonetic spelling as part of the Hebraized Orthography[32] and not necessarily *tarqīq*.
- *ṣ>s*: סראם "sever, separate," חסאם "dispute."
- Interesting is *q>k* as in מכטף (<*miqṭaf* "sickle").

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[32] See Hary, "Adaptations," 732.

16. Voicing:

• חוד (<*ḥūt*) "fish."

17. The definite article is written separately from the word that it defines as is common in the Hebraized orthography in Later Judeo-Arabic:[33] אל תלת "the third," אל אוול "the first."

• Sometimes the definite article is spelled phonetically and not morphophonemically, also typical to the Hebraized orthography in Later Judeo-Arabic:[34] For example, before "sun letters" there is no marking of the *lam*: אסעה/אסעא "now," ארבט "tying, fastening," or there is no denoting of the *alef* in בלאחקיק "indeed," unless a metathesis has occurred in this example, or a scribe's error.

Morphology

18. The loss of the initial *hamza* in some plural nouns indicates a change in the morphological pattern *'af'āl>f'āl*. The phenomenon is common in Maghrebi and Andalusi dialects:

• ווזאן "weights" (*'awzān>wzān*), בואב "gates" (*'abwāb>bwāb*), קדאח "goblets" (*'aqdāḥ>qdāḥ*), קואל "speech" (*'aqwāl>qwāl*).

This morphological change does not always occur in MD:

• אוולאד *'awlād* "children," ארכאן *'arkān* "beams," אלוואח *'alwāḥ* "panels."

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[33] Idem, *Multiglossia* 268–9.
[34] See Hary, "Adaptations," 732.

19. Some nouns may have different patterns in MD:

- כיילאן "measure" (however, כיילה also exists), זנייאן
  "adultery."

20. In verbs, the loss of the initial *hamza* may also cause the
verbal form IV to become I, as is the case in Andalusi dialects:[35]

- עטה "give," ראיץ' "wish."

21. Phonological changes cause hollow verbs to change as well,
$R_2=w>R_2=y$:

- דייא (<*ḍawwa'*) "illuminate."

The opposite process occurs in nouns:

- רקווא (<*ruqya*) "exorcism."

22. Phonological changes also cause final-*hamza* verbs ($R_3=$') to
become defective ($R_3=y$):

- אתכבא "hide" (*itkhaba'a>itkhaba*).

23. The verbal form *itfaʿal* exists as is the case in Maghrebi
dialects:

- אטקווא/אתקווא "exert effort," אתכלם "speak," אתווגע "be
  painful," אתכבא "hide," תתעווקו "be hindered."

Interesting is the verb אתמאדד "extend": *itfaʿal* or *mater lectionis*.

24. MD frequently offers verbs in their *maṣdar* forms. For
example, the patter *faʿlān* is used frequently in our text, although
seldom is it the form in Classical Arabic:

- כסלאן "dip" (to explain וטבל הכהן "and the priest shall
  dip," Leviticus 4:6), כבייאן "hide" (to explain ויטמנהו

בחול חלפאן "and he hid him in the sand," Exodus 2:12), בחול
"swear," כרהאן "hate," חרזאן "watch, keep," רגעאן "turn
back," כודלאן "close," חבלאן "become pregnant," גלקאן
"abandon," גנייאן "be foolish."

Another example for *maṣdar* is the form *tafʿīl*:

- תסדיד "close," תסלים "submit," תסליף "lend," תעויג "lend
  on pledge," תגויז "authorize," תטויל "to lengthen."

Syntax

25. The loss of case marking is common to Judeo-Arabic in
general. The loss of adverbial -*an* is not common in Judeo-
Arabic, but appears to be the case in MD, although most
probably adverbial -*an* was retained in the dialect, as in most
cases today.

- כתיר "very" (although regular also in the dialect), דאיים
  "always" (*dayma* in Morocco). In גדה "very" *tanwin* -
  an is replaced by a *he* (reference to –*an*>*a*). On the
  other hand, -*an* is retained in קובלאן "faced to," כרהאן
  "unwillingly."

26. *yod* marks defective *in*:

- כאווי (<*khāwin*) "hollow," אואני (<*awānin*) "vessels."
  We have, however, an example of defective -*in*
  spelled phonetically as in מגאזין (<*maghāzin*) "military
  expedition."

27. As the case markings are lost, oblique plural -*in* is the dominant form:

- קאטעין "cut," זאריעין "farmers," כטור מרבוטין "tied as birds," סתין "sixty," חוואטין "fishermen," ראקדין "sleep, lie down."

Lexicon

28. Some lexemes used in MD indicate dialectal use reflected in Moroccan or Andalusi dialects, or use of Judeo-Arabic:

- כשן "put on weight"; in Classical Arabic *xasuna* means "be rough," however the meaning in MD is extended to "put on weight," as is reflected in the Spanish translation and the biblical quotation.

29. Hebrew lexical influence:

- רשעו "become evil" (Hebrew entry זדה), where a Hebrew lexeme takes on an Arabic verbal pattern; גזלאן "thieves," influenced by Hebrew *gazal* "steal." However, we also find this in Moroccan Arabic, *gezlan l-lil* in the sense of "burglarsm, thieves."

Summary

In this paper we have analyzed several aspects of the Hebrew biblical dictionary *Maqre Dardeqe*. This dictionary with its Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic glosses was composed in order to help instruct children in the Bible and to help Jews respond to Christians in theological polemics. It was also used as a link to the different *shurūḥ* composed especially after the fifteenth century. We have compared the Spanish version of MD to the Italian version and also evaluated the dictionary as a lexicographical work, comparing it to Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-*

'Uṣūl. Furthermore, we have indicated some dialectological characteristics as reflected in the Judeo-Arabic glosses of MD in the areas of orthography and phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax and the lexicon. It is clear from the dialectological sketch of the Judeo-Arabic glosses that the dialect used by MD users is of Maghrebi type, probably of Sephardi Jewish communities in North Africa.

APPENDIX I

Sample of Analysis of Roots

מאד

ברֵאשי'   מוכג'ו ובע' כתיר או ג'דה כמו והנה טוב מאד

פי' לשון רבוי הענין בכל מקום שהוא

ואתחנן   ל"א אויר ובע' מאלך כמו ובכל מאדך ות"א דכל נכסיך

ובל"א פי' לשון מדה כלומר בכל מה שמודד לך

מאד *mucho* "very" and in Arabic *ktīr* "many" or *jiddan* "very" as in Gen. 1:31[36] "[And God saw all that He had made] and found it very good." The interpretation is that it has the meaning of "many" in every place where it appears. Another meaning is *avīr* "air" [?] and in Arabic *malk* "possession" as in Dt. 6:5[37] "[And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul] and with all your might." Targum Onkelos: "with all your possessions." Another meaning is "measure" as in all that was measured to you.

מאז

באלנשאש ובע' מיזן כמו מאזני הצדק הוא הכלי ששוקלין

מאז *balanza* "scale" and in Arabic *mīz(ā)n* as in Lev. 19:36 "[You shall have] an honest balance." It is the instrument that weighs.

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[36] In the margin the scribe writes Genesis.
[37] In the margin the scribe mentions the portion of "and I pleaded" from Dt.

נא

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בהעלותך   מירציד או אגורה ובע' אסעה כמו אל נא רפא נא

נא הראשון ל' בקשה והשני ל' עתה. ל"א אגורה ובע'

לך   אסעא כמו הנה נא ידעתי ופר"ש ל' עתה וכן הנה נא

וירא   סורו נא הראשון ל' עתה עכ"ל. ל"א קורודו ובע' נאי כמו

אל תאכלו ממנו נא ופר"ש כל שאינו מבושל כל צרכו קרוי

יחזקאל   נא ות"א כד חי. ל"א אלכסדריא כמו ועשיתי שפטים וכן

הנני פקד על אמון מנא ר"ל אלכסנדריא

</div>

נא *merced* or *ahora* "now" and in Arabic *assaʿa* as in Nu. 12:13[38] "[So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying] "Heal [her], O God, I beg You." The first נא means "request" and the second "now." Another meaning is *ahora* "now" and in Arabic *assaʿa* "now" as in Gen. 12:11,[39] "[When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife,] I know [what a beautiful woman you are]." Rashi[40] explains it as *now* and therefore in Gen. 19:2,[41] "[and he said, 'My lords,] please turn aside.'" The first נא has the meaning of "now"; his words are until here.[42] Another meaning is *crudo* "raw" and in Arabic *nāy* "raw" as in Ex. 12:9, "Do not eat any of it raw." Rashi explains that all that is not cooked as

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[38] In the margin the scribe mentions the biblical portion of "When you mount" from Nu.

[39] In the margin the scribe mentions the biblical portion "Go forth" from Gen.

[40] פר"ש is the acronym of פירוש רבי שמואל

[41] In the margin the scribe mentions the biblical portion of "And he saw" from Gen.

[42] עכ"ל is the acronym of עד כאן לשונו

necessary[43] is called "raw." In Targum Onkelos, "while living." Another meaning is *al-Iskandriya* as in Ez. 30:14[44] "[I will make Pathros a desolation, and will set fire to Zoan,] and will execute acts of judgment [upon Thebes]." Also in Jer. 46:35 "I will inflict punishment on Amon of Thebes," meaning *al-Iskandriya*.[45]

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צאה (partial)

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ישעיה   ופר"ש בנים [46]היג'וש ובע' אוולאד כמו הצאצאים והצעפות
ובנות לפי שיוצאין ממנו

צאה *hijos* "sons" and in Arabic *awlād* "sons" as in Is. 22:24,[47] "[And they will hang on him the whole weight of his father's house] the sprouts and the leaves." Rashi explains it as, sons and daughters depending on what comes out of him.

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[43] See Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot* 55a.
[44] In the margin the scribe writes Ezekiel.
[45] Notice the different spelling of *al-Iskandriya*.
[46] Scribe's error, should be והצפעות
[47] In the margin the scribe writes Isaiah.

APPENDIX II

Samples of roots translations into Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic

נבל

קאנשאר *cansar*	בלאלא	"wear away"
ויל *vil*	נאקס	"villain"
ויל *vil*	[empty space]	"villain"
קנשאר *cansar*	עג'ז	"wear away"
קאלאב'רינה *calavera*	ג'תא	"corpse"
באשייאש או קאנטארוש *vasijas* or *cantaros*	אואני	"jars"
ויאולאש *viola*	[no translation]	"harp"
דילוב'ייו *diluvio*	טווופ'אן	"deluge"

עגל

ביזירו *becerro*	עג'אל	"calf"
רודונדה *redonda*	מדאוור	"round"
שינדירוש *senderos*	טרק	"track"
ריינה *reina*	סלטאנה	"queen"
אוריגאל *orejal=pendiente*	חלאק	"earring"
קארוש *carros*	[empty space]	"cart"
מוג'יר *mujer*	[no translation]	"woman"

פאה

קנטון *canto*	טרף	"border"
ב'אנדה *banda*	גהה	"side"
גראנדיש או שנייוריש *grandes* or *señores*	כובאר	"grandees"
פ'ולור *pulir*	גייד	"cleave"

שיש

לינו *lino*	כתאן	"linen"
אליגרי *alegre*	פ'רחא	"happy"
סיש *seis*	סתא	"six"
שישינטא *sesenta*	סתין	"sixty"
שומבאייר (?)	ג'ואייאן	"temptation"
מארמול *mármol*	רכ'אם	"marble"

AN EARLY KARAITE GRAMMATICAL TREATISE

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The Karaite Grammatical Tradition

The key figures in the history of Karaite grammatical thought whose works have come down to us from the Middle Ages are ʾAbū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and ʾAbū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn Faraj. Both of these scholars belonged to the Karaite community of Jerusalem.

Ibn Nūḥ's work is datable to the second half of the tenth century. All of the surviving works explicitly attributed to him in the colophons are in the form of biblical commentaries written in Judeo-Arabic. These include commentaries that are primarily exegetical in nature, one commentary that is concerned primarily with translation and one grammatical commentary.[1] The grammatical commentary does not discuss linguistic topics in a systematic manner, nor does it offer remarks on all verses of the Bible. It focuses, rather, on problematic grammatical details in the Bible, which were

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[1] For further details see Geoffrey Khan, *The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought: Including a Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of The* Diqduq *of ʾAbū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ on the Hagiographa* (Leiden, 2000), introduction.

considered likely to cause difficulty for the reader. A full understanding of the meaning of the Bible was thought to be possible only with a thorough grasp of the grammatical structure of its language. Another characteristic of the work is that it did not present concepts and interpretations in a categorical way, but rather offered a variety of opinions concerning many issues. The work was known in the colophons simply as the *Diqduq*. This Hebrew term did not refer to the discipline of grammar as we understand it today, but rather to the detailed examination of the grammatical structure of Scripture, the purpose of which was the elucidation of the meaning of the Bible.

The main focus of the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ is the derivational morphology of words. A key feature of his grammatical theory is that the imperative form acted as the base for the derivation of verbal inflections. Many of his grammatical technical terms are in Hebrew, although the work was written in Arabic.

Ibn Nūḥ was heir to a tradition of Hebrew grammar that had developed among the Karaites of Iraq and Iran. This was brought to Jerusalem in the migrations of Karaites from the East during the tenth century. Ibn Nūḥ himself was an immigrant from Iraq. We shall refer to this grammatical tradition as the early Karaite tradition of Hebrew grammatical thought.[2]

’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, who was active in the first half of the eleventh century, retained some of the elements of this tradition, but was innovative in many ways, in method as well as in content. He was far more open than his predecessors to the influence of the contemporary Arabic grammatical tradition. His works were influenced extensively by the teachings of the Baṣran School Arabic grammarians, which represented the mainstream of Arabic grammatical thought of that period. In

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[2] For further details see Khan, *Early Karaite Tradition*.

conformity with the Baṣran tradition, he maintained that the base of the derivation of verbal inflections was the infinitive, which differed from the earlier theory of imperative bases. He abandoned, moreover, the earlier Hebrew terminology and adopted the Arabic terminology that was current in his day.

’Abū al-Faraj produced a large number of grammatical works, some of which have only recently been identified. Most of these works were systematic linguistic treatments of biblical Hebrew. His *magnum opus* was a comprehensive work on Hebrew morphology and syntax consisting of eight parts entitled *al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil ‘alā al-’Uṣūl wa-l-Fuṣūl fī al-Lugha al-’Ibrāniyya* ("The Comprehensive Book of General Principles and Particular Rules of the Hebrew Language"), which was completed in 1026 C.E.[3] He composed various shorter versions

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[3] For a summary of the contents of the *al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil*, see W. Bacher, "Le grammairien anonyme de Jérusalem," *Revue des études juives* 30 (1895), 232–56, where a few short extracts are published. Recent studies of aspects of grammar in *al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil* have been published by Maman: A. Maman, "Medieval Grammatical Thought: Karaites Versus Rabbanites" [in Hebrew] *Language Studies* VII (1996), 79–96; and idem, "The Infinitive and the Verbal Noun According to Abū al-Faraj Hārūn" in M. Bar-Asher, ed., *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1996), 119–49; idem, "The ''Amal' Theory in the Grammatical Thought of Abū al-Faraj Hārūn" in M. Bar Asher, ed., *Massorot. Studies in Language Traditions and Jewish Languages* [*Gideon Goldenberg Festschrift*] [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1997), 263–74; idem, "The Hebrew alphabet as a grammatical mnemotechnic framework: Introduction to *Al-Kitab al-Mushtamil* Part III" [in Hebrew] *Language Studies* 8 (2001), 95–139; and idem, "Order and Meaning in Root Letters: On the Character of the Seventh Part of Kitāb al-Muštamil by Abū al-Faraj Hārūn" [In Hebrew], *Pe‘amim* 89 (2002), 83–95; and Basal: N. Basal, "Part one of *al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil* by ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn and Its Dependence on Ibn al-Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-’Uṣūl fī al-Naḥw*," *Lěšonénu* 61 (1998), 191–209; idem, "The Concept of *ḥāl* in the *al-Kitāb al-Muštamil* of ’Abū al-Faraǧ Hārūn in Comparison With Ibn al-Sarrāǧ," *Israel Oriental Studies* 19 (1999), 391–408; idem, "A Fragment of Abū al-Faraǧ Hārūn's *al-Kitab al-Mushtamil* in Arabic

of this, the most widely published of these being a work called
al-Kitāb al-Kāfī ("The Sufficient Book").[4]

The works of ’Abū al-Faraj generally differed in approach
from the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ, which concentrated on problematic
issues. ’Abū al-Faraj, in fact, was interested in the phenomenon
of human language in general and was not always concerned

Script," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 29 (2001), 1–20; and idem, "Specification
in the Syntactical Understanding of the Karaite Grammarian ’Abū-al-Faraj
Hārūn" [in Hebrew], *Peʿamim* 90 (2002), 97–114.

[4] See S.L. Skoss, *The Arabic Commentary of ʿAli ben Suleimān the Karaite
on the Book of Genesis* (Philadelphia, 1928), intro., 11–27; M. Gil, *Palestine
during the First Muslim Period (634–1099)*, vol. I (Tel Aviv, 1983) section
938 and the references cited there. The earliest known manuscript of this
work has a colophon dated 1037 C.E. (II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 4601, fol. 107a).
A full edition and English translation has now been published by G. Khan,
Maria Ángeles Gallego and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *The Karaite Tradition
of Hebrew Grammatical Thought in its Classical Form: A Critical Edition
and English Translation of* al-Kitāb al-Kāfī fī al-Lugha al-ʿIbrāniyya *by ʿAbū
al-Faraj Hārūn ibn al-Faraj*, (Leiden, 2003). Short extracts from the work
were published previously by M.N. Zislin, "Glava iz grammatičyeskovo
sočinyeniya al-Kafi abu-l-Faradža Xaruna ibn al-Faradža," *Palyestinskiy
Sbornik* 7 (1962), 178–84 and idem, "Abu-l-Faradž Xarun o spryažyenii
Evreyskovo glagola," *Kratkiye Soobšeyeniya Institytu Narodov Azii* 86
(1965), 164–77; N. Allony, "Genizah Fragments of Hebrew Philology," [in
Hebrew] in *Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der
Osterreichischen Nationalbibliothek: Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer (P. Rainer
Cent.)* (Vienna, 1983), 229–47; D. Becker, "The 'ways' of the Hebrew Verb
According to the Karaite Grammarians Abu al-Faraj Harun and the Author of
Meʾor ha-ʿAyin" [in Hebrew] in M.A. Friedman, ed., *Studies in Judaica,
Teʿudah* 7 (Tel Aviv, 1991), 249–75; G. Khan, "ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn and the
Early Karaite Grammatical Tradition," *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 48
(1997), 314–34; idem, "Biblical Exegesis and Grammatical Theory in the
Karaite Tradition," in G. Khan, ed., *Exegesis and Grammar in Medieval
Karaite Texts* (Oxford, 2001), 117–50; and N. Basal, "Specification in the
syntactical understanding of the Karaite grammarian Abu al-Faraj Harun" [in
Hebrew], *Peʿamim* 90 (2002), 97–114.

exclusively with the language of the Hebrew Bible.[5] Another feature that distinguishes the works of ’Abū al-Faraj from the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ is the fact that ’Abū al-Faraj generally presents the material in a categorical manner without citing a range of different opinions.

Karaite grammatical texts may therefore be divided into two types: those belonging, on the one hand, to the early tradition, the principal exponent of which was Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ, and the comprehensive grammatical works of ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, on the other hand, which represent Karaite grammatical theory in its classical form, at the height of its development.

In addition to the works of Ibn Nūḥ and ’Abū al-Faraj, a number of other Karaite grammatical texts can be found in the manuscript collections, sometimes only in fragments. These generally can be shown to be related either to the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ or to the works of ’Abū al-Faraj. They may be assigned, therefore, to either the early or the classical phases of the Karaite grammatical tradition.

The works belonging to the classical tradition, which are largely dependent on the writings of ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, were written in the eleventh century. One such work is the grammatical treatise written in Hebrew known as *Me’or ‘Ayin*, which has been published by M.N. Zislin (Moscow, 1990) on the basis of a single surviving manuscript.[6] The text was written by an anonymous author in Byzantium some time during the second half of the eleventh century. According to the colophon,

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[5] For more details of the works of ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn see Khan, *Early Karaite Tradition*, 8–11 and idem, ed., *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts* (Atlanta, 2000), 7–11.

[6] II Firk. Evr. IIA 132 [1]. An important contribution to the assessment of this text is made by A. Maman in his review of the Zislin edition (A. Maman, “Review of Zislin,” *Lěšonénu* 58 [1994].)

the manuscript was written in 1208 in the town of Gagra, which is situated on the eastern shore of the Black Sea (now in Georgia). The work is largely derivative from the works of 'Abū al-Faraj Hārūn. Some elements, however, are drawn directly from the early Karaite grammatical tradition.

One of the immediate sources of *Me'or 'Ayin* appears to be an anonymous Arabic grammatical work that is extant in a number of manuscripts.[7] This text is referred to in the colophon simply as *al-Mukhtaṣar* ("The Digest"). It is largely devoted to verbal inflections, but also contains chapters on other grammatical topics. The author was an anonymous scholar who mentions 'Abū al-Faraj Hārūn as his contemporary. It is clear that the work is dependent on 'Abū al-Faraj to a large extent, though the author had access to earlier Karaite sources as well.

A number of fragmentary texts from the early Karaite grammatical tradition are extant.[8] These are all closely related to the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ but are of anonymous or uncertain authorship. In this paper I shall examine the contents and background of one of the texts from this group.

The text in question is a treatise on biblical Hebrew verbs. The main manuscript of the work was discovered in the Firkovitch collections in St. Petersburg by A. Harkavy, who published some sections of it.[9] Harkavy believed that the work was based on extracts from the writings of Saadya Gaon that

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[7] The text, first discovered by M. Zislin (cf. Zislin, ed., *Me'or 'Ayin* [Moscow, 1990], 17), is preserved in the manuscript II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 2591. A number of fragments of the work have been preserved in the Cairo Geniza.

[8] Most of the texts of this category that have come to my attention have been published in Khan, *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts*.

[9] A. Harkavy, "Mikhtav yad yashan bediqduq veshorashim," *Studien und Mittheilungen aus der Kaiserlichen Oefffentlichen Bilbliothek zu St. Petersburg* 5 (St. Petersburg, 1891).

were elaborated upon by a later author. His main arguments for this was that on two occasions a statement is attributed to somebody known as Sa'īd (*kalām Sa'īd* ["the words of Sa'īd"] and *qāla Sa'īd* ["Sa'īd has said"]). The compiler of the work refers to himself as "the commentator" (*al-mufassir*), who explains and expatiates on the statements of Sa'īd. The name Sa'īd was interpreted by Harkavy as the Arabic name of Saadya.[10] This view is also followed by Allony[11], who regarded it as a reworked form of Saadya's book on Hebrew grammar, *Kitāb Faṣīḥ Lughat al-'Ibrāniyyīna* ("The Book of the Elegance of the Language of the Hebrews").

It is difficult to accept the identification of the Sa'īd in this text with Saadya. An examination of the content of the text reveals that the grammatical theory of both the primary author Sa'īd and the commentator of the text differs in a number of respects from the theory presented to us by Saadya in his grammar book. In our text the derivative base of inflected verbal forms is the imperative, whereas Saadya maintained that verbal forms were derived from nominals.[12] Within the category of verbal forms, moreover, Saadya regarded the past form to be primary and the imperative and future to be derivative.[13] The technical terminology used in our text differs considerably from the terminology used by Saadya. One should contrast the close parallelism between the terminology in Saadya's *Kitāb Faṣīḥ*

[10] The Arabic name of Saadya, Sa'īd, is attested in a number of medieval sources; cf. H. Malter, *Saadiah Gaon: His Life and Works* (Philadelphia, 1921), 25–6, n. 3.

[11] N. Allony, "*Kitāb Naḥw al-'Ibrānī* – Diqduq halashon ha'ivrit," *Sinai* 90 (1982), 111–2.

[12] A. Dotan, *The Dawn of Hebrew Linguistics. The Book of Elegance of the Language of the Hebrews by Saadia Gaon. Introduction and Critical Edition* (Jerusalem, 1997), 127ff.

[13] ibid., 134.

Lughat al-ʿIbrāniyyīna and that of the text known as *Kitāb Naḥw al-ʿIbrānī* ("The Book of Hebrew Grammar"), which is clearly a shortened version of Saadya's grammar book.[14] The style of presentation that is found in our text is also radically different from that of Saadya. In the discursive passages in the text, a variety of alternative views are offered concerning the derivation of verbal forms. Saadya, in his presentation of grammatical issues, has, by contrast, a categorical approach with little discussion of alternative views or possibilities.

It is now clear that this text belongs to the Karaite tradition of Hebrew grammatical thought. A comparison with the other sources in this field, moreover, demonstrates that it is closer in a number of respects to the *Diqduq* of Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ than to other Karaite grammatical works. These parallels are found in the grammatical theory exhibited by the treatise, in the technical terminology and also in certain aspects of the style of presentation.

The base of the derivation of a verb is the imperative form. Much of the terminology is Hebrew, although the treatise itself is written in Arabic. In numerous places of the treatise there are discussions that present a variety of different views rather than asserting one particular view. The subject matter of the treatise, i.e. the derivational morphology of verbs, is, moreover, one of the central concerns of the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ.

The Structure of the Work

The treatise is a systematic classification of Hebrew verbs. It consists of a series of chapters, each devoted to verbs with

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[14] Fragments of the text *Kitāb Naḥw al-ʿIbrānī* from the Cairo Geniza have been published in I. Eldar, "*Kitāb Naḥw al-ʿIbrānī* – Taqṣir midiqduqō shel rav Saadya Gaon," *Lĕšonénu* 45 (1981); and Allony, "Diqduq."

imperative bases of one particular pattern. Most chapters include an alphabetically arranged list of imperative bases (referred to as *al-'aleph-bet*), discussion of any problematic issues regarding the derivation of the verb forms and a paradigm of the inflected forms of a sample verb of the category in question.

The treatise brings together in a range of structural categories much of the grammatical analysis of verbs that is found scattered throughout the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ. It attempts neither to systematize all aspects of grammar found in the *Diqduq*, nor to extend the treatment of grammar beyond the topics found there. This is in contrast with the grammatical works of 'Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, which present a comprehensive coverage of Hebrew morphology and syntax.

In its overall structure, the treatise differs from Ibn Nūḥ's *Diqduq*, which, as we have seen, consists of grammatical notes on the Bible arranged in the order of the biblical verses. It, nevertheless, exhibits a similarity to the *Diqduq* in its method of discussing problematic issues. As is the case in the *Diqduq*, these discussions frequently offer a variety of different opinions concerning the derivation of a form. This applies especially where there is a problematic issue (referred to by the term *mas'ala*) concerning the derivation. In many cases the author or commentator argues for one particular view, though in a few cases the question is left open. It is relevant to note that all the views cited in Ibn Nūḥ's *Diqduq* and in the treatise are anonymous. One consequence of this is that no particular opinion is given authority by virtue of its attribution to a specific scholar. The purpose of this method of presentation was to attempt to reach the truth by exploring many possible paths, and appears to have had a pedagogical purpose as well, encouraging

enquiry and engagement rather than passive acceptance of authority.

In many cases, the various views offered are clearly opinions held by other scholars. These are often attributed to people by phrases such as *qawm qālū* ("some people have said") or *qāla ba'ḍuhum* ("somebody has said"). One cannot exclude the possibility, however, that in some cases, differing views may have been presented as hypothetical alternatives. The purpose of this was to stimulate enquiry by making readers atune to particular issues that required explanation (*masā'il*). In one passage in the treatise,[15] the following reason is given for presenting a range of different opinions:

> I have expounded all this so that you may ask questions such as these to anybody claiming knowledge of grammar and see how opinions change and differ from one another concerning them. *Let a wise man hear and he will increase in wisdom* (Prov. 1:5).

According to this statement, the pedagogical purpose in this method of presentation is to alert the reader to all possible interpretations and equip him to engage in discussion with other scholars on the relevant issues.[16]

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[15] Khan, *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts*, 124–5.

[16] The presentation of alternative interpretations that often complement one another is a hallmark of Karaite biblical scholarship. It is a prominent feature of many Karaite Bible translations and exegetical texts written in the tenth and eleventh centuries; cf. M. Polliack, *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation: A Linguistic and Exegetical Study of Karaite Translations of the Pentateuch from the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries C.E.* (Leiden, 1997), 26–31, 181–99, 263–8)

The Identity of the Author

As has been remarked, the compiler of the work refers to himself as "the commentator" (*al-mufassir*), whose role it is to explain and expatiate on the statements of a certain Saʿīd. It is now clear that this Saʿid cannot be Saadya, but rather that he, and the commentator as well, must have been Karaites close to the circle of Ibn Nūḥ. Bacher has already proposed that the author Saʿīd was a Karaite.[17] He surmised that he was to be identified with Yefet ben ʿEli. In his Bible Commentaries, Yefet occasionally touches upon grammatical issues and he follows a grammatical theory close to the one that is found in the treatise and also in the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ. I am not aware of any source, however, that attributes a grammatical work to Yefet. A more serious obstacle to Bacher's proposal is the fact that Yefet is not referred to elsewhere as Saʿīd. The medieval sources give his Arabic name as ʾAbū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Baṣrī.[18]

More probable is the identification of the Saʿīd in our text with Saʿīd Shīrān. This scholar is referred to in one source as a grammarian who was a pupil of ʾAbū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Bakhtawaih.[19] Yūsuf ibn Bakhtawaih appears to have been an alternative name of Yūsuf ibn Nuḥ, and indeed the treatise exhibits many parallels with the grammatical work of Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ, both in its content and argumentation. These provide

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[17] W. Bacher, *Die Anfänge der hebräischen Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1895), 55.

[18] See S. Poznański, *The Karaite Literary Opponents of Saadiah Gaon* (London, 1908), 20–30; Skoss, "Jafet ben Ali-ha-Levi," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica: Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 8 (Berlin, 1931), 754–9 and J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1935), 30–1.

[19] S. Poznański, "Karaite Miscellanies," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 8 (Old Series) (1895–6), 699; M. Steinschneider, *Die Arabische Literatur der Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1902), 89; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 30.

internal evidence that the author of the treatise belonged to Ibn Nūḥ's circle.

The Verbal Paradigms

The paradigms of verbs in the treatise illustrate the full range of possible inflections of each imperative base pattern. In most paradigms, a large proportion of the forms are not attested in the biblical corpus and are, therefore, posited on the basis of analogy. In some cases virtually the whole paradigm is constructed by analogy. The paradigm of the imperative שַׁפְרֵה[20] for example, contains only one form that is attested, namely the 3ms. past form שִׁפְרָה (Job 26:13). Similarly the paradigm of the imperative שְׁפוּטֵה[21] is entirely hypothetical except for the 3pl. imperfect יִשְׁפּוּטוּ (Exod. 18:26).

Small differences in the arrangement of the paradigms can be found. All begin with the masculine singular imperative, which is the base form. This may be followed either by a further inflection of the imperative such as the masculine plural, by a past form or by a future form. Many paradigms also contain forms of the active participle and sometimes also of the infinitive. If the verb in question is transitive, each part of the verb is presented first in its independent form and then in the forms that it has when taking pronominal objects. Arabic translations are sometimes given for the masculine singular imperative form, and sporadically also of other forms in the paradigm.

In order to illustrate the inflected forms of verbs with *shewa* and *pataḥ* in the imperative, the author presents the paradigm of the verb שְׁמַע. The fact that this particular verb is chosen from

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[20] Khan, *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts*, 112–3.
[21] Ibid., 170–1.

among the numerous list of verbs with an imperative of the same pattern was considered by Harkavy to be an indication that the text was based on the work of Saadya. In his grammar book, *Kitāb Faṣīḥ Lughat al-ʿIbrāniyyīna*, Saadya cites a full paradigm of this verb to demonstrate the full range of potential inflections in a Hebrew verb. As we have seen, it is clear from the grammatical theory exhibited by the treatise on verbs that the author was a Karaite close to the circle of Ibn Nūḥ. It is, nevertheless, possible that the inclusion of paradigms in the treatise is the result of influence from Saadya. During Saadya's lifetime, the paradigm format was not used by Arabic grammarians to illustrate the inflections of verbs. Indeed, it appears not to have been adopted in the Arabic grammatical tradition until several centuries later.[22] Paradigms are not found in the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ. The inspiration for the author of the treatise, therefore, appears to have come from the grammar book of Saadya. The arrangement of the paradigm of שָׁמַע in the Karaite treatise, however, differs from that of Saadya.

Saadya's paradigm contains forms both from the *qal* and from the *hiphʿil* stems. The forms are arranged according to the person of the verb in the following order: first person, second person, third person. Within each of the persons, the forms are arranged in the order: masculine singular, feminine singular, masculine plural, feminine plural. Each of these is given with the full range of possible pronominal object suffixes. The order of presentation is: past (suffix conjugation), imperative, future (prefix conjugation). The imperative is included within the entries of the second person forms. The other entries include only the past and the future forms.

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[22] E. Goldenberg, "Luaḥ ha-neṭiya ha-ʿivri ha-rishon," *Lĕšonénu* 43 (1979).

When we compare this with the paradigm of שמע that is given in the Karaite treatise, we find the following differences: Only the forms of the *qal* stem are given. The paradigm was intended to illustrate the inflections of one particular class of verbs, namely those with an imperative with the pattern שְׁמַע.

The Karaite paradigm begins with the masculine singular imperative שְׁמַע followed by the second person masculine singular past form שָׁמַעְתָּ then the plural imperative שִׁמְעוּ followed by the masculine plural past form שְׁמַעְתֶּם. This may be regarded as being based on the entries for second person forms in Saadya's paradigm. As remarked, the second person forms were placed by Saadya together with the imperative. The imperative is placed by the Karaite author, however, before the past form, whereas Saadya places the imperative after the past form. No future form of the second person verbs are given in the Karaite paradigm.

The paradigm of שמע continues with the first person singular future and past (אֶשְׁמַע, שָׁמַעְתִּי), the third person masculine singular future and past (יִשְׁמַע, שָׁמַע), the first person plural future and past (נִשְׁמַע, שָׁמַעְנוּ), the second person masculine singular future form (תִּשְׁמַע), the third person masculine plural future and past (יִשְׁמְעוּ שָׁמְעוּ,). These are followed by the masculine singular form of the active participle שֹׁמֵעַ and its inflections with pronominal suffixes. At this point the paradigm breaks off. The following page is missing in the extant manuscript and it is likely, judging by other paradigms in the treatise, that the paradigm שמע contained a number of further items, such as the feminine and plural forms of the active participle.

The presentation of the future forms of the finite verb before the past forms differs from that of Saadya's paradigm, in which the past forms are always given first, followed by the future. As

we have seen, in the second person, which includes the imperative, Saadya's order of presentation is: past, imperative, future. The Karaite paradigm presents the imperative forms followed by the past with no future forms. The Karaite paradigm also differs from that of Saadya in the order in which the various persons of the verb are presented. We have remarked already that the Karaite paradigm begins with the second person to allow the imperative to be placed at the beginning. The first and third person forms are not, however, presented after this in two systematically arranged groups. Rather, forms of these two persons alternate: first singular, third masculine singular, first plural, second masculine singular, third masculine plural. The order of presentation is not by person but according to the alphabetic arrangement of the verbal prefixes ת-, נ-, י-, א-.

Even allowing for the *lacuna* at the end, it appears that the paradigm did not include a complete and systematic inventory of all forms of the prefix and suffix conjugations. The forms of the third feminine singular, second feminine singular and second feminine plural are missing. This should be contrasted with Saadya's paradigm, where all the possible inflections are included.

As far as we can tell from the surviving manuscripts, Saadya presented a paradigm of only one verb. Saadya's intention was that his paradigm of the verb שמע would illustrate the inflection of the Hebrew verb in general and not specifically the forms of verbs with the same phonetic and morphological patters as שמע. As we have seen, Saadya's paradigm includes not only the inflection of the *qal* stem of שמע but also that of the *hiph'il*. The orthography of some items of Saadya's paradigm in the manuscripts reflects the phonetic form that does not actually occur with שמע, e.g., השמיע (masculine singular imperative

hiph'il), in which the *yod* is apparently intended to represent the *ṣere* vowel that is found in verbs without a final guttural (e.g., הַשָּׁמֵד). The expected form from the verb שמע would have *pataḥ* (הַשָּׁמַע). This indicates that Saadya was concerned with the typical features of verbal inflection rather than with the inflection of one particular pattern of verb.[23] Indeed, one of the reasons for his choosing the verb שמע to illustrate verbal inflections appears to have been the fact that this verb is attested in a very wide range of inflections in the Bible. Only the verb שלח is attested in a greater number of inflections. He preferred to use the verb שמע, however, no doubt because, unlike שלח, its Arabic translation corresponded closely to it in form.[24] Saadya, one should recall, was concerned to a large extent with the general theory of language and not only the Hebrew language. His paradigm, therefore, appears also to have been intended to illustrate the inflections of the Arabic verb.[25] This should be contrasted with the Karaite treatise on verbs, in which a paradigm is given to illustrate the specific inflectional forms of each class of Hebrew verb. The remaining paradigms in the Karaite treatise, therefore, appear to be wholly the work of the author.

The other paradigms do not conform exactly to the aforementioned pattern of presentation that is found in the paradigm of שמע. Certain general trends of arrangement are, however, clearly discernible. The masculine singular imperative, of course, is always at the head of the paradigm and together with this are often grouped the masculine plural imperative and the second person forms. The order of the remaining persons is

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[23] Dotan, *The Dawn*, 198.

[24] E. Goldenberg, "שמע – Po'al le-dugma be-luaḥ ha-neṭiya ha-'ivri shel Rav Sa'adya Gaon," *Lěšonénu* 55 (1991), 83–99.

[25] Dotan, *The Dawn*, 109.

arranged according to the alphabetic order of the future prefixes
(אינת). The future forms are generally, but not consistently,
presented before the past forms. All verb forms that can be used
transitively are given with the full range of pronominal object
suffixes. In some cases this leads to unattested and often
semantically questionable phrases, such as the attachment of
first and second person direct object suffixes to the verb דִּבֶּר.

The paradigms in the Karaite treatise are not arranged in
vertical columns, but are presented rather horizontally in a
continuous text. The words, however, are often written one
under the other on the page, which gives the impression of a
vertical column arrangement. The paradigms are divided into
sections, which are generally separated by a space and the letter
'פ. This usage of the letter is taken from the codicological
practice of Bible manuscripts, where it represents an
abbreviation of the "open" (פתוחה) type of paragraph section.
Each section consists of one verbal form with its various
pronominal object suffixes.

There are no full paradigms of verbs in the *Diqduq* of Ibn
Nūḥ, yet in a number of places where an imperative base is
mentioned, this is followed by a list of some of its inflected
forms. In such cases the future forms are generally listed
according to the alphabetic order of the prefixes (אינת), as is the
case in the treatise on verbs, e.g.:

יָפְיָפִיתָ מבני אדם: קאל בעץ' אלנאס אן אמרהא יַפְיֵפַה: ואלעבר יָפְיָפָה: ואל א'
י' נ' ת' יכון אֲיַפְיָפֶה יְיַפְיָפֶה נְיַפְיָפֶה תְיַפְיָפֶה:

יָפְיָפִיתָ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם: Some people have said that the imperative
of this (Psa. 45:3) is יַפְיֵפַה and the past is יָפְיָפָה. The forms
with the addition of the prefixes אינת would be יְיַפְיָפֶה, אֲיַפְיָפֶה,
תְיַפְיָפֶה, נְיַפְיָפֶה. (*Diqduq* on Psa. 45:3)

ואלכלמה אלתי בוזן דַּבֵּר כַּפֵּר אדא ירכב אל א' י' נ' ת' עליהא תכון אֲדַבֵּר
אֲכַפֵּר יְכַפֵּר נְכַפֵּר נְדַבֵּר נְסַפֵּר נְדַשֵּׁן:

When the prefixes אינת are attached to words with the
pattern of דַּבֵּר and דַשֵּׁן, they are: נְדַשֵּׁן, נְסַפֵּר, נְדַבֵּר, נְכַפֵּר, יְכַפֵּר,
אֲכַפֵּר, אֲדַבֵּר. (*Diqduq* on Psa. 51:7)

The writing of the verbal prefix letters together in a group (אינת),
which is found in our treatise, and also in Ibn Nūḥ's *Diqduq* and
al-Fāsī's lexicon, may itself be a feature that was taken from the
Saadyanic tradition. Although Saadya did not order his
paradigms according to the sequence of אינת, he nevertheless
presents it elsewhere in his works as a distinct functional
category of letters. He made a functional division of the Hebrew
alphabet into 11 root letters and 11 servile letters (termed
lawāḥiq or *zawā'id* [added letters]). The servile letters were
subdivided by him into particles and prepositions that did not
alter the vocalization of a word when they were attached to it,
viz. בהוכלמש, and verbal prefixes that altered the vocalization of
the derivational base, which Saadya believed to be a nominal
form, viz. אינת.[26]

The Classification of Hebrew Verbs by Other Karaite Grammarians

From the work of 'Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, we learn that certain
Karaite grammarians devised a system of classifying Hebrew
verbal conjugations by a series of symbolic catchwords. His
presentation of this system is extant in his grammar books *al-
Kitāb al-Mushtamil* and *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*.[27] 'Abū al-Faraj states
that the method of classification was created originally by earlier

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[26] Ibid., 112.

[27] This appears in chapter 22 of part I of G. Khan et al, eds., *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*.
'Abū al-Faraj's presentation of the conjugations was reproduced by the
author of the later Karaite grammatical work, *Me'or 'Ayin* (Zislin, ed.).

Karaite grammarians. He refers to these by the term *diqduqiyyūna*. This term was used by 'Abū al-Faraj to designate the scholars of the early Karaite tradition of grammar:

אעלם אן בעץ' מן תקדם מן אלדקדוקיין עלי מא חכי וצ'ע מן הדה אלעלאמאת הָבֵא גֻּנִּי פְּרָת שׁוּעָל וגא מן בעדה מן וצ'ע כּוֹנַן וקד תבקא בעד דלך מן אלתצאריף מא ימכן אן יגעל לה עלאמאת

Note that one of the earlier grammarians, according to what is told, created the symbols הָבֵא, גֻּנִּי, פְּרָת and שׁוּעָל. Somebody after him created the symbol כּוֹנַן and there are still some remaining conjugations for which other symbols could be proposed. (Khan et al, eds., *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*, I.22.1).

As is alluded to in this statement, 'Abū al-Faraj himself expanded the classification of the earlier Karaite tradition by the addition of further symbols. The principle of this symbolic system of classification is that each bi-syllabic symbol represents the vowel of the imperative and the vowel of the past form of a conjugation. There are two possibilities:

(1) The first vowel of the symbol corresponds to the first vowel of the imperative and the second vowel of the symbol corresponds to the first vowel of the past form, e.g. the verbs הָשֵׁב (imperative) – הֵשִׁיב (past), בָּרֵךְ (imperative) – בֵּרֵךְ (past); and זְרֵה (imperative) – זֵרֵה (past) all fall within the class of conjugation that is designated by the symbol הָבֵא. This is the principle of the symbols proposed by the earlier grammarians.

(2) The first vowel of the symbol corresponds to the last vowel of the imperative and the second vowel of the symbol corresponds to the last vowel of the past form, e.g. the verbs הִתְעַנָּה (imperative) – נִבְנָה (past), הִתְעַנֵּה (imperative) – הִבָּנֵה (imperative) –

(past), הִתְרָאֵה (imperative) – הִתְרָאָה (past) all belong to the category designated by the symbol עֵדָה. This type of symbol was proposed by 'Abū al-Faraj to incorporate conjugations that were not covered by the earlier symbols.

This symbolic classification of verbs is found in various sections of the works of 'Abū al-Faraj. In each section his focus is on a different aspect of verbal inflection. He uses the classification in order to present examples from the full range of attested verbs in a systematic manner. In *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī* the classification occurs in a section that is concerned primarily with active and passive participles. In his exemplification of each category of this classification, therefore, 'Abū al-Faraj cites only the masculine singular imperative, the masculine singular past form, the active participle and the passive participle. He does not give the full range of inflections. The classification is used in *al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil* to illustrate other aspects of verbal inflection. It occurs, for example, in a section that is concerned with the vocalization of future (imperfect) forms. The inflections of verb that are listed for each category in this case, therefore, include the future forms.[28] The classification is also found in a section on pausal and context forms. The list of inflections of each category in this case includes pausal and context forms.[29]

According to a remark of 'Abū al-Faraj at the end of his chapter on the classification of verbs in *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*, earlier Karaite grammarians in Iraq had made full expositions of verbal conjugations:

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[28] MS II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 2287, fol. 92a ff.
[29] MS II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 2287, fol. 393b ff.

ולם אשרח כל תצריף מן דלך אלי אנתהאיה לאנה ליס דלך אלגרץ' ההנא בל
אלאמר ואלמאצ'י ואלפאעל ואלמפעול ולאן דלך קד תקצ'אה בעץ' אלדקדוקיין
מן משאיכנא אלערקיין רחמהם אללה

I have not presented exhaustively the entire inflection of
(each of these categories), since this is not my purpose
here. Rather, I have presented only the imperative, the past
form, the active participle and the passive participle. Such
a (full listing of inflections) has, moreover, been
undertaken by some of the grammarians from among our
Iraqi elders, may God grant them rest. (Khan et al, eds.,
Al-Kitāb al-Kāfī, I.22.55)

The symbolic system of classification is also found in the *Me'or
'Ayin* and the anonymous Karaite grammatical text known as *al-
Mukhtaṣar*,[30] both of which are dependent on the works of 'Abū
al-Faraj. The classification in *al-Mukhtaṣar* is accompanied by
detailed illustration of all inflections and is accompanied by
paradigms. Of particular interest in the present context is the fact
that the author of this work on several occasions refers to the
teachings of the "Persians" (אלעגם) regarding certain details of
the verbal inflections. These are referred to in the past tense[31]
and were no doubt the Karaite grammarians of Iran who were
active at an earlier period.

    The symbolic type of classification is not found, however, in
the Karaite treatise on verbs attributed to Sa'īd, nor is it found in
the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ. As can be seen in the examples given
above, one symbol may embrace verbs of several different
patterns. There is no evidence of any such grouping in our

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[30] The text, which was first discovered by M. Zislin (cf. Zislin, *Me'or 'Ayin*,
17) is preserved in the manuscript II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 2591. A number of
fragments of the work can be found in the Cairo Geniza. See also Khan,
Early Karaite Grammatical Texts, 12.

[31] E.g. ...וקד קיל אן אלעגם קאלו גיר דלך ("It is said that the Persians said
something else [i.e. had a different opinion]") (II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 2591 fol.
9b)

treatise. Furthermore, according to ʾAbū al-Faraj,[32] some verbs cannot be assigned to any of the classes that are represented by the symbols. These include imperatives such as שֵׁב and דַּע, which do not have a past form, passive verbs, which cannot logically have an imperative, anomalous verb forms such as יִשְׁפּוּטוּ (Exod. 18:26), or rarely attested verbs with multiple letters such as חֳמַרְמָרוּ (Lam. 1:20). All of these types of verb appear in the Karaite treatise on verbs, which suggests that the work is not closely dependent on the tradition of symbolic classification. It seems that the detailed studies of Hebrew verbal conjugations in the early Karaite grammatical tradition that were alluded to by ʾAbū al-Faraj were not always carried out within the framework of the symbolic classification.

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[32] Khan et al, eds., *Al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*, I.22.27–31

JEWS IN CHANGING EMPIRES OF MEDIEVAL ISLAM:
NOT ONLY ESCHATOLOGY AND MESSIANISM[1]

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Introduction

Medieval Jewish minorities did not exert any significant influence on events of empires in transition, be it the decline and collapse, or the rise of political superpowers.[2] Nevertheless, there is a long tradition in medieval Jewish historiography dealing with this topic, with two clearly defined trends identifying two distinct types of responses to the events, using different research methods and producing different sets of conclusions.

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[1] The first version of this paper was presented at the conference "Once Empires Fade – Religion, Ethnicity and the Possibilities for Peace," organized by The Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the Department of History and The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, April 9–11, 1994. This version has benefited from the good advice of many of my colleagues, among them Professors Robert Brody, Haggai Ben-Shammai and Norman Stillman. The result remains my full responsibility.

[2] Haim-Hillel Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, 1976), 385–92.

The first predictable Jewish response to the decline of medieval empires was the development of a sense of permanent threat vis-à-vis the future. The line of research stemming from this response makes use of the terminus technicus "interregnum" as a catchword to express the fundamentally humiliating condition of a medieval minority in periods lacking a strong central government, when the streets were ruled by the masses. The research that produced these conclusions focused mainly on the ways in which the individual confronted his daily existential difficulties. Numerous examples showed that this sense of threat was shared by many individuals in the society and led researchers to see it as a typical reaction of the entire minority and dub it "the worldly reaction."[3]

In the second kind of reaction to the decline of medieval empires, Jews attempted to understand the changes within a broader theological context. They regarded the global changes as a pattern of connecting highways and byways deliberately constructed by God to guide them on a path toward complete redemption from their plight in Exile. The resulting trend of research examines messianic expressions, apocalyptic works, commentaries and poems written during times of major change in medieval political superpowers.[4] Researchers have defined these expressions as "the spiritual reaction."

The conclusion could be drawn from both of these types of reactions that the Jewish response to great changes in medieval empires had an ethnic separatist goal that was indifferent to

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[3] Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* III (New York and Philadelphia, 1952), 75–119, 138–208.

[4] Ben-Zion Dinur, *Israel Ba-Golah* I, 1 [in Hebrew] (Tel-Aviv, 1961), v-lvi; this was the main concept behind the following two books: Abba-Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (New York, 1927), and Joseph Sarachek, *The Doctrine of Messiah in Medieval Jewish Literature* (New York, 1932).

broader universal peace, the worldly reaction being interested only in the minority's needs and the spiritual reaction focusing exclusively on national aspirations towards a utopian future.[5]

This paper will attempt to enrich our picture of the minority's reactions to major changes in medieval empires. I will reevaluate the meaning of the above-mentioned Jewish responses to political and military events in Arab lands during the Middle Ages while indicating a third type of response often overlooked by scholars studying minority responses to empires in transition.

Time Frame and Regional Picture
Muslims conquered an area previously controlled by two empires, the Byzantine and Persian, and one kingdom, Visigoth Spain. The Arab conquest—which took place from the first third of the seventh to the first third of the eighth centuries—changed the lives of world Jewry by spreading a new umbrella of authority over almost the entire Jewish world. This included the Jews who dwelled in the area extending from India to the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, the area of the former Sassanid Persian and Byzantine empires and of the Berbers, who were defeated by the Arabs, as well as the Jews of the Land of Israel and the Spanish Jews.

In the mid-eighth century the Jews of the eastern regions faced the Abbasid revolution that brought new forces to positions of power in the Caliphate and shifted its capital from Damascus to Baghdad. An escapee from this revolution established the Umayyad kingdom of Spain at that time.

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[5] Shlomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* IV (Berkeley, 1988), 45–73.

Another important revolution in the Islamic world took place during the tenth century, over the regions of North Africa, Egypt and the Land of Israel: This was the Shīʿite Fatimid revolution, which initiated the conceptual change that shattered the idea of a unified Caliphate. In the third decade of the tenth century, the Fatimids pronounced themselves Caliphs and claimed the throne of the entire Islamic world. Soon after their announcement, the Spanish Umayyads followed with the same claim. During the eleventh century many new and drastic changes of power occurred from West to East: In Spain the Umayyad Caliphate collapsed and a group of small kingdoms was built on its ruins; Bedouins invaded North Africa, disturbing the stability of the kingdom that ruled it; the Seljuk-Turks invaded Syria and the Land of Israel, endangering the Fatimid Caliphate; and the last year of that century saw the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, who established their Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The twelfth century added two significant events: the establishment of the Almohad empire in Morocco, Spain and Tunisia by local North-African elements; and in the seventies of that century, the replacement of the Fatimid Caliphate by the Ayyubids, who defeated the Crusaders and brought an end to the first Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The collapse of old empires and the rise of new powers in both the East and the West of the Muslim world, form the backdrop to our discussion.[6]

The Worldly Reaction to the Events
Whereas information dealing with the decline of empires generally comes from historians focusing on the major events in

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[6] Peter Malcolm Holt, Bernard Lewis and Ann K. Lambson, eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam*, I (Cambridge, 1970).

their broader context, our main source of information for the Jewish responses to these events is the Cairo Geniza, a large percentage of which comprises the writing and letters of common people. Here we have a first-class "worldly" reflection on the great events. Luckily for historians, the people whose writings were preserved in the Geniza were very reflective and alert to the happenings of Muslim society, and especially to international events. These "individual worldly reflections" were expressed in a variety of genres, from poetry to short notes, and their contents (in contrast to their literary style) can be characterized according to two main types:

1. *The Detached or Indifferent Reaction:* At first glance the "business as usual" attitude toward the events may appear less relevant to our topic. Yet despite its unexceptional character, this type of reaction deserves special attention. The people writing such reactions were in the eye of the storm, as it were, and still managed to find the time and the nerve to deal with such elementary mundane problems as the price of textiles, without even hinting at the fact that the world around them was collapsing. Typical of this is the merchant writing in the midst of the Almohad conquest of Morocco, who wanted nothing other than the merchandise he had sent a few months before the events; and another writing at the same time regarding his son's marriage to his cousin who lived in Morocco. Another example occurred during the 1050s: When the Bedouins invaded North Africa bringing disaster to the cities of the Zirids, a merchant wrote a letter dedicated solely to his personal needs in these hard times. There are numerous other examples in this vein.[7]

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[7] Shlomo Dov Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (Princeton, 1973), 138–43, 147–53, 323–30; idem, *A Mediterranean Society*, V, 46–9.

2. *The "Mourning" Reaction:* People expressed their feelings in letters, poems and short lists. Only rarely do we find a text itemizing an individual's problems without offering anything else, either on a technical or spiritual level; although at first glance one might interpret these reactions as mere helpless confrontation with hard times, the main goal of these expressions was essentially to provide information and to update other Jews in three ways:

- Giving descriptions of the horrors, they served the intelligence needs of fellow co-religionists in other corners of the empire, for purposes of security and even future economic activity.
- By stressing their difficulties in experiencing events shared by the whole nation, they strengthened their bonds of kinship with their distant brethren.
- By their expression of pain, people delivered all kinds of neutral (non-professional) quotidian information.[8]

Spiritual Response

The most commonly treated Jewish response to the decline and collapse of empires is the spiritual, messianic, one. This is due primarily to the availability of sources and the variety of disciplines dealing with them.[9] The messianic response is usually divided into social-spiritual and political-military messianic movements. However, the last active Jewish

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[8] Ibid., 45–73.
[9] Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 75–119, 138–208; Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1967); idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1972); Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven and London, 1998), 1–57.

messianic military movements—those of the eastern Muslim world elaborated below—took place during the great global political changes of the seventh and eighth centuries. From the eighth century on, the Jewish messianic movements had primarily social and spiritual manifestations.[10]

The social movements entailed the organization of groups of believers around a charismatic leader regarded as a messiah or at least as an authoritative interpreter of current events, such as the false messiahs who attracted the Jews of Morocco, Spain and Yemen in the twelfth century.[11] The patterns of these groups were similar, and they consisted of several elements: (1) a charismatic leader serving as a messiah or a spokesman for the group; (2) a new explanation of present events in the context of a messianic theory and as part of a complete and total apocalyptic vision, based on authoritative Jewish sources; (3) a declared intention of imminent immigration to the Land of Israel where conditions will be changed, often in a miraculous way (testimonies from the East and from the West describe Jewish people standing on their roofs, waiting to be transported from there to the messiah); (4) an apocalyptic utopia for the spiritual "correction" [= repentance] of the Gentile nations, unlike the dominant traditional trend which anticipated the physical elimination of the non-Jews; and (5) interestingly enough, only rarely do we find demands to repent or to change one's daily life, and to be stricter regarding certain aspects of Jewish religious behavior.

Participants in and observers of these movements as they took place—especially during the Arab conquest and the events

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[10] Ifran Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran – New Document* (Brussels, 1971), 11–117; Joëlle Beaucamp, et al., "La Persecution des chrétiens de Nagran et la chronologie himyarite," *ARAM* 11–2 (1999–2000), 15–23.

[11] See n. 27, below.

of the eighth century, and the late eleventh to the twelfth century—reflect the events of the time in their writings: the conquest of the Land of Israel by the Crusaders, or the rise of the Almoravids and the Almohads. They could be regarded as reflecting the imperial map of the Muslim world not only because of the time of their rise, but first and foremost because of their consciousness of these events and their reflections on them.

While military and social organizations can be measured and clearly defined, the spiritual reaction has to be evaluated by means of literary classification. For our purposes, it is not a classification according to traditional genres (apocalyptic visions, sermons, homiletics and epistles), but rather according to the level of reaction to the global changes and the intensity of the messianic idea of a certain textual response. The types of such spiritual reaction are: an acute apocalypse; a dreaming apocalypse; restrained homiletics; and reactive prayers for revenge or redemption.

Gathering and analyzing the material written in reaction to the decline and change of empires, we discern a pattern corresponding fully to the Jewish military reaction to apocalyptic events. The most intensive and explicit messianic reaction to such events was that of the Jews of the eastern regions of the Caliphate. Pseudo-epigraphic apocalyptic works are not found among the Jews of western Islam. These two types of apocalyptic works—the acute and the dreaming—were written mainly in the Land of Israel, and also in Babylonia and its periphery (this type may also be found among the Byzantine Jews). Even the dramatic events that took place in the West, such as the rise of the Fatimid Shīʿite empire in Tunisia, left no sign in the writings of the Maghrebi Jews. It was an "eastern"

Karaite of the late tenth century, Yefet b. 'Eli, who commented on contemporary events in the West as part of a wider biblical vision.[12]

The prolific Jewish center in western Islam reacted in a very subtle way to events, either by an occasional note, like the one by Dunash ibn Tamim on the building of al-Mahdiyya as the capital city on the shores of the Mediterranean; by a liturgical piece usually forgoing a detailed description of the events and hoping for a better future; or later, in the twelfth century, during the Almohad persecution, by a sermon in the form of a commentary, interpreting the events in a comforting way. The writer often considered biblical verses potentially relating to the disaster, as did Maimonides' father, Maimon, in his comforting Epistle. In this case, and in similar cases during the earlier Fatimid revolution, events were placed in the context of the Divine plan for world history, which also included relatively short periods of persecution (the period under discussion by a given writer). These periods were regarded as a prelude to better times.[13]

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[12] Haggai Ben-Shammai, "The Attitude of the Early Karaites towards Islam," in Isadore Twersky, ed., *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, II (1984), 16–9; idem, "Fragments of Daniel al-Qumisi's commentary on the Book of Daniel as a historical source," *Henoch* 13 (1991), 268–81; idem, "Editions and Versions of Yefet ben Eli's Commentary on the Bible," [in Hebrew] *Alei Sefer* 2 (1976), 17–31; idem, "The Judeo-Arabic vocabulary of Saadya's Bible translations as a vehicle for eschatological messages: The case of Saadya's usage of the 8th form of Arabic *QDR*" in this volume. Professor Ben-Shammai kindly added that elements 2, 3 and 5 are common in Karaite literature of the ninth-tenth century (Daniel al-Qumisi's epistle; commentary to Lamentations of Salmon and the Lamentations of "Mourners of Zion"); see: Haggai Ben-Shammai, "Poetic Works and Lamentations of Qaraite 'mourners of Zion' – Structure and Contents" [in Hebrew], in Shulamit Elizur et al., eds., *Knesset Ezra* (Jerusalem, 1994), 191–234.

[13] On the Building of al-Mahdiyya, see the previous note; for Messianic reactions see M.A. Friedman, *Maimonides, the Yemenite Messiah and*

In some of these works, a utopian messianic plan was drawn. Though the precise dates for final redemption would not be given, these explanations were expected to supply an updated understanding of the events, to comfort the minority and to keep its spirit as high as possible during the worrying period of great changes, while preventing any drastic change in Jewish life.

Military Reaction, Political Involvement and Results
Observing the above two trends, one might assume that the Jewish reactions to declining medieval empires lacked political and military expression. Indeed, scholars interested in this branch of knowledge specifically and deliberately make such a claim, basing their arguments on the fact that the collapse of an empire was not necessarily accompanied by the collapse of the administration, bureaucracy and traditional political framework of society in general. Hence the minorities could anticipate continuity in their basic status. However, the generalization that that Jews were both unable to participate in medieval political life and uninterested in doing so is far from being accurate.

1. *Initiatives:* Indeed, unlike Christians or Muslims who could initiate foreign policy and execute it, cases where Jews were involved in such activities were rare. There were, however, some incidents of military involvement of medieval Oriental Jews. This manifested itself in four ways:

a. Examples of Jewish involvement in helping to weaken an empire are recorded in a number of events. The earliest ones

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Apostasy [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 2002), 9–37, above, n. 9, and Gershon D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sepharadim," in idem, *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Literature* (Philadelphia, 1991), 271–97.

took place in the seventh century during the Arab conquests of
the Land of Israel, where the Jews tried to provide passive
assistance to the Arabs, and in the eighth century when the Jews
of Spain were given arms and participated in the battles against
the Visigoths. In both cases their condition prior to the change
was terrible. This occurred again in the last year of the eleventh
century, when the Jews defended Jerusalem against the
Crusaders, fighting side by side with the Muslim defenders.[14]

b. There were cases of reviving the image of the Jewish
fighter in order to preserve the memory of a normal nation. This
was achieved around 880 in Tunisia by a traveler who vividly
described the ten lost Jewish tribes living independently in their
legendary land; this tale of Jewish autonomy, and others like it,
remained in the collective memory of the Jews throughout the
Middle Ages.[15]

c. There were rare cases of Jews who tried to organize armed
troops and to use arms in order to change their fate. These cases
were almost entirely unique to the East and to the periods
around the Arab conquest, i.e., during the decline of the
Byzantine and the Persian empires in the sixth and early seventh
centuries. Of the two cases described below, the first is real and
the second imaginary, though its impact reflects the power of
ideas.

The first case was that of the Jewish military assistance
provided to the Persian conquest of the Land of Israel at the
beginning of the sixth century. For a short time a Jewish leader

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[14] Land of Israel: Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634—1099* (Cambridge,
1992), 11–74; Spain: Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Muslim Spain*
(Philadelphia, 1973), 1–75; Crusaders: Gil, *Palestine*, 826–37.
[15] Haim Zeev Wolf Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa* 1
(Leiden, 1974), 303–4.

was even appointed by the Persians over these areas.[16] During the Arab conquest of the East, a few Jewish military groups tried to rebel against the Arabs and to establish their own political statehood. Both activities were accompanied by high Messianic expectations, as have been examined above.[17]

The second, imaginary, instance of organized Jewish military power was a case mentioned as a real threat to Christianity in the first half of the sixth century by Simon of Beit Arsham. Simon incorrectly described the wars of the Himyarites, a monotheistic group from the Arabian Peninsula, as the war against Christianity of a legendary powerful armed Jewry, from its bases located between Southern Arabia and the Sea of Galilee.[18]

The bitter failure of all the military attempts was imprinted strongly on the nation's collective memory as a recommendation for sober messianism, such that the Jews were never again tempted to exploit future events of collapsing empires to turn their messianic dreams into reality.[19]

d. An exceptional episode of Jews rebelling as an organized group is the case of the Jews of Lucena in southern Spain in the 1080s. The story was told by Abdallah Abu Buluggin, the King of Granada, as follows:

> I imposed on the inhabitants of al-Yasana a heavy load of gold payment in order to supply the army's needs, and they were not used to such a payment. I made them understand that my intentions were serious... Ibn Maimun

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[16] Gil, *Palestine*, 5–10 (especially those referring to Abū 'Isā al-Iṣfahānī).

[17] Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 141–5; Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2004), ch. 5.

[18] Shahid, *Martyrs of Najran*, 11–117; Beaucamp, "La Persecution des chrétiens de Nagran," 15–23.

[19] Moshe David Herr, "Realistic Political Messianism and Cosmic Eschatological Messianism in the Teaching of the Sages," *Tarbiz* 54 (1985), 331–46.

[their leader] succeeded in bringing them to rebel against me. They armed themselves... and the whole city of al-Yasana revolted.[20]

Although the background to this unique case was indeed the weakness of the Kingdom of Granada in its last days and the attempt to escape the heavy burden of taxation, unlike the cases mentioned above, it entailed no intention to revive Jewish statehood. It does, however, hint at more than a bit of Jewish involvement in Spanish politics.[21]

Cases of Jewish involvement for the purpose of establishing an independent Jewish political framework were limited in both time and region. They surfaced around the time of the Muslim conquest and took place exclusively in the Muslim East.

2. *Political and Communal Response:* To these rare instances of Jewish military involvement one must add cases of Jewish involvement in the political life of Muslim countries during times of great change. A few prototypes from the tenth and the eleventh centuries will be mentioned here: Hasday ibn Shaprut who served as secretary of the Umayyad Caliphate; Samuel ibn Nagrela, Abraham ibn Ata, and the Tustari family in Fatimid Egypt; Manasseh ibn al-Qazzaz in Syria; and Natira and his sons in Babylonia. All of these serve as examples of individuals who made their way to the top of the Muslim administration on their own merit, but were regarded by themselves and by the community as court protectors for the Jewish community. These

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[20] Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (Philadelphia, 1979), 217–25.

[21] David J. Wasserstein, *The Caliphate of the West* (Oxford, 1993); idem, *The Role and the Fall of the Party-Kingdoms* (Princeton); Moshe Perlmann, "Eleventh-Century Andalusian Authors on the Jews of Granada," *PAAJR* 18 (1949) 269–90; David J. Wasserstein, "A 'fatwa' on conversion in Islamic Spain," *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations* I (1993), 177–88.

individuals ensured that world Jewry be acquainted with their missions as protectors of their minority communities and perceive their role as communal delegates sent by God.[22]

They used their positions in the courts not only to publicize their activities, but also to establish their status as international leaders: Hasday, for example, in addition to his local Spanish commitment, perceived of himself as the leader of world Jewry. This phenomenon is reflected in his rhymed Hebrew letter to the Queen of Byzantium. Samuel ibn Nagrela also considered himself the leader of world Jewry, emphasizing that as a leader in Spanish Granada, his wars in Spain were nothing less than wars of the community of Israel. Like other Jewish courtiers, both men were involved in court intrigues and tried to bring about a better Muslim leader on their behalf.[23]

Similar political involvement occurred in Egypt toward the traumatic end of the period of the messianic Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim (who disappeared in 1021). Almost all the Jewish courtiers of that time exerted a large measure of influence both in the life of the court and in Jewish politics, when their involvement on behalf of the Jewish community was expected. The absence of a Jewish leader at a time of great political change worried the community, which also felt the change and its ramifications.[24]

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[22] Hirschberg, *North Africa*, 211–7; Menahem Ben-Sasson, "Religious Leadership in Islamic Lands – Forms of Leadership and Sources of Authority," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Jewish Religious Leadership – Image and Reality* (New York, 2004), 195–7; idem, "Al-Andalus: The So-Called 'Golden Age' of Spanish-al-Andalus Jewry – A Critical View," in Christoph Cluse, ed., *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Century)* (Turnhout, 2004), 131–2.

[23] H. Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jewish People*, 452–8; Ashtor, *Spain*, I, 155–227; ibid., II, 41–189.

[24] Gil, *Palestine*, 340–2, 359–64, 809–20 (esp. the Tustaries); idem, *The Tustaries, Family and Sect* (Tel Aviv, 1981).

An example of this can be seen in the case of the North African communities who expressed their distress during the events of 1015–16, when the Sultan and his Jewish physician were absent on a long military journey. Indeed, the communal leaders in such cases are reported in contemporary letters to have been keenly alert to the phenomenon of the decline of empires and its potential influence on the Jewish community. Their activities were updated to reflect the new conditions.[25]

Each time a new Caliph was nominated, new nominations were also needed for the heads of the minority groups. This did not necessarily result in the appointment of a new leader, as the generally accepted procedure was to extend the former leader's tenure. When new dynasties took over, however, a change of Caliph involved a change in the Jewish leadership to one more acceptable to the new ruler. This was the case with the appointment of Moses Maimonides to the position of head of the Jews, when Saladin the Ayyubid replaced the Fatimid dynasty.[26]

As might be expected, not all reactions of minority leaders to a certain situation during times of great change were similar. With the rise of the Almohad empire in North Africa and Spain in the mid-twelfth century, Christians and Jews had to choose between conversion to Islam and death. A few of the Jews chose martyrdom, a few escaped (a reaction used in times of disaster; see below), but the vast majority of the community declared itself ready to convert to Islam, while hoping for better times, which would come only after the passage of more than a century.

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[25] Menahem Ben-Sasson, *The Emergence of the Local Jewish Community in the Muslim World (Qayrawan 800–1057)* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1996), 348–62.

[26] Idem, "Maimonides in Egypt, The First Stage," *Maimonidean Studies* 2 (1991), 3–30.

The first case of mass conversion occurred in Sijilmasa, southern Morocco, in 1142. First to convert was the official head of the community and its spiritual leader, a judge named Joseph b. Amram. A few leaders reacted differently, demanding that those converts who practiced Judaism in secret declare themselves as Jews, even if that meant immediate execution.

The burden of these events not only forced the crypto-Jews to question how to practice Jewish life in secret, but confronted them with basic questions regarding the expectations they had of the surrounding mighty empires (or in Judah Halevi's words in one of his poems: "between the Christian and the Muslim armies my army disappears"). People came close to concluding, in the Almohad era more than at any other period, that God had abandoned the Jews and would never redeem them. After a few years of crypto-Jewish life erosion had left its mark, and the expected outcome was a complete conversion, since no trend to choose martyrdom or to escape was evident. To prevent such an occurrence and to enable the Jews to overcome the hardships of the times, a third option was offered by Maimonides and his father. They instructed the Maghrebi Jews to observe as many commandments as they could secretly in order to feel that they were keeping their Jewish identity. They also developed a comprehensive interpretation of the events that temporarily reassured the Jews of the Maghreb.

These three types of reaction to the rise of a new empire and the subsequent change in status of the Jewish minority reflect the different evaluations of three types of leaders regarding the powers of both Jews and non-Jews in times of great change.[27]

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[27] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, V, 59–62; Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven and London, 1998); Friedman, *Yemenite Messiah*, 9–37; M. Ben-Sasson, "Religious Leadership," 177–209.

3. *Flight:* Times of great flux and the collapse of empires were accompanied by this third form of community response to the events. Jews escaped from areas of instability not only in cases where the status of minorities deteriorated. The main impetus for these demographic changes was the people's reevaluation of a possible destination for immigration. Stability, openness toward minorities and economic opportunities were of great importance when evaluating a potential new home.[28]

It should be born in mind that Mediterranean society was a mobile one, even during the rare patches of peaceful times. Intensive contact between Jewish communities and access to means of transportation made escape relatively easy and uncomplicated. After each of the events mentioned above, an explicit demographic change among the Jews was recorded, with a stream of refugees making its way toward a new haven. Large groups of newcomers were named after their place of origin, a distinction that would remain for a long time, re-shape Jewish society, and create new foci of power in international Jewry. For example: the Jewish center in North Africa was created as a result of the great changes in the East during the seventh and eighth centuries; while the events that took place in the Maghreb and the Land of Israel in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries strengthened the Egyptian and the Yemenite Jewish centers. Population changes were accompanied by other changes—in culture, in traditions of learning, and in mentality: the flight left traumatic scars among the immigrants both of the memory of the event itself and in some instances, of a less-than-warm welcome by their own brethren.[29]

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[28] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, 30–3, 48–57.
[29] The Maghreb: M. Ben-Sasson, *The Emergence of the Local Jewish Community*, 33–53; The Land of Israel: Gil, *Palestine*, 809–20; the

4. *Institutional Change in Jewish Life:* This was another result of changes in the empires' disposition. First, from the seventh century on, the traditional centers—Babylonia (Iraq) and the Land of Israel—found themselves faced with a new reality, operating within a single regime: the Muslim Caliphate. The Abbasid revolution of 750 brought with it a change in location of the seat of the Caliph and his central administration. Soon after this major change in history took effect, a new era in Jewish history began. The leaders of the eastern Jewish regions, the Babylonian Geonim, tried to use the advantage of their location to establish their hegemony over all Jewish communities of Muslim lands, including the Israeli center. The Gaon Rav Yehudai sent letters to Israel pointing to their mistaken traditions, trying to persuade them to desert their traditional customs and to instruct them on how to fulfill the commandments "properly." The Eretz Israel center, for its part, tried to impose its authority over all Jewish communities. The supremacy of Babylonia developed to the extent that their leaders regarded Babylonia as a replacement for Zion, and re-defined the geographical term of Zion with a qualitative description of Babylonia: Zion had been the embodiment of excellence and now, they claimed, the Babylonian center reflected this trait. In practical terms they were not mistaken, since until the third decade of the eleventh century the Babylonian Jewish center retained its supremacy over all the Jewish communities in Muslim lands.[30]

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phenomena were described by Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, 29–74; Ibid., III, 13–4.

[30] M. Ben-Sasson, "Varieties of Inter-Communal Relations in the Geonic Period," in Daniel Frank, ed., *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society and Identity* (Leiden, 1997), 17–31.

Changes in the foci of power in the Muslim world brought new Jewish centers to prominence: In Muslim Spain, which became a Caliphate, the Jewish community developed forms of world leadership as well as claims to be the Chosen Land for Jews in their time. After the announcement of Cairo as capital of the Fatimid Caliphate, the Jewish community of Cairo took upon itself the responsibilities of a leading institution; and as soon as the centrality of the Land of Israel declined, after the arrival of the Seljuks in the 1070s, Cairo—which was the capital of the new empire—became the official leading community of the Jewish Eastern Mediterranean area. This supremacy continued until 1516, when the Mameluk empire collapsed and the Ottoman empire took over.[31]

The relocation of the foci of Jewish power according to the Muslim centers of power did not always occur automatically and unconsciously, but was sometimes the result of the initiatives of leaders who read the "new" maps and acted contrary to the inertia so characteristic of the medieval period. The leaders chose a new center after evaluating the chances of the old location in the face of new conditions, and after a close examination of the possibilities and alternatives.[32]

Conclusion

Generally, it takes time and perspective for people to realize that a new era has begun. Traumatic change or catastrophe, however, may furnish its participants with an awareness of change even

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[31] Spain: Gershon D. Cohen, "The Story of the Four Captives," *PAAJR* 29 (1960–1961), 55–131; Egypt: Mark R. Cohen, "Administrative Relations," in Amnon Cohen and Gabriel Baer, eds., *Egypt and Palestine: A Millennium of Association* (Jerusalem, 1984), 113–35; idem, *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt – The Origins of the Office of Head of the Jews, ca. 1065–1126* (Princeton, 1980).

[32] M. Ben-Sasson, "Religious Leadership."

during the very time the events take place. Interestingly, we find a high degree of such awareness especially among the minorities of the time, contrary to the assumption that these would be consumed by their individual problems, without having the opportunity to stop for a moment to examine the broad meaning of events. This awareness was not the sole privilege of the intellectual elite who read Arabic writings and absorbed and assimilated their contents, but was shared even by some of the common people.

Here the Jewish individual represents more than just the minority; his reactions are those of an individual reacting at the very moment of the changes, and they indicate a broader comprehension of the events than simply their effects on the Jews. Such awareness is expressed in the idiom often repeated in the letters, that "one has to understand the times." As someone wrote soon after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders: "You must understand the times and know what the world faces."[33]

All of these reflections share a high degree of consciousness of the events as well as the ability to interpret the power of the events on the scale of international crisis. These two factors caused alert minorities to become the seismographs of the fading of an empire.

All three types of reactions to changes in the framework of empires suggest a new set of terms for understanding the Jewish responses to such events. Instead of the empires' aloofness and the rigid separation of Jews from the majority Muslim society, one should speak of Jewish participation and involvement in current events. Despite the limits and the restrictions binding the Jewish minority, and the fact that they lacked any political

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[33] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, V, 48–50.

independence, the Jews expressed their political goals in times of great change in the Mediterranean, and were fully alert to the political events taking place, as well as to their ramifications for themselves. The Jewish segment of Mediterranean society may, therefore, speak for other "mute" segments of this society facing the same events during the Middle Ages.

RELATIONS BETWEEN NESI'IM AND EXILARCHS: COMPETITION OR COOPERATION?

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During the Middle Ages members of the exilarchal family, commonly known as Nesi'im, migrated from the Exilarchate's ancestral seat of authority in Iraq to Jewish communities throughout the Near East and North Africa.[1] There they and their descendants often enjoyed a privileged status among the local Jewish and non-Jewish populations. This migration, on which materials preserved in the Cairo Geniza have shed important new light, transformed Near Eastern Jewry. Nevertheless, it has yet to receive the scholarly attention it deserves.[2] The present article deals with only a small facet of

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[1] While medieval sources refer both to Exilarchs and non-appointed members of the exilarchal dynasty as Nesi'im, to avoid confusion I have used the title Nasi only for the latter in the present article. For an overview of the Exilarchate during the Islamic period, and a discussion of its relationship to the Babylonia yeshivot, see R. Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven, 1998), 67–82; and A. Grossman, *The Babylonian Exilarchate in the Gaonic Period* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1984).

[2] For now see: M. Gil, *Palestine during the First Muslim Period, (634–1099)* [in Hebrew], 3 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1983), 1:443–7; idem, *In the Kingdom of*

that complex process, yet one with broad implications for our understanding of the migrations of the Nesi'im in general. What follows is a reassessment of the relations between the Exilarchate, which continued to operate in Iraq as this process was unfolding, and Rabbanite Nesi'im who could be found throughout the Near East and North Africa. While earlier views saw the migrating Nesi'im as competitors of the Exilarchate, the evidence examined here suggests a generally cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship.

Jacob Mann, building on a foundation of research laid by Samuel Poznanski, attributed the appearance of Rabbanite Nesi'im in Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt to two primary causes.[3] Externally, he linked their appearance to the disintegration of Abbasid authority, in particular after the Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 969. This political erosion, the theory held, also severely limited the scope of the Exilarchate's jurisdiction, creating a power vacuum in Jewish communities outside Abbasid lands. According to Mann, Nesi'im made their way to such places as Mosul, Damascus, Aleppo and Fustat by the first half of the eleventh century to fill this new void. Mann also thought the spread of the Nesi'im was driven by an internal struggle between two branches of the exilarchal dynasty. He assumed that when the descendants of the Exilarch David b. Zakkay gained control of the Exilarchate around the beginning of the eleventh century, the displaced family of the Exilarch Josiah b. Zakkay – David's brother – quit Baghdad to seek positions of power elsewhere. Thus, Mann imagined that the Nesi'im who could be found throughout the Near East during

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Ishmael during the Middle Ages, [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1997), 1:438–45; and the sources listed below in n. 5.

[3] See S. Poznański, *Babylonische Geonim im nachgaonische Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1914), 111–34.

the late Middle Ages had set out to establish their own local Exilarchates, and to replicate the Babylonian institution on a smaller scale wherever possible. He identified such offices in Mosul, Damascus and Aleppo. In Fustat, Mann argued, Nesi'im would have also established such an institution had they not been overshadowed by the Nagidate, a preexisting office of political leadership.[4] These local Exilarchates Mann chara-cterized as "rivals" of the still-functioning Exilarchate in Babylonia.[5] It is this last point that the present article addresses.

Since Mann's time many previously unknown documents relating to the Nesi'im have been brought to light by S.D. Goitein, Moshe Gil, Mark Cohen and others. Despite this abundance of new information, however, no serious reassessment of Mann's thesis concerning the relations between Nesi'im and Exilarchs has been formulated. In what follows the available evidence is reviewed. I suggest that these sources

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[4] Mann's views on the origins of the Nagidate are thoroughly revised in M. Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt: The Origins of the Office of the Head of the Jews, ca. 1065–1126* (Princeton, 1980). This revisionist thesis has been challenged in two articles by Shulamit Sela that argue for a partial return to Mann's early dating of the emergence of that office; see: S. Sela, "The Head of the Rabbanite, Karaite and Samaritan Jews: On the History of a Title," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57 (1994), 255–67; and idem, "The Head of the Jews in the Fāṭimid Empire in Karaite Hands," in *Mas'at Moshe: Studies in Jewish and Islamic Culture Presented to Moshe Gil* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1998), 256–81.

[5] Mann's theory is most fully developed in his article "Misrat Rosh ha-Gola be-Bavel ve-hista'afuta be-sof yeme ha-benayim," in *Livre d'hommage à la mémoire du Dr. Samuel Poznanski* (Warsaw, 1927), Hebrew section, 18–32. See also idem, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fāṭimid Caliphs*, 2 vols. (New York, 1920–22; repr. As 2 vols. In 1, New York, 1970), 1:171–8, 2:271–2; and idem, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, 2 vols. (New York, 1931–35; repr. 1972), 1:394–411. Mann's paradigm made its way into general surveys of Jewish history; see, for example, S. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed., 18 vols. (Philadelphia, 1957), 5:38–46.

actually point to a pattern of relations between the Exilarchate and the Nesi'im that is quite different from that originally envisioned by Mann. On the basis of this evidence I propose that relations between them were, for the most part, characterized not by competition or rivalry, but rather by a spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance.

The earliest relevant document is a fragmentary letter that has been dated to the first decades of the eleventh century.[6] The author, Joshua ha-Kohen b. Ya'ir, describes the exploits of an individual who posed as a Nasi for two years in a town in northern Palestine—possibly Tiberias—before being exposed as a fraud. Just before the letter breaks off, the writer, honoring a written request by the *Ḥaver* Jacob b. Joseph of Aleppo, begins to recount these events: "At the beginning a messenger suddenly came to us, a non-Jew from among the servants of the governor of the Euphrates valley. With him he had a large document signed with an Exilarchal seal [*ḥatūm be-ṭabaʿat nesiʾūt*].[7] We asked him from whom this document came, and he replied: 'I am h[ired…]'"[8]

It seems from Joshua ha-Kohen's account that the appearance of the "impostor" Nasi in northern Palestine and his assumption of various communal functions there were preceded by the

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[6] TS 13J35.1 + TS 20.94r in Gil, *Palestine*, II, 37–40. See also Mann's observations in *Jews in Egypt*, 1:172–4.

[7] Mann, in *Jews in Egypt*, 1:173, took the words *tabaʿat nesiʾūt* to mean the seal of a Nasi, but it is far more likely that Joshua ha-Kohen was referring to an exilarchal seal. While the latter were quite popular, as is evident from numerous references to them in contemporary sources, the seals of Nesi'im are rarely mentioned, and date from after the eleventh century. For a copyist's description of one such seal, which he found affixed to a thirteenth century responsum, see *Qoveṣ teshuvot ha-Rambam ve-iggerotav* ed. A. Lichtenberg (Leipzig, 1859), 3:21.

[8] Gil, *Palestine*, 2:40, ll. 58–60.

arrival of what appeared to be a letter of introduction bearing the official seal of the Exilarch. Apparently such tangible representations of his Davidic credentials played an important role in promoting the Nasi's claims, since Joshua ha-Kohen also writes that the townspeople were greatly impressed by his genealogical records (*ketav yaḥas*).[9] Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing what the exilarchal letter actually said. However, from the context in which it is mentioned by Joshua ha-Kohen, and from what we know about the Nasi's later success, we may conclude that it supported his cause and helped to establish his legitimacy. It seems, then, that the career of the impostor Nasi was launched in part by a letter of recommendation from the Exilarchate. Whether that letter was genuine or simply part of the Nasi's charade, it demonstrates that to those involved it was entirely plausible that an Exilarch should take an interest in the affairs of a Nasi and promote his authority in a local community.[10]

The Exilarchal letter supporting the pretender Nasi is reminiscent of a familiar administrative practice according to which Muslim rulers issued letters of appointment on behalf of local officials. A similar system operated in the Jewish community where local leaders received formal letters of appointment from Geonim, Exilarchs and Negidim. The latter may have become familiar with this practice from the letters of appointment that Muslim rulers issued them as the heads of the

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[9] Ibid, 39, ll. 44, 52–53.

[10] An alternate interpretation, though less likely, is that the words "At the beginning" refer not to the very beginning of the episode, but to the beginning of the Nasi's fall from grace. While this would necessitate a reinterpretation of the nature of the Exilarchate's involvement in this case, it would not affect my main contention that this episode reflects a concern on the part of the Exilarchate to oversee matters involving Nesi'im and to police claims to Davidic descent.

Jewish *dhimmī* community.[11] If the letter mentioned by Joshua ha-Kohen bespeaks a comparable procedure, it indicates that cooperation between Nesi'im and Exilarchs was facilitated, in at least certain cases, by patterns of interaction that resembled the formal bonds between central authorities and their local representatives.

This observation calls to mind an institution in the Islamic world that presents an instructive paradigm for understanding the relationship between the Exilarchate and the other members of the medieval "House of David." Islamic society in the Middle Ages, which valued noble birth (*nasab*) in general, accorded a particularly privileged status to the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, who were known as the *ashrāf* ("noble ones").[12] It was most likely under the Abbasids that the office of the *niqāba* developed, which, among other things, was responsible for overseeing the activities of the *ashrāf*, safeguarding their prestige and keeping false claimants from entering their ranks.[13] Thus, by the end of the ninth century an official designated as the *naqīb al-ashrāf* ("marshal of the nobility"), himself a member of the Prophet's family, could be found in important Muslim towns. These local officials were in turn supervised by a

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[11] Examples of letters of appointment for the *dhimmī* heads are to be found, among other places, in epistolographic and administrative manuals. For a discussion of this material see C.E. Bosworth, "Christian and Jewish Religious Dignitaries in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria: Qalqashandī's Information on Their Hierarchy, Titulature and Appointment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972), 59–74, 199–216.

[12] For details on the *ashrāf* and the two main branches of the family, the Alids (also called Talibids) and the Abbasids, see *Encyclopedia of Islam,* 2nd ed*.,* s.v. "Sharīf."

[13] A comprehensive study of the *niqāba* has yet to be written. For now see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Naḳīb al-Ashrāf."

chief marshal, the *naqīb al-nuqabā'*, who was presumably based in the Abbasid capital.

While historians have noted parallels between the *ashrāf* and the Nesi'im, they have principally focused on the comparable status of each group within its respective community.[14] Yet, a correspondence may also be found in the overarching institutional framework that both dynasties used to preserve their special status. While the Jewish community had nothing comparable to the elaborate organization and broad authority enjoyed by the Islamic *niqāba*, we may nonetheless recognize a parallel between the functions exercised by the latter and those apparently assumed by the Exilarchate in Joshua ha-Kohen's letter. In Jewish as well as Islamic society, dynastic elites sought to maintain their privileged status by carefully policing claims to group membership. In both societies this was a concern shared by all members of the sacred dynasty and consequently the basis for at least a minimum of group cohesion. Whereas in Muslim society this shared concern ultimately spawned a distinct and highly ramified institution in the form of the *niqāba*, in the Jewish community it appears to have been one of many responsibilities carried out by the Exilarchate.

The example of the impostor Nasi suggests the involvement of the Exilarchate in the affairs of a Nasi. But the earliest evidence of direct contact between a Nasi and an Exilarch comes from documents pertaining the first part of Daniel b. Azarya's career. In the late 1030s the Nasi Daniel b. Azarya, who was to become Gaon of the Palestinian Yeshiva, was forging alliances with influential individuals and groups in the Jewish world.[15] A

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[14] See, for example, S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols. (Berkeley, 1967–1993), 2:19.

[15] See Gil, *Palestine*, 1:585–6.

letter from 1038, sent by Daniel b. Azarya in Tunisia to Sahlān b. Abraham in Fustat, reflects various aspects of that campaign.[16] In it Daniel b. Azarya refers to his efforts to win the support of the Maghrebi Jews, and in particular the recognition of their powerful leader, the Nagid Jacob b. Amram.[17] At the same time Daniel b. Azarya informs his loyal friend Sahlān b. Abraham, who was beset with political opposition, of a strategy to maintain him in his position as head of the Babylonian community in Fustat.[18] In connection with this last matter Daniel b. Azarya writes that he "consulted with our Nasi, the Head of the Exile [*khāṭabtu nesi'enu rosh ha-gola*]," who promised to write to Abū Naṣr al-Tustarī, the powerful Karaite notable, in the hopes of winning his support for Sahlān b. Abraham.[19]

Goitein was the first historian to discuss this letter, but his interpretation of this last passage betrays the persistence of Mann's older (and less informed) theory of competition between the Exilarchate and the Nesi'im. According to his reading, the phrase "our Nasi, the Head of the Exile," refers not to the contemporary Exilarch in Babylonia, Hezekiah b. David, but to Daniel b. Azarya's brother Zakkay, whom he mentions in several other letters.[20] In support of this view Goitein referred to

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[16] TS 13J25.3, ibid, 2:627–30.

[17] See M. Ben-Sasson, *The Emergence of the Local Jewish Community in the Muslim World: Qayrawan, 800–1057* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1996), 371–2. For Jacob b. Amram see ibid, 362–72.

[18] For Sahlān b. Abraham see E. Bareket, *The Jewish Leadership in Fustat in the First Half of the Eleventh Century* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1995), 172–87.

[19] Gil, *Palestine*, 2:629, l. 14. For Abū Naṣr al-Tustarī see M. Gil, *The Tustaris, Family and Sect* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1981), 23–57.

[20] See S.D. Goitein, "Daniel ben Azarya, Nasi and Gaon: New Sources," in *Palestinian Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times*, ed. J. Hacker [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1980), 137. For examples of letters concerning Zakkay b. Azarya see: TS 10J25.2, in Gil, *Palestine*, 2:69—a letter in which Daniel b. Azarya thanks "Mesos ha-Yeshiva" for assisting his brother; TS 13J26.18,

the assumed tension between the families of Hezekiah b. David and Daniel b. Azarya over control of the Exilarchate going back to the tenth century. After the death of David b. Zakkay in 940 two branches of the exilarchal dynasty controlled the Babylonian Exilarchate: first the descendants of David b. Zakkay's brother Josiah, and later the descendants of David b. Zakkay himself. Daniel b. Azarya was Josiah's descendant, while Hezekiah b. David was David b. Zakkay's.[21] The appointment of Hezekiah b. David as Exilarch at the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century displaced the father of Daniel b. Azarya who would otherwise have succeeded his own father in occupying that post.[22] According to Goitein, who followed Mann's lead, this coup resulted in the departure of Daniel b. Azarya's family from Babylonia, and left a residual tension between it and the family of Hezekiah b. David.[23]

However, the Geniza has also preserved a letter from the Exilarch Hezekiah b. David, which deals with Sahlān b. Abraham's position in Fustat and extends thanks to Abū Naṣr al-Tustarī for his assistance in that matter. Gil, who published that

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ibid, 2:655–62—a letter written ca. 1055 in which Daniel b. Azarya complains about his brother's disruptive behavior in the various places he visited since leaving Iraq; TS NS 338.94, mentioned ibid, 1:585 – a letter expressing thanks to someone for treating Zakkay with kindness; and ULC Or 1080 J 78, ibid, 3:160–4 – a letter written in 1061 in which Israel b. Nathan of Jerusalem asks Nahray b. Nissim to inform him about the pending arrival of Zakkay and his son in Fustat. For Zakkay b. Azarya in general see: ibid, 1:583–4; and M. Gil, "Palestine during the First Muslim Period (634–1099) – Additions, Notes and Corrections," [in Hebrew] *Te'uda* 7 (1991), 302.

[21] For Hezekiah b. David and his influence on the Babylonian congregation in Fustat see: Gil, *Palestine*, 1:444–5; and idem, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 1:110–3.

[22] See Gil, *Palestine*, 1:443–4, 447; and Mann, "Misrat Rosh ha-Gola," 19–23.

[23] Goitein, "Daniel ben Azarya," 137.

letter, convincingly concluded that "our Nasi, the Head of the
Exile" mentioned by Daniel b. Azarya in his letter of 1038 must
be the Exilarch Hezekiah b. David.[24] What emerges from this
encounter, then, is an example of relations between the Nasi
Daniel b. Azarya and the Exilarch Hezekiah b. David that is far
more cooperative than Goitein originally imagined possible. In
this particular case, at least, the two united in order to keep
Sahlān b. Abraham in office, jointly applying pressure on the
influential Abū Naṣr al-Tustarī.

A number of interactions between the Exilarchate and
Nesi'im are attested during the long reign of Daniel b. Ḥisday,
who served as Exilarch from the second or third decade of the
twelfth century until his death in 1175.[25] The first case concerns
events that took place in Yemen around the year 1133.
According to a testimony copied by the Egyptian merchant and
scholar Ḥalfon ha-Levi b. Netanel, a Persian Nasi who was the
cousin of the Exilarch came to the port city of Aden during the
winter months. After assuming a certain measure of authority
over the local community, the Nasi became embroiled in a
controversy with loyalists (local and visiting) of the Palestinian
Gaon Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen b. Solomon concerning the propriety of
mentioning the Gaon's name during prayer services.[26]

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[24] See TS Loan 40 (I) in Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 2:186–90. See idem,
Palestine, 1:444 for his identification of the Nasi with the Exilarch Hezekiah
b. David.

[25] For Daniel b. Ḥisday see Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 1:433–5.

[26] For this episode see: TS 20.37, TS Arabic 48/270 and BM Or 5566 D.24a
+ TS 10J16.8, edited and discussed in S.D. Goitein, "The Jews of Yemen:
Between the Palestinian Gaon, Residing in Fatimid Cairo, and the
Babylonian Exilarch," in *The Yemenites: History, Communal Organization,
Spiritual Life*, ed. M. Ben-Sasson [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1983), 53–74.
Two additional documents, not included in Goitein's article, that relate to
these events are TS Arabic Box 54.39 and TS NS Box 320.1, see: S. Shaked,
A Tentative Bibliography of Geniza Documents (Paris, 1964), 146, 160; and

Similar to the Muslim practice of including the reigning Caliph's name in the Friday sermon, it was customary for Jews to invoke the names of their leaders in a special clause in the *qaddish* prayer as a way of formally recognizing their authority. The omission of a leader's name, or the inappropriate inclusion of another's was, conversely, considered a serious offense.[27]

Before the Nasi's arrival the custom in Aden was to recite the names of both the Exilarch and the Palestinian Gaon in the *qaddish* prayer. But once he arrived, the Nasi had the name of the Palestinian Gaon removed from the prayer, thus angering a number of Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen's local Yemenite supporters.[28] Things came to a head on the Sabbath before Passover when Saʿīd b. Abraham, a visitor from northern Yemen (which appears to have been beyond the scope of the Nasi's jurisdiction), came to Aden and recited the names of both the Exilarch and the Palestinian Gaon according to the earlier

S. Reif, ed., *Published Material from the Cambridge Genizah Collection: A Bibliography, 1896–1980* (Cambridge, 1988), 197, 369.

[27] For this practice see: Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, II, 19; and Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government*, 223–4; and, with special reference to the events in Aden discussed here, M.A. Friedman, "In Your Lifetime and in the Lifetime of our Lord Moses Maimonides," [in Hebrew] *Zion* 62 (1997), 75–8. For examples see: A. Neubauer, ed., *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1887–1895), 2:84; S. Schechter, "A Version of the Qaddish," [in Hebrew] in *Gedenkbuch zur Errinerung an David Kaufmann*, ed. M. Brann and F. Rosenthal (Breslau, 1900), Hebrew section, 52–4; and B.M. Lewin, "Old Fragments from the Maḥzor of the Yeshiva of Pumbedita," [in Hebrew] *Ginzei Qedem* 3 (1925), 50–6; E. Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1988), 245. For Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen and the relocation of the Palestinian Gaonate to Fustat in the first third of the twelfth century see: Gil, *Palestine*, 1:602–4, 625–6; and Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 1:255–62.

[28] Supporters of Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen stress that the invocation of his name during prayer services was both obligatory and a well-established custom in Aden (*ḥasaba 'l-ʿāda wa'l-wājib…ḥasaba mā taqaddama min al-ʿāda*); see TS 20.37, ll. 9,12 in Goitein, "Jews of Yemen," 58.

custom. Supporters of the Nasi who were present became incensed at this; they scolded Saʿīd for his behavior and stormed out of the synagogue.

A week later the Nasi himself confronted Saʿīd. He demanded an explanation for his actions and insisted that Saʿīd make a public apology. Accordingly, on the seventh day of Passover Saʿīd b. Abraham stood up in the synagogue before the congregation and announced: "My friends, surely you are aware that I erred in mentioning our master Maṣliaḥ the last time I conducted prayers. I hereby admit before God and this congregation that I sinned against the Lord God of Israel and against you."[29]

The Persian Nasi described in this incident was anything but a rival to his cousin, the Exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisday. His insistence that *only* the name of the Exilarch be recited in prayer services in Yemen had the unmistakable effect of bolstering the Babylonian Exilarchate at a time when it was competing with the Palestinian Yeshiva for control over Yemen's Jewish community.[30] While we know nothing about this Nasi outside of the facts of this particular case, it is apparent that, at least initially, his actions in Aden were closely aligned with the interests of the Exilarchate and served to consolidate its authority in the region.

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[29] TS 20.37, ll. 35–37, ibid, 60. The last line is borrowed from Pharaoh's apology to Moses and Aaron in Ex. 10:16. Note also the careful wording, which omits mention of Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen's title of Gaon of the Palestinian Yeshiva.

[30] For a discussion of the competition between Babylonian and Palestinian-Egyptian authorities over control of the Yemenite Jewish community see: S.D. Goitein, "The Support by Yemenite Jews of the Academies of Iraq and Palestine and the School of Moses Maimonides," in *The Yemenites*, 19–32; and idem, "Jews of Yemen," 53–6.

The impression regarding relations between Nesi'im and Exilarchs that emerges from the episode discussed above is strengthened by a report concerning Yemen's Jews that comes from Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the East during the last years of Daniel b. Ḥisday's life. According to Benjamin, Yemen's Jewish community was governed by two brothers, the Nesi'im Salmon and Ḥanan: "The land is divided between the two brothers, and they are of the seed of David for they have pedigrees. And they send many questions to the Exilarch, their kinsman in Baghdad [*qerovam she-be-bagdad*]."[31]

Here again we find a pattern of relations between the Exilarch in Baghdad and local Nesi'im that was essentially cooperative. This pattern emerges not only from the simple fact that the Yemenite Nesi'im corresponded with the Exilarch, but also from the nature and direction of that correspondence. Benjamin indicates that the communication was initiated by the Nesi'im themselves, not by the Exilarch, and that the Nesi'im would address the Exilarch with *questions*. In the Jewish political culture of the Middle Ages, the forwarding of queries was a powerful expression of the sender's recognition of the authority of the addressee.[32] Viewed in this light, the behavior described by Benjamin of Tudela conforms to a familiar mode of interaction according to which the supremacy of a central authority was voluntarily recognized by local leaders.[33]

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[31] M.N. Adler, ed., *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London, 1907), Hebrew section, 47; English section, 48.

[32] For a discussion of such activity as a voluntary expression of loyalty to the Geonic authorities in Babylonia see Ben-Sasson, *Qayrawan*, 416–9.

[33] While doubts have been raised about the reliability of Benjamin of Tudela's description of Arabian Jewry – see for example *Itinerary*, English section, p. 48 n. 2 – documentary materials from the Cairo Geniza have tended to substantiate at least the outlines of his account; see: Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, I, 271; idem, "The Misrat Rosh ha-Gola," 32; and E. Strauss, "Journey

Another form of cooperation between Nesi'im and Exilarchs is evident in Benjamin of Tudela's account of the messianic pretender known to him as David al-Ro'i.[34] Benjamin describes how the Jewish authorities sought to dissuade al-Ro'i from carrying out his plans to incite a rebellion and capture Jerusalem, fearing the retaliation of the Muslims. He writes: "The Exilarch and the Head of the Academy of the Pride of Jacob sent [a letter] to al-Ro'i saying: 'The time of redemption has not yet arrived; we have not yet seen the signs of it, and by strength alone no man can prevail. Now we demand that you desist from this thing or you will surely be banned in all of Israel [*menude be-khol yisra'el*].'[35] And they sent this to Zakkay the Nasi in Mosul and to Rabbi Joseph Burhān al-Falak, the astrologer, bidding them to send the letter on to al-Ro'i."[36]

In the previous example we noted the initiative of the Yemenite Nesi'im in maintaining close relations with the Exilarch by voluntarily soliciting his advice and acknowledging his supreme religious and political authority. From this example it is apparent that those same lines of communication served a useful purpose for the Exilarch as well and, on occasion, could be activated from Baghdad. Indeed, similar to the Nasi in Aden

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to India: A Letter from Aden to Egypt from the Year 1153 C.E.," [in Hebrew] *Zion* 4 (1939), 230. See also S.D. Goitein, "The Messiah of Bayḥān," in *The Yemenites*, 136.

[34] *Itinerary*, Hebrew section, 51–3; English section, 54–6. Compare the report in al-Samaw'al al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd*, ed. M. Perlmann in *Proceeding of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 32 (1964), Arabic section, 89ff. For a discussion of al-Ro'i's origins and identity see: Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 1:420–5; S.D. Goitein "'Obadyah, a Norman Proselyte," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 4 (1953), 78–9; and Mann, "Ha-Tenu'ot ha-meshiḥiyyot bi-me masa'e ha-ṣelav ha-rishonim," *Hatekufah* 24 (1928), 341–9.

[35] Based on B. Mo'ed Qatan 16a: "One who is banned by the Nasi is banned in all Israel [*menude la-nasi menude le-khol yisra'el*]."

[36] Adler, *Itinerary*, Hebrew section, 52; English section, 55.

discussed above, the Nasi in this episode functioned as a deputy of the Exilarchate in executing its authority at the local level.

The impetus for communication between the Exilarch and the Nasi Zakkay ironically places two members of the Davidic family in opposition to an ostensibly Davidic movement. As the heads of a religious minority within the Muslim polity, the Exilarch and the Gaon of the Baghdad Yeshiva were responsible for maintaining order in the Jewish communities under their jurisdiction. Their suppression of al-Ro'i and his rebellious activities no doubt falls under that general mandate. Moreover, it conforms to a familiar mode of rabbinic quietism that is echoed some years later in Maimonides' "Epistle to Yemen".[37] Written in 1172, the letter addresses, among other things, the claims of a messianic pretender who appeared in Yemen during a wave of religious persecution. While seeking to console Yemen's Jews in the moment of their suffering, Maimonides nevertheless takes a firm stand against the self-proclaimed Messiah and his alluring but potentially dangerous message. He urges his audience to adopt instead a posture of patience and humility in the face of persecution.[38]

Beyond these general considerations, however, there may have been a particular family interest in suppressing outbursts of messianic activism such as this in order to preserve the Davidic dynasty's messianic cachet. While the letter to al-Ro'i implicitly accepts the possibility of calculating the advent of the Messiah, it insists that only the central authorities possess the necessary

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[37] See A. Halkin, ed. and B. Cohen, trans., *Moses Maimonides' Epistle to Yemen*, [in Hebrew] (New York, 1952).

[38] See: M. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1994), 198–9; and R. Scheindlin, "Al-Harizi's Astrologer: A Document of Jewish-Islamic Relations," in *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations* 1 (1993), 165–6.

qualifications to determine when that time has indeed arrived: "The time of redemption has not yet arrived; we have not yet seen the signs of it." The net result is to assert the dominance of the central authorities – principal among them the Exilarchate[39] – in matters of messianic import. Viewed from this perspective it is not surprising that the warning addressed to al-Ro'i focuses exclusively on his messianic claims and not his rumored uprising, though it was obviously the latter that most directly jeopardized the safety of the Jewish community.

A further suggestion that internal, Davidic concerns were involved in the suppression of al-Ro'i's messianic movement is to be found in the language of the ban with which al-Ro'i is threatened. In specifying that al-Ro'i will surely be "banned in all of Israel" the letter alludes to a particularly harsh form of excommunication that was claimed as a special right by members of the Exilarchal dynasty.[40] Letters from supporters of Nesi'im along with diatribes written by their detractors indicate that members of the Exilarchal family encouraged popular sentiments connecting them with the messianic era.[41] However,

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[39] This becomes evident from the wording of the threatened ban; see below.

[40] See n. 35. That in the East this rabbinic dictum was thought to refer to Nesi'im of the exilarchal family (at least by Nesi'im themselves) is apparent from the way the Nasi Hodaya b. Jesse cites it in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century; see A.H. Freimann, ed. and S.D. Goitein, trans., *Abraham Maimuni Responsa* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1937), 13.

[41] For examples of messianic references see: TS 6J9.2 in Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, 2:347, where Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon Gaon refers to the Nasi David b. Hezekiah as *zera' ha-poreṣ* ("descendant of the one who makes the breach," based on Micha 2:13, for which see N. Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism* (London, 1962), 30–1); ENA 4020.13, where the biblical promise in Is. 11:1 ("And there shall come forth a shoot from the stock of Jesse…") is applied to the Karaite Nasi Hezekiah b. Solomon; ENA 3765.10v + TS 18J4.16r, an enthusiastic letter in which Daniel b. Azarya's arrival from Babylonia is characterized as "the arrival of the Son of David," in M. Cohen, "New Light on the Conflict over the Palestinian Gaonate, 1038–1042, and on

the case of David al-Ro'i demonstrates that Nesi'im and Exilarchs also shared a mutual interest in opposing open and active forms of messianism that threatened to squander the Davidic family's messianic potential. Mutual interests such as these not only formed the basis for cooperation between Nesi'im and Exilarchs, but also reinforced a sense of membership in an identifiable "House of David."

This pattern of cooperative relations between Nesi'im and Exilarchs continued into the thirteenth century. Correspondence between the Nasi Solomon b. Jesse and his brothers, who originated in Mosul and migrated during the early decades of the thirteenth century to Syria, Palestine and Egypt, has come to light and has most recently been examined by Gil.[42] In a letter from 1237, a relative informs Solomon b. Jesse of news that recently arrived from Mosul telling of the destruction of family property there during an earthquake.[43] Before detailing the damage, the writer reports that certain individuals sought to take advantage of the general confusion, and put forward claims

Daniel b. Azarya: A Pair of Letters to the Nagid of Qayrawan," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 1 (1976), 21–8; and TS Box K 25.244, another letter addressed to Daniel b. Azarya in which it is wished that God should fulfill His promises to the Davidic family and bring about the ingathering of the exiles in Daniel's lifetime, in Gil, *Palestine*, 2:736–41. See also the implicit rejection of the messianic claims put forward by Davidic dynasts in the so-called "Scroll of Evyatar," in Gil, *Palestine*, 3:394, l. 29, and in the Arabic version of the Bustanay story, in M. Gil, "The Babylonian Encounter," [in Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 48 (1978–9), 68.

[42] See Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 1:438–42; II, 2:246–80. See also: S.D. Goitein, "The Nasis of Mosul and the Destruction of their Houses by the Earthquake of 1237," [in Hebrew] in Y. Ben-Shem, H. Geyaryahu and B. Lurya, eds., *Sefer Yosef Braslavi* (Tel Aviv, 1970), 486–501; and P. Fenton, "A Meeting with Maimonides," *BSOAS* 45 (1982), 1–4.

[43] See TS 20.128 in Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 2: 254–8. Compare Goitein, "Nasis of Mosul," 490–2.

against the Exilarch.[44] The matter came before the Muslim ruler who ordered that the Exilarch be flogged and imprisoned. Though the precise sequence of events is obscure, the sympathetic manner in which this episode is related makes clear that both the writer and his addressee were concerned for the plight of the unnamed Exilarch. Accordingly, it offers yet another instance of solidarity between Nesi'im and the Exilarch.

Furthermore, this and other letters from the family archive attest to the continued involvement of Solomon b. Jesse and his siblings in matters connected with the town of Mosul, the seat of the Exilarchate. One such letter even indicates that some of the family members anxiously awaited an opportunity to return to Mosul.[45] It is apparent, then, that the migration of this family of Nesi'im to Syria, Palestine and Egypt cannot be adequately explained on the basis of a presumed tension within the exilarchal dynasty. Indeed, rather than internal fragmentation, the correspondence of Solomon b. Jesse and his siblings points toward an underlying sense of affiliation among members of the exilarchal dynasty that continued to be felt even across long distances.

There is of course one Nasi whose actions do seem to imply a direct challenge to the authority of the Babylonian Exilarchate. David b. Daniel made the audacious move of assuming the title of Exilarch in Tyre in or about the year 1091 and continued to use that title for the remaining years of his activity in Egypt.[46] Yet that unusual case should not unduly color our interpretation of the careers of other Nesi'im who cautiously avoided taking that step. The potential for Nesi'im to declare themselves

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[44] On the relocation of the Exilarchate to Mosul around the beginning of the thirteenth century see Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 1:436–7.

[45] See TS 16.36 in Gil, *Kingdom of Ishmael*, 2:264–9.

[46] For David b. Daniel see Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government*, 178–212.

Exilarchs as David b. Daniel did may have been theoretically present at all times given the embodied sanctity that was the common inheritance of all members of the exilarchal dynasty, yet there were also powerful incentives that deterred most from doing so. Even David b. Daniel held back from making such a bold move, obviously aware of its momentous implications, until at least the seventh year of his reign.[47]

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[47] We have little information on the Exilarchate in the second half of the eleventh century, and the possibility that David b. Daniel's move coincided with a period of institutional decline or an interregnum cannot be ruled out. Support for this conjecture may be found in the fact that Evyater ha-Kohen never mentions a reigning Exilarch in any of his numerous objections to David b. Daniel and his political machinations. This omission is all the more surprising given the evident correspondence between Evyatar ha-Kohen's father, Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon, to David b. Hezekiah, the son of the Exilarch who reigned during the first half of the eleventh century, in Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, 2:347; BM Or 5546 + ENA NS 13.1, fragments of two additional letters from Elijah ha-Kohen to David b. Hezekiah, the first of which expresses sadness at the latter's departure from Jerusalem, in Gil, *Palestine*, 2:8–9; and TS 10J24.1, a letter dated ca. 1091 from Evyater ha-Kohen to Babylonian authorities, among them a certain Hezekiah the Exilarch, in Gil, *Palestine*, 3:372–5. David b. Daniel may have waited until this last Exilarch's death before assuming the title for himself. The weakness of the Exilarchate some two decades earlier, and the influence of Jewish bankers over it, is attested by the Muslim historian Abū 'Alī b. al-Bannā'; see G. Makdisi, "Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdād." *BSOAS* 19 (1957), Arabic section, 25; English section, 43. A hint of disapproval on the part of the Exilarchate concerning David b. Daniel's move can be felt *ex silentio* in a letter sent by Daniel b. Ḥisday to Fustat in the year 1161; see ENA 4011.74 + TS 8J2 + MS Antonin 1131 in S. Assaf, "Letters of R. Samuel b. Eli and His Contemporaries," [in Hebrew] Tarbiz 1:3 (1930), 66–77. See Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 1:230–6 regarding this letter, its author and the historical context in which it was written. In that missive Daniel b. Ḥisday gives various precedents justifying exilarchal privilege in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. While he enthusiastically cites the career of the Nasi Daniel b. Azarya, he is silent with regard to his son, David b. Daniel, though the example of the latter would have made his case even more forcefully.

The examples discussed above challenge Mann's view that
Nesi'im migrated to Jewish communities outside of Iraq to set
themselves up as local rivals to the Exilarchate in Babylonia. In
several of these examples we have witnessed a pattern of
relations between Nesi'im and Exilarchs that mirrors the
cooperative, reciprocal relations that existed between Geonim
and their representatives in local Jewish communities. In those
cases Nesi'im formally recognized the supremacy of the
Exilarchate and manifested their loyalty to it by working to
further its interests and execute its authority in the communities
under their immediate jurisdiction. As the case of Daniel b.
Azarya illustrates, Nesi'im could also initiate matters by
requesting the intervention of the Exilarchate in local affairs.
These patterns of relations should be seen as a natural
consequence of the commonly accepted kinship ties that bound
Nesi'im and Exilarchs. In the case of the Yeshivot, such ties
were recognized as a highly effective means of enacting the
authority of the Gaon on the local community level, and were
accordingly cultivated wherever possible. In the case of the
Exilarchal dynasty this structure was automatically in place and
thus more readily available for effective implementation.

Cooperation between Exilarchs and Nesi'im is in fact quite
understandable even when viewed solely from the vantage point
of the Nesi'im. A significant component of the popularity of the
Nesi'im derived from their implicit ties to the Babylonian
Exilarchate. By positioning themselves as rivals of that age-old
institution the Nesi'im would have sacrificed those crucial
connections and severed themselves from a significant source of
their esteem in the Jewish community. Only in the exceptional
case of David b. Daniel do we find a Nasi who truly presented
himself as a rival to the Babylonian Exilarchate. We have

suggested that, in at least certain cases, the Babylonian Exilarchate oversaw matters concerning the Davidic dynasty and exercised functions comparable to those carried out by the *niqāba* in Muslim society. The ever-present possibility of a threat such as that posed by David b. Daniel provides additional perspective on these activities and suggests that they involved a good measure of self-interest.

On a still more fundamental level the relations between Exilarchs and Nesi'im described above may be said to reflect the informal patterns of loyalty that were characteristic of Islamic society in general during roughly the same period.[48] From this perspective, the "House of David" provided Nesi'im and Exilarchs a ready-made conceptual focus for their shared interests and a basis for cooperative action at moments when it became necessary. Often such cooperation took the familiar form of interactions between a central authority and its local representatives. Underlying these interactions, however, were informal ties of loyalty between Nesi'im and Exilarchs that were born of a mutual concern to preserve the privileged status of the Davidic dynasty.[49]

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[48] See the discussion of "loyalties of category" in R. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton, 1980), 97–174.

[49] For a similar argument, in which Mottahedeh's paradigm of informal loyalty is used to describe the relations between the community of Qayrawan and the Babylonian authorities, see: M. Ben-Sasson, "Fragmentary Letters from the Genizah: Concerning the Ties of the Babylonian Academies with the West," *Tarbiz* 56 (1987), 197–8; and idem, *Qayrawan*, 422–4.

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