

of goods. He also made a study of kinship and religion. Born in Vienna and educated in Budapest, Polányi was the foreign editor of the *Der Oesterreichische Volkswirt*, Austria's leading economic journal. Later he moved to England and in 1940 to America where he taught at Bennington College (Vermont) and New York. He was a socialist and in his later years the maintenance of peace became his major concern.

Polányi's writings include *The Great Transformation* (1945); jointly with A. Rothstein, *Dahomey and the Slave Trade* (1966); and *The Plough and the Pen-Writings from Hungary 1930–1956* (1963, jointly edited with Ilona Duczynska).

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[Joachim O. Ronall]

**POLANYI, MICHAEL** (1891–1976) British physical chemist and philosopher. Born in Budapest, Polanyi was educated at the extraordinarily successful Minta Gymnasium. He entered the University of Budapest to study medicine (1908) but his interest in physical chemistry largely dominated his student career and he spent the summer of 1912 at the Technische Hochschule in Karlsruhe, Germany, where he wrote his first papers on physical chemistry with Einstein's approval. He received his M.D. (1913) and returned to the Karlsruhe institute for the 1913–14 academic year, but joined the Austro-Hungarian Army as a medical officer on the outbreak of war in 1914. Diphtheria and other illness curtailed his military obligations, allowing him to complete his Ph.D. (awarded in 1919). Political upheaval linked to virulent antisemitism obliged Polanyi to leave Hungary to work in Karlsruhe again (1919–20), and in Berlin at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Fiber Chemistry (1920–23) and for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry (1923–33), eventually with a tenured position as "scientific member." After initial reservations, with the Nazi rise to power he moved to the University of Manchester, England (1933), as professor of physical chemistry with a brief to revitalize the chemistry department. A shift in his professional interests from the sciences to the humanities prompted a change in title to professor of social studies (1948) before his retirement in 1958. He was elected a senior research fellow at Merton College, Oxford (1959–61) and he continued to write, lecture, and travel as visiting professor in Europe and North America. He lived in Oxford until shortly before his death in Northampton. Polanyi's first scientific work concerned the interaction of molecules with a liquid surface, a process termed adsorption. His subsequent interests centered on the fundamental basis of molecular structure and the factors governing molecular association and dissociation. His theoretical insight was matched by technical innovations in crystallography and methods for studying gases at low concentration. His work had an important practical application in the British development of synthetic rubber during World War II. His work also explained the remarkable fibrous strength of cellulose. He was elected to the Royal Society of London (1944). Polanyi's inter-

est in other fields dates from his student days. His philosophical studies explored the links between the physical universe and religious belief and were also largely concerned with the central role of personal morality in the face of eternal human imperfection. These beliefs were closely related to his conviction that scientists should have social concerns but intellectual freedom without constraints imposed by central planning. His early defense of what are now termed civil rights complemented his vigorous political opposition to communism and his support for Keynesian economics. Polanyi identified with Christianity mainly on moral grounds and he converted to the Roman Catholic Church (1919), although possibly for political reasons. He was not a practicing Catholic and was skeptical about biblical authority. Although he did not join any Jewish communal organizations and was opposed to Zionism, he gave talks to Jewish societies. He married Magda, a chemistry student, in a civil ceremony (1921) and they had two sons. Polanyi's extensive writings in all fields are listed in Scott and Moleski's enlightening biography *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (2005).

[Michael Denman (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)]

**POLEMICS AND POLEMICAL LITERATURE.** There were internal polemics with Jewish sectarians in the talmudic and post-talmudic periods, and a rich Jewish polemical literature in the Middle Ages. It does not include the continuous and sustained controversies which characterize rabbinical literature throughout the ages on the interpretation of the Oral Law. For this see \*Conflict of Opinion. Polemics with non-Jews in the Bible, Talmud, and Middle Ages is discussed under \*Disputation and Polemics and \*Islam.

#### Talmudic Period

The talmudic literature is replete with details of polemics between the upholders of normative Judaism, the Pharisees and their successors, and the numerous sects which flourished at the time. Insofar as they are referred to by name, these are the \*Samaritans, the \*Sadducees, and those who are referred to under the generic name of \**minim* (sectarians). Confusion exists as to the exact nomenclature and identification of the last two. As a result of \*censorship, the original word in the Talmud had to be changed. Reference to the manuscripts as well as internal evidence provided by the context, show that the word *Zeduki*, Sadducee, which appears in the printed text refers to other sects. In addition, the word *min* applied to a wide range of sectarians, Judeo-Christians, Gnostics, Manicheans, Magi, etc. Thus whereas in the *Sifra* (Lev. 2) in the phrase "from here is provided an opening to the *minim*" the word refers to Gnostics who believed in dualism, the identical phrase in *Exodus Rabbah* 13:4 refers to those sectarians who denied the doctrine of free will. Jacob of Kefar Sakhnaya "of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth" (these words, which are in the Mss., have been omitted from the printed text; Av. Zar. 17a) is referred to as a *min* in 27b. The Talmud states in the name of R. Nahman "there are no *minim* among the gentiles" (Hul.

13b). The *minim* were all Jewish sectarians, and the Christian *minim*, Judeo-Christians.

There are a few polemics which can be definitely ascribed to Sadducees and Samaritans. With regard to the former, the Mishnah records a number of polemics between the Sadducees and the Pharisees in one of which Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai was the spokesman of the Pharisees. "The Sadducees said 'We cry out against you, O ye Pharisees' for they say 'the Scriptures render the hands unclean' [a typical rabbinic enactment]. Yet the writings of Hamiram [Homer?] do not render the hands unclean." In typical polemic vein Rabban Johanan carried the war into the enemy camp: "They say that the bones of the ass are clean, and the bones of Johanan the High Priest are clean" and the argument continues with the victory of the Pharisees (Yad. 4:6-8).

R. Eleazar b. Yose polemicized against the Samaritans by pointing out to them that the identification of Mt. Gerizim, the holy mountain, overlooking Shechem depends entirely upon the application of the *gezerah shavah*, an inference from analogy which was one of the 13 *\*hermeneutical* rules evolved by the rabbis which the Samaritans rejected (Sot. 33b). Whereas this, like so many of the polemics in the Talmud, was a literary and academic controversy, the Midrash gives one with a Samaritan which belongs to a less refined sphere. R. Ishmael b. Yose, on a pilgrimage from Galilee to Jerusalem, came to Mt. Gerizim. There he met a Samaritan who asked him where he was bound. When he answered "Jerusalem," the Samaritan said "Is it not better for you to pray on this blessed mountain than that accursed one?" To which Ishmael retorted, "You are like a dog which digs up a buried carcass. It is because you know that there are idols buried here, which Jacob hid away [Gen. 35:4] that you are so full of fervor for this mountain" (Gen. R. 81:3; TJ, AZ 5:4, 44c). The polemics with the *minim* are legion in the rabbinical literature. They cover every biblical and theological topic including monotheism, dualism (Sanh. 38a), that "he who created the wind did not create the mountains" (Hul. 87a), freedom of will, and predetermination (see above); the validity of the principles of rabbinic exegesis (Ber. 10a); that the destruction of the Temple was a sign that God had rejected the Jewish people (obviously a Judeo-Christian, though the printed text has a Sadducee; Yoma 57a); and other topics.

One fact seems to emerge clearly from a consideration of the many polemics in the Talmud, namely that they were rarely if ever sought out by the rabbis. Almost invariably the challenge came from the sectarians. The sectarian who "used to annoy Joshua b. Levi greatly with his biblical texts" (Ber. 7a) represents the general attitude of challenge by them and only response by the rabbis.

### In the Geonic Period

As was the case in the talmudic period, the rise of the various sects was the cause of various polemics. To a special category belongs *\*Saadia Gaon's Kitab al-Amanat* in which he answers the heretical opinions expressed by Hiwi al-Balkhi who lived

in Persia in the last quarter of the ninth century. The fact that Saadia found teachers in Babylonia teaching children from books based on Hiwi's biblical criticism makes it a contemporary polemic. The greatest polemic, however, in which Saadia took a leading part, but which extended over at least three centuries, was against the *\*Karaites*.

### Polemical Literature of the Middle Ages

The literature of the period reflects this preoccupation with disputation, polemical works being composed in almost every literary form then used by Jews: e.g., poetry, homiletics, ethical literature, fiction, and halakhic writing. In addition, the polemic – a genre whose main purpose was to express the views of the conflicting parties – was developed.

Purely halakhic and rabbinic disputes were usually dealt with in the literature of *she'elot u-teshuvot* (rabbinic responsa) and other halakhic literary forms. Medieval halakhists followed the literary style and legal precedents found in the vast body of talmudic literature, in which almost every point of law was contested, clarified, and usually determined. Even in controversies touching basic beliefs and carried on with intense emotion, medieval Jewry accepted opposing views as at least worthy of consideration. For example in his *Hassagot*, *\*Abraham b. David*, the leading rabbi of Provence, contested many of the legal decisions in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. Yet when the celebrated code of laws was printed, the *Hassagot* were included, as if they were a commentary on Maimonides' text. Opposing views, therefore, were regarded as important and worthy of being studied by all rabbinical scholars. Sometimes halakhic controversies originated from political differences rather than legal ones; thus the contentions between the leading rabbis in Palestine and Babylonia in the time of Saadia Gaon, carried on in the traditional halakhic literary forms, were in fact struggles for recognition as the supreme religious authority in the Jewish world.

Halakhic literary forms, however, were both inadequate and inappropriate for the resolution of basic ideological problems and new literary forms were used. One of the earliest literary documents recording a fierce ideological controversy is *Milhamot ha-Shem* ("The Lord's Fight," 1830), a small tenth-century book by the Karaite writer, Solomon b. Jeroham. Part of the polemical literature of the Rabbanite-Karaite dispute, the work is a Hebrew reply to Saadia Gaon's attack against the Karaites, though Arabic was usually the language in which this controversy was sustained. *Milhamot ha-Shem*, like most medieval polemical works, is written in the literary form of a letter (see *\*Letters and Letter Writing*). But whereas only the opening and concluding portions of such a letter were usually written in rhymed prose, this work is written entirely in that manner. The most striking characteristic of Solomon's book is its satirical nature; he quotes (and rhymes) passages from the Talmud and from the literature attributed to talmudic sages, including the *\*Shi'ur Komah*, to show how far these rabbinic sayings had strayed from the biblical text and from the accepted theological ideas of the times – even those accepted in

Saadia's philosophical works. The three elements – the epistolary form, the rhymed prose, and the satirical statement of the main thesis – became the common feature in medieval Hebrew polemical literature.

Polemical literature in the form of a literary epistle served as the main vehicle of expression in one of the greatest controversies in medieval Jewry – the controversy over the writings of Maimonides, which began in the last year of Maimonides' life and continued throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and especially during the years 1232–35 and 1304–05. The subjects of the controversy – the meaning of the anthropomorphic passages in the Bible and the talmudic literature, the reasons behind the commandments (*ta'amei ha-mitzvot*), the question of the resurrection and the nature of the afterlife, the existence of angels and demons, the problem of the creation *ex nihilo*, the allegorical interpretation of the biblical stories – were discussed in letters exchanged between the leading disputants. Most of the letters are written partly in rhymed prose, with some written completely so.

The use of the literary epistle resulted from the fact that the disputants usually did not intend to clarify the ideological, theological, or even exegetical problems over which the controversy arose. Their main aim was to disqualify the opponent as a competent judge in the issue, to prove that he does not have the requisite knowledge or awareness of the problems which would entitle him to be heard in the controversy. Thus, early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when \*Aaron b. Meshullam of Lunel answered Meir b. Todros Abulafia ha-Levi's letters concerning Maimonides' alleged disbelief in the resurrection, he dedicated the bulk of his letter to a discussion of Abulafia's character, knowledge, and understanding, and a review of his own feelings about Maimonides and his critics. The small portion of the letter that actually deals with the problem of the resurrection says nothing more than that Maimonides' views do not differ from those of the Talmud and the *geonim*, especially Saadia Gaon. The letter is entirely written in rhymed prose and makes extensive use of biblical and talmudic phrases, leaving no doubt that the writer intended to win the public over to his views mainly by the beauty with which he expressed his feelings. This form of polemic, therefore, encouraged not so much the clarification of the issues as the demonstration of the writer's personal qualities and literary ability, and the enumeration of his opponent's faults. Another example of the evasive character of the polemical epistle is \*Naḥmanides' reply to the rabbis of northern France in the same controversy over Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*. Naḥmanides did not address himself to the issues raised by the French rabbis, rather he concentrated on proving that the rabbis, being far removed from the culture of the Jews in Spain and the Provence, were not qualified to judge Maimonides. In addition, he said that the *Guide* was not written for them, but for the perplexed Jewish scholars in Spain who could not avoid contact with Greek and Arabic philosophy. In this letter, Naḥmanides did not reveal his own kabbalistic ideas nor make known his stand on the problems themselves. Neither his duties as a responsible

rabbi, nor the conventions of the polemical letter required Naḥmanides to express his own opinions about the issues involved. Although other letters exchanged in this controversy deal more closely with the ideological problems, they never do so fully or exhaustively. Abraham Maimon, for example, in his letters collected as *Milḥamot ha-Shem* ("The Wars of the Lord," a very common name for a polemical work), treated some problems, especially the allegorical interpretation of biblical and talmudic passages, as did Abraham b. Samuel in his defense of Maimonides against the criticism of the French rabbis. But even in these cases the personal allusions and the flow of rhymed phraseology make up a great part of the letters. These conventions persist in the letters exchanged during the controversy in 1305, when Abba Mari \*Astruc again raised the issue of the dangers stemming from allegorical interpretation and the study of philosophy. Astruc tried to organize a movement, to be headed by Solomon b. Abraham \*Adret, to oppose these practices.

Ashkenazi Ḥasidism, which flourished during the Middle Ages among the Jews in Germany and northern France, also gave rise to controversy. An extant fragment of Moses b. Ḥisdai \*Taku's detailed polemical work, *Ketav Tamim* ("Book of Righteousness," published by R. Kirchheim, in: *Ozar Neḥmad*, 3 (1960), 54–99), indicates that the work pays almost no attention to literary form, the issues themselves being the writer's major concern, although inflamed accusatory language is sometimes used. Moses did not hesitate to declare that his opponents, who included \*Judah he-Ḥasid, Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, and Abraham \*Ibn Ezra, were followers of the Karaites and the Christians who were destroying Judaism from within.

\*Kabbalah, probably the most innovating Jewish ideology during the Middle Ages, aroused surprisingly little controversy when it began to flourish in Provence in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and in Christian Spain during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. From this period only one letter in clear opposition to the Kabbalah is extant. It is known that there was some disagreement among the kabbalists themselves over whether the Kabbalah should be discussed openly and brought to the attention of the Jewish community, or kept a secret known only to the selected few, the mystically inspired elect. Like most medieval disputes, these discussions were carried on in the form of letters.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries both Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah again became objects of controversies, but with a larger part of the discussions now carried on in the form of special polemical books. Thus Joseph \*Jabez, who wrote in Italy after the expulsion of Jews from Spain, termed the teachings of the Jewish philosophers as the cause of the conversion of thousands of Jews to Christianity during the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Spain. Isaac b. Judah \*Abrabanel held somewhat similar views. Accusations and polemics against the philosophers are found in the works of many scholars up to and including Jacob \*Emden and \*Naḥman of Bratslav. Many polemical letters were written concerning the 16<sup>th</sup>-century controversy over whether the Zohar, the major work of the Kabbalah, should be printed. The opponents of publication comprised two groups:

the devout kabbalists, who thought that a work of kabbalistic mysticism should be kept secret in order to prevent the uninitiated from reading it; and the opponents of the Kabbalah in general, who opposed its printing in order to reduce the influence of the Kabbalah which they regarded as false. A few anti-kabbalistic works were written in Italy, the most notable being *Ari Nohem* by Leone \*Modena who systematically sought to prove that kabbalistic beliefs were invalid and that the kabbalists' claim that their theory and literature are ancient, transmitted from the time of the *tannaim*, is historically untrue. Modena was one of the first to use methods of literary and historical criticism in polemics against the Kabbalah. Two other 16<sup>th</sup>-century controversies deserve mention. The first was initiated by Azariah de' \*Rossi's *Me'or Einayim*, a critical study of Jewish history and tradition which claims that the accepted system of chronology, i.e., counting from the creation, has neither a historically nor a traditionally sound basis. For this view he was criticized both by Renaissance scholars and by traditional Jewish scholars like \*Judah Loew b. Bezalel of Prague. Azariah answered his more learned critics in a special book, *Mazref la-Kesef*.

During the 1530s dozens of polemical letters were written by supporters and opponents of the *semikhah*, the ordination of rabbis, after the rabbis of Safed tried to reinstate the tradition that had been broken early in the Middle Ages. The rabbis of Jerusalem, however, opposed this; participation in the controversy increased, engaging the attention of many rabbis from various countries. The participants tried to treat the controversy as a purely halakhic one and the language of the polemical letters exchanged on this problem is clearly halakhic. But there is no doubt that beyond the halakhic references lay the true question: Should the rabbis take upon themselves activities concerned with messianic times (the reestablishment of the *semikhah* was regarded as one of the events connected with the redemption) or should they wait patiently until the coming of the Messiah who will reinstitute the *semikhah* himself? A similar consideration probably lay behind the dispute over the printing of the Zohar, for it was believed that wide acceptance of the Zohar and its teachings was one of the signs indicating the approach of messianic times.

The fiercest controversies in Jewish history were those arising over Shabbateanism and \*Hasidism. Although there was some 17<sup>th</sup>-century criticism of \*Shabbetai Zevi and his prophet, Nathan of Gaza, even before the former was converted to Islam, it was neither intense nor widespread. After the conversion, however, the critics knew no bounds in their accusations against the Shabbateans, and for 150 years thereafter the persecution of believers in Shabbetai Zevi and those influenced by his teachings was carried out relentlessly by some of the greatest rabbis. Jacob b. Aaron \*Sasportas, among the first to oppose Shabbateanism, published his collection of anti-Shabbatean epistles under the title *Zizat Novel Zevi* (though it was proven recently that he re-edited some of his early letters to make them more anti-Shabbatean than they originally were). Later, anti-Shabbateans concentrated their

efforts on discovering scholars with Shabbatean sympathies and bringing about their excommunication (*herem*). Thus, Moses \*Hagiz accused Moses Hyyim \*Luzzatto of Shabbateanism, the same charge Jacob Emden leveled against Jonathan \*Eybeschuetz. Both Luzzatto and Eybeschuetz were defended against the accusation by a number of supporters, and the controversies raged for decades.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the newly founded hasidic movement was also suspected of heretical and Shabbatean tendencies. This suspicion, one of the causes for the unflinchingly intense opposition to the movement, led to the *herem* brought against the Hasidim in 1772, a ban which was renewed many times in the next 40 years. The Hasidim were mainly accused of disregarding the importance of traditional Talmud study and of abusing the traditional scholars. Rarely did Hasidism's opponents clearly express their real suspicion – that the hasidic movement was a new version of the Shabbatean and Frankist movements – a suspicion which was the underlying reason for the vehemence of the various *herem* declarations, in the anti-hasidic epistles, and in the collections of letters and special polemical works written by the *Mitnaggedim*. It is to be noted that very little material in the vast anti-hasidic literature is concerned with the basic ideas of Hasidism. The *Mitnaggedim* attacked the Hasidim because of the way they behaved, or the way they believed they behaved, almost totally disregarding the ideology of the new movement. In this omission the *Mitnaggedim* followed the tradition of epistolary polemical literature since the early Middle Ages.

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[Joseph Dan]

**POLEMON II** (d. 74 C.E.), king of Cilicia. The Judean princess, \*Berenice, widow of Herod of Chalcis, induced Polemon to undergo circumcision and marry her in an attempt to suppress rumors detrimental to her reputation. Polemon, with an eye to her wealth, accepted the proposal, but the marriage did not last long. Berenice deserted her husband, and the king, according to Josephus, “was relieved simultaneously of his marriage and of further adherence to the Jewish way of life” (*Ant.*, 20:145–6). Polemon of Cilicia has been confused with Julius Polemon, king of Pontus from 37–63 C.E., who visited \*Agrippa I at Tiberias.

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[Isaiah Gafni]