

The Islamic Influence on Saadia Gaon's Method in Defending Rabbinic Judaism

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ABSTRACT

Saadia Al-Fayyumi was one of the medieval scholars of Jewish law who lived in Muslim societies. He was the first in Iraq to defend Rabbinic Judaism against the opponents and skeptics of its religious heritage and he was influenced in his defense by Islamic thought. Previous studies discussed Saadia's defense of the Written and Oral law and illustrated Saadia's polemical writings against the Karaites. The current paper discusses the influence of Islam on Saadia's method in defending Rabbinic Judaism. Also, this essay illustrates the influence of Islamic thought on Saadia's arguments to pave the way for the Rabbis to use reason like the Mu'tazilah to defend their beliefs and provided them with arguments and proofs. Clearly, Islamic thought was a principle for Saadia to establish the foundations of faith. He laid down the principles of faith just as the Mu'tazilah and was influenced by Mu'tazilah's thoughts, Muslim jurists, Islamic theological doctrines, and their various ideas related to religious matters. Also, Saadia agreed with the Islamic theological sects in using logical evidences and religious texts as defensive tools to defend his beliefs. This Islamic influence on Jewish thought was a factor in its development, especially in light of the Arab-Islamic civilization in the medieval ages between 10th and the 15th centuries CE.

Keywords: Islamic Influence, The Mu'tazilah, Saadia al-Fayyumi, Kitab Al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat, Rabbinic Judaism.

INTRODUCTION

Rabbi Saadia ben Joseph Al-Fayyumi was born in Al-Fayyūm, Egypt in 882, and died in 942, Sura, Iraq. He was one of the medieval preeminent Jewish thinkers. He lived in Iraq under the Abbasid State (750-1258) and was the most important scholars of the Jewish canon. Saadia was influenced by the method of Islamic theological sects in his defense of Rabbinic Judaism. This influence was not a mere coincidence, but a natural matter because he grew up in Iraq, which was a fertile environment for the emergence of Islamic theological sects. Therefore, Saadia used their rational evidences such as the Mu'tazilah to defend Rabbinic Judaism against the skeptics and opponents. The current paper presents Saadia's method in defending Rabbinic Judaism in two items: first, Illustration the Islamic

influence in the principles of Jewish faith that Saadia laid down due to some skeptics' doubts in religious beliefs, and denying some of the laws stipulated in Judaism. Therefore, Saadia considered this as corrupting the foundations of faith and he combined in his defensive method for principles of faith, which he was influenced by the Mu'tazilah's thoughts, between reliance on the religious text and the rational evidences. He followed a middle method between mind and transmission such as *Imam Al-Ash'ari* (Mahmood, Suailk, Khairuddin & Nur 2022). Second, the response to questions of skeptics concerning matters of religion and holders of philosophical and religious doctrines, which he also influenced by Islamic religious thought.

Previous studies discussed Saadia's explanations of the written and oral law in addition to his defensive attitude towards Judaism and the maintaining of its

continuity; he interpreted without neglecting the simple meaning of the text itself. Previous studies discussed Saadia's explanations of the written and oral law in addition to his defensive attitude towards Judaism and the maintaining of its continuity; he interpreted without neglecting the simple meaning of the text itself. Among these studies; the book of Kalimi (2017). Other previous studies shed light on the polemical writings of Saadia against the Jewish sect; The Karaites that appeared in Baghdad in 8th-century (Cohen 1978). Saadia sought through these studies to emphasize the importance of the oral law that the Karaites rejected it. Among these studies are; the book of Schweid (2018). Also, the study of Poznański (1898). Other studies dealt with the explanation and interpretation of Saadia to some beliefs of Rabbinic Judaism, such as the belief in reward and punishment in the Hereafter. An example of this is the article of Brody (2016).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study aims to highlight on the importance of Islamic influence on Saadia in the light of the events of his time, the method he used to defend Rabbinic Judaism, as well as his responses to skeptics of Rabbinic Judaism. Also, the research illustrates the Islamic influence on the defensive tools that Saadia used in his defensive method against the opponents. It explains how Saadia paved the way for rabbis to use reason like the Mu'tazilah to defend their beliefs and provided them with arguments and proofs. The research also reviews the schism of Anan bin David (715-811 AD) from Rabbinic Judaism and his religious ideas mainly refused some Rabbinic Jewish beliefs. These ideas were very popular among the Jews and they were the most prominent reasons that stirred the religious feeling of Saadia who used same defensive tools of Islamic theological sects to defend his beliefs, in addition to the emergence of heresy on the Jewish side represented in *Hivi ha-Balkhi* in the second half of the ninth century AD (Frenkel 2018).

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat that Saadia wrote in Judeo-Arabic is the most important material that we rely on this paper to clarify the Islamic influence on Saadia Gaon's method in defending medieval Rabbinic Judaism. Furthermore, the current study

depends on the comparative analysis approach to analyze mainly the principles of Jewish faith that Saadia laid down in *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* to pave the way for the Rabbis to use rational proofs to defend their beliefs. Then we will compare his opinions with thoughts and beliefs of Islamic theological sects, especially The Mu'tazilah, to determine the Islamic influence on Saadia's method in defending Rabbinic Judaism.

DISCUSSION

Saadia was influenced by the method of Islamic theological sects in his defense of Rabbinic Judaism. This influence was not a mere coincidence, but a natural matter because he grew up in Iraq, which was a fertile environment for the emergence of Islamic theological sects. Therefore, Saadia used their rational evidences to defend Rabbinic Judaism against the skeptics and opponents.

This discussion presents Saadia's method in defending Rabbinic Judaism in two items: first, establishing and strengthening principles of Jewish faith due to some skeptics' doubts, such as Anan Bin David "8th century AD", in religious beliefs, and denying some of the laws stipulated in Judaism. Saadia considered this as corrupting the foundations of faith and combined in his defensive method for Rabbinic Judaism between reliance on the text of the Hebrew Bible and the rational evidence. Second, the response to skeptics' questions concerning matters of religion and holders of philosophical and religious doctrines. Also, the discussion illustrates Islamic Influence in Saadia's defense Method for Rabbinic Judaism and demonstrates the Islamic thoughts that clearly appeared in Saadia's Method in defending the Rabbinic Judaism.

ANAN BIN DAVID'S SECEDING FROM RABBINIC JUDAISM AND HIS INFLUENCE BY THE MU'TAZILAH

Anan Bin David lived in the Abbasid era when heresy, immorality, and blasphemy against religion (Amin2012). During this period, various philosophical currents and diverse cultures began to interact, and logical sects like the Mu'tazilah emerged. The Karaites sect, influenced by both Mu'tazilah and Shafi'ite thinking (Niazi 1993), was founded by Anan bin David in Baghdad (Cohen 1978). Similar to the Mu'tazilites, who rejected

the validity of narrated oral hadiths containing ambiguous expressions (Goldziher 1910), Anan bin David rejected the oral law and affirmed his belief solely in The old Testament (Camilla 1996). The Mu'tazilites based their stance on a hadith of Prophet Muhammad, where he prohibited his companions from writing down hadiths (Al-Nawawī 1994). Likewise, Anan drew support for his view from the *Midrash Shemot Rabah* (47:1), which stated that the Lord forbade Moses from writing down the oral Torah.

Anan allowed for the practice of deduction rulings from the text of the old Testament. He was influenced in this approach by the Islamic jurisprudence school in Kufa, Iraq, led by Abu Hanifa (150 AH), who advocated for deduction and expanded the use of analogy in deducing jurisprudential rulings (Nadwi 2010). Anan resorted to interpretation, just as the philosophers of the three monotheistic religions used interpretation as a means of rationalizing the realities of revelation, as a means of reconciling reason and religion. Anan formulated principles of faith, interpreted the first five books of the Hebrew Bible in Aramaic, and wrote a book in Aramaic, with a title "Book of Commandments". He mentioned in this book all duties that Karaites had to perform, which were contrary to the legislation of the Talmud (Simhah 2001). Anan's ideas based on the rejection of the oral Law began to spread, and heresy also spread among the Jewish community. As a result, atheists appeared and influenced by philosophical ideas. Also, they raised doubts in the entire Jewish religion, and this prompted Saadia to defend Rabbinic Judaism.

SAADIA'S DEFENSE FOR RABBINIC JUDAISM AND HIS INFLUENCE BY ISLAMIC THOUGHT

The scholars of the Jewish canon played a prominent role in the transmission and teaching of The Old Testament and Oral Law. These scholars are known as "*Geonim*". They had to defend their religious heritage, not only for proving the legitimacy and authenticity of the Oral Law, but also to prove its ability to argue against its opponents. Saadia Al-Fayyumi was one of These scholars of the Jewish canon who presided the Jewish religious academy in Sura, Iraq. He laid down principles of faith just as the Mu'tazilah, Abu Hassan *al-Ash'ari*, and Anan did. He used the same weapons of skeptics of the Oral Law, i.e. rational evidences and proofs influenced

by philosophy. Al-Fayyumi was the first to pave the way for the Rabbis to use reason. He provided them with arguments and proofs to prove their beliefs, so he imitated the Karaites in being influenced by the knowledge of logic or *Kalām* among Muslims (Lagerlund & Jacob 2011). Saadia Al-Fayyumi wrote some books in defense of Rabbinic Judaism, mainly *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat*. It included the origins of Rabbinic Judaism, the beliefs of those who opposed it, and responses to opponents and skeptics. He wrote this book in Judeo-Arabic; the language spoken by the Jews in Arabic-speaking regions. Saadia Al-Fayyumi (1880) meant by *Amanat* the principles of faith. As for beliefs, He said: "It is every meaning in the soul for every known thing, in the state in which it is found" (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Saadia Al-Fayyumi mentioned the reason for writing *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat*, as he said: "Many of the Children of Israel have impure faith, and their beliefs are incorrect. Many deniers attack people of truth and claim that people are drowning in seas of doubt" (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Hence, Saadia found that he had to help people and save them from these doubts. He also indicated that the purpose of researching matters of religion was due to two reasons. The first is to verify what we know about God's prophets as true for us, and the second is to respond to those who defame some of our religious matters (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Accordingly, responding to opponents and skeptics was necessary to establish the foundations of faith. In fact, the Jewish religion not only suffered from atheism, which Saadia stood up to defend it, but also Sunni Islam suffered from it, and Judge Abu Bakr Al-Baqlani (1974) defended it and responded to the violators and atheists.

The approach of Saadia in his defending Rabbinic Judaism, to which he referred in his book, was consistent with the purpose of research in matters of religion. He began each of the Ten principles of the Jewish faith with what was mentioned about them in the Old Testament. Then established rational proofs on it, and followed that with what all the violators went to. He mentioned what they have and what they owe, then he concluded with the prophetic evidence in every issue. In the following, we will present the ten foundations of faith as the first building block in the blocking wall that Saadia erected, and we will also discuss after each principle, the issues related to it or the appeals directed against it. Additionally, we will clarify the influence of Islamic thought,

especially the Mu'tazilah's thought, on principles of the Jewish faith, which Saadia laid down in his book *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* in order to defend Rabbinic Judaism.

PRINCIPLE ONE: THE WORLD IS CREATED

Saadia devoted the first article of *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* to identify the first principle of the faith. The issue of this principle was the world's eternity and its creation, just as the Mu'tazilites used to begin their logical philosophy with the title; all beings are created (Jamail & Waheed 2021). Saadia based his defense of this principle on the text of (Genesis 1:1), that God created heaven and earth in the beginning, and on the text of (Isaiah 24:44) which states: the Lord is the one who made everything and created heaven and earth. Therefore, all things are created and God created them from nothing. God has proven that this is true through miracles and prophecy (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Saadia also mentioned some rational evidences supporting this principle, such as the evidence of the Ending. He said: "Heaven and Earth have an end. Their power has an end, so they must have a beginning and an end. Likewise, the world has a beginning and an end because it is created it out of nothing" (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Saadia supported the previous rational evidence with texts from the Old Testament. He cited the passage mentioned in (Deuteronomy 13:7) to support his opinion (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Also, he presented twelve beliefs that contradicted this; such as the doctrine of *Hivi ha-Balkhi*, who denied that the world was created (Rosenthal 1948). He explained the arguments of each group, and refuted these arguments, clarifying similarities between them and the the Old Testament. Then he explained how (Ecclesiastes 4:1) stated that the earth would remain forever, which was contradict the fact things were created. He explained this and indicated that the earth created and God would keep it forever (Al-Fayyumi 1880). The Islamic influence on Saadia in the issue of creation clarifies in his saying: all things are created and God created them from nothing. He was influenced by Muslim jurists who interpreted the concept of creation as creating things out of nothing

(Al-Tabari 2000). Also, Saadia used evidence of the Ending which was the same rational evidence that the Muslim philosopher *Al-Kindi* cited to prove the world is created (Al-Kindi 1978).

PRINCIPLE TWO: THE CREATOR OF THINGS IS ONE

In the second principle, Saadia mentioned that God is one, omnipotent, and all-knowing. Nothing is like Him or His actions. He drew on (Deuteronomy 4:6,32:39,32:12) that God is one, (Job 42:2) that God is omnipotent, (Isaiah 40:28) that God is all-knowing, and (Psalms 86:8) that nothing is similar to God or His actions (Al-Fayyumi,1880). Saadia sought to prove the previous attributes of God to skeptics and opponents, who argued otherwise, with rational evidences. One of them is that He made bodies that have no gender despite their abundance. This proves He is One because if not, He would be multiple and incarnated (Al-Fayyumi,1880). Atheists and skeptics in Judaism sought to deny the attributes of power and oneness about God (Shemuel 1916). Therefore, Saadia defended the oneness of God and His attributes based on the text of the Old Testament. To refute those claims of anthropomorphism, who took every attribute of God to be pronounced as an embodiment, not as a metaphor (Al-Fayyumi 1880). As a result of that, Saadia denied suspicions of anthropomorphism and similarity of God influenced by Mu'tazilah which refused all Attributes of anthropomorphisms that attributed to God and assured its refusal with certain verses from the Qur'an (Gardet 1987). Saadia defended Rabbinic Judaism saying: "It is impossible to say something about God or what He made. Also, What we, the believers, said of his descriptions and embodiment, is for approximation and representation" (Al-Fayyumi 1880.).

Saadia resorted to interpretation, just as the Mu'tazilah and Anan did, to clear suspicions of anthropomorphism. He interpreted all the ten physical incarnate words attributed to God in the Old Testament as a metaphor (Al-Fayyumi 1880). In fact, the Mutazilites interpreted God's anthropomorphic features symbolically (Wensinck 1938), and Saadia was influenced by their method in this matter. For example, He interpreted what is mentioned

in (Genesis 44:21) about the eye that it means care. What is meant by the ear in (Genesis 44:8) is acceptance. The hand in (Kings 2:19:26) means power and the heart in (Proverbs 7:7) is wisdom. Saadia said that God does not have any of these members, but they are all metaphors. He also, such as the Mu'tazilah, denied anthropomorphic love and hate from God, and all other signs of quality (Al-Fayyumi1880; Al-Ash'arī 1950). In fact, Saadia wasn't only satisfied with the interpretation of denying anthropomorphism, but also he mentioned the appeals made by those who denied interpretation and responded to them in order to defend Rabbinic Judaism.

PRINCIPLE THREE: BELIEF IN THE MESSENGERS, PROPHETS, REVELATIONS AND DUTIES

The third article of *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* presents this principle and all the challenges related to it. Saadia sought to refute the claims of atheists who denied belief in the messengers and responded to those who said that duties, i.e. commands and prohibitions, contradict with reason; without mentioning the name of *Hivi ha-Balkhi* or others. He began with rational evidences and said:

The mind dictates that a good-doer has good, with charity if he needs it, or with gratitude, if he is in need of reward only. Thus, the Creator commanded His creatures to worship Him and thank Him. Also, the mind dictates that the wise is not to be insulted or slandered against. So, it is logical that the Creator forbid that for His servants. The mind requires that the creatures be prevented from encroaching on each other, so they are not allowed to do that (Al-Fayyumi1880).

Saadia was influenced by the Mu'tazilah in this rational evidence. The Mu'tazilites see that the mind is the basis of obligation, and through it a person can distinguish between good and bad (Al-asadābādī 1965). Saadia did not turn a blind eye to respond the deniers of the prophets and messengers. They claimed falsely that people did not need messengers, and their minds were sufficient for them to be guided to good and bad. Saadia began to respond to them with rational evidence that the need of creation for the messengers is not only for the sake of the audible legal laws; rather, it is for the sake of rational laws. He said:

The mind denies adultery, and there is nothing in it that determines how a woman can honor a man as his wife; is it with words only, money only, her consent and the consent of her parents only, or with the testimony of two or ten. Thus, messengers came with a dowry, a book, and two witnesses. For these matters and their likes, we were forced to messengers, as our opinions would have differed and we would not agree on anything (Al-Fayyumi1880).

The atheists claim that they don't need messengers and their minds help them to decide right and wrong (Al-Ashqar 2005). Therefore, Saadia confirmed the importance of the prophets in Judaism, as they were commanded to transfer the revelation of God and to confirm the Law of Moses to their people. (Al-Ashqar 2005) Also, he had proved the importance of prophets using rational evidence and emphasized that believing them for fortification and perfection of faith. He agreed with the Mu'tazilah in their response to those who denied prophethood. The Mu'tazilah confirmed the importance of messengers to tell people duties (Al-asadābādī 1996). Also, Saadia highlighted that the evidence for the authenticity of the messenger's message was the miracles and verses that the Creator chose for the messenger's message. They were signs confirming the validity of the message (Al-Fayyumi1880). Saadia was similar to the Mu'tazilah in its views that prophecy is only confirmed by a miracle (Al-asadābādī 1962). It seems that Saadia was affected by Mu'tazilah in this issue because he grew up in the arms of Mu'tazilah thought, and drew from its source and culture, whether in Egypt, where he was born and grew up, or in Iraq, where he wrote his books.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: BELIEVING THAT MAN HAS CHOICE, NOT FORCED

Saadia affirmed in *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* that every person had a will and choice. He said:

God gave man the ability to carry out his ordnances and abstain from forbidden things. This is shown in minds and books. As for what is in mind, The wise does not entrust anyone with what he is not capable of doing. As for the books, evidence is mentioned in (Micah 2:1) (Al-Fayyumi1880).

Saadia confirmed with rational evidence that a person has a free choice and the ability to choose what he wants to do. He does not do anything except what he has chosen to do. Also, he cannot do what

he is not chosen for him (Al-Fayyumi1880). Creator has no intervention in the actions of people. He does not force them to obey or disobey (Waxman 1918). Saadia responded to opponents and skeptics with this principle to defend Rabbinic Judaism and argued with them in the issue of forcing and saying that Old Testament has suspicions of obligation. He justified and explained some of these clauses that contain no reference to forcing, emphasizing that man has freedom of choice and isn't bound (Al-Fayyumi1880). Like Mu'tazilah, Saadia said that man is responsible for choosing his actions. He affected by Mu'tazilah's saying that God is not the creator of human actions and the person does only what he chooses, just as he cannot do what he does not choose (Al-asadābādī 1996).

PRINCIPLE FIVE: BELIEVING IN GOD'S KNOWLEDGE AND JUSTICE

The knowledge of God is his knowledge of what was, what will be, and what is. He knows what exists and what existed not, i.e. knowledge of all matters, explicit and implicit. Saadia emphasized this and considered it one of the principles of faith. Therefore, he responded to those who doubted God's knowledge with their saying: "God knows what is to take place before it takes place. He knows that man will disobey him, so man must disobey him in order to complete what he has known" (Al-Fayyumi1880). Saadia has denounced the previous skeptic's statement and responded to this suspicion. He explained that God's knowledge of a thing is not the reason for the thing to be, but God knows things in their reality of being. Man's choices have been known to him (Waxman 1918). Also, Saadia emphasized that God is self-Omniscient. He said "God's attribute, Omniscient, indicates God's knowledge and does not point to an increase in God's essence" (Al-Fayyumi1880). Saadia was influenced in this saying by the Muslim theologians, especially the *Mu'tazila*, who denied the self-attributes of God, and emphasized that God is self-Omniscient (Al-asadābādī 1996).

Saadia emphasized belief in God's justice and denied the injustice of God in his response to those who said that God abused the soul when he placed it in this dark body. He said: "It is impossible for God to offend his creation or oppress them. He created them to benefit them not to harm them" (Al-Fayyumi1880). Saadia based his response against slanders of skeptics and denial of the injustice of

the Lord, on (Job 34:9). He stated: "The Creator of perfectly just in His treatment of His creatures. He is insightful in creating them and aware of their actions" (Al-Fayyumi1880). In fact, Saadia was influenced by the Mu'tazilites in their saying of God's justice. They said: "God is fair in His judgment on the actions of humans. He is Omniscient and judges their action with right way and according to their benefit" (Al-Shahrastāni 1993).

PRINCIPLE SIX: BELIEVING IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

Muslim and Greek philosophers were concerned with the problem of man. They tried to understand the human soul, its forces and its relationship with the world and God (Husain 2022). That is why philosophers were concerned with human problems. They talked about the nature of the soul, its source, and its link to the body. Saadia devoted the sixth article of his book *Kitab al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat* to deal with the reality of the soul and death, and also to present Judaism's conception of the human soul. He explained that The Creator is immortal and his creating thing is a grace. He gave creatures the universe after creating it. He gave them tools for happiness and complete grace. He said: "All things were created for the sake of man, as in (Zechariah 12:1)" (Al-Fayyumi,1880). Saadia presented seven opinions on the soul, six of which he denied, including the opinion of Anan, who thought that the soul was pure blood. The seventh doctrine is the view adopted by Saadia. It's the correct doctrine according to what Saadia said. The soul is created as in (Zechariah 12:1). it's a pure essence like the purity of the spheres. It accepts the light then becomes luminous, and therefore speaks. Saadia based his opinion on two principles, the first is rational and based on observation. The soul is not like the earthly parts, and even if it was one of the astronomical parts, it would not have speech. It must be a gentle substance. It is more subtle and simpler than the essence of the celestial bodies (Al-Fayyumi 1880). As for the second principle, Saadia said according to (Daniel 12:3) that souls are enlightened as the celestial spheres are enlightened, and the evil souls are luminous; they are inferior to the state of the celestial bodies (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Saadia believed that the soul was self-aware and did not work except with the body, so when they get intertwined, its powers appear. He based his opinion on (Genesis 2:7) (Al-Fayyumi,1880). Saadia's

belief in the immortality of the soul after death made him explain the state of the soul when it leaves the body after death. He states that the soul is not seen if it exits the body after death, because of its purity and resemblance to air. Also, Saadia stressed the immortality of the soul after death which skeptics denied it. He saw the soul preserved until the time of recompense. Saadia said according to (Ecclesiastes 3:21): "The soul of the righteous is preserved under the throne of Majesty and the souls of the wicked get wandering in the world" (Al-Fayyumi, 1880). In Saadia's defense of the immortality of the soul after death, he asserted that it exists until the body wears out and its parts separate and remain separated from the body until God brings them together with their bodies again on the Day of Judgment. This is evidence of Saadia's belief in resurrection, reward, and punishment (Al-Fayyumi 1880). In fact, Saadia's views about the human soul stem from his complete belief in the description of Rabbinic Judaism for the human soul. Therefore, he considered belief in its immortality after death as one of the principles of faith and described it in life and after death. Additionally, Saadia did not agree with the belief of many Mu'tazilites who denied Immortality of the Soul after death. According to their belief, the soul exists in the body in life only (Al-Jawziyah 2019).

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: BELIEF IN REVIVING THE DEAD IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE HEREAFTER

Some Jews had doubts about the concept of resurrection and the revival of the soul after death (Brody 2016). This prompted Saadia to make the belief in resurrecting the dead in the world and in the Hereafter a principle of faith in Rabbinic Judaism. He differentiated between resurrecting the dead in the Hereafter for recompense and resurrecting the dead in the worldly abode (Yonatan 2016). Also, Saadia illustrated that the resurrection of the dead in the Hereafter will be for judgment. He clarified that resurrecting the dead in this world was disputable. Many believed it to be the time of salvation and explained everything they found in the Old Testament about resurrecting the dead superficially, and specified its time as the time of salvation. Few Jews interpreted passages about resurrecting the dead as reviving the State and the Nation (Al-Fayyumi 1880). This disagreement about this principle of faith was also a motive for Saadia to discuss it and verify the consensus of the Jewish nation's majority

that resurrecting the dead was in the world at the time of salvation and attempt to prove that to be a guide for them (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Therefore, Saadia cited paragraphs from Old Testament containing an indication that resurrecting the dead in this life was the time of salvation. He interpreted them according to their apparent meaning. As mentioned in (Daniel 12:2): "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. These to eternal life, and these to disgrace to eternal contempt go". His saying "many of those who have fallen asleep" means that the divine promise is limited only to the Children of Israel. That is why he didn't say: "all those who had fallen asleep", that means all the children of Adam. Also, his saying: "These are to eternal life" means that those whom the Lord will revive at the time of salvation are the ones who will receive the reward of the Lord. Those who are punished will lie in the dust. At the time of salvation, the Lord will revive every good person, but the unbeliever will not live (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Saadia also cited Talmudic passages confirming the belief of the majority of the Jewish nation that the dead is resurrected in this world at the time of salvation, like; "He who does not believe in resurrecting the dead in the abode of this world will not be resurrected with the whole Nation at the time of salvation" (Talmud, 1884, 90a). The proof that the dead is resurrected in this world was mentioned in (Ezekiel 37:1-10). As for those whom the Lord revives at the time of salvation, the Talmud mentioned that they do not die, nor do they return to dust. Old Testament confirmed this, as mentioned in (Isaiah 6:51): "Heaven and earth perish and salvation remains". Salvation means the people of salvation while those who are revived in this world are righteous of the Nation. Saadia believed that resurrecting the dead in this world is a virtue that God singled out for the Children of Israel to compensate them for their trials and their patience by granting them an additional period during which God revives their dead in the world's abode, thus linking their lives with that of the hereafter (Al-Fayyumi 1880). The effect of Mu'tazilah's thought appeared clearly on Saadia, in the issue of belief in the resurrecting of the dead in this world. Saadia was affected by Mu'tazilah's saying that the resurrecting of the dead in the world took place during the time of the Prophet Ezekiel. Also, Saadia emphasized, like Mu'tazilah, the inevitability of resurrecting the dead in the Hereafter (Al-Rāzī 1981).

PRINCIPLE EIGHT : BELIEF IN THE COMING OF SALVATION

Saadia called the eighth article of *Kitab al-Amanat wa 'l-I'tiqadat; Al-Furqan*. He meant distinction and differentiation between two matters and separating two ages, an era of division, diaspora, siege, and expulsion that the children of Israel suffered, and an era of hope that the Lord will gather the dispersed children of Israel and taking care of them. Saadia defined distinction by saying: "God's saving children of Israel from the state they are in, gathering them from the east and west of the earth, and bringing them to His holiness, so that they become His elite, as Moses said in (Deuteronomy 30:3)" (Al-Fayyumi1880). Saadia called for believing in the Coming of Salvation and considered it to be the principle of faith that must be believed in, for reasons including; the authenticity of the verses of Moses and the signs and miracles of Isaiah and other prophets who preached about it. The Lord afflicted the children of Israel with many trials, some of them were a punishment and the others were a test. Each of them had a duration and an end, just as the sufferings and persecutions that the Jews were subjected to be an indispensable conditions for their salvation in the future (Sysling 1992). Saadia kept talking about the promise of salvation affirmed by Rabbinic Judaism and denied by some skeptics. He cited the previous promises of the Lord from the Old Testament to the children of Israel and their prophets as evidence that the promise of salvation will be fulfilled. He said:

The promise of the Lord is true, confirms His words and His command, as he mentioned in (Isaiah 8:40). The Lord promised us to punish our oppressor and to give us a lot of money, as he said in (Genesis14:15). He promised us great matters. So, we must be patient (Al-Fayyumi1880).

Saadia believed that until salvation, the Lord made two terms for the enslavement of the children of Israel. One of which was repentance and the other was the end. Whichever of them was due, salvation would come. If our nation's repentance got completed, the end would be neglected (Al-Fayyumi1880). In an attempt to emphasize belief in the coming of salvation, Saadia responded to skeptics who said that the promise of salvation and consolation to the nation of Israel and the call for patience over adversity was at the time of the Second Temple. This had passed and nothing remained of them. The skeptics stated that the principle of belief in coming of Christ was originally corrupt. Saadia

responded to them and confirmed that the salvation mentioned in the Old Testament in (Isaiah 60:20) and (Jeremiah 31:40) was conditional on the people's obedience to be achieved. We must believe in it as a principle of faith (Al-Fayyumi 1880). The concept of salvation is linked to Judaism and Christianity, but there is no salvation in Islam. In fact, salvation in Christianity is different from the salvation in Judaism that was explained above. As for Christian salvation, it is based on salvation from sin, so that man can obtain eternal rest ('Ajībah 2006).

PRINCIPLE NINE: BELIEF IN REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN THE HEREAFTER

Saadia mentioned twelve criticisms against the Old Testament, including no reward and punishment in Hebrew Bible in the abode of the Hereafter and all punishment in it is worldly only (Al-Fayyumi1880). Given the seriousness of this criticism, Saadia dedicated the ninth article for explaining and responding to all views raised about belief in reward and punishment in the Hereafter, making it one of the foundations of faith. He said: "God has prepared a time to reward the righteous and will separate them from the unbelievers, as He said in (Malachi 3:17-18). Prophets had established signs and proofs to that time, which called the abode of the Hereafter" (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Saadia explained it with rational evidence for these deniers. He said:

The amount of happiness that is unique to the soul cannot be the bliss in this world, because every blessing in this world is accompanied by a calamity, every happiness with misery, every pleasure with pain, and every joy with sadness. It is impossible for God to make the reward of this soul these contradictory conditions. Rather, He must have prepared for it a home in which pure life and pure happiness are attained (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Also, the rational evidence included not punishing the wrong-doer for what he did, seeing infidels that God has blessed in this world, and believers who have been wretched in it. Saadia mentioned the signs that the Torah and the books of the prophets included about punishment in the Hereafter, like (Genesis 4:7), (Ecclesiastes 3:17), and (Zephaniah 1:14-17) (Al-Fayyumi 1880). All of them emphasize penalty in the hereafter. Saadia cited what was mentioned in (Masechet Sanhedrin 10:1), in his response to atheists denying the reward and punishment in Hereafter. He said: "Whoever did not believe to reward and punishment in the

Hereafter will have no reward in it even if he was a good-doer in all his works" (Al-Fayyumi 1880). Saadia confirmed the Jewish nation unanimously accepted reward and punishment in the Hereafter, as transmitted by sayings that cannot be interpreted or altered. The reward was on the body and soul together, just as the divine reward in the Hereafter is of the kind of work. The Lord rewards the righteous for their righteous deeds and punishes the misguided sinners for their sins. Saadia did not turn a blind eye to answer many of the questions related to this principle, such as, Is there a differentiation between the righteous and the non-righteous? Are their reward and punishment equal? Who deserves permanent punishment?, etc (Al-Fayyumi 1880). In fact, these questions and the doubts about them prompted Saadia to consider belief with reward and punishment in the Hereafter as a principle of the Jewish faith.

Saadia was affected by the saying of Mu'tazilah that reward and punishment occur in the Hereafter, and that what happens to a person in this world of blessings or pain is not called reward or punishment (Al-asadābādī 1962). He relied on Mu'tazilah's thought in his reliance on rational evidence to respond the atheists denying the reward and punishment in the Hereafter, and he said:

The abode of Hereafter is for the reward with justice. The evidence for the existence of reward and punishment in the Hereafter is seeing the unbelievers whom God has blessed in the world and not punishing the sinners for what they did in the world (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

PRINCIPLE TEN: MAN SHOULD DO THE BEST IN THIS WORLD

Skeptics did not deny this principle, but it was necessary for Saadia to clarify deeds that validate human life. Therefore, he concluded the context of his talk about the principles of faith with the best deeds that a person must do in this world in order to be happy. If his morals are good, his actions will be ideal (Abdulrahman, Saad & Mohamad 2023). In this principle, Saadia tried to reconcile goodness of the soul and goodness of the body according to the philosophers and ordering of good-doing and the prohibition of evil-doing, which is the fifth and final principle of the Mu'tazilites (Al-asadābādī 1996). Saadia explained how a person should choose the best. All beings are characterized by the abundance of composition, and the human body too. Also, a person is characterized by a lot of variation between

people in what they like and hate. Saadia believed that man has morals and controls likes and dislikes, also he should choose every moral, using it in its place as much as it should, and avoid it in the place that so requires (Al-Fayyumi 1880).

Saadia counted the favorite and beloved deeds in which a person finds happiness. They were thirteen deeds. Also, Saadia discussed each of them. He mentioned what prompted people to prefer one of them throughout their time, and what they neglected. Saadia mentioned the appropriate place for using these deeds. He explained that these deeds were; asceticism, eating and drinking, intercourse, love, money-hunger, children, building the world, life, power, schadenfreude against enemies, seeking wisdom, worship, and comfort. Saadia summed up his opinion about what is best for a person to do in the worldly life, in order to be praised in the two worlds. He advised mediation and moderation in what is permitted by law. Saadia said: "It is wrong to use one of these deeds, or to leave others, and not associate them with it. It is not necessary to take from each work an equal part, but an appropriate amount, as required by wisdom" (Al-Fayyumi 1880). In fact, Saadia was influenced in this principle by the thought of Mu'tazilah and their belief that man should do the best and the most suitable in this world. Mu'tazilah believed that Divine justice means the agreement of God's actions with the interest required by mind (Al-Shāfi'ī 1998). Saadia was affected by Mu'tazilah's idea that stated: "God doing the most suitable for humans, which has benefits for His servants" (Al-asadābādī 1962).

CONCLUSION

Rabbinic Judaism faced rebellion, atheism, and disbelief as it happened to Sunni Islam in the Abbasid era, which was a reaction and result of the expansion of the Caliphate and openness to conflicting intellectual and philosophical currents and different religions. Sunni Islam had many defenders. Saadia confronted the skeptics of the Jewish religion. He did what all of them did as Saadia laid down foundations for the Jewish faith that included all its aspects. He tried to reconcile religion and philosophy, as did the Muslim philosophers, and responded to the skeptics of Rabbinic Judaism. The influence of Mu'tazilah thought and its Islamic culture has clearly appeared in Saadia Gaon's Method in defending Rabbinic Judaism. Saadia was influenced by Muslim jurists, Islamic theological doctrines, and their various ideas

related to religious matters. Saadia's thoughts and opinions were similar to the opinions and attitudes of the scholars of theology in Islam. This Islamic influence on Jewish thought was a factor in its development, especially in light of the Arab-Islamic civilization in the Medieval.

Saadia's method was distinguished by his extreme intelligence. He did not direct his responses to specific persons, did not mention the names of persons, and mentioned the opinions which he considered to be the opinions of some opponents. He refuted claims all of them; philosophers who said the world was eternal and their followers who attributed the creation of things to nature, celestials, and spiritualities. Moreover, he faced Deuteronomy, Epicureanism, Christians, and Brahmins who said that people had no need for messengers. Also, he confronted those who said that duties and obligations were contrary to the mind, those who said that the miracles that happened to Moses could be explained as natural phenomena, those who denied the knowledge of God, those who said that man was forced, those who denied the resurrection of the dead in the world and those who denied reward and punishment in the afterlife.

Saadia benefited from an opponent's approach in his disputation, and from the dialectical method founded by the Mu'tazilah. He combined in his defensive approach between reliance on the text and rational evidence such as scholars of theology in Islam. He tried, in his responses to the skeptics, to know the basis on which the opponent's opinion is based and the justification for it. The book *Al-Amanat wa'l-I'tiqadat*, which he imitated the Mu'tazilites in its classification, showed that he understood different Islamic theological doctrines in his time and excelled in his responses to the points of contention which opponents disagreed with him.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, Walid Ali & Ahmad Abdel Tawwab; methodology, Walid Ali, Ahmad Abdel Tawwab & Lila Abo-Elmagd; writing original draft & preparation, Walid Ali, & Ahmad Abdel Tawwab & Lila Abo-Elmagd; writing review and editing, Walid Ali & Ahmad Abdel Tawwab; linguistic revision, Ahmad Abdel Tawwab; Visualization, Walid Ali; Supervision, Walid Ali. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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