JEWS AND JUDAISM IN THE WRITINGS OF IBN TAYMIYYA
(The Theologian's Contacts with Jews and Former Jews)

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Abstract. Despite the enormous body of literature on the writings of the Damascene theologian and jurist, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), scholars have not paid much attention to his discussions of Jews and Judaism. The reason for this lacuna is the vast corpus of writings that Ibn Taymiyya left behind him, without, however, any direct or comprehensive discussions of Judaism. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya lacks a systematic conceptualization of the matters he treats in his works. Thus, this paper examines Ibn Taymiyya's references to Judaism from a wide variety of works, including his writings against the Shīʿa, the Christians, and the Mongols. The essay in front of you is the first section of a larger writing project on Judaism in the works of Ibn Taymiyya, focusing here on his contacts with Jews or former Jews. It argues that Ibn Taymiyya was regularly in touch with Jewish converts to Islam who served as his interlocutors for matters pertaining to Judaism; and that he was personally involved with the attack in the Mamluk Sultanate against Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadhānī (d. 718/1318), the vizier of the Ilkhanids, who was himself a Jewish convert to Islam. As it was common in the Islamic Middle Period, Ibn Taymiyya's tirade against Rashīd al-Dīn links between the latter's Jewish background and heretical views (*zandaqa* and *ilḥād*) as a means to demonize the entire Ilkhanid state, despite the conversion to Islam of its rulers and elite.

Keywords: ʿAbd al-Sayyid ibn al-Muhadhdhib; Asad al-Yahūdī; heresy and apostasy; Ibn Taymiyya; Ilkhanids (Mongols); interreligious polemics; Jewish conversion to Islam; Judaism and Anti-Judaism; Mamluk Sultanate; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadhānī.

I. Introduction

On Dhū al-Ḥijja 4, 701 A.H. (July 31, 1302) a Jewish judge, *dayyān al-Yahūd*, who inherited the title from his father and grandfather, ʿAbd al-Sayyid ibn al-Muhadhdhib,[1] entered with his sons to

[1] The full name, as given by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, is ʿAbd al-Sayyid b. Isḥāq b. Yaḥyā al-Isrāʾilī (the Israelite) al-Ḥakīm al-Fāḍil (the Honorable Physician) Bahāʾ al-Dīn ibn al-Muhadhdhib. On the *nisba al-Isrāʾilī* vs. *al-Yahūdī*, N.A. Stillman (*EI*^{2}, "Yahūd") writes: "Because of the decidedly more negative connotations of the term *Yahūd* [Jews], as opposed to *Banū Isrāʾīl* [Children of Israel], the latter increasingly became the polite usage in Arabic when referring to Jews (in a semantic parallel to early modern French usages *juif* versus *israélite*). *Al-Isrāʾīlī* was the usual *nisba* for distinguished Jews, such as Mūsā b. Maymūn al-Isrāʾīlī al-Andalusī [i.e. Maimonides]." Cf. D.J. Wasserstein, "What's in a Name? ʿAbd Allāh b. Isḥāq ibn al-Shanāʿa al-Muslimānī al-Isrāʾīlī and Conversion to Islam in Medieval Cordoba," in *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern Times: A Festschrift in Honor of Mark R. Cohen*, eds. A.E. Franklin et al. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 139-14; and see now Y. Frenkel, "Conversion Stories from the Mamlūk Period," in *Muslim-Jewish Relations in the Middle Islamic Period: Jews in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Sultanates (1171-1517)*, ed. S. Conermann (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; [Bonn]: Bonn University Press, 2017), 75-94. I would like to thank Y. Frenkel and M. Frenkel for bringing this issue to my attention.

the *Dār al-'adl* (Palace of Justice)[2] in Damascus, where they all converted to Islam. The viceroy granted upon them the robes of honor, and ordered them to ride on horses around the city with a musical procession of drums and horns to accompany them. Furthermore, the viceroy organized at his residence a banquet that included a complete recitation of the Qur'ān, and judges and religious scholars attended the feast. On the holiday of 'Īd al-aḍḥā (Sacrifice Feast) that occurred six days afterwards (Dhū al-Ḥijja 10, 701/August 6, 1302), 'Abd al-Sayyid and his sons were treated with high regard by the people attending the mosque, and a number of Jews adopted Islam following the conversion of the judge.[3]

'Abd al-Sayyid (d. 715/1315), a member of a distinguished Jewish family, was a physician and ophthalmologist by profession. The viceroy appointed him to head the Nūrī hospital in Damascus.[4] 'Abd al-Sayyid's son, Yūsuf ibn al-dayyān (Joseph, the judge's son; d. 751/1350), was among the family members who converted to Islam, and like his father was himself a physician.[5]

The case of 'Abd al-Sayyid represents a wider phenomenon of Jewish physicians adopting Islam during the Mamluk period.[6] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī reports that the Jewish doctor

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[2] *Dār al-'adl*: The place where the ruler or his deputies held public hearings (*maẓālim*). The building in Damascus was the first of its kind to be built for this purpose, and was founded by Nūr al-Dīn Zankī (r. 541-69/1146-74). By the Mamluk period, it was transformed into the viceregal palace, and was known also by the name *Dār al-sa'āda* (House of Felicity). For more details on the Damascene *Dār al-'adl*, see N.O. Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of the *Dar al-'Adl* in the Medieval Islamic Orient," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27, 1 (1995): 6-9; W.M. Brinner, "*Dār al-Saʿāda* and *Dār al-ʿAdl* in Mamluk Damascus," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977), 235-247. On the Mamluk institution of *maẓālim* see A. Fuess, "*Ẓulm* by *Maẓālim*? About the Political Implication of the Use of *Maẓālim* Jurisdiction by the Mamluk Sultans," *Mamluk Studies Review*, 13, 1 (2009): 121-147.

[3] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1993), 2:366-367 (this edition of the *Durar* is a reprint of Hyderabad: Majlis Dā'irat al-Maʿārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1929-1932); I. Goldziher, "Mélanges Judéo-Arabes, I. 'Abd al-Sayyid al-Isra'ili," *Revue des études juives*, 43 (1901): 1-2 (trans. of Ibn Ḥajar); Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wal-nihāya*, eds. Aḥmad Abū Mulḥim et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1985), 18:10-11; al-Yūnīnī, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān*, ed. and trans. L. Guo (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 1:206-207 (English trans.), 2:255 (Arabic).

[4] *Ibid*. On the Nūrī hospital, see A. Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital: Medicine, Religion, and Charity*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, index, s.v. "al-Bīmāristān al-Nūrī."

[5] Following his conversion, Yūsuf changed his name to Muḥammad. A question that was raised among Muslim scholars was whether he could grant an *ijāza* (authorization to transmit knowledge) for teachings that he had taken prior to his conversion to Islam, i.e. as a Jew. Ibn Taymiyya ruled out that such an *ijāza* was indeed permissible. See al-Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-mughīth bi-sharḥ Alfīyat al-ḥadīth*, eds. 'Abd al-Karīm ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khuḍayr and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Allāh ibn Fuhayd Āl al-Fuhayd (Riyadh: Maktabat Dār al-Minhāj, 2005), 2:303-304; Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *al-Klām 'alā 'ulūm al-ḥadīth*, ed. Ḥasan Nūr Ḥasan al-'Illī (Mecca: Umm al-Qura University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1994-95), 2:489; al-Dhahabī, *Dhuyūl al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, ed. Abū Hājar Muḥammad al-Saʿīd ibn Basyūnī Zaghūl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1985), 4:173.

[6] A. Mazor, "Jewish Court Physicians in the Mamluk Sultanate during the First Half of the 8th/14th Century," *Medieval Encounters*, 20 (2014): 38-65; *idem*, "Asad al-Yahūdī – A Court Physician in the

was fond of Muslims and attended *ḥadīth* sessions. He studied with the traditionist Jamāl al-Din Yūsuf b. al-Zakī al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341),[7] and after his conversion learned the Qur'ān, and associated with the religious scholars.[8] Another teacher of this doctor was Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), the controversial Ḥanbalī theologian and jurist, who mentions the student in his works. In his denunciations of monistic Sufism (*ittiḥād*, "Unity," or *waḥdat al-wujūd*, "Unity of Being"),[9] the Damascene theologian critiques the writings of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and the spread of his doctrines among his contemporaries.[10] A particular case for rebuking Ibn 'Arabī was his argument in the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) that Pharaoh, known in the Qur'ān for his blasphemy (Q. 79:24; 28:28), had been granted belief by God and had died "pure, immaculate, and free of evilness."[11] Ibn Taymiyya severely attacks Ibn 'Arabī's monistic speculations, and considers them to be heretic statements. Thus he names Ibn 'Arabī and his supporters, disparagingly, using the term *Fir'awnī* (Pharonist). In order to demonstrate that monist Sufis approve of Pharaoh, Ibn Taymiyya relates one discussion with the Jewish student 'Abd al-Sayyid. The latter told him that he had met the Sufi sheikh al-Sharaf al-Balāsī, seeking knowledge from him. When the sheikh invited him to follow his doctrine (*madhhab*), 'Abd al-Sayyid answered that the doctrine was false (*madhhab fāsid*), and that he would not abandon Moses (i.e. his Jewish faith) and follow Pharaoh, for Moses had caused Pharaoh to drown.[12] Ibn

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Mamlūk Period" [Hebrew], *Zion*, 77 (2013): 471-489. Mazor writes of Jewish physicians' conversion to Islam in the context of the anti-*dhimmī* persecutions in the Mamluk Sultanate of the early fourteenth century and the "decline of the science of medicine in the Muslim world." He ignores, however, the possible intellectual motives for such acts of conversion, as in the case of 'Abd al-Sayyid. See S. Stroumsa, "On Jewish Intellectuals who Converted to Islam in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society, and Identity*, ed. Daniel Frank (Leiden; New York, 1995), 179-197.

[7] al-Mizzī was Ibn Taymiyya's teacher and companion. See *EI*^{2}, "al-Mizzī" (G.H.A. Juynboll).

[8] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 2:366.

[9] See W.C. Chittick, "*Waḥdat al-wujūd* in Islamic Thought," *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* (Hyderabad), 10 (1991): 7-27.

[10] Ibn 'Arabī resided in Damascus from 620/1226 until his death in 638/1240, and wrote in this city the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) and the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Meccan Revelations). On this scholar and his teachings, see A. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 163-168; W.C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005).

[11] *Ibn al-'Arabī's Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam: An Annotated Translation of 'The Bezels of Wisdom,'* trans. B. Abrahamov (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2015), 159. On the controversy about this idea of Ibn 'Arabī, see D. Gril, "Le personnage coranique de Pharaon d'après l'interprétation d'Ibn 'Arabī," *Annales islamologiques*, 14 (1978): 37-57; C.W. Ernst, "Controversy over Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣuṣ*: The Faith of Pharaoh." *Islamic Culture*, 59 (1985): 259-266; E. Ormsby, "The Faith of Pharaoh: A Disputed Question in Islamic Theology," *Studia Islamica*, 98-99 (2004): 5-28. On the Qur'ānic view of Pharaoh see A. Silverstein, "The Qur'ānic Pharaoh," in *New Perspectives in the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in Historical Context 2*, ed. Gabriel S. Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 467-477.

[12] Q. 7:136; 8:54; 17:103. In Jewish biblical exegesis, it was occasionally suggested that Pharaoh survived the drowning. See *Sefer Pirke Rabi Eli'ezer*, Warsaw: Zisberg, 1874, chapter 43; *Midrash agadah*, ed. S. Buber, Vienna: A. Fanto, 1894, 1:145 (commentary to Ex. 14:28); *Midrash Tehillim*, ed. S. Buber (Vilna:

Taymiyya ends this account: "I said to 'Abd al-Sayyid – that is, prior to his conversion to Islam: 'Your Judaism served you well, for a Jew is better than a Pharonist!'" (*nafa'atka al-Yahūdiyya, Yahūdī khayr min Fir'awnī*).[13]

The purpose of this essay is to survey Ibn Taymiyya's contacts with Jews and former Jews in order to study from these encounters on his attitude towards Jews and Judaism. Despite numerous studies on Ibn Taymiyya, what we may call "Taymiyyan Studies,"[14] Judaism is rarely discussed through researching his writings. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya was the polemicist *par excellence* in the Middle Islamic Period, a characteristic that did not go unnoticed by one of his disciples who stated that his master "was frequently tactless and argumentative, may God forgive him!"[15] The assertion of a modern reader, Walid Saleh, confirms this view: "It is no wonder that most of [Ibn Taymiyya's] production was theological or polemical in nature. The man could hardly muster the composure to write dispassionately."[16] In his polemics, Ibn Taymiyya condemns the Mongols,[17] the Christians,[18] Twelver Shī'a,[19] the *ghulāt* sects,[20] Sufi doctrines,[21]

Rom, 1891), 228 (commentary to Psa. 106:5). For an opposite opinion, see Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary to Ex. 14.

[13] Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Furqān bayna al-ḥaqq wal-bāṭil*, in *Majmū'at al-fatāwā* (herefater: MF), eds. 'Āmir al-Jazzār and Anwar al-Bāz, al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafā', 2005, third ed., 13:101 (this edition of the MF retains the pagination of *Majmū' fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya*, eds. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim and Muḥammad ibn Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad, Riyadh: Maṭābi' al-Riyāḍ, 1961-67); I. Goldziher, "Mélanges Judéo-Arabes, XXXIV. Encore 'Abd al-Sayyid al-Isra'ili," *Revue des études juives*, 60 (1910): 38; Joel L. Kraemer, "The Andalusian Mystic Ibn Hūd and the Conversion of the Jews," *Israel Oriental Studies*, 12 (1992): 65-66. In a second account of the same discussion between Ibn Taymiyya and 'Abd al-Sayyid, the Sufi master is not named al-Sharaf al-Balāsī, but Ḥasan al-Shirāzī (MF, 2:218). On Ibn Taymiyya's critique of Ibn 'Arabī, see A. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 87-111.

[14] There is vast literature on Ibn Taymiyya and his works. Some of the more significant studies on him include H. Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-d-Dīn Ahmad b. Taimīya, canoniste ḥanbalite, né à Harrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328* (Le Caire: Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1939); C. Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: Una vita esemplare. Analisi delle fonti classiche della sua biografia* (Pisa; Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2003); Y. Rapoport and Sh. Ahmed (eds.), *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010); B. Krawietz and G. Tamer (eds.), *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013). For a survey of the current state of the art in studying Ibn Taymiyya, see E.A. Bazzano, "Ibn Taymiyya, Radical Polymath (Part I: Scholarly Perceptions; Part 2: Intellectual Contributions)," *Religion Compass*, 9, 4 (2015): 100-139.

[15] al-Dhahabī, ed. and trans. in C. Bori, "A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 67, 3 (2004): 334 (Arabic), 343 (English trans.)

[16] W. Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of *An Introduction to the Foundations of Qur'ānic Exegesis*," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 132.

[17] D. Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: Studies in Anthropological History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 283-305 (this is a revised version of a previous publication: "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three 'Anti-Mongol' *Fatwas*," *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 11, 2 [2007]: 89-120); Y. Michot, "Un important témoin de l'histoire et de la société mamlūkes à l'époque des Īlḫāns et de la fin des Croisades: Ibn Taymiyya (ob. 728/1328)," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 1, (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1995), 335-353; E. Fons, "À

and practices pertaining to "popular religion,"[22] but *none* of his writings deals directly with Judaism, what explains the scarcity of studies on this topic.[23] The extant of Ibn Taymiyya's

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propos des Mongols. Une lettre d'Ibn Taymiyya au Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn," *Annales Islamologiques*, 43 (2009): 31-68; T. Morel, "Deux Textes anti-Mongols d'Ibn Taymiyya," *Muslim World*, 105, 3 (2015): 368-397; R. Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260-1335)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 78-80.

[18] Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, eds. ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan ibn Nāṣir et al. (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima, 1999); *idem*, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawab al-Sahih*, ed. and trans. T.F. Michel (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1984); *idem*, *al-Ṣārim al-maslūl ʿalā shātim al-Rasūl*, eds. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥalawānī, Muḥammad Kabīr Aḥmad Shawdarī (Damām: Dār al-Maʾālī, 2007, second ed.); *idem*, "*Mas'alat al-Kanâ'is* (The Question of the Churches)," trans. B. O'Keeffe, *Islamochristiana*, 22 (1996): 53-78; M.S. Wagner, "The Problem of Non-Muslims who Insult the Prophet Muḥammad," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 135, 3 (2015): 529-540. For an extensive bibliography on Ibn Taymiyya's anti-Christian writings, see J. Hoover, "Ibn Taymiyya," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4 (1200-1350), eds. D. Thomas and A. Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 824-878.

[19] Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunnah al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (Riyadh: Jamiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd al-Ilāmiyya; Idārat al-Thaqāfa wal-Nashr bil-Jāmiʿa, 1986); Y. Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Critique of Shīʿī Imāmology: Translation of Three Sections of His *Minhāj al-Sunna*," *Muslim World*, 104 (2014): 109-149; G. Schallenbergh, "Ibn Taymīya on the *Ahl al-Bayt*," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 407-420.

[20] Literally: "extremists," i.e. Shīʿītes who were accused by their rivals of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) in religious matters and in respect to their imams. On Ibn Taymiyya's polemics against the *ghulāt*, see S. Guyard, "Le *Fatwa* d'Ibn Taimiyyah sur les Nosairis," *Journal Asiatique* (6e série), 18 (1871): 158-198; Y. Friedman, "Ibn Taymiyya's *Fatāwā* against the Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawī Sect," *Der Islam*, 82, 2 (2005): 349-363; *idem*, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 62-63, 188-199, 299-309; Y. Talhamy, "The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46, 2 (2010): 175-194. On the *ghulāt* sects, see *EI*^{2}, "Ghulāt" (M.G.S. Hodgson); M. Asatryan, *Controversies in Formative Shiʿi Islam: The Ghulat Muslims and Their Beliefs* (London: I.B. Tauris; The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017).

[21] M. Abdul Haq Ansari, "Ibn Taymiyyah and Sufism," *Islamic Studies*, 24, 1 (1985): 1-12; Y. Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's Commentary on the Creed of al-Ḥallāj," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. A. Shihadeh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 123-136. On Ibn Taymiyya's criticism of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings, see Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*.

[22] Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm li-mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm*, ed. Nāṣir ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿAql (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1994, fourth ed.); *idem*, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle against Popular Religion, with an Annotated Translation of His Kitāb Iqtiḍā' aṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaquīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm*, trans. M.U. Memon (The Hague: Mouton, 1976); N.H. Olesen, *Culte des saints et pélerinages chez Ibn Taymiyya: 661/1263-728/1328* (Paris: Libr. orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1991); C.S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 195-218; Y. Michot, "Between Entertainment and Religion: Ibn Taymiyya's Views on Superstition," *Muslim World*, 99, 1 (2009): 1-20.

[23] E. Ashtor (Strauss), *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Mitsrayim ve-Suryah tahat shilton ha-Mamlukim* [History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluk Rule] (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1944-1970), 1:210-217; A. Morabia, "Ibn Taymiyya, les Juifs et la Tora," *Studia Islamica*, 49 (1979): 91-122, & 50 (1979): 77-107; Samīra ʿAbd Allāh Bakr Banānī, *Juhūd al-imāmayn Ibn Taymiyya wa-Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya fī daḥḍ muftarayāt al-Yahūd* (Mecca: Wizārat al-Taʿlīm al-ʿĀlī, Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, Maʿhad al-Buḥūth al-ʿIlmiyya wa-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1997); Muḥammad Ḥarbī, *Ibn Taymiyya wa-mawqifhu min ahamm al-firaq wal-diyānāt fī ʿaṣrihi* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1987), 323-403; Yūsuf al-ʿĀyib, "Naqd Ibn Taymiyya li-ʿaqīdat al-ulūhiyya fī al-diyāna al-Yahūdiyya,"
http://www.univ-emir.dz/download/revues/elaib35.pdf (last accessed: February 28, 2017). Ḥamdī ibn Ḥumayd ibn Ḥammūd al-Qurayqirī's *Qawāʿid Ibn Taymiyya fī al-radd ʿalā al-mukhālifīn: al-Yahūd, al-Naṣārā, al-falāsifa, al-firaq al-Islāmiyya* ([Riyadh: Dār al-Faḍīla, 2011], 69-81) contains three "treatises"

writings, one of the most prolific authors of the Later Islamic Middle Period, is another reason that scholars hardly treated discussions of Judaism in his works. Caterina Bori observes that Ibn Taymiyya "did not have a systematic mind. Rather, he was unsystematically explosive both in the quantity and in the quality of his works. Anybody approaching his writings must cope with his digressive and repetitive style, with the immense number of authorities and past scholars he had in mind or to whom he directly refers, and with his polemical language and the targets it implicitly or explicitly strikes."[24] It is thus my aim to discuss here Ibn Taymiyya's encounters with Jews, in an essay that is a part of a longer study on the Damascene theologian's attitude towards Judaism.

II. Ibn Taymiyya's Encounters with Jews and Former Jews

Besides ʻAbd al-Sayyid ibn al-Muhadhdhib, Muslim sources report of further contacts of Ibn Taymiyya with Jews. A second Jewish apostate who associated with Ibn Taymiyya was Asad (or: Usayda) al-Yahūdī (the Jew).[25] Asad (d. after 730/1329-30), a physician, surgeon, and ophthalmologist, resided in Safed and Ḥamāh, and was a friend of several Mamluk high-officials and leading intellectuals of his times, including Ibn Taymiyya, the polymath Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn al-Wakīl (d. 716/1316),[26] and the historian al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363).[27] Asad used to hold debates (*munāẓarāt*) with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Wakīl. On his disputations with al-Ṣafadī, this historian says:

> Due to his brightness and cleverness, [Asad] used to challenge us [i.e. al-Ṣafadī] while discussing [Arabic] grammar and the principles of [Islamic] jurisprudence. I have not seen among Muslims anyone as fearless as he was, for he does not discriminate neither between an old man and a youngster, nor between a king and his vizier.[28]

Despite their close acquaintance, al-Ṣafadī is suspectful of Asad's true faith; he speculates that Asad might have abandoned Islam in order to return to his former faith (*aslama thumma tahawwada*), although no clear indication for that has even been found. He maintains that Asad

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of Ibn Taymiyya on Judaism, extracted and edited from the MF and the *Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*.

[24] C. Bori, "The Collection and Edition of Ibn Taymīyah's Works: Concerns of a Disciple," *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 13, 2 (2009): 55.

[25] See Mazor's studies (*op. cit.*, n. 6).

[26] One of Ibn Taymiyya's rivals in the debates against him. See Sh.A. Jackson, "Ibn Taymiyyah on Trial in Damascus," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 39, 1 (1994): 46-47.

[27] *EI²*, "al-Ṣafadī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak" (F. Rosenthal); D.P. Little, "Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of His Contemporaries," in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald P. Little (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 190-211.

[28] al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bil-wafayāt*, eds. Aḥmad al-Arnā'ūṭ and Turkī Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʻArabī, 2000), 9:8-9; *ibid.*, *Aʻyān al-ʻaṣr wa-aʻwān al-naṣr*, eds. ʻAlī Abu Zayd et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʻāṣir; Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1998), 1:488-490.

was not a sincere Jew either, and that he used his Judaism in order to conceal his philosophical views.[29]

Associating Jews (or Jewish converts to Islam)—in our case, Asad al-Yahūdī—with heresies such as philosophy was not peculiar to al-Ṣafadī. Amir Mazor points out to Ibn Ḥazm's (d. 456/1064) polemic against an anti-Muslim tract that is ascribed to the Jewish vizier, Samuel ha-Nagid, that is, *al-Radd 'alā Ibn Naghrīla al-Yahūdī* (Refutation of Ibn Naghrīla, the Jew).[30] Ibn Ḥazm opens his polemic with the following words, introducing his adversary:

> Now then, a man whose heart seethes with malice toward Islam and its community of believers and whose liver is molten with hostility for the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, a man who belongs to the "materialist" heretics (*mutadahhirat al-zanādiqa*) who conceal themselves among the most abject of religions and most detestable of religious doctrines, namely Judaism, upon whose adherents God's curse falls constantly and upon whose followers God's wrath, may He be exalted and magnified, resides permanently. Insolence has loosened this man's tongue and hubris has released his reins. His contemptuous soul has become arrogant because of his abounding wealth, and the abundance of gold and silver in his possession has inflated his detestable ambition, such that he composed a book in which he expressly intended to expose alleged contradictions in the Word of God, may He be exalted and magnified, in the Qur'ān.[31]

Ibn Ḥazm's polemic identifies the subject of the polemic as a Jew who belongs to the materialists (*dahriyya*), those who, according to Patricia Crone, "denied the existence of God, angels, spirits, the resurrection, post-mortem reward and punishment, and the afterlife altogether. In effect, they rejected the entire metaphysical realm as either false or beyond the limits of human reasoning, on the understating that there was no point in trying to know about anything *unless* it was accessible to human reasoning."[32] The other term used against the author of the anti-Muslim tract identifies him as belonging to the *zanādiqa* (sin. *zindīq*), a word that designates a variety of heresies and religious views that were condemned by Muslim orthodoxy.[33]

Modern scholars question Samuel ha-Nagid's authorship of an anti-Muslim tract. Sarah Stroumsa argues that Ibn Ḥazm's *Refutation of Ibn Naghrīla* actually refutes the *Kitāb al-Dāmigh*

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[29] *Wa-lam yakun Yahūdīᵃⁿ ilā yatasattaru bi-dhalika wa-inammā kāna yarā ra'y al-falāsifa*.
[30] Mazor, "Jewish Court Physicians," 55-56; *idem*, "Asad al-Yahūdī," 478-479.
[31] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Radd 'alā Ibn al-Naghrīla al-Yahūdī wa-rasā'il ukhrā*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-'Urūba, 1960), 46; trans. R. Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 77 (cited with a slight change).
[32] P. Crone, "The Dahrīs according to al-Jāḥiẓ," in *idem*, *Collected Studies in Three Volumes*, vol. 3: *Islam, the Ancient Near East and Varieties of Godlessness*, ed. H. Siurua (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 96 (italics in original).
[33] Originally, *zindīq* designated the followers of Manichaeism. See G. Vajda, "Les *zindîqs* en pays d'Islam au debut de la période abbaside," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 17 (1937-38): 173; I. Kristó-Nagy, "Denouncing the Damned *Zindīq*! Struggle and Interaction between Monotheism and Dualism," in *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfir*, eds. C. Adang et al. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 56-57.

of the "free-thinker" Ibn al-Rāwandī (*fl*. third/ninth century) instead of a Jewish treatise.[34] Maribel Fierro, however, ascribes the anti-Muslim tract to alleged adherents of the *dahriyya*, Andalusian Jews who were well familiar with the *Kitāb al-Dāmigh*. Aside from the subject of the *Refutation*, Ibn Ḥazm, in his heresiographical work, *al-Fiṣal wal-milal*, identifies two Jewish physicians: Ismāʻīl b. Yūnus al-Aʻwar and Ismāʻīl ibn al-Qarrād, as *dahrīs*. Thus the *Refutation* could be attacking Jewish acquaintances of Ibn Ḥazm.[35]

The true identity of the author of the anti-Muslim tract should concern us here, as we are simply interested in studying the links, from the point of view of Muslim orthodoxy, between Judaism and heresy. Ibn Ḥazm believed that the author of the polemical tract was a contemporary Jew in al-Andalus, and more specifically, that it was composed by Samuel ha-Nagid. A case from Ibn Taymiyya's times, studied by Livnat Holtzman, points out to the same allegation of heretical speculations among Jews in Mamluk Syria. It appears in the background for completing a poem of more than 100 verses by Ibn Taymiyya, the *Manẓūma al-tāʾiyya* (literally: a poem rhyming in *tāʾ* throughout the work), concerning the question on predestination. While a copyist of Ibn Taymiyya's works reports that this poem is a response to a question presented to him by a *dhimmī* (Jew or Christian), Abū ʻAlī Ḥafṣ ʻUmar ibn ʻAlī al-Bazzār (d. 749/1348), a biographer of Ibn Taymiyya, is more specific regarding the religion of this *dhimmī*:

> The righteous sheikh Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad known as Ibn al-Dawrī told me that he participated in one of the sheikh [Ibn Taymiyya]'s classes. A Jew asked Ibn Taymiyya a question on predetermination (*masʾala fī al-qadar*), which he [i.e., the Jew] composed as an eight-verse poem. When Ibn Taymiyya read the question, he contemplated for a brief moment, and then he started writing a response to that question. He wrote and wrote, and all the while we thought he was writing in prose. When he finished, his companions who were present there looked at what he wrote, and to their astonishment they saw that he composed a poem in the same meter as the verses composed by the man who sought Ibn Taymiyya's opinion. Ibn Taymiyya's work was a rhymed poem of nearly 184 verses. The poem contained vast knowledge to such an overwhelming extent, that were it interpreted, its interpretation would have filled two huge volumes. The poem was truly an unprecedented legal response to a question (*jawāb fatwā*).[36]

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[34] S. Stroumsa, "From Muslim Heresy to Jewish-Muslim Polemics: Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Dāmigh*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 107 (1987): 767-772. On Ibn al-Rāwandī see Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rawāndī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999); I. Lindstedt, "Anti-Religious Views in the Works of Ibn al-Rāwandī and Abū l-ʻAlāʾ al-Maʻarrī," *Studia Orientalia*, 111 (2011): 131-157.

[35] M. Fierro, "Ibn Ḥazm and the Jewish *Zindīq*," in *Ibn Hazm of Cordoba: The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, eds. Camilla Adang, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 497-509. This article was first published in French: Fierro, "Ibn Ḥazm et le *zindīq* juif," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 63-64: *Minorités religieuses dans l'Espagne médiévale* (1992): 81-90. Stroumsa was not convinced by Fierro's thesis. See *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, 209-211.

[36] al-Bazzār, *al-Aʻlām al-ʻaliyya fī manāqib shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya*, trans. L. Holtzman, "The *Dhimmi*'s Question on Predetermination and the Ulama's Six Responses: The Dynamics of Composing Polemical Didactic Poems in Mamluk Cairo and Damascus," *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 16 (2012): 2-3 (cited with some changes).

The *dhimmī*/Jewish poem, a provocative, yet sophisticated question on predestination, reads:

> Listen, you scholars of Islam! I, the non-Muslim under the protection of your religion (*dhimmī dīnikum*), am baffled, so please lead me towards the clearest theological proof.
> If, as you claim, my Lord decreed my infidelity (*kufr*), although my infidelity did not please Him, what could I have done?
> He urged me [to be a believer], but at the same time He blocked the entrance [leading to faith] for me. Is there a way that I can enter [your religion]? Please, explain this to me!
> He decreed that I will go astray, and then He said: Be pleased with the decree! Should I not be pleased with the source of my misery?
> Thus, ye people [i.e. Muslims], I am pleased with what has been decreed, while my Lord is not pleased with the misfortune that befell me.
> Is it possible for me to be pleased with what my Lord is not pleased with? I am confused! Pray, tell me how am I to cope with this confusion.
> Since My Lord wished me to be an infidel by virtue of His divine volition, how is it possible [to call me] disobedient, when all I did was to obey the divine volition?
> Do I have the choice (*ikhtiyār*) to disobey the Lord's decree? Do quench my thirst with theological proofs![37]

In this case, Muslim readers of the question of the *dhimmī* and of Ibn Taymiyya's response, *al-Tā'iyya*, raised the possibility that the inquirer was not a *dhimmī* or a Jew, but a Muslim with Mu'tazilī-Shī'īte tendencies. The poem argues for a *dhimmī*, infidel (*kāfir*) writer who speaks to Muslim scholars, but Muslim historians believed he was either Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd Fatḥ al-Dīn Ibn al-Baqaqī (who was executed in the year 701/1301), or Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Sakākīnī (d. 721/1321), two contemporaries of Ibn Taymiyya who were suspected with heresy (*zandaqa*).[38] Nonetheless, even if the composer of the poem on predestination was not a Jew, the cases of 'Abd al-Sayyid and Asad al-Yahūdī as Jews who contacted Ibn Taymiyya testify for interchanges with Jews (or former Jews) and relying on them as his informants regarding Judaism. From these Jews Ibn Taymiyya may have learned that Maimonides was revered among Jewish circles as al-Ghazālī was among Muslims.[39]

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[37] Ibn Taymiyya, MF, 8:149; trans. Holtzman, "The *Dhimmi*'s Question on Predetermination," 4-5 (cited with some changes).

[38] See Holtzman's article for a comprehensive study of this affair. On Ibn al-Baqaqī, see also A.F. Broadbridge, "Apostasy Trials in Eighth/Fourteenth Century Egypt and Syria: A Case Study," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, eds. J. Pfeiffer et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 363-382.

[39] *Wa-huwa* [i.e. Maimonides] *fī al-Yahūd ka-Abī Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī fī al-Muslimīn*. Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wal-naql*, ed. Rashād Sālim (Riyadh: Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmiyya, 1991, second ed.), 1:131-132. For a translation of the entire passage, see Sh. Pines, "Ibn Khaldūn and Maimonides, a Compararison [*sic*] between Two Texts," *Studia Islamica*, 32 (1970): 271-273. Maimonides is mentioned once more in the *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wal-naql* (7:94) along with the Karaite author Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf al-Baṣīr. On the latter, see *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, "Yūsuf al-Baṣīr" (G. Schwarb).

Another Jewish convert to Islam who met Ibn Taymiyya was one of the greatest politicians of the era—Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadhānī (or: Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb; d. 718/1318),[40] the Persian vizier of the Ilkhanid ruler, Ghāzān Khān (r. 694-703/1294-1304), and of his brother and successor, Öljeitü (703-716/1304-1316); both were converts to Islam.[41] Rashīd al-Dīn was born into a family of Jewish physicians that served the Ilkhanid dynasty since the days of its founder, Hülegü, or of his son and successor, Abaqa. He was named *Ṭabīb* (physician) because of his original occupation, and held his position as a vizier for over twenty years, until his execution in 718/1318 due to political intrigues in the Ilkhanid court. Rashīd al-Dīn gained much power and wealth, and became famous thanks to his intellectual achievements, among them his vast history, the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* (Compendium of Chronologies). His Jewish background haunted him: as an insult, one of his rivals at the court named him a "Jew" in front of the Ilkhan; and Ibn Taymiyya's disciple, the historian al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), referred to him as *al-Rashīd al-Yahūdī, mushīr al-Dawla*, "al-Rashīd the Jew, the counselor of the [Mongol] dynasty."[42] Rashīd al-Dīn, nevertheless, held the most prestigious position in the Ilkhanid Empire. al-Ṣafadī reports that Rashīd al-Dīn was Ghāzān's

> adviser, friend, table companion, comrade, doctor and cook. [Ghāzān] would not eat except from his hand and the hands of his son. They would cook him food in silver vessels and ladle it out on to gold trays and cups, and carry it out to him themselves. Khwāja (master) Rashīd would cut it up for him and serve him with his hand. For this purpose Khwāja Rashīd enjoyed the revenues of two towns and additional extensive income. Khwāja Rashīd knew about matters [of the Khān] which no one else knew about.[43]

[40] See N. Ben Azzouna, "Rashīd al-Din Fadl Allāh al-Hamadhānī's Manuscript Production Project in Tabriz Reconsidered," in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 187-188; A. Netzer, "Rashid al-Din and his Jewish Background," *Irano-Judaica*, 3 (1994): 118-126; R. Amitai, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources for the Biography of Rashīd al-Dīn," in *The Court of the Il-Khans, 1290-1340*, eds. J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 23-37; *idem*, "Jews at the Mongol Court in Iran: Cultural Brokers or Minor Actors in a Cultural Boom?," in *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, eds. M. von der Höh et al. (München: Wilhelm Fink; Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013), 33-45.

[41] R. Amitai, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk sultanate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 59, 1 (1996): 1-10; D. Aigle, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeytü's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies*, 22 (1999): 35-67. On the Ilkhanid conversions to Islam more broadly, see J. Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion To Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. L. Komaroff (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 369-389.

[42] Netzer, "Rashid al-Din," 123; Amitai, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources," 28 n. 26. On al-Dhahabī as a chronicler of the Mamluk-Mongol wars, see J. de Somogyi, "Adh-Dhahabī's *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* as an Authority on the Mongol Invasion of the Caliphate," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1936): 595-604; *idem*, "Adh-Dhahabī's Record of the Destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699-700/1299-1301," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, eds. S. Löwinger and J. de Somogyi (Budapest: Globus Nyomdai Müintézet, 1948), 1:353-386.

[43] Amitai, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources," 25 (diacritics added).

Although contemporary sources are not entirely clear how many times Ibn Taymiyya met Ghāzān Khān and on what occasions, he did have contacts with the Ilkhan's two great emirs, Quṭlūgh-Shāh and Mūlāy, and met other figures, including Rashīd al-Dīn himself.[44] In his anti-Mongol *fatwās* Ibn Taymiyya attacks the religion of the Ilkhanids and the faith of Rashīd al-Dīn. The context, once more, associates between the "Jewish vizier" and the "heresies" that are prevalent in the Ilkhanid state.[45]

> [*I. The Disbelieves of the Mongols*] The greatest of their viziers [i.e. of the Ilkhanids] and others [i.e. other figures of importance] treat the religion of Islam [to be equal] to the religion of the Jews and the Christians, declaring that these are all paths towards reaching God, as if they were the four schools of law (*al-madhāhib*) among Muslims.
>
> Then there are some among them who give preference to Judaism or Christianity, while others give preference to Islam. Such positions are very common among them, even among their jurists (*fuqahā'*) and their devotees, most certainly among the Jahmites of the Pharaonist Unitarians (*al-Jahmiyya min al-ittiḥādiyya al-Fir'awniyya*) and others alike. *Falsafa* (philosophy) is widespread among them, and it is the doctrine of many of the philosophizers (*mutafalsifa*) or of most of them. It is also the position of many of the Christians [in their realm] or most of them, and of many Jews as well. Moreover, if anyone said that the majority of their greatest religious scholars among them and their devotees share this doctrine, I would not object such a statement. I have seen and heard too much about it than I am capable of discussing it here.
>
> It is known by the religion of the Muslims, and according to the consensus of all Muslims, that anyone who considers it permissible to follow anything other than Islam or to follow any law other than the Muḥammad's (may God's peace and blessing be upon him) is a disbeliever. It is the same as the disbelief of one who believes in one part of the Book [i.e. the Qur'ān] and disbelieves in another, as God Most High said: "As for those who ignore God and His messengers and want to make a distinction between them, saying, 'We believe in some but not in others,' seeking a middle way, they are really disbelievers: We have prepared a humiliating punishment for those who disbelieve,"[46] and Jews and Christians are included [in this disbelief]. Similarly, those who philosophize believe in certain things and disbelieve in others. Jewish and Christian philosophizers, their disbelief remains for two aspects (? *min wajhayn*) (*sic*).
>
> [*II. Polemic against Rashīd al-Dīn*] But it is the greatest of their viziers who believe and act according to this position: he is a philosophizing Jew (*Yahūdī mutafalsif*) who adopted Islam while sticking to his Jewish faith and to *tafalsuf* (pseudo-philosophy), and joined this heresy (*rafḍ*). He is one of the most important people of the pen among them, and the latter are more important among them than the people of the sword. Let the believer reflect upon this! In short, there is no kind of hypocrisy (*nifāq*), heresy (*zandaqa*), and deviation (*ilḥād*) that has not penetrated those who follow the Tatars. Indeed, they are the most ignorant of humankind and of those who know the least about religion—they are the farthest from following it! They are those who follow [wrong] opinion and whatever the soul desires.[47]

[44] Aigle, *The Mongol Empire*, 293-295; Bori, "A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya," 325.
[45] The identification of Rashīd al-Dīn in this *fatwā* is thanks to Y. Michot, "Textes spirituels d'Ibn Taymiyya, XII," https://hartsem.academia.edu/YahyaMichot (last accessed: October 4, 2017).
[46] Q. 4:150-151 (M.A.S. Abdel Haleem's translation).
[47] Ibn Taymiyya, MF, 28:285-286.

Ibn Taymiyya finds it repulsive that the Mongols, according to his observation, treat Jews, Christians, and Muslims to be on the same standing, and that Muslims in the Ilkhanid state no longer stand at the top of the hierarchy in relation to the abrogated religions: Judaism and Christianity.[48] He thus connects this situation to what he perceives to be the disbelieves of the Mongols. He refers to an amalgam of heresies that are widespread among the Mongols, such as being Jahmites (*Jahmiyya)*; Pharaonist Unitarians (*al-ittiḥādiyya al-Fir'awniyya*), i.e. followers of monistic doctrines; and supporters of *falsafa* (philosophy) or *tafalsuf* (pseudo-philosophy), hypocrisy (*nifāq*), heresy (*rafḍ*, *zandaqa*), and deviation (*ilḥād*).

The Jahmites were allegedly the followers of Jahm b. Ṣafwān, an early theologian who was executed in 128/746. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the eponym of Ibn Taymiyya's school of law, composed against this group the *Radd 'alā al-Zanādiqa wal-Jahmiyya* (Refutation against the *Zindīqs* and Jahmites). Thomas Michel writes that Ibn Taymiyya's usage of the term *Jahmiyya* is, "while always pejorative, ambiguous, and except for the basic meaning of proponents of 'negative extreme transcendentalism,'… raises the question of what group is [exactly] intended."[49]

Falsafa or *tafalsuf* represent another pejorative in Ibn Taymiyya's writings. The first term is usually translated as "(Greek) philosophy," and the second as "philosophizing." We have encountered already al-Ṣafadī's accusation of Asad al-Yahūdī being a "philosopher;" this is also the accusation of Ibn Taymiyya against Rashīd al-Dīn (section II).[50]

Finally, other terms for heresy are used here, among them *nifāq*, the word used in the Qur'ān against Muḥammad's enemies;[51] *rafḍ*, usually an abusive word used against the Shī'ītes

[48] P. Jackson questions the myth of Mongol 'toleration' of the religions of the conquered peoples in Asia and the Near East. See Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary world*, eds. R. Amitai and M. Biran (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 243-290. On the Christians under the rule of Ghāzān and Öljeitü, see *ibid*., 274-275. See also Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1997), 26.

[49] T. Michel, introduction to Ibn Taymiyya, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity*, 44. On the Jahmites, see *EI*^{2}, "Djahmiyya" (W. Montgomery Watt) and "Djahm b. Ṣafwān" (*idem*).

[50] In an email to me from September 24, 2017, F. Griffel writes: "Within the post-classical period (after 1100), the word 'falsafa' means in 95% of all contexts 'Avicennism.' This is already the case in the *Kuzari* and this perception grows stronger the further you move away from 1100. It is not (or: no longer) 'Greek philosophy... Given that al-Ghazali criticized it and condemned it as apostasy from Islam (more specific: as clandestine apostasy, which is concealed from the community), a follower of al-Ghazali could brand it as 'zandaqa.'" For now, on Ibn Taymiyya's attitude towards *falsafa* see the studies by T. Michel, "Ibn Taymiyya's Critique of *Falsafa*," *Hamdard Islamicus*, 6, 1 (1983): 3-14; Y. Michot, "From al-Ma'mūn to Ibn Sab'īn, via Avicenna: Ibn Taymiyya's Historiography of *Falsafa*," in *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, eds. F. Opwis and D. Reisman (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 453-475; A. von Kügelgen, "The Poison of Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle For and Against Reason," in *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law*, 253-328.

[51] *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, "Hypocrites and Hypocrisy" (Camilla P. Adang).

(*al-Rāfiḍa*, "those who reject," a common term in Ibn Taymiyya's anti-Shīʿīte writings), suggests that Ibn Taymiyya ascribes Rashīd al-Dīn Shīʿīte inclinations;[52] and *ilḥād*, meaning deviation or apostasy.[53]

Ibn Taymiyya refers to Rashīd al-Dīn being a *mulḥid* (apostate) in his discussion of the vizier's Qur'ānic exegesis on Q. 109 (*al-Kāfirūn*, "The Disbelievers") (section III).[54] Although not referring in this text to Judaism and Christianity as "abrogated religions"—with the advent of Islam—the link between this creed and the abrogation (*naskh*) of Qur'ānic verses is becoming clear in the following passage.[55]

> [*III. Refutation of Rashīd al-Dīn's Exegesis on Q. 109*] Their vizier, this heretic, hypocrite scoundrel (*al-ḥabīth al-mulḥid al-munāfiq*), even composed a tract whose content is that the Prophet (may God's peace and blessing be upon him) approved the religion of the Jews and the Christians, and did not condemn them, and that were not denounced for their faith, and were not ordered to follow Islam. This ignorant scoundrel found a proof for that in the words of the Most High [to the Prophet]:
>
> "Say, 'Disbelievers:
> Do not worship what you worship,
> You do not worship what I worship,
> I will never worship what you worship,
> You will never worship what I worship,
> *You have your religion and I have mine*."[56]
>
> [The vizier] falsely argued that this verse[57] implied that [God] approved their religion, saying: "This verse is unequivocal, and was not abrogated (*muḥkama, laysat mansūkha*)." His words caused a great affair (*ūmūr*).
>
> It is agreed that it is ignorance on his part, as [God] said: "*You have your religion and I have mine*," there is nothing in it that implies that the religion of the disbelievers is true, or that it is acceptable. This proves only His disavowal of their religion. Thus [the Prophet] (may God's peace and blessing be upon him) said about this *sūra*: "It is a repudiation of idolatry (*innaha barāʿa min al-shirk*)."[58] Just as the Most High said in another verse [to the Prophet]:

[52] Y. Michot, "Textes spirituels d'Ibn Taymiyya, XII," n. 18; H. Fayazi, "Rashīd al-Dīn's Interpretation of *Sūrat al-Kawthar*: An Annotated Edition," *Muslim World*, 102 (2012): 285. On *Rāfiḍa* see E. Kohlberg, "The Term '*Rāfiḍa*' in Imāmī Shīʿī Usage," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 99, 4 (1979): 677-679.

[53] *EI*[2], "Mulḥid" (W. Madelung).

[54] Likewise, the historian Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) accuses Rashīd al-Dīn for using philosophical and heretic methods (*ilḥād*) in his scriptural exegesis. Amitai, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources," 32 and n. 44, includes other examples in which Mamluk historians name Rashīd al-Dīn a *mulḥid*.

[55] On this link see Y. Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23. On Judaism and Christianity being abrogated by Muḥammad's revelation, see the citation of al-Ṭabarī in Z. Maghen, "The Interaction between Islamic Law and Non-Muslims: *Lakum dīnukum wa-lī dīni*," *Islamic Law and Society*, 10, 3 (2003): 270.

[56] Q. 109.

[57] Q. 109:6 (italicized).

[58] A *ḥadīth* cited by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and others. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm, al-maʿrūf bi-Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, eds. Muṣṭafā al-Sayyid Muḥammad et al. (Giza: Mu'assasat Qurṭuba; Maktabat Awlād

> "If they do not believe you, say, 'I act for myself, and you for yourselves. You are not responsible for my actions nor am I responsible for yours."[59]
>
> [God's] words "*You have your religion and I have mine*," are similar to saying elsewhere: "Our deeds belong to us, and yours to you."[60] He followed that by saying: "You are not responsible for my actions nor am I responsible for yours."
>
> Implying that this *sūra* means that they [i.e. Jews and Christians] are not ordered to abandon their faith cannot be sustained because it is mandatory in Islam, by the transmitted texts and the consensus of the community, that [the Prophet] commanded the disbelievers and the People of the Book to believe in him, that he came to them with this [message], and that he informed them that they were infidels who would remain in Hellfire for eternity.[61]

When reading Rashīd al-Dīn's exegesis on Q. 109 in the *Book of Elucidation* (*al-Tawdīhāt*), currently still in a manuscript form,[62] Yahya Michot finds Ibn Taymiyya's diatribe against the vizier to be unsubstantiated. Rashīd al-Dīn, Michot says, does not contend the abrogation of Judaism and Christianity as an Islamic creed of faith.[63] Nonetheless, the vizier's objection to the interpretation of Q. 109:6, "You have your religion and I have mine," as being abrogated by the "Verse of the Sword" (Q. 9:5),[64] does defy the conservative interpretation to the seemingly contradiction between the two verses. Rashīd al-Dīn completely rejects the concept of abrogation of some verses by others, and believes in the cohesiveness of the Qur'ān as a Holy Scripture. [65]

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al-Shaykh lil-Turāth, 2000), 14:485. See also *EI*[2], "Barā'a" (R. Brunschvig); L. Daaïf, "La *barā'a*: Réflexions sur la fonction et l'évolution de la structure de la quittance (I[er]-V[e]/VII[e]-XI[e] siècles)," *Annales islamologiques*, 48, 2 (2014): 3-60.

[59] Q. 10:41.

[60] Q. 2:139. These are Muḥammad's words to the Jews and the Christians.

[61] Ibn Taymiyya, MF, 28:286-287.

[62] *Majmū'a Rashīdiyya*, Paris, B.N., Ar. 2324.

[63] Michot concludes: "These passages from the *Book of Elucidation* (*al-Tawdīhāt*) are in complete contradiction to what Ibn Taymiyya says of the Rashīd al-Dīn's commentary on *sūra* 109… [It is] false that in his commentary [Rashīd al-Dīn] regarded Judaism and Christianity not to be abrogated by Islam and still accepted by the Most High. The few excerpts given above are clear enough about this point. Thus, if Ibn Taymiyya is so mistaken in his condemnation of the exegesis of Rashīd al-Dīn, it is very likely that his attacks, instead of being the result of a personal reading of the *Elucidation*, relied on the calumnious accusations of certain enemies of Ghazan's vizier. Even though it is unfounded, the Taymiyyan condemnation retains a great historical interest by the testimony it brings of the extension taken by the faction [of enemies] against Rashīd al-Dīn." Michot, "Textes spirituels d'Ibn Taymiyya, XII," n. 32.

[64] "When the [four] forbidden months are over, wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn [to God], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful" (Q. 9:5).

[65] See the discussion on Rashīd al-Dīn's exegesis on Q. 109, including some translated extracts from the *Book of Elucidation*, in D. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Īlkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 94-98 (the references there should be corrected to Q. 9:5, not 9:6). On interpreting the contradiction between Q. 109:6 and Q. 9:5 through the method of abrogation, see U. Rubin, "On the Coherence of the Qur'ān" [Hebrew], in *'Iyyunim ba-Islam ha-kadum: Devarim she-ne'emru be-yom 'iyyun li-khevod Me'ir Y. Kister bi-melot lo tish'im shanah* [Studies in Early Islam: Proceedings of a Symposium in Honor of M.J. Kister's 90th Birthday] (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2004), 72-85. On abrogation (*naskh*) in Qur'ānic exegesis, see *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, "Abrogation" (J. Burton); L. Fatoohi, *Abrogation in the Qur'an and Islamic Law: A Critical Study of the Concept of Naskh and Its Impact* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Lastly, it should be mentioned here that associating the Ilkhanid rule with the service of a "Jewish, philosophizing vizier" such as Rashīd al-Dīn implies the illegitimacy of Ghāzān and of the Mongol claim to adopt Islam. Furthermore, studying the case of Ibn Ḥazm, who laments in his writings the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus, and attacks the Zīrids of Granada for their employment of a Jewish, "heretic" vizier, Samuel ha-Nagid,[66] points out to the personal history of Ibn Taymiyya, as a theologian who experienced numerous trials and was at the center of fiery debates in Damascus and Cairo, in comparison to Rashīd al-Dīn's prestigious role in the Ilkhanid administration. Michot, who makes this comparison, ends it, nonetheless, with the tragic end of both figures:

> On the Mongol side, a Persian vizier of Jewish origin who holds the highest political office and enjoys the support of his sovereign; is doing well in business and is extremely rich; a scholar of a universal curiosity; both physician and cook of his ruler; chronicler of the [Mongol] dynasty and world historian; intellectually attracted to philosophy as well as to the study of religion; alternating between Sunna and Shī'a; and a father of many children... On the other side of the Euphrates, in the Mamluk Sultanate, a Syrian scholar from an old, Arab family of *'ulamā'*; a free lance, activist theologian, who, according to his own words, did not posses "neither land grant (*iqṭā'*),[67] nor school (*madrasa*), nor property, nor [did he hold] high office (*ria'āsa*) or appointment"; a popular sheikh who is frequently in political-religious dissent in relation to the Cairene power and is regularly imprisoned by it; an expert of the religious sciences, who is also versed in philosophy and mysticism, and in the critique of their excesses or deviations; and a devote Sunnī of strict observance, who is attracted to asceticism and always remains unmarried... In fact, it was only death that could bring together Ibn Taymiyya and Rashīd al-Dīn, both having their lives ending in disgrace—the first was incarcerated at the Citadel of Damascus, while the second was convicted under the pretext of poisoning the Ilkhan Öljeitü, the brother and successor of Ghāzān. The remains of Rashīd al-Dīn were exhumed around 1400 and transferred to a Jewish cemetery; and the tomb of Ibn Taymiyya, when we [i.e. Michot] visited it in 1995, was abandoned, found in the backyard of the maternity hospital of Damascus and surrounded by refuse.[68]

III. Conclusions

The Mamluk sources report of Ibn Taymiyya having contacts with a number of Jews, among them two physicians and intellectuals, 'Abd al-Sayyid ibn al-Muhadhdhib and Asad al-Yahūdī. 'Abd al-Sayyid was a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya and of his friend, al-Mizzī, before he converted to Islam in 701/1302. His conversion, since he came from a member of a family of judges, was an event of much significance to the Muslim residents of Damascus, and encouraged other Jews of

[66] See Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 80-83.
[67] On the *iqṭā'* administration in Ayyubid and Mamluk Syria, see M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 41-42.
[68] Y. Michot, "Rashîd al-Dîn et Ibn Taymiyya: Regards croisés sur la royauté," in *Muḥaqqiq'nāmah: Maqālāt-i Taqdīm Shudah bih Ustād Duktur Mahdī Muḥaqqiq bih Munāsabat-i Gudhasht-i Haftād Sāl-i Zindigī va-Panjāh Sāl-i Khadamāt-i 'Ilmī va-Farhangī va-Dānishgāhī*, eds. Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī and Jūyā Jahānbakhsh (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sīnā'nigār, 2001), 2:113-114.

the city to abandon their faith. The second convert, Asad al-Yahūdī, might have held unorthodox positions, and was suspected by his acquaintance, to historian al-Ṣafadī, to be a *murtaḍ* (apostate) and a clandestine philosopher.[69] This man, nonetheless, managed to associate with Ibn Taymiyya as well as with Mamluk officials in Syria. It is reported that he used to hold disputations with Ibn Taymiyya and other figures of note.

Another convert to Islam at this period was the vizier to the Ilkhanid state, Rashīd al-Dīn, in a time that the Mongols were the greatest military threat to the Mamluk State, certainly in Syria where Ibn Taymiyya resided. The theologian met Rashīd al-Dīn as part of his diplomatic efforts to release captives from the Mongols. His view of the vizier is of an apostate "philosophizer," who in his scriptural exegesis on Q. 109 contradicts the Qur'ānic message for he considers Judaism and Christianity not to be abrogated by Islam. Although unfounded when compared to the vizier's commentary on the same *sūra*, this position of Ibn Taymiyya might suggest that he did read the exegesis of Rashīd al-Dīn, or was involved in a larger effort to confront Rashīd al-Dīn and the Mongol dynasty. Furthermore, his condemnation of the "Jewish vizier" constitutes another feature in the discourse against the employment of *dhimmīs* for positions in the Muslim government, while considering Rashīd al-Dīn to be a heretic scheming against Islam.[70] In other writings of his, Ibn Taymiyya attacks the Fatimids for their employment of Jewish and Christian viziers, thus worsening the situation of Muslims living in Egypt in favor of their co-religionists.[71]

Lastly, this essay investigates the overlap in Muslim sources, including the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, between Judaism and heretical views, thus attributing to Jews and to their supporters within Islam heretical positions such as *zandaqa*, *ilḥād*, and involvement in *falsafa*. Associating Jews with heresies is meant to demonize Judaism and to remove Jews from their positions of power and from interaction with Muslims. This essay discusses several polemical cases, as in the refutation of Ibn Ḥazm against Samuel ha-Nagid, and Ibn Taymiyya's writings

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[69] See *EI*^{3}, "Apostasy" (F. Griffel).

[70] On this discourse during the Later Islamic Middle Period, see L.B. Yarbrough, "'A Rather Small Genre': Arabic Works against Non-Muslim State Officials," *Der Islam*, 93 (2016): 139-169. Yarbrough (*ibid*., 142) considers the origins of this literature "around the time of the transition from Fāṭimid to Ayyūbid rule in Egypt."

[71] Ibn Taymiyya, MF, 28:346-347. The Jewish viziers to whom Ibn Taymiyya hints in this text might be Ya'qūb ibn Killis (d. 380/991) and Abū Sa'd Ibrāhīm al-Tustarī (killed by Turkish soldiers in 439/1047). On these two figures, see M.R. Cohen and S. Somekh, "In the Court of Yaqub Ibn Killis: A Fragment from the Cairo Genizah," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 80, 3-4 (1990): 283-314; *idem*, "Interreligious *Majālis* in Early Fatimid Egypt," in *The Majlis; Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, eds. H. Lazarus-Yafeh et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 128-136; Y. Lev, "The Fatimid Vizier Ya'qub Ibn Killis and the Beginning of the Fatimid Administration in Egypt," *Der Islam*, 58 (1981): 237-249; T. Be'eri, "Two Historical Dirges on the Assassination of Abu Sa'd al-Tustari" [Hebrew], *Tarbiẓ*, 69, 1 (1999): 127-144; Moshe Gil, *ha-Tustarim: ha-Mishpahah veha-kat* [The Tustaris: Family and Sect] (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute; Moreshet, 1981).

against an alleged Jew who challenged him on the question of predestination, and against Rashīd al-Dīn as representing the disbelieves of the Ilkhans and their false conversion to Islam.[72]

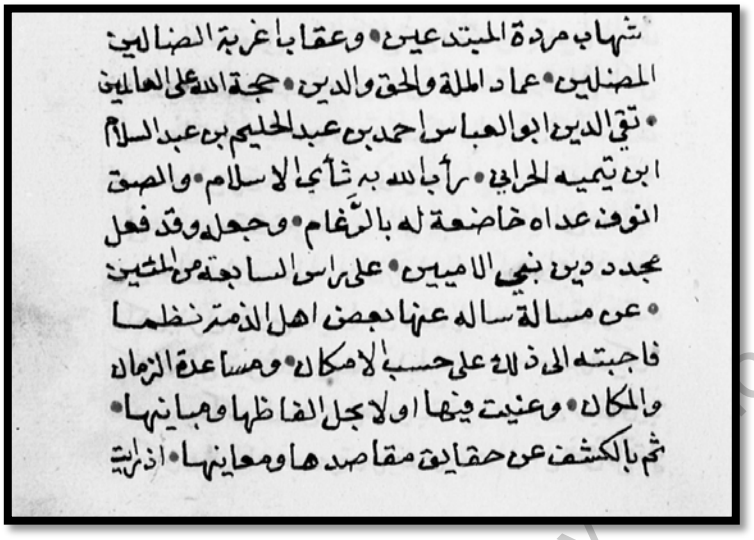

Figure 1: Introduction to an anonymous tract, *Sharḥ jawāb Ibn Taymiyya 'an mas'ala sa'alahu 'anhā ba'ḍ al-dhimma* (Commentary to Ibn Taymiyya's Reply to a Question Asked by a *Dhimmī*), Ms. Garrett 1299Y, f. 2r (detail), Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts Collection, with a colophon dated Ramaḍān 1127/September 1715

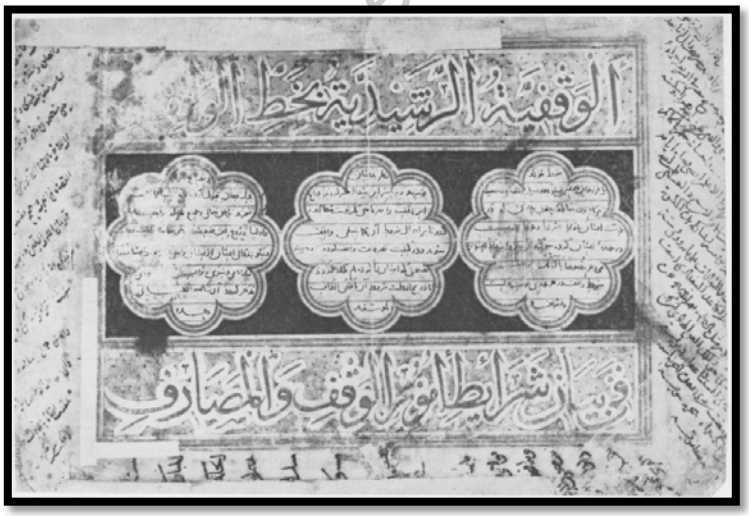

Figure 2: The title page of an endowment deed for a complex of charitable institutions east of of Tabriz, the *Rab'-i Rashīdī* (Rashīdī quarter), with the handwriting of Rashīd al-Dīn, c. 709/1309 (I. Afshar, "Autograph Copy of Rashīd-al-Dīn's *Vaqfnāmeh*," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 14, 1-3 [1970]: 5-13; discussed in S.T. Kamola, "Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 2013], 222)

[72] [*Postscript*: Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:483, reports of another Jewish convert to Islam, Yūsuf ibn Abī al-Bayān al-Isrā'ilī. Yūsuf was an official in Safed and Damascus, and associated, like Asad, with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Wakīl. He died in 741/1340.]