

Alfarabi's views concerning prophecy are stoutly contested by Judah ha-Levi. Alfarabi claims that prophecy emanates from a soul of purified reasoning powers; the soul associates itself with the active reason and receives from it aid and instruction. From this naturalistic explanation of prophecy Judah ha-Levi totally dissents, holding the opinion that prophecy is in reality God speaking (i. 87). Nevertheless, Alfarabi's conception of prophecy was shared by Abraham ibn Daud, who speaks of three gradations of reason: reason "in potentia," "in actu," and the "intellectus acquisitus." Maimonides also adopted Alfarabi's views concerning prophecy, while at the same time insisting on the selection by the divine will, and on the prophet's inner preparation by a higher moral standard and imaginative faculty (Moreh, ii. 36) and follows him in his classification of the soul-powers in his "Eight Chapters." From him, too, in all probability, Maimonides borrowed a passage concerning the seven divisions of medical science, which are to be found in Alfarabi's distribution of the sciences. Finally, in his "Moreh," ii. 27, Maimonides has made use of Alfarabi's commentary upon Aristotle's "Physics." Other writers likewise reflect Alfarabi's influence upon Jewish literature; Abraham b. Hiyyah Albageloni, Joseph ibn Aknin, Shem-Tob Palquera, and Moses di Rieti knew and availed themselves of Alfarabi's writings.

While Alfarabi's teachings were generally held in the highest esteem, his view concerning the immortality of the human soul was vigorously combated by Jewish authors. Arabic philosophers endeavored to solve the problem of immor-

On Immor- tality, left unsettled by Aristotle, by suggesting that during man's life the human intellect combines with the

Active Intelligence of the Universe. Alfarabi considers this hypothesis as utterly absurd. Man's supreme aim is rather to elevate his capabilities to the highest degree of perfection attainable. This conception, which was expressed by Alfarabi in the lost commentary on the "Nikomachean Ethics," brought much reproof upon him; and for it Immanuel ben Solomon, in his "Final Judgment" (c. 28), consigns him to the infernal regions.

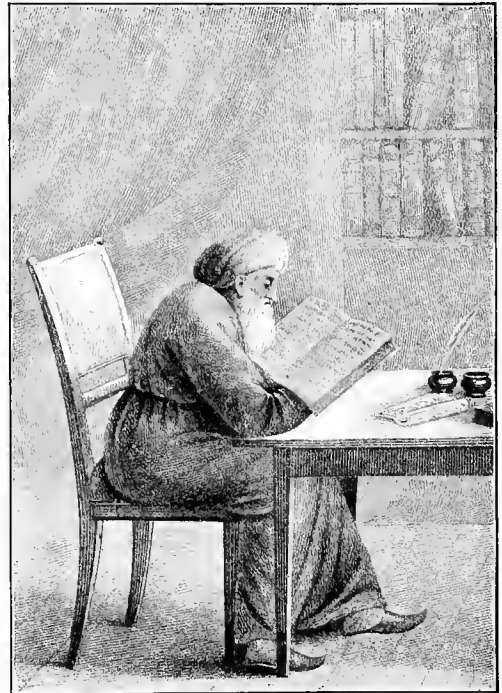
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A. Lo.

ALFASI, ISAAC BEN JACOB (called also **ha-Kohen** in the epitaph attached to his "Halakot"): Eminent Talmudist; born in 1013 at Kala't ibn Hamad, a village near Fez, in North Africa (whence his surname, which is sometimes attached also to Judah Hayyng, the grammarian); died at Lucena, 1103. Five scholars named Isaac, all distinguished Talmudists, flourished about the same time; viz., Isaac ben Baruch Albalia of Seville, Isaac ben Judah ibn Giat of Lucena, Isaac ben Reuben of Barcelona, Isaac ben Moses ibn Sakni of Pumbedita, and Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi. Of these the last-named was the most prominent. He seems to have devoted himself exclusively to the study of the Talmud, under Rabbis Hananeel and Nissim, both in Kairwan, the recognized rabbinical authorities of the age. After their death, Alfasi took their place in the estimation of his contemporaries, and was regarded as the chief expounder of the Talmud. Whatever his official position may have been, he had to abandon it in his old age (1088); for two informers,

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Halfah, son of Alagab, and his son Hayyim, according to Abraham ibn Daud, denounced him to the government upon some unknown charge. He left his home and fled to Spain, whither his fame as the author of the "Halakot" ('Er. viii.) had preceded him. He went to Cordova, where he found support and protection in the house of Joseph b. Meir b. Muheyir ibn Shartamikosh. From Cordova he went to Granada, and thence to Lucena. Here he probably acted as the official rabbi of the congregation after the death of Isaac ibn Giat (1089), with whom he had some angry discussions. There was also some ill-feeling between Alfasi and Isaac Albalia. The latter, when on his death-bed, asked his son to go to Alfasi and tell him that he pardoned all his offenses against him, and begged Alfasi to do the same on his part and



Isaac Alfasi.

(From a traditional portrait.)

to be a friend to his opponent's son. Isaac Albalia's wish was fulfilled, and his son found in Alfasi a true friend and a second father.

In his capacity as rabbi, Alfasi was both judge and teacher. As a judge he enjoyed the confidence of litigants, and his decisions were carefully studied by other rabbis as guides in similar cases. As a teacher, his great learning attracted a large number of students, eager to listen to his exposition of the Talmud; among them was Joseph ibn Migash, the teacher of Maimonides. Before his death Alfasi designated this Joseph ibn Migash as his successor, passing over his own son, though he likewise was an excellent Talmudic scholar.

Alfasi died, aged ninety years, at Lucena, on Tuesday, the tenth of Siwan (May 19), 1103 (the date given in the epitaph is impossible); and a monument was erected to his memory, whereon were inscribed the following somewhat hyperbolic lines (given at the end of Alfasi, vol. iii.; by Luzzatto in "Abne

Zikkaron" and in "Kerem Hemed," iv. 93, vii. 255; also by Geiger in "Divan des Jehudah ha-Levi"):

"It was for thee that the mountains shook on the day of Sinai;
For the angels of God approached thee
And wrote the Torah on the tablets of thy heart;
They set the finest of its crowns upon thy head."

The chief work of Alfasi is his "Halakot," often referred to as the "Rif" (**R.** Isaac **F**asi) from the initials of Alfasi's name. Rabad described it as "the little Talmud," because it contains the essence of the Talmud in an abridged form. In the

His "Ha- first place, Alfasi eliminated from the **lakot."** Talmud all baggadic comments; that is, the second of its two constituent elements (Halakah and Haggadah, or Law and Homily); in accordance with the title of the book, he retains only the Halakah. He gives the halakic discussions of the Gemara in a condensed form, adding occasionally criticisms on the interpretations and decisions given by post-Talmudic authorities. A further reduction in the bulk of the Talmud was effected in the following way: Alfasi contented himself with collecting practical Halakot only, omitting all treatises that are principally devoted to laws which are only practical in Palestine. The treatises included in Alfasi's work are therefore the following: 1, Berakot; 2, Small Halakot; 3, Shabbat; 4, 'Erubin; 5, Pesahim (omitting ch. v.-ix.); 6, Ta'anit; 7, Bezah; 8, Rosh ha-Shanah (omitting ch. iii.); 9, Yoma (omitting ch. i.-vii.); 10, Sukkah (omitting ch. v.); 11, Megillah; 12, Mo'ed Katan; 13, Yebamot; 14, Ketubot; 15, Gitin; 16, Kiddushin; 17, Nedarim (only found in recent editions); 18, Hullin; 19, Baba Kamma; 20, Baba Mezi'a; 21, Baba Batra; 22, Sanhedrin; 23, Makkot; 24, Shebu'ot (included in ch. ii. hilkot Niddah); 25, 'Abodah Zarah.

Ever since the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, attempts had been made to collect the Halakot it contained, and to elucidate, in each case, the final decision of the halakic discussion of the Gemara. The results of these attempts were such works as the "Halakot Gedolot" of the gaon Simon Kahira, "Halakot Pesuḳot" of the gaon Yehudai, and the "Sheiltot" of the gaon Ahai of Shabha. These

collections all proved insufficient; Alfasi's work was intended to be comprehensive and thorough. The merits of the "Halakot" are described by Maimonides in the introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah as follows: "The 'Halakot' of our great teacher, Rabbenū Isaac, of blessed memory, have superseded all their predecessors, because there is included therein everything useful for the understanding of the decisions and laws at present in force; that is, in the time of the Exile. The author clearly demonstrates the errors of those before him when his opinion deviates from theirs, and with the exception of a few Halakot whose number at the very utmost does not amount to ten, his decisions are unassailable." Alfasi based his "Halakot" on the Babylonian Talmud, without, however, neglecting the Palestinian Talmud, which is frequently quoted, and the dicta of which are accepted, provided they are not contradicted by the former. In case of difference between the two Gemaras Alfasi follows the Babylonian, arguing thus: "The Babylonian is younger than the Palestinian, and its authors knew the contents of the Palestinian Gemara even better than we do. Had they not been convinced that the passage from the Palestinian Gemara, cited in opposition to their opinion, was untrustworthy, they would never have deviated from it" ('Er., at end). Critics, however, attacked many of Alfasi's Halakot as con-

trary to the decisions of the Babylonian Talmud. In all such cases it will be found that the critic and the author differ in reality as to the right interpretation of the Talmudic passage, for in truth Alfasi never deviates from what he recognizes as the final decision of the Babylonian Talmud.

Alfasi is exceedingly self-conscious, decided, and firm in asserting the correctness of his decisions, and in rejecting the opinions of those who differ from him (Ket. x. 115, ed. Sulzbach, 1720; Ber. vii. 39b). He rarely wavers or doubts. Of previous authorities he mentions by name Gaon Hai, Gaon Judah, and Gaon Moses (Ket. iv. 84b); others he cites by the general term "Some of the rabbis." In three places (*ib.* x. 116b, 119; viii. 106) he refers to a lengthy explanation in Arabic, which he originally gave as an appendix to the treatise Ketubot, convinced "that he who will read these explanations will arrive at the true sense of the text of the Talmud." These explanations have been detached from their original place, and are at present known only by two Hebrew translations, the one being included in a collection of responsa by Menahem Azariah di Fano (Nos. 127-129), the other in "Temim De'im" (Nos. 218-220, the third part of "Tummat Yesharim"). The latter work contains also a few responsa of Alfasi, translated from the original Arabic by Abraham ha-Levi אברהם (Nos. 221-223).

The "Halakot" of Alfasi became famous both on account of the reputation of the author and of their intrinsic value. The work was

studied like the Talmud, and soon had its commentators and its critics. The principal commentators are the following: Jonah, on Berakot; Nissim, on Seder Mo'ed, Makkot, Shebu'ot, 'Abodah Zarah, Seder Nashim (except Yebamot), and Hullin; Joseph Habiba, on the smaller Halakot, Seder Neziḳin (except Makkot, Shebu'ot, and 'Abodah Zarah), and Yebamot; Joshua Boaz in his commentary "Shilṭe ha-Gibborim" includes notes of various scholars, both for and against Alfasi. The so-called commentary of Rashi, found in some editions, consists merely of extracts from Rashi's general commentary on the Talmud. Alfasi's chief critic is Zerahiah ha-Levi of Lunel, whose work "Ha-Ma'or" (The Luminary) consists of two parts, entitled respectively, "The Great Luminary" (Zerahiah, the sun) and "The Small Luminary" (Lunel, the moon), the former on Berakot and Seder Mo'ed, the other on Seder Nashim and Seder Neziḳin. Nahmanides in "Milḥamat Adonai" (The Wars of the Lord) defended Alfasi. Rabad attacked Zerahiah's criticisms in defense of Alfasi, but at the same time wrote *Hassagot* (criticisms) of his own on the "Halakot" (see "Temim De'im"). Even a disciple of Alfasi, Ephraim, is found among his critics ("Temim De'im," No. 68). A long list of emendations is given by Joseph Shalom in "Derek Tamim." In addition to these commentaries and criticisms, there are to be mentioned the "Kelale ha-Rif," contained in "Yad Malachi" (pp. 123a, 124b). These rules show how to detect the different degrees of decisiveness which Alfasi desired to indicate in the "Halakot," when quoting the opinion of other authorities. Alfasi's "Halakot" appeared without commentaries (Cracow, 1597, 8vo; Basel, 1602, 8vo); the above-mentioned commentaries, and further notes and emendations, were added in subsequent editions (among others, Talmud and Alfasi, Warsaw, 1859, fol.). Besides the "Halakot," there is a collection of Alfasi's "Responsa," ed. Judah Aryeh Loeb Ashkenazi (Leghorn, 1821, 4to). The collection contains 320 questions, mostly referring to civil law cases; only a few

have reference to religious rites. Some Arabic responsa of Alfasi are to be found in Harkavy, "Studien und Mitteilungen," vols. iv., xxv., and in S. A. Wertheimer, "Kohelet Shelomoh," Jerusalem, 1899; compare "Monatsschrift," xlv. 144.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: R. Abraham ibn Daud (Rabad), *Sefer ha-Kabbalah*; Azulai, *Shem ha-Gedolim*, s.v.; Grätz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, vi. 76 et seq.; Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* col. 1087; Weiss, *Dor*, iv. 281 et seq.; Cazès, *Notes Bibliographiques sur la Littérature Juive Tunisienne*, Tunis, 1893.

M. F.

ALFASI, ISAAC BEN JOSEPH: Descendant of a Spanish family; flourished in Adrianople in the sixteenth century. He translated Ghazzali's work, "Mishkat al-Anwar," into Hebrew, under the title, "Maskit ha-Orot u Pardes ha-Nizzanim" (The Chamber of Light and the Garden of Flowers). This work is still extant in manuscript in the Bodleian Library.

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I. Br.

ALFASI, ISAAC BEN REUBEN: Sometimes stated to be a grandson of Isaac Alfasi. He is frequently cited as the author of "Sha'are Shebu'ot," a work in twenty chapters on oaths, usually printed with Alfasi's "Halakot" (Fürst, "Bibl. Jud." i. 36; Ben Jacob, "Ozar ha-Sefarim," p. 605). It is probable, however, that the actual author was Isaac ben Reuben of Barcelona or an otherwise unknown Isaac ben Reuben, especially as he quotes the Rif without claiming relationship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* col. 1148; Weiss, *Dor*, iv. 281. A *Song of Love* by Isaac ben Reuben has been translated into English by Nina Davis in *Jew. Quart. Rev.* viii. 271.

D.

ALFASI, MASA'UD RAPHAEL: Rabbi in Tunis at the end of the eighteenth century; died in 1776. He is the author of "Mishḥa de-Rabuta" (Oil of Anointing), a work containing notes on Joseph Caro's "Shulhan 'Aruk" (Leghorn, 1805). He was assisted by his two learned sons, Solomon (d. 1801) and Hayyim (d. 1783), the former being the author of a similar work, "Kerub Mimshaḥ" (The Anointed Cherub), Leghorn, 1859, fol.

M. F.

ALFONSI, PETRUS (called before baptism **Moses Sephardi**, "the Spaniard"): A controversialist and physician in ordinary to King Alfonso VI. of Castile; born at Huesca, Aragon, in 1062, and died in 1110 at the age of forty-eight. He embraced Christianity and was baptized at Huesca on St. Peter's day, June 29, 1106, in his forty-fifth year. In honor of the saint and of his royal patron and godfather he took the name of Petrus Alfonsi (Alfonso's Peter). Like all the apostates of his time, he sought to show his zeal for the new faith by attacking Judaism and defending the truths of the Christian faith. He composed a series of twelve dialogues against the Jews, the supposed disputants being Mose and Pedro (= Moses Sephardi and Petrus Alfonsi, or, in other words, himself before and after conversion). Though the work is overpraised by Raymund Martin, in his "Pugio Fidei," and others equally biased, it is but little known to-day; and, as Steinschneider observes ("Hebr. Uebers." p. 933), fully merits the oblivion into which it has fallen. The "Dialogi in quibus impiæ Judæorum . . . opiniones . . . confutantur," the full title of which is given in Wolf, "Bibliotheca Hebræa" (i. 971) and Fürst, "Bibl. Jud." (i. 36), appeared at Cologne in 1536 and later in "Bibliotheca Patrum" (xii. 358, xxi.; ed. Lugdunensis, p. 172; ed.

Migne, t. 157, p. 535). Other books are ascribed to him, and he is sometimes confounded with Petrus Hispanus of the thirteenth century. See Steinschneider (*l.c.* p. 470, § 282; p. 934, § 557, note 208), who regards him as the probable translator of the "Canones Tabularum" ("Cod. Corp. Chr." 283, 13; f. 141b) from the Arabic. It is ascribed to one Petrus Anfulusus, who is very likely identical with Alfonsi (see Steinschneider, "Hebr. Bibl." 1882, xxi. 38; "Hebr. Uebers." pp. 985, 986, § 589).

Another controversial tract, described as a dialogue "Inter Petrum Christianum et Moysem Hæreticum" (Codex Merton, 1756, f. 281; in Coxse's "Cat." p. 69), is said to have been written by Petrus Alphonsi (compare "Hebr. Bibl." xxi. 38). In Cambridge University, England, there is a manuscript of the fifteenth century bearing the title: "De Conversione Petri Alfonsi Quondam Judæi et Libro Ejus in Judæos et Saracenos," which is mentioned in Steinschneider's "Polemische und Apologetische Literatur," 1877, p. 224 (compare p. 235, No. 5, s.v. Epistola).

Alfonsi's fame rests chiefly on a collection of thirty-three tales, composed in Latin. This collection has enjoyed a most remarkable popularity, and is, on that account, an interesting subject of study in comparative literature. It is entitled "Disciplina Clericalis," or "A Training-school for the Clergy," and was often used by clergymen in their discourses, notwithstanding the questionable moral tone of some of the stories. The work is important as throwing light on the migration of fables, and is almost indispensable to the student of medieval folk-lore. Translations of it into French, Spanish, and German are extant; and Joseph Jacobs has recently discovered some of the stories at the end of Caxton's translation of the fables of Æsop, where thirteen apologues of "Alfonse" are taken from the "Disciplina Clericalis."

An outline of the tales, by Douce, is prefixed to Ellis' "Early English Metrical Romances." Nearly all the stories are adopted in the "Gesta Romanorum." Chapters ii. and iii. were done into Hebrew and issued under the title ספר הנוח, "Book of Enoch," Constantinople, 1516; Venice, 1544 and 1605. An early French translation of this Hebrew extract was made prior to 1698 by Piques, and August Pichard published another version in Paris, 1838.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The whole literature is put together and discussed in Steinschneider's *Hebr. Uebers.* (pp. 934-935). Mention should be made of the scholarly edition of F. W. V. Schmidt, Berlin, 1827, to whose notes Steinschneider offers very valuable emendations and parallels from Oriental and Western folk-lore. Steinschneider, *Manna*, 1847, pp. 102, 114; idem, *Cat. Bodl.* cols. 549, 550, 733, 734; idem, *Jewish Literature*, p. 174; the authorities mentioned in B. Plick's article, *Pedro Alfonso*, in McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, vii. 864, 865; W. A. Clouston, *Flowers from a Persian Garden*, p. 100, London, 1890; Jacobs, *Jewish Ideals*, 1896, pp. 141-143, lays stress on Alfonsi's importance as one of the intermediaries between Eastern and Western folk-lore, and quotes one of Caxton's stories from "Alfonse."

G. A. K.

ALFONSINE TABLES: A series of astronomical tables giving the exact hours for the rising of the planets and fixed stars; compiled at Toledo at the request of Alfonso X. of Castile about the year 1252, the date given in the Latin editions being the year 1251. They are of considerable importance to the history of astronomy and even to that of geographical discovery, since it was by trusting to a revision of them by Abraham Zacuto that Columbus was enabled to reach the New World. According to Zacuto, the chief compiler of the tables was Isaac ibn Sid, a hazzan or cantor of the city of Toledo; and astronomical observations of his, dating from the years 1263-66, were seen by Isaac Israeli.