Additional Contributions of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī to the Muslim-Jewish Polemic

Contribuciones adicionales de ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī a la polémica judío-musulmana

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‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, a fourteenth-century Muslim polemicist of Jewish origin, has been somewhat obscured in research due to doubts about the uniqueness and originality of his thinking and the extent of his Jewish education. This article, part of a broader research effort presently under way, attempts to surmount these doubts by demonstrating that ‘Abd al-Haqq made a unique contribution to the oeuvre of Muslim anti-Jewish polemics, displayed originality in his extensive use of gematria and adaptation of source material to his agenda, and possessed no small amount of Jewish knowledge. The last-mentioned is reflected in his familiarity with the structure and messages of the Bible, at least a superficial acquaintance with parts of the Oral Law, and possibly some proficiency in Hebrew.

Key words: Polemics, ‘Abd al-Haqq al-Islāmī, al-Sayf al-Mamdūd, dalā’il al-nubuwwa, ‘Uzayr, Midrash, gematria.

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Introduction

Not much is known about Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī. He was an apostate Jew who probably lived in Ceuta in the late fourteenth century. He testifies to having converted to Islam at the age of forty and having convinced his family to do the same. Sixteen years after that event, he wrote the polemical tract *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd fī l-radd ‘alā Aḥbār al-Yahūd* (*The Outstretched Sword for Refuting the Rabbis of the Jews*.)

The first to mention *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* in the academic literature was Moritz Steinschneider, who described it and its author tersely and generally. Almost seven decades later, Moshe Perlmann reviewed the gist of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* as set forth in three manuscripts. “There is hardly anything new in his [‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s] arguments, i.e., in the passages he quotes for his case,” Perlmann concluded. Elsewhere, he defined *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* as “vulgar.” Some fifty years after Perlmann, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, seeing room for further discussion of the contents of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, turned her attention to this pamphlet for the self-stated purpose of completing Perlmann’s overview. Lazarus-Yafeh sorts ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s arguments into four (actually five) categories that correspond to what she considers his polemical methodologies: (1) Biblical verses and Midrashim, (2) gematria (calculation of the numerical value of Hebrew letters), (3) arguments that exhibit Karaite characteristics, and (4) Qur’ān commentary. She concludes that although he was not an educated Jew, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq knew the Bible and Jewish customs better than Muslim authors (presumably polemicists who were born as Muslims) did.

1 See Alfonso, “‘Abd al-Haqq al-Islāmī”, p. 6.
2 ‘Abd al-Haqq al-Islāmī, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd fī l-radd ‘alā Aḥbār al-Yahūd*, ed. and trans. by E. Alfonso, pp. 9-11. Throughout the article, I refer to the Arabic text in Alfonso’s edition. The Bible translation that I use throughout the article is *The King James Version of the English Bible: An Account of the Development and Sources of the English Bible of 1611 with Special References to Hebrew Tradition*. In certain cases, the translation is slightly modified to reflect (in my opinion) the Hebrew text more accurately.
5 Perlmann, “‘Abd al-Haqq al-Islāmī”, p. 176.
6 Lazarus-Yafeh, “Contribution of a Jewish Convert from Morocco to the Muslim Polemic against Jews and Judaism”, p. 83.
In 1998, Esperanza Alfonso published a critical edition of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* that included a translation into Spanish and resorted to more manuscripts than Perlmann accessed. Her introduction discusses important issues that surrounded the writing of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* as well as other matters such as the conversion of Jews, interfaith relations, and the Jews of Morocco. It also touches briefly upon the nature and contents of the pamphlet. In 2010, she dedicated a short entry to ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq that briefly describes his life and pamphlet. Ryan Szpiech devoted a discussion to the conversion narrative of several Jews, of whom ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq is one, who wrote anti-Jewish tracts after their conversion.

In a forthcoming article, I show that although some of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s arguments appear to resemble those of Samaw’al al-Maghribī (1125–1175 CE) and Sa’īd b. Ḥasan al-Iskandārī (thirteenth–fourteenth century), with the exclusion of two examples, the former do not seem to have been inspired by the latter and his thinking was actually highly original and independent.

Below, I intend to show additional manifestations of the originality of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s work and demonstrate that Perlmann’s and Lazarus-Yafeh’s arguments regarding his lack of singularity, originality, and Jewish education should be circumscribed. The discussion will reveal further aspects of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s contribution to the Muslim-Jewish polemic. It will focus on three topics: his presentation of *dalā’il al-nubuwwa*, his attitude toward ‘Uzayr, and his familiarity with Midrashic ideas and Jewish interpretive methods.

1. *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*

Perusal of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* shows ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s far-reaching reliance on Biblical verses, transliterated into Arabic and accompanied by a commentary. The transliteration is generally quite reasonable but the commentary is often incongruous with the verse that it interprets because ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq tailors it to his polemical agenda. Lazarus-Yafeh

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8 Alfonso, “‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī”, pp. 6-7.
9 Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic*, pp. 196-200.
10 Mazuz, “‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī—An Independent-Minded Polemicist or a Mimic of His Predecessors?” (forthcoming).

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assumes that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq used Christian translations of the Bible into Arabic because they were more literal than the Jewish ones, hence richer in anthropomorphism (taṣīm).11 However, by writing that there are twenty-four books in the Bible,12 ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq implies his familiarity with the Jewish, not the Christian, division of the Biblical corpus.

One of the most frequent claims among Muslim polemicists is that the Bible alludes to Muḥammad’s name but that the Jews, jealous of the non-Jewish prophet, deleted the allusions and falsified the verses that contained them. This falsification, known as tahrīf in Islamic sources,13 was, according to the Muslim sages, thwarted by Allāh in some cases, thus demonstrating the truth of their religion. Consequently, Muslim authorities often refer to these verses as “evidence of prophethood” (dalāʾil al-nubuwwa) or “signs of prophethood” (aʾlām al-nubuwwa). ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq seems to be very original in his dalāʾil, both in his use of verses and in his interpretation of other verses that were invoked by previous polemicists. Below, I divide the verses that he uses as dalāʾil into five types and explain that he interprets most of them through the technique of gematria, which he considers a cardinal principle in the Jewish religion.14

Use of common verses in the Muslim polemic with Judaism

Muslim polemicists are specifically drawn to four Biblical verses (Gen. 17:20 and Deut. 18:15, 18:18, and 33:2); one may find them or their paraphrases in almost every anti-Jewish polemical Islamic tract.

11 See Lazarus-Yafeh, “Contribution of a Jewish Convert”, p. 84.
‘Abd al-Ḥaqq is unusual in that he omits the last. Like many earlier Muslim polemicists, he explains the words *bi-me’od me’od* (exceedingly) in Gen. 17:20 as referring to Muḥammad, since their gematria, like Muḥammad’s name, is 92.\(^\text{15}\) While many of his predecessors limited their commentary to gematria, he offers a new reading of the verse: “Your prayer for Ishmael is accepted and I shall bless him and multiply him and aggrandize him and descend from him Muḥammad, peace be upon him.”\(^\text{16}\)

Deut. 18:15 and 18:18 appear in a passage that discusses the future of prophecy among the Israelites and the way to identify true and false prophets.\(^\text{17}\) Muslim polemicists argue that the word *nābi*’ (prophet) refers to Muḥammad.\(^\text{18}\) Only one of them, Samaw’al al-Maghribī, explains how he reached this conclusion\(^\text{19}\) and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s precursors generally state that the prophet at issue is Muḥammad, with no further comment. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, in contrast, proposes that the emphasis be placed on the word *be-fīv* (in his mouth, Deut. 18:18), which is 98 in gematria—the sum of Muḥammad (92) and Friday (6). In his view, then, the verse not only proves that the Bible alludes to Muḥammad’s future arrival but also that Friday will replace the Sabbath as the sacred day of the week.\(^\text{20}\)

### Mecca

‘Abd al-Ḥaqq does not use Deut. 33:2, in which the word “Paran” is explained by most polemicists as referring to Mecca, thus implying Muḥammad.\(^\text{21}\) Nevertheless, he explains two other Biblical verses as

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suggestive of Mecca. Gen. 12:9 reports that Abraham went *ha-Negbah* (southward). This word and Mecca share the numerical value of 65. Thus, according to ‘Abd al-Haqq, the verse proves that Mecca is alluded to in the Bible and that Abraham went there.\(^{22}\) He also claims that the word *heikhalō* (his temple) in Mal. 3:1 (a verse that I discuss again below) refers to Mecca on the grounds of equal numeration.\(^{23}\) Now, the tally of *heikhalō* is 71 and that of Mecca is 65. However, the word *heikhal* alone, without *vav* (��, 6), is 65. It is not clear why ‘Abd al-Haqq argues in this manner but, as we shall see, this is not the only time he manipulates the letter *vav*.

**Muhammad**

‘Abd al-Haqq finds allusions to Muhammad in several verses due to words or expressions that add up to 92. Examples are *le-gōy gadōl* (a great nation, Gen. 12:2; 21:18),\(^{24}\) *kī mī hū* (for whom is this, Jer. 30:21),\(^{25}\) and *havā ve-ʻad* (and came to, Dan. 7:13).\(^{26}\) He also sees such an allusion in the word *amen*, which appears twice in Is. 65:16.\(^{27}\) It is not clear to which occurrence he refers. In this example, he does not follow the Hebrew, in which the count of the word is 91; instead, he calculates according to his transliteration, in which he uses two *auffs* (אא). An additional example is his use of the word *elōhim* (God, 92).\(^{28}\)
Although he does not specify which verse contains this word, his argument appears in proximity to his transliteration of Deut. 18:15—which includes not elōhîm but eloheikha (your God, without the mater lectionis vav). If this is the verse that inspires him to see a reference to Muḥammad in the word elōhîm, then here too he manipulates the letter vav, since the word eloḥîm is spelled without a vav.

‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s eagerness to enhance his dalā’īl arsenal leads him to use verses in which no word adds up to exactly 92. Thus he argues that some verses refer to Muhammad’s name and additional elements. The “extras” are actually attempts to stretch the relevant verses in order to accommodate his polemical intention. By doing this, he displays originality. For example, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq interprets the word magen (shield, 93) in Gen. 15:1 as a reference to Muhammad (92) and Allāh, the one. Contemplating Gen. 1:16, he finds that ha-gedōlîm (the great [lights], 98) is suggestive of Muḥammad (92) and Friday (6), the Muslim holy day that abrogates the Jewish one. In the Hebrew text, the word appears without vav, as ha-gedo{līm}, which is exactly 92, just like Muḥammad’s name. It follows that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq had a different text in front of him or added the vav. By implication, he had some knowledge of Hebrew. This is the third time that he manipulates the letter vav to satisfy his polemical needs.

Hebrew “cognates” of the word Muḥammad

The Bible uses the word mahmâd (pleasant) in several places. Given its homophonic similarity to Muḥammad’s name, especially if its vowelization is changed, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq mobilizes it for his cause. Lazarus-Yafeh notes his unusual use of the root h.m.d.. One example is I Kgs. 20:6: “Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes

31 Lazarus-Yafeh, Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism, p. 106.
(mahmād ‘eineikha), they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.’ This text describes the confrontation between Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, and Ahab. ‘Abd al-Haqq interprets this verse as follows: “And everything in which your interest exists, Muḥammad, they will put in their hands and take it, i.e., the banner (‘alam) on which the name of Muḥammad, pбуh, appears.”32 Lazarus-Yafeh points out a possible inspiration from BT, Sanhedrin 102b, where the words mahmād ‘eineikha are explained as denoting a Torah scroll (sefer Tōrah).33 Indeed, ‘Abd al-Haqq replaces the scroll with the banner.

I Kgs. 22:35, describing the war between Aram and Israel, reads: “And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up (ma‘omād) in his chariot against the Arameans, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.”34 ‘Abd al-Haqq interprets the verse as follows: “And the king mentioned Muḥammad’s name as he fought al-Rūm.”35 The word al-Rūm generally denotes the Romans, the Byzantines, or, in certain contexts, the Seleucids. According to the Biblical text, Ahab fought Aram. Since the lam that belongs to the definite article, before rā’, is not articulated, the word sounds like ar-Rūm, which is close to Aram. ‘Abd al-Haqq seems to have been inspired by the similarity of the words ma‘omād and mahmād, possibly suggesting that he was able, at least to some extent, to read Hebrew.

The word mahmād recurs in Hos. 9:6.36 ‘Abd al-Haqq interprets this verse as a prophecy concerning various forms of retribution that await the Jews. One of them is that Muḥammad will seize their property; by so saying, ‘Abd al-Haqq probably matches the verse to the descriptions of the spoils that the Muslims took from the Jews of Medina and Khaybar.37

32 ‘Abd al-Haqq, al-Sayf al-Mamūdūd, p. 22. Interestingly, ‘alam has another meaning in classical Arabic, a sign of prophethood that implies on Muḥammad’s future arrival.
Then ‘Abd al-Haqq discusses Hos. 9:7: “The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool (‘evīl), the man of the spirit (‘īsh ha-rūāh) is mad (meshuga’), for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.”38 He interprets the first hemiverse as speaking of the approach of days in which the Jews will get their just desserts for having troubled Muhammad. Turning to the second hemiverse, he writes: “You said that he is an ignoramus and a fool who imagines visions (maryāḥ) and this is your gravest sin and the reason for your severe punishment and the reason you are at fault for your hatred.”39 He does not specify where the Jews said this; this part seems less an interpretation of his own than a comment on a Jewish interpretation of Hos. 9:7 that associates the words “fool” (not necessarily ‘evīl, but shōteh) and “man of the spirit,” ‘īsh ha-rūāh, with Muḥammad. Several Jewish sources do suggest that such an interpretation existed. For example, the Pereq Rabbi Shim‘on ben Yōhai (Chapter of Rabbi Shim‘on ben Yōhai) reads: [...] “A fool prophet and a man of the spirit [...]”40 In this text, as well as others, the word shōteh replaces ‘evīl and word meshuga’ does not appear.41 In addition, other Jewish sources use the term meshuga’ to describe Muḥammad.42

If so, ‘Abd al-Haqq is familiar with a Jewish interpretation of Hos. 9:7 and comments about it. What is more, he interprets one preceding verse as an omen of Muḥammad’s future arrival. While upbraiding the Jews for their use of Hos. 9:7, he uses it to demonstrate the existence of a reference to Muḥammad in the Bible, thus obliging the Jews to acknowledge him.43 In other words, he reinterpretsthe verse.

40 E.g. “[...] והוא אש שנים ילך אחיו אותה אחד כותב זכרו על המקדש המובח 연 המקדש המובח.” See Tefilat Rabbi Shim‘on ben Yōhai (The Prayer of Rabbi Shim‘on ben Yōhai) in Beit ha-Midrash, vol. 4, p. 119.

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Ahmad

While most Muslim polemicists try to prove that the name Muḥammad appears in the Bible, in several places ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq does the same with the name Ahmad, one of Muhammad’s names in Islamic tradition. 44 Gen. 2:8 reads: “And the Lord God planted a garden (gan) eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” The word gan, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq asserts, refers to Ahmad since the numerical value of both words is 53. 45 He does the same with the expression hayah ke-ahad (become as one) in Gen. 3:22. 46

In three other places he stretches his reasoning to claim that the numerical value of a word in a Jewish text refers to Ahmad as well as additional Islamic elements. For example, he defines ve-hinneh (behold) in Gen. 1:31, which adds up to 66, as a reference to Ahmad (53), Friday as the sacred day of the week (6), the five daily prayers (5), and the two festivals (2), 47 probably referring to id al-adhā and id al-fitr. He explains the word yeyahelū (shall await, 64) in Is. 42:4 similarly, only omitting mention of the festivals. 48 He applies the same technique to the word nogah (brightness, 58), which appears in the Sabbath morning service, but links it only with Ahmad and the five daily prayers. 49

‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s references to Ahmad may represent an attempt on his part to refute Moses Maimonides’ (d. 1204 CE) rejection, in the Epistle to Yemen, of the argument that Muḥammad’s name is implied


in Gen. 17:20. Maimonides’ reasoning—that the Qur’ān (apparently 61:6) states that the name appearing in the Torah is Aḥmad, which is 53—deprives the Muslim polemicists’ argument of its value.50

2. Attitude toward ‘Uzayr

‘Abd al-Ḥaqq describes ‘Uzayr as one of the prophets who foretold Muḥammad’s arrival.51 ‘Uzayr is a Qur’ānic figure that most Muslim and modern scholars identify as Ezra the Scribe.52 ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq is strongly unique and original here because previous Muslim polemicists described ‘Uzayr-Ezra as the culprit behind the falsification of the Bible.53

‘Abd al-Ḥaqq ascribes to ‘Uzayr Mal. 3:1: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to this temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” Interestingly, a passage in BT, Megilla 15a states that “Ezra is Malachi.” If so, this may be an example of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s familiarity with a Talmudic idea.

51 ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, al-Sayf al-Mamdūd, pp. 118-120.

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3. Familiarity with Midrashic ideas and Jewish interpretive methods

Although ‘Abd al-Haqq made extensive use of Biblical sources, it is clear that he was also inspired by Midrashic texts. He specifically mentions having drawn on matters that the Jews claimed to appear in the Torah and “their other compositions from the Hebrew texts,” based on “interpretation by their ancient ones and elucidation by their sages” (tafsīr qudamā’ihim wa-sharh ‘ulamā’ihim). Thus, it is very likely that these other compositions refer to the Oral Law.

Thus far, we have mentioned the possibility that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq was familiar with a Jewish interpretation of Hos. 9:7 and the idea that “Ezra is Malachi” in BT, Megilla 15a. Lazarus-Yafeh correctly mentions the example of BT, Sukka 5b, where R. Abahū says that the kerūbīm (cherubs) are children, on which basis ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq accuses the Jews of idolatry. She also mentions BT, Sanhedrin 102b (where mahmad ‘eineikha is explained as denoting a Torah scroll). It seems that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq was inspired by another passage in Tractate Sanhedrin on the Ahab story discussed above since, as he puts it, the Israelites considered Ahab one of the greatest of infidels because he believed in Muhammad’s religion. This brings to mind the dictum regarding the portion in the hereafter of the seven figures whom the Jewish tradition considers the vilest: “Three kings and four laymen have no portion in the afterlife.” One the kings listed is Ahab. If so, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq has reframed Ahab’s image. An additional Talmudic source that may have inspired ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq is BT, Megilla 14a. One of the Jewish fundamentals that ‘Abd

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57 “[...] شاهد مسلم وأبرمود رضي الله عنهم، أن لهم كل ولد بطلة، See Mishna, Sanhedrin 10:2; JT, Sanhedrin 50b (10:2), 53a (10:2); BT, Sanhedrin 90a; Aḥōt de-Rabbi Nathan 36:6.
58 Interestingly, Sa‘īd b. Ḥasan uses another king on this list, Manasseh, for his polemical needs, claiming that the monarch “cried out to Allāh, extolled and exalted, asking for help through Muhammad” and was eventually rescued by Allāh (Weston, “The Kitāb Masālik al-Nazar”; pp. 332-333). If so, both quondam Jews invoke figures that are poorly regarded and rejected in Jewish tradition and present them as proto-Muslims. The reason for their doing so entails further study.

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al-Ḥaqq criticizes concerns the festivals. The Jews, he claims, added festivals that do not appear in the Torah, such as Purim (which he calls the festival of Haman [ḥāmān]), and terms the Scroll of Esther (megillat Ester) the Chapter of Haman [ṣūrat Ḥāmān]). Such a supplement, he states, contravenes the injunction neither to add to nor to subtract from the contents of the Torah. His words may suggest that he was familiar with the following passage in BT, Megillah 14a: “Our Rabbis taught: ‘Forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses prophesied to Israel, and they neither subtracted from nor added to what is written in the Torah, with the exception of the reading of the Scroll [of Esther].’” In Section 2, I raised the possibility that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq was familiar with the idea in BT, Megillah 15a, that “Ezra is Malachi.” The two contents appear only one page apart. This proximity raises the hypothetical possibility that ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq took much interest in this part of Tractate Megillah.

As mentioned, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq considers the gematria a cardinal principle in the Jewish religion. The Jewish attitudes towards gematria and its function are varied. R. Eli’ezer b. Yossei the Galilean numbers it among the thirty-two “measures” (middōt) in the study of Aggada (not Torah). Mishna Abot 3:18 terms gematria a “dessert” relative to “wisdom,” i.e., secondary in studying the Torah. The various attitudes toward gematria among Jewish sages remained controversial even in later generations. Maimonides, for example, considers gematria one of the things that one should believe. Abraham b. Ezra (d. 1167 CE), however, regards it as a derash (exegetical) method only, meaning that it cannot explain the peshat (literal meaning) of the Biblical text.

Although the attitudes vary, it is clear that gematria has some place and importance in Jewish tradition. This may explain ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s

60 ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, al-Sayf al-Mamdūd, p. 42.
statement and, in turn, may demonstrate that he was familiar with or inspired by one or more of the sources that find gematria legitimate.

One of the categories into which Lazarus-Yafeh sorts ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s claims is “arguments with Karaite characteristics.”65 The Karaites’ resistance to the Rabbanites centered on the Oral law. Such resistance requires, at least, some knowledge in sources such as the Mishna and the Talmuds or ideas from them. This again suggests ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s familiarity with such sources.

Conclusion

Apart from the early polemicists, it is almost impossible to find a Muslim polemicist who did not absorb his predecessors’ teachings. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, apparently, is no exception in this regard; he fits the mold emphatically by accusing the Jews of anthropomorphism. Yet the existence of differences among the polemicists’ texts leaves ample room for comparative research.

Alfonso notes places in ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s writings where his arguments appear to resemble those of previous apostate Jewish polemicists such as Samaw’al al-Maghribī and Saʿīd b. Ḥasan, but states that these notes are not intended to be exhaustive, let alone to be used to reconstruct the genesis of al-Sayf al-Mamduḥ.66 I showed that, with the exclusion of two examples, it is unlikely that the former was inspired by the latter and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s thinking was actually novel and independent.67 One should not necessarily seek his sources of inspiration entirely in previous Jewish converts’ works. Actually, when viewed side-by-side with their reuse of previous polemical contents, apostate Jewish polemicists make an original contribution.68 After all, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq lived as a Jew until the age of forty and was probably part of a Jewish community. He must have absorbed something from this period and this milieu. Thus, some of the contents he discusses may reflect a piece of the spiritual “cargo” of his quondam community. It is also possible that

67 Mazuz, “‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī”.

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he was familiar with some of the Islamic arguments that he mentions from his Jewish, and not Muslim, milieu, since they were well-known topics of conversation among believers of both faiths.69

This discussion shows that the arguments regarding ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq’s lack of uniqueness, originality, and Jewish education are of limited validity. Taken together with my second article on this polemicist, it also demonstrates that, in many ways, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq was an original thinker and made a unique contribution to the Islamic literature. He may even have known some Hebrew—possibly exceeding the purely ritual fluency that most Jews in the Islamic world possessed.

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