

**GRAETZ
HEINRICH**

HISTORY OF
THE JEWS,
VOL. 3 (OF 6)

Heinrich Graetz
History of the Jews, Vol. 3 (of 6)

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24936245

History of the Jews, Vol. 3 (of 6):

Содержание

CHAPTER I.	4
CHAPTER II.	32
CHAPTER III.	66
CHAPTER IV.	105
CHAPTER V.	154
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	192

Heinrich Graetz

History of the Jews, Vol. 3 (of 6)

CHAPTER I.

THE DECAY OF JUDÆA AND THE JEWS IN DISPERSION

The Zendik Religion – King Kobad and Mazdak the Reformer – Revolt of the Jews – Mar-Zutra – Revival of the Schools – The Saburaïm – The Talmud committed to writing – Tolerance of Chosru II – The Christianization of Judæa – The Jews under Byzantine Rule – Justinian – Persecution of the Samaritans – Benjamin of Tiberias – Attack on Tyre – The Emperor Heraclius.

500–628 C. E

Hardly had the Jews recovered from the long and horrible persecution to which they had been subjected by King Firuz, when they were overtaken by fresh storms, which subverted the work of three centuries. Firuz had been followed by his brother,

who reigned a short time, and was succeeded by Kobad (Kovad, Cabades). The latter was a weak king, not without good qualities, but he allowed himself to become the tool of a fanatic, and was prevailed upon to institute religious persecutions. There arose under this monarch a man who desired to reform the religion of the Magi and make it the ruling faith. Mazdak – for that was the name of this reformer of Magianism – believed that he had discovered a means of promoting the promised victory of Light over Darkness, of Ahura-Mazda over Angromainyus. He considered greed of property and lust after women the causes of all evil among men, and he desired to remove these causes by introducing community of property and of women, even allowing promiscuous intercourse among those related by ties of consanguinity. In Mazdak's opinion it was on the foundation of communistic equality that the edifice of Zoroaster's doctrine could most safely be raised. As he led a virtuous and ascetic life, and was very earnest in his endeavors to reform, he soon succeeded in gaining numerous adherents (about the year 501), who availed themselves of these advantageous liberties, and called themselves Zendik, or true believers of the Zend. King Kobad himself became Mazdak's faithful disciple and supporter. He issued a decree commanding all the inhabitants of the Persian Empire to accept the doctrines of Mazdak, and to live in accordance therewith. The lower classes became the most zealous of Zendiks; they promptly appropriated the possessions of the rich and such of the women as pleased them. Thus

there arose a confusion of the ideas of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, such as had never been known in the history of nations. Finally, the Persian nobles dethroned this communistic king, and threw him into prison; but when Kobad escaped from confinement and, by the aid of the Huns, was again placed in possession of his dominions, they were unable to prevent Mazdak's adherents from renewing their licentious conduct. Many children born during Kobad's reign were of doubtful paternity, and no one could be certain of the peaceful enjoyment of his property.

The Jews and Christians naturally did not escape the communistic plague, and although only the rich suffered from the legalized robbery of the Zendiks, the community of women struck a terrible blow at all classes. Chastity and holding sacred the marriage vows had, from the first, been characteristic virtues of the Jews, and by Talmudic law, they had become even more deeply rooted in their natures. They could not endure the thought of their wives and maidens exposed to violation, and the purity of their families, which they treasured as the apple of their eye, threatened with defilement. They appear therefore to have opposed an armed resistance to the licentious attacks of the Zendiks. An insurrection of the Jews, which broke out at this juncture, was in all probability organized for the purpose of resisting this intolerable communism. At the head of this insurrection stood Mar-Zutra II, the youthful Prince of the Captivity, who, to judge from the fact alone that legend has

embellished his birth and deeds with wonderful details, must have been a remarkable personage.

Mar-Zutra, born in about 496, was the son of Huna, a learned Prince of the Captivity, who, after the death of the tyrant Firuz, was invested with the dignity of the Exilarchate (488–508). At the time of his father's death, Mar-Zutra was still a young boy. During the period of his minority, the office of Prince of the Captivity was held by Pachda, his sister's husband, who does not seem to have been inclined to yield this dignity to the lawful heir. Mar-Zutra's grandfather, Mar-Chanina, in company with his grandson, sought the court of the Persian king, and in 511, presumably by means of valuable presents, succeeded in effecting Pachda's deposition and Mar-Zutra's investiture. It was this young prince who now arose, sword in hand, to protect his brethren. The immediate cause of the insurrection is said to have been the murder of Mar-Isaac, the president of one of the academies. Mar-Zutra's forces consisted of four hundred Jewish warriors, with whose help he probably succeeded in expelling Mazdak's rapacious and lustful adherents from the territory of Jewish Babylonia, and in resisting this shameless violation of most sacred rights. He is further said to have accomplished such brilliant feats of arms that the troops which had been sent by the king to quell the insurrection were unable to withstand him. Mar-Zutra is even said to have won independence for his people, and to have laid the non-Jewish inhabitants of Babylonia under tribute. Machuza, near Ctesiphon, became the capital of a small

Jewish state, with the Prince of the Captivity for its king.

The independence thus conquered by Mar-Zutra lasted nearly seven years; the Jewish army was finally overcome by the superior numbers of the Persian host, and the Prince of the Captivity was taken prisoner. He and his aged grandfather, Mar-Chanina, were executed, and their bodies nailed to the cross on the bridge of Machuza (about 520). The inhabitants of this town were stripped of their possessions, and led into captivity, and it is probable that this was not the full extent of the persecution. The members of the family of the Prince of the Captivity were compelled to flee. They escaped to Judæa, taking with them Mar-Zutra's posthumous heir, who also bore the name Mar-Zutra. He was educated in Judæa, and there became a distinguished scholar. On account of Kobad's persecution, the office of Prince of the Captivity in Babylonia remained in abeyance for some time. The Talmudical academies were closed, for the teachers of the Law were persecuted and compelled to hide. Two of the leading men, Ahunai and Giza, fled, and the latter settled on the river Zab. Other fugitives probably directed their steps towards Palestine or Arabia. Kobad's revenge for an insurrection provoked by fanaticism dealt a severe blow at the public life of the Babylonian Jews, which centered in the two academies, at Sora and Pumbeditha. However, the persecution does not seem to have extended over the whole of Persia, for Jewish soldiers served in the Persian army which fought against the Greek general Belisarius, and the Persian captain had so great

a regard for them that he requested a truce in order that they might peacefully observe the feast of Passover.

After Kobad's death, the persecution of the Babylonian Jews ceased. His successor, Chosroes Nushirvan, was not, indeed, well-disposed towards them, and imposed upon them and the Christians a poll-tax from which only children and old men were exempt; yet this tax was not an indication of intolerance or hate, but simply a means of filling the imperial treasury.

As soon as peace was restored the representatives of the Babylonian Jews hastened to re-establish their institutions, to re-open the academies, and, as it were, to re-unite the severed links in the chain of tradition. The fugitive Giza, who had remained in hiding by the river Zab, was called to preside over the academy at Sora; the sister academy at Pumbeditha chose Semuna as its head. A third name of this period has been transmitted to posterity, that of Rabaï of Rob (near Nahardea), whose position and office are, however, not clearly known. These men, with their associates and disciples, devoted their whole activity to the Talmud. It was the sole object of the attention of all thoughtful and pious men of that period; it satisfied religious zeal, promoted tranquillity of mind, and was also the means of acquiring fame, and thus furthering both spiritual and temporal aims. The persecution of the Law endeared and sanctified it, and the Talmud was the sacred banner around which the entire nation rallied.

But the disciples of the last Amoraïm had lost all creative

power, and were unable to continue the development of the Talmud. The subject-matter and the method of teaching were both so fully defined that they were incapable of extension or of amplification. The stagnation in Talmudical development was more marked than ever before. The presidents of the academies were content to adhere to the ancient custom of assembling their disciples during the months of Adar (March) and Ellul (September), giving them lectures on the traditional lore and the methodology of the Talmud, and assigning to them themes for private study. At the utmost they settled, according to certain principles, many points of practice in the ritual, the civil law and the marriage code, which had until then remained undetermined, or concerning which there was a difference of opinion in the academies. Their purpose was to render the exhaustless material of the Talmud, which discussion and controversy had deprived of all definiteness, available for practical use. In order to prevent the decay of religious living, it was necessary that all doubt and uncertainty should cease; the judges stood in need of fixed principles by which to decide the cases brought before them, and all were ignorant of authoritative precepts by which to regulate their religious conduct. The establishing of the final rules for religious and legal practice after careful consideration of the arguments *pro* and *con* conferred upon the post-Amoraic teachers the name of Sabureans (Saburaï). After the various opinions (Sebora) were reviewed, they were the ones that established the final, valid law. The activity of the Sabureans

really began immediately after the completion of the Talmud, and Giza, Semuna and their associates merely worked along the same lines; their intention was to develop a practical code rather than the theory of the Law. They did not arrogate to themselves the authority to originate. First of all, Giza and Semuna, the presidents of the academies, engaged in the work of committing the Talmud to writing. They availed themselves partly of oral tradition, partly of written notes made by various persons as an aid to memory.

As everything which proceeded from the Amoraïc authorities appeared of importance to their successors, they gathered up every utterance, every anecdote which was current in learned circles, so that posterity might not be deprived of what they deemed to be the fulness of wisdom. They made additions for the purpose of explaining obscure passages. In this form, as edited by the Sabureans, the contemporary communities and posterity received the Talmud.

The era of the Sabureans witnessed the beginnings of an art without which the sacred writings had remained a sealed book, – the introduction of a system of vowel-points, by means of which the text of Holy Writ became intelligible to the unlearned. This art owes its origin to a faint breath of "scientific research" wafted from dying Greece. Justinian had closed the schools of philosophy in Greece, and the last of her wise men sought refuge in Persia. From them the science of grammar was communicated to the Syrian Christians, these in turn roused in their Jewish

neighbors the spirit of emulation in the investigation of the Scriptures, and this led to the adoption of vowel-points and accents.

The names of the immediate successors of Giza and Semuna have been preserved neither by the chronicles nor by tradition, they were forgotten in the persecution with which the academies were again visited. In this century Magianism contended with Christianity for the palm of intolerance. Judaism was an abomination to both, and the priests of these two religions, of which the one preached the victory of light, and the other the rule of brotherly love, used weak kings as the instruments of horrible persecutions.

Chosroes Nushirvan's son, Hormisdas (Ormuz) IV, was unlike his great father in every respect. His tutor and counselor, Abuzurj-Mihir, the Persian Seneca, is said to have invented the game of chess for this weakly monarch, in order to teach him the dependence of the king on the army and the people. During this philosopher's lifetime the true character of Hormisdas was hidden, but immediately upon his retirement the Nero-like nature of the king broke out, and overstepped the bounds of prudence and moderation.

Led by the Magi, who attempted to arrest the approaching dissolution of their religion by persecuting the adherents of other beliefs, he vented his wrath upon the Jews and the Christians of his empire. The Talmudical academies in Sora and Pumbeditha were closed, and as under Firuz and Kobad, many of the teachers

of the Law again emigrated (about 581). They settled in Firuz-Shabur (near Nahardea), which was governed by an Arabian chieftain, and was, therefore, less exposed to espionage. They continued their labors in Firuz-Shabur, and new academies arose in that town, the most distinguished being that of Mari.

Hormisdas' cruel reign, however, was of short duration; the Persians became dissatisfied and refractory, and the political enemies of Persia entered its territory, and possessed themselves of the country. The empire of the Sassanians would have become the prize of some successful invader, had it not been saved by the efforts of the brave general Bahram Tshubin. But when the foolish monarch went so far as to reward the deliverer of his country with ingratitude and to dismiss him, Bahram rose against the unworthy king, dethroned him, and threw him into prison, in which he was afterwards murdered (589). At first, for the sake of appearances, Bahram governed in the name of Prince Chosru, but soon he threw off all disguise and ascended the Persian throne. The Jews of Persia and Babylonia hailed Bahram as their deliverer. He was for them what the Emperor Julian had been for the Jews of the Roman empire two hundred years before; he put an end to their oppression and favored their endeavors. For this reason they espoused his cause with great devotion, assisted him with money and troops, and supported his tottering throne. Without the aid of the Jews, it is probable that he would have experienced great difficulty in retaining it for any length of time, for after some hesitation the Persian nation turned towards

Chosru, the lawful heir to the throne. Only the army for the most part remained faithful to Bahram, and the Jews, doubtless, provided for the maintenance and the pay of the troops. The re-opening of the academies in Sora and Pumbeditha is undoubtedly to be attributed to the favor of Bahram in return for the devotion of the Persian Jews. Chanan of Iskia returned from Firuz-Shabur to Pumbeditha, and restored the ancient academic organization; it is also probable that the academy of Sora, which enjoyed by far the greater repute, elected a president at this time, although his name is not mentioned in the chronicles.

Bahram's rule was brought to a sudden end. The Byzantine emperor Mauritius, to whom the fugitive Prince Chosru had fled, sent an army to his aid, with which the loyal Persians united to make war upon Bahram. The Jews paid with their lives for their adherence to the usurper. At the capture of Machuza, a town containing a large Jewish population, the Persian general Mebodes put the greater part of the Jews to death. They probably fared no better in the other cities into which Chosru's victorious army penetrated. Bahram's army was vanquished, and he himself compelled to take refuge with the Huns. Chosru II, surnamed Firuz, ascended the throne of his ancestors. This prince, who was both just and humane, resembled his grandfather Nushirvan rather than Hormisdas, his father; he did not hold the Jews to account for their participation in the revolt. Throughout his long reign (590–628), the two academies enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity. Chanan was succeeded by Mari bar Mar, who had

founded an academy in Firuz-Shabur, and the president of Sora during the same period was a teacher of similar name, Mar bar Huna (609 to about 620), during whose administration the fortunes of the Jews of Palestine alternated from victory to defeat. The successors of these teachers were Chaninaï in Pumbeditha and Chananya in Sora; they lived to see the victorious advance of the Arabs and the end of the Persian rule. The last of the Sassanian kings, of whom there were ten in the short period of twelve years, had no leisure to devote to the affairs of the Jewish population of their shattered empire; the Jewish community in Babylonia continued, therefore, to exist in its ancient order, with the Prince of the Captivity at its head. During the half-century that elapsed between the re-opening of the academies under Bahram and the Arab conquest of Persia (589–640), three Resh-Galutas are mentioned by name: Kafnaï, Chaninaï, and Bostanaï. The last of these belongs to the ensuing epoch, in which, aided by favorable circumstances, he succeeded in again investing the dignity of Prince of the Captivity with substantial power.

The position of the Jews in Judæa during the sixth century was so terrible that a complete cessation of intellectual pursuits ensued. Like their co-religionists of the Byzantine empire, they were without political standing; the laws of the younger Theodosius were still in force, and were applied with increased severity by Justin I. The Jews were excluded from all posts of honor, and were forbidden to build new synagogues. The

successors of this emperor, as narrow-minded as he and even harder of heart, enforced the anti-Jewish laws rigorously. The spirit which animated the rulers of the Eastern Empire against the Jews is shown by an utterance of the Emperor Zeno, the Isaurian upstart. In Antioch, where, as in all the great cities of the Byzantine empire, there existed the race-course (stadium) and the factions of the two colors, blue and green, one of those disturbances which seldom ended without bloodshed had been fomented by the latter party. Upon this occasion the partisans of the green murdered many Jews, threw their bodies into the flames, and burned their synagogues. When the Emperor Zeno was informed of this occurrence, he exclaimed that the sole fault of the partisans of the green was that they had burned only the dead Jews, and not the living ones as well! The bigoted populace, whom the disputes of the clergy and the color-factions had demoralized, saw in their ruler's hatred of the Jews a tacit invitation to vent their rage upon them. The inhabitants of Antioch had always been inimical towards the Jews. When, therefore, a notorious charioteer of Constantinople, Calliopas by name, came to Antioch, and joining the party of the green, occasioned a riot, the Jews again felt the brutal barbarity of this faction. Its partisans had repaired to Daphne, near Antioch, in order to celebrate some festival, and there, without any sufficient motive, they destroyed the synagogue and its sanctuaries, and brutally murdered the worshipers (507).

Meanwhile how much of the land of their fathers still

remained in the hands of the Jews? Christianity had made itself master of Judæa, and had become the heir of Judaism. Churches and monasteries arose in the Holy Land, but its former masters were subjected to all sorts of persecution whenever they attempted to repair a dilapidated synagogue. Bishops, abbots and monks lorded it over Palestine, and turned it into a theater of dogmatic wranglings over the simple or dual nature of Christ. Jerusalem had ceased to be a center for the Jews; it had become a thoroughly Christian city, the seat of an archbishop, and inaccessible to its own sons. The law forbidding Jews to enter the Holy City, which had been revived by Constantine, was, after the death of Julian, most rigorously enforced by the authorities. Tiberias, the stately city on the lake, alone maintained its academical rank, and under the presidency of Mar-Zutra III and his descendants, it became a seat of authority for the Jews of other countries. Even the Jewish king of Arabia voluntarily submitted to the exhortations addressed to him from Tiberias. But Christianity had acquired a hold even there, and Tiberias was also the seat of a bishopric. The mountain cities of Galilee were inhabited by Jews, who probably followed the same occupations as their forefathers, namely, agriculture and the cultivation of the olive.

Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity, where the most beautiful women in all Palestine were to be found, seems to have been mostly populated by Jews, as it had not been raised to the rank of a bishopric. Scythopolis (Bethsan), which became the

capital of Palæstina Secunda during this century, and Neapolis (Shechem), the capital of the Samaritans since Samaria had become Christian, had Jewish inhabitants. But in all these cities, with the exception of Nazareth, the Jews seem to have been in the minority, insignificant in comparison with the number of the Christians.

There probably existed an educational system among the Jews of Palestine, but it must have been inadequate and unimportant, since, with the exception of Mar-Zutra, not even the names of the teachers are known. Until the time of Justinian the Jews of Palestine and the Byzantine empire, whatever may have been their civil disabilities, enjoyed complete religious liberty; the emperors did not interfere in the affairs of the heart. Justinian was the emperor who, besides imposing greater civil restrictions, first interfered in matters of conscience. It was he who promulgated the disgraceful law that Jewish witnesses were not to be allowed to testify against Christians, and that they were to be considered competent witnesses only in their own cases (532). Compared with the Samaritans, the Jews were a favored class, for the evidence of the former had no validity whatever, and they were not even allowed to dispose of their property by will. This was an act of revenge against the Samaritans, who had several times risen in revolt against the imperial power, and on one occasion had set up a king in the person of Julian ben Sabar (about 530). As the Jews had not taken part in this insurrection, they were favored to a certain extent. Meanwhile,

however, Justinian also published an anti-Jewish law. Although the Jews and Samaritans were excluded, like all heretics, from offices of honor, they were obliged by law to assume the onerous and expensive decurionate (magisterial office), without being permitted, however, to enjoy the privileges attached to it, namely, exemption from exile and flogging. "They shall bear the yoke, although they sigh under it; but they shall be deemed unworthy of every honor" (537).

Justinian was one of those rulers who, in spite of narrowness of mind and wickedness, have their own opinions on religious matters, and desire to assert them without regard for their subjects' peace of mind. Justinian wished to carry out his views concerning the Christian celebration of Easter, and he therefore forbade the Jews to celebrate the Passover before the Easter of the Christians. The governors of the provinces had strict orders to enforce this prohibition. Thus, whenever the Jewish feast of the Passover preceded the Christian Easter, in the year before leap-year, the Jews incurred heavy fines for holding divine service and eating unleavened bread (about 540).

Other invasions were made by Justinian on the territory of religious affairs. A Jewish congregation, probably in Constantinople or Cæsarea, had been for some time divided against itself. One party wanted the reading of the portions of the Pentateuch and the Prophets to be followed by a translation into Greek, for the benefit of the illiterate and the women. The pious members, on the other hand, especially the teachers of the

Law, entertained an aversion to the use of the language of their tormentors and of the Church in divine service, probably also on the ground that no time would be left for the Agadic exposition. The dispute became so violent that the Grecian party laid the matter before the emperor, and appealed to him, as judge, in the last instance. Justinian of course pronounced judgment in favor of the Greek translation, and recommended to the Jews the use of the Septuagint or of Aquila's translation in their divine service. He also commanded that in all the provinces of his empire the lessons from the Holy Scriptures be translated into the vernacular. Thus far Justinian was in the right. It is true that he also forbade, under threat of corporal punishment, the excommunication of the Greek party or party of innovation by those that clung to the old liturgical system; but even this may be regarded as an act of justice, as the emperor desired to guarantee liberty in matters connected with the liturgy. But another clause of the same rescript proves unmistakably that in this matter he was consulting the interests of the Church alone, laboring, as he did, under the delusion that the use of a Greek translation in the synagogical services, especially of the Septuagint, Christian in coloring, would win over the Jews to the Christian faith. He decreed that all the Jewish congregations of the Byzantine empire, naturally including those which entertained no desire in this direction, should use a Greek or Latin translation of the lessons for each Sabbath, and he forbade the use of the Agadic exposition, which had been

customary until then. Justinian desired to suppress the national conceptions of the Holy Scripture in favor of a translation which had been altered in many places to suit the purposes of Christianity.

It was probably Justinian who forbade the recital of the confession of faith, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is one," in the synagogues, because it seemed a protest against the doctrine of the Trinity. He also forbade the prayer, "Holy, holy, holy," because the Jews added an Aramaic sentence, by way of explanation, in order that this prayer might not, as the Christians held, be taken as a confirmation of the Trinity. Finally, he forbade the reading of the prophet Isaiah on the Sabbath, so that the Jews might be deprived of this source of comfort for their present sorrows and of hope for future happiness.

The service in the synagogue was to be a means of converting the Jews, and the spirit of Judaism, manifesting itself in Agadic expositions and homilies, was to be made to yield to Christian doctrines, the path to which was to be leveled by a method of interpretation showing Christ to be prefigured in the Old Testament. It appears, therefore, that the despotic Justinian by no means proposed to grant liberties to the synagogue, but that he desired, on the contrary, to impose a species of restraint. He was very zealous in exacting obedience to this decree, and he commanded his minister, Areobindus, to communicate the edict concerning the translation of the lessons read in the synagogue to all the officers of the provinces, and to enjoin upon them to

watch strictly over its rigorous execution (February 13th, 553).

This malignant decree was, however, followed by no serious consequences; the need of a translation of the Bible was not sufficiently pressing among the Jews to oblige them to make use of one. The party which desired to introduce a translation stood isolated, and it was not difficult to conduct divine service in the customary manner and to escape the notice of the authorities in those instances in which the congregation was at peace. The preachers continued to make use of the Agada, even introducing covert attacks upon anti-Jewish Byzantium into their sermons. "'There are creeping things innumerable' (Psalm civ) signifies the countless edicts which the Roman empire (Byzantium) publishes against us; the 'small and great beasts' are the dukes, governors, and captains; whosoever of the Jews associates himself with them shall become an object of scorn." "As an arrow is not perceived until it has pierced the heart, so it is with the decrees of Esau (Byzantium). His shafts come suddenly, and are not felt until the word is spoken for death or imprisonment. Their writings are 'the arrow that flieth by day.'" In this strain the teachers of the Law preached in Judæa.

The Jews of Palestine had but little cause to be satisfied with Justinian's rule, which oppressed them doubly with its extortionate taxation and its religious hypocrisy. Stephanus, the governor of Palæstina Prima, doubtless no better than the majority of officials in Justinian's time, helped to irritate the Jews, by whom he was thoroughly hated. The time was past,

however, when the Jews could angrily shake the galling yoke from their necks, and take up arms against their oppressors. The Samaritans, who had been hard pressed since the days of the Emperor Zeno, were more passionate and venturesome, but their numerous insurrections resulted in forging new chains for them, especially since the days of their short-lived king, Julian, when they had so ruthlessly massacred their hated enemies, the Christians. They were compelled, with even greater rigor than the Jews, to embrace Christianity, and all who refused to submit forfeited the right of disposing of their property. Although Sergius, bishop of Cæsarea, declared that the obstinacy of the Samaritans had decreased, and that they embraced Christianity with ever-increasing sincerity, and although he succeeded in inducing Justinian to mitigate the severity of the harsh laws which had been promulgated against them, they nevertheless concealed in their hearts the deepest hatred toward their tormentors.

On the occasion of a chariot-race in Cæsarea, the capital, where the jealousy of the color-factions against one another never allowed an event of that kind to pass off without a riot, the Samaritans threw off all restraint, and fell upon the Christians. The Jewish youth made common cause with them, and together they massacred their Christian opponents in Cæsarea and destroyed their churches. Stephanus, the governor, hastened to the aid of the Christians, but the Samaritans pressed him and his military escort so hard that he was obliged to take refuge in his

official residence. Eventually they killed him in his own house, and spread terror throughout the city and the surrounding country (July, 556). The Samaritans probably counted upon the support of one of their countrymen, Arsenios by name, the all-powerful favorite of Empress Theodora, with whose secret commissions he was entrusted. Stephanus' widow hurried to Constantinople to acquaint the emperor with this disturbance and the death of her husband, whereupon Justinian ordered Amantius, the governor of the East resident in Antioch, to intervene with an armed force.

Amantius found it easy to execute this command, as the movement was not serious, but few of the Samaritans and Jews of Palestine being concerned in it. Punishment was meted out only to the guilty, but was in keeping with the spirit of the times, and consisted of beheading, hanging, loss of the right hand, and confiscation of property.

Justinian's successor, Justin the Younger, appears to have made no change in the anti-Jewish laws. Although he renewed the oppressive enactments of his predecessor against the Samaritans, whom he deprived of the right to dispose of their property by testament or by deed, there is no edict of his which was prejudicial to the Jews. Under the two excellent emperors, Tiberius and Mauritius, no mention is made of the Jews. It is not until the accession of the usurper Phocas, who renewed the times of Caligula and Commodus, that a disturbance occurs, in the course of which the Jews were carried away to a deed of brutal violence, which proves that the arbitrariness of the officials

and the arrogance of the clergy must have caused intolerable suffering among them.

In Antioch, hatred had existed between Jews and Christians for centuries, and had been intensified by constant friction. Suddenly the Jews fell upon their Christian neighbors, perhaps at the races in the circus, and retaliated for the injuries which they had suffered; they killed all that fell into their hands, and threw their bodies into the fire, as the Christians had done to them a century before. The Patriarch Anastasius, surnamed the Sinaite, an object of special hate, was shamefully abused by them, and his body dragged through the streets before he was put to death. When the news of this rebellion reached Phocas, he appointed Bonosus governor of the East, and Cotys, commander of the troops, and charged them to bring the rebels to account. But the Jews of Antioch fought so bravely that the Roman army could obtain no advantage over them. It was only when the campaign was renewed with numerous troops collected from the neighboring country that they succumbed to the Roman generals, who killed part of them, mutilated others, and sent the rest into exile (September and October, 608).

The misdeeds of the Emperor Phocas afforded the Jews an unexpected opportunity to give vent to their deep resentment. He had dispossessed his predecessor Mauritius, and this provoked the Persian king, Chosru II, the son-in-law of the latter, to attack the Roman possessions in the East. A Persian host inundated Asia Minor and Syria, in spite of the fact that Heraclius, the

newly elected emperor, sent news to the Persian king of Phocas' well-merited chastisement, and begged for peace.

A division of the Persian army under the general Sharbarza descended from the heights of Lebanon in order to wrest Palestine from the Byzantine scepter. On hearing of the weakness of the Christian arms and of the advance of the Persian troops, the Jews of Palestine felt a fierce desire for battle. It seemed to them that the hour had come for revenge upon their twofold enemy, Roman and Christian, for the humiliations which they had borne for centuries. Tiberias was the hotbed of this warlike movement, and it was started by a man named Benjamin, who possessed a prodigious fortune, which he employed in enlisting and arming Jewish troops. A call was issued to all the Jews of Palestine to assemble and join the Persian army, and it met with a ready response. The sturdy Jewish inhabitants of Tiberias, of Nazareth, and of the mountain cities of Galilee, flocked to the Persian standard. Filled with rage, they spared neither the Christians nor their churches in Tiberias, and probably put an end to the bishopric. With Sharbarza's army they marched on Jerusalem, in order to wrest the Holy City from the Christians. The Jews of southern Palestine joined their countrymen, and with the help of the Jews and a band of Saracens, the Persian general took Jerusalem by storm (July, 614). Ninety thousand Christians are said to have perished in Jerusalem; but the story that the Jews bought the Christian prisoners from the Persians, and killed them in cold blood is a

pure fiction.

In their rage, however, the Jews relentlessly destroyed the Christian sanctuaries. All the churches and monasteries were burned, and the Jews undoubtedly had a greater share in this deed than the Persians. Had not Jerusalem – the original possession of the Jews – been torn from them by violence and treachery? Did they not feel that the Holy City was as foully desecrated by the adoration of the cross and of the bones of the martyrs as by the idolatries of Antiochus Epiphanes and Hadrian? The Jews seem to have deluded themselves with the hope that the Persians would grant them Jerusalem and the surrounding territory whereon to establish a commonwealth.

With the Persians, the Jews swept through Palestine, destroyed the monasteries which abounded in the country, and expelled or killed the monks. A detachment of Jews from Jerusalem, Tiberias, Galilee, Damascus, and even Cyprus, undertook an incursion against Tyre, having been invited by the four thousand Jewish inhabitants of that city to fall upon the Christians on Easter-night and to massacre them. The Jewish host is said to have consisted of 20,000 men. The expedition, however, miscarried, as the Christians of Tyre had been informed of the impending danger. They anticipated their enemies, seizing their Jewish fellow-citizens and throwing them into prison; then they awaited the arrival of the Jewish troops, who found the gates closed and fortified. The invading Jews revenged themselves by destroying the churches around Tyre. As often, however, as the

Christians of Tyre heard of the destruction of a church, they killed a hundred of their Jewish prisoners, and threw their heads over the walls. In this manner 2000 of the latter are said to have met their death. The besiegers, disheartened by the death of their brethren, withdrew, and were pursued by the Tyrians.

The Palestinian Jews were relieved of the sight of their enemies for about fourteen years, and the immediate result of these wars filled them with joy. No doubt many a Christian became converted through fear, or because he despaired of the continuance of Christianity. The conversion of a monk who of his own free will embraced Judaism was a great triumph for the Jews. This monk had spent many years in the monastery on Mount Sinaï in doing penance and reciting litanies. Suddenly he was assailed by doubts as to the truth of Christianity. He alleged that he had been led to this change by vivid dreams, which showed him on one side Christ, the apostles, and the martyrs enveloped in gloomy darkness, while on the other side were Moses, the prophets, and the holy men of Judaism, bathed in light. Weary of this internal struggle, he descended from Mount Sinaï, crossed the desert to Palestine, and finally went to Tiberias, where he declared his settled determination to embrace Judaism. He offered himself for circumcision, adopted the name of Abraham, married a Jewess, and henceforward became a zealous advocate of Judaism and a vehement opponent of his former religion.

Meanwhile the hope which the Jews had placed in the Persian

conquerors had not been fulfilled. The Persians did not deliver up to them the city of Jerusalem, and did nothing to promote the rise of a free Jewish commonwealth, besides which they probably oppressed the Jews with taxes. There thus arose great discord between the allies, which ended in the Persian general's seizing many of the Jews of Palestine and banishing them to Persia. This only served to increase the discontent of the Jews, and induced them to change their opinions and to lean more towards the Emperor Heraclius. This prince, who underwent the rare transformation, by which a dull coward is in a night changed into an enthusiastic hero, was anxious to conciliate his Jewish enemies in order to use them against his chief opponent. He therefore entered into a formal alliance with the Jews, the negotiations for which were probably conducted by Benjamin of Tiberias. This treaty secured for them immunity from punishment for the injuries which they had inflicted on the Christians, and held out to them other advantages which have not come down to us (about 627).

Heraclius' victories, coupled with Chosru's incapacity, and the revolt which Syroes, the son of the latter, had raised against his father, won back for the Greek emperor all those provinces which were on the point of being permanently constituted Persian satrapies. After the conclusion of peace between Heraclius and Syroes, who dethroned and killed his aged father, the Persians quitted Judæa, and again the country fell under Byzantine rule (628). In the autumn of the same year the emperor proceeded

in triumph to Jerusalem. On his journey he touched at Tiberias, where he was hospitably entertained by Benjamin, who also furnished the Byzantine army with the means of subsistence. In the course of conversation the emperor asked him why he had shown such hatred towards the Christians, to which Benjamin ingenuously replied, "Because they are the enemies of my religion."

When Heraclius entered the Holy City he was met by the vehement demand of the monks and the Patriarch Modestus for the extirpation of all the Jews of Palestine, at once a measure of revenge for their past treatment of the Christians, and a safeguard against the recurrence of the outrage if similar incursions should happen. The emperor protested, however, that he had solemnly and in writing promised immunity from punishment to the Jews, and to violate this pledge would make him a sinner before God and a traitor before men. The fanatical monks replied that the assassination of the Jews, far from being a crime, was, on the contrary, an offering acceptable to God. They offered to take the entire responsibility for the sin upon their own shoulders, and to appoint a special week of fasting by way of atonement. This argument convinced the bigoted emperor and sufficed to quiet his conscience; he instituted a persecution of the Jews throughout Palestine, and massacred all that failed to conceal themselves in the mountains or escape to Egypt.

There still existed Jewish congregations in Egypt, even in Alexandria itself, whence the Jews had been expelled by the

fanatic Cyril in the beginning of the fifth century. A certain Jew of Alexandria, Urbib by name, celebrated for his wealth and generosity, during a pestilential famine charitably fed the needy without distinction of religion. The Jews of Alexandria, moved by warm sympathy for their suffering co-religionists, fraternally welcomed the unhappy fugitives from Judæa, the victims of monkish fanaticism. Heraclius seized upon this occasion to renew the edicts of Hadrian and Constantine, by which the Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem or its precincts (628).

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWS IN EUROPE

Growth of the Jews in Europe – The Communities in Constantinople and Italy – Theodoric – Isidore of Seville – Pope Gregory I. – The Jews of France – Chilperic and Dagobert – Avitus – The Jews in Spain – Controversies between Jews and Christians.

510–64 °C. E

The Jews of Europe had no history, in the proper sense of the word, until a conjunction of fortunate circumstances enabled them to develop their powers, and to produce certain works whereby they wrested the pre-eminence from their brethren in the East. Until then there are only chronicles of martyrdom at the hands of the victorious Church, monotonously repeated with but little variation in all countries. "Dispersed and scattered throughout the world," says a celebrated author of this period, "the Jews, though subject to the Roman yoke, nevertheless live in accordance with their own laws." The only point of interest is the manner in which the Jews settled in the European states, and lived unmolested, in friendly intercourse with their neighbors, until Christianity gradually encompassed them, and

deprived them of the very breath of life. In the Byzantine empire, in Ostrogothic Italy, in Frankish and Burgundian Gaul, in Visigothic Spain, everywhere we are confronted with the same phenomena. The people, even the barons and the princes, were entirely free from intolerance, felt no antipathy against the Jews, and associated with them without prejudice; to the higher clergy, however, the prosperity and comfort of the Jews appeared as a humiliation of Christianity. They desired the fulfillment of the curse which the founder of Christianity is said to have pronounced on the Jewish nation, and every anti-Jewish, narrow-minded thought which the fathers of the Church had uttered against them was to be literally fulfilled by embittering their life. At the councils and synods, the Jewish question occupied the clerical delegates quite as fully as dogmatic controversies and the prevailing immorality, which was continually gaining ground among the clergy and the laity, in spite, or perhaps in consequence of, ecclesiastical severity and increased austerity in observances.

It is remarkable, however, that the Roman bishops, the recognized champions of Christianity, treated the Jews with the utmost toleration and liberality. The occupants of the Papal throne shielded the Jews, and exhorted the clergy and the princes against the use of force in converting them to Christianity. This liberality was in truth an inconsistency, for the Church, following the lines of development prescribed by the Council of Nice, had to be exclusive, and therefore hard-

hearted and given to persecution. It could only say to Jew, Samaritan, and heretic: "Believe as I believe, or die," the sword supplying the lack of argument. But who would not prefer the benevolent inconsistency of Gregory the Holy to the terrible consistency of the bloodthirsty kings Sisebut and Dagobert, who, ecclesiastically speaking, were more Catholic than the Pope? But the toleration of even the most liberal of the bishops was not of much consequence. They merely refrained from proselytizing by means of threats of banishment or death, because they were convinced that in this manner the Church would be peopled with false Christians, who would curse it in their inmost hearts. But they did not hesitate to fetter and harass the Jews, and to place them next to the serfs in the scale of society. This course appeared absolutely just and pious to almost all the representatives of Christianity during the centuries of barbarism. Those nations, however, which were baptized in the Arian creed showed less intolerance of the Jews. The more Arianism was driven out of Europe, and the more it gave way before the Catholic religion, the more the Jews were harassed by proselytizing zeal. Their valiant resistance continually incited fresh attacks. Their heroic constancy in the face of permanent degradation is, therefore, a noble trait which history ought not to conceal. Nor were the Jews devoid of all knowledge in those illiterate times. They were certainly better acquainted with the records of their religion than the inferior clergy, for the latter were not capable of reading their missal.

Our survey of the settlement of the Jews in Europe begins, on our way from Asia, with the Byzantine empire. They lived in its cities before Christianity had begun its world-conquest. In Constantinople the Jewish community inhabited a separate quarter, called the brass-market, where there was also a large synagogue, from which they were, however, expelled by one of the emperors, Theodosius II or Justinus II, and the synagogue was converted into the "Church of the Mother of God."

The holy vessels of the ruined Temple, after having been transported from place to place, had at last been deposited at Carthage, where they remained for nearly a century. It was with pain that the Jews of the Byzantine capital witnessed their removal to Constantinople by Belisarius, the conqueror of the empire of the Vandals. The Jewish trophies were displayed in triumph along with Gelimer, the Prince of the Vandals and grandson of Genseric, and the treasures of that unfortunate monarch. A certain Jew, filled with profound grief on seeing the living memorials of Judæa's former greatness in the hands of her enemies, remarked to a courtier that it was not advisable to deposit them in the imperial palace, for they might bring misfortune in their train. They had brought misfortune to Rome, which had been pillaged by Genseric, and they had brought down adversity upon his successor, Gelimer, and his capital. It would therefore be better to remove these holy relics to Jerusalem, where they had been wrought by King Solomon. No sooner had the Emperor Justinian been informed of this observation than his

superstitious mind began to be fearful of the consequences, and he accordingly removed the Temple vessels in haste to Jerusalem, where they were deposited in a church.

In Greece, Macedonia, and Illyria the Jews had been settled a long time, and although the Christian emperors persecuted them, and laid them under considerable restraint, they nevertheless allowed them autonomy in communal affairs, and the application of their own system of jurisprudence in civil suits. Every community had a Jewish overseer (ephoros), who had the control of the market prices, weights and measures. In Italy the Jews are known to have been domiciled as early as the time of the Republic, and to have been in enjoyment of full political rights until these were curtailed by the Christian emperors. They probably looked with excusable pleasure on the fall of Rome, and exulted to see the ruling city of the world become the prey of the barbarians and the mockery of the whole world, and felt that the lamentation over Jerusalem could be literally applied to Rome as well: "She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary?" After the Gepidæ and the Heruli, by whom Rome had been temporarily enslaved, came the Goths, who threw the name of Rome into oblivion by founding the Ostrogothic empire under Theodoric (Dioterich) of the house of the Amali.

The Jews also had to bear a share of the calamities which the savage swarms of barbarian tribes brought upon the Roman world. With the adoption of Christianity the Germanic and

Sclavonic hordes learnt also intolerance from the Romans, their teachers, and in their rude minds it assumed even more hateful forms. The Jewish preachers of this time had to complain of new foes. "See, O Lord, how many are mine enemies! If Esau (Rome) hateth Jacob," thus the Agadists expressed themselves, "he hath at least some specious ground, for he was robbed of his birthright; but what hath Israel done to the barbarians and the Goths?" But of what could the barbarians rob the Jews? They had long since forfeited their political independence, and their spiritual fortune was secure against destruction. Rome, however, was robbed by the barbarians of its crown, and clothed with the dress of the slave.

Rome did not remain the political center of Italy, Ravenna, in alternation with Verona, being the residence of the Ostrogothic emperors. In these cities, as also in Rome, Milan, and Genoa, Jewish communities existed at this period. The Jews were also well represented in Lower Italy, especially in the beautiful town of Naples, in Palermo, Messina, and Agrigentum, on the island of Sicily, and in Sardinia. In Palermo there lived Jewish families of ancient nobility, who bore the name of Nasas (Nassi). The laws governing the Italian Jews were the decrees of Theodosius, which gave them autonomy in the management of the internal affairs of their communities, but forbade the building of new synagogues, the assumption of judicial offices and military rank, and the possession of Christian slaves. The last point frequently led to friction between the clergy and the Jews. The repeated invasions

of the barbarian tribes and the numerous wars had increased the number of prisoners, and the Jews carried on a brisk trade in slaves, although they were not the only slave merchants. The depopulated cities and the desolate fields rendered the slave-market a necessity. Laborers were thus obtained for agriculture and the business of daily life. The Jewish slave-owners made a practice of converting their slaves to Judaism, partly because there was a Talmudical ordinance which directed that they should either be circumcised, or, if they resisted, be sold again, and partly in order not to be hindered in the exercise of religious duties by the presence of foreign elements in the house. The slaves themselves preferred to remain with their Jewish masters, who, with few exceptions, treated them humanely, regarded them as members of the family, and shared their joys and sorrows.

Although the restrictions of the Theodosian code had the force of law, it may be questioned whether they were really carried into effect. The bishops of the apostolic see, who had learnt political shrewdness from the Roman statesmen, were too prudent to be fanatic. The Pope Gelasius had a friend, a Jew of Telesina, who bore the title of "the most illustrious" (*clarissimus*), and at his intercession his relative Antoninus was warmly recommended by the Pope to the bishop Secundinus. A charge having been brought against a Jew named Basilius, of selling Christian slaves from Gaul, he pleaded that he only sold heathen slaves, and that it was impossible to prevent a few Christians from being included among a number of other slaves; this excuse was accepted by

Pope Gelasius.

When Italy became Ostrogothic under Theodoric, the Jews of that country were placed in a peculiar position. Hostile outbreaks were not infrequent during this reign, but at bottom they were not directed against the Jews, but against this hated Arian monarch. Theodoric, although an Arian, was by no means favorably disposed towards the Jews, whose conversion he desired. On a certain occasion, he had his counselor and minister Cassiodorus write the following to the community of Milan: "Why dost thou seek temporal peace, O Judah, when because of thine obduracy thou art unable to find eternal peace?" The Jews of Genoa having requested permission to put their synagogue into better repair, Theodoric sent them the following reply: "Why do you desire that which you should avoid? We accord you, indeed, the permission you request, but we blame the wish, which is tainted with error. We cannot command religion, however, nor compel any one to believe contrary to his conscience." He permitted the Jews neither to erect new synagogues, nor to decorate old ones, but simply allowed them to repair such as were falling into decay.

The Ostrogothic ruler was zealous in preserving internal peace and in upholding the laws, and accordingly he was just to the Jews whenever any undeserved injury was inflicted upon them. The Catholics entertained a secret hate of the Arians, and with the deepest resentment saw Arianism on the throne, while the Catholic Church was merely magnanimously tolerated: they seized upon every opportunity of thwarting Theodoric,

when it could be done with impunity. On one occasion, when a few slaves rose against their Jewish masters in Rome, the mob gathered, burnt the synagogue, ill-treated the Jews, and plundered their property, in order to laugh Theodoric's edicts to scorn. Theodoric, having been informed of this, bitterly reproached the Roman Senate, which was now but the shadow of its former self, for permitting such misconduct, and imperiously charged it to discover the culprits and oblige them to make compensation for the damage they had done. As the leaders of the riot were not discovered, Theodoric condemned the Roman commune to make compensation. This severity roused the entire Catholic Church against him.

It is creditable to the Italian Jews of this period that, in spite of the general deterioration and demoralization, the political and ecclesiastical literature of the times imputes no other crimes to them than obduracy and unbelief. Their religion shielded them from the prevailing wickedness. Cassiodorus, who became a monk after resigning all his dignities, composed among other works a homiletic exposition of the Psalms, in which he makes frequent reference to the Jews, apostrophizing them, and endeavoring to convert them. It is characteristic of this period that Cassiodorus, – who, besides Boëthius, was the only notability of the sixth century possessing a certain philosophic culture – designated the Jews by the most opprobrious names. It would be easy to compile a dictionary of abusive words from his writings; he called them "scorpions and lions," "wild asses,"

"dogs and unicorns."

In spite of the antipathy of the leaders of opinion, the Jews of Italy were happy in comparison with their brethren of the Byzantine empire. Theodoric's successors, his beautiful and accomplished daughter Amalasantha, and her husband and murderer Theodatus, a weakling with philosophical pretensions, followed his principles. The Jews supported King Theodatus with tenacious fidelity, even when he himself had given up all hope. The Jews of Naples risked their lives rather than come under Justinian's scourge. Belisarius, the conqueror of the Vandal empire, the laurel-crowned hero, trembled at Justinian's wrath, and allowed himself to be used as the blind tool of the latter's tyranny; he had already subjugated the whole of Sicily and the southern extremity of the Italian peninsula, and now was swiftly approaching Naples, the largest and most beautiful city of Lower Italy. On his summons to the inhabitants to surrender, the Neapolitans divided into two factions. But even the war party was not disposed to sacrifice itself for the Ostrogoths, who were hated in Italy. The Jews alone, and two lawyers, Pastor and Asclepiadotus, who had been raised to fame through the influence of the Ostrogothic kings, opposed the surrender of the city to the Byzantine general. The Jews, who were wealthy and patriotic, offered their lives and their fortunes for the defense of the city. In order to allay the fear of scarcity of provisions, they promised to supply Naples with all necessaries during the siege. The Jews, unaided, defended that part of the city which

was nearest the sea, and fought with such bravery, that the enemy did not venture to direct their attacks against that quarter. A contemporary historian (Procopius) has raised a glorious monument to the heroic bravery of the Jews of Naples.

Having one night, by means of treachery, penetrated into the city, the enemy almost made themselves masters of it (536), but the Jews, with the courage of lions, still continued the struggle. It was only at break of day, when the enemy had overwhelmed them with numbers, and many of their own side had been killed, that the Jews quitted their posts. It is not related how the surviving Jewish combatants fared – certainly no better than their confederates Asclepiadotus and Pastor, who fell victims to the fury of the people. Now occurred that which the Italian Jews had anticipated with horror; they came under the rule of the Emperor Justinian, whose anti-Jewish ideas place him in a class with Hadrian, Constantine, and Firuz. Italy, ruler of the world, sank to the rank of a province (Exarchate) of the Byzantine empire, and the Jews of Italy trembled before the exarch of Ravenna.

This situation, however, did not continue long. Justinian's successors were obliged to abandon a great part of Italy forever to the powerful and uncouth Lombards (589), who, half heathen, half Arian, troubled themselves but little about the Jews. At all events there are no exceptional laws for the Jews to be met with in the Longobard code. Even when the Lombards embraced the Catholic faith, the position of the Jews in Italy remained bearable. The heads of the Catholic Church, the Popes, were

free from extreme intolerance. Gregory I (590–604), called the Great and the Holy, who laid the foundation of the power of Catholicism, gave utterance to the principle that the Jews should be converted only by means of gentle persuasion and not by violence. He conscientiously maintained their rights of Roman citizenship, which had been recognized by various emperors. In the territory which was subject to the papal sway in Rome, Lower Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia, he steadfastly persisted in this course, in the face of the fanatical bishops, who regarded the oppression of the Jews as a pious work. His pastoral letters are full of earnest exhortations, such as the following: "We forbid you to molest the Jews or to lay upon them restrictions not imposed by the established laws; we further permit them to live as Romans and to dispose of their property as they will; we only prohibit them from owning Christian slaves."

But greatly as Gregory abhorred the forcible conversion of the Jews, he exerted himself to win them for the Church by other means. He did not hesitate to make an appeal to cupidity, and remitted a portion of the land-tax to such of the Jewish farmers and peasants as embraced Christianity. He did not, indeed, deceive himself with the belief that the converts who were obtained in this manner were loyal Christians; he counted, however, upon their descendants. "If we do not gain them over," he wrote, "we at least gain their children." Having heard that a Jew named Nasas had erected an altar to Elijah (probably a synagogue known by this name) in the island of

Sicily, and that Christians met there to celebrate divine service, Gregory commanded the prefect Libertinus to raze the building, and to inflict corporal punishment on Nasas for his offense. Gregory vigorously persecuted such of the Jews as purchased or possessed Christian slaves. In the Frankish empire, where fanaticism had not yet made its way, the Jews were not forbidden to carry on the slave trade. Gregory was indignant at this, and wrote to King Theodoric (Dieterich) of Burgundy, Theodebert, king of Austrasia, and also to Queen Brunhilde, expressing his astonishment that they allowed the Jews to possess Christian slaves. He exhorted them with great warmth to remove this evil, and to free the true believers from the power of their enemy. Reccared, the king of the Visigoths, who submitted to the papal see, was flattered beyond measure by Gregory for promulgating an edict of intolerance.

In the Byzantine empire and in Italy, Christianity had from the very first shown more or less hostility to Judaism, but in the west of Europe, in France and Spain, where the Church established itself with difficulty, the situation of the Jews assumed a different and much more favorable aspect. The invasions of the barbarians had completely changed the social order existing in these countries. Roman institutions, both political and ecclesiastical, were nearly effaced, and the polity of the empires established by heathen or half Christianized nations was not built up on the basis of Church law. It was a long while before Catholicism gained a firm footing in the west of Europe, and the Jews who

had settled there enjoyed undisturbed peace until the victorious Church gained the upper hand.

The immigration of the Jews into these important and wealthy provinces took place probably as early as the time of the Republic or of Cæsar. The Jewish merchants whose business pursuits brought them from Alexandria or Asia Minor to Rome and Italy, the Jewish warriors whom the emperors Vespasian and Titus, the conquerors of Judæa, had dispersed as prisoners throughout the Roman provinces, found their way voluntarily or involuntarily into Gaul and Iberia. The presence of the Jews in the west of Europe is a certain fact only since the second century.

The Gallic Jews, whose first settlement was in the district of Arles, enjoyed the full rights of Roman citizenship, whether they arrived in Gaul as merchants or as fugitives, with the peddler's pack or in the garb of slaves; they were treated as Romans also by the Frankish and Burgundian conquerors. The most ancient legislation of the Franks and Burgundians did not consider the Jews as a distinct race, subject to peculiar laws. In the Frankish kingdom founded by Clovis, the Jews dwelt in Auvergne (Arverna), in Carcassonne, Arles, Orleans, and as far north as Paris and Belgium. Numbers of them resided in the old Greek port of Marseilles, and in Béziers (Biterræ), and so many dwelt in the province of Narbonne that a mountain near the city of that name was called *Mons Judaicus*. The territory of Narbonne belonged for a long time to Visigothic Spain, and for this reason the Jewish history of this district reflects all the

vicissitudes of the Jews on the further side of the Pyrenees.

The Jews of the Frankish and Burgundian kingdoms carried on agriculture, trade, and commerce without restraint; they navigated the seas and rivers in their own ships. They also practised medicine, and the advice of the Jewish physicians was sought even by the clergy, who probably did not care to rely entirely on the miraculous healing powers of the saints and of relics. They were also skilled in the use of the weapons of war, and took an active part in the battles between Clovis and Theodoric's generals before Arles (508).

Besides their Biblical names, the Jews of Gaul bore the appellations which were common in the country, such as Armentarius, Gozolas, Priscus, or Siderius. They lived on the best of terms with the people of the country, and intermarriages even occurred between Jews and Christians. The Christian clergy did not scruple to eat at Jewish tables, and in turn often entertained the Jews.

The higher ecclesiastics, however, took umbrage, because the Jews refused, at Christian banquets, to eat of certain dishes, which the precepts of their religion forbade them to enjoy. For this reason the council of Vannes (465) prohibited the clergy from taking part in Jewish banquets, "because they considered it undignified that Christians should eat the viands of the Jews, while the latter refused to eat of Christian dishes, thus making it appear as though the clergy were inferior to the Jews." But this decision of the council was of no avail; canonical severity was

powerless to check this friendly intercourse. It became necessary to re-enact this ecclesiastical prohibition several times. Thus, in spite of their separation from Judæa and Babylonia, the centers of Judaism, the Jews of Gaul lived in strict accordance with the precepts of their religion. Wherever they settled they built their synagogues, and constituted their communities in exact agreement with the directions of the Talmud.

The friendly relations existing between the Jews and the inhabitants of Gaul underwent no change even when the country, by reason of Clovis' conversion, came under the rule of the Catholic Church. Clovis was, indeed, a bloodthirsty butcher, but not a fanatic. The clergy were under obligations to him, because he had abandoned heathenism for Christianity, and he did not need to yield to them in any way. As he left an hereditary kingdom to his successors, they were not placed in painful situations and dilemmas, as were the elective kings of the Visigoths, and were not obliged to make concessions or sacrifices to the Church. Among the Franks, therefore, heathen customs remained long in vogue, and the Jews were permitted to live according to their religion without molestation. It is true that many ecclesiastical fanatics exerted themselves to convert the Jews by every means in their power, even using ill-treatment, and many severe resolutions were passed at their councils. But these persecutions remained isolated, even when they were countenanced by one or another of the zealous kings. Burgundy, however, ever since King Sigismund had embraced the Catholic

faith (516), and felt bound to elevate oppression of the Arians and the Jews into the policy of the state, was more hostile to the Jews than the rest of France. It was this king who first raised the barrier between Jews and Christians. He confirmed the decision of the council of Epaone, held under the presidency of the bloodthirsty bishop Avitus, forbidding even laymen to take part in Jewish banquets (517).

A spirit of hostility to the Jews gradually spread from Burgundy over the Frankish countries. As early as the third and fourth councils at Orleans (538 and 545), severe enactments were passed against them. Not only were the Christians commanded not to take part in Jewish banquets, and the Jews forbidden to make proselytes, but the latter were even prohibited from appearing in the streets and public squares during Easter, because "their appearance was an insult to Christianity." Childebert I of Paris embodied this last point in his constitution (554), and thus exalted the intolerance of the clergy into a law of the state. This feeling of hostility, however, was not prevalent among Childebert's contemporaries. The Frankish empire was divided among several monarchs, who, although related, mortally hated one another; this division had the effect of confining intolerant practices to single provinces. Even ecclesiastical dignitaries of high rank continued to maintain friendly intercourse with the Jews, without fearing any danger to the Church. But fanaticism is naturally contagious; when it has once gained a firm footing in a country, it soon obtains ascendancy over all minds, and

overcomes all scruples. In the Frankish empire the persecution of the Jews proceeded from a man who may be regarded as the very incarnation of Jew-hatred. This was Avitus, Bishop of Arverna, whose see was at Clermont; what Cyril had been to the Jews of Alexandria, Avitus was to the Jews of Gaul.

The Jewish population of his bishopric was a thorn in his side, and he accordingly roused the members of his flock against it. Again and again he exhorted the Jews of Clermont to become converts, but his sermons meeting with no response, he incited the mob to attack the synagogues, and raze them to the ground. But even this did not content the fanatic; he offered the Jews the choice between presenting themselves for baptism and quitting the city. Only one Jew received baptism, thus making himself an object of abhorrence to the whole community. As he was going through the streets at Pentecost in his white baptismal robe, he was sprinkled with rancid oil by a Jew. This seemed a challenge to the fanatic mob, and they fell upon the Jews. The latter retreated to their houses, where they were attacked, and many of them killed. The sight of blood caused the faint hearts to waver, and five hundred of the Jews besought Bishop Avitus to accord them the favor of baptism, and implored him to put an end to the massacre at once. Such of them as remained true to their religion fled to Marseilles (576). The Christian population celebrated the day of the baptism of the five hundred with wild rejoicing, as though the cross might pride itself on a victory which had been won by the sword. The news of the occurrence in

Clermont caused great joy among the fanatics. Bishop Gregory of Tours invited the pious poet Venantius Fortunatus to celebrate in song the achievement of Avitus. But the Latin verses of this poet, who had emigrated to France from Italy, instead of glorifying Avitus, raised a monument of shame to his memory. They indicate quite clearly that the Jews of Clermont suffered innocently, and became converts to Christianity out of sheer desperation. Thus the effects of the ever-growing fanaticism made themselves felt in many parts of France. The Council of Mâcon (581) adopted several resolutions which aimed at assigning an inferior position in society to the Jews. They were neither to officiate as judges nor to be allowed to become tax-farmers, "lest the Christian population appear to be subjected to them." The Jews were further obliged to show profound reverence to the Christian priests, and were to seat themselves in their presence only by express permission. All who transgressed this law were to be severely punished. The edict forbidding the Jews to appear in public during Easter was re-enacted by this council. Even King Chilperic, although he bore no particular good-will to the Catholic clergy, emulated the example set by Avitus. He also compelled the Jews of his empire to receive baptism, and himself stood sponsor to the Jewish neophytes at the baptismal font. But he was content with the mere appearance of conversion, and offered no opposition to the Jews, although they continued to celebrate the Sabbath and to observe the laws of Judaism.

The later Merovingian kings became more and more bigoted, and their hatred of the Jews consequently increased. Clotaire II, on whom had devolved the rule of the entire Frankish empire (613), was a matricide, but was nevertheless considered a model of religious piety. He sanctioned the decisions of the Council of Paris, which forbade the Jews to hold magisterial power or to take military service (615). His son Dagobert must be counted among the most anti-Jewish monarchs in the whole history of the world. Many thousands of Jewish fugitives who had fled to the Frankish empire to escape from the fanaticism of Sisebut, king of the Visigoths, roused the jealousy of this sensual monarch, who was ashamed of being considered inferior to his Visigothic contemporary and of manifesting less religious zeal. He therefore issued a decree, wherein he declared that the entire Jewish population of the Frankish empire must either embrace Christianity before a certain day, or be treated as enemies and be put to death (about 629).

The more the authority of the Merovingian *fainéants*, as they have been called, declined, and the more the power of the politic and cautious stewards, Pepin's descendants, rose, the greater was the exemption from persecution and torture enjoyed by the Jews. The predecessors of Charlemagne seem to have felt that the Jews were a useful class of men, whose activity and intellectual capabilities could not but be advantageous to the state. The slave trade alone remained a standing subject of legislation in the Councils; but in spite of their zeal they were unable to abolish

the traffic in human beings, because their condemnation applied to only one phase of the trade.

The Jews of Germany are to be regarded merely as colonies of the Frankish Jews, and such of them as lived in Austrasia, a province subject to the Merovingian kings, shared the same fate as their brethren in France. According to a chronicle, the most ancient Jews in the Rhine district are said to have been the descendants of the legionaries who took part in the destruction of the Temple. From the vast horde of Jewish prisoners, the Vangioni had chosen the most beautiful women, had brought them back to their stations on the shores of the Rhine and the Main, and had compelled them to minister to the satisfaction of their desires. The children thus begotten of Jewish and Germanic parents were brought up by their mothers in the Jewish faith, their fathers not troubling themselves about them. It is these children who are said to have been the founders of the first Jewish communities between Worms and Mayence. It is certain that a Jewish congregation existed in the Roman colony, the city of Cologne, long before Christianity had been raised to power by Constantine. The heads of the community and its most respected members had obtained from the heathen emperors the privilege of exemption from the onerous municipal offices. The first Christian emperor, however, narrowed the limits of this immunity, exempting only two or three families. The Jews of Cologne enjoyed also the privilege of exercising their own jurisdiction, which they were allowed to retain until the Middle

Ages. A non-Jewish plaintiff, even though he were a priest, was obliged to bring his suit against a Jew before the Jewish judge (bishop of the Jews).

While the history of the Jews in Byzantium, Italy, and France possesses interest for special students, that of their brethren in the Pyrenean peninsula rises to the height of universal importance. The Jewish inhabitants of this happy peninsula contributed by their hearty interest to the greatness of the country, which they loved as only a fatherland can be loved, and in so doing achieved world-wide reputation. Jewish Spain contributed almost as much to the development of Judaism as Judæa and Babylonia, and as in these countries, so every spot in this new home has become classic for the Jewish race. Cordova, Granada, and Toledo are as familiar to the Jews as Jerusalem and Tiberias, and almost more so than Nahardea and Sora. When Judaism had come to a standstill in the East, and had grown weak with age, it acquired new vigor in Spain, and extended its fruitful influence over a wide sphere. Spain seemed to be destined by Providence to become a new center for the members of the dispersed race, where their spirit could revive, and to which they could point with pride.

The first settlement of the Jews in beautiful Hesperia is buried in dim obscurity. It is certain that they went thither as early as the time of the Roman Republic, as free men, to take advantage of the rich resources of this country.

The victims of the unhappy insurrections under Vespasian, Titus, and Hadrian were also dispersed to the extreme west,

and an exaggerated account relates that 80,000 of them were carried off to Spain as prisoners. They probably did not remain long in slavery; the sympathy of their free brethren undoubtedly hastened to ransom them, and thus fulfil the most important of the duties prescribed by Talmudical Judaism to its adherents. How numerous the Jews had settled in some parts of Spain is shown by the names which they conferred upon these localities. The city of Granada was called the city of the Jews in former times, on account of its being entirely inhabited by them: the same name was also borne by the ancient town of Tarragona (Tarracona), before its conquest by the Arabs. In Cordova there existed a Jewish gateway of ancient date, and near Saragossa there was a fortress which at the time of the Arabs was called Ruta al Jahud. In the neighborhood of Tortosa a gravestone was found with both a Hebrew and a national name. This memorial was inscribed in three languages – Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; the Jews must, therefore, have emigrated at an early period from a Greek district to the north of Spain, and acquired the Latin language, without forgetting that of the Holy Writings.

Pride of ancestry, which was a characteristic of the Jews of this country as of the other Spaniards, was not content with the fact that the Jewish colony in Spain had possessed the right of citizenship long before the Visigoths and other Germanic tribes had set their tyrannous iron foot in the land, but desired to lay claim to even higher antiquity for it. The Spanish Jews maintained that they had been transported hither

after the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonian conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar. Certain Jewish families, the Ibn-Dauids and the Abrabanel, boasted descent from the royal house of David, and maintained that their ancestors had been settled since time immemorial partly in the district of Lucena, and partly in the environs of Toledo and Seville. The numerous Spanish-Jewish family of Nasi also traced back its pedigree to King David, and proved it by means of a genealogical table and seals. The family of the Ibn-Albalias was more modest, and dated its immigration only from the destruction of the Second Temple. A family tradition runs to the effect that the Roman governor of Spain begged the conqueror of Jerusalem to send him some noble families from the capital of Judæa, and that Titus complied with his request. Among those thus transported was a man named Baruch, who excelled in the art of weaving curtains for the Temple. This Baruch, who settled in Merida, was the ancestor of the Ibn-Albalias.

Christianity had early taken root in Spain. In fact a council of bishops, priests, and the subordinate clergy met at Illiberis (Elvira, near Granada) some time before Constantine's conversion. The Jews were nevertheless held in high esteem by the Christian population as well as by the heathens. The Iberians and Romans who had been converted to Christianity had not yet discovered in the Jews a race repudiated by God, a people whose presence was to be shunned. They associated with their Jewish neighbors in perfect freedom. The newly-converted

inhabitants of the country, who often heard their apostle preach about Jews and Judaism, had no conception of the wide gulf dividing Judaism from Christianity, and as often had the produce of their fields blessed by pious Jews as by their own clergy. Intermarriages between Jews and Christians occurred quite as frequently in Spain as in Gaul.

The higher Catholic clergy, however, could not suffer this friendly intercourse between Jews and Christians to continue; they perceived it to be dangerous to the newly-established Church. To the representatives of the Church in Spain is due the honor – if honor it be – of first having raised a barrier between Jew and Christian. The Council of Illiberis (about 320), at whose head was Osius, Bishop of Cordova, forbade the Christians, under pain of excommunication, to hold friendly intercourse with the Jews, to contract marriages with them, or to allow them to bless the produce of their fields. The seed of malignant hatred of the Jews, which was thus first sown by the Synod of Illiberis, did not, however, produce its poisonous fruit until much later. When the migrating Germanic hordes of the Suevi, Vandals, and Visigoths first laid waste this beautiful country, and then chose it for their home, the Catholics of the land were obliged to bear the yoke of political and religious dependence, for the Visigoths, who had taken lasting possession of the peninsula, happened to have been converted to the Arian faith. On the whole, the Visigothic Arians were tolerably indifferent to the controversy of the creeds, as to whether the Son of God was the same as,

or similar to, the Father, and whether Bishop Arius ought to be regarded as orthodox or heretical. But they thoroughly hated the Catholic inhabitants of the country, because in every Catholic they saw a Roman, and consequently an enemy. The Jews, on the other hand, were unmolested under the Arian kings, and besides enjoying civil and political equality, were admitted to the public offices. Their skill and knowledge, which gave them the advantage over the uncivilized Visigoths, specially fitted them for these posts. The favorable condition of the Jews in Spain continued for more than a century, beginning with the time when this country first became a province of the Toletanic-Visigothic empire, and extending over the later period, when, under Theudes (531), it became the center of the same. The Jews who dwelt in the province of Narbonne, and in that district of Africa which formed part of the Visigothic empire, also enjoyed civil and political equality; some of them rendered material service to the Visigothic kings. The Jews that lived at the foot of the Pyrenees defended the passes leading from Gaul into Spain against the invasions of the Franks and Burgundians, who longed to possess the country. They were regarded as the most trusty guardians of the frontier, and their martial courage gained for them special distinction. The Visigothic Jews must have remained in communication, either through Italy or through Africa, with Judæa or Babylonia, from which countries they probably received their religious teachers. They adhered strictly to the precepts of the Talmud, abstained from wine made by

non-Jews, and admitted their heathen and Christian slaves into the covenant of Abraham, as ordained by the Talmud. While their brethren on the other side of the Pyrenees were greatly oppressed, and forcibly converted to Christianity, or compelled to emigrate, they enjoyed complete liberty of religion, and were further granted the privilege, which was denied the Jews in all the other countries of Europe, of initiating their slaves into their religion.

But as soon as the Catholic Church obtained the supremacy in Spain, and Arianism began to be persecuted, the affairs of the Jews of this country assumed an unfavorable aspect. King Reccared, who had abjured the Arian creed at the Council of Toledo, was the first to unite with the Synod in imposing restrictions on the Jews. They were prohibited from contracting marriages with the Christians, from acquiring Christian slaves, and from holding public offices; such of their children as were born of intermarriages were to be forcibly baptized (589). They were thus made to assume an isolated position, which pained them all the more as they were animated by a sense of honor, and until now had lived upon equal terms with their fellow-citizens, having, in fact, been privileged more than the Catholics. Most oppressive of all was the restraint touching the possession of slaves. Henceforward the Jews were neither to purchase Christian slaves nor to accept them as presents, and if they transgressed the order and initiated the slaves into Judaism, they were to lose all rights in them. The whole fortune of him that circumcised a slave

was forfeited to the state. All well-to-do people in the country possessed slaves and serfs, who cultivated their land and provided for the wants of the house; the Jews alone were to be deprived of this advantage. It is conceivable that the wealthy Jews who owned slaves exerted themselves to obtain the repeal of Reccared's law, and to this end they proffered a considerable sum of money to the king. Reccared, however, refused their offer, and for this deed was commended beyond measure by Pope Gregory, whose heart's desire was fulfilled by this law (599). Gregory compared the Visigothic monarch to David, king of Israel, "who refused to accept the water which his warriors had brought him at the risk of their lives, and poured it out before the Lord." In the same manner, he contended, Reccared had sacrificed to God the gold which had been offered to him. At the same time Reccared confirmed a decision of the Council of Narbonne, forbidding the Jews to sing Psalms at their funeral services, – a custom which they had probably adopted from the Church.

Although Reccared desired to enforce these restrictive laws against the Jews, it was nevertheless not very difficult for the latter to evade them. The peculiar constitution of Visigothic Spain afforded them the means of escaping their pressure. According to this constitution the king was not an all-powerful ruler, for the Visigothic nobles, who possessed the right of electing him, were absolutely independent in their own provinces. Neither they nor the people at large shared the fanaticism of the Church against the Jews. They accorded them,

as in the past, the right of purchasing slaves, and probably also bestowed offices upon them. In twenty years Reccared's laws against the Jews had fallen into complete disuse. His successors paid but little attention to the matter, and were on the whole not unfavorably disposed towards the Jews.

At this period, however, a king of the Visigoths was elected, who, liberal in other respects, and not uncultured, was a scourge for the Jews of his dominions, and, in consequence, prepared a grievous destiny for his empire. Sisebut, a contemporary of the Emperor Heraclius, was, like the latter, a fanatical persecutor of the Jews. But while some excuse may be found for Heraclius's conduct in the revolt of the Jews of Palestine, and in the fact that he was compelled to adopt this course by the blind fury of the monks, Sisebut acted thus without any provocation, of his own free will, and almost contrary to the wish of the Catholic clergy. At the very commencement of his reign (612), the Jews engaged his attention. His conscience was troubled by the fact, that in spite of Reccared's laws, Christian slaves still served Jewish masters, and were initiated into Judaism, to which faith they willingly adhered. He therefore renewed these laws, and commanded the ecclesiastics and the judges, as well as the entire population of the country, to see that in future no Christians stood in servile relations to the Jews, but he went further in this direction than Reccared; the Jews were not only prohibited from acquiring any slaves, but were forbidden to retain those whom they possessed. Only those Jews who embraced Christianity were permitted to

own slaves, and they alone were allowed to advance a claim to the slaves left by their Jewish relatives. Sisebut solemnly exhorted his successors to maintain this law. "May the king who dares abolish this law" – thus ran the formula of Sisebut's curse – "incur the deepest disgrace in this world, and eternal torments in the flames of hell." In spite of this severity and of Sisebut's earnest exhortations, this law appears to have been as little enforced at that period as under Reccared. The independent nobles of the country extended their protection to the Jews, either for their own interest or out of defiance to the king. Even many of the priests and bishops seem to have supported the Jews, and to have concerned themselves but little about the king's command. Sisebut therefore enacted a still severer decree. Within a certain period all the Jews of the land were either to receive baptism or to quit the territory of the Visigothic empire. This order was strictly executed. The weak, who clung to their property or loved the land which their fathers had inhabited time out of mind, allowed themselves to be baptized. The stronger-minded, on the other hand, whose conscience could approve of no compromise, emigrated to France or to the neighboring continent of Africa (612–613). The clergy, however, were by no means satisfied with this forced conversion, and one of their principal representatives reproached the king with having indeed "exhibited zeal for the faith, but not conscientious zeal." With this fanatical persecution Sisebut paved the way for the dissolution of the Visigothic empire.

Sisebut's rigorous laws against the Jews lasted no longer than his reign. They were repealed by his successor, Swintila, a just and liberal monarch, whom the oppressed named the "father of his country." The exiled Jews returned to their native land, and the proselytes reverted to Judaism (621–631). In spite of their baptism the Jewish converts had not abandoned their religion. The act of baptism was deemed sufficient at this period, and no one inquired whether the converts still retained their former customs and usages. The noble king Swintila was, however, dethroned by a conspiracy of nobles and the clergy, and a docile tool, Sisenand by name, raised to his place. Under this monarch the clergy again acquired the ascendancy. Once again, at the Council of Toledo (633), the Jews became the object of synodal attention. At the head of this council stood Isidore, archbishop of Hispalis (Seville), a well-informed and equitable prelate, but infected with the prejudices of his time. The synod proclaimed the principle that the Jews ought not to be made to embrace Christianity by violence and threats of punishment; nevertheless Reccared's laws against them were re-enacted. The full severity of the ecclesiastical legislation was, however, directed against the Jews who had been forcibly converted under Sisebut, and had reverted to their religion. Although the clergy themselves had criticized the method of their conversion, they nevertheless considered it a duty to keep within the pale of Christianity the Jews that had once received the holy sacrament, "in order that the faith may not be dishonored."

Religion was regarded at this period merely as a lip-confession. The synod which sat under Sisenand decided, therefore, that the Jews who had been baptized should be forcibly restrained from the observance of their religion, and withdrawn from the society of their co-religionists, and that the children of both sexes should be torn from their parents and thrust into monasteries. Those discovered observing the Sabbath and the Jewish festivals, contracting marriages according to the Jewish rites, practising circumcision, or abstaining from certain foods, in obedience to the precepts of Judaism, were to expiate their offenses by forfeiting their freedom. They were to be reduced to slavery, and presented to orthodox Christians chosen by the king. According to this canonical legislation, the forcibly converted Jews and their descendants were not to be admitted as witnesses, because "those that have been untrue to God cannot be sincere to man"; this was the conclusion reached by ignorance in session. In comparison with this severity, the treatment of the Jews that had remained steadfast to their faith appears quite merciful.

Even these, however, the clergy exerted themselves to alienate from Judaism. Isidore of Seville wrote two books against the Jews, wherein he attempted to prove the doctrines of Christianity by means of passages from the Old Testament, naturally in that tasteless, senseless manner which had been employed since the commencement of the polemic warfare against Judaism by the Fathers. The Spanish Jews, in order to confirm themselves in their ancestral faith, were induced to take up the controversy,

and to refute this specious proof. The learned men among them replied with counter treatises, written probably in Latin. Their superior knowledge of the Biblical records made their victory easy. In answer to the principal rejoinder, that the scepter had departed from Judah, and that the Christians, who possessed kings, thus formed the true people of Israel, the Jews pointed to a Jewish kingdom in the extreme East, which they asserted was ruled over by a descendant of David. They alluded to the Jewish-Himyarite empire in southern Arabia, but this was governed by a dynasty which had been converted to Judaism.

These resolutions of the fourth Council of Toledo and Sisenand's persecution of the Jewish converts do not appear to have been carried out with all the proposed severity. The Visigothic-Spanish nobles took the Jews more and more under their patronage, and against them the royal authority was powerless. At this period, however, a king resembling Sisebut ascended the Visigothic throne. Chintila assembled a general council, and not only did he obtain from them a confirmation of all anti-Jewish clauses contained in the existing laws, but enacted that no one should be allowed to remain in the Visigothic empire who did not embrace the Catholic religion. The ecclesiastical assembly adopted these propositions with joy, and exulted over the fact that "by the piety of the king, the unyielding infidelity of the Jews would at last be destroyed." They appended the canonical law, that in future every king, before his accession, should be compelled to take a solemn oath not to allow the

converted Jews to violate the Catholic faith, nor to favor their unbelief, but strictly to enforce the ecclesiastical decisions against them (638).

A second time the Jews were obliged to emigrate, and the converts, who still clung to Judaism in their secret hearts, were compelled to sign a confession to the effect that they would observe and obey the Catholic religion without reserve. But the confession thus signed by men whose sacred convictions were outraged, was not and could not be sincere. They hoped steadfastly for better times, when they might be able to throw off the mask, and the elective constitution of the Visigothic empire soon made this possible. The present situation lasted only during the four years of Chintila's reign (638–642).

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWS OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Happy condition of the Jews in Arabia – Traditions as to their original settlements – Yathrib and Chaibar – The Jewish-Arabic tribes – The Benu-Nadhir, the Benu-Kuraiza, and Benu-Bachdal – The Benu-Kainukaa – The Jews of Yemen – Their power and influence – Conversion of Arabian tribes to Judaism – Abu-Kariba the first Jewish-Himyarite king – Zorah Dhu-Nowas – Samuel Ibn-Adija – Mahomet – His indebtedness to Judaism – Mahomet's early friendliness to the Jews and subsequent breach with them – His attacks on the Jewish tribes – The War of the Fosse – The position of the Jews under the Caliphs.

500–662 C. E

Wearied with contemplating the miserable plight of the Jews in their ancient home and in the countries of Europe, and fatigued by the constant sight of fanatical oppression, the eyes of the observer rest with gladness upon their situation in the Arabian peninsula. Here the sons of Judah were free to raise their heads, and did not need to look about them with fear and humiliation,

lest the ecclesiastical wrath be discharged upon them, or the secular power overwhelm them. Here they were not shut out from the paths of honor, nor excluded from the privileges of the state, but, untrammelled, were allowed to develop their powers in the midst of a free, simple, and talented people, to show their manly courage, to compete for the gifts of fame, and with practised hand to measure swords with their antagonists. Instead of bearing the yoke, the Jews were not infrequently the leaders of the Arabian tribes. Their intellectual superiority constituted them a power, and they concluded offensive and defensive alliances, and carried on feuds. Besides the sword and the lance, however, they handled the ploughshare and the lyre, and in the end became the teachers of the Arabian nation. The history of the Jews of Arabia in the century which precedes Mahomet's appearance, and during the period of his activity, forms a glorious page in the annals of the Jews.

The first immigration of Jewish families into the free peninsula is buried in misty tradition. According to one account, the Israelites sent by Joshua to fight the Amalekites settled in the city of Yathrib (afterwards Medina), and in the province of Chaibar; according to another, the Israelite warriors, under Saul, who had spared the beautiful young son of the Amalekite king, and had been repudiated by the nation for their disobedience, returned to the Hejas (northern Arabia), and settled there. An Israelite colony is also supposed to have been formed in northern Arabia during the reign of David. It is possible that under the

powerful kings of Judah, seafaring Israelites, who navigated the Red Sea on their way to Ophir – the land of gold – established trading stations, for the trade with India, in Mariba and Sanaa (Usal), the most important commercial towns of southern Arabia (Yemen, Himyara, Sabea), and planted Jewish colonies there. The later Arabian Jews said, however, that they had heard from their forefathers that many Jewish fugitives had escaped to northern Arabia on the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. But there can be no doubt that the persecution of the Jews by the Romans was the means of establishing a Jewish population in the Arabian peninsula. The death-defying zealots who, after the destruction of the Second Temple, fled in part to Egypt and to Cyrene, in order to continue there the desperate struggle against the thralldom of Rome, also passed in straggling bands into Arabia, where they were not compelled to hide their love of freedom or to abandon their warlike bearing.

From these fugitives sprang three Jewish-Arabic tribes – the Benu-Nadhir, the Benu-Kuraiza, and the Benu-Bachdal, the first two of which were descended from Aaron, and therefore called themselves Cohanim (Al-kahinani). Another Jewish family – the Benu-Kainukaa – were established in northern Arabia, and their mode of living was different from that of the Nadhir and Kuraiza. These tribes had their center in the city of Yathrib, which was situated in a fruitful district, planted with palms and rice, and watered by small streams. As the Jews were often molested by Bedouins, they built castles on the elevated places

in the city and the surrounding country, whereby they guarded their independence. Although originally the sole rulers of this district, they were afterwards obliged to share their power and the possession of the soil with the Arabs, for, about the year 300, two related families, the Benu-Aus and the Chazraj (together forming the tribe of Kaila), settled in the same neighborhood, and sometimes stood in friendly, sometimes in hostile relations to the Jews.

To the north of Yathrib was situated the district of Chaibar, which was entirely inhabited by Jews, who constituted a separate commonwealth. The Jews of Chaibar are supposed to have been descendants of the Rechabites, who, in accordance with the command of their progenitor, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, led a nomadic and Nazarite life; after the destruction of the First Temple, they are said to have wandered as far as the district of Chaibar, attracted by its abundance of palms and grain. The Jews of Chaibar constructed a line of castles or fortresses, like the castles of the Christian knights; the strongest of them was Kamus, built upon a hill difficult of access. These castles protected them from the predatory incursions of the warlike Bedouins, and enabled them to offer an asylum to many a persecuted fugitive. Wadil-Kora (the valley of the villages), a fertile plain a day's journey from Chaibar, was also inhabited exclusively by Jews. In Mecca, where stood the sanctuary of the Arabs, there probably lived but few Jews.

They were numerous represented, however, in southern

Arabia (Yemen), "the land," its inhabitants boasted, "the very dust of which was gold, which produced the healthiest men, and whose women brought forth without pain." But unlike their brethren in Hejas, the Jews of Arabia Felix lived without racial or political cohesion, scattered among the Arabs. They nevertheless in time obtained so great an influence over the Arab tribes and the kings of Yemen (Himyara), that they were able to prevent the propagation of Christianity in this region. The Byzantine Christian emperors had their desires fixed upon these markets for Indian produce. Without actually meditating the subjection of the brave Himyarites (Homerites), they desired to gain their friendship by converting them to Christianity; the cross was to be the means of effecting a commercial connection. It was not until the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century that the Christian envoys succeeded in converting to Christianity an Arab prince and his tribe, whose capital was the commercial town of Najara. – Arabia owned only half the island of Yotabe (now Jijbân), in the Red Sea (60 miles to the south of the capital, Aila); a small Jewish free state had existed there since time immemorial.

In consequence of their Semitic descent, the Jews of Arabia possessed many points of similarity with the primitive inhabitants of the country. Their language was closely related to Arabic, and their customs, except those that had been produced by their religion, were not different from those of the sons of Arabia. The Jews became, therefore, so thoroughly Arabic

that they were distinguished from the natives of the country only by their religious belief. Intermarriage between the two nations tended to heighten the similarity of their characters. Like the Himyarites, the Jews of southern Arabia applied themselves more particularly to the trade between India, the Byzantine empire, and Persia. The Jews of northern Arabia, on the contrary, led the life of Bedouins; they occupied themselves with agriculture, cattle breeding, transport by caravan, traffic in weapons, and probably also the calling of robbers. The Arabian Jews likewise possessed a patriarchal, tribal constitution. Several families were united under one name, and led by a chieftain (shaïch), who in times of peace settled controversies and pronounced judgment, and in war commanded all the men able to bear arms, and concluded alliances with neighboring tribes. Like the Arabs, the Jews of the peninsula extended their hospitality to every one who entered their tents, and held inviolable faith with their allies; but they shared also the faults of the original inhabitants of the peninsula, avenging the death of one of their number with rigorous inflexibility, and hiding in ambush in order to surprise and annihilate their enemy. It would sometimes happen that a Jewish tribe, having entered into an alliance with an Arabian clan, would find itself opposed to a kindred tribe which had espoused another cause. But even though Jews were at feud with each other, their innate qualities moderated in them Bedouin ferocity, which never extended mercy to a foe. They ransomed the prisoners of a kindred tribe

with which they happened to be at war, from the hands of their own allies, being unwilling to abandon them as slaves to heathens, "because," said they, "the redemption of such of our co-religionists as are prisoners is a religious duty." Besides being equal to the Arabs in bravery, the Jews also contended with them for the palm in poetry. For in addition to manliness and courage, poetry was cultivated among the Arab nobles; it was fostered by the chieftains, and richly rewarded by the Arab kings. Next to the warrior, the poet was the man most honored in Arabia; for him all hearts and tents opened wide. The Jews of Arabia were likewise able to speak with elegance the Arabic language, and to adorn their poetry with rhymes.

The knowledge of their religion, which the Arabian Jews had brought with them in their flight from Judæa, and that which afterwards came to them from the academies, conferred upon them superiority over the heathen tribes, and soon made them their masters. While but few Arabs, before the latter part of the seventh century, were familiar with the art of writing, it was universally understood by the Jews, who made use, however, of the square, the so-called Assyrian characters. As the few Arabs that succeeded in learning to write generally employed the Hebrew characters, it would appear that they first acquired the art of writing from the Jews. Every Jew in Arabia was probably able to read the Holy Scriptures, for which reason the Arabs called the Jews the "nation of writing" (Ahl' ul kitab).

In the form in which it was transmitted to them, that is to

say, with the character impressed upon it by the Tanaim and the Amoraim, Judaism was most holy to the Arabian Jews. They strictly observed the dietary laws, and solemnized the festivals, and the fast of Yom-Kippur, which they called Ashura. They celebrated the Sabbath with such rigor that in spite of their delight in war, and the opportunity for enjoying it, their sword remained in its scabbard on that day. Although they had nothing to complain of in this hospitable country, which they were able to regard and love as their fatherland, they yearned nevertheless to return to the holy land of their fathers, and daily awaited the coming of the Messiah. Like all the Jews of the globe, therefore, they turned their face in prayer towards Jerusalem. They were in communication with the Jews of Palestine, and even after the fall of the Patriarchate, willingly subordinated themselves to the authorities in Tiberias, whence they received, as also from the Babylonian academies probably, religious instruction and interpretation of the Bible. Yathrib was the seat of Jewish learning, and possessed teachers of the Law (Achbâr, Chabar) who expounded the Scriptures in an academy (Midras). But the knowledge of the Bible which the Arabian Jews possessed was not considerable. They were acquainted with it only through the medium of the Agadic exegesis, which had become familiar to them in their travels or had been brought to them by immigrants. For them the glorious history of the past coalesced so completely with the Agadic additions that they were no longer able to separate the gold from the dross. Endowed with poetical fancy,

the Arabian Jews on their side embellished the Biblical history with interesting legends, which were afterwards circulated as actual facts.

The Jews of Arabia, enjoying complete liberty, and being subjected to no restraint, were able to defend their religious opinions without fear, and to communicate them with impunity to their heathen neighbors. The Arab mind, susceptible to intellectual promptings, was delighted with the simple, sublime contents of the Bible, and by degrees certain Jewish conceptions and religious ideas became familiar and current in Arabia. The Arabian Jews made their neighbors acquainted with a calendar-system, without which the latter were completely at sea in the arrangement of their holy seasons; learned Jews from Yathrib taught the Arabs to insert another month in their lunar year, which was far in arrear of the solar year. The Arabs adopted the nineteen-years cycle of the Jews (about 420), and called the intercalary month Nasi, doubtless from the circumstance that the Jews were accustomed to receive their calendar for the festivals from their Nasi (Patriarch).

The Jews even succeeded in instructing the Arabs in regard to their historical origin, concerning which their memories were void, and in their credulity the latter accepted this genealogy as the true one. It was of great consequence to the Jews to be regarded and acknowledged by the Arabs as their kinsmen, and too many points of social interest were bound up with this relationship for them to allow it to escape their attention. The

holy city of Mecca (Alcharam), the chief city of the country, was built round an ancient temple (Kaaba, the Square), or more properly, round a black stone; for all Arabs it was an asylum, in which the sword durst not quit the sheath. The five fairs, the most important of which was at Okaz, could be frequented only in the four holy months of the year, when the truce of God prevailed. Whoever desired to take advantage of these periods and to enjoy security of life in the midst of a warlike people, not over-scrupulous in the matter of shedding blood, was obliged to establish his relationship to the Arabs, otherwise he was excluded from these privileges.

Happily, the Arabian Jews bethought them of the genealogy of the Arabs as set forth in the first book of the Pentateuch, and seized upon it as the instrument by which to prove their kinship with them. The Jews were convinced that they were related to the Arabs on two sides, through Yoktan and through Ishmael. Under their instruction, therefore, the two principal Arabian tribes traced back the line of their ancestors to these two progenitors, the real Arabs (the Himyarites) supposing themselves to be descended from Yoktan; the pseudo-Arabs in the north, on the other hand, deriving their origin from Ishmael. These points of contact granted, the Jews had ample opportunity to multiply the proofs of their relationship. The Arabs loved genealogical tables, and were delighted to be able to follow their descent and history so far into hoary antiquity; accordingly, all this appeared to them both evident and flattering. They consequently exerted

themselves to bring their genealogical records and traditions into unison with the Biblical accounts. Although their traditions extended over less than six centuries on the one side to their progenitor Yarob and his sons or grandsons Himyar and Kachtan, and on the other, to Adnan, yet in their utter disregard of historical accuracy, this fact constituted no obstacle. Without a scruple, the southern Arabians called themselves Kachtanites, and the northern Arabians Ishmaelites. They readily accorded to the Jews the rights of relationship, that is to say, equality and all the advantages attending it.

The Arabs were thus in intimate intercourse with the Jews, and the sons of the desert, whose unpoetical mythology afforded them no matter for inspiration, derived much instruction from Judaism. Under these circumstances many Arabs could not fail to develop peculiar affection for Judaism, and some embraced this religion, though their conversion had not been thought of by the Jews. As they had practised circumcision while heathen, their conversion to Judaism was particularly easy. The members of a family among the Arabs were indissolubly bound to one another, and, according to their phylarchic constitution, the individuals identified themselves with the tribe. This brought about, that when a chieftain became a Jew, his whole clan at once followed him, the wisest, into the fold of Judaism. It is expressly recorded about several Arabian tribes that they were converted to Judaism; such were the Benu-Kinanah, a warlike, quarrelsome clan, related to the most respected Koraishites of Mecca, and

several other families of the tribes Aus and Chazraj in Yathrib.

Especially memorable, however, in the history of the Arabs is the conversion to Judaism of a powerful king of Yemen. The princes or kings of Yemen bore the name of Tobba, and at times ruled over the whole of Arabia; they traced their historical origin back to Himyar, their legendary origin to Kachtan. One of these kings, who went by the name of Abu-Kariba Assad-Tobban, was a man of judgment, knowledge, poetical endowments, and of valor which incited him to conquest. Abu-Kariba therefore undertook (about 500) an expedition against Persia and the Arabian provinces of the Byzantine empire. On his march he passed through Yathrib, the capital of northern Arabia, and not expecting treachery from the inhabitants of the town, left his son there as governor. Hardly, however, had he proceeded further, when he received the sad intelligence that the people of Yathrib had killed his son. Smitten with grief, he turned back in order to wreak bloody vengeance on the perfidious city, and after cutting down the palm trees, from which the inhabitants derived their principal sustenance, laid siege to it with his numerous band of warriors. A Jewish poet composed an elegy on the ruined palm trees, which the Arabs loved like living beings, and the destruction of which they bewailed like the death of dear relatives. The Jews rivaled the Chazraj Arabs in bravery in resisting Abu-Kariba's attack, and finally succeeded in tiring out his troops. During the siege, the Himyarite king was seized with a severe illness, and no fresh water could be discovered

in the neighborhood to quench his burning thirst. Two Jewish teachers of the Law from Yathrib, Kaab and Assad by name, took advantage of Abu-Kariba's exhaustion to betake themselves to his tent, and persuade him to pardon the inhabitants of Yathrib and raise the siege. The Arabs have woven a tissue of legend about this interview, but it is certain that the Jewish sages found opportunity to discourse to Abu-Kariba of Judaism, and succeeded in inspiring him with a lively interest for it. The exhortations of Kaab and Assad raised his sympathy to so high a pitch that he determined to embrace the Jewish faith, and induced the Himyarite army to do likewise.

At his desire the two Jewish sages of Yathrib accompanied him to Yemen, in order to convert his people to Judaism. This conversion, however, was not easy, for a nation does not cast off its opinions, usages and bad habits at will. There remained as many heathens as Jews in the land; they retained their temples, and were allowed to profess their religion unmolested. Altogether the Judaism which the king of Yemen professed must have been very superficial, and cannot have influenced to an appreciable extent the customs or the mode of living of the people. A prince of the noble tribe of the Kendites, a nephew of the king of Yemen, Harith Ibn-Amru by name, also embraced the Jewish faith. Abu-Kariba appointed him as viceroy of the Maaddites on the Red Sea, and also gave him the government of Mecca and Yathrib. With Harith a number of the Kendites went over to Judaism. The news of a Jewish king and a Jewish empire in the

most beautiful and fertile part of Arabia was spread abroad by the numerous foreigners who visited the country for the purpose of trade, and reached the Jews of the most distant lands. It was asserted that they had settled there before the destruction of the First Temple and the fall of the Israelite kingdom.

Abu-Kariba's reign did not last long after his adoption of Judaism. His warlike nature prevented him from maintaining peace, and prompted him to engage in bold enterprises. It is said that in one of these campaigns he was slain by his own soldiers, who were worn out with fatigue and weary marches. He left three sons, Hassan, Amru, and Zorah, all of whom were minors.

Zorah, the youngest (520–530), was nicknamed Dhu-Nowas (curly-locks) on account of his fine head of hair. He was a zealous disciple of Judaism, and for that reason gave himself the Hebrew name Yussuf. But his zeal for the religion of which his father had also been an enthusiastic advocate continually involved him in difficulties, and brought misfortune to him, his kingdom, and the Jews of Himyara. King Zorah Yussuf Dhu-Nowas had heard how his co-religionists in the Byzantine kingdom suffered from daily persecution. He felt deeply for them, and wished therefore by retaliation to force the Byzantine emperors to render justice to the Jews. When some Roman (Byzantine) merchants were traveling on business through Himyara, the king had them seized and put to death. This spread terror among the Christian merchants who traded with the country whence come the sweet perfumes and the wealth

of India. It also caused the Indian and Arabian trade to decline. In consequence of this, Dhu-Nowas involved his people in an exhausting war.

A neighboring king, Aidug, who still adhered to heathenism, reproached the Jewish king for his impolitic step in destroying the trade with Europe. The excuse Dhu-Nowas made was that many notable Jews in Byzantium were innocently put to death every year. This, however, made no impression upon Aidug. He declared war against Dhu-Nowas and defeated him in battle (521). As the outcome of his victory, Aidug is said to have embraced Christianity. Dhu-Nowas was not killed in this battle, as the Christian authorities relate, but made another effort, and through his impetuosity entangled himself in new difficulties. Najaran, in Yemen, was inhabited chiefly by Christians; it had, too, a Christian chief, Harith (Aretas) Ibn-Kaleb, who was a feudatory of the Jewish-Himyaritic kingdom. Harith probably did not perform his feudal duties in the war against Aidug, or he may have committed other acts of insubordination. One account relates that two young Jews were murdered in Najaran, and that the chief Harith was cognizant thereof. The Jewish king was therefore much displeased; at any rate, Dhu-Nowas had a pretext for chastising the ruler of Najaran as a rebel. He besieged the town, and reduced the inhabitants to such straits that they were forced to capitulate. Three hundred and forty chosen men, with Harith at their head, repaired to Dhu-Nowas's camp to sign the terms of peace (523). There, it is said, the king of Himyara,

although he had assured the men of immunity from punishment, determined either to force them to accept Judaism or to put them to death. As they refused to renounce their faith, it is reported that they were executed, and their bodies thrown into the river. The entire account is so completely legendary that it is impossible to discover any historical fact. This much is certain: Dhu-Nowas levied a heavy tribute on the Christians in the kingdom of Himyara as a reprisal for the persecution of his co-religionists in Christian countries.

The news of the events in Najaran spread like wildfire; the number of the victims was exaggerated, and the punishment of the rebels was stigmatized as a persecution of the Christians on the part of a Jewish king. An elegy was composed on the martyrs. Simeon, a Syrian bishop, who was traveling to northern Arabia, did his utmost to rouse up enemies against Dhu-Nowas. Simeon believed the exaggerated account which had been circulated. He sent an incisive letter to another bishop who lived near Arabia, imploring him to set the Christians against the Jewish king, and to incite the Nejus (king) of Ethiopia to war against him. He also proposed to imprison the teachers of Judaism in Tiberias, and to compel them to write to Dhu-Nowas to put a stop for their sake to the persecution of the Christians. The Emperor Justin the First, a weak and foolish old man, was also asked to make war on the Jewish king. But his people were engaged in a war against the Persians, and he therefore replied, "Himyara is too far from us, and I cannot allow my army to march through a sandy desert

for so great a distance. But I will write to the king of Ethiopia to send troops to Himyara."

Thus, many enemies conspired to ruin one who had attempted to assist his co-religionists in every way. Dhu-Nowas's most formidable enemy was Elesbaa (Atzbaha), the Nejus of Ethiopia, a monarch full of religious zeal. He beheld with jealousy the crown on the head of a Jew, and required no persuasion to fight, for the Jewish kingdom had long been a thorn in his side. Elesbaa equipped a powerful fleet, which the Byzantine Emperor, or rather young Justinian, his co-regent, re-inforced with ships from Egypt. A numerous army crossed the narrow strait of the Red Sea to Yemen. The Christian soldiers were united with this army. Dhu-Nowas, it is true, took measures to prevent the landing of the Ethiopian army by barring the landing-places with chains, and gathering an army on his side. The army of Himyara, however, was inferior in numbers to that of Ethiopia, but the king relied on his faithful and courageous cavalry. The first engagement terminated disastrously for Dhu-Nowas. The town of Zafara (Thafar) fell into the hands of the enemy, and with it the queen and the treasures. The Himyaran soldiers lost all courage. Yussuf Dhu-Nowas, who saw that there was no escape, and who was unwilling to fall into the hands of his arrogant foe, plunged, with his steed, from a rock into the sea, his body being carried far away (530). The victorious Ethiopians raged in Himyara with fire and sword, plundering, massacring, and taking the unarmed prisoners. They were so enraged at the Jews

in Himyara that they massacred thousands as an atoning sacrifice for the supposed Christian martyrs of Najaran. Such was the end of the Jewish kingdom of Himyara, which arose in a night and disappeared in a night.

About this time the Jews of Yathrib fell into strife with the neighboring tribes of Arabia. The Jews in Yathrib, on account of their intimate relation with the king of Himyara, whose authority extended over the province, ruled over the heathen, and a Jewish chief was governor. The Arabians of the Kailan race (Aus and Chazraj) hated the rule of the Jews, and seized the opportunity of rebelling when the Jews could not rely on assistance from Himyara. An Arabian chief of the Ghassanid race, Harith Ibn Abu Shammir, who was closely related to the Kailan race, was invited to lead his troops towards Yathrib. This brave and adventurous prince of Arabia, who was attached to the Byzantine court, accepted the invitation. In order not to arouse the suspicions of the Jews, Ibn Abu Shammir gave out that he intended going to Himyara. He encamped near Yathrib, and invited the Jewish chiefs to visit him. Many of them came, expecting to be welcomed with the prince's usual generosity, and to be loaded with presents. But as they entered the tent of the Ghassanid prince, they were one by one murdered. Thereupon Ibn Abu Shammir exclaimed to the Arabs of Yathrib: "I have freed you from a great part of your enemies; now it will be easy for you to master the rest, if you have strength and courage." He then departed. The Arabs, however, did not venture to engage

openly with the Jews, but had recourse to a stratagem. During a banquet, all the Jewish chiefs were killed, as well as Alghitjun or Sherif, the Jewish prince. Deprived of their leaders, the Jews of Yathrib were easily conquered by the Arabians, and they were obliged to give up their strongholds to them (530–535). It was a long time before they could get over the loss of their power and the sense of defeat. The insecurity of their lives taught them dissimulation, and they gradually placed themselves under the protection of one or another tribe, and so became dependents (Mawâli) of Aus and Chazraj. They hoped for the coming of the Messiah to crush their enemies.

Harith Ibn Abu Shammir, the Ghassanid prince, on his return from Yathrib, commenced a feud with a Jewish poet, who thereby became renowned throughout Arabia. Samuel Ibn-Adiya (born about 500 and died about 560), whose martial spirit was shown in the attacks of the Ghassanids, won immortality through his friendship with the most celebrated poet of Arabia in the time before Mahomet. His biography gives an insight into the life of the Jews of Arabia of that time. According to some, Samuel was descended from the heathen race of the Ghassanids; according to others, he was of Jewish origin, or to be more correct, he had an Arabian mother and a Jewish father. Adiya, his father, had lived in Yathrib until he built a castle in the neighborhood of Taima, which, from its many colors, was called Al-ablak, and has been immortalized in Arabic poetry. Samuel, the chief of a small tribe, was so respected in Hejas that the weaker tribes

placed themselves under his protection. Ablak was a refuge for the persecuted and exiled, and the owner of the castle defended those under his roof at the risk of his life.

Imrulkais Ibn Hojr, the adventurous son of the Kendite prince, and at the same time the most distinguished poet of Arabia, was hemmed in on all sides by secret and open enemies, and could find shelter nowhere except in Samuel's safe retreat. The Jewish poet, the lord of the castle, was proud to afford a refuge to Arabia's most celebrated writer, whose fame and adventures were known throughout the peninsula. Imrulkais took his daughter and what remained of his retinue to Ablak, and lived there for some time. As the Kendite prince had no prospect of obtaining the assistance of the Arabs to avenge the murder of his father, and to regain his paternal inheritance, he endeavored to win over Justinian, the Byzantine Emperor. Before starting on his journey, he charged Samuel with the care of his daughter, his cousin, and of five valuable coats of mail and other arms. Samuel promised to guard the persons and the goods entrusted to him as he would the apple of his eye. But these arms brought misfortune on him. When the Ghassanid prince was in Hejas he went to Ablak, Samuel's castle, and demanded the surrender of Imrulkais' arms. Samuel refused to surrender them according to his promise. Harith then laid siege to the castle. Finding it impregnable, however, the tyrant had recourse to a barbarous expedient to compel Samuel to submit. One of Samuel's sons was taken outside the citadel by his nurse, and Harith captured

him, and threatened to kill him unless Samuel acceded to his request. The unfortunate father hesitated for only a moment between duty to his guest and affection for his son; his sense of duty prevailed, and he said to the Ghassanid prince: "Do what you will; time always avenges treachery, and my son has brothers." Unmoved by such magnanimity, the despot slew the son before his father's eyes. Nevertheless, Harith had to withdraw from Ablak without accomplishing his object. The Arab proverb, "Faithful as Samuel," used to express undying faith, originated from this circumstance.

Many blamed him for the sacrifice of his son; but he defended himself in a poem, full of noble sentiments, courage and chivalrous ideas: —

Oh, ye censurers, cease to blame the man
Who so oft has defied your censure.
You should, when erring, have guided me aright,
Instead of leading me astray with empty words.
I have preserved the Kendite coats of mail;
Another may betray the trust confided him!
Thus did Adiya, my father, counsel me in by-gone days:
"O Samuel, destroy not what I have built up!"
For me he built a strong and safe place, where
I ne'er feared to give defiance to my oppressor.

Before his death (about 560) Samuel could look back with pride on his chivalrous life and on the protection he had afforded

the weak. His swan-song runs: —

Oh, would that I knew, the day my loss is lamented,
What testimony my mourners would afford me;
Whether they will say "Stay with us! For
In many a trouble you have comforted us;
The rights you had you ne'er resigned,
Yet needed no reminder to give theirs to others."

Shoraich, his son, followed in his father's footsteps. He was a brave and noble man. On one occasion Maimun Asha, the celebrated Arabic poet, whose ungovernable temper raised many enemies against him, was pursued by an adversary, and having been captured, he was, by chance and without being recognized, taken with other prisoners to Taima, the castle of Shoraich. Here, in order to obtain his release, he sang a poem in praise of Samuel: —

Be like Samuel, when the fierce warrior
Pressed heavily around him with his array;
"Choose between the loss of a child and faithlessness!"
Oh, evil choice which thou hadst to make!
But quickly and calmly did he reply:
"Kill thy captive, I fulfil my pledges."

Towards the end of the sixth century, the Jews of Yathrib had nearly recovered from the oppressive blows dealt them by their neighbors in Arabia. Their rulers, the Aus and Chazraj, had

exhausted themselves in bloody feuds which lasted twenty years, whilst their allies suffered less. In consequence of another war between the same tribes, the Jews again rose to importance in Yathrib.

Judaism not only won over to its side many tribes in Arabia, and taught the sons of the desert certain indispensable arts, but it also inspired the founder of a religion, who played an important part in the great drama of the world's history, and whose influence survives to this day. Mahomet, the prophet of Mecca and Yathrib, was, it is true, not a loyal son of Judaism, but he appreciated its highest aims, and was induced by it to give to the world a new faith, known as Islam, founded on a lofty basis. This religion has exercised a wonderful influence on the course of Jewish history and on the evolution of Judaism. In the peaceful meetings in Mecca, his birthplace, at the public markets, and on his travels, Abdallah's son heard much spoken of the religion which acknowledges the belief in one God, who rules the world. He heard much of Abraham, who devoted himself to the service of God, and of religion and morality, which gave the disciples of Judaism the advantage over infidels. Mahomet's mind, at once original and receptive, was powerfully impressed by all this. Waraka Ibn-Naufal, a celebrated Meccan, and a descendant of the noble Khoraisch race, was a cousin of Chadija, Mahomet's wife, and he had embraced Judaism and knew Hebrew well. He certainly imbued Mahomet with a love for the religion of Abraham.

Mahomet's first doctrines were strongly tinged with Jewish coloring. He first conceived them when suffering from epilepsy, and he communicated them to his friends, pretending that they were revealed to him by the angel Gabriel. First and foremost he proclaimed the simple but fundamental principle of Judaism. "There is no God but Allah"; later his pride led him to add as an integral part of the confession of faith, "and Mahomet is his prophet." Judaism may justly consider his teachings a victory of its own truths and a fulfilment of the prophecy that "one day every knee will bend to the only God, and every tongue will worship Him," for Mahomet taught the unity of God, that there are no gods beside Him (anti-trinity), and that He may not be represented by any image. He preached against the dissolute idolatry which was practised with 300 idols in the Kaaba; he declaimed against the immorality which was openly and shamelessly practised amongst the Arabs; he condemned the revolting practice of parents who from fear or in order to be rid of them drowned their new-born daughters, and he declared that there was nothing new in all these changes, but that they were commanded by the faith of the ancient religion of Abraham. A similar thing had happened at the time when Paul of Tarsus first made known to the Hellenes the history and principles of Judaism.

The best teachings in the Koran are borrowed from the Bible or the Talmud. In consequence of the difficulties which Mahomet for several years (612–633) had to encounter in Mecca

on account of these purified doctrines, there grew around the sound kernel a loathsome husk. Mahomet's connection with the Jews of Arabia assisted not a little in determining and modifying the teachings of Islam. Portions of the Koran are devoted to them, at times in a friendly, at times in a hostile spirit.

When Mahomet failed in obtaining a hearing in Mecca, the seat of idolatrous worship in Arabia, and even ran the risk of losing his life there, he addressed himself to some men from Yathrib, and urged them to accept his doctrines. These men were more familiar with Jewish doctrines than the Meccans; they found in Mahomet's revelations a close analogy to what they had often heard from their Jewish neighbors. They, therefore, showed themselves inclined to follow him, and caused him to be invited to Yathrib, where his teachings were likely to be favorably received on account of the numerous Jews residing there. As soon as he came there (622, the year of expatriation – Hejira), Mahomet took care to win over the Jews of Yathrib and to set forth his aims, as though he desired to bring about the universal recognition of Judaism in Arabia. When he saw the Jews fasting on the day of Atonement, he said, "It becomes us more than Jews to fast on this day," and he established a fast-day (Ashura). Mahomet entered into a formal alliance for mutual defense with the Jewish tribes, and instituted the custom of turning towards Jerusalem in prayer (Kiblah). In the disputes between the Jews and his disciples (Moslems), which were submitted to his judgment, he behaved leniently to the

Jews. For this reason Mahomet's disciples preferred to bring the matters in dispute before a Jewish chief, because they expected more impartiality from him than from Mahomet. Mahomet for a long time employed a Jewish scribe to do his correspondence, he himself being unable to write. These advances on the part of a man of so much promise were very flattering to the Jews of Medina. They looked upon him to some extent as a Jewish proselyte, and expected to see Judaism through him attain to power in Arabia. Some of them followed him devotedly and were his faithful allies (Ansar); amongst them was a learned youth, Abdallah Ibn-Salâm, of the race of Kainukaa. Abdallah and other Jews assisted Mahomet in propagating the Koran. The unbelieving Arabs frequently reproached him, saying that he was an ear (accepted anything as truth), that it was not the angel Gabriel who was teaching him, but a mortal man. Nevertheless, though Abdallah Ibn-Salâm and other Jewish Ansars supported him, they were far from abandoning Judaism on this account, and continued to observe the Jewish commandments, and Mahomet was at first not offended by this conduct.

But only a small number of the Jews of Medina joined the band of believers, particularly when they perceived his selfish efforts, his haughtiness, and his insatiable love of women. They bore in their hearts too high an ideal of their ancient prophets to place this enthusiast, who longed after every beautiful woman, on an equal footing with them. "See him," said the Jews, "he is not satisfied with food, and has no other desire than that of

being surrounded by women. If he is a prophet, he should confine himself to his duties as a prophet, and not turn to women." Other Jews said: "If Mahomet is a prophet, he should appear in Palestine, for only in that place God appears unto his elect." The Jews also objected to him, saying, "You pride yourself on being of Abraham's faith, but Abraham did not use the flesh and milk of camels." Mahomet's chief opponents on the Jewish side were Pinehas Ibn-Azura, a man of caustic wit, who seized every opportunity to make Mahomet appear ridiculous; furthermore, the far-famed Kaab Ibn-Asharaf, the offspring of an Arab father and a Jewish mother; a poet, Abu-Afak, an old man more than a hundred years old, who endeavored to arouse hate against Mahomet amongst the ignorant Arabs; and Abdallah, the son of Saura, who was looked upon as the most learned Jew in Hejas. Pinehas is the author of a witty answer to Mahomet's invitation to the Jewish tribe of Benu-Kainukaa to accept Islam. Mahomet, in his epistle, had used the words: "Lend yourselves unto God as a beautiful pledge." Pinehas answered, "God is so poor that He borrows from us!" Thus the Jewish opponents of Mahomet placed a ridiculous meaning on his sayings and revelations, and treated him contemptuously, not anticipating that the fugitive from Mecca, who had come to Medina for assistance, would shortly humble and in part destroy their tribes, and that he would control the destiny of many of their co-religionists in times to come. They relied too much on their own courage and strength, and forgot that the most dangerous enemy is he whom one

disregards too much. Mahomet, indeed, with sly dissimulation, at first accepted the contempt bestowed on him by the Jews with apparent equanimity. He advised his disciples, "Fight only in a becoming manner with the people who believe in the Holy Writ (Jews), and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and to you. Our God is the same as yours, and we are faithful to Him." But the mutual discontent made it difficult to maintain peace permanently. On the one side, the Jews did their best to alienate Mahomet's followers. They succeeded in prejudicing the first man in Medina, the Chazrajite Abdallah Ibn-Ubey, against Mahomet, so that he remained antagonistic to Mahomet to the end of his days. This man was about to be elected king of his town, but through the arrival of Mahomet he had been cast into the shade. On the other side, his followers urged him to declare to what extent he held to Judaism. They saw that his disciples amongst the Jews still continued to observe the Jewish laws, and to abstain from camel's flesh, and they said to him, "If the Torah be a divine book, then let us follow its teachings." Since Mahomet was thoroughly an Arab, he could not join Judaism, and he perceived that the Arabs would not conform to religious customs which were quite strange to them. So it only remained for him to break with the Jews definitely. He thereupon published a long Sura (called the Sura of the Cow), full of invectives against the Jews. He altered the position assumed in prayer, and decreed that the believers should no longer turn their faces towards Jerusalem, but towards Mecca and the Kaaba. He discarded

fasting on the day of Atonement (Ashura), and instituted instead the holy month Ramadhan, as had been customary among the Arabs from very ancient times. He was obliged to withdraw much of what he had in the beginning given out as God's revelation. Mahomet now asserted that the Torah had contained many allusions to his appearance and calling as a prophet, but that the Jews had expunged the passages. At first he declared that the Jews were possessed of the true faith; later on he said that they honored Ezra (Ozaïr) as the son of God, just as the Christians did Jesus, and that the Jews were consequently to be regarded as infidels. His hatred against the Jews, who refused to accept his prophecies, and saw through his designs, continually widened the breach between them and him.

Although he hated the Jews in his innermost heart, yet he did not venture to provoke them by acts of violence, because his authority was not sufficiently great, and the Jews outnumbered his followers. But after the battle at Bedr (in the winter of 624), when the small body of Mahometans gained a victory over the numerous Koraishites, the situation changed. Mahomet, whose power was greatly increased through this victory, exchanged the attitude of a humble prophet for that of a fanatical tyrant, to whom any measure, even assassination, was a justifiable means of freeing himself from his enemies. However, he was prudent enough to avoid becoming involved in disputes with the powerful Jewish tribes; he began with the weak and defenseless. A poetess, Asma, daughter of Merwan, who was of Jewish descent, and

married to an Arab, was murdered at night whilst asleep (because she had composed satires against the false prophet), and he commended the murderer. Thereupon the Jewish tribe Kainukaa experienced his religious wrath. It was the weakest of the Jewish-Arabian tribes, and to it belonged that Pinehas Ibn-Azura, whose sarcastic wit had made Mahomet appear in a ridiculous light. The pretext was of the slightest kind. A Mahometan had killed a Jew on account of a poor practical joke, and the Kainukaa avenged his death. Mahomet thereupon challenged them to profess Islam, or to accept war as the alternative. They replied: "We are, it is true, for peace, and would gladly maintain our alliance with you; but since you desire to make war upon us, we will show that we have no fear." They reckoned upon the assistance of the tribes of Nadhir and Kuraiza, who were their co-religionists, and withdrew to their fortresses at Medina. Mahomet collected his troops, and besieged the Kainukaa. Had the numerous Jews of northern Arabia, Nadhir, Kuraiza, and those of Chaibar, who, like the Kainukaa, were threatened, come to their assistance, and had they, before it was too late, made an offensive and defensive alliance, they would have been able to crush Mahomet and his straggling followers, on whose fidelity, moreover, he could not entirely rely. But the Jews, like the Arabs, were divided, and each tribe had only its own interests in view. The Kainukaa fought desperately for fifteen days, expecting re-inforcements from their co-religionists. But as these did not come, they surrendered to the enemy. Mahomet had all the Jews of Kainukaa put in

chains with the intention of killing them; but a word from Abdallah Ibn-Ubey, their ally, made him draw back with alarm from his purpose. Abdallah laid hold of his shirt of mail, and said: "I will not let you go until you promise me to spare the captives; for they constitute my strength; they have defended me against the black people and the red people." To which Mahomet replied: "Let them be free; may God condemn them, and Abdallah with them!" The Jews of Kainukaa, 700 in number, were obliged to leave their possessions behind, and they set out for Palestine in a most destitute condition (February, 624). They settled in Batanea, whose chief town was Adraat, where they were probably received in a fraternal manner by their co-religionists, who, at this time, were free from the Byzantine yoke.

After the victory over the Kainukaa, Mahomet communicated to the Moslems a revelation against the Jews, which deprived them of every protection: "O ye believers, choose ye not Jews and Christians as allies; they may protect themselves. He who befriends them is one of them; God tolerates no sinful people." This exclusion was less harmful to the Christians, as they were not numerously represented in northern Arabia, and generally kept themselves neutral. The Jews, on the contrary, who were accustomed to independence, and who were full of warlike courage, became involved in numerous disputes by this act of outlawry. Their former allies for the most part renounced them, and at Mahomet's bidding, took spiteful vengeance on them.

With this mutual, deadly hatred existing between Mahomet

and the Jews, it is said that the Benu-Nadhir invited him one day to their castle of Zuhara with the intention of hurling him from the terraces and thus ending his life. At that time their chief was Hujej Ibn-Achtab. Mahomet accepted the invitation, but watched the movements of the Jews. Suspecting that they desired his death, he stole away and hastened to Medina. The Jews of Nadhir paid dearly, it is said, for this treacherous project. Mahomet gave them the choice of quitting their homes within ten days, or of preparing for death. The Nadhir were resolved at first to avoid war and to emigrate, but encouraged by Abdallah, who promised them assistance, they accepted the challenge which had been thrown down. They, however, waited in vain for the assistance promised to them. Mahomet commenced operations against them, and uprooted and burnt the date-trees which supplied them with food. His own people rebelled at this proceeding, for to these unscrupulous warriors a palm was holier than a man's life. After several days of siege, the Nadhir were obliged to capitulate, and the terms were that they should depart without arms, and that they should take only a certain portion of their possessions – as much as a camel could carry.

They thereupon emigrated to the number of six hundred, some of them going to their countrymen in Chaibar, and some settling in Jericho and Adraat (June-July, 625). The war against the Nadhirites was, later on, justified by Mahomet through a revelation of the Koran, which read: "All in the heavens and earth praise God; He is the most honored, the most wise. He it is who

drove out the unbelievers amongst the people of the Book from their dwelling places (Kainukaa), to send them to those who had already emigrated. You thought not that they would go forth, they themselves thought that their strong places would protect them from God himself, but God attacked them unexpectedly, and threw terror into their hearts, so that their houses were destroyed with their own hands, as well as laid waste by believers." The exiled Benu-Nadhir, who had remained in Arabia, did not accept their misfortune quietly, but exerted themselves to form a coalition with the enemies of Mahomet in order to attack him with combined forces. Three respected Nadhirites, Hujej, Kinanah Ibn-ol-Rabia, and Sallam Ibn Mishkam, incited the Koraishites in Mecca, in alliance with the mighty tribe of the Ghatafan and others, to make war against the haughty tyrannical prophet, who was daily becoming more powerful and more cruel. The enemies of Mahomet in Mecca, though filled with rage against him, were first incited by the Jews to join battle with him.

Through the activity of the Nadhirites the Arabian tribes were induced to join in the war. They found it more difficult, however, to induce their co-religionists, the Benu-Kuraiza, to take part. Kaab-Ibn-Assad, the governor of Kuraiza, at first would not receive the Nadhirite Hujej, who had desired his protection, because his tribe had made an alliance with Mahomet and the Moslems, and he was so guileless as to rely on Mahomet's word. Hujej managed to convince him of the danger which threatened the Jews, and to persuade him that the victory of so

many allies over the less numerous Moslems was certain. The Benu-Kuraiza yielded to his arguments. Ten thousand of the allied troops took the field, and intended to surprise Medina. Mahomet, forewarned by a deserter, would not allow his army, which was inferior in numbers, to fight a pitched battle. He fortified Medina by surrounding it with a deep ditch and other defenses. The Arabs, accustomed to fight in single combat, vainly discharged their arrows against the fortifications. Mahomet succeeded finally in sowing the seeds of mutual distrust among the chief allies, viz., the Koraishites, the Ghatafan and the Jews.

The "War of the Fosse" terminated favorably for Mahomet, and very unhappily for the Jews, upon whom the whole of his wrath now fell. On the day after the departure of the allies, Mahomet, with 3000 men, took the field against Kuraiza, announcing that he was thus obeying an express revelation. His next step was to arouse the enthusiasm of his followers in the cause of the war. "Let him that is obedient offer up his prayers in the neighborhood of Kuraiza," was the formula with which he exhorted them. The Jews, unable to resist in a battle, retired to their fortresses, which they put into a state of defense. Here they were besieged by Mahomet and his troops for twenty-five days (February-March, 627). Food then began to fail the besieged, and it became necessary to think of capitulation. They besought Mahomet to treat them as he had treated their brethren, the Nadhirites, viz., allow them to withdraw with their wives, their children, and a portion of their property. The vindictive prophet,

however, refused their request, and demanded unconditional surrender.

Nearly 700 Jews, amongst them the chiefs Kaab and Hujej, were ruthlessly slaughtered in the market-place, and their bodies thrown into a common grave. The market-place was thenceforth called the Kuraiza Place. And all this was done in the name of God! The Koran makes reference to it in the following verse: "God drove out of their fortresses those of the people of the Book [the Jews] who assisted the allies, and he cast into their hearts terror and dismay. Some of them you put to flight, some you took captive; he has caused you to inherit their land, their houses, and their wealth, and a land which you have not trodden; for God is almighty." The women were bartered for weapons and horses. Mahomet wished to retain one of the captives, a beautiful girl, Rihana by name, as his concubine; she, however, proudly rejected his advances. Only one of the Kuraiza remained alive, a certain Zabir Ibn-Bata, and he only by the intercession of Thabit, one of his friends. Full of joy, the latter hastened to the aged Zabir, to tell him of his fortune. "I thank thee," said the Jewish sage, who lay in fetters; "but tell me what has become of our leader Kaab?" "He is dead," answered Thabit. "And Hujej Ibn-Achtab, the prince of the Jews?" "He is dead," he again replied. "And Azzel Ibn-Samuel, the fearless warrior?" "He, too, is dead," was his answer again. "Then I do not care to live," said Zabir. The old man begged that he might die by the hands of his friend. His wish was granted.

A year later came the turn of the Jews in the district of Chaibar, a confederacy of small Jewish states. This war, however, was protracted into a long campaign, because the province had a number of fortresses which were in a good state of repair, and were well defended. The exiled Nadhirites in Chaibar roused their comrades to vigorous resistance. The Arab races of Ghatafan and Fezara had promised assistance. The leading spirit of the Chaibarites was the exiled Nadhirite, Kinanah Ibn Rabia, a man who possessed indomitable firmness and courage. He was called the King of the Jews, and was abetted by Marhab, a giant of Himyarite extraction. Mahomet, before the beginning of the war, turned in prayer to God, beseeching him to grant a victory over the Jews of Chaibar. The war, in which Mahomet employed 14,000 warriors, lasted almost two months (Spring 628).

The war against Chaibar assumed the same character as that which was waged against the other Jewish tribes. It was begun by the cutting down of the palm trees, and the siege of the small fortresses, which surrendered after a short resistance. Mahomet met the most vigorous resistance at the fortress Kamus, which was built on a steep rock. The Mahometans were several times beaten back by the Jews. Abu-Bekr and Omar, Mahomet's two bravest generals, lost their distinction as unconquered heroes before the walls of Kamus. Marhab performed wonderful feats of valor, to avenge the death of his brother, who had fallen earlier in the war.

When Mahomet sent his third general, Ali, against him, the

Jewish hero addressed him thus: "Chaibar knows my valor, I am Marhab the hero, well armed and tried in the field." He then challenged Ali to single combat. But his time had come. He fell at the hands of his peer. After many attempts, the enemy succeeded in effecting an entrance into the fortress. How the captives fared is not known. Kinanah was captured and put on the rack in order to force him to discover his hidden treasures. But he bore pain and even death without uttering a word. After the fortress had fallen, the Jews lost courage, and the other fortresses surrendered on condition that the garrisons should be allowed to withdraw. They were subsequently allowed to take possession of their lands, and only had to pay as an annual tribute one half of their produce. The Mahometan conquerors took possession of all the movable property, and returned home laden with the spoils of the Jews. Fadak, Wadil-Kora and Taima also submitted. Their inhabitants, according to agreement, were allowed to remain in their land. The year 628 everywhere was distinguished by fatalities for the Jews. It marks the victory of Mahomet over the Jews of Chaibar, the decay of the last independent Jewish tribes, and the persecution of the Jews of Palestine by the Emperor Heraclius, who had, for a short time, again taken up arms. The sword which the Hasmoneans had wielded in defense of their religion, and which was in turn used by the Zealots and the Arabian Jews, was wrung from the hands of the last Jewish heroes of Chaibar, and henceforth the Jews had to make use of another weapon for the protection of their sanctuary.

Mahomet had brought two pretty Jewish women with him from the war at Chaibar: Safia, the daughter of his inveterate enemy, the Nadhirite Hujej, and Zainab, the sister of Marhab. This courageous woman bethought herself of an artifice, whereby she might avenge the murder of her co-religionists and relatives. She pretended to be friendly towards him, and prepared a repast for him. Mahomet unsuspectingly ate of a poisoned dish which she had set before him and his companions. One of them died from the effects. But Mahomet, who, not having found the dish to his taste, had scarcely tasted it, was saved alive, but suffered for a long time, and felt the effects of the poison to the hour of his death. Questioned as to the reason of her action, Zainab coolly replied, "You have persecuted my people with untold afflictions; I therefore thought that if you were simply a warrior, I could procure rest for them through poison, but if you were really a prophet, God would warn you in time, and you would come to no harm."

Mahomet thereupon ordered her to be put to death, and commanded his troops to use none of the cooking utensils of the Jews before they had been scalded. The rest of the Jews did not even now give up the hope of freeing themselves of their arch-enemy. They intrigued against him, and made common cause with some ill-disposed Arabs. The house of a Jew, Suwailim, in Medina was the appointed meeting-place for the malcontents, whom Mahomet and his fanatic followers named "the hypocrites" (Munafikun). A traitor betrayed them, and

Suwallim's house was burnt to the ground. The Jews in Arabia felt real joy at Mahomet's death (632), because they, like others, believed that the Arabs would be cured of their false belief that he was a higher being endowed with immortality. But fanaticism, together with the love of war and conquest, had already taken possession of the Arabians, and they accepted the Koran as a whole, alike its revolting features and the truths borrowed from Judaism, as the irrefragable Word of God. Judaism had reared in Islam a second unnatural child. The Koran became the book of faith of a great part of humanity in three parts of the world, and, being full of hostile expressions against the Jews, it naturally urged on the Mahometans to acts of hostility against the Jews. This is paralleled by the effect which the Apostles and the Evangelists produced upon the Christians. So great was the fanaticism of the second Caliph, Omar, a man of a wild and energetic nature, that he broke the treaty made by Mahomet with the Jews of Chaibar and Wadil-Kora. He drove them from their lands, as he did also the Christians of Najaran, in order that the holy ground of Arabia might not be desecrated by Jews and Christians.

Omar assigned the landed property of the Jews to the Mahometan warriors, and a strip of land near the town of Kufa, on the Euphrates, was given them in return (about 640). But as no evil in history is quite devoid of good consequences, the dominion of Islam furthered the elevation of Judaism from its deepest degradation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AGE OF THE GEONIM

The Conquests of Islam – Omar's Intolerance – Condition of the Jews in Babylonia – Bostanaï – The Princes of the Captivity and the Geonim – Dignity and Revenues of the Prince – Communal Organization – Excommunication – Julian of Toledo and the Jews – The Moslems in Spain – The Jews and Arabic Literature – The Assyrian Vowel-system – The Neo-Hebraic Poetry: José ben José – Simon ben Caïpha – Employment of Rhyme – Jannaï – Eleazar Kaliri – Opposition to the Study of the Talmud – The False Messiah Serenus, the Syrian – The Jews in the Crimea and the Land of the Chazars – The False Messiah Obadia Abu-Isa.

640–76 °C. E

Scarcely ten years after Mahomet's death the fairest lands in the north of Arabia and the northwest of Africa acknowledged the supremacy of the Arabs who, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, swept across the borders of Arabia with the cry: "There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet." Although there was no distinguished man at the head of

the Arab troops, they conquered the world with far greater speed than the hosts of Alexander of Macedon. The kingdom of Persia, weakened by old age and dissension, succumbed to the first blow, and the Byzantine provinces, Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, whose inhabitants had but little sympathy with the intriguing court of Constantinople, did not offer the slightest resistance to the Arabs.

Medina, an oasis in the great desert, a spot unknown to the different nations, became the lawgiver for millions, just as Rome had been in olden times. The various peoples that had been conquered, had no choice but to recognize Mahomet as a prophet and be converted to Islam, or to pay tribute. The Emperor Heraclius had taken Palestine from the Persians only ten years before it was again lost. Jews and Samaritans both helped the Arabs to capture the land, in order that they might be freed from the heavy yoke of the malignant Byzantine rule. A Jew put into the hands of the Mussulmans the strongly-fortified town of Cæsarea, the political capital of the kingdom, which is said to have contained 700,000 fighting men, amongst whom were 20,000 Jews. He showed them a subterranean passage, which led the besiegers into the heart of the town. The Holy City, too, after a short siege, had to yield to the Mahometan arms. The second successor of Mahomet, the Caliph Omar, took personal possession of Jerusalem (about 638), and laid the foundation-stone of a mosque on the site of the Temple. Bishop Sophronius, who had handed over the keys of Jerusalem to Omar, untaught by the change of fate which he had himself experienced, is said

to have made arrangements with the Caliph, in capitulating, that the Jews be forbidden to settle in the Holy City. It is true that Jerusalem was looked upon by the Mussulmans as a holy place, and pilgrimages were made thither by them. It was also called the Holy City (Alkuds) by them, but it was to remain inaccessible to its sons. Omar is said to have driven out both Jews and Christians from Tiberias. Thus ceased the literary activity of the school of that place. They, however, received permission to settle there again under the succeeding Caliphs.

Rising Islam was as intolerant as Christianity. When Omar had driven the Jews out of Chaibar and the Christians out of Najaran, he gave instructions to his generals against the Jews and Christians. These orders were called "the covenant of Omar," and contained many restrictions against the "peoples of the Book" (Jews and Christians). They were not allowed to build new houses of worship, nor to restore those that were in ruins. They had to sing in subdued tones in the synagogues and churches, and were compelled to pray silently for the dead.

They dared not hinder their followers from accepting Islam, and were compelled to show marks of respect to Mussulmans whenever they met them. Further, they were not allowed to fill judicial or administrative offices. They were forbidden to ride on horses, and had to wear marks whereby they could easily be distinguished from the Moslems. Jews and Christians were not allowed to make use of a signet-ring, which was considered a mark of honor. Whilst the Mahometans were exempt from taxes,

and at most only had to pay a slight contribution for the poor, Jews and Christians had to pay a poll-tax and ground-rent.

In spite of this fact, the Jews felt themselves freer under the new rule of Islam than they did in the Christian lands. The restrictive laws of Omar were not carried out even during Omar's lifetime, and though the fanatic Mussulmans scorned the Jews for their religion, they did not despise them as citizens, but showed great honor to worthy Jews. The first Mahometans treated the Jews as their equals; they respected them as friends and allies, and took an interest in them even as enemies. The Asiatic and Egyptian Jews consequently treated the Mahometans as their liberators from the yoke of the Christians. A mystical apocalypse makes a distinct reference to the joy experienced at the victory of Islam. Simeon bar Yochaï, who was looked upon as a mystic, foretells the rise of Islam, and bewails the same in the prayer which runs as follows: "Have we not suffered enough through the dominion of the wicked Edom (the Roman-Christian dominion), that the dominion of Ishmael should now rise over us?" Metatoron, one of the chief angels, answers him: "Fear not, son of man! God sets up the kingdom of Ishmael only in order that it may free you from the dominion of the wicked Edom. He raises up a prophet for them, he will conquer countries for them, and there will be great hatred between them and the sons of Esau" (the Christians). Such were the sentiments of the Jews with regard to the conquests of the Mahometans.

The Jews in the ancient Babylonian district (called Irak by

the Arabs) attained a great measure of freedom through the victories of the Mahometans. During their campaigns against the last Persian kings, the Jews and the Nestorian Christians, who had been persecuted under the last Sassanian princes, had rendered them much assistance. The Jews and the Chaldean Christians formed the bulk of the population near the Euphrates and the Tigris. Their assistance must have been opportune, as we find even the fanatical Caliph Omar bestowing rewards and privileges upon them. It was, doubtless, in consequence of the services which they had rendered that the Mahometan generals recognized Bostanaï, the descendant of the Exilarch of the house of David, as the chief of the Jews. Omar respected Bostanaï so highly that he gave him a daughter of the Persian king Chosru in marriage. She had been taken prisoner, together with her sisters (642) – a singular turn of fate! The grandson of a race that boasted descent from the house of David married a princess whose ancestors traced their descent from Darius, the founder of the Persian dynasty. Bostanaï was the first Exilarch who was the vassal of the Mahometans.

The Exilarch exercised both civil and judicial functions, and all the Jews of Babylonia formed a separate community under him. Bostanaï also obtained the exceptional permission to wear a signet-ring (Gushpanka). By this means he was able to give his documents and decrees an official character. The seal, in reference to some unknown historical allusion, bore the impress of a fly. Bostanaï must have been an important personage

in other respects, since legends cluster about him, and would make his birth itself appear a miraculous event. The Judæo-Babylonian community, which had acquired some importance through Bostanai, obtained its real strength under Ali, the fourth Caliph, Mahomet's comrade and son-in-law, the hero of Chaibar.

Omar had died at the hands of an assassin (644), and his successor, Othman, had been killed in an insurrection (655). Ali was nominated Caliph by the conspirators, but he had to struggle against many bitter opponents. Islam was divided into two camps. The one declared for Ali, who resided in the newly-built town of Kufa; the other for Moawiyah, a relative of the murdered Caliph Othman.

The Babylonian Jews and Nestorian Christians sided with Ali, and rendered him assistance. A Jew, Abdallah Ibn-Sabâ, was a spirited partisan of Ali. He asserted that the succession to the Caliphate was his by right, and that the divine spirit of Mahomet had passed to him, as it had from Moses to Joshua. It is said that when Ali took the town of Firuz-Shabur or Anbar, 90,000 Jews, under Mar-Isaac, the head of a college, assembled to do homage to the Caliph, who was but indifferently supported by his own followers (658). The unhappy Ali valued this homage, and, doubtless, accorded privileges to the Jewish principal. It is quite probable that from this time the head of the school of Sora was invested with a certain dignity, and took the title of Gaon. There were certain privileges connected with the Gaonate, upon which even the Exilarch did not venture to encroach. Thus a peculiar

relation, leading to subsequent quarrels, grew up between the rival offices – the Exilarchate and the Gaonate. With Bostanaï and Mar-Isaac, the Jewish officials recognized by the Caliph, there begins a new period in Jewish history – the Epoch of the Geonim. After Bostanaï's death dissension arose among his sons. Bostanaï had left several sons by various wives, one of them the daughter of the Persian king. Perhaps her son was his father's favorite, because royal blood flowed in his veins, and he was probably destined to be his successor. His brothers by the Jewish wives were consequently jealous of him, and treated him as a slave, *i. e.*, as one that had been born of a captive non-Jewess, who, according to Talmudic law, was looked upon as a slave, so long as he could not furnish proof that either his mother or himself had been formally emancipated. This, however, he could not do. The brothers then determined to sell the favorite, their own brother, as a slave. Revolting as this proceeding was, it was approved by several members of the college of Pumbeditha, partly from religious scruples, partly from the desire to render a friendly service to Bostanaï's legitimate sons. Other authorities, however, maintained that Bostanaï, who was a pious man, would not have married the king's daughter before he had legally freed her, and made her a proselyte. In order to protect her son from humiliation, one of the chief judges, Chaninaï, hastened to execute a document attesting her emancipation, and thus the wicked design of the brothers was frustrated; but the stain of illegitimacy still attached to the son, and his descendants were

never admitted to the rank of the descendants of the Exilarch Bostanaï.

Bostanaï's descendants in the Exilarchate arbitrarily deposed the presidents of the colleges, and appointed their own partisans to the vacant places. The religious leaders of the people thus bore Bostanaï's descendants a grudge. Even in later times, an authority amongst the Jews had to defend himself with the words: "I am a member of the house of the Exilarch, but not a descendant of the sons of Bostanaï, who were proud and oppressive." The vehement quarrels about the Caliphate, between the house of Ali and the Ommiyyades, were repeated on a small scale in Jewish Babylonia. The half-century from Bostanaï and the rise of the Gaonate till the Exilarchate of Chasdaï (670 to 730) is in consequence involved in obscurity. Few also of the Geonim who held office and of the presidents of the colleges during this period are known, and their chronological order cannot be ascertained. After Mar-Isaac, probably the first Gaon of Sora, Hunai held office, contemporaneously with Mar-Raba in Pumbeditha (670 to 680). These presidents issued an important decree with respect to the law of divorce, whereby a Talmudical law was set aside. According to the Talmud, the wife can seek a divorce only in very rare cases, *e. g.*, if the husband suffers from an incurable disease. Even if the wife were seized with an unconquerable aversion to her husband, she could be compelled by law to live with him, and to fulfil her duties, on penalty of losing her marriage settlement, and even her dowry, in case she insisted upon the

separation. Through the domination of Islam circumstances were now changed. The Koran had somewhat raised the position of women, and empowered the wife to sue for a divorce. This led many unhappy wives to appeal to the Mahometan courts, and they compelled their husbands to give them a divorce without the aforesaid penalties. It was in consequence of the events just related that Hunai and Mar-Raba introduced a complete reform of the divorce laws. They entirely abrogated the Talmudical law, and empowered the wife to sue for a divorce without suffering any loss of her property-rights. Thus the law established equality between husband and wife. For the space of forty years (680 to 720), only the names of the Geonim and Exilarchs are known to us; historical details, however, are entirely wanting. During this time, as a result of quarrels and concessions, there arose peculiar relations of the officials of the Jewish-Persian kingdom towards one another, which developed into a kind of constitution.

The Jewish community in Babylonia (Persia), which had the appearance of a state, had a peculiar constitution. The Exilarch and the Gaon were of equal rank. The Exilarch's office was political. He represented Babylonian-Persian Judaism under the Caliphs. He collected the taxes from the various communities, and paid them into the treasury. The Exilarchs, both in bearing and mode of life, were princes. They drove about in a state carriage; they had outriders and a kind of body-guard, and received princely homage.

The religious unity of Judaism, on the other hand, was

embodied in the Gaonate of Sora and Pumbeditha. The Geonim expounded the Talmud, with a view to a practical application of its provisions; they made new laws and regulations; administered them, and meted out punishment to those that transgressed them. The Exilarch shared the judicial power with the Gaon of Sora and the head of the college of Pumbeditha.

The Exilarch had the right of nomination to offices, though not without the acquiescence of the college. The head of the college of Sora, however, was alone privileged to be styled "Gaon"; the head of the college of Pumbeditha did not bear the title officially. The Gaon of Sora together with his college, as a rule, was paid greater deference than his colleague of Pumbeditha, partly out of respect to the memory of its great founders, Rab and Ashi, partly on account of its proximity to Kufa, the capital of Irak and of the kingdom of Islam in the East. On festive occasions, the head of the college of Sora sat at the right side of the Exilarch. He obtained two-thirds of certain revenues for his school, and performed the duties of the Exilarch when the office was vacant. For a long time, too, only a member of the school of Sora was elected president of the school of Pumbeditha, this school not being permitted to elect one from its own ranks.

Now that the Exilarch everywhere met with the respect due a prince, he was installed with a degree of ceremony and pomp. Although the office was hereditary in the house of Bostanaï, the acquiescence of both colleges was required for the nomination

of a new Exilarch, and thus there came to be a fixed installation service. The officials of both the colleges, together with their fellow-collegians, and the most respected men in the land, betook themselves to the residence of the designated Exilarch. In a large open place, which was lavishly adorned, seats were erected for him and the presidents of the two schools. The Gaon of Sora delivered an address to the future Exilarch, in which he was reminded of the duties of his high office, and was warned against haughty conduct toward his brethren. The installation always took place in the synagogue, and on a Thursday. Both officials put their hands upon the head of the nominee, and declared amidst the clang of trumpets, "Long live our lord, the Prince of the Exile."

The people, who were always present in great numbers on the occasion, vociferously repeated the wish. All present then accompanied the new Exilarch home from the synagogue, and presents flowed in from all sides. On the following Saturday evening there was a special festive service for the new prince. There was a platform in the shape of a tower erected for him in the synagogue. This was decked with costly ornaments that he might appear like the kings of the house of David in the Temple, on a raised seat, apart from the people. He was conducted to divine service by a numerous and honorable suite. The reader chanted the prayers with the assistance of a well-appointed choir.

When the Exilarch was seated on his high seat, the Gaon of Sora approached the Exilarch, bent the knee before him, and

sat at his right hand. His colleague of Pumbeditha having made a similar obeisance, took his seat on the left. When the Law was read, they brought the scroll to the Exilarch, which was looked upon as a royal prerogative. He was also the first one called to the reading of the Law, which on ordinary occasions was the prerogative of the descendants of the house of Aaron. In order to honor him, the president of the college of Sora acted as interpreter (Meturgeman), expounding the passage that had been read.

After the Law was read, it was customary for the Prince of the Exile to deliver an address. But if the Exilarch was not learned, he delegated this duty to the Gaon of Sora. In the final prayer for the glorification of God's name (Kadish, Gloria), the name of the Exilarch was mentioned: "May this happen in the lifetime of the Prince." Thereupon followed a special blessing for him, the heads of the colleges and its members (Yekum Purkan), and the names of the countries, places and persons, far and near, that had advanced the welfare of the colleges by their contributions. A festive procession from the synagogue to the house or palace of the Exilarch, and a sumptuous repast for the officials and prominent personages, which often included state officers, formed the conclusion of this peculiar act of homage to the Exilarch.

Once a year, in the third week after the Feast of Tabernacles, a kind of court was held at the house of the Exilarch. The heads of the college, together with their colleagues, the presidents of

the community, and many people besides, came to see him at Sora, probably with presents. On the following Sabbath the same ceremonial took place as at the nomination. Lectures were delivered during this court week, which was afterwards known as "the Great Assembly," or the "Feast of the Exilarch."

The Exilarch derived his income partly from certain districts and towns, and partly from irregular receipts. The districts Naharowan (east of the Tigris), Farsistan, Holwan – as far as the jurisdiction of the Exilarch extended – even during the period of decadence, brought him an income of 700 golden denarii (\$1700). We can easily imagine how great his revenue must have been in palmy days. The Exilarch also had the right of imposing a compulsory tax upon the communities under his jurisdiction, and the officials of the Caliph supported him in this because they themselves had an interest in it.

The president of the college of Sora was the second in rank in the Judæo-Babylonian community. He was the only one who held the title of Gaon officially, and he had the precedence over his colleague of Pumbeditha on all occasions, even though the former were a young man and the latter an aged one. Meanwhile, the school of Pumbeditha enjoyed perfect equality and independence with respect to its internal affairs, except when one or another Exilarch, according to Oriental custom, made illegal encroachments upon it.

Next to the president came the chief judge, who discharged the judicial duties, and was, as a rule, his successor in office.

Below these were seven presidents of the Assembly of Teachers, and three others who bore the title of Associate or scholar, and who together seem to have composed the Senate in a restricted sense. Then came a college of a hundred members, which was divided into two unequal bodies, one of seventy members representing the "great Synhedrion," the other of thirty forming the "smaller Synhedrion." The seventy were ordained, and consequently qualified for promotion; they bore the title of Teacher. The thirty or "smaller Synhedrion" do not seem to have been entitled to a seat and vote, they were simply candidates for the higher dignity. The members of the college generally bequeathed their offices to their sons, but the office of president was not hereditary.

This peculiarly organized council of the two colleges by degrees lost its strictly collegiate character, and acquired that of a deliberative and legislative Parliament. Twice a year, in March and September (Adar and Elul), in accordance with ancient usage, the college held a general meeting, and sat for a whole month. During this period the members occupied themselves also with theoretical questions, discussing and explaining some portion of the Talmud, which had been given out beforehand as the theme. But the attention of the meeting was principally directed to practical matters. New laws and regulations were considered and decreed, and points which had formed the subject of inquiry by foreign communities, during the preceding months, were discussed and answered. Little by little the replies to the

numerous inquiries addressed to them by foreign communities on points of religion, morals, and civil law, came to occupy the greater part of the session. At the end of the session all opinions expressed by the meeting on the points submitted for their consideration were read over, signed by the president, in the name of the whole council, confirmed with the seal of the college (Chumrata), and forwarded by messenger to each community with a ceremonious form of greeting from the college. It was customary for the various congregations to accompany their inquiries with valuable presents in money. If these presents were sent specially to one of the two colleges, the other received no share; but if they were remitted without any precise directions, the Soranian school, being the more important, received two-thirds, and the remainder went to the sister-college. These presents were divided by the president among the members of the college and the students of the Talmud.

Over and above such irregular receipts, the two colleges derived a regular income from the districts which were under their jurisdiction. To Sora belonged the south of Irak, with the two important cities Wasit and Bassora, and its jurisdiction extended as far as Ophir (India or Yemen?). In later times the revenues of these countries still amounted to 1500 gold denars (about \$3700). The northern communities belonged to Pumbeditha, whose jurisdiction extended as far as Khorasan.

The appointment of the judges of a district was, in all probability, the duty of the principal of the college, in

conjunction with the chief judge and the seven members of the Senate-council. Each of these three heads of the Babylonian-Jewish commonwealth accordingly possessed the power of appointing the judges of his province, and the communities were thus either under the Prince of the Captivity or the Soranian Gaonate, or were dependent on the college of Pumbeditha. When a judge was appointed over a certain community he received a commission from the authorities over him. He bore the title of Dayan, and had to decide not only in civil but also in religious cases, and was therefore at the same time a rabbi. He chose from amongst the members of the community two associates (Zekenim), together with whom he formed a judicial and rabbinical tribunal. All valid deeds, marriage contracts, letters of divorce, bills of exchange, bills of sale, and deeds of gift, were also confirmed by this rabbi-judge. He was, at the same time, the notary of the community. For these various functions he received – first, a certain contribution from every independent member of the community; secondly, fees for drawing up deeds; and, thirdly, a weekly salary from the vendors of meat. The children's schools, which were in connection with the synagogue, were probably also under the supervision of this rabbi-judge.

The communal constitution in Jewish Babylonia has served as a model for the whole Jewish people, partly until the present time. At the head of the community stood a commission entrusted with the public interests, and composed of seven members, who were called Parnesé-ha-Keneset (Maintainers of

the Community). A delegate of a Prince of the Captivity, or of one of the principals of the colleges, was charged with the supervision of public business, and also possessed the power of punishing refractory members. The punishments inflicted were flogging and excommunication. The latter, the invisible weapon of the Middle Ages, which changed its victims to living corpses, was, however, neither so often nor so arbitrarily exercised by the Jews as by the Christians; but even among them it fell with terrible force. Those who refused to comply with religious or official regulations, were punished with the lesser excommunication. It was mild in form, and did not entail the total isolation of the person excommunicated, and affected the members of his own family still less. But whosoever failed to repent within the given respite of thirty days, and to make application to have the excommunication annulled, incurred the punishment of the greater ban. This punishment scared away a man's most intimate friends, isolated him in the midst of society, and caused him to be treated as an outcast from Judaism. No one was allowed to hold social intercourse with him, under penalty of incurring similar punishments. His children were expelled from school, and his wife from the synagogue. All were forbidden to bury his dead, or even to receive his new-born son into the covenant of Abraham. Every distinctive mark of Judaism was denied him, and he was left branded as one accursed of God. The proclamation of the ban was posted up outside the court of justice, and communicated to the congregation. Although

this punishment of excommunication and its consequences were extremely horrible, it was nevertheless, at a time when the multitude was not open to rational conviction, the only means of preserving religious unity intact, of administering justice, and of maintaining social order.

The Jewish commonwealth of Babylonia, notwithstanding its dependence on the humors of a Mahometan governor and the caprice of its own leaders, seemed nevertheless to those at a distance surrounded with a halo of power and greatness. The Prince of the Captivity appeared to the Jews of distant lands, who heard only confused rumors, to have regained the scepter of David; for them the Geonim of the two colleges were the living upholders and the representatives of the ideal times of the Talmud. The further the dominion of the Caliphate of the house of Ommyyah was extended, to the north beyond the Oxus, to the east to India, in the west and the south to Africa and the Pyrenees, the more adherents were gained for the Babylonian Jewish chiefs. Every conquest of the Mahometan generals enlarged the boundaries of the dominion under the rule of the Prince of the Captivity and the Geonim. Even Palestine, deprived of its center, subordinated itself to Babylonia. The hearts of all Jews turned towards the potentates on the Euphrates, and their presents flowed in freely, to enable the house of David to make a worthy appearance, and the Talmudical colleges to continue to exist in splendor. The grief for their dispersion to all corners of the earth was mitigated by the knowledge that by

the rivers of Babylon, where the flower of the Jewish nation in its full vigor had settled, and where the great Amoraim had lived and worked, a Jewish commonwealth still existed. It was universally believed by the Jews that in the original seat of Jewish greatness the primitive spring of ancient Jewish wisdom was still flowing. "God permitted the colleges of Sora and Pumbeditha to come into existence twelve years before the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and vouchsafed them His special protection. They never suffered persecution at the hands of the Romans or the Byzantines, and have known neither coercion nor bondage. From thence will proceed the deliverance of Israel, and the dwellers in this happy corner of the earth will be spared the sufferings that are to usher in the age of the Messiah." Such was the view held by all who had not seen the Babylonian settlement with their own eyes.

It was accounted an honor for a dead person to be mentioned at a memorial service at the colleges. For this purpose a special day was set apart in each month of assembly, during which no business was transacted by the colleges; the members mourned for the benefactors of the colleges that had died during the past year, and prayed for the peace of their souls (Ashkabá). Later on it became customary to forward lists of the dead, even from France and Spain, in order that they might also be thus honored.

The Jews of Spain, to whom so brilliant a part is allotted in Jewish history, drained the cup of misery to the dregs, at the very time when their brethren in Irak obtained almost perfect

freedom and independence. Some of them had been obliged to emigrate; others were compelled to embrace Christianity, and were required by the king Chintila, solemnly to declare in writing their sincere adherence to the Catholic faith and their entire repudiation of Judaism. But although they had been forcibly converted, the Jews of Visigothic Spain nevertheless clung steadfastly to their prohibited religion. The independent Visigothic nobles, to a certain extent, protected them from the king's severity, and no sooner were the eyes of the fanatical Chintila closed in death than the Jews openly reverted to Judaism under Chindaswinth, his successor (642–652). This monarch was at open enmity with the clergy, who desired to restrain the power of the throne in favor of the Church, but was well affected towards the Jews.

His son, Receswinth, however, who was altogether unlike him, adopted an entirely different policy. Either from fanaticism, or in order to ingratiate himself with the clergy, at that time hostile to the throne, he proposed in an ecclesiastical council (which was at the same time a parliament) to deal rigorously with the Jews, more especially with such of them as had formerly feigned to be Christians. In his speech from the throne, Receswinth made the following appeal to the members of the council: "It is because I have learnt that my kingdom is polluted by them as by an epidemic that I denounce the life and the behavior of the Jews. For while the Almighty has entirely freed the country from heresy, a disgraceful desecration of the churches

still continues. This shall either be reformed by our piety or rooted out by our severity. I mean that many of the Jews still persist in their old unbelief, while others, although purified by baptism, have relapsed so deeply into the errors of apostasy that their blasphemy seems even more abominable than the sin of those who have not been baptized. I adjure you, therefore, to decree against the Jews, without favor or respect of persons, some measure which shall be agreeable to God and to our faith." The Council of Toledo (the eighth), however, passed no new law against the Jews, but simply confirmed the canonical decisions of the fourth Council of Toledo. The Jews were, it is true, allowed to remain in the country, but could neither possess slaves, nor hold any office, nor appear as witnesses against Christians. But far harder was the fate of those who, during the persecutions, had pretended to embrace Christianity. They were compelled to remain within the pale of the Church, and to abjure Judaism once again. Flight was impossible, for severe punishments were decreed against all who renounced Christianity, or hid themselves anywhere, or attempted to leave the country. Even the abettors of, or accessories to, the flight of converts incurred heavy punishment. Those, however, who desired to continue outwardly in their pretended faith, but who still clung to Judaism in their inmost hearts, were required to subscribe anew to a renunciation of their religion (*placitum Judæorum*).

On February 18th, 654, the Jews of the capital Toletum

(Toledo) signed a confession of the purport that they had already promised, it was true, under king Chintila, to remain steadfast to the Catholic faith, but that their unbelief and the erroneous opinions which they had inherited from their fathers had prevented them from acknowledging Christ as their Master. Now, however, they voluntarily promised for themselves, their wives, and their children that, in future, they would not observe the rites and ceremonies of Judaism. They would no longer hold culpable intercourse with unconverted Jews, neither would they intermarry with near relations (children of brothers and sisters), nor take Jewish wives, nor observe Jewish marriage-customs, nor practice circumcision, nor keep the Passover, the Sabbath, nor any other Jewish festivals; they would no longer observe the dietary laws – in a word, they would henceforward disregard the laws of the Jews and their abominable customs. On the other hand, they would honestly and devoutly profess a religion in conformity with the gospel and the apostolic traditions, and observe the precepts of the Church without deceit or pretense. One thing, however, was impossible, namely, that they should partake of pork; they were entirely unable to overcome their abhorrence of it. They promised, however, to partake freely of anything which might have been cooked with pork. Whoever among them should be guilty of a violation of this promise was to be put to death by fire or by stoning at the hands of their companions or their sons. To all of this they swore "by the Trinity." It is probable that the forced converts in the other cities

of the Visigothic-Spanish empire were obliged to give similar written assurances. At the same time they were still compelled to pay the tax levied on the Jews, for the Treasury could not afford to lose by their change of faith.

As king Receswinth was well aware, however, that the independent nobles of the country afforded the Jews their protection, and allowed such of them as had been converted by force to live according to their convictions, he issued a decree forbidding all Christians to befriend the secret Jews, under penalty of excommunication and exclusion from the pale of the Church. But these measures and precautions by no means accomplished the intended result.

The secret Jews, or as they were officially termed, the Judaizing Christians, could not tear Judaism out of their hearts. The Spanish Jews, surrounded as they were by perils of death, early learnt the art of remaining true in their inmost soul to their religion, and of escaping their Argus-eyed foe. They continued to celebrate the Jewish festivals in their homes, and to disregard the holy-days instituted by the Church. Desirous of putting an end to such a state of things, the representatives of the Church issued a decree, which aimed at depriving this unfortunate people of their home life; they were henceforward compelled to spend the Jewish and Christian holy-days under the eyes of the clergy, in order that they might thereby be obliged to disregard the former and to observe the latter (655).

When, after a long reign, Receswinth died, the tormented

Jewish converts took part in a revolt against his successor, Wamba (672–680). Count Hilderic, Governor of Septimania, a province of Spain, having refused to recognize the newly-elected king, raised the standard of revolt. In order to gain adherents and means, he promised the converted Jews a safe refuge and religious liberty in his province, and they, taking advantage of the invitation, emigrated in numbers. The insurrection of Hilderic of Nismes assumed greater proportions, and at first gave hopes of a successful issue, but the insurgents were eventually defeated. Wamba appeared with an army before Narbonne, and expelled the Jews from this city. At the council which he convened (the eleventh) the Jews did not form the subject of any legislation; they seem, on the contrary, to have enjoyed a certain amount of freedom during his reign, and to have made some efforts towards their self-preservation.

In order, on the one hand, to prove that, although they were unable to reconcile themselves to Christianity, they were not entirely bereft of reason, as their enemies had declared at the councils and also in their writings; and, on the other hand, in order to keep their ancestral belief alive both in themselves and in such of their brethren as only partly belonged to the Christian faith, certain talented Jews set themselves to compose anti-Christian treatises, probably in Latin. One point alone is known of the arguments advanced in these polemical writings. The authors referred to a tradition relating that the Messiah would not appear before the seventh cycle of a thousand years, counting

from the creation of the world; the first six cycles corresponded to the six days of the creation, and the seventh would be the universal Sabbath, the reign of the Messiah. But as, according to their method of reckoning, hardly five thousand years had elapsed from the creation to the birth of Jesus, it was impossible, they maintained, that the Messiah had appeared. This objection must have been forcibly urged by the Jewish writers, for many Christians were thereby made to waver in their faith.

This partial liberty of religion, thought, and speech, was suppressed by Wamba's successor, who gained possession of the throne by treacherous means. Erwig, who was of Byzantine origin, and who possessed to the full the deceitfulness and unscrupulousness of the degenerate Greeks, caused Wamba to assume the cowl, and proclaimed himself king. In order to have his usurpation recognized as lawful succession, Erwig found himself obliged to make some concessions to the clergy, and accordingly he handed the Jews over to them as victims. With assumed earnestness, he addressed the council which was assembled to crown him, and in a fanatical speech, submitted for confirmation a series of laws against the Jews. The portion of the royal speech which was directed against the Jews ran as follows: "With tears streaming from my eyes, I implore this honorable assembly to manifest its zeal, and free the land from this plague of degeneracy. Arise, arise, I cry unto you; put to the test the laws against the apostasy of the Jews which we have just promulgated."

Of the seven-and-twenty paragraphs which Erwig submitted to the council for ratification, one alone related to the Jews; the rest were leveled at those forced converts who, despite their promises to persist in the Christian faith, and the severe punishment that followed in case of detection, were still unable to abandon Judaism. Erwig's edict made but short work of the Jews. They were commanded to offer themselves, their children, and all persons under their control, for baptism within the space of a year, otherwise their property would be confiscated, one hundred lashes would be inflicted on them, the skin torn off their head and forehead to their everlasting shame, and they themselves driven out of the country. On the converted Jews, fresh hardships were imposed. They were now not only obliged to spend the Christian and Jewish holy-days under the eyes of the clergy, but were further subjected to clerical control in all their movements. Whenever they set out upon a journey, they had to present themselves before the ecclesiastical authorities of the place, and obtain a certificate from them, setting forth the time they had lived there, and attesting that their conduct had been in rigorous conformity with Church law during that period. At the same time, unless they could prove that they had led a blameless, Christian life, they were incompetent to hold any office, even to act as village bailiff (*vilicus*, actor) over Christian slaves. They always had to carry about with them a copy of the laws which had been passed against them, so that they might never be able to plead ignorance in excuse. The ecclesiastical and

royal judges were instructed to watch strictly over the execution of these orders, and all Christians were forbidden to accept any presents from converted Jews.

The council, at the head of which was Julian, the Metropolitan of Toledo, a man of Jewish descent, passed all Erwig's proposals, and enacted that these laws, as ratified by the decision of the synod, were by general acknowledgment inviolable for all time. Two days after the prorogation of this council, the Jews, both those that had remained true to their religion and those that had been converted, were called together, the laws were read to them and their rigid observance strictly enjoined (January 25th, 681). A third time the converted Jews were compelled to abjure Judaism and to draw up a confession of faith – with the same sincerity, of course, as under Chintila and Receswinth.

But the Visigothic-Spanish Jews fared still worse under Erwig's successor, Egica. He did not drive them out of the country, it is true, but he did what was worse, he restricted their rights. He prohibited the Jews and the Judaizing Christians from possessing landed property and houses; moreover, they were forbidden to repair to Africa, or to trade with that continent, or to transact business with any Christians whatever. They were compelled to surrender all their real estate to the Treasury, and were indemnified, probably not too liberally, for the same (693). Only those that were really converted were left unfettered by these restrictions.

The Jews were driven to despair by this new law, which

it was impossible to evade, as their real estate was actually confiscated; they accordingly united in a perilous conspiracy against their unrelenting foe. They entered into an alliance with their more fortunate brethren in Africa, with the intention of overthrowing the Visigothic empire, and were probably aided by the boldly-advancing Mahometans and the malcontent nobles of the country (694). The attempt might easily have succeeded, for, owing to dissension, unnatural vices and weakness, the country was far advanced in a state of ruin and dissolution. But the conspiracy of the Jews was discovered before it had matured, and severe punishment was inflicted not only on the culprits, but on the whole Jewish population of Spain, including that of the province of Septimania (together with Narbonne). They were all sentenced to slavery, presented to various masters, and distributed throughout the country, their owners being prohibited from setting them free again. Children of seven years of age and upwards were torn from their parents and given to Christians to be educated. The only exception made was in favor of the Jewish warriors of the narrow passes of the Gallic province, who formed a bulwark against invasion. They were indispensable, and their bravery protected them from degradation and slavery, but even they were compelled to change their religion.

The Spanish Jews continued in this state of degradation until Egica's death. When his son Witiga followed him to the grave, the last hours of this empire were evidently at hand. The Jews of Africa, who at various times had emigrated thither from Spain,

and their unlucky co-religionists of the Peninsula, made common cause with the Mahometan conqueror, Tarik, who brought over from Africa into Andalusia an army eager for the fray. After the battle of Xeres (July, 711), and the death of Roderic, the last of the Visigothic kings, the victorious Arabs pushed onward, and were everywhere supported by the Jews. In every city that they conquered the Moslem generals were able to leave but a small garrison of their own troops, as they had need of every man for the subjection of the country; they therefore confided them to the safe-keeping of the Jews. In this manner the Jews, who but lately had been serfs, now became the masters of the towns of Cordova, Granada, Malaga, and many others. When Tarik appeared before the capital, Toledo, he found it occupied by a small garrison only, the nobles and clergy having found safety in flight. While the Christians were in church, praying for the safety of their country and religion, the Jews flung open the gates to the victorious Arabs (Palm-Sunday, 712), receiving them with acclamations, and thus avenged themselves for the many miseries which had befallen them in the course of a century since the time of Reccared and Sisebut. The capital also was entrusted by Tarik to the custody of the Jews, while he pushed on in pursuit of the cowardly Visigoths, who had sought safety in flight, for the purpose of recovering from them the treasure which they had carried off.

Finally, when Muza Ibn-Nosair, the Governor of Africa, brought a second army into Spain and conquered other cities, he also delivered them into the custody of the Jews. It was

under these favorable conditions that the Spanish Jews came under the rule of the Mahometans, and like their co-religionists in Babylonia and Persia, they were esteemed the allies of their rulers. They were kindly treated, obtained religious liberty, of which they had so long been deprived, were permitted to exercise jurisdiction over their co-religionists, and were obliged, like the conquered Christians, to pay only a poll-tax (Dsimma). Thus were they received into that great alliance, which, to a certain extent, united all the Jews of the Islamite empire into one commonwealth.

As the Mahometan empire grew in size, the activity of its Jewish inhabitants increased in proportion. The first Caliphs of the house of Ommiyah, by reason of their continual wars with the descendants and comrades of Mahomet, with the fanatical upholders of the letter of the Koran, and with the partisans of the spiritual Imamate (high-priesthood), had become entirely free from that narrow-mindedness and mania for persecution which characterized the founder and the first two Caliphs. The following rulers of the Mahometans, Moawiyah, Yezid I., Abdul-Malik, Walid I., and Suliman (656–717), were far more worldly than spiritual; their political horizon was extensive, and they fettered themselves but little with the narrow precepts of the Koran and the traditions (Sunna). They loved Arabic poetry (Abdul-Malik was himself a poet), held knowledge in esteem, and rewarded the author quite as liberally as the soldier who fought for them. The Jewish inhabitants of Mahometan countries

soon adopted the Arabic language. It is closely related, in many of its roots and forms, to Hebrew, with which language all of them were more or less familiar, and they needed a knowledge thereof, as it was the indispensable medium of communication. The enthusiasm which the Arabs felt for their language and its poetry, the care which they took to keep it pure, accurate and sonorous, had their effect upon the Jews, and taught them to employ correct forms of speech. During the six hundred years which had elapsed since the fall of the Jewish nation, the Jews had lost the sense of beauty and grace of expression; they were negligent in their speech, careless of purity of form, and indifferent to the clothing of their thoughts and emotions in suitable terms. A people possessed of an imperfect delivery, using a medley of Hebrew, Chaldee, and corrupt Greek, was not in a position to create a literature, much less to enchain the wayward muse of poetry. But, as already mentioned, the Jews of Arabia formed an exception. They acquired from their neighbors correct taste, and the art of framing their speech pleasantly and impressively. The Jewish tribes of Kainukaa and Nadhir, which had emigrated to Palestine and Syria, the Jews of Chaibar and Wadil-Kora, who had been transplanted to the region of Kufa and the center of the Gaonate, brought with them to their new home this love and taste for the poetical Arabic tongue, and gradually instilled them into their co-religionists. Hardly half a century after the occupation of Palestine and Persia by the Arabs, a Babylonian Jew was able to handle the Arabic language

for literary purposes: the Jewish physician, Messer-Jawaih of Bassorah, translated a medical work from the Syriac into Arabic. Henceforward the Jews, together with the Syrian Christians, were the channels through which scientific literature reached the Arabs.

The enthusiasm of the Arabs for their language and the Koran evoked in the hearts of the Jews a similar sentiment for the Hebrew tongue and its holy records. Besides this, the Jews were now obliged to make closer acquaintance with the Scriptures, in order that they might not be put to the blush in their controversies with the Mahometans. Until now the talented men among them had turned their attention exclusively to the Talmud and the Agadic exposition, but necessity at last compelled them to return to the source, the Bible.

As soon, however, as it was desired to recover what had been lost for centuries, and to return with ardor to the study of Biblical literature, a need manifested itself which first had to be supplied. In supplying the Biblical text with the vowel signs invented in Babylonia or in Tiberias, it was necessary to proceed in such passages, as had not become familiar by frequent reading in public, according to grammatical rules. The Punctuators were obliged to be guided partly by tradition and partly by their sense of language. In this manner there arose the rudiments of two branches of knowledge: one treating of the above-mentioned rules of the Hebrew language, the other of the science of orthography, together with the exceptions as handed down by

tradition (Massora). This apparently unimportant invention of adding certain strokes and points to the consonants thus led to the comprehension of the Holy Scriptures by the general public and the initiation of a more general knowledge of Judaism. By its help the holy language could now celebrate its revival; it was no longer a dead language employed only by scholars, but might become a means of educating the people. The auxiliary signs tended to break down the barrier between the learned (Chacham) and the unlearned (Am-ha-Arez).

An immediate consequence of contact with the Arabs and the study of the Holy Writ was the birth of neo-Hebraic poetry. Poetical natures naturally felt themselves impelled to make use of the copious Hebrew vocabulary in metrical compositions and polished verse, in the same manner as the Arabs had done with their language. But while the Arabic bards sang of the sword, of chivalry, of unbridled love, bewailed the loss of worldly possessions, and attacked with their satire such of their enemies as they could not reach with the sword, the newly-awakened Hebrew poetry knew of but one subject worthy of enthusiasm and adoration, God and His providence, of but one subject worthy of lament, the destitution and sorrows of the Jewish nation. The new-born Hebrew poetry, however different in form and matter from that of the Bible, had a religious foundation in common with it. The psalm of praise and the soul-afflicting dirge of lamentation were taken by the neo-Hebraic poets as their models. But a third element also claimed attention. Since the state had

lost its independence, learning had become the soul of Judaism; religious deeds, if not accompanied by knowledge of the Law, were accounted of no worth. The main feature of the Sabbath and festival services was the reading of portions of the Law and the Prophets, the interpretation thereof by the Targumists and the explanation of the text by the Agadists (preachers of homilies). Neo-Hebraic poetry, if it was to reach the hearts of the people, could not be entirely devoid of a didactic element. The poet's only scene of action was the synagogue, his only audience, the congregation assembled for prayer and instruction, and his poetry, therefore, necessarily assumed a synagogical or liturgical character.

The poetical impulse was strengthened by practical necessity. The original divine service with its short and simple prayers was no longer sufficient. It was extended, it is true, by the recitation of psalms and appropriate liturgical compositions, but even this did not fill up the time which the congregation would gladly have spent in the house of God. This was especially felt on the New Year's festival and on the Day of Atonement, which were dedicated to deep devotion, and during the greater part of which the congregation remained in the house of prayer, contrite, and imploring forgiveness and redemption. It was evident that the divine service must be amplified, and more matter for meditation provided. In this manner arose the synagogical, or, as it was also called, the *poetanic* composition. At the head of the succession of neo-Hebraic poets stands José bar José Hayathom

(or Haithom), whose works are not without true poetic ring, although devoid of artistic form. The date and nationality of this poet are entirely unknown, but it appears probable that he was a native of Palestine, and that he lived not earlier than the first Gaonic century.

José b. José took as the subject of his poems the emotions and memories which move a Jewish congregation on New Year's Day. On this occasion, the birthday of a new division of time, on which, according to Jewish ideas, the fate that the year has in store for men and communities is decided, God is extolled in a sublime poem as the mighty Master, the Creator of the world, the just Judge and the Redeemer of Israel. This poem, which was attached to the old prayers for the prescribed blowing of the cornet, and was intended to interpret them, embraces in a small compass the story of Israel's glorious past, its oppressed present, and promised future. José's poem is at once a psalm of triumph and of lamentation, interwoven with penitential prayers and words of hope. The resurrection is described in a few striking, picturesque lines.

Another and longer of José's poems has for its theme the ancient worship in the Temple on the Day of Atonement, which an attentive nation had once followed in devotional mood, and the description of which was well calculated to awaken the great memories of the glorious times of national independence (Abodah). It is a sort of liturgical epic, which describes simply, and without any lyrical strain, the creation of the universe and

of man, the ungodliness of the first generation, Abraham's recognition of God, the election of his posterity as God's peculiar people, and the calling of Aaron's family to the service of the Temple. Arrived at the priesthood of Aaron, the poet, following the account of the Mishna, goes on to describe the duties of the high-priest in the Temple on the Day of Atonement, and concludes with the moment when the high-priest, accompanied by the whole nation, joyful and assured by visible signs of forgiveness, leaves the Temple for his home, – a beautiful fragment of the past, which has always awakened a powerful echo in the hearts of the Jewish people.

Elevation of thought and beauty of language are the characteristics of José b. José's poetry. His New Year's sonnets and Temple epic have become parts of the divine service of certain congregations, and have served as models for others. His verses are unrhymed and without meter, a proof of their great antiquity. The only artificial feature of his poetical works is the alphabetical or acrostic commencement of verses, for which several of the Psalms, Jeremiah's Lamentations, and the post-talmudical prayers served as models. In the first fruits of the new Hebraic poetry, form is completely subservient to the subject-matter. There has been preserved from ancient times another Abodah, ascribed to a poet named Simon ben Caipha. It appears to have been written in imitation of that of José b. José, but is greatly inferior to its model. However, it was honored by being adopted by the synagogue of the Gaonate. To the name of

Simon Caipha, which sounds like the Jewish name of the apostle Peter, a peculiar legend is attached: The apostle, who supports the foundation of the Catholic Church, is represented as having written this Abodah in order to declare in the opening part his truly Jewish acknowledgment of God's unity, and to renounce his adherence to Jesus, as though the disciple who three times denied his Master had desired in this liturgical poem to attest his unbelief.

It was impossible that Jewish liturgical poetry could long remain satisfied with this simplicity of form. Little by little the Jews became acquainted with the poetry of the Arabs, the agreeable sound of its rhymes captivated them, and they were led to regard rhyme as the perfection of poetry. The *poetanists*, therefore, if they would be well received, could not afford to neglect this artistic device, and they assiduously devoted themselves to its cultivation. As far as is known, the first poet who introduced rhyme into the neo-Hebraic poetry was a certain Jannai, probably an inhabitant of Palestine. He composed versified prayers for those special Sabbaths which, either by reason of historical events connected with them, or of being a time of preparation for the approaching festivals, were possessed of particular importance. The Agadic discourses, which had been introduced on these Sabbaths, do not seem to have pleased the congregations any longer, because the preachers were unable to find new and attractive matter; they seem, indeed, to have read out the same discourses in a given order from year to year.

The poems of Jannai and his fellow-workers aimed at giving the substance of these Agadic expositions in the form of agreeable verse. Hence, Jannai's productions are versified Agadas. But as he was not enough of a poet to reproduce the elevated and striking passages of Agadic literature, as his rhymes were heavy and labored, and as he also burdened himself with the task of commencing his verses with consecutive letters of the alphabet, and of interweaving his name into them, his poems are dull, clumsy, and unwieldy.

Altogether neo-Hebraic poetry gained nothing during its earlier years by the introduction of rhyme. Eleazar ben Kalir or Kaliri (of Kiriath-Sepher), one of the first and most prolific of the *poetanic* writers, and a disciple of Jannai, was just as clumsy and harsh as his master, and his style was even more obscure. He wrote over 150 liturgical pieces, including hymns for the festivals, penitential prayers for the holy-days, songs of lamentation for the principal fasts, and various other compositions which cannot be classed under distinct heads. Kaliri put into most artificial verses a large portion of the Agadic literature, but only a few of his compositions have any poetical value, and none possesses beauty. In order to overcome the difficulties which were presented by the allusions to the Agada, by the use of rhyme, of the alphabetically arranged initial words and the interweaving of his name, Kaliri was obliged to do violence to the Hebrew language, to set at defiance the fixed rules which govern the use of words, and to create unprecedented

combinations. In place of word-pictures, he often presents to his reader obscure riddles, which it is impossible to solve without a thorough acquaintance with the Agadic writings. Nevertheless, Kaliri's poetic compositions made their way into the liturgies of the Babylonian, Italian, German, and French Jews; the Spaniards alone, guided by delicate feeling for language, refused to adopt them. Kaliri was honored as the greatest of the *poetanic* writers, and tradition has glorified his name.

By the introduction of these compositions, the liturgy acquired an altered character. The translation of the portions of the Law which were read out to the congregation, and the Agadic expositions thereof, which, as the Jews of the Islamic empire adopted the Arabic language, had become unfamiliar to the multitude, gradually disappeared from the divine service, and their places were filled by metrical compositions (*Piyutim*) which answered the same purpose, and at the same time possessed the advantage of a poetical character. By this means considerable extension was given to the divine service. The reader supplanted the preacher. Singing was introduced into the synagogue, as the poetical prayers were not recited, but chanted (*Chazanuth*). Special tunes were introduced for the various prayers. But the *poetanic* compositions were not adopted by all congregations as part of their divine service. The Talmudical authorities were at first opposed to their adoption, for the reason that they were usually interpolated between the various divisions of the principal prayer, and in this manner destroyed

the continuity and coherence of its separate parts.

The return to the source of the Bible had the result of kindling a poetic flame in artistic natures; but, at the same time, it fanned into existence a wild spirit which at first brought trouble, schism, and malediction in its train, although afterwards it became a source of purification, vigor, and blessing to the Jews. The origin of this movement, which divided the Jewish commonwealth of the east and west into two camps, dates from the first Gaonic century.

The Babylonian Talmud held sway over the Jewish community in Babylonia; it was not only a code, but also the constitution for the community of which the Prince of the Captivity and the two presidents of the Talmudical colleges were the chief dignitaries. By the expansion of the Islamic dominion from India to Spain, from the Caucasus far down into Africa, the authority of the Talmud was extended far beyond its original bounds; for the most distant congregations placed themselves into communication with the Geonim, submitted points of religion, morals, and civil law to them for advice, and accepted in full faith their decisions, which were based on the Talmud. The Babylonian-Persian communities felt themselves in nowise hampered by the Talmudical ordinances, which were of their own creation, and had sprung up in their midst, the outcome of their views, morals, and customs, the work of their authorities. The African and European communities were too unlearned in the Bible and the Talmud to be able to express an opinion on the matter. They

accepted the decisions of the Geonim as law, without greatly troubling themselves as to their agreement with the Bible.

Not so, however, with the Arabian Jews who had emigrated from Arabia to Palestine, Syria and Irak, the Benu-Kainukaa, the Benu-Nadhir, and the Chaibarites. They were sons of the desert, men of the sword, soldiers and warriors, accustomed from their childhood to a free life and to the development of their strength; men who cultivated social intercourse with their former Arabic allies and fellow-soldiers, in whose midst they again settled after the conquest of Persia and Syria. Judaism was indeed dear to them, for they had sacrificed liberty, country, fame and wealth in its cause, and had resisted Mahomet's importunities, and had not allowed themselves to be converted to Islam. But between the Judaism which they practised in Arabia, and the Judaism taught by the Talmud, and set up as a standard by the colleges, there lay a deep gulf. To conform to Talmudical precepts, it would have been necessary for them to renounce their genial familiarity with their former comrades, and to give up their drinking-bouts with the Arabs which, despite their interdiction by the Koran, the latter greatly loved. In a word, they felt themselves hampered by the Talmud.

The Jews of Arabia, who came into close contact with the Mahometans, and were, therefore, frequently involved in controversy as to whether Judaism was still possessed of authority or had been superseded by Islam, were obliged, so as not to be at a loss in such discussions, to familiarize themselves

with the Bible. They in that way probably discovered that much of what the Talmud and the colleges declared to be religious precept, was not confirmed by the Bible. But from whatever cause this aversion to Talmudical precepts may have arisen, it is certain that it first had its origin in the Arabian Jewish colony in Syria or Irak. It is related, in an authentic source, that during the first part of the eighth century, many Jews allowed themselves to be persuaded to abandon Talmudical Judaism and to conform only to the precepts of the Bible.

The leader of this movement was a Syrian, Serene (Serenus) by name, who called himself the Messiah (about 720). He promised the Jews to put them into possession of the Holy Land, having first, of course, expelled the Mahometans. This attempt to regain their long-lost independence was perhaps occasioned by the fanatical Caliph Omar II (717–720). That bigoted prince, who had been raised to the throne by the intrigues of a zealous reader of the Koran, had re-enacted the restrictive laws of his predecessor, Omar I (the covenant of Omar), which had fallen into oblivion under the politic Ommyyades. After his accession to the throne, he wrote to his governors as follows: "Do not pull down a church or a synagogue, but do not allow new ones to be built within your provinces." Omar devoted himself to making proselytes, holding out attractive promises to the new converts, or unceremoniously compelling both Jews and Christians to embrace Islam. It was probably for this reason that the Jews were disposed to support the false Messiah, and to lend credence to

his representations that he would make them free again in the land of their fathers, and exterminate their enemies. Upon his banner Serene inscribed the release from Talmudical ordinances; he abolished the second day's celebration of the festivals, the prescribed forms of prayer, and the laws of the Talmud relating to food: he permitted the use of wine obtained from non-Jews, and sanctioned marriage between persons of nearer relationship than was allowed by the Talmud, as also celebration of marriages without a marriage-contract. It is probable that this hostility towards the Talmud gained him many adherents.

Serene's fame spread as far as Spain, and the Jews of that country resolved to abandon their property and to place themselves under the leadership of the pseudo-Messiah. Hardly ten years after the Jews of Spain had been delivered from the yoke of the Visigoths by the conquests of the Mahometans, they, or at least many of them, were desirous of again abandoning their newly-acquired fatherland. It appears that they were dissatisfied with the rule and administration of the Mahometan governors. As they had rendered signal services to the Arabs in the conquest of the Peninsula, they probably expected particular consideration and distinction, and instead of this they were impoverished equally with the Christians. Serene's fate was miserable, as indeed he deserved. He was captured and brought before the Caliph Yezid, Omar II's successor, who put an end to his Messianic pretensions by propounding insidious questions to him, which he was unable to answer. Serene is

said, however, to have denied before the Caliph that he had had any serious designs, but that he only intended to make game of the Jews; whereupon the Caliph handed him over to the Jews for punishment. Many of his adherents, repenting of their easy credulity, desired to rejoin the communities from which they had severed themselves by infringement of the Talmudical ordinances. The Syrian communities were doubtful, however, whether they ought to re-admit their repentant brethren into their midst, or whether they ought not to be treated as proselytes. They referred the matter, therefore, to Natronaï ben Nehemiah, surnamed Mar-Yanka, the principal of the college at Pumbeditha, and successor of Mar-Raba (719–730). Natronaï's decision concerning the reception of Serene's adherents was conceived in a liberal spirit, and ran as follows: According to the laws of the Talmud, there is nothing to prevent them from being re-admitted by the communities and being treated as Jews; but they are to declare openly in the synagogues their sorrow and repentance, and to promise that their future conduct shall be pious and in accordance with the precepts of the Talmud, and in addition they are to suffer the punishment of flogging. At that time there were also other apostates, who went so far as to disregard the Biblical precepts concerning the Sabbath, the ritual for slaughtering cattle, the eating of blood, and the intermarrying of near relations. It is not known, however, in what country these people lived. Without declaring either for Christianity or Islam, they had entirely severed their connection with Judaism. When

some of these sought re-admission into the fold of Judaism, Natronai was again asked for his opinion. He said, "It is better to take them under the wings of God than to cast them out."

At about this time the Jews of the Byzantine empire were subjected to severe persecution, from the effects of which they did not for a long time recover, and this, too, at the hands of a monarch from whom they had least expected hostile treatment. Leo, the Isaurian, the son of rude peasant parents, having had his attention drawn by the Jews and the Arabs to the idolatrous character of the image-worship which obtained in the churches, had undertaken a campaign with the intention of destroying these images. Being denounced, however, before the uncultivated mob as a heretic and a Jew by the image-worshipping clergy, Leo proceeded to vindicate his orthodoxy by persecuting the heretics and the Jews. He issued a decree commanding all the Jews of the Byzantine empire and the remnant of the Montanists in Asia Minor to embrace the Christianity of the Greek Church, under pain of severe punishment (723). Many Jews submitted to this decree, and reluctantly received baptism; they were thus less steadfast than the Montanists, who, in order to remain faithful to their convictions, assembled in their house of prayer, set fire to it, and perished in the flames. Such of the Jews as had allowed themselves to be baptized were of the opinion that the storm would soon blow over, and that they would be permitted to return to Judaism. It was, therefore, only outwardly that they embraced Christianity; for they observed the Jewish rites in secret, thereby

subjecting themselves to fresh persecutions. Thus the Jews of the Byzantine empire pined away under unceasing petty persecution, and for a time they are hidden from the view of history.

Many Jews of the Byzantine empire, however, escaped compulsory baptism by emigration. They quitted a country in which their forefathers had settled long before the rise of that Church which had so persistently persecuted them. The Jews of Asia Minor chose as their home the neighboring Cimmerian or Tauric peninsula (the Crimea), whose uncivilized inhabitants, of Scythian, Finnish and Sclavonian origin, practised idolatry. These Alani, Bulgarians and Chazars were, however, not jealous of men of other race and of a different belief who settled in their vicinity. Thus, side by side with the Jewish communities which had existed from early times, there arose new communities on the shores of the Black Sea and the Straits of Theodosia (Kaffa), and in the interior, in Sulchat (Solgat, now Eski-Crimea), in Phanagoria (now Taman), and on the Bosphorus (Kertch), which lies opposite. From the Crimea the Greek Jews spread towards the Caucasus, and the hospitable countries of the Chazars on the west coast of the Caspian Sea and at the mouth of the Volga (Atel). Jewish communities settled in Berdaa (Derbend), at the Albanian Gates, in Semender (Tarki), and finally in Balanyiar, the capital of the land of the Chazars. By their energy, ability and intelligence, the Greek-Jewish emigrants speedily acquired power in the midst of these barbarian nations, and prepared the way for an important historical event.

Hardly thirty years after the fall of the false Messiah, Serene, an anti-Talmudical movement, coupled with Messianic enthusiasm, was again set on foot, but this time on a different scene. The prime mover was a fantastic and warlike inhabitant of the Persian town of Ispahan, one Obaiah Abu-Isa ben Ishak. He was not an ignorant man; he understood the Bible and the Talmud, and was capable of expressing his thoughts in writing. It is said that he was made aware of his call to an exalted vocation by a sudden cure from leprosy. Abu-Isa did not proclaim himself to be the Messiah, but asserted that he was the forerunner and awakener (Dâï) who was to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. His views concerning the office of precursor of the Messiah were, indeed, altogether peculiar. He taught that five forerunners would precede the Messiah, and that each one would be more perfect than his predecessor. He considered himself the last and most perfect of the five, and of equal merit with the Messiah. He assumed his vocation in good earnest, and announced that God had called him to free the Jewish race from the yoke of the nations and of unjust rulers.

The Messianic precursor of Ispahan found many partisans, 10,000 Jews, it is said, gathering around him for the purpose of aiding him in his work of deliverance. To them Abu-Isa expounded a form of Judaism differing in some respects from that accepted at the time; the points of difference, however, are not known. He entirely abolished divorce, even in the case of adultery. He augmented the three daily periods for prayer by four

new periods, citing in support of this innovation the verse of a psalm: "Seven times a day do I praise thee." Abu-Isa retained the forms of prayer as prescribed by the Talmud, and in no way disturbed the existing order of the calendar. He explained his own peculiar system of religion in one of his works, in which he prohibits the use of meat and wine by his followers, but pronounces the abrogation of sacrificial worship.

Abu-Isa desired to accomplish his Messianic task of liberation with sword in hand. He accordingly made soldiers of his followers, and rode at their head like a general. There could have been no more favorable moment for an attempt to regain liberty by open force. In all the provinces of the Mahometan empire the spirit of rebellion against Mervan II, the last Caliph of the Ommyyad dynasty, was aroused. Ambitious governors, dissatisfied partisans, the Abassides, who laid claim to the supreme power, all these antagonistic elements conspired to overthrow the house of Ommyyah, and turned the wide dominions of the empire into a battlefield of fierce passions. During this period of rebellion, Abu-Isa and his band seem to have begun their work of deliverance in the neighborhood of Ispahan. They probably strengthened their position during the disturbances consequent upon the severe defeat sustained by Mervan's general on the Euphrates (at Kerbella, August, 749).

Finally, Abu-Isa fell in battle; his followers dispersed, and the Jews of Ispahan had to suffer for his revolt. His adherents, however, loyally cherished his memory; under the name of

Isavites or Ispahanites they continued to exist until the tenth century, forming the first religious sect to which Judaism had given birth since the fall of the Jewish state. The Isavites lived in accordance with their master's teaching, observing some points of Talmudical Judaism, while disregarding many others.

During this time, however, no extraordinary movement occurred in the center of Jewish religious life; everything continued on the old lines, the principals of the colleges and the Geonim succeeded each other without leaving any perceptible traces behind them. They had no suspicion that a new spirit was abroad in Judaism, which would shake it to its very foundations.

CHAPTER V.

RISE OF KARAISM AND ITS RESULTS

Anan ben David, the founder of Karaism – His life, writings, and influence – Hostility to the Talmud – Anan's innovations – Karaite reverence of Anan – The Exilarchate becomes elective – Adoption of Judaism by the Chazars – King Bulan and Isaac Sinjari – Bulan's Jewish successors – Charlemagne and the Empire of the Franks – The Jews and Commerce – Jewish Envoy sent to the Caliph Haroun Alrashid – Spread of the Jews in Europe – The Caliphs and the Jews – The study of philosophy – Sahal – The Kalam – Mutazilists and Anthropomorphists – Judah Judghan – The *Shiur Komah* – The Akbarites – Moses the Persian.

761–84 °C. E

It is as little possible for an historical event to be evolved, as for a natural birth to occur without labor. For a new historical phenomenon to struggle into existence, the comfortable aspect of things must be destroyed, indolent repose in cherished custom disturbed, and the power of habit broken. This destructive activity, although at first painful, is eventually favorable to

the growth of healthy institutions, for thereby all vagueness is dissipated, all pretense destroyed, and dim reality brought more clearly to light. Opposition, the salt of history, which prevents corruption, had been wanting in Jewish history for several centuries, and religious life had been molded in set forms, and had there become petrified. Pauline and post-apostolic Christianity in its day supplied just the opposition required. It abrogated the standard of the Law, did away with knowledge, substituted faith, and thus produced in the evolution of Judaism a disposition to cling firmly to the Law, and to develop a system of religious teachings which should deal with the minutest details. The Talmud resulted from this movement of opposition; it was the sole prevailing authority in Judaism, and succeeded in supplanting the Bible in the estimation of the people. Even the study of the Talmud, which had possessed a refreshing and enlightening influence in the time of the Amoraim, had degenerated in the following century and in the first Gaonic period into a mere matter of memory, entirely devoid of any power of intellectual fructification. A free current of air was wanting to clear the heavy atmosphere. Opposition to the Talmud, the password of the two heralds of the Messiah, Serene and Abu-Isa, had left no lasting impression, partly because the movement, accompanied by fanatical agitation in favor of a pretended Messiah, led to no other result than the undeceiving of its partisans, and partly because it had been set on foot by obscure persons, possessed of neither importance nor authority.

If this one-sidedness was to be overcome, if the Bible was to be re-instated in its rights, and religious life to regain its spirituality, it was necessary that opposition to it, which up till then had been manifested only in narrow circles, should be imparted to a more extended public by some moderate reformer invested with official character. Until this movement proceeded, not from some out-of-the-way corner, but from the region which at that time formed the center of Jewish life, it was impossible for it to be taken up by the multitude, or to produce any regenerative effects. The required agitation was set on foot by a son of the Prince of the Captivity, of the house of Bostanaï, and produced lasting effects.

It appears that the Exilarch Solomon died (761–762) without issue, and that the office ought to have been conferred on his nephew, Anan ben David. The biography of this man, who exercised so profound an influence upon Jewish history, and whose adherents exist at the present day, is quite unknown, and the facts have been entirely distorted in consequence of the schism which occurred later on. While his disciples honor him as a pious and holy man, who, "if he had lived at the time when the Temple was still standing, would have been vouchsafed the gift of prophecy," his opponents cannot sufficiently disparage him. But even they admit that Anan was exceedingly well read in the Talmud, and that he employed its style with great ability. It is also certain that the son of the Exilarch held that certain decisions of the Talmud possessed no religious authority, and

that his anti-Talmudical tendency was known, at all events, to the representatives of the two academies, who directed the election of the Exilarch. The Gaonic office was at that time held by two brothers, sons of Nachman: that of Sora by Judah the Blind (759–762), and that of Pumbeditha by Dudaï (761–764). These two brothers united with their colleges to prevent Anan from succeeding to the dignity of Exilarch, and to choose in his stead his younger brother Chananya (or Achunaï). But Anan did not stand entirely alone; of elevated rank, he naturally had friends. His expectation of succeeding to a position of authority, whose sway was acknowledged by all the Jewish communities of the East at least, had doubtless attracted many ambitious, greedy and parasitical followers. But he also possessed adherents among those who refused more or less openly to regard the Judaism of the Talmud as true Judaism, and who welcomed Anan as a powerful champion. The Ananite party were not sparing in their efforts to obtain the nomination of their chief by the Caliph Abu Jafar Almansur, who, they supposed, was favorably disposed towards them; but their opponents gained the day. They are said to have attempted the life of Anan, and to have accused him of planning a rebellion against the Caliph, who thereupon threw him into prison, where, the legend goes on to relate, a Mahometan was incarcerated. Both of them were to have been hanged, but Anan's companion in misfortune advised him to explain to the Caliph that he did not belong to the same sect as his brother Chananya. Thereupon Almansur is said to have liberated

him, because, according to Anan's adherents, he regarded him with kindness, according to his adversaries, in consequence of handsome presents of money, and permitted him to emigrate with his followers to Palestine.

One thing only among all these doubtful statements is certain, namely, that Anan was obliged to leave his country and settle in Palestine. In Jerusalem he built his own synagogue, which was still standing at the time of the first crusade. It is likewise certain that, in consequence of the mortifying slight cast upon him by the Gaons, Anan became hostile to the Gaonate, and directed all his animosity against the Talmud, the principal source of its importance. He displayed, in fact, a fierce hostility to the Talmud and its supporters. He is reported to have said that he wished that all the adherents of the Talmud were in his body, so that by killing himself he might at the same time make away with them. He considered everything in the Talmud reprehensible, and was desirous of returning to the Bible in the ordering of religious life. He reproached the Talmudists with having corrupted Judaism, and accused them at the same time, not only of adding many things to the Torah, but also of disregarding many of its commandments, which they declared to be no longer obligatory. Many things which, according to the text of the Bible, ought to have been binding for all time, they set aside. The advice which he impressed on his followers was "to seek industriously in the Scripture." On account of this return to the letter of the Bible (Mikra), the system of religion which

Anan founded received the name of the Religion of the Text, or Karaism.

Anan expounded his views concerning religious commandments and prohibitions in three works, one of which was a commentary on the Pentateuch, certainly the very first of all productions of this class. Anan's works have not survived the lapse of time; the original character of Karaism is thus enveloped in complete obscurity. This only is clear, that in his hostility to the Talmud the founder of the Karaite sect increased rather than lessened the religious duties of life, enforced many observances which time and custom had long abolished, and in his blind eagerness to change the Talmudical exposition of the Law, often fell into ridiculous exaggerations. He made use of the Talmudical, or more properly the Mishnaic rules of interpretation, and with their help considered himself entitled, equally with the old teachers (of the Mishna), to deduce new laws of religion. The most important alterations were those made in the dates of the festivals, the Sabbath, in the laws of marriage, and the dietary regulations. Anan abolished the fixed calendar, which had been established in the middle of the fourth century; but finding no grounds in the Bible for this innovation, he was obliged to refer back to the time of the Second Temple and the Tanaites. As in former times, the beginning of every month was to be fixed by observation of the new moon. The leap years were not to follow in a regular series, according to the nineteen-years cycle, but were to be determined by repeated examination of the

condition of the crops, especially at the time of the ripening of the barley. This was not so much an absolute innovation as a renewal of a method of regulating the festivals, the untenableness of which in the state of dispersion of the Jewish nation is evident. This variability of the calendar offered but little difficulty to Anan and his followers in Palestine, but it shows little foresight for the future. As had been formerly done by the Sadducees, Anan fixed the Feast of Pentecost fifty days after the Sabbath following the Passover.

In the strict observance of the Sabbath, Anan far outstripped the Talmud. He pronounced it unlawful to administer any medicines on the Sabbath, even in the case of dangerous illness, or to perform the operation of circumcision, or to leave the house in those cities where the Jews did not live separate from the non-Jewish population; he did not allow any warm food to be eaten, nor even a light or fire to be kindled on the eve of the Sabbath by the Jews themselves, or by others for their use. Anan introduced the custom among the Karaites of spending the Sabbath-eve in entire darkness. All these alterations and many others he pretended to deduce from the letter of the Bible. He made the laws relating to food severe beyond all measure, and he extended the prohibition of marriage to relatives who, according to the Talmud, were allowed to intermarry, so that the marriage of uncle and niece and of step-brothers and sisters, who were absolutely unrelated to one another, was regarded by him as incest. Compared with this exaggerated severity, of what

importance was the abolition of the phylacteries (Tephillin), of the festal plants at the Feast of Tabernacles, and of the festival of Dedication, instituted in remembrance of the time of the Hasmoneans, and of other trifles? As his opponents rightly affirmed, he set up a new and much stricter Talmud. Religious life was thus invested by Anan with a gloomy and unpoetical character. The forms of prayer, which had been employed during many centuries, some of which had been in use in the Temple, were forbidden by the founder of this sect to be used in the synagogue, and they were banished, together with the prayers of the *poetanim*. Instead of them, only Biblical selections, made without taste, were to be read out in the manner of a litany in the Karaite synagogues. As the Jews of the Islamic empire were possessed of their own jurisdiction, Anan's innovations dealt also with points of civil law. In opposition to the text of the Bible, he placed the female heirs on an equal footing with the males with reference to property inherited from parents, while on the other hand he denied to the husband the right of succeeding to the property of his deceased wife.

But although Anan gave great impetus to the study of the Bible, the system of vowel points having been already introduced, thus enabling all men to read the Scriptures, nevertheless the age in which he lived was neither ripe enough nor his mind sufficiently comprehensive to enable him to produce a healthy, independent exposition of the text. He himself was obliged, in order to establish his innovations, to have recourse to

forced interpretations, such as would hardly have been proposed by the Talmudists whom he reviled. In rejecting the Talmud, he broke the bridge connecting the Biblical past with the present. The religion of the Karaites is thus no natural growth, but an entirely artificial and labored creation. Anan had no regard for the customs and sentiments of the people. As his system of religion depended on the interpretation of the Scripture, Karaism naturally was unsettled in character. A new explanation of the text might threaten the very foundations of religious life, for what had been lawful might become unlawful, and *vice versâ*. Anan was as devoid of the power of appreciating poetry as of understanding history. The sacred prophetic and poetic literature was of no further use to him than to prove the existence of some law or some religious command. He closed the gates of the sanctuary on the newly-awakened poetical impulse.

It is singular that Anan and his followers justified their opposition to the Talmud by the example of the founder of Christianity. According to their idea, Jesus was a God-fearing, holy man, who had not desired to be recognized as a prophet, nor to set up a new religion in opposition to Judaism, but simply to confirm the precepts of the Torah and to abrogate laws imposed by human authority. Besides acknowledging the founder of Christianity, Anan also recognized Mahomet as the prophet of the Arabs. But he did not admit that the Torah had been repealed either by Jesus or by Mahomet, but held it to be binding for all time.

It is impossible to ascertain the number of Anan's adherents who followed him into exile. His disciples called themselves, after him, Ananites and Karaites (Karaim, Bene Mikra), while to their adversaries they gave the nickname of Rabbanites, which is equivalent to "Partisans of Authority." At first the irritation existing between the two parties was extremely violent. It is hardly necessary to say that the representatives of the colleges placed the chief of the party and his adherents under a ban of excommunication, and excluded them from the pale of Judaism. But on their side, the Karaites renounced all connection with the Rabbanites, entered into no marriage with them, refused to eat at their table, and even abstained from visiting the house of a Rabbanite on the Sabbath, because they considered that the holy day was desecrated there. The Rabbanites pronounced the Karaites heretics, preached against them from the pulpit, especially against their custom of spending the Sabbath-eve in darkness, and refused to allow the followers of Anan to take part in the prayers. The Karaites, on the other hand, could not sufficiently abuse the two colleges and their representatives. They applied to them the allegory of the prophet Zachariah, of the two women who carried Sin in a bushel to Babylon, and there founded a dwelling-place for her. "The two women are the Geonim in Sora and Anbar (Pumbeditha)." This satire, which probably originated with Anan, became current among the Karaites, and they never called the two colleges otherwise than "the two women."

Thus, for the third time, the Jewish race was divided into two hostile camps. Like Israel and Judah, during the first period, and the Pharisees and Sadducees in the time of the Second Temple, the Rabbanites and Karaites were now in opposition to each other. Jerusalem, the holy mother, who had witnessed so many wars between her sons, again became the scene of a fratricidal struggle. The Karaite community, which had withdrawn from the general union, acknowledged Anan as the legitimate Prince of the Captivity, and conferred this honorable title on him and his descendants. Both parties exerted themselves as much as possible to widen the breach.

After Anan's death, his followers, out of reverence, introduced memorial prayers for him into the Sabbath service. They prayed for him thus: "May God be merciful to the Prince Anan, the man of God, who opened the way to the Torah, and opened the eyes of the Karaites; who redeemed many from sin, and showed us the way to righteousness. May God grant him a good place among the seven classes who enter into Paradise." This service, in memory of Anan, is still in use with the Karaites of the present day.

It is impossible, however, for impartial judgment to endorse this encomium, for it is impossible to discern in Anan any greatness of mind. He was not a profound thinker, and was entirely devoid of philosophical knowledge. He had so mean a conception of the soul that, in painful adherence to the letter of the Bible, he designated the blood as its seat. But he was

also inconsistent in his opposition to Talmudical Judaism, for he allowed not a few religious laws to continue in force that could no more be traced to a Biblical origin than the institutions which he rejected.

After Anan's death the Karaite community conferred the leadership on his son, Saul. Anan's disciples, who called themselves Ananites, differed on various points with their master, especially with regard to the prescribed mode of killing birds. Thus, immediately after Anan's death, the enduring character which he had desired to impart to religious life was destroyed, and there arose divisions which increased with every generation. This schism caused the Karaites to study the Bible more closely, and to support and strengthen their position against one another, and against the Rabbanites, from Holy Writ. It was for this reason that the study of the Bible was carried on by the Karaites with great ardor. With this study went hand in hand the knowledge of Hebrew grammar and of the Massora, the determination of the manner of reading the Holy Scripture. There sprang up many commentators on the Bible, and altogether a luxuriant literature was produced, as each party, thinking it had discovered something new in the Bible, desired to have its authority generally acknowledged.

While the Karaites thus were extremely active, the Rabbanites were most unfruitful in literary productions. A single work is all that is known to have appeared in those times. Judah, the blind Gaon of Sora, who has already been mentioned, and

who had done much to oppose Anan's claim, composed a Talmudical Compendium, under the title "Short and Established Practice" (Halachoth Ketuoth). In this work Judah collected and arranged, in an orderly manner, the subjects which were scattered through the Talmud, and indicated briefly, omitting all discussions, what still held good in practice. To judge from a few fragments, Judah's Halachoth were written in Hebrew, by which means he rendered the Talmud popular and intelligible. For this reason the work penetrated to the most distant Jewish communities, and became the model for later compositions of a similar description.

The Karaite disturbances also contributed to lessen the authority of the Exilarch. Until the time of Anan the academies and their colleges had been subordinate to the Prince of the Captivity, and to the principals of the schools chosen or confirmed by him; at the same time, however, they had no direct influence over the appointment to this office when it became vacant. But having once succeeded in dispossessing Anan of the Exilarchate, the Gaons determined that this power should not be wrested from their hands, and accordingly from this time exercised it on the ground that they could not allow princes of Karaite opinions to be at the head of the Jewish commonwealth. The Exilarchate, which had been hereditary since the time of Bostanaï, became elective after Anan, and the presidents of the academies directed the election. On the death of Chananya (Achunaï), and hardly ten years after Anan's

defection from Rabbanism, a struggle for the Exilarchate broke out afresh between two pretenders, Zaccāi ben Achunāi and Natronāi ben Chabibāi. The latter was a member of the college under Judah. The two heads of the schools at this period, Malka bar Acha, of Pumbeditha (771–773), and Chanināi Kahana ben Huna, of Sora (765–775), united to bring about the overthrow of Natronāi, and succeeded in procuring, through the Caliph's attendants, his banishment from Babylonia. He emigrated to Maghreb (Kairuan), in which city there had existed ever since its foundation a numerous Jewish population. Zaccāi was confirmed in the office of Exilarch. The Exilarchate continued to become more and more dependent on the Gaonate, which often deposed obnoxious princes, and not infrequently banished them. But as the Exilarchs, when they arrived at power, attempted to free themselves from this state of dependence, there occurred collisions which exerted an evil influence on the Babylonian commonwealth.

At about the same time as Karaism sprang into existence, an event occurred which only slightly affected the development of Jewish history, but which roused the spirits of the scattered race and restored their courage. The heathen king of a barbarian people, living in the north, together with all his court, adopted the Jewish religion. The Chazars, or Khozars, a nation of Finnish origin, related to the Bulgars, Avars, Ugurs or Hungarians, had settled, after the dissolution of the empire of the Huns, on the frontier between Europe and Asia. They had founded a kingdom

on the Volga (which they called the Itil or Atel) at the place near which it runs into the Caspian Sea, in the neighborhood of Astrakhan, now the home of the Kalmucks. Their kings, who bore the title of Chakan or Chagan, had led these warlike sons of the steppe from victory to victory. The Chazars inspired the Persians with so great a dread that Chosroes, one of their kings, found no other way of protecting his dominions against their violent invasions than by building a strong wall which blocked up the passes between the Caucasus and the sea. But this "gate of gates" (Bab al abwab, near Derbend) did not long serve as a barrier against the warlike courage of the Chazars. After the fall of the Persian empire, they crossed the Caucasus, invaded Armenia, and conquered the Crimean peninsula, which bore the name Chazaria for some time. The Byzantine emperors trembled at the name of the Chazars, flattered them, and paid them a tribute, in order to restrain their lust after the booty of Constantinople. The Bulgarians, and other tribes, were the vassals of the Chazars, and the people of Kiev (Russians) on the Dnieper were obliged to pay them as an annual tax a sword and a fine skin for every household. With the Arabs, whose near neighbors they gradually became, they carried on terrible wars.

Like their neighbors, the Bulgarians and the Russians, the Chazars professed a coarse religion, which was combined with sensuality and lewdness. The Chazars became acquainted with Islam and Christianity through the Arabs and Greeks, who came to the capital, Balanyiar, on matters of business, in order to

exchange the products of their countries for fine furs. There were also Jews in the land of the Chazars; they were some of the fugitives that had escaped (723) from the mania for conversion which possessed the Byzantine Emperor Leo. It was through these Greek Jews that the Chazars became acquainted with Judaism. As interpreters or merchants, physicians or counselors, the Jews were known and beloved by the Chazar court, and they inspired the warlike king Bulan with a love of Judaism.

In subsequent times, however, the Chazars had but a vague knowledge of the motive which induced their forefathers to embrace Judaism. One of their later Chagans gives the following account of their conversion: The king Bulan conceived a horror of the foul idolatry of his ancestors, and prohibited its exercise within his dominions, without, however, adopting any other form of religion. He was encouraged by a dream in his endeavors to discover the proper manner of worshiping God. Having gained a great victory over the Arabs, and conquered the Armenian fortress of Ardebil, Bulan determined to adopt the Jewish religion openly. The Caliph and the Byzantine emperor desired, however, to induce the king of the Chazars to embrace their respective religions, and with this intention sent to Bulan deputations with letters and valuable presents, and men well versed in religious matters. The king thereupon arranged for a religious discussion to take place before him between a Byzantine ecclesiastic, a Mahometan sage, and a learned Jew. The champions of the three religions disputed the

whole question, however, without being able to convince one another or the king of the superior excellence of their respective religions as compared with the other two. But as Bulan had remarked that the representatives of the religion of Christ and of Islam both referred to Judaism as the foundation and point of departure of their faiths, he declared to the ambassadors of the Caliph and the Emperor that, as he had heard from the opponents of Judaism themselves an impartial avowal of the excellence of that religion, he would carry out his intention of professing Judaism as his religion. He thereupon immediately offered himself for circumcision. The Jewish sage who was the means of obtaining Bulan's conversion is supposed to have been Isaac Sanjari or Sinjari.

It is possible that the circumstances under which the Chazars embraced Judaism have been embellished by legend, but the fact itself is too definitely proved on all sides to allow any doubt as to its reality. Besides Bulan, the nobles of his kingdom, numbering nearly four thousand, adopted the Jewish religion. Little by little it made its way among the people, so that most of the inhabitants of the towns of the Chazar kingdom were Jews; the army, however, was composed of Mahometan mercenaries. At first the Judaism of the Chazars must have been rather superficial, and could have had but little influence on their mind and manners. A successor of Bulan, who bore the Hebrew name of Obadiah, was the first to make serious efforts to further the Jewish religion. He invited Jewish sages to settle in his dominions, rewarded them

royally, founded synagogues and schools, caused instruction to be given to himself and his people in the Bible and the Talmud, and introduced a divine service modeled on that of the ancient communities. So great was the influence which Judaism exercised on the character of this uncivilized race, that while the Chazars that remained heathens, without a twinge of conscience sold their children as slaves, those of them that had become Jews abandoned this barbarous custom. After Obadiah came a long series of Jewish Chagans, for according to a fundamental law of the state only Jewish rulers were permitted to ascend the throne. Neither Obadiah nor his successors showed any intolerance towards the non-Jewish population of the country; on the contrary, the non-Jews were placed on a footing of complete equality with the other inhabitants. There was a supreme court of justice, composed of seven judges, of whom two were Jews for the Jewish population, two Mahometans and two Christians for those who were of these religions, and one heathen for the Russians and Bulgarians. For some time the Jews of other countries had no knowledge of the conversion of this powerful kingdom to Judaism, and when at last a vague rumor to this effect reached them, they were of opinion that Chazaria was peopled by the remnant of the former ten tribes. The legend runs thus: Far, far beyond the gloomy mountains, beyond the Cimmerian darkness of the Caucasus, there live true worshipers of God, holy men, descendants of Abraham, of the tribes of Simeon and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who are so powerful that five-and-twenty

nations pay them tribute.

At about this time – in the second half of the eighth century – the Jews of Europe also emerged a little from the darkness which had covered them for centuries. Favored by the rulers, or at least neither ill-treated nor persecuted by them, they raised themselves to a certain degree of culture. Charlemagne, the founder of the empire of the Franks, to whom Europe owes its regeneration and partial emancipation from barbarism, also contributed to the spiritual and social advancement of the Jews in France and Germany. By the creation of the German-Frankish empire – which extended from the ocean to the further side of the Elbe, and from the Mediterranean to the North Sea – Charlemagne transferred the focus of history to Western Europe, whereas hitherto it had been at Constantinople, on the borderland between Eastern Europe and Asia. Although Charlemagne was a protector of the Church, and helped to found the supremacy of the papacy, and Hadrian, the contemporary Pope, was anything but friendly to the Jews, and repeatedly exhorted the Spanish bishops to prevent the Christians from associating with Jews and heathens (Arabs), Charlemagne was too far-seeing to share the prejudices of the clergy with respect to the Jews. In opposition to all the precepts of the Church and decisions of the councils, the first Frankish emperor favored the Jews of his empire, and turned to account the knowledge of a learned man of this race, who journeyed to Syria for him, and brought back to France the products of the East. While other monarchs punished the

Jews for purchasing Church vessels or taking them as pledges from the clergy or the servants of the Church, Charlemagne adopted the opposite course; he inflicted heavy punishment on the sacrilegious ecclesiastics, and absolved the Jews from all penalties.

The Jews were at this period the principal representatives of the commerce of the world. While the nobles devoted themselves to the business of war, the commoners to trades, and the peasants and serfs to agriculture, the Jews, who were not liable to be called upon to perform military service, and possessed no feudal lands, turned their attention to the exportation and importation of goods and slaves, so that the favor extended to them by Charlemagne was, to a certain extent, a privilege accorded to a commercial company. They experienced only the restraint put upon all merchants in the corn and wine trade; the Emperor considered it dishonest to make a profit on the necessaries of life. This somewhat materialistic value set upon the Jews marks, however, great progress from the narrow-mindedness of the Merovingian monarchs, the Gunthrams and the Dagoberts, who saw nothing in the Jews but murderers of God. But Charlemagne also manifested deep interest in the spiritual advancement of the Jewish inhabitants of his empire. In the same way as he had cared for the education of the Germans and the French by inviting learned men from Italy, so also he earnestly desired to place a higher culture within the reach of the German and the French Jews. With this intention he removed a learned family, consisting

of Kalonymos, his son Moses, and his nephew, from Lucca to Mayence (787), hoping besides to make the Jews independent of the academies of the Levant.

Charlemagne's embassy to the powerful Caliph Haroun Alrashid, to which was attached a Jew named Isaac, is familiar to every student of history (797). Although at first probably Isaac accompanied the two nobles, Landfried and Sigismund, only in the character of interpreter, he was nevertheless admitted into Charlemagne's diplomatic secrets. Thus, when the two principal ambassadors died on the journey, the Caliph's reply and the valuable presents which he had forwarded, fell into Isaac's sole charge, and he was received in solemn audience by the Emperor at Aix. The Emperor is also said to have requested the Caliph, through his embassy, to send him from Babylonia a learned Jew for his country, and Haroun is reported to have sent him a man answering his requirements. This man was a certain Machir, whom Charlemagne placed at the head of the Jewish congregation of Narbonne. Machir, who, like Kalonymos of Lucca, became the ancestor of a learned posterity, founded a Talmudical school at Narbonne.

Owing to their favorable position in the Frankish-German Empire, in which they held land, the Jews were permitted to undertake voyages and carry on business, and were harassed neither by the people nor by the really religious German ecclesiastics; they were also enabled to abandon themselves to their inclination for travel, and thus spread through many of the

provinces of Germany. In the ninth century, numbers of them dwelt in the towns of Magdeburg, Merseburg, and Ratisbon. From these points, they penetrated further and further into the countries inhabited by the Slavonians on the further side of the Oder as far as Bohemia and Poland. Meanwhile, in spite of the favor which Charlemagne extended to them, he, like the best men of the Middle Ages, found it difficult to treat them on an entirely equal footing with the Christians. The chasm, which the Fathers of the Church had placed between Christianity and Judaism, and which had been widened by individual ecclesiastics and the synods, was far too deep to be overleapt by an emperor who was devotedly attached to the Church. Charlemagne himself maintained, on one point, a difference between Jew and Christian, and perpetuated it in the peculiar form of the oath which was imposed on the Jews who were witnesses against, or accusers of, a Christian. They were required, in taking an oath against a Christian, to surround themselves with thorns, to take the Torah in their right hand, and to call down upon themselves Naaman's leprosy and the punishment of Korah's faction in witness of the truth of their statement. If there was not a Hebrew copy of the Torah at hand, a Latin Bible was held to be sufficient. It is impossible not to admit, however, that to allow the Jews to testify against a Christian was in itself a deviation from the ordinances of the Church.

In the East, at the beginning of the ninth century, the Jews were also reminded, in a disagreeable manner, that they had

to expect scorn and oppression even from the best rulers. The reigns of the Abassid Caliphs, Haroun Alrashid and his sons, are regarded as the most flourishing period of the Caliphate of the East, but it is at this very time that Jewish complaints of oppression rise loudest. It is possible that in re-enacting Omar's law against the Christians (807), Haroun also made it applicable to the Jews; for they were compelled to wear a distinctive badge of yellow on their dress, in the same way as the Christians were obliged to wear blue, and they had to use a rope instead of a girdle. When, after his death (809), his two sons, Mahomet Alemin and Abdallah Almamun, for whom their father had divided the Caliphate into two parts, engaged in a destructive civil war, throughout the whole extent of the great empire, the Jews, especially those in Palestine, experienced severe persecution. The Christians, however, were their companions in misfortune. During the four years (809–813) of this fratricidal struggle, robbery and massacre seem to have been the order of the day. The sufferings were so terrible, it seems, that a preacher of those times declared them to be a sign of the speedy coming of the Messiah. "Israel can only be redeemed by means of penitence, and true penitence can only be evoked by suffering, affliction, wandering, and want," declared this orator by way of consolation of his afflicted congregation. In the civil war raging between the two Caliphs, he fancied he saw the approaching destruction of the Ishmaelite rule and the approach of the Messianic empire. "Two brothers will finally

rule over the Ishmaelites (Mahometans); there will then arise a descendant of David, and in the days of this king the Lord of Heaven will found a kingdom which shall never perish." "God will exterminate the sons of Esau (Byzantium), Israel's enemies, and also the sons of Ishmael, its adversaries." But these, like many others, were delusive hopes. The civil war, indeed, shook the Caliphate to its foundations, but did not destroy it. Alemin was killed, and Almamun became the sole ruler of this extensive empire.

It was during Almamun's reign (813–833) that the Caliphate of the East flourished most luxuriantly. As he was imbued with tolerance, it was possible for the sciences and a certain form of philosophy to develop. Bagdad, Kairuan in northern Africa, and Merv in Khorasan, became the centers of science, such as Europe did not possess until many centuries later. The genius of the Greeks celebrated its resurrection in Arabic garb. Statesmen competed with men of leisure for the palm of erudition. The Jews did not remain unaffected by this enthusiasm for science. Investigation and subtle inquiry are indeed part of their innermost nature. They took earnest interest in these intellectual activities, and many of their achievements gained the approbation of the Arabs. The history of Arab civilization has several Jewish names recorded in its annals. Sahal, surnamed Rabban (the Rabbanite, the authority on the Talmud), of Taberistan on the Caspian Sea (about the year 800), was celebrated as a physician and a mathematician. He translated

into Arabic the *Almagest* of the Greek astronomer Ptolemy, the text-book of astronomy during the Middle Ages, and was the first to note the refraction of light. His son Abu-Sahal Ali (835–853) is placed among those that advanced the study of medicine, and was the teacher of two Arabic medical authorities, Razi and Anzarbi.

With even more ardor than that with which they had applied themselves to medicine, mathematics and astronomy, the Mussulmans prosecuted the study of the science of religion, a sort of philosophy of religion (*Kalâm*). It was invested with as much importance as the affairs of state, and exercised a certain influence on politics. The expounders of the Koran, in trying to explain away the grossly sensual references to God, and to reconcile the contradictions contained in that work, developed ideas which projected far beyond the restricted horizon of Islam. Many commentators, by reason of their rationalistic explanations, came into conflict with the champions of the text, and were branded by them as heretics. The Mutazilists (heretics) laid great stress upon the unity of God, and desired that no definite attributes should be ascribed to him; for thereby the essence of God appeared to them to be divided into parts, and several beings to be included in the idea of God, whose unity was thus negated. They further asserted the freedom of the human will, because the unconditional predetermination by God, which the Oriental mind believes, and the Koran confirms, was incompatible with divine justice, which rewards the good and

punishes the bad. They believed, however, that they still stood on the same ground as the Koran, although, of course, going far beyond it, and in order to bring their doctrine into harmony with the blunt sayings of their religious book, they employed the same method as the Alexandrian-Jewish philosophers of religion had used to reconcile the Bible with Greek philosophy; they adopted an allegorical interpretation of the text. This interpretation was employed for the purpose of bridging over the gulf existing between the rationalistic idea of God and the irrational idea as taught by the Koran. The rationalistic Mutazilist theology of the Mahometans, although denounced at first as heretical, steadily gained ascendancy; the schools of Bagdad and Bassora rang with its doctrines. The Caliph Almamun exalted it into the theology of the court, and condemned the old simple views of religion.

The adherents of orthodoxy were horrified by this license of interpretation, for the text of the Koran, in an underhand way, was forced into conveying an opposite meaning, and simple faith lost all support. They, therefore, adhered strictly to the letter and to the natural meaning of the text. Some of them went still further. They took, in their literal meaning, all the expressions concerning God, however gross they might be, which occurred in the Koran, or were used by tradition, and constructed a most vile theology. Mahomet expressed a revelation thus: "My Lord came to meet me, gave me his hand in greeting, looked into my face, laid his hand between my shoulders, so that I felt his cold finger-tips," and the orthodox school accepted all this in

revolting literalness. This school (Anthropomorphists) did not hesitate to declare that God was a body possessed of members and a definite form; that he was seven spans high, measured by his own span; that he was in a particular spot – upon his throne; that it was permissible to affirm of him that he moves, mounts his throne and descends from it, stops and rests. These and still more blasphemous descriptions of the Supreme Being, in the same grossly materialistic strain, were given by the orthodox Mahometan teachers of religion, in order to show their adherence to the letter of the Koran in contradistinction to the Rationalists.

The Jews of the East lived in so close a connection with the Mussulmans that they could not fail to be affected by these tendencies. The same phenomena were repeated, therefore, in Jewish circles, and the variance between Karaites and Rabbanites assisted in transferring the Islamic controversies to Judaism. The official supporters of Judaism, however, the colleges of Sora and Pumbeditha, held aloof from them. Entirely absorbed in the Talmud, and its exposition, they either took no notice at first of the violent agitation of mind prevailing, or else refused to yield to it. But outside of the colleges men were actively interested in these new methods, and Judaism was pushed through another process of purification.

The faint ray of philosophy which fell into this world of simple blind faith, ignorant of its own beliefs, produced a dazzling illumination. The Karaites for the most part were of Mutazilist (rationalistic) tendency, while the Rabbanites, on the contrary,

having to defend the strange Agadic statements concerning God, were antagonistic to science. But as the religious edifice of Karaism was not finished, there arose new sects within its pale, with peculiar theories and varying religious practices.

The first person known to have imparted the Mutazilist tendency of Islamic theology to Judaism was Judah Judghan, the Persian, of the town of Hamadan (about 800). His adversaries relate of him that he was originally a camel-herd. He himself pretended to be the herald of the Messiah, and when he had gained adherents, unfolded to them a peculiar doctrine, which he asserted had been made known to him in a vision.

In opposition to the ancient traditional views, in accordance with which the Biblical account of God's deeds and thoughts must be taken literally, Judah Judghan asserted that we ought not to represent God with material attributes or anthropomorphically, for he is elevated above all created things. The expressions which the Torah employs in this connection are to be taken in a wholly metaphorical sense. Nor may we take for granted that, by virtue of His omnipotence and omniscience, God predetermines the acts of man. Much rather ought we to proceed from God's justice, and assume that man is master of his actions, and possessed of free will, and that reward and punishment are meted out to us according to our merit. While Judah of Hamadan was possessed of liberal views concerning theoretical questions, he recommended the severest asceticism in practice. His adherents abstained from meat and wine, fasted

and prayed frequently, but were less strict with respect to the festivals. His followers, who long maintained themselves as a peculiar sect under the name of Judghanites, believed so firmly in him that they asserted that he was not dead, but would appear again, in order to bring a new doctrine with him, as the Shiites believed of Ali. One of his disciples, named Mushka, was desirous of imposing the doctrine of his master on the Jews by force. He marched out of Hamadan with a troop of comrades of similar sentiments, but, together with nineteen of his followers, was killed, in the neighborhood of Koom (east of Hamadan, southwest of Teheran), most probably by the Mussulmans.

Judah Judghan attached more importance to an ascetic mode of living than to the establishing of the philosophical basis of Judaism, and was therefore rather the founder of a sect than a religious philosopher. A contemporary Karaite, Benjamin ben Moses of Nahavend (about 800–820), spread the Mutazilist philosophy among the Karaites. Benjamin Nahavendi is regarded by his fellow-Karaites as an authority, and is honored by them as greatly as Anan, their founder, although he differed from the latter on many points. Benjamin was entirely permeated with the conceptions of the Mutazilists. He was scandalized, not only by the physical and human characteristics of God contained in the Scripture, but also by the revelation and the creation. He could not rest satisfied with the idea that the spiritual Being had created this earthly world, had come into contact with it, had circumscribed himself in space for the purpose of the revelation

on Sinai, and uttered articulate sounds. In order not to abandon his elevated idea of God, and at the same time to preserve the revelation of the Torah, he adopted the following notion, as others had done before him: God had himself created only the spiritual world and the angels; the terrestrial universe, on the other hand, had been created by the angels, so that God ought to be regarded only as the mediate creator of the world. In the same way the revelation, the giving of the Law on Sinai, and the inspiration of the prophets were all the work of an angel only. Certain disciples adopted Benjamin's views, and formed a peculiar sect, called (it is not known for what reason) the Makariyites or Maghariyites.

While Benjamin Nahavendi, as is generally acknowledged, deviated widely from the Jewish system with respect to religious philosophy, he approached the Rabbanites on the subject of morals; he adopted many Talmudical ordinances, and left it to the free choice of the Karaites to reject or adopt them as their standard. In order to enforce obedience to the laws, Benjamin Nahavendi introduced a species of excommunication, which differed only slightly from the excommunication of the Rabbanites. When an accused person refused to obey the summons served on him, and attempted to evade judgment, he was to be cursed on each of seven successive days, and then excommunication pronounced on him. The excommunication consisted in the prohibition of intercourse with all the members of the community, who also were forbidden to greet him, or to

accept anything from him; he was to be treated in all respects like one deceased, until he submitted. If he obstinately disregarded the decree, it was lawful to hand him over to temporal justice. Although Benjamin Nahavendi inclined to Rabbanism on certain points, he adhered firmly, nevertheless, to the Karaite principle of unrestrained research in the Bible. One ought not to tie one's self down to the authorities, but to follow one's own conviction; the son may differ from the father, the disciple from the master, as soon as they have reasons for their different views. "Inquiry is a duty, and errors occasioned by inquiry do not constitute a sin."

In the same manner as the orthodox Mahometan teachers of religion worked counter to the unrestrained subtlety of the Mutazilists, and, falling into the opposite extreme, conceived the divinity as possessed of a bodily form, so also did the Jewish adherents of the orthodox doctrine go astray, and, regarding the rationalistic innovation as a defection from Judaism, they conceived the most absurd ideas concerning the materiality of God. They even desired to accept in their most literal sense the Biblical expressions, "God's hand, God's foot, his sitting down, or walking about." The Agadic exposition of the Scripture, which occasionally made use of material, tangible figures, adapted to the comprehension of the people, promoted the acceptance of this anti-Jewish theory. This theory, the creation of an imbecile, gained adherents by reason of its mysterious nature. It gives a minute, corporeal description of the Deity, measures his height from head to foot by the parasang-scale, speaks in blasphemous

detail of God's right and left eye, of his upper and lower lip, of his beard and of other members, which it would be sacrilegious even to mention. In order, however, not to prejudice the sublimity and majesty of God, this theory enlarges each organ to enormous proportions, and considers that justice has been done to the case when it adds that the scale by which the members are measured considerably exceeds the whole world (Shiur-Komah). To this God, whom it thus dissected and measured, the theory assigned a special house in heaven with seven halls (Hechaloth). In the uppermost hall, God is seated upon an elevated throne, the proportions of which are measured by the same enormous scale. The halls are populated by this materialistic theory with myriads of angels, to some of whom are assigned names formed by the arbitrary combination of Hebrew and foreign words into barbarous sounds. The chief angel, however, is a certain Metatron, and the theory adds, after the example of the Christian and Mahometan authors, that he was Enoch or Henoch, originally a man, but transported by God into heaven, and converted into flames of fire. With evident pleasure the theory dwells upon the description of this abortion of a morbid fancy. It even dared place him at the side of the Divinity, and call him the "little God."

This theory, which was a compound of misunderstood Agadas, and of Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan fantastic notions, clothed itself in mysterious obscurity, and pretended to be a revelation. In order to answer the inquiry whence it

had acquired this wisdom which enabled it to scoff at Judaism, in other words, at the Bible and the Talmud, it quotes alleged divine instructions. As there is no nonsense, however apparent, which cannot find adherents when earnestly and impressively enunciated, this doctrine of mystery, which was based upon a grossly material conception of God, found many followers. Its adepts called themselves "Men of Faith." They boasted of possessing the means of obtaining a view of the divine household. By virtue of certain incantations, invocations of the names of God and the angels, and the recitation of certain prayer-like chants, combined with fasting and an ascetic mode of living, they pretended to be able to perform supernatural deeds. For this purpose they made use of amulets and cameos (Kameoth), and wrote upon them the names of God or the angels with certain signs. Miracle-working was a trifle to these mystics. They asserted that every pious man had the power of performing miracles, if he only employed the proper means. To this end they wrote a number of works on the theory and practice of the esoteric doctrine; for the most part they contained downright nonsense, but here and there they rose to poetry. But this mystical literature only gave hints; the adepts would surrender the real key to a knowledge of the divine secrets and to the power of performing miracles only to certain persons, in whose hand and forehead they pretended to discover lines that proved them to be worthy of this favor.

This mystical doctrine flourished chiefly in Palestine, where

the real study of the Talmud was languishing; little by little it made its way into Babylonia. This became apparent on the occasion of the election of a principal of the Pumbeditha academy (814). The best claim to this office was that advanced by a certain Mar-Aaron (ben Samuel), by reason of his erudition and on account of his having acted up till then as chief judge. Nevertheless, preference was given to the claim of a rival, the aged Joseph bar Abba, who was far inferior to him in learning; the reason of this preference being that the latter was an adept in mysticism, and was believed to be favored with the intimacy of the prophet Elijah. One day when this same Joseph bar Abba was presiding at a public meeting, he exclaimed with rapture, "Make room for the old man who is just coming in." The eyes of all present were immediately turned to the entrance, and those to the right of the principal respectfully stepped aside. They saw no one enter, however, and were therefore all the more positively convinced that the prophet Elijah had entered invisible, had seated himself on the right of his friend Joseph, and had been present during the whole of his discourse. After that time no one dared occupy the place at the side of the principal of the Pumbeditha academy, for it had been honored and hallowed by Elijah, and it became the custom to leave it vacant.

Joseph's successor, Mar-Abraham ben Sherira (816–828), was likewise a mystic. It was said that he could foresee the future from the rustling of palm leaves on a calm day.

More liberal views, and even Karaism, found a way into the

halls of learning, just as mysticism had done before. Through these opposed views quarrels naturally arose, which came to light when the office of Exilarch was to be filled. In the year 825 there was to be the election of a new Prince of the Exile. For this office there were two candidates, David ben Judah and Daniel. The latter was inclined to Karaism, and perhaps just on this account found in southern Babylonia many supporters who gave him their votes. The Babylonians in the north, who belonged to Pumbeditha (Anbar), decided in favor of David, as he doubtless belonged to the orthodox party. The quarrel was carried on with much virulence. The mystic Abraham ben Sherira was deposed in consequence, and Joseph ben Chiya appointed in his place. It is not known by which party this was brought about. But Abraham had followers in Pumbeditha, who gave him their support, and refused allegiance to the rival Gaon. The quarrel could not be decided by their own authorities, and both parties appealed to the Caliph Almamun to confirm the Exilarch of their choice. Almamun, however, at that time was engaged in a dispute about the Eastern Church. He had been called upon to decide between two claimants for the Chaldæo-Christian Patriarchate, and wanted to rid himself of such litigation. He therefore declined to interfere in the internal affairs of the Jews and Christians, and decreed that in future each party should be empowered to elect its own religious chief. If ten Jews wished to elect an Exilarch, ten Christians an Archbishop, or ten Fire-worshippers a Chief Priest, they had the power to do so. This

decree was unsatisfactory to both parties, inasmuch as it left the quarrel undecided; it is not certain how it ended. So much, however, is known: David ben Judah asserted his authority, and filled the post for about ten years (till 840).

In the school of Sora also quarrels broke out (827). The quarrel between the chiefs lasted for a long time in the school of Pumbeditha. Eventually a compromise was effected. There were to be two Gaons holding office together, who should share equally the title and the revenue. Abraham, however, was to have the privilege of delivering the address at the general assemblies.

One day both heads of the school at Pumbeditha met in Bagdad at an installation ceremony, at which it was customary to give an address. The capital of the Caliphate had at this time a numerous Jewish community and several synagogues. Bagdad, which was nearer to Pumbeditha than to Sora, belonged to the district of the School of Pumbeditha. Its president was there given the preference to him of Sora.

When the lecture was to begin, and it was proclaimed aloud, "Hear what the heads of the schools are about to say," those present burst into tears on account of the disunion in their midst. The tears of the multitude had so mighty an effect upon Joseph ben Chiya that he arose, and publicly tendered his resignation in favor of his opponent.

He received an insulting blessing as the reward of his noble resolve. "May God give you a share in the world to come," said his opponent, who now assumed his position. It was only after

Abraham's death (828), that the noble Joseph was re-installed as Gaon of Pumbeditha (828–833).

All disputes had ceased in the school of Sora, but they soon broke out again, and created such confusion, that Sora was without a Gaon for two years (837–839). We are in the dark as to the true reason of all this discord, but it is probable that the rise of Karaism had something to do with it. However much the Rabbanites hated the Karaite sect, and though they declared it heretical, and kept away from it, yet they adopted several of its teachings, and imitated it in others.

But if Anan's sect had sown the seeds of dissension amongst the followers of the more ancient sect, it was itself not by any means free therefrom. The principal dogma of Karaism was unlimited freedom in exegesis, and the regulation of religion according to the result of honest inquiry. The result was that every Karaite constructed his Judaism according to his own interpretation of the text. Religious practice was regulated according to the clever or silly ideas of the expositor. Moreover, exegesis was yet in its infancy. The knowledge of the Hebrew language, the basis of a healthy, rational exegesis, was still scanty, and arbitrariness had every opportunity of asserting itself. Every one believed himself to be in possession of the truth, and when he did not condemn them, pitied those who did not share his views. We have a sad picture of the condition of Karaism scarcely a century after Anan's death. New sects, too, arose from it, the founders of which had strange ideas about some customs of

Judaism. Musa (or Mesvi) and Ishmael, from the town of Akbara (seven miles east of Bagdad), are said to have held peculiar views about the observance of the Sabbath. What these views were we do not now know, but they approached the doctrines of the Samaritans. The two Akbarites further declared that the Pentateuchal prohibition against eating certain parts of the fat of an animal only referred to the sacrifices, and that it was permissible to use them otherwise. Musa and Ishmael found followers who lived according to their doctrines. These formed a sect within Karaism, and called themselves Akbarites.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.