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MAḤAMMAD B. 'ABD AL-RAḤMĀN IBN ZIKRĪ
(d. Fez, 1731 CE)

RAŠF AL-ḌARAB
FĪ
FADL BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL WA-L-'ARAB

(ON THE EMINENCE OF ISRAELITES AND ARABS)

A Neo-Muslim Apology in Defence of the Israelites



Edited from manuscripts
with an introduction and notes by

PAUL FENTON

CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS

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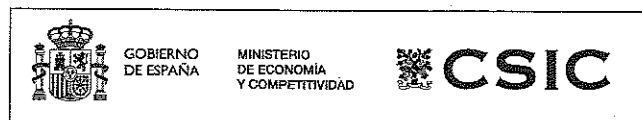
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PART ONE

THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

The present publication of Maḥammad Ibn Zikrī's *Rašf al-darab* represents the first appearance of a unique apologetic work emanating from the ranks of the Jewish 'Marranos' known as the *muhāğirīn* or 'émigrés'. Of the several crypto-Jewish communities that existed in Islamic lands none, as far as I know, produced any substantial literary works reflecting their situation within the Muslim-Jewish *convivencia*.¹ Despite their long-standing conversion to Islam, generally by force, the descendants of the Moroccan Marranos, also known as *bildiyyīn* or *blād*,² continued over the centuries to constitute a distinct section of Maghrebi society whose destiny was often to be dismal. Indeed, bias against them festered among certain sectors of Moroccan aristocracy. Retrieved from the dust of oblivion, Ibn Zikrī's work opens a new chapter in the history of interreligious polemics and constitutes the most explicit defence of Jewish ethnicity in the arena of the medieval debate

¹ A notable exception, in a somewhat different context, is the remarkable chapter 'On whether Israelites can Apostatise' in the Judeo-Persian philosophical work *Hobot Yehudah* written in 1686 by Judah b. El'azar of Kashan, who was forcibly converted to Islam during the anti-Jewish persecutions of 1656-1662 under Shah 'Abbās II. See *Hobot Yehudah le-Rabbi Yehudah ben El'azar*, Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute, 1995, pp. 222-225; English translation in V. B. Moreen, *In Queen Esther's Garden, An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 255-259.

² A-L. Prémare, *Dict. arabe-français*, vol. I, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1993, p. 295. The meaning of this term is discussed below.

about ethnic superiority, known as the *šu'ūbiyya*. Written from a unique viewpoint, that of a 'Muslim Israelite', the *Rašf* is probably the starkest confrontation between Jewishness and Arabness. Its pages reveal the polemical arguments marshalled by the antagonistic camps involved, some of which had been inherited from the Andalusī past and beyond. At the same time, it throws light on the complexities of integration and the stigmatisation and exclusion of minority ethnicities by the dominant group. Furthermore, it affords a unique glimpse into the mental universe of crypto-Jews in a Muslim context and provides a rare testimony to the many and harsh restrictions and vexations to which they were subjected despite their having become over time, in many instances, devout and learned Muslims. Though they belong to the socio-political and religious history of the Maghreb, the multiple issues raised by this work in terms of overlapping religiosities and the construction of ethnic identities will help to illuminate the dynamic interaction of religious traditions in contact in many contexts.

1. CONVERSION OF JEWS TO ISLAM IN AL-ANDALUS AND THE MAGHREB

Individual or even mass conversion of Jews to Islam is not a phenomenon peculiar to the Maghreb. However, on account of Morocco's recurrent political upheavals and the particular conditions that prevailed in a country where Jews became over time the only non-Muslim minority, it occurred here more frequently than elsewhere. Although the *Muhāğirūn* of whom it is question in Ibn Zikrī's work, belong to the context of Morocco, in order to fully understand their embittered condition, it is necessary to harp back to the earlier history of the Maghreb and Muslim Spain.

Persecution of non-Muslims under the Almohads (1130-1269) reached its peak in 1148, when their particularly intolerant rule engulfed Al-Andalus and confronted the Jews with the choice between conversion, exile or death.³ As recounted in the doleful

³ See H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, Leiden, 1974, vol. I, pp. 191 *et seq.*; *idem*, "The Decrees of the Almohads", in S.W.

dirge by the contemporary poet Abraham Ibn 'Ezra, tens of communities in North Africa and Al-Andalus were either wiped out or forcefully converted to Islam.⁴ Large-scale massacres took place in Siġilmāssa, Marrakesh and Fez. The religious sages of the time, notably the *dayyan* Maymūn b. Joseph and, later, his son the famous Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) responded to the religious and psychological issues raised by this mass conversion, the former in his *Iggeret he-neḥāmāh* ('Epistle of Consolation')⁵ and the latter in his *Iggeret ha-šemad* ('Epistle on Forced Conversion').⁶ Presumably, the Maimonides themselves posed as Muslims before making their escape to Fez, where, in 1160, Maymūn composed his pastoral *Epistle* in Judeo-Arabic. He comforts his disheartened fellow Jews and encourages them to secretly study the Torah and fulfil all the commandments mentally if not physically, assuring them that God would not abandon His people. He lays particularly emphasis on the necessity of reciting the central daily Hebrew prayer, the '*Amīdāh*', even in abbreviated form or in Arabic. The *Epistle* reflects the despair that had gripped his co-religionists who could not even recite a short prayer without endangering their lives.

Only a few years separate Maymūn's *Epistle of Consolation* from Moses Maimonides' *Epistle on forced Conversion*, also called *Epistle on Martyrdom*, which was probably composed in Fez in 1165. Its tone suggests that a turn for the worse had meanwhile occurred in the situation of the crypto-Jews. The latter were now compelled to attend at mosque, to acknowledge the prophethood of Muḥammad and to resign themselves to seeing their children brought up as Muslims. Maimonides rose to meet the existential challenge of the time. Unlike an anonymous rabbi who had been

Baron *et alia* (eds.), *Yitzhak F. Baer Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem, 1960, pp. 134-153 (in Heb.), and the introduction to our *Exile in the Maghreb*, New York, Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.

⁴ See *ibid.*

⁵ L. Simmons, "The Letter of Consolation of Maimun ben Joseph", *JQR* 2 (1890), pp. 62-101; and Maimon ben Joseph ha-Dayyan, *Letter of Consolation of Maimon Father of Moses Maimonides*, ed. and trans. Fred Rosner, Haifa: Maimonides Research Institute, 2003.

⁶ *Crisis and Leadership: the Epistles of Moses Maimonides*, transl. A. Halkin, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985, pp. 12-45.

previously consulted by the apostates on their predicament and who had denied them all hope of salvation, Maimonides propounds a form of Jewish *taqiyya* ('dissimulation'). He encourages his co-religionists to remain inwardly faithful to their ancestral creed while outwardly professing Islam. Interestingly, he hints that from the outset the Muslims made light of the Jews' conversion and doubted their sincerity:

In past persecutions they were compelled to transgress the commandments [...] but in this persecution we are not forced to commit acts prohibited [by Judaism], but merely to orally profess belief in that individual [Muḥammad] so that if someone wishes to fulfil the commandments secretly he can do so [...]. They fully realise that we do not believe in that credo, which is only uttered in order to escape the caliph's decree, to merely appease him by stating the superiority of his religion [...]. I tell [my fellow Jew] to confess and not choose death. However, he should not remain in the domain of that ruler. He should stay in his house until he can leave the realm. If he is dependant on his work, let him carry it out in private. A persecution as unusual⁷ as this one, where the only coercion is to utter something, was hitherto unknown.⁸

Thus Maimonides most realistically advises his fellow Jews to circumvent martyrdom by paying lip service to the Muslims' exactions. He does, however, declare the state of apostasy to be sinful and urges the apostates to make every effort to escape it by seeking elsewhere a more tolerant asylum. His insightful response was to become the religious guide for countless generations of forced converts under Islam. It is no coincidence

⁷ Probably the word underlying the Hebrew *nifla* 'in the lost Arabic original was *garīb*. The translation 'marvellous', used by certain apologists, is utterly misleading. See, for example, M. Chérif, "Encore sur le statut des *ḍimmī*-s sous les Almohades", in M. Fierro and J. Tolan (eds.), *The Legal Status of Dhimmī-s in the Islamic West*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, p. 71.

⁸ I have combined the readings of the two versions published respectively in *Iggeret ha-šemad la-Rambam*, ed. A. Geiger, Breslau, 1850, fol. 5a-b and *Iggerot ha-Rambam*, vol. I, ed. Y. Shilat, Jerusalem, 1995, pp. 53-54, and compared them with Frankfurt, Ms. Heb. oct. 68, fols. 9b-10a. Cf. Halkin, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Muslim accusations about the insincerity of Jewish converts is a recurrent theme down the ages and is not limited to Morocco.

that Fez, where the *Epistle* was originally composed, later became the scene of an endemic and abiding form of Judeo-Muslim Marranism which is the subject of the present study.

Persecutions intensified with the accession in 1165 of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (d. 1184), when still further restrictions were imposed upon the crypto-Jews, some of whom were second generation Muslims, by his successor Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr (r. 1184-1198).

The Andalusī Jewish philosopher and exegete Joseph Ibn 'Aqnīn, who, like Maimonides, later settled in Fez, has left a gripping account of the persecutions under Abū Ya'qūb.⁹ Some of the cruel disabilities imposed upon the Jewish converts in his time continued for numerous generations and eventually became part of the historical condition of crypto-Jews under Islam. Others have certain parallels, for which they may even have formed the precedents, in the ordeals suffered by the Marranos in the Christian context.

In the present persecutions, he says, the more we obey their instructions and comply with their doctrines and forsake our own, the more they burden our yoke and increase our travail. [...] The proof can be seen in the afflictions suffered by the apostates of our land who, on account of these persecutions, have utterly forsaken the faith and changed their attire. Yet their conversion has been of absolutely no avail to them, for they are subjected to the same vexations as those who have remained faithful to the creed. To be sure, even the conversion of their fathers or grandfathers a century ago has been of no advantage to them. [...] Indeed, this treatment has induced many apostates to return to their former faith.¹⁰

⁹ See A. S. Halkin, "On the History of Forced Conversion under the Almohads", *Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, New York, 1953, pp. 101-110 (in Heb.); *idem*, "On the figure of Joseph b. Judah Ibn Aqnīn", in *Harry Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew Section, Jerusalem, 1965, pp. 93-111 (in Heb.).

¹⁰ Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Tibb al-nufūs* ('Hygiene of the souls'), ch. 4, ms. Oxford, Bodl. Neubauer 1273, fol. 143a, translated in our *Exile in the Maghreb*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison, 2016, text A4, pp. 51-55.

Ibn 'Aqnīn goes on to say that the persecutions were embittered by a veritable inquisition egged on by the lower elements of society:

We are made the object of inquisitions in which both great and small testify against us. Their slightest statements render lawful the shedding of our blood, the confiscation of our property, and the dishonour of our wives. But by the grace of God who has taken pity on the faithful remnant, their testimonies have proven contradictory, for the nobles pleaded in our favour whilst the commoners testified against us. Now the custom of the land would not allow the testimony of the vulgar to supersede that of the gentry. Thus though these measures were repeatedly renewed, God continuously took pity.

Among the restrictions he proceeds to enumerate is the impossibility for converts to marry outside of their social group on account of the contempt in which their women were held by the Muslims.

Such is the case that should a [Muslim] possess a female Jewish captive and have a child by her, he is belittled by them for so doing. Moreover, his children are despised and it is not easy for him to marry them off, for they are so spurned that even the meanest [Muslim] will not contract an alliance with him.

The New Muslims could only practice certain trades, their rights to inheritance were revoked, and their children were placed in the custody of Muslim guardians. On account of their state of abasement, he reports, they had become a byword:

When a [Muslim] wishes to exaggerate a state of scorn or humiliation that had befallen him or his fellows, he exclaims: 'My shame was like that of the Jews'.¹¹ Similarly, if they seek to offend a neighbour, after having exhausted all other insults, or if they are angered at a son or a slave, they exclaim: 'What a Jew!' Likewise

¹¹ The simile is widespread, even in Sufi literature. Cf. al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, vol. 3, Beirut, Dār al-ma'rifa, n.d., p. 342; Ibn 'Aḡība, *Iqāz al-himam*, Cairo, n.d., Dār al-fikr, p. 178.

if they want to curse someone in the most offensive manner possible, they say: 'May Allāh make you like them and count you among their number!' If they want to describe a distasteful deed or a blemish they say: 'Even the lowest Jew would not be content with such a thing'.

One of the harshest vexations imposed upon the New Muslims was the obligation to wear distinctive and degrading attire. Forbidden to don the 'noble' turban, they had to wear unsightly bonnets and black tunics with long sleeves in order to make them resemble 'the inferior state of women'.

The purpose of these distinctive garments is to differentiate us from among them so that we should be unmistakably recognised in our dealings with them, in order that they might treat us with disparagement and humiliation. This is a form of servitude that results in our blood being spilled with impunity, for whenever we travel on the road between towns, we are waylaid by robbers and brigands and are murdered secretly at night or killed in broad daylight.¹²

In short, the same humiliation and subservience demanded of the *ḍimmīs* were also deemed incumbent upon the converts.¹³

Ibn 'Aqnīn also refers several times to the condition of the Judeo-Muslims in his commentary on the *Song of Songs*. Whereas the later Marranos would perceive in the Biblical story of Esther the embodiment of their plight,¹⁴ for Ibn 'Aqnīn Solomon's allegory of love expressed the unswerving fidelity of the crypto-Jews to the tenets of their ancestral faith despite persecution.

I suffer severe trials and on account of persecution my mind fails like that of a drunkard [...]. Yet the love in my heart for Him

¹² *Ibid.*, fols. 144-146.

¹³ The standard studies on the status of the *ḍimmīs* are A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects*, London, Frank Cass, 1930 and A. Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam*, Beirut, Impr. Catholique, 1958. See also M. Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

¹⁴ See C. Roth, *A History of the Marranos*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1932, pp. 186-188.

is unabated for I disobey the nations (i.e. the Muslims) who command me to transgress His precepts and constantly inflict upon me both torture and death, as it is written: 'Yet for Thy sake we face death all day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter' (Ps. 44, 23).¹⁵

Similarly, in the verse: 'At our doors are all manner of delicacies, old and new, which I have concealed for you, O my beloved' (Cant. 7, 14), he perceives the situation of *taqiyya* that the apostate Jews endure:

My deeds reveal my love for Thee for I fulfil Thy will despite my being subjected to persecution and woe... This is an allusion to the generations of forced conversion in which we perform the commandments while the sword hangs over our heads and especially the present persecutions, may God annul them! Nonetheless, as is known, we indulge in the study of the Torah, evidenced by the presence in Fez of the great sage Moses Maimonides, whose extent of knowledge is sublime... If we could call upon him alone in this forced conversion, it would have been enough for us.¹⁶

This text shows that for an extended period after their forced conversion, the crypto-Jews continued to secretly practice Judaism despite the threat of death. The Muslims were not dupe, as is clear from the following passage from a Muslim chronicle:

'Abd al-Wāḥid b. 'Alī al-Marrākuṣī ordered the [Muslims] of Jewish origin residing in the Maghreb to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population by wearing a degrading attire

¹⁵ Josephi b. Judah Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Divulgatio mysteriorum Luminumque apparentia, Commentarius in Canticum canticorum*, ed. A. S. Halkin, Jerusalem, Meqisey nirdamīm, 1964, p. 68 on Cant. 2, 4: 'His banner over me is love'.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 398. Incidentally, it can be inferred from Ibn 'Aqnīn's statement that Maimonides himself was also a forced convert. The question was been recently discussed by H. A. Davidson, *Moses Maimonides, The Man and His Works*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 9-28 and J. L. Kraemer, *Maimonides, The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds*, New York, Doubleday, 2008, ch. 7 'Did Maimonides convert to Islam?', pp. 116-124.

consisting of a black robe with ridiculously long sleeves. They had to wear a skull cap in the shape of a donkey's pack-saddle instead of the usual turbans and, in addition, a distinguishing sign called a *šikla*, remained in force throughout his reign. His son, Abū 'Abdallah (d. 1227) imposed upon them yellow turbans and robes. The reason for Abū Yūsuf [al-Manšūr]'s compelling the [Neo-Muslims] to wear distinctive clothing was the doubt he entertained as to the sincerity of their belief: "Were I sure that they were true Muslims, he would say, I would allow them to merge with the Muslims through marriage or in their other affairs; if, however, I were sure that they were Infidels, I would have their men slain, their children enslaved and their property confiscated and distributed among the Believers. But I have doubts about their case."

Al-Marrākuṣī concludes that ever since the Almohads came to power:

Neither synagogue nor church is to be found throughout all the Muslim lands of the Maghreb. But the Jews in our parts externally profess to Islam; they pray in the mosques and teach the Qur'ān to their children complying with our religion and our law. God alone knows what their hearts conceal and what they keep in their homes behind closed doors.¹⁷

Only a century later under al-Ma'mūn (r. 1227-1232) had persecution sufficiently abated to allow Jews to timidly reappear in the capital at Marrakesh. The Almohads were succeeded by the Marīnids (1258-1465), who did not care for their form of religious fundamentalism. They moved their capital to Fez, where, as outsiders, they were in need of Jews. They allowed them to re-

¹⁷ *Kitāb al-mu'ğib fī talhīs aḥbār ahl al-Mağrib* ('History of the Almohads', written in 1224), ed. Reinhart Dozy, Leiden, 1881, pp. 223-224. Some of the foregoing facts are discussed by M. Fierro, "Conversion, ancestry and universal religion: the case of the Almohads in the Islamic West (sixth/twelfth-seventh/thirteenth centuries)", *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2010), pp. 155-174 and M. García-Arenal, "Rapports entre les groupes dans la péninsule Ibérique. La conversion des juifs à l'islam", *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 63-64 (1992), pp. 91-101.

emerge, employing many of them in their administration.¹⁸ However, the re-conversion process was not an easy one and was fraught with mortal danger. In principle, relapse (*ridda*) from Islam was punishable by death. Indeed, a Muslim historian records that in 1276, shortly after their re-emergence under Sultan Ya'qūb b. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, an anti-Jewish riot broke out in Fez resulting in the killing of numerous Jews. There would have been a total massacre had the Emir Ya'qūb and his soldiers not driven the murderous rabble out of the Jewish quarter. Many reconverted to Islam 'through fear of the sword' and, for social or economic reasons, found it preferable to remain crypto-Jews while outwardly professing Islam. When the Marīnids were eventually toppled, the Jews were again massacred or forcibly converted.

2. WHO ARE THE MUHĀĠIRŪN?

Perhaps nowhere else in the Islamic world are the representatives of religious nobility so numerous as in Morocco, the land of the saint and the *šarīf*. Claiming descent from the house of Muḥammad through Idrīs (d. 791), the patron saint of the Fez, the *šurafā'* rose to a position of social and political prestige under the Marīnids, who aggrandised them as a means of legitimising their own authority.¹⁹ Perceiving Jews and, more so, crypto-Jews as commercial and political rivals, the *šurafā'* continuously incited the Muslim population against them whenever Jews occupied positions of authority within the Marīnid government as courtiers and financial advisors. The political power of the *šurafā'* crystallised with the 'miraculous' discovery in Fez of Idrīs' tomb in 1437 during reconstruction work on the Mosque of the

¹⁸ See M. Shatzmiller, "An ethnic factor in a medieval social revolution: the role of Jewish courtiers under the Marīnids", in *Islamic Society and Culture, Essays in honour of Professor Aziz Ahmed*, ed. M. Israel, New Delhi, Manohar, 1983, pp. 149-163.

¹⁹ See M. García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform, Mahdīs of the Muslim West*, Leiden, Brill, 2006, ch. 8: The Marīnids and Sharīfism, pp. 217-245.

ašraf. The discovery conferred a sacred character on its precincts, henceforth considered as *ḥurm* and out-of-bounds to Infidels.²⁰

As pointed out by the historians H. Hirschberg and D. Corcos²¹ this date coincides with the ousting of the Jews from the nearby district of *Funduq al-yahūd* in Old Fez, for 'protective reasons', and their relocation in New Fez. The expulsion came as a traumatic blow and some Jews, unable to sustain the loss of their property in the neighbourhood where they had lived for centuries, chose conversion. It is possible that Ibn Zikrī's ancestors went over to Islam at this time and joined the already significant community of Neo-Muslims in Fez. The latter's ranks were further swollen by the forced conversions precipitated by the fall of the Marīnids in 1465 and subsequently by the numerous natural catastrophes that punctuated Moroccan history. Over the centuries these apostates formed a distinct group known initially by the name of *muhāġirīn*, 'émigrés', and later by that of *bildiyyīn* or *blād*, 'indigenous [Jews]'.²²

According to the commentators, the Qur'ānic term *muhāġir* refers to 'those who migrate from an environment of unbelief towards one of belief'.²³ The archetypes of the *muhāġirīn* are the *anṣār* who accompanied Muḥammad on his flight (*hiġra*) from Mekka to Madīna at the inception of Islam. Down the ages the term has been employed to refer to converts to Islam or Muslims who had chosen to leave for an Islamic country when their homeland was conquered by non-Muslims. Hence it has been used to denote the immigrants in North Africa from former Muslim Spain, Crimean Tartars and Caucasians, who resettled in the Ottoman Empire (Syria, Palestine), Balkan Muslims who resettled in Turkey, Muslim refugees from India and Burma who left for Pakistan, and Muslims who emigrated from Algeria rather than

²⁰ See G. Salmon, "Le culte de Mulei Idris et la mosquée des Chorfa à Fez", *Archives marocaines* 3 (1905), p. 415; Le Tourneau, *Fès*, pp. 599-604.

²¹ D. Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, Jerusalem, Rubin Mass, 1976, p. 75.

²² The exact meaning of these denominations will be discussed below.

²³ 'But those who have believed, migrated, and striven for Allāh's cause, can look forward to Allāh's mercy' (2, 218).

accept French dominion.²⁴ The term was also used in the Maghreb²⁵ to label Jews who had collectively converted to Islam, either under duress, which was mostly the case, or voluntarily.

The 17th century scholar Maḥammad Mayyāra (d. 1662), himself a descendant of Jewish converts, considered the name *muḥāḡir* to be offensive and proscribed its usage. Writing from a totally Muslim angle, he declared it to be a derogatory name given to apostate Jews by their former co-religionists:

He who gives fair consideration to the term *muḥāḡir*, frequently used in our time as an insult, will realise that this depends solely on the negative intent of the person employing it. This does not correspond to its etymological meaning, which signifies total ‘abandonment’. Religiously, the migrant is one who abandons that which Allāh has forbidden, or, as explained in Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, forsakes evil. In practice, rather than its philological or religious meaning, it designates one who has abandoned unbelief, especially the Jewish religion. Indeed, there is neither shame nor blemish in being described as having forsaken unbelief.²⁶

Mayyāra goes on to propose another explanation of the term, which arose in a discussion:

The derogatory meaning of this word originated with the Jews, —may Allāh curse them! They use it to revile the apostates among them who forsook their abject religion, a deed they consider to be utterly iniquitous. At the time when the [Jews] still cohabited

²⁴ R. Le Tourneau, *Fès avant le Protectorat*, Casablanca, 1949, p. 198.

²⁵ In Persia such Jews were known as *ḡadīd-i-islām*; on their plight, see R. Patai, *Jadīd al-Islām: the Jewish “New-Muslims” of Meshhed*, Detroit, 1997. In Bukhara they were called *Challa* (‘half and half’), an allusion to their not having been considered fully-fledged Muslims, which was also the case in Morocco. Indeed, despite their geographical distance, there are several interesting parallels between the Moroccan *muḥāḡir* and the Bukhāran *Challa* to which reference will be made in the course of this study.

²⁶ Maḥammad b. Aḥmad Mayyāra, *Naṣīḥat al-muḡtarrīn wa-kifāyat al-muḡtarrīn bi-l-tafrīqa bayn al-muslimīn bimā lam yunzilhu rabb al-‘alamīn wa-lā aḥbara bi-hi al-ṣādiq al-amīn wa-lā ṭabata ‘an al-ḥulafā’ al-muḥtadīn*, ed. Mina al-Maḡārī and Ḥafīda al-Dāzī, Rabat, Dār Abī Raqrāq, 2007, p. 164. As will be seen below, Ibn Zikrī also adopts this explanation.

with the Muslims in Fez, the term was adopted from them by low class Muslims who imitated them in insulting those, like the Jews, who converted to Islam.²⁷

Mayyāra’s explanation is more than dubious since *muḥāḡir* is a generic term and occurs elsewhere applying to Jewish converts. *Muḥāḡirūn* of Jewish extraction were to be found in Tūat²⁸ and notably in Tūqurt (Touggourt)²⁹ in Algeria, where the term designated Jews who were forcibly converted to Islam in the 18th or 19th century.³⁰

The title of an anonymous 18th century tract written against the *muḥāḡirīn*, which will be studied in more detail below, *Qaḍīyyat al-muḥāḡirīn al-musammūn al-yawm bi-l-bildiyīn*³¹ (‘The Issue of the *muḥāḡirīn* who are today called *bildiyīn*’), suggests that at one point the term *muḥāḡirūn* was abandoned in favour of the alternative *bildiyīn* ‘indigenous’. It has been proposed that this latter Arabic term derives from al-Balīda, a neighbourhood in Old Fez located immediately S. E. of *Funduq al-yahūd*, where the Jews originally resided before the creation of the *mellāḥ* in New Fez.³² In support of this etymology it is noteworthy that the apostate Jews of Rabat, the so-called *bḥīrīn*, were also named

²⁷ Though David Corcos, a modern historian of Moroccan Jewry, adopts Mayyāra’s view in his “The Jews of Morocco under the Marinides”, *Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 27, n. 64. Corcos claims the term was in use until the 17th century, when it was replaced by *bildiyīn*. For my own explanation, see below, p. 24.

²⁸ J. O. Hunwick, “The Rights of Dhimmīs to Maintain a Place of Worship: a 15th Century Fatwā from Tlemcen”, *al-Qantara* 12 (1991), p. 152.

²⁹ See our *Exile in the Maghreb*, text A 37 and A. Cahen, “Lettre à M. Féraud... sur les Juifs d’Algérie et de Tuggurt”, *Recueil des notices et mémoires de la société archéologique de la province de Constantine* 10 (1866), pp. 1-16.

³⁰ See *Exile in the Maghreb*, text A 37. Interestingly, according to two former Jewish residents of Tuggurt, Mr Eliyahou Balouka (1918-2013) (interviewed 24/3/2007), and Mr Simon Attia (1921-2013) (interviewed 18/6/2008), rabbi of Tuggurt in the 1940’s, the local Muslims called these apostates *muḥāḡirīn*, which the Jews (intentionally?) pronounced *muḡāhirīn*: ‘open sinners’. It is possible that this was also the ‘offensive expression’ used by Moroccan Jews to which Mayyāra refers.

³¹ *Qaḍīyyat al-muḥāḡirīn al-musammūn al-yawm bi-l-bildiyīn*, ed. M. Fatha, Rabat, Ed. Abū Raqrāq, 2004.

³² *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 8. On the al-Balīda district, see Le Tourneau, *Fès*, pp. 118-119.

after their former quarter facing the sea, al-Baḥīra. However, the term *bildī* is used in other Jewish communities to distinguish an indigenous element from a foreign one. For example, in the Yemen *baladī* designates the original local rite as opposed to the Sefaradī one imported from the Holy Land.

It is not impossible that the word reflects Andalusī Arabic usage preserved in the modern Spanish 'baladī', meaning 'worthless', and may be the name given to Jewish renegades by the Spanish exiles.³³ As we shall see below, the latter also employed the Spanish word 'Tornadissos' or 'renegades', whose Arabic equivalent *badaliyīn* may have been intentionally corrupted into *bildiyyīn*. Alternatively, the appellation *bildiyyīn* might be the equivalent of the Hebrew *tōšabīm* 'original inhabitants' which was used in Morocco to distinguish the indigenous Arabic or Berber speaking Jews from the *megōrašīm*, or 'Spanish exiles'. Perhaps the latter dubbed the apostates as 'indigenous ones' since they originated almost exclusively from the camp of the *tōšabīm*. Indeed, of the Jewish family names borne by the *bildiyyīn* not one is of Iberian origin. Surely, having sought refuge in Morocco at the price of great sacrifice in order to escape conversion to Catholicism, it was unlikely that the Spanish Jews would be induced to embrace Islam once on North African soil. Looking down upon the local Maghrebi Jews who had apostatised, the Spanish exiles were careful to distinguish them from their own kind known as *megōrašīm*, which translates into Arabic as *muhāğirūn*.

Contrary to Mayyāra's claim, I contend that the Muslims considered *muhāğirūn* too noble a term to be applied to the Jewish converts of doubtful sincerity and it was they who chose to call them *bildiyyīn*.

³³ K. Lokotsch, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der europäischen Wörter Orientalischen Ursprungs*, Heidelberg, 1927, p. 17, n.° 196 and R. Kiesler, *Kleines vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Arabischen im Iberoromanischen und Italienischen*, Tübingen, Francke Verlag, 1994, p. 151, n.° 20. However, this meaning is not proposed by F. Corriente either in his *Dictionary of Andalusī Arabic*, Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 62, or his *Dictionary of Arabic and Allied Loanwords, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Gallician and Kindred Dialects*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, who gives p. 222: 'run-of the-mill'.

Another explanation, perhaps a popular etymology, attributes this appellation to the fact that many *bildīs*, unlike other Fāsīs who bore Arab or Berber tribal *nisbas*, had toponymic names, such as Tāzī or Sebtī, referring to their place of origin.³⁴ Thus the Fāsīs prized the nobility of their pedigree and their ability to trace themselves back to common ancestors, while, at the same time, reviling those who, like the Persians of old targeted in the šu'ūbite debates, minimised the relevance of lineage and identified themselves as merely hailing from 'such and such a village'. Lastly, the term *bildiyyīn* could have been circulated by Andalusī and šarīfian Muslims who saw themselves as the true Arab *muhāğirūn*, whereas they considered the Neo-Muslims to be hybrids of local Moroccan stock.

In recent times, both these terms had become unfamiliar to Jews and Muslims alike who referred to members of the apostate community as *Ahl Fās* ('notables of Fez').³⁵ In contrast, Jews invariably referred to Arabs as *al-muslimūn*, whereas Muslims generally called proselytes of Jewish origin *islāmiyyūn* or *muslimāniyyūn*.

3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIVALRY: *BILDĪS* AND *ŠARĪFS*, *BILDĪS* AND *ŠŪFIS*

The seminal studies by Mercedes García-Arenal,³⁶ have greatly contributed to clarifying the subsequent destiny of the *muhāğirīn* (henceforth: *bildīs*) in Morocco, especially in Fez, and

³⁴ Cf. N. Cigar, "Lettre inédite de Mūlay Isma'īl aux gens de Fès", *Héspéris-Tamuda* 15 (1974), p. 111, n. 16.

³⁵ It seems that this term designated in particular apostates of recent date, as confirmed by 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Sūda, "*Buyūtāt Fās qadīm^{an} wa-ḥadīṭ^{an}*", *Mağallat al-baḥt al-'ilmī* 22 (1973), pp. 109-111. See also Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 230 who proposes another explanation for this denomination.

³⁶ Mercedes García-Arenal, "Les Bildiyyīn des Fès, un groupe de néo-musulmans d'origine juive", *Studia Islamica* 66 (1987), pp. 113-143; *idem*, "Jewish converts to Islam in the Muslim West", *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997), pp. 227-248, and *idem*, "*Naṣīḥat al-muğtarrīn* of Maḥamad Mayyāra (d.1072/1662): a Collection of Fatwās on the Bildiyyīn of Fez", *The Maghreb Review* 16 (1991), pp. 84-93.

the hardships they experienced in integrating into the Muslim milieu. As it had been in Al-Andalus, Muslim society in Fez was divided into ethnic or quasi-ethnic groups, membership of which was determined by birth. The most significant factions in Fez were the Idrisid *šurafā'*, the *bildīs*, and 'the commonalty' amongst whom the sizeable Andalusian component grew numerically and politically stronger from the 16th century onwards. Extremely conscious of their alleged origins, the *šurafā'* and Andalusī Arabs flaunted the distinction of their ancestries, using their pedigree as a title of nobility and a criterion for social prestige. The importance placed on lineage gave rise to a vast literature devoted to their genealogies and biographies.³⁷ No doubt the chauvinistic sentiments of 'group solidarity' (*ta'aṣṣub*), which had already been rife in Muslim Spain, exacerbated the ethnic divides between the Arab, Berber, Andalusian, and Jewish elements.³⁸

Throughout the Marīno-Waṭṭāsīd and Sa'dian periods, the constant efforts deployed by the Neo-Muslims of Jewish extract to attain social and economical equality within the majority society in Fez, brought them into continuous conflict with the *šurafā'*, and later with the Andalusīs, who rejected their integration through fear of 'contamination'. Confined into a distinct social group, they were relentlessly discriminated against and frowned upon, especially by *šurafā'* and ultimately also by Šūfis, when they too became a powerful constituent of Moroccan society.

Since mediaeval times, Morocco had been receptive to the leadership of charismatic figures incarnated by holy men and marabouts. The rise of *šarīfism* was accompanied by the spread of *šūfism*, which first recruited amongst the educated and affluent classes.

That the *bildīs* first became the object of religious polemics in Šūfī literature precisely during the Marīnid period is indicated

³⁷ Cf. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Les Historiens des Chorfa, Essai sur la littérature historique et biographique au Maroc du xvi^e au xx^e siècle*, Paris, E. Larose, 1922, p. 44 *et seq.*, and the hundreds of works listed by 'Abd al-Salām Ibn Sūda, *Dalīl mu'arriḥ al-maḡrib al-aqṣā*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1997.

³⁸ For an earlier example of Jewish reactions to the *šu'ūbiyya* in Muslim Spain, see our *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn 'Ezra, philosophe et poète andalou du xii^e siècle*, Leiden-New York, Brill, 1997, pp. 243-251.

by a chapter of the *Rasā'il al-kubrā* by Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī (1333-1390), a leading mystical figure in Morocco. In these letters of spiritual guidance, extensively quoted by Ibn Zikrī in the *Rašf*, al-Rundī discusses a question put to him concerning the superiority of Moses' prophecy over that of Muḥammad, a theme later taken up by Ibn Zikrī. Most probably this otherwise unthinkable question with its *šu'ūbī* overtones originated with the Jewish apostates, for whom this issue was of importance in determining the 'nobility' of their religious pedigree.³⁹

In his reply, Ibn 'Abbād argues that it is blasphemous to claim Moses' superiority over Muḥammad since the latter clearly expressed his pre-eminence even though it was detrimental to his bid to convert the Jews of Medinah. According to Ibn 'Abbād, here lies the very proof of the veracity of his claim. He further states that any Muslim who maintains that Moses is a greater prophet equivalently admits that Muḥammad did not have a mission to convert non-Muslims and acknowledges Judaism's pre-eminence over Islam. Finally, he states that not all prophets are equal, though their inequality does not imply imperfection in any of them. Therefore, it is pointless to exaggerate the praise of Muḥammad to the detriment of the image of other prophets.⁴⁰

The Šūfis soon came to share the *šurafā'*'s animosity towards the *bildīs* as is evidenced by the attitude of Ibn 'Abbād's disciple Ibn Sakkāk (d. 1415). In his *Nuṣṣ al-mulūk*, Ibn Sakkāk sharply criticises the Marīnid sovereigns while eulogising the *šurafā'*, declaring notably that he 'adores the city of Fez because the *šurafā'* are respected there while the *muhāḡirīn* are despised'.⁴¹ However, as will be seen anon, the *bildīs* eventually found acceptance in

³⁹ In some respects it is analogous to the question put to Maimonides by 'Obadyah the Proselyte, formerly a Muslim, asking whether his ancestors had been pagans or monotheists. Cf. Maimonides, *Responsa*, ed. J. Blau, vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1960, §448, pp. 725-728.

⁴⁰ See Ibn 'Abbad of Ronda: *Letters on the Sufi Path*, transl. and introduced by John Renard, New York, Paulist Press, 1986, pp. 53-54.

⁴¹ The printed version, Ibn Sakkāk, *Nuṣṣ al-mulūk*, Fez, 1898, p. 13, has *dhimmi* instead of *muhāḡirīn*. Interestingly, Ibn Zikrī quotes this passage with stupefaction and refuses to believe that it could have been written by Ibn Sakkāk. See *Rašf*, ms M, fol. *infra*, fol. 52a. See also H. S. Sqalli, *Contribution à l'étude du discours politico-religieux sous les derniers Mérinides*, PhD Aix

ṣūfī circles, especially in the Tiġānī order, in which they even rose to prominence.

Elsewhere the converts from Judaism were not well received by their new co-religionists. Not only were they considered of inferior extraction and morality, but even the sincerity of their conversion was called into question and they continued to be perceived as crypto-Jews. Ethnic tensions came to a head when the Neo-Muslims began opening shops in the most exclusive part of the Qaysāriyya, or covered bazar, thus raising fears of commercial rivalry with the old established traders in Fez. Apart from being the hub of a lucrative trade in precious textiles and luxury goods, the bazar fell within the sacred precincts (*ḥurm*) of the mausoleum (*qubba*) of Mawlāy Idrīs, the patron saint of the city. For this reason it was out of bounds for beasts and Jews and this soon became too a pretext for the exclusion of Neo-Muslims. Claiming that their noble origins singled them out as guardians of the sanctity of the Qaysāriyya, the *ṣurafā'*, who included some of the more important merchant families of the capital, argued that it was a place where only men of worth and piety were allowed to conduct business. As descendants of Jews, *bildīs* were looked down upon as being devoid of both honour and repute. They were stigmatised with the essential vices of which the Jews were allegedly possessed according to Muslim sources. The negative stereotypes conveyed by the Qu'rān brought upon them accusations of dishonesty and commercial fraud and no effort was spared to eject them from the Qaysāriyya.

Henceforth, the subsequent saga of the *bildīs* in Fez is a continuous bout of claims and counter-claims with rival contenders vying to win predominance in the Qaysāriyya. The *bildīs* would gain sway whenever they were able to curry favour with the reigning sultan by placating him with alluring presents or through the influence of *bildī* or even Jewish personalities at court. It was a class war that primarily entailed a struggle for commercial preponderance, but it was not a mere Kulturkampf between the 'natives' and the 'newcomers' taught by Weberian sociology. As

en Provence, 1992; M. Bencheikroun, *La Vie intellectuelle marocaine sous les Mérinides et les Wattāsides*, Rabat, 1974, pp. 368-372.

the political situation evolved, the polemical arguments mustered up by each group to buttress its legitimacy took on overtones of deeper issues connected with religious and hereditary authority.

Two relatively late accounts have recorded the chain of events in this confrontation, the first of which is an anonymous tract *Qaḍiyyat al-muhāġirīn al-musammīn al-yawm bi-l-bildiyyīn* ('The Question of the Emigrés, today called the *bildiyyīn*').⁴² Starting off as a history of the markets and corporations of Fez it soon develops into a polemical diatribe directed against the *bildīs*. According to this account, which relates events up until the first half of the 18th century, the probable time of its composition,⁴³ the *bildīs* first appeared in the wake of the anti-Jewish riot which broke out in 1276 during the reign of Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq:

in the course of which a number of Jews converted to Islam through fear of the sword. Once Abū Yūsuf had put a stop to the killing and looting, he moved the surviving Jews out of Old Fez and resettled them in the new city. Those that had remained faithful to their creed called disparagingly those that had apostatised *muhāġirīn* or 'emigrants'. Till this day the term has become a by-word to designate those among them who have become Muslim.⁴⁴ Thereafter, the group that had apostatised, adopted the professions of the Muslims, some settling in the Qaysāriyya, while others took to the markets of the Madina. In addition to being despised because of their Jewish origins, they were accused of dishonesty, commercial malpractice and impiety⁴⁵ in order to obtain their exclusion from the Qaysāriyya. This polemical activity resulted in the Jews' being barred from this market for they employed fraudulent practices, dishonesty, and usury.⁴⁶

⁴² *Qaḍiyyat al-muhāġirīn al-musammīn (!) al-yawm bi-l-bildiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Fatha, Rabat, Dār Abī Raqrāq, 2004. There exists a French translation of this tract made by a French civil servant, Marcel Vallat (1898-1986). See A. Sebtī, "Ces Fassis d'origine juive", *Zamane* (Nov. 2011), pp. 66-71. Ibn Sūda, *Dalīl*, p. 77, n.° 409, believes it was written by the celebrated 'Alawid historian Abū l-Qāsim al-Zayyānī (1734-1833).

⁴³ See García-Arenal, "Les Bildiyyīn des Fès", pp. 114-115.

⁴⁴ See *supra*, n. 27.

⁴⁵ The Muslim presumption that Jews are dishonest is already present in the Qur'ān. Cf. 3, 75; 4, 161; 5, 13.

⁴⁶ *Qaḍiyyat al-muhāġirīn*, p. 55.

The anonymous author explains that the expulsion took place on the basis of a *fatwā* elicited by the sultan Abū Yūsuf from the *fuqahā* after the receipt of numerous complaints. It occurred after the *bildīs* had been exposed to public opprobrium by parading them through the streets of the city (*taṭwīf*). Thereafter, they were to be restricted to trades such as small money-changers, wool carders, blood-letters, butchers, grocers, milk sellers, carpenters, saddle-and bridle makers, shoe repairers, belt makers, blacksmiths, dyers, brass-smiths, tanners, rope-makers and cotton sellers, some of which were considered mean.⁴⁷ Whenever the question of the *bildīs* re-surfaced, this *fatwā* would serve as a reference.

The situation remained unchanged until the reign of the Marīnid sovereign 'Abd al-Ḥaqq. The latter had appointed several Jews to important posts. Through the efforts of one of these, whom the *Qaḍiyya* calls Ḥusayn al-Yahūdī, the *bildīs* were re-admitted to the Qaysāriyya, in exchange for a financial consideration for the sultan, ever in need of money.⁴⁸

However, the overthrow of the last Marīnid sovereign Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq II, in 1465, in what was essentially a coup by the *šurafā*, spelt disaster for the Jews. His Jewish vizir Hārūm b. Baṭāš was brutally murdered together with a large number of Jews and countless others were forcibly converted to Islam.⁴⁹ The sultan was assassinated and replaced by Muḥammad al-Ġūtī, the syndic of the *šurafā*, who subsequently expelled the *bildīs* from the Qaysāriyya in 1481.⁵⁰

These events did not put an end to the tensions between the two rival groups, for as the importation of luxury fabrics increased so the struggle for its monopoly intensified. In addition to chronic dishonesty, the *Qaḍiyya* accuses the *bildīs* of corrupting weak monarchs through connivance with officials belonging to their former co-religionists or fellow apostates. They were soon to regain

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59. See R. Brunschvig, "Métiers vils en Islam", *Studia Islamica* 16 (1962), pp. 41-60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60. Cf. L. Massignon, 'L'interdit corporatif à l'encontre des Juifs islamisés de Fès, du xvi^e au xvii^e siècle', *RMM* 58 (1924), pp. 221-224.

⁴⁹ See M. García-Arenal, "The Revolution of Fas in 869/1465 and the Death of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Marīnī", *BSOAS* 41 (1978), pp. 43-66.

⁵⁰ *Qaḍiyyat*, p. 63. According to a variant reading: 1476.

access, it claims, under Aḥmad al-Waṭṭāsī (r. 1526-1549) who was only too content to accept their subsidies to finance his war against the Sa'dī Muḥammad al-Šayḥ. Through the sultan's tax collector, al-Manḡūr al-islāmī (d. 1520), himself of Jewish origin,⁵¹ the right to re-enter the coveted market was again brought up.

Opportunity for the *šurafā* to regain the upper hand arose in the sixteenth century when messianic expectations and religious exaltation of *ḡihād* against the Christians were running high and Waṭṭāsīd power was clearly waning.

According to the second account, composed by a *bildī* author named Mayyāra, about whom more will be said below, the two factions again locked horns in 1528 when the *šurafā* fiercely opposed an attempt by a converted Jew named Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Miknāsī, to open a cloth store in the Qaysāriyya. In a petition presented to the Waṭṭāsīd sultan it was demanded that the Neo-Muslims be denied access to the market stating that it had always been a respectable place solely frequented by virtuous and honest merchants. 'From time immemorial the Muslim sovereigns had forbidden the *bildīs* occupancy (*ḡulūs*) in the Qaysāriyya in order to preserve the *qubba* from dishonest and impious dealings'.⁵² The sultan consulted the leading *fuqahā* of Fez and other cities, and obtained from them seventeen *fatwās* concerning the unresolved status of the converts within Muslim society, thus transforming the conflict into a legal issue. All the *fatwās* preserved by Mayyāra concur on the illegitimacy of such an exclusion and unanimously denounce any form of ethnic discrimination between Muslims. Only the noted Grand *mufī* of Fez, 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Wanšārīsi (d. 1549), while concurring with his colleague's opinions, weighs up the seriousness of the accusations of corruption levelled against the *bildīs*:

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. Curiously, not only do the facts repeat themselves but also names. This ['Abd al-Raḥmān] al-Manḡūr al-islāmī has the same surname as the *bildī* secretary of al-Šayḥ al-Ma'mūn, Aḥmad al-Manḡūr al-islāmī, who died fifty years later in 1583 (mentioned *ibid.*, pp. 68-69); coincidence or confusion? On the latter, who was one of the most outstanding Muslim scholars of his time, see *infra*, notes 382 and 396.

⁵² Mayyāra (see *infra*, pp. 34-43) reproduces the document in §16, pp. 75-76 and proceeds to refute it in §§ 14-20 and 25.

All Muslims, whether *muhāğir* or not, are bound to honesty in their transactions. Whosoever proves to be lacking in honesty and practises fraud in the markets is to be upbraided by the market inspector charged with supervising its regularity, and expelled therefrom, regardless of whether he be a *muhāğir* or not.⁵³

On the basis of their decisions, the sultan authorised the Neo-Muslims to carry on trade in the markets of the madīna and the Qaysāriyya.

By the 17th century, the *bildīs*' economic position had palpably improved under the 'Alawids, who authorised their trade in the Qaysāriyya, mainly because of the benefits the sultans themselves stood to reap. Henceforth, the *bildīs* became the preponderant element not only in the economic arena but also in religious and intellectual spheres.⁵⁴ Many of the eminent scholars of Morocco both in exoteric law and in esoteric ṣufi doctrine emerged from the ranks of the *bildī* community. It therefore became less tolerable for them to suffer any kind of discrimination. Thus, upon being re-expelled from the Qaysāriyya towards the end of the century, the *bildīs* appealed both to the sultan and the governor of Fez, Muḥammad al-Ma'mūn al-Sa'dī. In 1601, the latter issued a public *ẓahīr* addressed to the merchant corps exhorting them to:

follow the straight path ... to renounce pride in lineage and discrimination between veteran and Neo-Muslims... there is to be equality among Muslims for "you are the sons of Adam and Adam issued from the earth" and Islam has effaced all that preceded it... none is superior to another except in religion and good deeds. In his farewell address the prophet declared: 'O people, is your Lord not one, and your father one? Is it not true that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, or vice-versa, nor a clear-skin man to a black-skin man, or vice-versa, except in piety'⁵⁵... all Muslim markets are the same and do not allow exclusiveness'.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Naṣīḥat al-muğtarrīn*, §5, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁴ See *infra*, pp. 54-57.

⁵⁵ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 510, n.° 23479.

⁵⁶ The complete text of this interesting *ẓahīr* is provided by Mayyāra in *Naṣīḥa*, § 22, pp. 85-88.

Consequently, the *bildīs* were readmitted to the market, only to be re-expelled a few years later in the anarchy that followed the death of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (d. 1603) and the rivalry for his succession.

The situation again reached a climax in 1641. Exasperated by the *bildīs*' efforts to abolish the disabilities imposed upon them, the populace rose up in arms and plundered their shops, obliging the governor of Fez, Abū Bakr al-Tamlī, to enforce drastic measures.⁵⁷ In reaction, the *bildīs* enlisted the aid of one of their own — a Fez born scholar named Maḥammad Mayyāra (1591-1662).⁵⁸ The latter was the scion of a well-known family, which had already produced distinguished scholars. Despite his eminence as a jurist and theologian, his ethnic origins prevented him from ever holding public office.⁵⁹ Mayyāra replied by penning a polemical work with the title *Naṣīḥat al-muğtarrīn wa-kifāyat al-muğtarrīn fī l-tafrīq bayn al-muslimīn* ('Advice to the Deluded and Sufficient [Counsel] for the Needful concerning Discrimination amongst Muslims').

In addition to being an ingenious religious tract, the *Naṣīḥa* also throws light on the historical and social context of the conflict opposing the Judeo-Muslims and their detractors and conveys some idea of the ideological arguments, many of which were also essentially anti-Jewish, pitched against the *bildīs* by their šarīfian and Andalusī rivals. The latter revived some of the ancient disputes about pride of lineage in the spirit of the *šū'ūbiyya* by considering the Neo-Muslims to be of low extraction regardless of whether their conversion was recent or long standing. This important aspect

⁵⁷ The latter was, however, no friend of the Jews, for in 1646 he authorised the destruction of the synagogues of Fez. Cf. G. Vajda, *Un recueil de textes historiques judéo-marocains*, Paris, Larose, 1951, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Qādirī, *Naṣr al-maṭānī li-ahl al-qarn al-ḥadī 'aṣar wa-l-tānī*, in Muḥammad Ḥağğī and Aḥmad Tawfīq (eds.) *Mawsū'at al-lām al-mağrib*, Beirut, Dār al-ğarb al-islāmī, vol. 4, pp. 1500-1501; *idem*, *Itiqāt al-durar*, ed. Hāšim al-'Alawī al-Qāsimī, Beirut, Dār al-Āfāq al-Ġadīda, 1983, I, pp. 151-153, n.° 246; Lévi-Provençal, *Les Historiens des Chorfa*, pp. 258-259.

⁵⁹ Al-Ifrānī, *Ṣafwa*, p. 140, reports that for a living he hired out women's finery for weddings.

of the anti-*bildī* debate will be discussed in more detail in connection with Ibn Zikrī's composition.

Though Mayyāra's work has been briefly analysed elsewhere,⁶⁰ it is will not be superfluous in view of the present study to give a rapid synopsis, highlighting its polemical arguments, since some of these are taken up and amplified by Ibn Zikrī a century later.

4. A LITERARY FORERUNNER: *THE NAŠĪḤAT AL-MUĠTARRĪN* BY MAḤAMMAD MAYYĀRA

The full title of Mayyāra's work is *Našīḥat al-muġtarrīn wa-kifāyat al-muġtarrīn bi-l-tafrīqa bayn al-muslimīn bi-mā lam yunzil-hu rabb al-'ālamīn wa-lā aḥbara bi-hi al-šādiq al-amīn wa-lā ṭabata 'an al-ḥulafā' al-muhtadīn* ('Advice for the Deluded and Sufficient [Counsel] for the Needful concerning Discrimination amongst Muslims in Cases not revealed by the Master of the Worlds, nor announced by the Truthful One, nor established by the Well-Guided Caliphs'). Several manuscript copies of it are to be found in various Moroccan libraries, and it was edited for the first time in 2007.⁶¹ The treatise is divided into two parts. The first is a collection of twenty-two legal opinions (*fatāwā*) issued by leading scholars in response to the above-mentioned petition, presented in 1528 to the sultan Aḥmad al-Waṭṭāsī (r. 1525-1549) by the opponents of the *bildīs* on the question of their admissibility to the Qaysāriyya.⁶² To these, copied according to Mayyāra from the original documents, are appended an additional four *fatwās* culled from the works of his contemporaries.⁶³

⁶⁰ See M. García-Arenal, "Našīḥat al-muġtarrīn of Maḥammad Mayyāra (d. 1072/1662): A Collection of Fatwās on the Bildiyyīn of Fez", *The Maghreb Review* 16 (1991), pp. 84-94.

⁶¹ Maḥammad b. Aḥmad Mayyāra, *Našīḥat al-muġtarrīn wa-kifāyat al-muġtarrīn bi-l-tafrīqa bayn al-muslimīn bi-mā lam yunzil-hu rabb al-'ālamīn wa-lā aḥbara bi-hi al-šādiq al-amīn wa-lā ṭabata 'an al-ḥulafā' al-muhtadīn*, ed. Mina al-Maġārī and Ḥafīda al-Dāzī, Rabat, Dār Abī Raqrāq, 2007.

⁶² *Našīḥa*, pp. 63-88.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-95: 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Šarīf al-Marī, 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Muḥammad, 'Ubaydallah Muḥammad al-'Arbī, and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Abbār.

The second part of the *Našīḥa*, to give it an abbreviated title, consists of thirty-two comments by Mayyāra on the foregoing *fatwās*⁶⁴ followed by three observations (*tanbīḥāt*), in which he refutes certain malicious misinterpretations of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* spitefully applied by the anti-*bildīs* to the Neo-Muslims.⁶⁵ Here, partly taking his cue from the *fatwās* themselves, Mayyāra transposes the *bildī* predicament from a socio-economical plane to a legal and ethical one. He especially elaborates on the arguments provided by the favorable *fatwās* issued by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Ḥarrūbī (*fatwā* 1-2), Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥabbāk (*fatwā* 4), and Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan Ḥarzūz (*fatwā* 17).⁶⁶ As for the remaining rulings, which corroborate the findings of these three authorities, he contents himself with simply summarising them.⁶⁷

Al-Ḥarrūbī (d. 1556), a jurisprudent and ṣūfī active in Algiers,⁶⁸ rules that the ostracism of which the Jewish convert Aḥmad al-Miknāsī was victim is inconsistent with the principles of protection (*ḥurma*) and compassion (*raḥma*) to be shown to those who embrace Islam. Furthermore, it is contrary to the example set in early Islam by its founder and his companions as well as the Caliphs, who saw no objection in admitting converted Jews into the markets. Such an error is unacceptable on the part of jurists, who are thus liable to punishment. Moreover, were all

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-172.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-189.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Našīḥa*, p. 96.

⁶⁷ The *Qaḍiyya* (p. 77), which polemicises against Mayyāra, accuses him of presenting only the positive *fatwās* and passing over in silence the negative ones which, according to this anonymous author, were more numerous and more legitimate. It is a pity that these have not been preserved —if they did indeed ever exist— for they are purported (p. 68) to have contained not just ethnic justifications but also legal arguments derived from the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and religious authorities.

⁶⁸ See on him Muḥammad Ibn 'Askar, *Dawḥat al-nāšir li-maḥāsini man kāna bi-l-maġrib min maṣayih al-qarn al-'āšir*, ed. M. Ḥaġġī, Rabat, 1977, pp. 126-127; al-Qādirī, *Našr al-maṭānī*, lith. I, p. 90, ed. M. Ḥaġġī, vol. 2, pp. 895-896; Muḥammad b. Ġa'far al-Kattānī, *Salwat al-anfās wa-muḥādāt al-akyās bi-man uqbira min al-'ulamā' wa-l-ṣulahā' bi-Fās*, ed. 'Abdallah al-Kattānī et al., II, Casablanca, Dār al-ṭaqāfa, 2006, p. 291; *idem*, Lith., Fez, 1898, p. 258; 'Abd al-Kabīr al-Fāsī, *Taḍkirat al-muḥsinīn*, in M. Ḥaġġī (ed.), *Mawsū'at al-lām al-maġrib*, Beirut, Dār al-ḡarb al-islāmī, II, 1996, p. 857.

converts to be subjected to such treatment, this would imply excluding countless individuals from the markets 'including our forefathers and ourselves, for we are for the most part descended from converts'.⁶⁹

Al-Ḥabbāk (d. 1531), author of the fourth and, to our mind, the most significant *fatwā*, was a disciple of 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Qawrī and one of the most respected *fuqahā* of Fez. It is noteworthy that some of the egalitarian arguments he offers in favour of the lifting of the restrictions placed upon the *bildīs* are known to us from *šu'ūbī* polemics and anticipate those later expanded by Mayyāra and Ibn Zikrī. Al-Ḥabbāk upholds the fundamental solidarity of the community of believers as expressed in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* according to which there should be 'no severance of bonds, no jealousy, and turning of backs on a fellow Muslim'.⁷⁰

Most importantly, al-Ḥabbāk intimates that ethnic diversity was willed by God and that nobleness resides not in extraction but in action. These elements prefigure the fuller discussion of the issues in question deployed by Ibn Zikrī.

Lastly, he employs the method of *qiyās* ('deduction by analogy') arguing from the example set by Jewish converts at the time of Muḥammad, one of whom, 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām, became a companion of the Muslim prophet:

Many Jews converted to Islam during the time of the prophet and they were not derided nor despised. They include 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām, who was one of the prophet's foremost companions, and others like him who became good Muslims of irreproachable conduct [...]. Allāh Almighty has said: 'Oh people, I have created you from man and from woman and have placed you in peoples and tribes for you to know one another; [however], the noblest among you before Allāh are the most pious' (Qur. 49, 13). How may you claim that the *muhājirūn* threaten your livelihood [through competition], when sustenance in Allāh's hands?⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Naṣīha*, pp. 63-66.

⁷⁰ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, p. 288. This *ḥadīth* is also quoted by Ibn Zikrī.

⁷¹ *Naṣīha*, pp. 67-69. Interestingly, this selfsame argument was said to have been used in 1391 by [Abū l-'Abbās?] ibn Muḥriz, the *qāḍī* of Algiers,

In his *fatwā*, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan Ḥarzūz (d. 1554), *ḥaṭīb* and *muftī* of Meknes,⁷² declares that any decision favouring inter-Muslim discrimination runs counter to the statements of the Qur'ān⁷³ and the egalitarian principles expressed in Muḥammad's famous farewell address mentioned above.⁷⁴ Furthermore, he personally testifies that the converts he has observed (in Meknes?) are to be counted among the most pious and zealous Muslims.⁷⁵

In the second part of the *Naṣīha*, Mayyāra begins his comments on these *fatwās* by delegitimising the *ṣurafā*, whom he accuses of introducing 'heretical accretions' (*bida'*) and betraying the prophet's inheritance through their arrogance. Indeed, as descendants of Muḥammad their first duty should have been to imitate the principles he illustrated, especially that of humility (*hiyā*).⁷⁶

He then goes on to plead for the unity of the Muslim community and for the positive reception to be reserved for those who enter Islam through conversion. Those who sow discord within the community by introducing discrimination, act sinfully since such behaviour dissuades prospective candidates.⁷⁷ Indeed, in light of the verse: 'They shall love those who migrated to them' (Qur. 59, 9), the Muslim has the obligation to love the newcomers and not accuse them forthwith of dishonesty and fraud!

Mayyāra is particularly aggressive towards the Andalusīs and their exaggerated sense of distinction. Interestingly, he employs a polemical technique, anticipating Ibn Zikrī's own strategy,

to counter the refusal of the Muslim population to allow the Jewish exiles from Majorca to land in their city. Cf. Isaac b. Šešet (Rībaš, d. Algiers, 1408), *Responsa*, I, Jerusalem, Meḥōn Yerūšalayim, 1993, §61, p. 63b.

⁷² On him, see Aḥmad ibn al-Qāḍī al-Miknāsī, *Ġadwat al-iqtibās*, Rabat, Dār al-Mansūr, 1974, p. 108, n.° 32; Ibn 'Askar, *Dawḥat al-nāšir*, p. 144.

⁷³ He quotes the verses 'Hold fast to the cord of Allāh and let nothing divide you' (3, 103) and 'Have nothing to do with those who have split up their religion into sects' (6, 159).

⁷⁴ *Naṣīha*, pp. 77-78. Cf. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, IV, p. 145.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-80.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-105. Ibn Zikrī uses a similar argument in the introductory remarks of his *Rašf*.

⁷⁷ *Naṣīha*, pp. 105-107. See the anecdote he supplies on p. 107, translated below p. 59.

consisting of an 'inversion of the stigma', i.e. he overturns the arguments of *bildīs*' detractors. In order to discredit their claims to ethnic and ethical superiority, he expatiates on the point made by al-Ḥarrūbī: the countless Muslims who descend from converts—including Andalusīs—should also receive the same treatment and be excluded from the markets. This assertion affords him the occasion to sarcastically ridicule the importance the Andalusīs attach to their Iberian origins 'as if they believed that Al-Andalus was inhabited solely by the Aws and Ḥazrağ!' and to cast aspersions on the reliability of their Arab lineages.⁷⁸ He stresses that in relation to the *bildīs* who have lived in Fez for centuries, the Andalusīs are relative newcomers and he goes as far as to suggest that they emigrated to Fez in order to cover up their real origins:

The question which has arisen concerns in particular Neo-Muslims of Jewish origin. Indeed, those that exclude the latter might not exclude a convert of Christian or Magian origin! [...] Now if the reason for this exclusion was his having formerly been an infidel or the recentness of his conversion, then, on the contrary, this is a consideration applicable to all converts [...]. However, we have observed that many of those who uphold this judgement are themselves of unknown pedigree. Some were brought here [to Fez] and those descended from ancestors who originated from elsewhere can count only half the number of generations here in comparison to those they seek to exclude (i.e. the *bildīs*). Indeed, most trace their lineage to Al-Andalus on account of which they attribute to their persons and peers considerable distinction (*maziyya* 'azīma) far beyond that of a person hailing from either Medina or Mecca, as if they descend from the prophet himself or one of his close companions! Perhaps some even consider that they are superior to the latter and are thus only interested in allying themselves to an Andalusian lineage. This is utter stupidity [...] and, who knows, perhaps their forbears were themselves descended from new converts from the Jewish or Christian faiths, i.e. the very individuals they wish to exclude? Their emigration to distant lands in which their lineage was unknown was precisely in order to conceal their origins.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁷⁹ *Naṣiḥa*, pp. 110-111. Interestingly, a similar view is voiced in a letter by Sīdī Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh (r. 1757-1790) to the population of Fez quoted

He concludes:

One of my late mentors well-versed in history and genealogy told me that some of our citizens among those who today enjoy high status and are married into šarīfian families and other leading families of Fez—and he gave me their names—back in al-Andalus, were Jews by religion who subsequently adopted the Christian faith and then embraced Islam in more recent times. When they came to Fez, they happened to have high status and wealth, and so their previous background was forgotten.⁸⁰

Our polemicist bemoans the predominance of ethnic pride in Fez, where, he assures us, 'it has, in certain cases, replaced religion itself.' Adducing proofs from the *ḥadīth*, some of which will reappear in Ibn Zikrī's treatise, Mayyāra demonstrates that such an attitude is a regression to the time of the *ḡāhiliyya*.⁸¹

In strictures 21-22, Mayyāra castigates those who brandish lineage in order to denigrate and insult other Muslims.⁸² No doubt his indignation stems from the blatant insults to which the *bildīs* were subjected, especially, it seems, on the part of the self-glorifying Andalusīs. To show that such attitudes are blameworthy Mayyāra recalls the following verse: 'Let not some men ridicule others: it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor should some women mock others: it may be that the latter are better than the former. Do not defame or be sarcastic to each other, or call each other by [offensive] nicknames. How bad it is to earn an evil reputation after accepting the faith! Those who do not repent are evil-doers' (Qur. 49, 11).

Quoting Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's *Istī'āb*, Mayyāra explains that this verse was revealed after an episode in which Muḥammad's

by his wazīr Abū l-Qāsim al-Zayyānī (d. 1833), *Tuḥfat al-nubahā' fī l-tafrīqa bayn al-fuqahā' wa-l-sufahā'*, Rabat National Library, MS K241, p. 190: 'as for those who claim Andalusī lineage, they are an amalgam of Iberians, Arabs, Byzantines, Persians, as well as slaves, foreigners, and converted Jews whose pedigree is as unidentifiable as the ruins left by 'Ad and Ṭamūd.'

⁸⁰ *Naṣiḥa*, p. 114. The diatribe against the Andalusīs covers pages 108-114. See *infra*, pp. 109-111 for similar arguments put forward by Ibn Zikrī.

⁸¹ *Naṣiḥa*, p. 137.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

wife Šafiya was called by her co-spouses 'Jewess, daughter of Jews!' The Muslim prophet asked her why she had not replied: 'My father was Aaron and my uncle Moses and my spouse is Muḥammad!' 'thereby alluding to the nobleness that accrues from descent from a prophet... and, in this case, Šafiyya's nobility in relation to other women'.⁸³

In a final chapter, Mayyāra expresses his irritation at the insults heaped upon the *muḥāğirīn*.⁸⁴ He comments on this term both from the lexicographical and legal point of view deploring its widespread use in Fez, since, as mentioned above, he considers it to be an offensive appellation.⁸⁵ It is obvious that his acrimony is idiosyncratic. He also includes among the derogatory terms that of 'Israelite'.⁸⁶ But this appellation too is only pejorative from the point of view of the speaker's usage, for in itself

this name is praiseworthy, virtuous and noble for Israel is Allāh's prophet Jacob, the son of Allāh's prophet Isaac, son of Allāh's prophet and friend our ancestor Abraham. Moreover Israel's son was Joseph. Therefore [Israel's] son was a prophet, and both he, his father and grandfather were prophets [...]. He was called Israel because he travelled the night (*asrā*) he emigrated to Allāh ... thus his name is partly Hebrew or Syriac and partly Arabic.⁸⁷

As a counter argument to šarīfian and Andalusī conceit, Mayyāra is here suggesting that, as descendants of the Banū Isrā'īl, the *bildīs* have cause for pride since they too count prophets

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 134. According to Islamic teaching all prophets belong to a special class of mankind infused with noble status; in addition, Muslim sources state that Šafiya was affiliated to a priestly family descended from Aaron.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* § 30, pp. 160-171. See *supra*, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168. As he himself states, Mayyāra derived his (dubious) etymology of the name Isrā'īl from the 12th century Muslim author 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abdallāh al-Suhaylī (d. 1185), *al-Ta'rif wal-i'lām bi-mā abham fī al-qur'ān min al-asmā' wa-l-a'lām* (Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1987, p. 3 on Qur. 2, 40). Unless he is intentionally pretending to be ignorant of the real Hebrew etymology, this is an indication that Mayyāra lacked even a rudimentary knowledge of Judaism.

among their ancestry. This claim, which also carries an idiosyncratic ring, will later become the major polemical stratagem voiced by Ibn Zikrī.

Mayyāra concludes his broadside with three observations in which he denounces the invention of false *ḥadīṡ*s and the misinterpretation of Qur'ānic verses aimed at slandering the Neo-Muslims. Behind these misinterpretations loom the negative stereotypes that had long been applied to Jews. Firstly, the common people say of them, as if quoting a *ḥadīṡ*: 'Have no confidence in them, even if they are longstanding converts' or 'even after forty generations'.⁸⁸

Secondly, their opponents pretend that their alleged dishonest nature is referred to in the verse: 'You will constantly discover treachery on their part, except for a few of them' (Qur. 5, 13), whereas according to its traditional interpretation the verse denotes the Infidels.⁸⁹ Finally, Mayyāra admits that the fanaticism, which he impugns is deeply ingrained in the mentality of the multitude, but he is confident that his composition will have a beneficial effect on those that seek the truth.

Though Maḥammad Mayyāra, known as the Great (*al-kabīr*), was considered a towering figure of his generation, biographers were very discreet about his *Naṣīḥa* and the uproar it caused. The historian Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Qādirī (1712-1773), who, as we shall later see, had his own ideas on the subject of the *šu'ūbiyya*, devotes a relatively long notice to Mayyāra, in which he simply describes the *Naṣīḥa* as a rebuttal of the Muslim partisans of discrimination.⁹⁰ As later Ibn Zikrī, Mayyāra was accused of having argued in favour of the primacy of the *'ağam* over the *'arab*, though neither of the two authors had upheld any such thing. This was just a slanderous allegation aimed at fanning the fires of ethnic discord between antagonistic factions in Fez.

The scholar Aḥmad b. al-Ṭālib Ibn Sūda (1826-1903) has the following to say about Mayyāra's composition:

⁸⁸ *Naṣīḥa*, p. 172. On this proverb, see *infra*, n. 117.

⁸⁹ These misinterpretations are later taken up by Ibn Zikrī, *Rašf*, fols. 27a-b.

⁹⁰ Al-Qādirī, *Naṣr al-matānī*, I, pp. 235-237; p. 236.

As for his proofs in favour of the occupancy of a store by an individual of this or that origin, it is feeble and finds no support either in Scripture or the *sunnah*. However the use of insulting nicknames is forbidden from whatever side, as it is written: 'Do not call each other by offensive nicknames' (Qur. 49, 11). Just as this is not permitted to others, so it is also not permitted to members of this ethnicity [viz. *bildīs*] to call others by offensive names, for all Muslims are equal in their obligation to observe the law. Furthermore, it is stated in the *ḥadīṭ* that 'It is disobedience to insult a Muslim'. Would that this author had respected the truth and had accordingly prescribed equal rights for all Muslims instead of expressing his own opinion according to which no consideration is to be lent to lineage where religion and piety are to be found. In this he deviated from the correct approach and failed to respect people's rank and grant each his due rights. His pen ran away with him and he exceeded the limits of the issue under consideration. May Allāh pardon him and preserve us all from error.⁹¹

According to M. Ḥaḡḡī, Mayyāra's opponents incited the populace to march through the streets brandishing copies of the *Naṣīḥa* while mocking the author and his origins.⁹² Resentment ran so high, that he was obliged to request protection from the head of the *Dilā'ī zāwiya*, the self-proclaimed sultan of Fez Muḥammad al-Ḥaḡḡ (d. 1671). The sultan's nephew, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Dilā'ī obliged by composing an eulogy of Mayyāra's work named *Taqrīz naṣīḥat al-muḡtarrīn*.⁹³

Two additional pamphleteers came out in his defence, a fellow scholar Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-'Awfī,⁹⁴ and later our *bildī* theologian Maḥammad Ibn Zikrī.

The *Qaḍīyya* claims that the famous scholar Abū 'Abdallah Maḥammad b. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī al-Fihri (1632-1704),⁹⁵ who was of Andalusī stock, also penned a rejoinder to Mayyāra,

⁹¹ Ibn Sūda, *Dalīl*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1997, pp. 73-74.

⁹² M. Ḥaḡḡī, *L'activité intellectuelle au Maroc*, p. 209.

⁹³ Copies are preserved in Rabat, National Library, mss K 125-8 and K 923.

⁹⁴ Al-Qādirī, *op. cit.*; Ḥaḡḡī, *op. cit.*, I, p. 210.

⁹⁵ On him see M. Ben Cheneb, *Etude sur les personnages mentionnés dans l'idjāza du Cheikh Abd el-Qādir el-Fasy*, Paris, E. Leroux, 1909, p. 92; al-Qādirī, *Naṣr al-maṭānī*, ed. M. Ḥaḡḡī, vol. 4, pp. 1636-1644.

presenting fifty-two opinions from Morocco's most noted scholars and saints contradicting his arguments. To these he added his own opinions based on scriptural and legal proofs "more judicious and convincing than those of Maḥammad Mayyāra".⁹⁶ He called for the *bildīs*' exclusion and the marking of their stores with a distinctive sign, but was opposed to the motion of imposing upon them discriminatory attire.⁹⁷ Though no title is supplied and indeed no such composition is recorded by al-Fāsī's biographers, there is no reason *a priori* to doubt the existence of such a work, especially in view of the anti-Jewish sentiments of al-Fāsī's father, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī, despite being considered one of the foremost *ṣufīs* of his time.⁹⁸ It is even conceivable that Ibn Zikrī's wrote his *Rašf* as a rejoinder to such a refutation of Mayyāra, since al-Fāsī was his teacher.

This polemical joust engaged the attention of the scholarly milieu, for it is noteworthy that al-Fāsī's fellow disciple, Abū 'Amr 'Utmān b. 'Alī al-Yūsī (d. 1674), a contemporary of Mayyāra but not a *bildī*, composed a 300 verse *qaṣīda* in defence of the *bildīs* with the title *al-Radd 'alā man za'ma tanqīṣ Banī Isrā'īl wa-anna-hu lā faḍla la-hum 'alā l-islām* ('Refutation of Those Who Maintain the Inferiority of the Israelites and Deny their Advantage in Relation to Islam').⁹⁹

⁹⁶ *Idem*, pp. 94-95.

⁹⁷ Apparently, six hundred years after the Almohad decrees, proselytes of Jewish origin were still prohibited to don the Muslim turban and expected to wear discriminatory garments, supposedly similar to those imposed upon Jews!

⁹⁸ See his disparaging comments on Jews in his *Aḡwiba al-ṣuḡrā*, ed. Muḥammad M. al-Amīn, Beirut (?), 2003, pp. 62-63, translated in our *Exile in the Maghreb*, doc. A 50. Moreover, a photograph of al-Fāsī's rejoinder is reported to have existed in Paris by Ibn Sūda, *Dalīl*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1997, p. 50, n.° 231.

⁹⁹ *Idem*, vol. I, n.° 427, p. 120 and vol. II, n.° 1954, p. 426. Al-Ifrānī, *Safwat man intaṣar*, lith., Fez, p. 113; al-Qādirī, *Naṣr al-maṭānī*, II, lith. Fez, 1892, pp. 13-15; al-Yūsī, *Muḥāḍarāt*, lith. Fez, 1899, *in fine*, and Ben Cheneb, *Idjāza*, §5.

It begins [*rağaz*]:

ملتهم واحدة لا ملتان	هذا وقد كان بفاس فرقتان
أخراهما تدعى الحضور الفافرين	قد لقت أحدهما المهاجرين
وتدعى المجد بلا مستند	وهذه تزعم وصف السود
كلتاها كفارسي رهان	وهذه دعوى بلا برهان
[...]	
لهم تعلق بأقوى عروة	والمؤمنون أخوة واسوة
في كل شيء قد تساوى الحق	وليس بين المؤمنين فرق

There arose in Fez two factions
of one faith, not two,
The one named 'émigrés' (*muḥāğirīn*),
The other 'high society'.
One claimed the quality of nobility,
And pretended to honour without reliance,
While the other had —without proof— defiance,
Both being like two competing steeds.
[...]
Believers are brothers and an example,
Who have a hold on the firmest clasp.
There is no differentiation between the faithful,
In all things [their] right is equal.¹⁰⁰

This poem was in turn commented upon in 1807 by Aḥmad Bannānī (d. 1818) in his *al-Uğāla al-mūfiyya bi-muḥtāğ al-manẓūma al-yūsiyya*, about which more will be said below.¹⁰¹

5. SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the reign of Mawlāy Rašīd (r. 1664-1672), a *bildī* official named Ibn al-Aḥwal was instrumental in restoring the trading rights of the *bildīs* until they were again accused of 'intending to lay hands on Muslim money by fraudulent and deceitful means'.¹⁰² It was then that, at the suggestion of the *qāḍī*

¹⁰⁰ Ms. Rabat, Royal Library 4152, fol. 6b.

¹⁰¹ See *infra*, pp. 150-152.

¹⁰² *Qaḍiyya*, pp. 75, 93 and 96.

of Fez, they were left to trade in the Qaysāriyya but imposed with the infamous *kalḥa*, a cubit long ferula rod, attached to the shutters of their shops to distinguish them from those of the other Muslims.¹⁰³ According to the *Qaḍiyya* this degrading sign, intended as a warning to Muslim customers, only fell into disuse after the demise of Mawlāy Isma'īl (d. 1727),¹⁰⁴ but other sources attest to its continuance into the 19th century.¹⁰⁵

Bildī power had waxed so strong during the reign of Sultan Mawlāy Isma'īl (r. 1672-1727) that the sovereign thought it necessary to address a letter of complaint to the inhabitants of Fez. Whereas he considers the Andalusīs and the Lamṭiyyīn the genuine 'inhabitants of Fez', he castigates them for having 'accepted a state of submission, inertia and humiliation' as the *bildiyyīn*, whom he calls 'white chickens' had become the decision makers!¹⁰⁶

In the intervening decades, the ranks of the *bildīs* had been swollen by countless Jewish apostates. There was no lack of causes for conversion in Morocco for much of the burdensome pressure and onerous restrictions that Islamic legislation brought to bear upon the Jews was manifestly intended to persuade them of the advantages to be gained from apostasy.

Along with these disabilities, natural disasters in the successive centuries such as drought and famine, had forced thousands of Jews to convert collectively to Islam in order to

¹⁰³ *Idem*, pp. 83-84. One is reminded of the practice in Qayrawan of nailing 'boards portraying a monkey on the doors of Jewish homes', mentioned by 'Abdallah al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-nufūs*, ed. B. Bakkūš and M. al-Maṭwī, vol. I, Beirut, Dār al-ğarb al-islāmī, 1983, pp. 476-477. Obviously this object would be connected with the word *kelḥa* 'a good-for-nothing', from which derive the adjectives *mukallaḥ* and *kalḥī*, meaning respectively 'idiot', and 'of inferior quality' in colloquial Arabic. Cf. Prémare, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, vol. 10, p. 614 and A. Lentin, *Supplément au Dictionnaire pratique.... de M. Beaussier*, Alger, 1959, p. 263.

¹⁰⁴ *Idem*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁰⁵ See J. Berque, "Des 'Marranos' musulmans à Fès?", *Mélanges en l'honneur de F. Braudel. Histoire économique du Monde Méditerranéen 1450-1650*, Paris, 1973, pp. 123-135.

¹⁰⁶ N. Cigar, "Lettre inédite de Mūlay Isma'īl aux gens de Fès", *Héspéris-Tamuda* 15 (1974), p. 117.