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-Ḥaqq 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-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, *dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 'Uzayr, Midrash, gematria.

'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, un polemista musulmán del siglo XIV y de origen judío, ha sido algo silenciado por la investigación puesto que existían dudas respecto a la excepcionalidad y originalidad de su pensamiento, así como respecto a la extensión de su educación en el Judaísmo. Este artículo, parte de un estudio más amplio, intenta superar esas dudas demostrando que 'Abd al-Ḥaqq hizo una contribución única a las obras de polémica musulmana anti-judía, mostró una amplia originalidad en su extenso uso de la gematría y adaptación de las fuentes a su agenda, mostrando, asimismo, un gran conocimiento judío. Esto último queda demostrado por su familiaridad con la estructura y el mensaje bíblicos, por un conocimiento superficial de partes de la ley oral y por una cierta habilidad con el hebreo.

Palabras clave: Polémica, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, *dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 'Uzayr, Midrash, gematría.

Introduction

Not much is known about Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī. He was an apostate Jew who probably lived in Ceuta in the late fourteenth century.[1] 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 ʿalā Aḥbār al-Yahūd* (*The Outstretched Sword for Refuting the Rabbis of the Jews*).[2]

The first to mention *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* in the academic literature was Moritz Steinschneider, who described it and its author tersely and generally.[3] 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 [ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's] arguments, i.e., in the passages he quotes for his case," Perlmann concluded.[4] Elsewhere, he defined *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* as "vulgar."[5] 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.[6] Lazarus-Yafeh sorts ʿAbd 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) Qurʾān commentary. She concludes that although he was not an educated Jew, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq knew the Bible and Jewish customs better than Muslim authors (presumably polemicists who were born as Muslims) did.[7]

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[1] See Alfonso, "ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī", p. 6.

[2] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd fī l-radd ʿalā 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.

[3] Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache*, p. 125.

[4] Perlmann, "ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī, a Jewish Convert", p. 180.

[5] Perlmann, "ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī", p. 176.

[6] Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert from Morocco to the Muslim Polemic against Jews and Judaism", p. 83.

[7] Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert", p. 89.

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 ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq that briefly describes his life and pamphlet.[8] Ryan Szpiech devoted a discussion to the conversion narrative of several Jews, of whom ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is one, who wrote anti-Jewish tracts after their conversion.[9]

In a forthcoming article, I show that although some of ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's arguments appear to resemble those of Samawʾal al-Maghribī (1125–1175 CE) and Saʿīd b. Ḥasan al-Iskandarī (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.[10]

Below, I intend to show additional manifestations of the originality of ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's contribution to the Muslim-Jewish polemic. It will focus on three topics: his presentation of *dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, his attitude toward ʿUzayr, and his familiarity with Midrashic ideas and Jewish interpretive methods.

1. *Dalāʾil al-Nubuwwa*

Perusal of *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd* shows ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq tailors it to his polemical agenda. Lazarus-Yafeh

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[8] Alfonso, "ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī", pp. 6-7.

[9] Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic*, pp. 196-200.

[10] Mazuz, "ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī—An Independent-Minded Polemicist or a Mimic of His Predecessors?" (forthcoming).

assumes that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq used Christian translations of the Bible into Arabic because they were more literal than the Jewish ones, hence richer in anthropomorphism (*tajsīm*).[11] However, by writing that there are twenty-four books in the Bible,[12] ʿAbd 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 *taḥrīf* 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" (*dalā'il al-nubuwwa*) or *"*signs of prophethood" (*aʿlām al-nubuwwa*). ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq seems to be very original in his *dalā'il*, 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 *dalā'il* 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.

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[11] See Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert", p. 84.

[12] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 20.

[13] On *taḥrīf*, see Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Ḥazm*, pp. 223-248; Lazarus-Yafeh, "Taḥrīf", *EI*², vol. 10, pp. 111-112; Accad, "Corruption and/or Misinterpretation of the Bible: The Story of the Islamic Usage of *Taḥrīf*", pp. 67-97; Reynolds, "On the Qur'ānic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*taḥrīf*) and Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic"; Nickel, *Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Qur'ān*; Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*, pp. 175-177; Mazuz, *The Religious and Spiritual Life of the Jews of Medina*, pp. 17-21; Toenies Keating, "Revisiting the Charge of *Taḥrīf*: The Question of Supersessionism in Early Islam and the Qur'an", pp. 202-217; del Río Sánchez, "The Rejection of Muhammad's Message by Jews and Christians and Its Effect on Islamic Theological Argumentation", pp. 68-72.

[14] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 42.

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is unusual in that he omits the last. Like many earlier Muslim polemicists, he explains the words *bi-meʾod meʾod* (exceedingly) in Gen. 17:20 as referring to Muḥammad, since their gematria, like Muḥammad's name, is 92.[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."[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.[17] Muslim polemicists argue that the word *nabī'* (prophet) refers to Muḥammad.[18] Only one of them, Samawʾal al-Maghribī, explains how he reached this conclusion[19] and ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's precursors generally state that the prophet at issue is Muḥammad, with no further comment. ʿAbd 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.[20]

Mecca

ʿAbd 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.[21] Nevertheless, he explains two other Biblical verses as

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[15] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 40.

[16] See ‚‚ودعوتك لاسماعيل مقبولة. سأبرك فيه، وأكثره، وأنميه، وأخرج منه محمدا، صلى الله عليه وسلم‘‘ ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 40. Cf. the Biblical source: ‚‚וּלְיִשְׁמָעֵאל, שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנֵּה בֵּרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ וְהִפְרֵיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֹתוֹ, **בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד:** שְׁנֵים-עָשָׂר נְשִׂיאִם יוֹלִיד, וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל.‘‘ (emphasis added here and throughout the article).

[17] ‚‚**נָבִיא** מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ כָּמֹנִי יָקִים לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלָיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן.‘‘; ‚‚**נָבִיא** אָקִים לָהֶם מִקֶּרֶב אֲחֵיהֶם כָּמוֹךָ וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרַי בְּפִיו וְדִבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּנּוּ.‘‘

[18] E.g. al-Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-Nubuwwa*, p. 195.

[19] See Samawʾal al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd* – Silencing the Jews, pp. 29-30 (7b).

[20] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 59-60. Cf. ‚‚נָבִיא אָקִים לָהֶם מִקֶּרֶב אֲחֵיהֶם כָּמוֹךָ וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרַי **בְּפִיו** וְדִבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּנּוּ.‘‘

[21] E.g. al-Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-Nubuwwa*, p. 195.

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 ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, 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* (ו, 6), is 65. It is not clear why ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq argues in this manner but, as we shall see, this is not the only time he manipulates the letter *vav*.

Muḥammad

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq finds allusions to Muḥammad 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-ʿad* (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 *alif*s (أَلمِن). An additional example is his use of the word *elōhīm* (God, 92).[28]

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[22] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 55-56. Cf. "וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם, הָלוֹךְ וְנָסוֹעַ **הַנֶּגְבָּה**.". On the agenda behind such an identification, see ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 65 n.45 (translation). See further, Schussman, "Abraham's visits to Ishmael: The Jewish Origin and Orientation", pp. 325-345.

[23] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 119. Cf. "הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָכִי, וּפִנָּה דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָי; וּפִתְאֹם יָבוֹא אֶל **הֵיכָלוֹ** הָאָדוֹן אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים, וּמַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם חֲפֵצִים הִנֵּה בָא אָמַר, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת."

[24] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 48-49, 54-55. Cf. "וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ **לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל** וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ וֶהְיֵה בְּרָכָה."; "קוּמִי שְׂאִי אֶת הַנַּעַר וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת יָדֵךְ בּוֹ כִּי **לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל** אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ." The words *le-gōy gadōl* recur in Gen. 17:20, a verse that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq uses to prove that Muḥammad's name is alluded to in the Bible. However, he uses the gematria of the words *bi-me'od me'od* only.

[25] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 117-118. Cf. "וְהָיָה אַדִּירוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ, וּמֹשְׁלוֹ מִקִּרְבּוֹ יֵצֵא, וְהִקְרַבְתִּיו, וְנִגַּשׁ אֵלָי: **כִּי מִי הוּא** זֶה עָרַב אֶת לִבּוֹ, לָגֶשֶׁת אֵלַי נְאֻם יְהוָה."

[26] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 116. Cf. "חָזֵה הֲוֵית, בְּחֶזְוֵי לֵילְיָא, וַאֲרוּ עִם עֲנָנֵי שְׁמַיָּא, כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ אָתֵה הֲוָא; **וְעַד** עַתִּיק יוֹמַיָּא מְטָה, וּקְדָמוֹהִי הַקְרְבוּהִי."

[27] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 122. Cf. "אֲשֶׁר הַמִּתְבָּרֵךְ בָּאָרֶץ, יִתְבָּרֵךְ בֵּאלֹהֵי **אָמֵן**, וְהַנִּשְׁבָּע בָּאָרֶץ, יִשָּׁבַע בֵּאלֹהֵי **אָמֵן**: כִּי נִשְׁכְּחוּ, הַצָּרוֹת הָרִאשֹׁנוֹת, וְכִי נִסְתְּרוּ, מֵעֵינָי."

[28] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 63 n.58.

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 *elōhīm* 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 *elōhīm*, then here too he manipulates the letter *vav*, since the word *elohīm* is spelled without a *vav*.

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's eagerness to enhance his *dalāʾil* arsenal leads him to use verses in which no word adds up to exactly 92. Thus he argues that some verses refer to Muḥammad'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, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq interprets the word *magen* (shield, 93) in Gen. 15:1 as a reference to Muḥammad (92) and Allāh, the one.[29] Contemplating Gen. 1:16, he finds that *ha-gedōlīm* (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-gedolīm*, which is exactly 92, just like Muḥammad's name.[30] It follows that ʿAbd 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 *maḥmad* (pleasant) in several places. Given its homophonic similarity to Muḥammad's name, especially if its vowelization is changed, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq mobilizes it for his cause. Lazarus-Yafeh notes his unusual use of the root *ḥ.m.d.*.[31] 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

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[29] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 51-52. Cf. ״אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה אֶל אַבְרָם, בַּמַּחֲזֶה, לֵאמֹר: אַל תִּירָא אַבְרָם, אָנֹכִי **מָגֵן** לָךְ שְׂכָרְךָ, הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד.״

[30] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 35. Cf. ״וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים, אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת **הַגְּדֹלִים**: אֶת הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל, לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם, וְאֶת הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטֹן לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה, וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים.״

[31] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism*, p. 106.

(*maḥmad '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-Ḥaqq 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, *pbuh*, appears."[32] Lazarus-Yafeh points out a possible inspiration from BT, *Sanhedrīn* 102b, where the words *maḥmad 'eineikha* are explained as denoting a Torah scroll (*sefer Tōrah*).[33] Indeed, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq 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'omad*) 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-Ḥaqq 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-Ḥaqq seems to have been inspired by the similarity of the words *ma'omad* and *maḥmad*, possibly suggesting that he was able, at least to some extent, to read Hebrew.

The word *maḥmad* recurs in Hos. 9:6.[36] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq 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-Ḥaqq probably matches the verse to the descriptions of the spoils that the Muslims took from the Jews of Medina and Khaybar.[37]

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[32] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 22. Interestingly, *'alam* has another meaning in classical Arabic, a sign of prophethood that implies on Muḥammad's future arrival.

[33] Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert", p. 85.

[34] Cf. "וַתַּעֲלֶה הַמִּלְחָמָה, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, וְהַמֶּלֶךְ הָיָה **מָעֳמָד** בַּמֶּרְכָּבָה, נֹכַח אֲרָם; וַיָּמָת בָּעֶרֶב, וַיִּצֶק דַּם הַמַּכָּה אֶל חֵיק הָרָכֶב."

[35] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 26.

[36] "כִּי הִנֵּה הָלְכוּ מִשֹּׁד, מִצְרַיִם תְּקַבְּצֵם מֹף תְּקַבְּרֵם; **מַחְמַד** לְכַסְפָּם, קִמּוֹשׂ יִירָשֵׁם, חוֹחַ, בְּאָהֳלֵיהֶם."

[37] See e.g. al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, vol. 1, pp. 176-180, 374-375; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, vol. 3, pp. 9-10; Kister, "The Massacre of the Banū Qurayza: A Re-examination of a Tradition", pp. 61-96; Lecker, *Muḥammad and the Jews*, pp. 133, 151-156, 171-174, 199-205.

Then ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq 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 (*ʾevīl*), the man of the spirit (*ʾīsh ha-rūaḥ*) is mad (*meshugaʿ*), 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 Muḥammad. 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 *ʾevīl*, but *shōṭeh*) and "man of the spirit," *ʾīsh ha-rūaḥ*, with Muḥammad. Several Jewish sources do suggest that such an interpretation existed. For example, the *Pereq Rabbī Shimʿōn ben Yōḥai* (Chapter of Rabbi Shimʿōn ben Yōḥai) reads: […] "A fool prophet and a man of the spirit […]."[40] In this text, as well as others, the word *shōṭeh* replaces *ʾevīl* and word *meshugaʿ* does not appear.[41] In addition, other Jewish sources use the term *meshugaʿ* to describe Muḥammad.[42]

If so, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq 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 reinterprets the verse.

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[38] Cf. בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַפְּקֻדָּה, בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַשִּׁלֻּם   יֵדְעוּ, יִשְׂרָאֵל; **אֱוִיל הַנָּבִיא, מְשֻׁגָּע אִישׁ הָרוּחַ** עַל רֹב עֲוֹנְךָ, וְרַבָּה מַשְׂטֵמָה."

[39] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 31. On the meaning of *maryāḥ*, see ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 56 n.16 (translation).

[40] "[...] נביא שוטה ואיש הרוח [...]." See *Batei Midrashōt*, vol. 2, p. 25.

[41] E.g. "[...] ועומד איש שוטה ובעל הרוח ומדבר על הקב"ה כזבים [...]." See *Tefīlat Rabbī Shimʿōn ben Yōḥai* (The Prayer of Rabbi Shimʿōn ben Yōḥai) in *Beit ha-Midrash*, vol. 4, p. 119.

[42] E.g. *The Epistle of R. Sherira Gaon*, p. 100; Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen: The Arabic Original and the Three Hebrew Versions*, pp. 14, 18, 36, 38, 80; Samawʾal al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd* – Silencing the Jews, p. 67 (17a); Samawʾal al-Maghribī's (d. 570/1175), *Ifḥām al-Yahūd*: The Early Recension, p. 39; *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, pp. 54, 69. See further, Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, pp. 302-303; Avishur, "Hebrew Derogatories for Gentiles and Jews in Judaeo-Arabic in the Medieval Era and Their Metamorphoses", pp. 98-103.

[43] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 32-33.

Aḥmad

While most Muslim polemicists try to prove that the name
Muḥammad appears in the Bible, in several places ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq does
the same with the name Aḥmad, one of Muḥammad'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*, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq asserts, refers to Aḥmad since the numerical
value of both words is 53.[45] He does the same with the expression
hayah ke-aḥad (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 Aḥmad 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 Aḥmad
(53), Friday as the sacred day of the week (6), the five daily prayers
(5), and the two festivals (2),[47] probably referring to *ʿīd al-adḥā* and
ʿīd al-fiṭr. He explains the word *yeyaḥelū* (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 Aḥmad and the five
daily prayers.[49]

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's references to Aḥmad 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

[44] For an example of another Muslim polemicist who did so, see Weston, "The
Kitāb Masālik al-Naẓar of Saʿīd Ibn Ḥasan of Alexandria: Edited for the First Time and
Translated with Introduction and Notes", p. 325; Halft, "Saʿīd b. Ḥasan al-Iskandarī: A
Jewish Convert to Islam: *Editio princeps* of the Later Recension (732/1331) of His
Biblical 'Testimonies' to the Prophet Muḥammad", p. 285. See further, Mazuz, "Saʿīd
b. Ḥasan, Biographical Notes through the Prism of *Masālik al-Naẓar*", pp. 52-53.

[45] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 38-39. Cf. ‏"וַיִּטַּע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, **גַּן** בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם;‏
‏וַיָּשֶׂם שָׁם, אֶת הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר."‏

[46] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 41-42. Cf. ‏"וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, הֵן הָאָדָם **הָיָה**‏
‏**כְּאַחַד** מִמֶּנּוּ, לָדַעַת, טוֹב וָרָע; וְעַתָּה פֶּן יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ, וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים, וְאָכַל, וָחַי לְעֹלָם."‏

[47] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 44. Cf. ‏"וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, **וְהִנֵּה** טוֹב‏
‏מְאֹד; וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר, יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי."‏

[48] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 66-67. Cf. ‏"לֹא יִכְהֶה וְלֹא יָרוּץ, עַד יָשִׂים בָּאָרֶץ‏
‏מִשְׁפָּט; וּלְתוֹרָתוֹ, אִיִּים **יְיַחֵלוּ**."‏

[49] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 121. Cf. ‏"מלאים זיו ומפיקים **נגה**."‏

in Gen. 17:20. Maimonides' reasoning—that the Qurʾān (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 ʿUzayr

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq describes ʿUzayr as one of the prophets who foretold Muḥammad's arrival.[51] ʿUzayr is a Qurʾānic figure that most Muslim and modern scholars identify as Ezra the Scribe.[52] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is strongly unique and original here because previous Muslim polemicists described ʿUzayr-Ezra as the culprit behind the falsification of the Bible.[53]

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ascribes to ʿUzayr 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, *Megīlla* 15a states that "Ezra is Malachi." If so, this may be an example of ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's familiarity with a Talmudic idea.

[50] Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, pp. 43-45. See further, Mazuz, "The Identity of the Apostate in the Epistle to Yemen", p. 370.

[51] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 118-120.

[52] For a summary of the classical attitude toward ʿUzayr, reviewing all the relevant literature, see Lazarus-Yafeh, "Ezra-ʿUzayr: History of a Pre-Islamic Polemical Motif through Islam to the Beginning of Biblical Criticism", pp. 359-; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, pp. 50-74. See further, Heller, "Ezra the Scribe in Islamic Legend", pp. 214-217; Hirschberg, "Maqrūn—the Horned One—and Ezra-ʿUzayr is the son Allāh", pp. 125-133; Comerro, "Esdras est-il le fils de Dieu?". For a different view on ʿUzayr's identity, see Sharon, 'People of the Book', vol. 4, pp. 36-43. Cf. Sharon, "The Decisive Battles in the Arab Conquest of Syria", p. 40; Sharon, "The Decisive Battles in the Arab Conquest of Syria", p. 301; Segovia, "Response to Annette Yoshiko Reed, 'Fallen Angels and the Afterlives of Enochic Traditions in Early Islam'".

[53] E.g. Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fī l-Milal wa-l-Ahwāʾ wa-l-Niḥal*, vol. 1, p. 312; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Radd ʿalā Ibn al-Naghrīla al-Yahūdī wa-Rasāʾil Ukhrā*, p. 77; Samawʾal al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd* – Silencing the Jews, p. 51 (13a). See further, Whittingham, "Ezra as the Corrupter of the Torah? Re-Assessing Ibn Ḥazm's Role in the Long History of an Idea".

3. Familiarity with Midrashic ideas and Jewish interpretive methods

Although ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq 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 qudamāʾihim wa-sharḥ ʿulamāʾihim*).[54] Thus, it is very likely that these other compositions refer to the Oral Law.

Thus far, we have mentioned the possibility that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq was familiar with a Jewish interpretation of Hos. 9:7 and the idea that "Ezra is Malachi" in BT, *Megīlla* 15a. Lazarus-Yafeh correctly mentions the example of BT, *Sukka* 5b, where R. Abahū says that the *kerūḇīm* (cherubs) are children, on which basis ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq accuses the Jews of idolatry. She also mentions BT, *Sanhedrīn* 102b (where *maḥmad ʿeineikha* is explained as denoting a Torah scroll).[55] It seems that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq was inspired by another passage in Tractate *Sanhedrīn* 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 Muḥammad's religion.[56] 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.[57] If so, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq has reframed Ahab's image.[58]

An additional Talmudic source that may have inspired ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is BT, *Megīlla* 14a. One of the Jewish fundamentals that ʿAbd

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[54] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 14.

[55] Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert", pp. 84-85. For ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's remarks on the *kerūḇīm*, see ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 89-90.

[56] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 20, 25.

[57] "שלושה מלכים וארבעה הדיוטות, אין להם חלק לעולם הבא [...]." See Mishna, *Sanhedrīn* 10:2; JT, *Sanhedrīn* 50b (10:2), 53a (10:2); BT, *Sanhedrīn* 90a; *Aḇōt de-Rabbi Nathan* 36:6.

[58] Interestingly, Saʿīd 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 Muḥammad" and was eventually rescued by Allāh (Weston, "The Kitāb Masālik al-Naẓar", 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.

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 [*'īd Hāmān*]), and terms the Scroll of Esther (*megīllat Ester*) the Chapter of Haman [*sūrat Hāmān*]). Such a supplement, he states, contravenes the injunction neither to add to nor to subtract from the contents of the Torah.[59] His words may suggest that he was familiar with the following passage in BT, *Megīlla* 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].'"[60] In Section 2, I raised the possibility that 'Abd al-Ḥaqq was familiar with the idea in BT, *Megīlla* 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 *Megīlla*.

As mentioned, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq considers the gematria a cardinal principle in the Jewish religion.[61] The Jewish attitudes towards gematria and its function are varied. R. Eli'ezer b. Yossei the Galilean numbers it among the thirty-two "measures" (*mīddōt*) in the study of Aggada (not Torah).[62] Mishna *Aḇōt* 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.[63] Abraham b. Ezra (d. 1167 CE), however, regards it as a *derash* (exegetic) method only, meaning that it cannot explain the *peshaṭ* (literal meaning) of the Biblical text.[64] Although the attitudes vary, it is clear that gematria has some place and importance in Jewish tradition. This may explain 'Abd al-Ḥaqq's

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[59] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, pp. 70-71.

[60] ‏"ת"ר ארבעים ושמונה נביאים ושבע נביאות נתנבאו להם לישראל ולא פחתו ולא הותירו על מה שכתוב בתורה חוץ ממקרא מגילה."‏

[61] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 42.

[62] *Mishnat Rabbi Elī'ezer 'ō Midrash Sheloshīm ū-Shtaim Mīddōt*. Hillel (Hyman) Gershom Enelow (ed.), p. 38.

[63] ‏"דעו רבותי שאין ראוי לנו להאמין אלא באחד משלושה דברים: הראשון   דבר שתהיה עליו ראיה ברורה מדעתו של אדם, כגון חכמת החשבון והגימטריאות והתקופות."‏ See Maimonides, "Letter on Astrology to the Rabbis of Montpellier," vol. 2, p. 479.

[64] ‏"[...] וחשבון אותיות אליעזר דרך דרש כי אין הכתוב מדבר בגימטריה כי יכול יוכל הרוצה להוציא כל שם לטוב ולרע רק השם כשמעו. עכ"ל."‏ See Ibn Ezra, *Commentary on the Torah*, vol. 1, p. 169 (Gen. 14:14).

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 ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd 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. ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's writings where his arguments appear to resemble those of previous apostate Jewish polemicists such as Samawʾal 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-Mamdūd*.[66] I showed that, with the exclusion of two examples, it is unlikely that the former was inspired by the latter and ʿAbd 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, ʿAbd 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

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[65] Lazarus-Yafeh, "Contribution of a Jewish Convert", p. 87.

[66] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *al-Sayf al-Mamdūd*, p. 37 (introduction).

[67] Mazuz, "'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī".

[68] E.g. Mazuz, "The Midrashic Sources of Saʿīd b. Ḥasan", pp. 67-81; Mazuz, "Saʿīd b. Ḥasan", pp. 49-57.

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 ʿAbd 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, ʿAbd 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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[69] See *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth-Century Essay in Comparative Religion*, pp. 49-50; *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth-Century Essay in the Comparative Study of Religion*, pp. 76-77; Sklare, "Responses to Islamic Polemics by Jewish Mutakallimūn in the Tenth Century", pp. 137-161. See further, Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, pp. 145-151.

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