

לאבי היקר מורי ורבי אשר שמרני
כאישון בת עין וילמדני דרכי תורה
וארחות מישרים. יאריך אלהים ימיו
ויהי חלקו בטוב. כ"ז. תרצ"ג.

A BIOGRAPHY OF SAMUEL HANAGID
AND
A SKETCH OF HIS LITERARY ACTIVITIES

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PREFACE

In our sketch of the life of Samuel Hanagid and a characterization of his literary activities it is important that we know something about the Jews of Spain, their beginnings as they are reported in both legendary and historical fashion. It is also of interest to know something of the intellectual atmosphere in which the nagid lived and worked. For the purpose of our study we will divide this paper into four main chapters. These are:

I. The Jews of Spain

Life family
II. Life of Samuel Hanagid Within the Framework of the
Intelligentsia of His Day

III. The contents of the Magid's Poetry and Its Evaluation

IV. His Other Literary Activities

CHAPTER I

The Jews of Spain

This is a capitulation of Herzog's long note

"Spain was a center of Jewish learning since the earliest times, from the exile of Jerusalem to the present."¹ We also have the statement of R'Isaac Ibn Giyat² that when the first temple was destroyed two families of the house of David came to Spain and settled in Lucena and Seville. Moses Ibn Ezra has the statement³ that the inhabitants of Spain excelled in poetry, language, and philology the Jews who dwelt in other lands. He further maintains that there is a tradition that the Jews of Spain are of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin who were exiled to Baylon, returned to Palestine and were later exiled to Spain and Rome. In the Kitab *Almuhajara*⁴ Ibn Ezra claims for them superiority over all the other exiled communities. Since, according to tradition, the Jews of Spain are direct descendants of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its suburbs, they would be unquestionably superior to the Jews of other lands in the world. Although this tradition may be justified in attributing greater wisdom and learning to the inhabitants of the environs of Jerusalem during the days of the first temple, it is not exactly true of the days of the Second Temple when, through the influence of the Pharisees and their teaching, learning and Torah became the possession of all Jews. Yet it was felt that the Jews of Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Torah, wisdom, of the spirit of prophecy, the dwelling place of

dh *likely explained*

and the knowledge of the Holy Tongue were of higher culture and learning than the other cities of Palestine. He adduces further proof from the Bible to support his contention. We have two verses. One is Deuteronomy 17:8 where Jerusalem is spoken of as the judgment seat and the other Isaiah 2:3 - "From Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem." The popular folk legend concerning the Jews of Spain is brought by Isaac Abarbanel,⁵ who refers to the account as given by early Christian historians.⁶ "And it is proper that you know that many officers and kings of other lands aided Nebuchadnezzar in his attack on Jerusalem and led some of the Jews captive to their various lands. And among them was Firis who was king of Spain, for Hercules the great....etc. And when this Hercules left Spain he gave his kingdom to his nephew whose name was Ispan. Ispan had but one daughter whom Firis married...." We are told further⁷ that he was present at the destruction of the first temple and had brought captives of the tribes of Benjamin and Simon as well as priests and Levites of Jerusalem. Many of these had come of their own free will and they settled in two provinces. "The one is known until today as Andalusia." Here the Jews settled in a city which became the center of Jewish life in Spain, Lucena. "The gentiles said concerning Lucena that its atmosphere made one wise since its climate was so pleasant. Perhaps also the Jews called it Lucena because it reminded them of Luz in Palestine, the place dedicated to prophecy." The second province was that of Tule^{ai}tula (Arabic name for city of Toledo) and it seemed that the Jews called the city Tule^{al}tula because of the journeying ($\delta\iota\gamma\gamma\epsilon$) which they had been compelled to do when they came there from Jerusalem. This place was known earlier as Firisuela. It appears further to Harkavy⁸ that they called a city near Toledo, Maqueda in memory of the city $\mu\alpha\kappa\epsilon\delta\alpha$ in Palestine. This refers also to another city near Toledo which they called

10. this is Abarbanel

Escalona in memory of the neighboring country of their own loved land, e.g., Askelon. Perhaps these cities in their general topography were similar to the cities in Palestine and reminded the unhappy exiles of their native land. Without doubt, many of the cities in Spain were similarly named by Jews. But, with the passage of time, the names were changed and only these three remained as testimony. From that early time Jews settled all over the various localities in Spain. They did not return to Palestine during the days of the Second Temple since they believed that the decree of Cyrus was not a complete redemption and, therefore, they were not obliged to return. With the destruction of the Second Temple many of the Jewish exiles came to the lands of the West. In the recorded history of the early kings of Spain Harkavy cites the account of the Roman emperor who sent 50,000 Jewish families to those cities of Spain which were under Roman dominion. These were some of the Jews exiled from Jerusalem by Titus who joined their brethren in Spain. Harkavy cites the other accounts connected with the coming of the Jews to Spain after the destruction of the Second Temple. Thus the Seder Olam Zuta⁹ tells of Vespasian's destruction of the Temple and his exiling of many Jewish captives to Spain. We also have R'Abraham Ibn Daud's statement in the Sefer Seder Hakabala¹⁰ that in response to the request of one of his Spanish governors, Titus sent some of the captives of Jerusalem to Spain. In the Divre Joseph of R'Joseph b. Isaac Sambari we find¹¹ reference to the "exile of T^ul^ut^ula that is Ispania, and the reason they called it T^ul^ut^ula is that when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem many great, important kings joined him in the battle, among whom was the king Ispan after whom the city of Ispania is called and Jews called it T^ul^ut^ula because God carried them from place to place." This story concerning Ispan penetrated the writings

of Arabic historians and Jewish authors who wrote in Arabic. We find R'Jehuda Ibn Balaam in his commentary upon the word 'Sefarad' in Obadiah v.20 saying¹² "I saw in the history book of Alkuti that Andalus is called Ispania after the name of the first king of the land whose name was Ispan. Harkavy believes¹³ that Judah Ibn Balaam's reference to Alkuti is to the Arabic writer, Ibn Alkutasy whose book became a source for the Arabic writers in Spain.

We see, then, that tradition has related the Jews of Spain to the exiles of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. and to the Jews who survived the destruction of the Second Temple. The Talmud calls Spain by the name 'Aspamia' and designates it as the place to which the exiles came after the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁴

Despite all of these traditions, it still remains a moot question as to when the Jews settled in Spain. Some legends even say that the Jews settled in Spain during the reign of King Solomon. Adoniram, Solomon's chancellor of the exchequer, is said to have been buried in Spain. It may be that the Jews travelled to Spain with the Phoenicians, who were great travellers and went as far as the Baltic Sea. Mann believes¹⁵ that Jews must have heard of the country situated at the end of *Sinai* p'or the Mediterranean. Most scholars say that the city called "Tarshish" in the Bible is identical with Tartasus (later Tortosa) in Spain. When the Bible speaks of big ships, they are called *gallions*. I Kings X tells us that Solomon possessed a Tarshish ship. It sailed together with the ships of Tyre (Phoenicia). They would return every three years with gold, silver, elephants, etc. This ship undoubtedly touched the shores of N. Africa. In Obadiah v.20 we hear "And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel, that are among the Canaanites, even unto the Zarepheth, and the captivity of Jerusalem, that is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south."

It still is questionable whether we can identify ספרד and ספרט with France and Spain as was done in medieval times. The Targum translates the word ספרט as ספרט . Thus it is found in medieval literature. Scholars have pointed out, however, that in Phoenicia, south of Sidon, there was a place called ספרד . Then, there is the passage in I Kings XVII:9,10 which tells of God's commanding Elijah to go to ספרד and find support there. $\text{וַיֵּלֶךְ אֵלִיָּהוּ מִן הַיַּרְדֵּי וְהָיָה בְּסֶפֶד$. It has further been pointed out that the Talmud often uses the word "Aspamia" when referring to Aspamia in Asia Minor and not necessarily to Spain. However, this we may say with a certain degree of certainty: that Jews had settled in Spain as early as the first century. Both France and Spain were under Roman dominion. Jews came there as traders. Their numbers were increased in the year 70 by the influx of exiles after the destruction of the Temple by Titus. Certain Talmudic references during the first Christian centuries point to the fact that Jews were in Spain at that time. Rabbi Meir of the second century tells us¹⁶ this fact, as well as the halachic reference¹⁷ made to Spain by Judah b. Ilai, a contemporary of Rabbi Meir. The New Testament likewise adds to our knowledge of the Jews of Spain of the first century. Paul in his Letter to the Romans speaks of his desire to go to Spain and stopping at Rome on his way.¹⁸ The presence of Christians at this early period in Spain undoubtedly refers to the first Christians who were really Jews. In the first decade of the fourth century (306) the church council held at Elvira and headed by the bishop of Cordova, passed certain resolutions affecting the Christian-Jewish relationships. These were, it seems, too cordial to suit the church fathers and, accordingly, we have certain regulations forbidding intercourse of any kind - eating together, etc. Especially interesting is the decree of the church forbidding the peasants to ask the Jews to bless their fields.

This probably had something to do with the 16 laws and rec.¹⁹
The existence of these laws proves that friendly relations existed between the Roman and Jewish inhabitants of Spain. The clergy as well as others associated freely with Jews. It was against this friendship and good feeling that the church created these edicts. We can thus assume that only under heathenism did the Jews fully enjoy citizenship. Under Christianity restrictions were placed upon them.

With the disintegration of the Roman empire in the fifth century, hordes of barbarians from the north swept over the Roman provinces and established the Visigothic kingdom in the sixth century. So long as the new conquerors remained Aryan the Jews lived undisturbed by the new rulers. The Visigoths were Aryan by religion, whereas the population of Spain was Catholic. Thus there was a double conflict in the country, religious and racial. Although the Visigoths took over all the Roman laws²⁰ yet there was more freedom than the Jews of Spain had enjoyed under Byzantium.

A new period begins with Reccared (586-601) who was desirous of strengthening the unity of the Visigothic empire and, therefore, accepted Christianity in 589. Catholicism was made the church of the state at the Third Council of Toledo. This period is characterized by the suffering and restrictions it imposed upon the Jews. It extended with slight relaxation from 589 till 711 ending finally with the Arab conquest. From 589 on we hear of successive church councils which included in their canons restrictions against the Jews. Especially critical was the reign of Sisebut whose severe treatment of Jews resulted in the baptism of 90,000 Jews.²¹ In 612-13 he expelled the Jews from Spain. Many remained and accepted Christianity publicly, hoping for a change in government at which time they would be able to return. The law book of the Visigothic kingdom which con-

tains the "Laws on Heretics and Jews" is the Fuero Juzgo or Visigothic Code. It comprises the many laws, restrictions, and prohibitions concerning Jews that were composed by the various Visigothic monarchs as an aid of the church against the Jews as well as those Jews who had been converted to Christianity and who might entertain ideas of returning to their old faith. All Jewish observances are prohibited, Jews can not bear witness against Christians, not to possess slaves, etc.²²

This long period of persecution and suffering finally came to an end in 711 with the Arab invasion of Spain under Al-Tariq. Their coming was hailed by the Jews who assisted the conquerors. The Arabs turned over the conquered cities to the Jews while they pressed on to new victories.

For two centuries we do not hear much about the condition of the Jews in Spain. Undoubtedly, it was a period of adjustment to new conditions. No doubt, the Jews reaped great benefits from the support they gave the invaders, serving as the guardians of the fortresses left in the wake of the Arab conquests.²³ They obtained very extensive communal autonomy. We also know very little about the spiritual and cultural life of Jews of this period. Questions regarding Halacha and Jewish law were sent to the Babylonian Gaonim by the Jews of Spain. We find statements to this effect in the responsa of Sar Shalom, gaon of Sura (849-53). Natronai Gaon (853-63) also sent responsa to Spain as well as a liturgy containing the order of one hundred daily blessings to the community in Lucena. Another Natronai, known as 'KJ'ON 72 (KJ) transmitted the Talmud orally to Spain.²⁴ Amram Gaon (850-75) is reported to have had relations with the Barcelona Jewish community. It was to Spain that he sent his Siddur which became the main liturgy for Spanish Jewry. Abraham Ibn Daud tells us (25) that Saadya Gaon corresponded with various

communities in Spain, Cordova, Elvira, Lucena, and others. Eldad Hadam²⁶ is also said to have written his message to Spain in 883. Despite the account given in Abraham Ibn Daud's Sefer Seder Hakhala²⁷ to the effect that the Jews of Spain were without Jewish learning and tradition prior to the arrival of R'Moses b. Chanoch, one of the four captives who finally came to Spain and became the leader of the Jewish community in Cordova; they were not altogether out of touch with Jewish life, as is evidenced by the nature of their correspondence with the second generation of Gaonim in Babylon²⁸ previously cited, where they show great concern about the exact performance of religious ritual as well as a desire to become acquainted with rabbinic and halachic²⁹ tradition as developed in the Babylonian academies. We also have the statement of Samuel Hanagid "that Spain was a place of widespread learning and Torah from the earliest times, from the destruction of Jerusalem up to this day."²⁹ Even Abraham Ibn Daud admits that to the limit of their scholarly ability they studied and observed as much as possible.³⁰ Judah Ibn Koreish, contemporary of Saadya, testifies that the early Jewish inhabitants of Spain strove to comprehend the Targum³¹ Dunash Ibn Labrat likewise considered it an honor to be numbered among the scholars of Spain, thus implying a tradition of scholarship.³²

For an appreciation of the early conditions of the Jews in Spain, their internal life and leadership we must again turn to the source to which we have previously referred. Abraham Ibn Daud tells us³³ the story of Moses b. Chanoch, one of the four captives sent by the Babylonian scholars to gather money for the support of the schools *התלמודים אשר בארץ ספרד*. The caliph of Spain had sent a fleet of ships to raid merchant ships. He speaks also of the capture of the four scholars among whom was R'Moses, father of Chanoch, and his wife. A tragic story is told about the wife of Moses who

was so beautiful that the captain of the fleet desired her. After asking whether those who are drowned at sea share in the resurrection and upon being answered by Moses in the affirmative, the hapless woman drowned herself to save her honor. The scholars did not disclose who they were and the purpose of their journey. The scholars were sold as captives at various ports. R'Shmarya was sold in Egypt and there established a new center; R'Hushiel in Africa and later ransomed, became leader of Kairuwan community; and R'Moses and his son were sold into captivity at Cordova where they were redeemed by the Jews who thought them to be Ame-haaretz. And in Cordova, we are told, there was a synagog and school presided over by a certain R'Nathan who was a pious man. Yet the Jews of Spain were not particularly learned. Yet they strove to do as much as was within their power. One day, in the discussion of a halachik^c question, the obscure R'Moses enlightened the others. They wondered at his scholarship after he had interpreted many halachoth and answered all their questions. All recognized him as a real authority. R'Nathan the dayan relinquished his position in favor of a man whom he recognized as his superior and advised his followers to appoint R'Moses in his stead. The captor of R'Moses sought to reclaim and sell him for a higher price. The caliph refused to allow this since he was glad that the Jews of Spain no longer had to turn to Babylon for guidance since it was the seat of the rival caliphate of the Abbasids. The learning and scholarship of Cordova became known throughout Spain and the lands of the west and many scholars came to R'Moses with their questions. According to Ibn Daud, this event happened in the days of Sherira Gaon. Mann has established the date of the event of the Four Captives at 972. Ibn Daud goes on to tell us that R'Moshe established his authority in Spain. His son R'Chanoch

was married into the prominent family of Falyag (*לפליג*). Among the pupils of R'Moses was one R'Joseph ben Isaac Ibn Shatnosh who was known as ben Avitur who attained great proficiency. He is said to have prepared an Arabic translation of the Talmud for Caliph *Hakim* Alchakim. As long as R'Moses lived there was no controversy as to leadership. However, with his death Ibn Avitur refused to accept the authority of R'Chanoch who had taken his father's place. After the death of Chisdai Ibn Shaprut the controversy split the Jewish community into two conflicting factions. R'Chanoch finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand. By order of the caliph, Ibn Avitur had to leave Cordova. He is said to have wandered until he finally arrived at the Yeshiva of Hai Gaon who, according to the mistaken notion of Ibn Daud, would be glad to welcome him since the new center in Spain threatened the authority of the Babylonian center. Yet, we are told that Hai refused to see him. Ibn Avitur finally came to Damascus and died there. With the exception of a few individuals who threatened his authority³⁴ R'Chanoch maintained his position as leader of the Cordova Jewish community. He is said to have died through an unforeseen accident when the *BIMAH* in the synagog fell upon him.

An event of great importance which affected the external life of the Jews of Spain was the disintegration of the Moslem empire in Spain. The caliphate which had existed through the tenth century was broken up in 1009 due to the Civil War. As long as the vizier Muhammed Ibn Abi Amir, known as Almanzor lived, he ruled in place of the weakling caliph *Hisham*.³⁵ He was able to keep the Christian rulers of the north in check. His greatest victory was the conquest of Barcelona in 985. He ruled with an iron hand and mercilessly destroyed anyone who threatened his sovereignty or the welfare of the empire. He died in 1002 and his office was taken over by his son

Muzaffar or Abd-al-Malik who served as vizier and was succeeded by his brother Sanchol in 1009. Sanchol persuaded the caliph who had no children to proclaim him as heir to the caliphate. The family of the Spanish Ommeyyads who had ruled in Spain since 750 were incensed at the intruder. A revolt broke out and a member of the Ommeyad dynasty, Mahdi, assassinated the vizier.³⁶ Civil war started and the caliphate was broken up and divided into small kingdoms or principalities ruled over by various petty tyrants. Each was an independent kingdom in its own right. This dissension played into the hands of the Christian kingdoms of the north who reconquered more and more of Spain. The Berbers, who had originally been brought in from North Africa by Almanzor as mercenaries in order to quell the numerous uprisings, attracted by the possibility of becoming rulers of a disunited empire, stirred up revolt. Headed by Buleiman Ibn Hakim, they besieged and conquered Cordova in 1013, sacking the city and leaving it in ruins. Its inhabitants, among them Jews, fled to other cities, Saragossa, Toledo.³⁷ A Berber tribe from North Africa under Zawi established itself in southern Spain with Granada as the capital of the kingdom. In 1020, when Zawi travelled to N. Africa, his nephew, Habbus, ascended the throne. As vizier he had a powerful man by the name of Abul-Kasim Ibn Alarif. Nearby was founded the city of Malaga by the principality of Granada. Another kingdom was set up with Almeria as its capital, with Khairam and then, Zuhair who succeeded him in 1028 with Ibn Abbas as vizier. There were Berber princes in other principalities, Carmona, Moron, and Ronda as well as in Toledo, Valencia, the Balearic Isles, and Denia. Cordova lost its position of political supremacy. The pre-eminence was now with the principality of Seville. The city of Seville had at this time its own independent kingdom under the rulership of Kady, Abu'l-Kasim Mohammed, one of the Beni Abbad who was the founder of the

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Abbasid dynasty of Seville. He succeeded in driving off the Berber garrison in 1024 and, as a result, his kingdom and influence upon the other principalities was strengthened.³⁸ Yet no unity had been established among the independent municipalities who fought continuously among themselves, making treaties and breaking them. There was no central authority. This condition was in force immediately after the destruction of Cordova. Among the various exiles of this destruction was Samuel Hanagid who, after experiencing a number of vicissitudes, finally came to Malaga and settled there. Here there was to take place a series of startling events which were to transform this comparatively obscure man into one of the greatest influences of the Jews of Spain of the eleventh century.

Notes on Chapter I

1. Judah b. Barzilai - Sefer Haitim, P.134a. *Coronel - נחן 733-Vienna 1872.*
2. Commentary of Abarbanel to Zechariah 12:7.
3. Kitab Almahazara - *אלמחזרה* - Ben-Zion Halper, ed. Stiebel, P.62ff.
4. Ibid. In answer to the fifth question - *אשר יאמרין לפני פולחן*
הקדש ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל
5. At the end of his commentary to Kings II, Chapter 25 - *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*
6. Harkavy - Measef I, P.36, Note 2 - Thomas in answer to Alfonso, king of Spain. Shevet Yehuda, ed. Amsterdam, P.9.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Seder Olam Zuta, ed. Lazarus, pp.161-2. "Vespasian came and destroyed the Temple and exiled Israel and many families of the house of David to Aspamia, that is, Spain."
10. Neubauer, Medieval Jewish Chronicles, Seder Hachachamim I:74. "When Titus prevailed over Jerusalem one of his governors in charge of Spain asked that he send him some of the exiles of Jerusalem, which he did."
11. *דברי חכמים* in the Medieval Jewish Chronicles, Seder Hachachamim I:141, Neubauer *אספמיה היא אספמיה*.
12. Harkavy, Measef Nedachim, P.102.
13. Measef I, P.37.
14. Jebamoth 115b.
15. After class discussion.
16. Leviticus Rabba, Chapter 29, commenting on *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל* that it means *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*.
17. Baba Basra 38a - *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*.
18. Letter to the Romans, Chapter 15:22ff - "This is why I have so often been prevented from coming to see you. But now there is no more work for me in this part of the world, and as I have had a great desire for many years to come to see you, when I go to Spain, I hope to see you on my way there, and to have you see me off on my journey, etc. etc."
19. Canon 49 of Council of Elvira - Landholders are to be admonished not to permit the produce they thankfully receive from God to be blessed by the Jews, lest our benediction be rendered invalid and unprofitable. Should any person presume to do so after this interdiction, let him be entirely ejected from the church. Also Canon 50 - If any person, whether clerical or one of the faithful shall take food with the Jews, he is to abstain from our communion that he may learn to amend.
20. Lex Romana Visigothorum. (as presented in *Lindo* - Note 21)
21. *Lindo* - History of Jews of Spain and Portugal, P.13.
22. Ibid. *Fuero Juzgo*, pp.28-36.
23. After discussions in History I, Mann.
24. Harkavy - Measef, P.40, Note 10.
25. Medieval Jewish Chronicles, Seder Hachachamim I:74, Neubauer.
26. Eldad Hadani - Epstein, P.29 *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*.
27. Med. Jew. Chronicles, P.68, Neubauer.
28. Ibid. P.63.
29. Harkavy, Measef, P.36, Note 2. - *Coronel - Sefer Haitim - נחן 733-P.134A.*
30. Med. Jew. Chronicles, P.68, Neubauer. *ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*
31. Risala, Paris, 1871. P.1 - Judah Ibn Koreish.
32. *אשר יאמרין לפני פולחן הקדש ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל ואלוהי ישראל*. London, 1855, P.51.
33. Med. Jew. Chronicles, P.68, Neubauer.

- 34. Ibid. P. 70571.
- 35. Dozy - Moslems in Spain - pp.488ff.
- 36. Ibid. P.545.
- 37. Harkavy - Measef - P.5.
- 38. Dozy - Moslems in Spain, P.597.

CHAPTER II

Life of Samuel Hanagid

Within the Framework of the Intellegentsia of His Day

The establishment of the various Berber principalities served as a further impetus toward the inner cultural and spiritual development of the Jews of Spain. The various petty tyrants were, for the most part, ignorant Berbers who were good fighters but semi-barbarians.⁸ The Arabs who had been conquered by these Berbers looked upon them with disdain. Each of these rulers sought to conceal his ignorance of literature and learning. Thus each vied with the other in surrounding themselves with poets and scholars and encouraging their efforts by handsome gifts.

For many years prior to this period Jews had applied themselves to the development of literature and poetry. It is true, as Simchoni tells us¹ that the life and work of most of the poets and writers of the Middle Ages is shrouded in darkness. This was due to the deficient historical sense of the Jews of this period. They felt it a waste of time to record in detail the life of an individual. Their concern was for the Klal Yisroel and its experiences. It was enough for an individual if his works found immortality. His name could then go down to oblivion. This attitude was entirely different in the early history of Israel when the people took pride in recording and remembering its great men. In the later ages this historical deficiency was compensated for in the creation of legend and story woven around a personality whose historical existence had become a myth. In recent ages, however, it has been felt that lack of knowledge of the personal life necessarily limits the appreciation of the work of a man. It is only in the light of particular circum-

stances and vicissitudes of an author that we can understand his contribution.

Many of the writers, poets, and thinkers of the early period in Spain impressed their stamp upon the culture of their day and indirectly influenced the development of Hebrew literature. It is difficult to understand the source of the unusual literary creativity of this period. All the great Jewish writers lived in a cultural milieu at once familiar and foreign. They were educated in the knowledge of Arabic language and literature, sacred and profane, knew the Koran and its interpretations, studied Moslem theology, and were at home in Arabic poetry.² They were masters of Arabic idiom through which medium they acquired all their secular knowledge. To all appearances, they were assimilated into the culture of a strange people. Their behavior impresses one as being similar to that of our assimilated emancipationists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet it was different. These poets, philosophers, and creators of the Arabic milieu did not sell their souls for their new acquisition. Always they felt it to be foreign, not of their own. They employed its technique to enrich their own, to create a fundamental culture of their own in their ancestral tongue. Hebrew as a language had been divorced from the everyday life of the people and had become the medium only of prayer and religious observance. What it was that motivated these men to disregard the language and culture in which they had been reared and whose finest nuances they so well appreciated to attempt to create a literature in a language which was far from their everyday experience still remains a mystery. Some have tried to explain it as a manifestation of religious romanticism, the desire to write on secular matters in a holy tongue. According to Simchoni³ this is not a satisfactory

explanation. They did this because it could not be in any other manner. Historical experience has disclosed that only those creations of a positive, national character have been preserved while others have gone down into oblivion. The first axiom was felt by our great men in Spain. It was not only their love of the Hebrew language that prompted them to use it as a medium of their cultural creativity but also the knowledge of the fact that their creations could live and endure the ravages of time only as a link in our great historical chain, as a branch of the ancient literature that had bloomed forth in such profuseness in days of yore. "It was only in the old vessels that the new wine could be preserved for the generations." For them, the relationship between the form and content assumed great importance. They did not see something accidental and passing in Hebrew but realized the great influence of the form of expression upon the content.

There was a newness in the creations of the Spanish-Jewish school that was something of a revolution as regards the traditional usage of Hebrew as a spoken tongue. For hundreds of years Hebrew had not left the boundaries of the religious life. There was not even a necessity felt to concern oneself with any problem outside of the religious much less to express such questions in Hebrew. Inasmuch as religion sought to incorporate all of life's activities under its aegis, in this degree it made for a widening of the boundaries in which Hebrew was to serve. Yet, since all of life could not be limited by the religious impulse a compromise was effected. A definite demarcation was made between the sacred and the profane. Hebrew was guarded in order that it might not be employed for secular purposes. All ideas outside of the religious were thus to find their medium of expression in secular languages. In this manner Hebrew as a language was impoverished. Scientific and cultural activity, poetry were thus

excluded from the religious realm and were considered by authoritative religion as unnecessary and suspicious activity. However, religion made its peace with them since it felt, intuitively, that their expression in a foreign tongue would be their eventual undoing, that their influence would be short-lived, and they would eventually be forgotten. Therefore, religion made severe restrictions against the use of Hebrew for secular purposes and saw in it a profanation of the Holy Tongue. Certain freedom was granted for the use of Hebrew in the composition of piyutim and prayers for the synagogue. Even in these creations, limited as they are in content, we discern the inherent love of the Hebrew tongue. A great deal of this Paytanic literature was unnecessary since the regular prayers of the synagogue sufficed for religious purposes. Yet, a great Paytanic literature was developed. It was as though the many Paytanim sought to give expression to the creative surge within them in their loved tongue. Through the medium of the piyutim they lovingly wove all the wealth of their emotion into intricate acrostics and complicated word combinations. Some of the rabbis objected to the profuse Paytanic literature that was developed, not realizing that within this limited sphere the creative spirits of the time found something of an outlet.

Yet all religious restrictions could not stifle the urge that came from inner necessity to express the manifold problems of life. This creative impulse, born as it was in obscurity, blossomed forth in Spain as a sudden phenomenon, yet its origin was much earlier. In spite of restrictions placed upon it by the leaders of religious life in Babylon, we find it sprouting forth though stifled and without much beauty and fragrance. From time to time fragments from the Geniz^a reveal poems written in Arabic rhyme and metre in the Hebrew language which found their way to Egypt or were created there.

These fragments, however, were cast into the shade by the greater light that first found its glorious expression in the brilliant galaxy of men of genius that arose in Spain and whose work served as a beacon to all those who sought to give expression to the creative spirit that moved them. Because of the pre-eminence achieved by the Jews of Spain, we may well attribute to their work a revolution through which Hebrew once again included in its scope all matters of the spirit, especially those which were outside the boundaries of religious sanctity. In this way Hebrew once again assumed the role that it played in the earlier days of Israel's history. In the accomplishment of this great work many obstacles had to be overcome. Faced with the many dangers of total assimilation and racial destruction authoritative Judaism sought to retain and preserve only those elements that had survival value. In the preservation of those elements that had acquired sanctity through the ages, a defense was created against the race's destruction. These elements were primarily religious. Those who regarded with suspicion any incursion of features outside of the religious into Jewish life could not but regard with fear that which did not possess the sanctity of the original folk tradition. The old demand, so current in the last days of the Second Temple, that everything created outside the realm of Holy Writ should be hidden or done away with found its affirmation during the Middle Ages. It is true that some merit was found to consider theological discussions, philosophy, mathematics, astrology, etc. as a part of Judaism. But it was permitted only in that it supported Judaism. Even so, the philosophical works of Maimonides were not above suspicion as was evidenced by the hostility that his works occasioned during his life and the criticism that was leveled against them after his death. The difficulty that was encountered in admitting the Song of Songs into the Holy Canon was not changed in later

ages.⁴

Criticism was also leveled against the new Hebrew creations by the "intellectuals" who mocked the efforts of the inspired Spanish-Jewish poets as romanticism and jeered at the limitations of their poetry. These did not know Hebrew and gave themselves over completely to the ruling culture. This opposition is often found expressed indirectly by those who were devoted to the development of their loved language.⁵ They felt bitterly the criticism of those who sought to limit the creative Hebrew spirit within the bounds of traditional usage and who mocked the resurrection of a forgotten cultural language.

It was against these opposing forces that Spanish-Jewish poetry had to fight its battle and from which she emerged triumphant and victorious. The main sources for this period are Judah Al-Charizi⁶ and Moses Ibn Ezra.⁷ According to both of these sources the history of Jewish culture in Spain actually received its real impetus in the time of Chisdai Ibn Shaprut. Ibn Ezra lauds Chisdai. "In those days the minds of men were stirred from their slumbers and aroused from their sleep when they saw the work of this noble leader and his lofty, elevated thought, the glory of his noble soul and the importance of his fine character. He drank from the wells of wisdom of the East and chose the gems of learning from all the distant lands....he gathered all the learned men unto himself in Spain." These scholars, according to Ibn Ezra, were responsible for the spread of learning in Spain. "They composed excellent books and compiled wonderful thoughts. They praised and exalted Chisdai with many poems and compositions." He begins with the philological work of Chayyuj and shows how, encouraged by the generosity and leadership of Chisdai, learning flourished in Spain. He also mentions the work of those "who composed the best of their works in unrhymed

verse which were read by the congregation on Yom Kippur, the other fasts, and holidays. He criticizes the Paytanim because they did not compose their works in line with the advances made by the grammarians. He complains further of their having introduced the science of mathematics and astronomy into their compositions which served only to bewilder the reader,⁸ so that "instead of prayer one becomes involved in dispute and argument." Ibn Ezra, in his classification, makes no distinction between the Hebrew literature written in Hebrew and the works on philology of the language written for the most part, in Arabic. Both of these movements, however, draw inspiration from one source, the return to the Hebrew language of the Scriptures. One employed it as a source of exact philological and lexicographical knowledge upon which to base a science of language and the others as a means of literary creativity. The former aided the latter by presenting them with an exact knowledge of the rules of Hebrew grammar and language that they might employ it with assurance and skill.

First among those who contributed to the development of Hebrew literature in Spain was Menahem ben Saruk of Tortosa.⁹ He is first among those who wrote in Hebrew. We do not know where he derived his original impetus to occupy himself with Hebrew. His deficiency and lack of a thorough grounding in the Arabic language was both an advantage and a disadvantage; the first, because his background in comparative philology was necessarily weak and the second, because this very lack compelled him to be original in his research and manner of expression. He had to limit his researches to the original source of Hebrew, the Bible. Apparently Chisdai respected his ability very much since he made him his private secretary and appointed him to attend to the enormous correspondence which Chisdai had in Hebrew. His dictionary of the Bible, known as the *Machberes Menahem*,

disregards all comparative philology. Since he had no idea of the tri-literality of the Hebrew root, his attempt to systematize the roots was very limited. It was this limitation of Saruk's that drew such sharp criticism from his colleague Dunash Ibn Labrat. The *Sefer* of Menahem was written in Hebrew and was the first effort to write a cultural work in Hebrew. One finds the style heavy and labored yet far superior to the school of translators, the Tibbonites.¹⁰ The influence of the Paytanic literature is also evident.¹¹ It was Menahem ben Saruk who paved the way for secular Hebrew literature. From this standpoint the Arabic writings of Yehudah Chayyuj, Jonah Ibn Janah, and their followers are to be regarded as a retrogression. Perhaps this may account for the fact that the Hebrew writings of Menahem ben Saruk became very popular in all Jewish quarters while those of Chayyuj and Janah, although scientifically more superior, remained in comparative obscurity.¹² Ibn Ezra apparently did not think much of Menahem's work.¹³ Menahem is also to be remembered as the first Hebrew stylist in Spain. The letter which Chisdai Ibn Shaprut sent to the Chazar kingdom in 940 was written by Menahem.¹⁴ We also know of the letter of protestation which Menahem sent to Chisdai when, due to the criticism of Dunash, he lost favor and was imprisoned.¹⁵

As we have said, a contemporary and opponent of Menahem was Dunash Ibn Labrat, a grammarian and a poet. Born in Bagdad, he received his training in Fez in North Africa and was attracted, as were many others, by the generous support and assistance that Chisdai had to offer to all the Jewish scholars who sought his help. His work of criticism of Menahem is the *Sefer al-Tamiz*, dedicated to Chisdai wherein he insists that Arabic had to be employed in the understanding of Hebrew roots.¹⁶ Although in the introduction to this work he has a poem half of which praises Chisdai and the

second, Menahem, yet he felt himself a greater scholar, coming as he did from Bagdad, seat of learning. Dunash is also important for having introduced metre into Hebrew poetry, adopting Arabic metre with modifications. The ensuing conflict between the two was very bitter and was later continued by their respective pupils.¹⁷

Menahem ben Saruk and Dunash Ibn Labrat form the principal characters of what is regarded as the first generation of cultural Jewish activity in Spain.¹⁸ Their efforts represent the early struggles to find a sound, scientific basis for the Hebrew language. The second generation is concentrated in two cities, Cordova and Lucena. The latter city was veritably all Jewish.¹⁹ Pupils of Menahem, living in both these cities, surpassed their teacher in philological knowledge and literary abilities. Jewish poetry really began to flourish in their day. Noteworthy among its leaders were Judah b. David Chayyuj whose grammatical works remained the foundation-stone of all Hebrew grammar,²⁰ as well as R' Isaac b. Yishosh Ibn Saktar. *Yashush*

It was Chayyuj who discovered the tri-literality of the Hebrew root thus putting down a second basis for Hebrew philology in his *מלך* dealing with weak verbs and Ayin Ayin as well as a book dealing with *שקל*. His system was later perfected by R' Jonah Ibn Janah in his *ספר חכמה* (still in Arabic) in which he points out the insufficiency of Chayyuj's system, nevertheless admitting that he received his own method in Hebrew philology from Chayyuj. His criticism involved him in a controversy with Samuel Hanagid who was a pupil of Chayyuj (which we shall consider later). As a result of the great controversy which arose Janah revised his system and finally wrote his Magnum Opus in Arabic which was later translated into Hebrew by Judah Ibn Tibbon. It is called *ספר חכמה* containing two parts. *ספר חכמה* deals with consonants, vowels, and nouns and the second

verbs

part *ḥeḥel 790*, with the roots.

Two contemporaries of Chayyuj who were prominent in grammatical work are also mentioned as poets.²¹ These are Isaac ben Mar Saul and Isaac ben Jikitilla. They were both pupils of Menahem. Ibn Ezra tells us that they competed with one another but that Ibn Jikitilla was superior because of his greater knowledge in Arabic literature.²² However, Jonah Ibn Janah regarded Mar Saul as one of the greatest grammarians and included in his *ḥeḥel 790* some of his poems as a memorial. These demonstrate that Mar Saul was acquainted with the Arabic metre instituted by Dunash.²³

Among the younger contemporaries of this group there stands out the figure of one R'Isaac b. Khalfon. He was not of Spanish descent, having been brought to Spain from N. Africa.²⁴ He differed from his colleagues in that he made of his poetry a mean of livelihood, travelling from one part of the country to the other and relying upon the generosity and patronage of wealthy donors in whose honor he composed verses.²⁵ He was brought to court by his father-in-law Isaac b. Kapron on the ground of non-support of his daughter. Ibn Khalfon gave vent to his anger in a letter in poetic form sent to Samuel Hanagid while the latter was still in Malaga.²⁶ Ibn Khalfon seems to have had many enemies who embittered his life. Upon one occasion when Samuel Hanagid was betrayed by some of his fellow-Jews, Ibn Khalfon wrote a venomous poem giving expression to his hatred and distrust of the world of men.²⁷ From the various other fragments of his poetry found in the Divan of Samuel Hanagid as they are recorded by his son Jehosef²⁸ we see that Ibn Khalfon did not possess any unusual ability as a poet. Judah al-Charizi, in commenting upon the merit of Ibn Khalfon, compliments him for his ability but the weight of his remarks are unfavorable.²⁹ Apparently al-Charizi thought of

his poems as being both good and bad but having no distinctive quality.³⁰ Moses Ibn Ezra enumerates the names of scholars and poets of this period.³¹ Of their work nothing has remained to the later generations.

The secular, intellectual activities of the Jews of Spain extended not only to poetry but also found expression in other fields of general learning.³² The study of medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and general science found many adherents among Jews who wrote works in Arabic on these subjects. The fact that their work was altogether foreign to the Jewish 'Volksgeist' meant that while their discoveries in these fields were honored by the outside world, they left no impression upon the Jewish people and were speedily forgotten. However, those who wrote in Hebrew or who translated the scientific work of non-Jewish scholars into Hebrew did influence the spiritual life of the Jew. The one exception to this rule was in the field of philosophy. Those who wrote on philosophy did not entirely lose touch with the spirit of the people. Despite the fact that their works were in Arabic, they succeeded in becoming a part of Jewish life through the activity of the translators. This is especially true of the work of Saadya Gaon whose influence served as a stimulus for philosophical inquiry and creation among the Jews of Spain.

It was in such an intellectual setting that Samuel Hanagid lived and worked. It was this man who represented the finest flowering of Hebrew genius of this third generation of great men of Spain.³³ It seemed as though events conspired for the nagid which were to give him the opportunity to escape from the darkness of obscurity and unimportance into the sunlight of opportunity and achievement.

In the city of Merida dwelt the family of Samuel Hanagid.³⁴ The city of Merida was one of the earliest Jewish communities in Spain.

The entire community traced its descent to the exiles of the destruction of the Second Temple.³⁵ The family of the nagid moved to Cordova as a result of a series of political disturbances and battles which ended in the destruction of the flourishing community of Merida.³⁶ We know very little about Samuel's father. We know that his name was Joseph³⁷ by the testimony of Abraham Ibn Daud. It appears that Samuel had an older brother who died during Samuel's life. His name was R'Jitschok, known by his Arabic name as Abu Ibrahim. He died in 1040. He was the leader of his community. Samuel wrote a number of very eloquent eulogies upon his death.³⁸ In the will of R'Samuel written to his son Jehosef (1041-2) an uncle is mentioned as living.³⁹ We have no idea to whom this referred. It is suggested that it might be the brother of Samuel's wife. We are also in doubt as to whether Samuel had any sisters. There are none mentioned except in a poem of consolation sent to Samuel by the poet Isaac b. Khalfon upon the unexpected death of her son.⁴⁰ We do not know anything regarding the mother of Samuel Hanagid, her family, or origin.⁴¹ Unfortunately, Ibn Ezra restricts himself from going into real detail about the life and activity of the nagid. Undoubtedly, living as he did, at a period so close to that of the nagid, he had certain information which would have thrown some light on these problems.

Samuel Hanagid was born in 992. Harkavy tells us that he was born in Cordova.⁴² Yet we have the statement of Moses Ibn Ezra that he came from Meida.⁴³ His teachers were among the greatest scholars of Spain. R'Chanoah b. Moses was Samuel's teacher in Talmudic learning⁴⁴ while he received his grammatical and philological knowledge from Menahem ben Saruk. The nagid studied and was well versed in the general learning, the arts and sciences of the Mohammedan world. He spoke Arabic fluently and was familiar with Arabic literature which skill he used to good advantage in the court of the ruler of

Granada.⁴⁵ Besides Hebrew and Arabic he is reported to have known five other languages. He was interested in the study of nature and its laws and exhorted others to follow this pursuit.⁴⁶ He also made a study of astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy. As testimony of the literary ability and general knowledge of Samuel Hanagid we have the statement in the will of Judah Ibn Tibbon to his son Samuel where he tells his son that all of Samuel's fame and achievement came through his own effort and knowledge of Arabic.⁴⁷

While living in Cordova, despite all his learning, he had difficulty in supporting himself.⁴⁸ However, this did not depress him for we find him writing some of his poems of life, love, and wine during this period.⁴⁹ He felt certain that eventually he would make his mark and rise to a position of importance. We have poems written by him during his youth which, like all adolescent first fruits of the intellect, are written in a satirical, cynical manner.⁵⁰ It was in Cordova that he began writing poems commemorating various incidents in his life. Thus, we have a poem of thanksgiving after having been saved when at sea from the attacks of a giant tuna fish. All of these poems of thanksgiving, praise, etc. are part of his collection known as *pi'shon* *ya*.⁵¹ Among the friends mentioned in his poems there were many who came from Cordova and who undoubtedly knew Samuel from his youth. Some of them he mentions in his poems.⁵² Among these were R'Joseph ben Samuel, R'Joseph ben Whisdai, the poet Isaac ben Khalfon, Abu Hassan, and especially Baruch ben alBalía who likewise came from Merida when that city was destroyed.⁵³ His friendship and love for this man extended to his son R'Isaac, a promising young author, whom he supported and advised and to whom he sent books and gifts at frequent occasions.⁵⁴

We do not know much about the youth of R'Samuel Hanagid, the days spent at Cordova. Of the many poems he wrote throughout his

life we have only a small number. These deal primarily with the incidents of his later life when he ascended to greatness as nagid. Sa'oon has in his possession a new manuscript of the nagid's Divan (to be discussed later) which may throw some light on this early period of his life. However, at present, we can know little about his personal life, domestic associations, nor of his immediate relatives. Historians have recorded only the later periods of his life, those at Malaga and Granada.

With the fall of Cordova in 1013 many of its inhabitants fled to other localities, Saragossa, Toledo, and elsewhere. Samuel Ibn Nagdela came to Malaga which was under the reign of the Berbers.⁵⁵ He probably felt that seeking shelter under Berber influence would be the best policy to pursue. He also felt that in their cultural and intellectual barbarity they would feel the need for a cultivation of the arts and sciences and that he would thus be able to advance his own interests through serving in the capacity of intermediary - to transmit the learning and culture he had acquired to these barbarians of N. Africa. Events certainly justified his feeling. Dozy has pointed out⁵⁶ the difficulty which the Berber rulers encountered in managing the various affairs of state. Neither an Arab nor a Berber could be appointed to fill the important post of hajib, or minister to conduct the correspondence and other details. No Berber had the ability and an Arab could not be trusted since he entertained only hatred and disdain for the foreign ruler and would gladly betray him upon any occasion. In Malaga he managed to eke out a bare living but was not depressed by his low economic status, continuing to hope that the opportunity which he was awaiting would finally come. It was during this period that he wrote his parables which later came to be incorporated in the Ben Mishle in which we find him continually spurring himself on to renewed effort and

courage during the trying moments of his monotonous and humdrum life of squalor and want. His only fear is that he may be compelled to apply to others for aid. It is to eliminate this possibility that he puts forth all his strength.⁵⁷

During his short stay in Malaga, a period of eight years (1012-1020), he had already attained a position of prominence in governmental circles. In this capacity he not only advanced himself to a higher position but was of great assistance to friends. His rise was also accompanied by animosity and jealousy on the part of envious courtiers. In 1020 he seems to have been removed from this position of prominence. A further catastrophe occurred when two of his very closest friends were set upon and put to death by bandits. His enemies rejoiced at his downfall. However, his staunch friend, the poet R'Isaac ben Khalfon, sent the poem of consolation previously mentioned, assuring him of continued fidelity and asserting his confidence that Samuel would rise above all these difficulties.⁵⁸ We have no information concerning the reason for his dismissal from the position he had attained at the court of Malaga; but we do know that it was not very long afterward that he was restored to his important status and invested with still greater authority.

R'Abraham Ibn Daud is our main source for this period of Samuel's life and activity.⁵⁹ According to the account given in Sefer Seder Hakabala as well as in Dozy's Moslems in Spain, Samuel occupied himself as a merchant in a small store which was in close proximity to the courtyard of Ibn al-Arif, vizier to Habbus, king of the Berbers in Granada. The maid servant of the vizier soon recognized the great erudition and scholarship of this obscure merchant. On frequent occasions the servants of the vizier had to write letters to him while he was at the court in Granada. The latter was astounded at the elegance of these letters, written in faultless Arabic.

He knew that his illiterate servants could not write in such fashion. He therefore asked for leave from the court at Granada and returned to his castle at Malaga where he inquired as to the author of the writings. He was informed that the storekeeper Samuel, the Jew, was the writer. A short talk with Samuel convinced the vizier of the desirability of retaining him as his own private aide. He took Samuel with him to Granada and did nothing without consulting him, having the utmost faith and confidence in his wisdom and counsel. As a result of wise counsel we are told that Habbus, the king, and his state prospered. Ibn al-Arif became ill and at the point of death disclosed the fact to the king that all of his wise counsel and guidance had really come from another source, the Jew Samuel. He advised Habbus to rely on Samuel's wisdom to guide him and assured him of success in all his ventures. A graphic description of this incident is given in Dozy.⁶⁰ After the death of Ibn al-Arif Samuel was made vizier. A Jew as vizier was a novelty in Spain. Chisdai Ibn Shaprut, although he had actually functioned in this capacity, had never been recognized as vizier to Abd al-Rachman.

Samuel's arrival at Granada to serve at the court of Habbus meant the realization of all his hopes and dreams. He had at last reached an eminence from which he was not removed until death. His position was unparalleled in the history of Israel in exile. He was virtually the ruler in Granada. Dozy shows very poor taste in making the matter of Samuel's appointment a necessary result of the situation in Granada and not that of Samuel's own abilities.⁶¹ With regard to the appointment of Samuel, Dozy points out that Habbus had no other recourse for a number of reasons. There were influential Jews at court who brought their influence to bear. Further, he could not rely upon any of his Berber chieftains to serve in this capacity since they were uncouth and uncultured. Arabs were opposed

to Berbers and were felt to be disloyal. Samuel was expert in the use of Arabic idiom with finesse and delicacy and in the traditional Arabic fashion. Therefore, he was chosen. Harkavy has shown⁶² that none of the other Berber chieftains who had similar problems appointed Jews to such posts in their domains. Further, before or after Samuel and his son, Jehosef, no Jews were given the posts of vizier. It was the wise statesmanship and tactful diplomacy of Samuel Hanagid which raised the political importance of G_uanada. But his major importance for us is that in his position of influence he was able to ward off any danger that threatened Jews.

In addition to the account of Samuel's activities given by R' Abraham Ibn Daud,⁶³ Moses Ibn Ezra⁶⁴ and the poems written by Samuel referring to the various incidents of his life, Harkavy brings the testimony of contemporary Arabic writers as to the position and influence of Samuel.⁶⁵ The Arabic writer Abu Merwan Ibn Chaffan, a contemporary of Samuel and an avowed enemy writes about him: "This accursed one, even though Allah has deprived him of true religion, was one of the most perfect men by reason of his widespread knowledge, persistence, and patience, his gentility and considerateness. He was at all times master of himself, well-mannered and well dressed; and was able to sway even his enemies and win^{over} to his cause by his eloquence....knew Arabic well and also the culture of Islam. He could write and speak Arabic proficiently. In addition to this he was well versed in the ancient learning and exceeded all in his knowledge of astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics. He was a remarkable orator, spoke little but with great force and great eloquence. He was^a deep thinker and collected many books." This testimony, coming as it does from a bitter enemy, does credit to Samuel more than any other account by one of his friends who might have been swayed by personal feelings of friendship in over-exaggerating

his character and achievements. Another Arabic contemporary, enemy of the nagid and the Jews of Spain generally, Abu Mohammed Ali Ibn Hazam in mentioning the discussion he had concerning the scriptural passage "The staff shall not depart from Judah" (Gen. 49:10), has this to say about Samuel: "I discussed this matter with the most learned and most expert among them, namely Samuel ben Joseph Halevy, the Kitab known as Ibn al Nagdali in 1013."

On the other hand, many Arabic poets who numbered themselves among the friends of Samuel composed many poems in his honor. Foremost among those was the poet Monfatil⁶⁶ who sang his praises of Samuel in this manner: "Thou art the man in whom have been concentrated all those virtues that are found in such small degree among others. Thou art he who brought forth nobility from captivity into freedom. Thou art more elevated and worthy than all the great men of East and West, even as the gold is worthier than the copper." Further, he makes a still more unusual statement to the effect that were men more discerning and able to distinguish between good and evil they would rather kiss the fingers of Samuel as symbols of goodness and truth than kiss the holy black ~~Kaba~~ stone at Mecca. Monfatil says further that he has come to appreciate Israel's religion and the observance of the Sabbath as an ideal institution. Such effusiveness perhaps suggests that the poet had good reason to exalt Samuel. It is quite possible that Samuel, in his eagerness to aid all scholars and poets, extended a helping hand to many Arabic writers and that these in return dedicated many laudations to him. The fact is borne out by another Arabic poet who extolled the character and work of Samuel. Alachfasch Ibn Maimun sings, "Seek him and you will find hope and succor. In his palace you will see beauty. No loved friend has ever found in him abomination or blemish and he is always the same even though time may change."

We have seen that with the return of Zawi Ibn Zairi to North Africa, his nephew, Habbus Ibn Maksan ascended the throne of Granada. It was during his reign that the strange series of events, previously described, led to the elevation of Samuel Halevy to the position of vizier. Besides Samuel Hanagid there were many other influential Jews in Granada who were frequently at the court. Among these were R'Joseph Ibn Migash, R'Isaac ben Leon, and R'Nehemiah Eshcapa. These were envious of this stranger who had come from distant parts to assume the greatest position of authority in the country.⁶⁷ Though ostensibly appearing friendly and heeding his every command diligently, these men plotted against Samuel. They were loud in proclaiming that the stars foretold the doom and disgrace of the nagid. Samuel was not unaware of their machination and was not deluded by their protestations of friendship. He was ever on guard against them.⁶⁸

It was fortunate at this time of continual revolt and disturbance among the various kingdoms and principalities, that the kingdom of Granada remained firm and presented a united front to its various enemies, the small kingdoms of Arab and Berber nations in southern Spain. In this Samuel Hanagid played no small part in protecting the kingdom as well as himself against the enemies. So wise was his counsel and honest his dealings that both Berber rulers and ^{ARAB} Berber subjects respected and admired him. Samuel dealt diplomatically with both of these elements and kept them in accord, preventing revolt and strife.

The most persistent of Samuel's enemies was Zuhair, ruler of Almeria, a neighboring kingdom, and his vizier Abu Achmed Ibn Abbas. The latter wrote a public condemnation of the Jews, especially Samuel and said they were disrupting the Arab kingdoms. This letter he distributed among the Arab masses in Granada in an effort to incite

them against the Jews.⁶⁹ Habbus, trusting Samuel implicitly, was not influenced by their slander. He realized that they looked upon Samuel as a bulwark of the kingdom of Granada and sought his downfall in order to weaken the power of Granada.

The death of Habbus in 1038 created great disturbance in Granada. Rivalry developed between his two sons and their respective followers as to the kingship. Our source for this period is again R'Abraham Ibn Daud.⁷⁰ The two brothers, Balkin and Badis, both had their supporters. The Berber element supported Balkin while the majority of Granada's population were loyal to Badis. Many influential Jews, among them the three previously mentioned, Joseph Ibn Migash, Isaac ben Leon, and R'Nehemiah, were followers of Balkin.⁷¹ R'Samuel Hanagid advocated Badis. To the surprise and disappointment of his followers, Balkin resigned in favor of Badis. However, the realization that he had cheated himself out of royal power embittered him and he plotted against his brother whom he had sworn to support. When Balkin became ill, Badis the king persuaded the doctor to be somewhat careless about curing him. As a result of this procedure Balkin died and the undisturbed rule of Granada was left with the victorious Badis.

The danger that had threatened Samuel during this trying time is quite apparent. Had Balkin succeeded in pushing his claim to the kingship it would have meant the deposition and possible death of Samuel. With the success of Badis, Samuel's position was assured. Yet, the danger was not passed. Many intrigues were directed against Samuel and the king was threatened that if he did not discharge him the kingdom would be destroyed. His greatest enemy was Ibn Abbas, the vizier of the kingdom of Almeria, Zuhair. It was he who was the real power in Almeria and who determined all the policies of the state. He was a man of culture, knew the arts and sciences, and came

of a brilliant family which traced its lineage to Mohammed. He was renowned for his wealth, miserliness, pride, and self-seeking, being at the same time a beautiful Arabic stylist and linguist. He is reported to have been fabulously wealthy, possessing many ornate castles and a large retinue of servants. His harem was resplendent with hundreds of the beauties of the land with whom he regaled his sensual appetites. He is said to have had a veritable treasury of books, 400,000 in number, besides a great number of unfinished manuscripts. Ibn Abbas himself was at this time not yet thirty, handsome in appearance and a brilliant and persuasive orator. However, his high station served only to accentuate his innate meanness of disposition and to make him more overbearing and ruthless to those who refused to do his bidding.⁷² In his unmitigated arrogance and conceit, he was very domineering and as a result made many enemies. The presence of Samuel the Jew as nagid in Granada was a constant source of irritation to him and he sought by all means to influence Badis against him. Failing in this, animosity was created between these two kingdoms. Politically, this state of affairs was very dangerous since the Arab Khady Ismail Ibn Abbad of Seville was putting forth his efforts to destroy these Berber kingdoms both of whom he considered as invaders and aliens to all true Arabs. The strained relationship between Almeria and Granada was therefore very dangerous at this time. Ibn Abbas, although vizier to a Berber king, looked with disdain upon Badis and, in his hate for Samuel, was opposed to any covenant between the two kingdoms. In his machinations against Samuel he was assisted by the vizier of the royal Hammudites in Malaga, Ibn Bakanna. To further his purpose, Ibn Abbas tried to negotiate a treaty with Mohammed, ruler of Carmona, an enemy of Granada.⁷³ With Badis established securely upon the throne of Granada, Samuel sought to repair the breach between the

two kingdoms. Arrangements were made for Zuhair and his vizier Ibn Abbas to come to Granada where terms could be discussed and a truce effected. Incited by Ibn Abbas, Zuhair, accompanied by a large army, entered Granada and, at the suggestion of Ibn Abbas, began to dictate terms to Badis. However, they were treated cordially and accorded honor. But all these attempts at friendly concourse were disrupted by Ibn Abbas' attitude. Although ostensibly talking about peace treaties, Zuhair and his vizier were planning battle. Badis saw through this subterfuge and was ready for immediate combat. However, at the counsel of Samuel, he allowed one of his generals, Boluggin, to make one last appeal to Ibn Abbas for peaceful relationship. The latter listened impatiently to the eloquent pleadings of Boluggin who conjured up the glories and victories that the two kingdoms might achieve in united combat. Ibn Abbas, however, insisted upon the deposition and death of Samuel Hanagaid. Boluggin returned to Badis after this unsuccessful interview and warned him that Ibn Abbas threatened the security of Granada and that unless steps were taken Granada would be put in danger. Accordingly, Badis prepared for battle. Attack was impossible as long as Zuhair and his men were guests of Granada and so, Badis planned to attack them on their return journey to Almeria. The road took them through narrow passes. Here Badis stationed his soldiers. Hope was still held that Zuhair might repent of the policy instigated by Ibn Abbas and come to terms with Badis while still his guest. Therefore, a messenger was sent to Zuhair warning him of the impending danger and advising him to leave Granada immediately before he was attacked at the pass of Alpuente. This kindly counsel was welcome to Zuhair but again he was influenced by Ibn Abbas, the stronger personality of the two. According to some Arab historians, it was the express purpose of Ibn Abbas to cause Zuhair's downfall, expecting himself somehow to escape death and assume the kingship of

Almeria. Zuhair, upon leaving Granada, found his army surrounded. A brave warrior, he gave battle. But the result was foretold. The African mercenaries went over to the enemy and the battle was turned into a complete rout. Zuhair died bravely.

Samuel's anxiety over the outcome of the battle has been expressed in a number of poems written upon this occasion.⁷⁴ Especially noteworthy is the long prayer which he wrote asking for the victory of his master Badis against the enemy. Then after the battle, we have his poem of praise and thanksgiving for the victory.⁷⁵

While all the other officers and men taken captive were allowed to return to Almeria, Ibn Abbas was retained as prisoner in the Alhambra at Granada and kept in irons. Here his pride was finally broken and he realized his error. He knew that his life was in danger and, therefore, offered a large sum of money to Badis as ransom. Some of Badis' counsellors advised clemency while others thought that he should be put to death since his existence endangered the welfare of Granada. Badis was finally convinced of the latter argument. He was brought before the king and, realizing his danger, redoubled his offer of ransom but all to no avail. Despite his many tears and pleading we are told that he was stabbed to death in the palace, Badis striking the first blow.⁷⁶

Samuel Hanagid now breathed more easily. In commemoration of this event he wrote a long poem of thanksgiving, (٧٧'٤) in which he described the entire affair.⁷⁷

An event of great importance in the life of the nagid transpired at this time. The Khady of Seville, Ibn Abbad, was the recognized head of the Arabs in Spain. He planned incessantly to rid Spain of the Berber invaders who had taken rulership of Arab Spain into their hands. He attempted to incite the Arab inhabitants of Granada to revolt against Badis. Also, in Carmona, the Arabs were aroused to

revolt against the Berber king Muhammed, who had made a treaty with Badis. Fortunately, the plot against Granada became known to Badis and Samuel who punished the conspirators, many of whom escaped to Seville to seek the protection of the Khady. In attacking Carmona, the Arabs were more successful and had already succeeded in conquering two outlying cities, Ossuna and Ecija. Besieged at Carmona, Muhammed sent word to Badis and Idris of Malaga appealing for aid. Realizing that the conquest of Carmona meant the weakening of Berber rule in Spain, they answered his appeal. Hurrying to his aid, they found themselves confronting a much larger enemy. Feeling that victory was impossible, they retreated to their respective provinces. Ibn Abbad recognized this as an opportune time to destroy his enemy, Badis. Before the latter could reach Granada he was attacked by Abu Menar, general of Ibn Abbad. Surprised in a narrow pass and outnumbered, Badis nevertheless determined to give battle. We have a prayer offered by Samuel upon this occasion calling upon God to aid Badis in this time of trouble. He had apparently accompanied his master.⁷⁸ In the midst of the fray, Samuel sent messengers to Idris informing him of the danger threatening Badis. The latter hastened to the aid of his ally and the two armies united succeeded in turning the tide of battle. The Arabs, expecting an easy victory, now found themselves facing a fearless army with reinforced strength. Badis and Idris emerged victors. Ibn Abbad fell in battle. In commemoration of this event Samuel composed a poem of praise and thanksgiving to God Who had once more answered his prayer. This poem, which the nagid called *afaa* comprises one hundred forty-seven stanzas. Samuel was especially glad over the death of this enemy who had not only imperilled his own position but who had persecuted all Jews

within his domain.⁷⁹

With this victory and the death of two of his enemies there still remained the vizier of Malaga, Ibn Bakanna, erstwhile ally of Ibn Abbas who hated the nagid. In the danger which threatened the Berber ruler in Spain, this animosity had been forgotten. But when the enemy had been defeated, Ibn Bakanna continued his efforts to harm Samuel. The nagid, however, did not cease hoping that he would be rid of this enemy. We have his poem recording a dream in which was prophesied the downfall of this enemy who threatened his life. The lines of the poem, it seems, appeared to him while he slept. Having as his guest for the night an Arab judge, Abu Medin by name, to whom he recounted the strange prophecy, predicting the death of his enemy, Ibn Bakanna.⁸⁰ Strangely enough, the latter did die a few days later. In the conflict over the accession to the throne of Malaga upon the death of Idris, Ibn Bakanna sought to make his son, Yachya Ibn Idris ruler. A mercenary army of North African Berbers under Naja supported Hassan Ibn Yachya, brother of Idris. Naja's plan succeeded. Hassan was placed on the throne, although soon after he was poisoned by Yachya's sister who thus avenged her brother's death. Because of his opposition to Hassan, Ibn Bakanna was put to death. Thus was Samuel rid of another enemy.⁸¹ In his rejoicing he again wrote a poem of thanksgiving. It is given in the form of a dialogue between the nagid and the harbinger of the tidings of Ibn Bakanna's death.⁸²

In the year 1042 Samuel's position was again endangered and the destruction of Granada imminent when a coalition was formed against Badis. Abu Algish Mojehid, prince of the Balearic Isles and Denia, Ibn Ammar of Mursia and others joined to defeat Badis. The allies first besieged Lorca, friendly to Badis. Samuel went to

the aid of the beleaguered city. Reaching Velez, Samuel encamped for the night. Here he wrote a poem which takes the form of a last will and testament to his son Jehosef.⁸³ In it he expresses his love for Jehosef for whose sake alone he has endured all these perils when he would have preferred a simple, quiet life of travel and meditation. Again, almost miraculously, the approach of Samuel and his army caused a complete demoralization of the enemy. They fled in rout without a battle and Samuel entered the city of Larca winning a bloodless victory. Samuel's joy is expressed in a poem upon this occasion written to Jehosef expressing his thanks and gratitude to God.⁸⁴

With the poisoning and death of Hassan, Naja thought that the time was ripe for him to seize the reins of leadership. He relied upon the large army of mercenary Africans in Malaga to help him enforce his rule. He slaughtered Hassan's son and threw his brother Idris into prison. The Berbers, outraged by his presumption, ostensibly fell in with his plans. However, when he sallied forth to give battle to Mohammed, Berber king of Algeciras, he was set upon by the Berbers and put to death.⁸⁵ Naja had been an enemy of Granada as well, so that his death was heralded with much joy by the Berbers. Samuel again wrote a poem upon this occasion.⁸⁶

During the same year (1043) a relative of Badis, the Berber king of Carmona, Muhammed Ibn Abdallah Ibn Birsil, was treacherously slain by Abbad Mutadid of Seville who, like his father Abbad, felt intense hatred for the Berbers. Badis was determined to revenge himself for the murder of Muhammed. He realized, also, that Mutadid was becoming very powerful and threatened Berber rule in Spain, having succeeded in destroying a number of Berber kingdoms. According to some Arab historians, Abbad was unable to conquer Carmona

because of the noble resistance offered by the son of the slain Muhammed, Ishah al-Aziz.

During the decade between 1043-53 we know very little of the details of Samuel's life and activities in Granada. We do know that he continued to be of great assistance to Badis. Arab historians speak with great praise of the importance of Granada among the Arab kingdoms of Andalusia. This was undoubtedly due to the wise counsel and guidance of Samuel. Badis, as king, spent most of his days in drinking and carousal and paid little attention to the affairs of state. He was disliked by both Berber and Arab alike for his ruthless cruelty. Samuel's work was of great importance. He had to mitigate the cruelty and unreasonableness of his master and to placate the feelings of both elements of the population at Granada. To illustrate one instance of the nagid's diplomacy, we have the account given by a number of Arab historians.⁸⁷ Dozy has given us a graphic account of Mutadid's perfidious murder of Berber chieftains based upon Arabic sources. In 1053 Mutadid invited a number of Berber chieftains who paid him tribute to Seville where he wished to entertain them and resume friendly relations. Here again, he dealt treacherously with his unsuspecting guests, murdering all of them and confiscating their kingdoms to the great joy of their Arab inhabitants. Badis, infuriated at this affair, planned to slaughter all the Arabs in Granada by way of reprisal. Here we have the record of the Arab writer, Ibn Bassam, as to the course of events. He reports that when the cruel Badis heard of the murder of Muhammed of Moron and that of his relative Abu Nasr of Ronda he was enraged. He proceeded to deal harshly with the Arabs in Granada. Word had come to him of the revolt of the Arabs against Abu Nasr and the Berbers of Ronda and Badis feared that he would suffer a similar fate.⁸⁸

He therefore planned a wholesale slaughter of all the Arabs of Granada while they assembled at the great mosque for prayer. As in all things, he consulted with Samuel and warned him to keep his plan secret and not to attempt to swerve him from his resolve since he had determined to execute it. Samuel was very much opposed to the king's plan and tried to delay it. In the interim, he sought to convince Badis of the folly of the contemplated step by warning him that all the Arabs of Spain would rise up against him and destroy Granada in vengeance. Badis refused this counsel and ordered his men to carry out his design. The only recourse left to Samuel, though it endangered his own life, was to warn the leaders and elders of the Arab population not to come to the mosque on the coming Friday. Accordingly, they hid themselves. Badis, realizing that his plot had failed and that the Arabs had been warned, called Samuel to task for having divulged his secret. Samuel denied having done this and attributed the failure to the people who, observing the military maneuvers that Badis had ordered, knew that he planned a reprisal against the Arabs of Granada. Samuel then pleaded with the king to be thankful to God that he had been prevented from fulfilling his purpose, which would have led to his own downfall. Samuel's own life was in danger had not some of Badis' sheiks approved this counsel.⁸⁹

Another story is told of a Moslem merchant who was envious of Samuel's position and took every occasion to heap unbridled insult and abuse upon him. Badis, angry with his behavior, ordered Samuel to decree that his tongue be cut out. But Samuel, by a splendid gift, transformed his enemy into a friend. Passing by with Badis one day, the merchant left his store and sang praises of Samuel. In response to the king's question as to why his command had not been fulfilled, Samuel answered that it had. He had removed the evil

tongue and replaced it with one of blessing and goodness.

In addition to his various diplomatic duties as vizier of Badis, Samuel was in constant touch with the Jews of Spain and elsewhere. Despite his many affairs, he concerned himself continually with the welfare of his fellow Jews. After the death of his illustrious teacher, Chanoch ben Moses, Samuel assumed the position of religious head of the rabbis of Spain and Europe generally. From this time on began the First Generation of the Rabbinate as it is termed by Abraham Ibn Daud.⁹¹ He also wrote responsa on matters of ritual and halacha, an activity which we will consider when we discuss the work of Samuel Hanagid as talmudist. Himself a leader and supporter of a school of learning,⁹² he assisted and supported all who were engaged in the study of the Torah as far as his beneficence could reach. According to Ibn Daud,⁹³ "He helped the Jews of Spain as well as those of Magreb, Africa, Egypt, Sicily, the yeshiva at Babylon as well as the schools in Palestine. He also purchased many books, secular and sacred, books of the Mishna and Talmud which are also holy books."⁹⁴ Anyone who desired to make the Torah his sole work in Spain or the other lands we have mentioned Samuel would spend great sums of money to support him and would establish scholars to make copies of Mishna and Talmud which he would give as gifts to needy scholars. In addition to his support of schools and scholars in Palestine, he sent large supplies of the purest oil, *nir*, for the use of the synagogues of the Holy Land. This report of Abraham Ibn Daud is further supported by the testimony of men who refer with gratitude to Samuel's kindness. We have the statement concerning R'Isaac ben Baruch Ibn Albalia that Samuel provided for him when he was still a child in Cordova, sending him books and gifts which practice was continued by his son R'Jehosef.⁹⁵ Further, we have the

statement concerning R'Nissim ben Jacob of Kairuwan through whom the halachic decisions of R'Hai, gaon of Babylon, was transmitted to Samuel, that the latter assisted him with money and gifts.⁹⁶ Concerning R'Isaac ben Yehuda Ibn Giyat of Lucena we have Ibn Daud telling us that "the two nagidim, R'Samuel and his son R'Jehosef, honored and supported him."⁹⁷

Samuel admired and respected the great scholars in Israel. Disregarding the poverty of Rabenu Nissim of Kairuwan he arranged for the marriage of his son Jehosef to Nissim's daughter who, though she was ugly, was possessed of great learning.⁹⁸ When R'Masthiach, dayan of Sicily, returned from Babylon, Samuel inquired of him as to the character and personality of R'Hai Gaon whom he so admired.

He died in 1056 at the age of 63.⁹⁹ His death caused great sorrow among the many Jews all over the world who had learned to love him.

His son Jehosef assumed his father's position as vizier of Granada. According to both Ibn Ezra¹⁰⁰ and Ibn Daud¹⁰¹ Jehosef was possessed of great secular and Jewish learning. However, brought up in the lap of luxury and nobility, he was proud of his position. Though he continued his father's good deeds both as vizier and as leader of the Jews, he was not able to continue his position long. He had many enemies in the court who incited the populace against him. A riot broke out against Joseph in 1066. He hid himself in the cellar of his home but was discovered and put to death. A general massacre of Jews in Granada followed, 1500 losing their lives. His library, undoubtedly a very valuable one, was scattered all over. So did Joseph meet an untimely death. His wife, daughter of Rabenu Nissim, fled to Lucena where she was protected and accorded honor by the Jewish community.¹⁰²

38. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, חלק א', pp.81-90.
39. Ibid. P.104, l.21.
40. Ibid. P.97, l. 10ff.
41. Kitab al-Mahazara, P.65.
42. Harkavy, Measef, P.3.
43. Kitab al-Mahazara, P.65.
44. Sefer Seder Hakabala, Med. Jew. Chron. P.71.
45. Ibid. Kitab al-Mahazara, P.66; Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.609.
46. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, חלק א', P.50, l. 11-16.
47. Will of Judah Ibn Tibbon to his son Samuel. "Derek Tobin", London 1852, Steinschneider, Trans. H. Edelman. - וארבע יוצדכי
הכפולין קצמנו לא הגיעו אל הפסוק והמחלוקת פדמה כי אף דבית דרביה, כנז
ראיה מה שספר הנאיב ביני מן הפסוק שהצד אלה גדולה.
48. זכרון ארואטי, Harkavy, pp.7-10. Cf. pp.200-1-
49. Ibid. P.15, l.10-11; P.22, l.14-15.
50. Ibid. pp.18-23.
51. Measef, Harkavy, P.4, cf. P.46, Note 10.
52. זכרון ארואטי, Harkavy, P.17, P.2-11; P.19-12-15.
53. Med. Jew. Chron, Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.74 - ואלו אלהם של ליצחק
זה דן אלהיה וסבנו דקורטורה.
54. Ibid. וכל שמואל הווי הנאיב היה אזהר אמת ודודנו נדר ויהי משל לו ספרין ומלגול.
55. Ibid. P.71, וכל שמואל הווי הזה ברה למאלקה.
56. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.608.
57. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, pp.126-7 - אבול יריק דמזמטיק ואלו זשכר דסכנה
יקח אחת דחק מקח, ואלו אלו דמנה.
58. Ibid. P.91-100, especially pp.94-5.
59. Med. Jew. Chron. P.71, Cf. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.607.
60. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, pp.607-8.
61. Ibid. P.608.
62. Measef, Harkavy, P.11.
63. Med. Jew. Chron. P.71ff.
64. Kitab al-Mahazara, P.65ff.
65. Measef, Harkavy, P.11ff. Cf. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.609.
66. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.609.
67. Med. Jew. Chron., Sefer Seder Hakabala, Abraham Ibn Daud, P.72.
68. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, P.52, l.15ff.
69. Ibid. P.31, l.16ff.
70. Med. Jew. Chron., Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.72.
71. Ibid.
72. Harkavy, Measef, pp.15-16; Cf. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.601ff.
73. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.611.
74. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, P.36, l.4-18; pp.37-8.
75. Ibid. P.39, l.1-6; P.41, l.11-18.
76. Harkavy, Measef, pp.17-22; Cf. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, pp.612-16.
77. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, pp.30-45.
78. Ibid. pp.56-57.
79. Harkavy, Measef, pp.22-26; cf. זכרון ארואטי, pp.57-72; Dozy, pp.618-19.
80. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, P.77.
81. Dozy, pp.622-3; Harkavy, Measef, P.27.
82. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, pp.77-80, גלורה.
83. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, pp.104-5.
84. Ibid. pp.105-6.
85. Harkavy, Measef, P.31; cf. Dozy, P.623.
86. Harkavy, זכרון ארואטי, P.107.
87. Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.640.

88. Ibid. P.641.
89. Ibid. pp.643-4.
90. Harkavy, Measef, P.34, after Dozy based on Ibn Chajjan.
91. Med. Jew. Chron., Sefer Seder Hakabala, Abraham Ibn Daud, P.73b.
92. Cited by Harkavy in the Measef, P.56, Note 3, as mentioned in Judah Ibn Balaam's commentary.
93. Sefer Seder Hakabala, pp.72-3.
94. Ibid. As Harkavy points out in Measef P.56, Note 4, the words *וְכָל הַיְּהוּדִים הָיוּ מַכְתִּירִים בְּכָל מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה* were written by Ibn Daud against the Karaites who questioned the authority of the Oral Law.
95. Sefer Seder Hakabala, pp.74-5.
96. Ibid. P.73. - *וְכָל הַיְּהוּדִים הָיוּ מַכְתִּירִים בְּכָל מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה*
וְכָל הַיְּהוּדִים הָיוּ מַכְתִּירִים בְּכָל מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה
97. Ibid. P.74. - *וְכָל הַיְּהוּדִים הָיוּ מַכְתִּירִים בְּכָל מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה*
וְכָל הַיְּהוּדִים הָיוּ מַכְתִּירִים בְּכָל מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה
98. Ibid. P.73.
99. Kitab al-Mahazara, Moses Ibn Ezra, ed. Halpern, P.67.
100. Ibid. P.68.
101. Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.73.
102. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

The Contents of the Nagid's
Poetry and Its Evaluation.

The poetry of Samuel Hanagid¹ is of great value to us for many reasons. Until the work which Harkavy did with the Russian manuscripts purchased from the collection of Ibn Reshf (Abraham Fir-kowitz) very little was actually known about the poetic work of Samuel Hanagid. There were many references made by various writers who lived after him as to the excellence of his poetry and its high spiritual quality. Yet later ages knew nothing of it.² Thus, we have the statement of Moses Ibn Ezra³ in laudation of the nagid. He speaks of him as the most renowned of all the poets of the period. To the nagid, Ibn Ezra attributes the first use of a particular metre, ~~and~~ rhyme in the writing of his Ben Tehillim. "He labored hard to beautify his work." Ibn Ezra also includes in his praise the nagid's collection of proverbs and sayings. This work, according to Ibn Ezra, comprises "many of the Arabic and Persian sayings and philosophical wisdom as well as the principles of our great sages of the past." It was Ibn Ezra's feeling that all of the nagid's writings were characterized by a beauty of expression and a delicacy of nuance which was unexampled and which clothed his efforts in a princely aura. So also we hear from Abraham Ibn Daud⁴ that "in the days of Chisdai Ibn Shaprut they began to chirp and during the time of Samuel Hanagid they came forth in song." We also have the statement of Judah al-Charizi⁵ that Samuel's songs "were first in importance and their content new and inspiring" and also⁶ "in his day the great nagid R'Samuel Halevy was master of poetry and he brought its secrets into the light." Solomon Gabirol, gifted contemporary of the nagid, has also left us a poem in which he expresses his praise of the nagid, who

had befriended and aided him. Gabirol describes his meeting with a strange creature who advises him to visit Samuel who was wise above all men. Gabirol speaks of the nagid's friendship. "My friend, loved of my soul....you are healing for pain....you are a help and I have loved you, your love is boundless. My song praises you, it will increase in fine language....All masters of song tremble before him, they are covered with shame and confusion...." In such extravagant manner does Ibn Gabirol sing the praises of the nagid.⁷ Harkavy goes on to say in his introduction⁸ that the strength and force of Samuel's poetry is unparalleled among his contemporaries, both those who preceded and came after him. It is Harkavy's opinion that in some respects the nagid's poetry exceeds in strength the poetry of R'Yehuda Halevy. Harkavy feels further that the nagid was a direct, spiritual descendant of the psalmists. It was these inspired writers who have expressed their faith in God in an outpouring of soul and an expression of trust in God that, according to Harkavy, found its counterpart only in the poetry of the nagid and nowhere else. On the field of battle, when he was in danger, this great man who controlled the affairs of a country did not rely upon his own strength but, even as the psalmist, poured out his prayer and petition to God, prayers that are filled with faith, trust, and unbounded joy in the knowledge of God's protecting presence. "The harp of the daughter of Zion, strung upon the willow trees of Babylon, sang again to the sons of Judah, words of joy in sothern Spain as they had done long ago when Israel dwelt in its native land."

The poems of the nagid are likewise of great importance in helping our knowledge of the life and experiences of the nagid. As we have seen, many of them were written upon crucial occasions. They express both joy and sorrow and are a revelation of the character of the man during times of crisis.

In our study of the contents of the poetry of Samuel Hanagid we have followed closely the collections made by Harkavy and Brody.⁹

Although the work of Harkavy and Brody represent the recovery, in some measure, of the poetic works of the nagid they do not comprise his entire Divan. David Sassoon of London discovered a new manuscript of the Divan eight years ago. This new find has not been published in full but Sassoon has given us some פירוש אכ characterizing his find.¹⁰ According to Sassoon, his discovery contains the entire Ben Tehillim, Ben Mishle, and Ben Koheleth.¹¹ The first book preserves one hundred eighty-seven longer and shorter poems written by the nagid at home or in the field of battle. The Ben Mishle and Ben Koheleth are a scholarly attempt at collecting all the proverbs and sayings of the various nations.¹² Sassoon maintains that the new manuscript shows that these poems were not mere paraphrases of the Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, as Dozy maintains,¹³ but independent works of the nagid. Ben Tehillim was arranged by Jehosef, Samuel's elder son, while the younger son, Eli-asaf, compiled the Ben Mishle. The writer of this long lost manuscript which Sassoon has discovered is the author of the responsa

פירוש אכ, Tam ben Gedalya Ibn Yachya.¹⁴ Sassoon maintains that the discovery of the new manuscript opens up new chapters in Jewish history and literature, since until his discovery, only little of the Ben Mishle was known while Ben Koheleth was completely forgotten. The poems of the Ben Tehillim have been edited by Harkavy and by Brody and Yellin but there are only a bare third of the nagid's poems. The new manuscript contains all the three poetical works of the nagid nearly in their entirety. Chronology, character, history, and literature find new meaning in the light of this manuscript. The introduction given by Jehosef to the compilation of his father's Ben Tehillim is given. "Says Jehosef, the son of the nagid, Rabbi

Samuel the Levite; I collected in this book what came into my hand of the poetical works of my father - may the Almighty raise him in honor - which I wrote with my own hand when I was eight years and six months old, for I was born, according to the exact record of my father - three hours and three-fifths of an hour and two-thirds of a fifth of the hour of the third night (Tuesday), eleventh of Tishri 4796 (1035) corresponding to the eleventh of the month Dhi Ka'dah of the year 426 according to the era of the Ishmaelites. And I started with this compilation after Passover of the year 4804 (1044). His brother Eliasaf informs us in his introduction to the Ben Mishle that he was born on the twenty-third of Heshvan 1049. He copied his father's Divan at the very early age of six and a half, about 1056.

The Sassoon manuscript gives us further information about a battle at Golah in 1056. The people of Malaga, betraying the army, caused its defeat and the capture of Samuel Hanagid. Samuel managed to escape through wonderful miracles. At that time the nagid vowed to compile a book which he called Hilkhatha Gabaratha. The book is described in a poem called Todah, announcing the aims of the book, the battle at Golah and his escape.¹⁵ We hope to deal with the contents of this poem in detail when we discuss the Talmudic work of the nagid. We now proceed to a consideration of the nagid's poetry. It will be seen that, in some instances, we have outlined shortly the contents of the poem; in others, paraphrased, and in some cases attempted a translation of some of the passages.

1. The writer is worried about his friends, one of whom is in a dungeon and the other in captivity. What is to be the end? Are they to come together again? Is he to rise from his lowly position?

2. This is dedicated to a friend, Joseph ben Samuel, the judge who combines within his person the ancient royalty and priesthood that was in Israel. He is lavish in his praise of the justice and wisdom of Joseph ben Samuel.

3. There is present a feeling of hopelessness of conquering the love of this critic who fills him with his animosity. He shows that he was deeply hurt by his enmity.

4. According to Harkavy, *ש"ס/ל"ד/ס"ד* 64, this poem was written before the death of Judah, the younger son of Samuel. Brody points out that the poem shows the great sadness and deprivation that Samuel felt when separated from his sons. His great love is manifested in his prayer that God protect and guard them. There is a continued use of Biblical phraseology.

5.¹⁷ Here he shows his great grief, describing the helplessness of man against the treachery of time. He appeals to his readers to sympathize with Nissim in his great grief. How can man rejoice at a time like this when even the heavens are shrouded in black clouds of grief. All of nature mourns with R'Nissim, this man single in greatness, who was bereaved of his only son. This man, to whom the Scrolls of the Law were a necklace, did not merit to hand them down to his son to continue his good deeds. It is Samuel's trust that God judges the world in righteousness which is his only source of consolation. Otherwise he would be overcome with his grief. He asks God to comfort Nissim and give him two sons for the loved one lost.¹⁸

6. This is a lyrical poem lauding the magic power of wine to drown all pain. It makes one generous and fortifies the timid heart. "The cup is my portion and it is for me, where I find the cup, there I dwell and my heart is good."

7. This, too, is a lyrical poem in praise of beautiful women whose houses are filled with treasures brought to her by her lovers. She rules majestically; her will is law.

8. "Kingdom of evil, let an end come to your rule. Israel, thou who art hated, rule over those that hate thee. The land of Israel has long slept desolate. Arise, for there is healing."

9. A lyrical poem dedicated to a beautiful damsel. There is healing in her countenance and in the bow of her lips, death in her eyes. He is helpless at her whims. "I laugh when she wills, she laughs when I rage."

10. He appeals to the moon to judge his case. This was probably written during days of trouble. His star of destiny had betrayed him. Instead of a friend, it became an enemy.

11. A nature poem. The balmy summer and mild fall have passed. Winter and cold descend upon the land. He appeals to his friend to join his comrade. Watch the change in nature. Drink day and night for joy and good cheer.

12. The days of cold are gone, spring has come and with it all the fragrance of field and flowers. Birds sing joyful paeans of praise one to the other. He invites his friends to join him in his beautiful garden.

13. Lyrical. He gives advice on living, no asceticism. There is a time for service of the Lord and a time for one's own enjoyment. Drink wine without ceasing. Singing and drinking rule the night.

14. This is addressed to some woman.¹⁹ He expresses sorrow at the absence of a loved one. Constant tears are a proof of his sor-

2. friend

row.²⁰ He speaks of his wanderings and tears as constant bread. It is only the cheering word that he receives from his friend that saves him from utter gloom and dismay. In the reading of this letter he finds joy and freedom from sorrow. He appeals to his friend to continue writing to him for in their letters and friendship he finds freedom from mental agony and the slavery of his hard lot. He asks his friend to whom he dedicates this poem to be to him what Judah was to Benjamin of old and to restore him to his home and family.²¹

15. Written in his youth after his departure from Cordova, this poem testifies to the inner strength and determination of Samuel to rise above his difficulties and aspire after the highest. He knows no obstruction until he reaches the goal he set for himself. He is not satisfied with the mere pleasures of physical living. While his body is at rest, his soul is restless, seeking a higher fulfillment. His thought soars to the highest heavens and finds no rest. He has friends who are really his enemies envious of his ambitious nature who accuse him of seeking wealth when it is really his soul striving to reach the heights. Since Cordova did not offer him the opportunity for this development he planned to wander on until he found his heart's desire, where his soul hunger could be satisfied. His desire was not for personal greatness. He sought only to have the strength to help his friends and loved ones and to admonish his enemies. His supposed friends do not understand his wanderings and restless activity; that the spirit of God in man compels him to create and strive without question as to the advantage to be derived. The soul of such a man, like the moon, seeks to rise to the heights and finds no rest until he has accomplished his high purpose and the world wonders at his achievements. He swears by God that he will not desist from striving and will overcome all obstacles until he has gained his goal.

As for his friend whose friendship and love is engraved upon his heart, may he be saved from all harm and may God watch over him.

16. According to Harkavy, dedicated to R'Joseph ben Samuel, the judge. Those who knew his fathers, who were freemen, will wonder at his servitude to home and family as shown by his unhappiness at leaving. What is a pure soul worth unless it serve those who are pure of soul such as my friend whom I love? Only he who serves those who are greater in wisdom is really the great man. "Thou, Joseph, who hast added wisdom to that of thy fathers and hast made fools wise....thou art more precious to me than myself. I have loved thee since my childhood, days of happiness and quiet when evil slumbered, days of goodness in a good land." This refers to a contrast with their present state of uncertainty and separation.

17. A letter in answer to a judge, his good friend, whose name is given as Isaac in the poem.²² This poem is written in a note of despair. All wanderings and travail have an end but his never cease. All illness and disease may be cured but his - the sickness of separation from loved friends can not be healed. He calls to his friends to cry over the separation and the fire of sadness that has consumed his soul even as Israel cried after the death of Nadab and Abihu. He does not condemn his friend for leaving him for in his departure Samuel can recall only his fine character while his flaws disappear and are forgotten. "But when he returns and my sadness and pain are healed then I will reprove him for leaving me." Immediately Samuel recalls that this would be committing a wrong against his dearest friend who did not plan to cause pain by leaving but he had to leave of necessity. Therefore, he admonishes his mouth to speak but words of justice and love as his friend Isaac. "He has battled in learning with the learned ones and prevailed over them." Samuel goes on to

praise Isaac. R'Isaac is a fortress to all those who are oppressed, exiles and poor inhabitants. "Evil doers and wicked men realize that you will not be perverted in justice, therefore, they will repent and do good instead of evil." Samuel speaks of Isaac's letters as cool, fresh waters in a day of heat and drought. Samuel ends his poem with praise for the beauty of Isaac's letter. The nagid asks that Isaac accept his praise in answer to his letter, altho his letter is much superior to Samuel's feeble attempt. "But as it is impossible to compare winter and summer or a princess to a maid servant, so is it impossible to compare my poem to yours."

18. This poem really is the heading of a poem written to Samuel Hanagid by his friend R'Isaac ben Khalfon. The latter had divorced his wife who was the daughter of the grammarian and poet Isaac ben Kafron. Great troubles arose and the matter was brought to the Beth Din and it appears that ben Kafron was successful in the suit. Isaac was very angry and in this poem renounces his friends, the judges, who did not come to his aid.

19. In the poem that follows the above opening lines he complains to Samuel that there is no justice in the affairs between men. None can be relied upon in time of trouble.²³

20. In this poem we have the nagid's answer to R'Isaac ben Khalfon. Should he really feel that the brutal person and he who suffers innocently are equal before the law? Are the lion and the lamb to be compared? How could he say that all are equal when he himself is superior to many in his knowledge of the Torah and higher learning? What other favors could God have granted him? Even nobles are below him in authority by reason of his wisdom. He exhorts Isaac to desist from such expressions of lack of faith and to keep his mouth from abominations. For all of men's words are written in the heavenly record and measured by God on high.

21. Written to a friend after after his enforced departure from Cordova.²⁴ He appeals to the friend to come to his aid since evil days have come upon him; he is alone and friendless. Though he is inwardly tormented by his misfortune, he faces the world bravely, hiding from it the pain he feels. He does not fear time. If it catches him in its meshes, with the help of his Creator he will overcome it. These verses illustrate the inner spiritual strength of the nagid. Lion-hearted, he faced all difficulties. Even when he was upon evil days he did not abandon the hope that he would be raised to glory and splendor.²⁵

22. This poem is very difficult of explanation. Its beginning is missing. The first stanza may have reference to the age of Joseph's brothers as they were leaving Egypt. But for the most part, the meaning is very obscure.

23. This poem, entitled *שִׁיר הַתְּנָנִים*. "Thanksgiving," was written when the nagid sailed with some merchants and they were attacked by a giant tuna fish. It was believed that a ship at the time could never withstand the attack of this sea monster. But the ship was saved after great danger. The nagid composed this poem upon that occasion and described what happened.²⁶

The first few lines express the doubt of the nagid that he would ever find surcease from sorrow. He probably meant to express his frame of mind when this new trouble appeared. All lies in the hand of God. He who bringeth low will raise according to His will even though we can not understand His ways. The poet then addresses his soul and says, "Know that not for naught did God bring me upon this earth." He created him for great things. Therefore, he adjures his heart not to fear trouble when it comes for God will rescue His servant from all harm. Praise the Lord always! The following line is missing but the poet continues to tell his heart to place its

faith and trust in God. He points to the present incident and shows how God rescued him from the wild beast of the sea. He describes its dimensions in exact detail.²⁷ It was of gigantic size and appeared like an island in the midst of the sea. The travellers were stricken dumb with fear as it approached the ship and reared up on its tail like some giant tree. In terror every man prayed to his God. And the poet said that God punishes evil doers in many ways. If he is to be punished for his sins then he must die. Indeed, he is doomed. Still he prays to God and pleads that he be given time to repent his evil ways. For this great danger has aroused him from his sleep of iniquity and sinfulness. But, if he must die, then let his death atone for all his sins. As he prayed thus, the danger increased for the monster dived into the sea even as Pharaoh and his people of old. It swam under the ship in order to turn it over and all souls aboard were stricken with fear. But God had mercy and the monster entered the depths of the sea and disappeared completely. Thus were the people saved from certain death by the mighty power of God. And the nagid answers triumphantly that in this manner does God guard over his loved ones and take vengeance upon the wicked. It is God who gave it strength and He commands it to do harm or desist from destroying. After all of this, the poet gives thanks and promises never to forget God's goodness. Then follow his articles of faith. His God has no beginning and no end; resurrection shall come with the geuloh; that Moses and his Torah are true; that the words of our sages are true and their learning and wisdom are pleasant; that there is reward and punishment in the world to come; that God rules over land and sea, over the heavens and all their stars. "His fear is upon me and His law is perfect in my heart."²⁸

This poem is of importance for its demonstration of the poetic ability of Samuel Hanagid. In it he shows his graphic sense of de-

scription. The whole poem leads up in its dramatic intensity to a climax that is the essence of a graphic narrative. It also shows thorough familiarity with Biblical and talmudic sources through profuse references to historical and halachic material.

24. Dedicated to a friend whose name is given in the first line as Aba Hassan - noblest among men, of fine disposition to whom the nagid is pledged in bonds of friendship. "If I do evil by my friends, let the angels condemn me before the Heavenly Tribunal. True to all my friends, how can I forget a friendship as old as ours? With my mother's milk did I imbibe my love for you which was written like ink upon my heart. Time can not erase this writing from my innermost parts."

Here is truly a noble expression of real devotion and unselfish friendship rarely paralleled in odes of friendship.

25. This poem, entitled נצח, was written after the nagid's experience with Zuhair of Almeria and his vizier Ibn Abbas, arch-enemy of Samuel. After his rescue he wrote this poem describing what occurred and how God assisted him in winning victory over his enemies.

This poem begins with exaltation of God, His greatness, His marvelous deeds. His is above all praise because His deeds are great. All presumptuous ones who glory in their wickedness will be caught in the trap of their own evil while the righteous who cry unto God will be answered in their day of sorrow. There is both justice and a judge. There is order in the universe. The guilty are paid according to their deeds and there is One Who does good for the upright and Who rewards those who study the Torah and keep its commandments. "And if there are enemies who make a covenant for my evil, I, too, have the covenant which God has made with the fathers. Therefore, since He has rescued me, how can I refrain from declaring the works

of God."

in metered verse

The nagid then continues in rhymed prose to narrate the whole story of his experiences and conflict with Zuhair and Ibn Abbas as we have recorded it earlier. This poem is our most complete source for this period of Samuel's life. The description of the battle of Badis and Zuhair is very vividly given. In the midst of the narrative the nagid breaks forth into passionate prayer calling upon God to destroy the enemies who seek his life and to come to his aid as He did in the time of Barak and Deborah. He calls upon the patriarchs to rise from their graves and plead his case before the throne of the Almighty, calling upon Him to exercise justice and mercy. Then follows the glorious paean of victory and the nagid's description of the battlefield and the fallen enemy. A striking picture is given of the desolation that surrounds the dead on the battlefield. He ends with the call to his friends to join with him in praise and thanksgiving and to let the world know of his redemption. Sura and Fumbedita are also mentioned.

26. Poem written in eulogy of Hai Gaon²⁹ In grief over Hai's death the poet states that there is no counsel, no wisdom, no escape from death. He calls upon his friends to come to his aid for he will mourn unceasingly. He will go about the city in tears and lamentation. The death of Hai is greater than the destruction of both temples. He bewails the death of Hai who in life reminded all who looked upon him of the exalted prophets of old, who instructed all Israel in the Torah and righteousness. He proclaims a day of fasting and lamentation as an eternal anniversary. For his good deeds and learning he accomplished as much as one could do in a hundred years but now, with his death, it was as though he had never existed. According to his wisdom should a man be praised and his deeds in public. Let his (Hai) learning go with him as sustenance upon his long journey.³⁰

He wails over the book that has become hidden, over the Mishna of R'Judah Hanasi and that of R'Hiya, over the loss of the whole Talmud and its study and over its master who spread learning afar. Alas, the oppressed have lost their only protector and doubts in halacha and tradition have increased. Where will wisdom now be found? Where will ye find bread when there is no provider? For the Torah weeps and mourns over the spouse of its youth. And over the teachers who teach wrongly and who do the work of God presumptuously and who elevate themselves in law without justice. And he who knew the errors and wrongs must be silent and observe all the tumult and confusion. For truth has departed from Pumbedita and Sura. Though he left no children so that his learning might be retained he has many pupils in the Moslem and Christian lands whom he nurtured in learning and prepared for leadership. He calls upon those who persecuted Hai Gaon to realize the extent of their loss; that there is none to take his place. The poet closes this eloquent eulogy calling upon God to give to Hai an exalted throne in the world to come and to reward him to live and see the rebuilding of Jerusalem. "Let his portion be with Moses, Jotham, and Hezekiah and with the patriarchs who did the will of God at Moriah."

27. The nagid lauds³¹ the traveller and wanderer over the face of the earth and elevates him above the man who remains stationary and makes no change in habitat. While the former experiences new things and learns more about the world, the latter learns nothing new. The poem was probably a defense of his own life at the time; a life of which we find him complaining bitterly in other places. Yet, he felt that he had been enriched by these experiences and knew more about the world. Therefore, he turns to men and advises them to acquire all kinds of new knowledge, especially that of mathematics. He welcomes all who have difficult questions to turn to him

for solutions. He concludes by adjuring all to admire the man of travel and wisdom above the dwellers in the city.

28. This poem, the beginning of which is missing, is a sort of reflection, pessimistic in nature and deterministic in philosophy. In it the nagid expresses the impotence of man and his plans in the scheme of the universe. What can man accomplish when God has already done all? What counsel can be taken when all counsel has been given?

It must be said that this poem is of a different strain entirely from the mood expressed in other poems of the nagid. While in the latter there is voiced an irrepressible optimism and determination to overcome all obstacles, here we are confronted with dejected resignation and submission to forces beyond man's control.

29. In this poem the nagid exhorts his friend to join him in drinking and merrymaking. The world smiles upon them as a young maiden. The skies are quiet in the darkness....

30. An ode to his wanderings, this poem may be placed in the group which the nagid wrote after his departure from Cordova. Wandering has been decreed upon him in the heavenly record and travel through many lands. And he upon whom wandering is decreed must wander as Cain of old and fly continually like the dove.

31. In this poem³² the nagid contrasts his true friends with those who only simulated friendship because of his important position. Among these were many prominent Jews who later fled Granada as a result of a civil war.

"My heart in the midst of me is a closed city and love of friends is there treasured." But, he goes on to say, not all of his friends are equal. There are those who are as necessary to him as his right hand while others are unnecessary appendages. He is on guard against the sycophants who praise him with their lips but who are continually seeking his downfall. These supposed friends honor

him in public but find comfort in the prediction of astrologers that his end is nigh. They wait for the fulfillment of these prophecies. But even as the barren woman can not hope to bear children, so their plan can not come to fruition for God has prepared Samuel for greatness. When he does die it will be in due time. Then in all cities will be heard the call, "Come and wail over the loss of this great man of the generation in wisdom and Torah."

The reader finds the last line somewhat immodest. Yet, exaggeration and flowery expression are characteristic of oriental poetry.

32. Written in praise of his friend Joseph ben Samuel, a judge. He addresses his friend as loved by God and loved by himself. He girded himself in righteousness. He performed the law as though it were given at Sinai and established everything according to its absolute truth. His principles were the measuring rod for all the people and they did not swerve from his decisions. Samuel declares himself a friend and associate of anyone who labors in learning the truth of Torah and who wrestles with the Talmud and conquers it. He has much wisdom, wealth, and greatness; yet he bows before R'Joseph. When he sees him in his saintliness then he recognizes and knows that Joseph is wise and learned in the Torah and compares himself to a servant before him and places Joseph in reverence as his master whom he would serve with all his heart.

33. From the contents of the poem³³ it appears that the nagid wrote it to one of his friends asking him to provide for the scribe who had written the Torah for him. The poem opens with the appeal to the friend to do him the favor he asks. And the scholar who will be supported will do everything that his friend commands. He will guard himself against all ritual errors. If the friend assists him then God will surely aid him. He will be loved and respected by all as an upright man and a benefactor of his friends.

34. The poet turns³⁴ to his God and prays that He behold him in this time of trouble and hearken to his supplication. May He remember his servant that he be not ashamed in his hope. "I go through the waters, O Lord, save me from my fright. I go through burning fire, rescue me from my fear. I am in sorrow and can not multiply my words. Do the desire of my heart and hasten to my aid. And if I am not worthy, do it for the sake of my son and my learning."

35. This poem is called אֵלֶּה. The poet³⁵ begins with the praise of God's goodness. From year to year He does great things - miracles and benefits as to the patriarchs of old and to the great men of Israel's past. Every year he passes through the depth of the sea and a path is made in the mighty deep. Every year he passes through fire and the flames become his protector and life. Therefore, to God is due all praise for He is God and from His hand comes all strength. "I will tell of Thy glory in the gates and praise Thy name in the midst of the congregation....Thou hast redeemed me; for a year Thou hast saved my life in time of trouble and on the day of my woe Thou hast been my support."

The poet then goes on to narrate in vivid style all the events which led up to the final battle with Ibn Abbad and the death of the latter.

One finds here the faith and trust in God which is so characteristic of the nagid's poetry. This man had no doubt that God had watched over him since childhood, shielded him from all sorrow and affliction and had raised him from obscurity to his great position. It is the outpouring of the thankful soul for the manifold blessings showered upon him by a gracious father and protector.

Above all the poet is conscious of his own unworthiness to receive the beneficence of God. "Is this for me," he cries, "for I

am but as a worm, not man, smallest among men, laden with sin and burdened with iniquity. I am unworthy of all the good Thou hast performed for me. If Thou dost reward me in this world so munificently, how shall I appear before Thee on the day of judgment?"

The last stanza contains the aim of the entire *שיר*. In it the poet says, "when your children ask what is this, those questioned will answer them. It is a song of praise to God who saved His loved one. It is a praise, great and glorious, to the great God whose deeds are great."

36. Written to a friend with whom he had made peace after a quarrel. The name of the friend is given as R'Joseph. Until this time of renewed friendship the nagid has beheld the world as dark for him and time as painful and full of disappointments. But now everything has changed to pleasantness and amiability. Has the cloud of darkness around the sun been removed that it shines forth now in all its undimmed brilliance? The poet knew that forgiveness and friendship were sure to be renewed for both of the men were forgiving in nature and could not nurse anger against each other. If anyone were to ask why he had forsaken his friend since his love for him was so strong, he would answer that it was his heart clothed in pride. He could not subdue his pride and teach his heart patience and long suffering. If he could, he would have brought his heart and placed at the feet of his friend as a servant who seeks mercy of his master. But how can he, the younger, control his anger when his heart is filled with pride reaching up into the heavens? How can he control his heart which considers its shame as worse ^{as} ~~than~~ death? This heart of his so stalwart that if it entered the field of battle which is like the raging sea in its turbulence, even then it would not flinch nor cower but would drink of the cup of death with laughter upon its lips even as one drinks some water when thirsty. Ask wisdom and if

it is too difficult ask R'Joseph to whom wisdom is sister, whose wisdom is great and whose words are healing balm to all sufferers. The nagid is willing to give his all to save his friend, even his very life. He welcomes the return of friendship. The letter of friendship which he has received will grow more precious as time goes on. The wounds of strife and contention were as the sickness of leprosy but now that anger has ceased and peace exists between them, the day of purity has come and the two letters written one to the other are as the birds which are brought by the impure man on the day of his purity.³⁶ "We have seized time and compelled it to change its evil design with regard to our friendship." A man as noble as R'Joseph must support his friend so that friendship will never cease.

In the following stanzas the nagid speaks of the worthy elements of his soul which entitle him to the everlasting love and regard of his friend. God has given him an eloquent mouth that he might continually laud his loved friends. Further, he has been given a deep heart, deep as the sea. His confidences and love are not open to every individual. Only the rare friend can reach down to draw out of it the love and sentiment he feels. Such is R'Joseph who brought the friendship out of the depths of his heart, even as Moses was taken out of the depths of the waters. So great is the power of R' Joseph that mighty men are constrained to do his bidding and he leads them about as Moses led his flock.

"Hearken unto the song of your friend, see how he has beautified his language. Give ear to his words. He has written this poem in your honor, in one day, and it is more precious than if it had taken a year. In it he has bound half his heart and the rest he has kept to live."

37. In this poem Samuel envisioned certain prophecies while

he slept which predicted the death of his arch-enemy, the vizier of Malaga, Abu Jéfr Ibn Abi Musá. This prophecy Samuel records as follows:

Ibn Abbas and his friends are destroyed. Let praise to God be renewed. And his associate in his evil design will be threshed as the wheat is beaten in order to remove the grains. Where is all their complaint and evil-doing and power....Let God's name be sanctified!

38. Then came the actualization of the prophecy. Not many days had passed when Abi Musá was killed. When informed of this event, the nagid wrote the poem entitled ٩٧٤٢ or "Tidings."

The poet begins with the exaltation and adoration of God similar in its content and expression to many liturgical passages of laudation.

To God is glory and majesty and His is the kingdom and strength. The poet beholds and relates his glory to men. To Him are grandeur and honor over heaven and earth. How much did God elevate a man who was His enemy and He did honor him who sought to do evil unto His loved ones. And this man blasphemed against God as Haman of old and said, "I see Him not. Oh Thou Harbinger of good tidings, let me understand, lift thy voice. Is it true what I have heard, how did it happen?" The poet goes on to give the answer of the man with tidings adjoining Samuel to rejoice in dancing, drinking, and loud praise and exaltation of God for Abi Musá has fallen in the revolt at Malaga and has joined Samuel's enemy Ibn Abbas, in the land of darkness. The entire city rejoices even as the nagid. Samuel answers that the news is sweet as honey to him and invites him to dress himself in rich raiment and to go among Samuel's friends and acquaint them with the entire happening. Then addressing his two departed enemies, he adjures them to ally themselves in Sheol; let Abi Musá rot as Ibn Abbas and let his name be forgotten even as Ibn Abbas before him.

The land is well rid of their evil machinations. He further addresses the grave-digger who is to dig the grave of Abi Musi to dig it to the lowest depths, that he would reward him richly. As for him, he would perfume himself and robe himself in gala attire and rejoice in festive manner. "And if one should say, 'Who has done all this as you willed it?' I will answer, 'Do you not know, God doeth this?' Be silent and write this down as a memorial in your book. Read them on the Sabbath. Let them be upon thy heart and make them known to thy children."

38. In eulogy over the death of his brother Abu Abraham (R' Isaac) when the nagid rent his garment over his death.³⁷ The poet begins with the stirring lament, "Why should I rend my garment when my heart is torn as a garment eaten by moths? Why should they shower dust and ashes upon my clothes when the innermost parts of my heart are as earthen pits? Pain and woes have wracked my bones, why would you break glasses and wares as a sign of mourning? Soon the rents of the garment can be sewed together but the torn fragments of my heart will remain as thorns to prick my innermost being. The dust and the ashes which you place on my clothes will be removed and my garments cleaned but the rents which have been created in my heart and the pain of my heart cleaves to my broken frame. Because of my brother's death happiness and peace are removed from me forever."

This is a moving poem of lamentation. The poet shows genuine sorrow which, in its poignancy and pathos, leaves a deep impression upon the reader.

39. Lamentation over the death of the nagid's brother. Longest of all his compositions referring to his death.³⁸ The poet in the midst of despair cries out: "Let the day of my death hasten, let the day of my birth be forgotten. Quickly I will be carried into the dust and I will no longer see evil. Is there a pain equal to

mine; is there a blow like that which I have received? To whom shall I recount the pain of my heart and who will be stirred by my woe? Who will hearken to my bitter tale? The poet goes on, addressing his soul and offering it as redemption for his brother's soul. Would that his soul be taken instead of his brother! Then comes a real expression of love: "My brother who, while he existed, I was, but now that he is gone I am as though I had been but am no more." The nagid feels that he is being treacherous in still being alive while his brother is dead. If he thinks of his brother at night then sleep is stolen by this memory. When he feasts and thinks of his brother's dwelling place and his fast in eternal death, his food turns to poison. And when he thinks of his brother thirsting in his grave, then....

Here the poem ends. But enough has been retained to reveal the love and affection which the nagid entertained for his older brother. One feels that he was ever obsessed with the thought of his brother and that he could find no peace nor enjoy rest while the thought preyed continually on his mind.

40. The beginning of this poem is missing. It also is in eulogy of his deceased brother. "Would that I could be a burnt offering. And to those who would comfort me and say that time will yet console me and that I will find rest from my sorrows, I answered in trembling that this can not be for after the death of my brother only the curse of God would follow me if I enjoy peace and happiness." In agony the poet prefers death to this unbearable sorrow. We hear him say, "Hasten to my aid for to bear pain such as this my soul can not."

41. Written after the death of his brother when a friend attempted to console him. He calls to his friend and says that consolation is impossible. How can he live when his brother has been placed in the grave? "Depart from me," he calls, do not increase your words,

leave me and stand off. Bring me instead the sea-monster, /יָם, who has been bereaved of its young and we will become friends and both mourn together. But my woe is greater. There is no sorrow like mine and no pain as mine for the death of my brother."

Again we are struck with the tragedy and sorrow which overcomes the nagid.³⁹

42. Written when the nagid visited the grave of his brother on the day after his burial.⁴⁰ The poem is addressed to the grave of his brother. He has returned there and blessed his brother. Yesterday did he bury him and yet his bitterness remains. See, he calls to him in greeting. Surely he hears his voice when he calls with all his strength. The poet pleads, "Answer me. Will you recognize my lamentation and wailing over your grave?" And further he asks, "Has your body withered into the dust, have your bones lost their marrow and fallen into nothingness? Has your strength departed in the night even as mine from much weeping?"

Then comes the note of faith and trust. "I have left thee, my brother, as security in the hands of my God and I trust that you will find peace in going to Him."

43. Also written at the grave of his brother and addressed to a friend. Samuel swears by the living God that the fire of pain and sorrow will burn continually in his bosom until he has been laid to rest at his brother's side. It is a remarkable vow of undying loyalty and a promise that his brother will be an unforgettable, treasured memory as long as the poet is in the land of the living.

44. Written after a visit to his brother prior to his departure for his own city of Granada. He wishes his brother farewell affectionately while he departs for home. He leaves but his brother remains in his memory, ineffaceable. To those who leave the city in order to escort him on his way he addresses himself saying, how can

they escort him, sorrowing and head bowed, when their leader (his brother) is not with them!⁴¹

45. Written after the seven-day interval of ^mmourning over his brother's death.

The days of mourning have passed but the days of pain and sorrow still remain. Nights of care and travail have not passed. The poet bursts into all the expression of sorrow that we know to demonstrate his great sadness over the death of his brother. Is this, then, his reward? Is this to be his fate that he must linger in sorrow and lamentation? "Were an enemy to have attacked my brother I would have driven him off; and had it been possible to redeem him from death I would have given my entire fortune to save his soul from perdition. But what can I do when these are the commands of God?"

46. Written a month after his brother's death. The poet asks - Is it possible to rejoice and enjoy himself in the company of his friends. If he did this he would be treacherous, a faithless man. But no, he will cling to his mourning and clasp his hands in woe. He will not make feasts for his voice will still resound in woe in his home because of his brother whose voice has forever ceased.

47. While travelling he came near his brother's grave and went to visit it. This poem was written upon this occasion. It seems from this poem that time has not been able to dull the pain that the nagid felt over the death of his brother. Here is felt the same pain and tragedy that pervaded his expressions immediately after his brother's death.

The sea is not wide enough to separate him from his brother and to prevent him from coming to his grave and lying prostrate upon it. Indeed, if he should fail to visit him he would be betraying his love. "Alas, my brother, I sit by your grave and because of you

there is yet a great pain in my heart even as great as when you died." How can his pain cease when its cause remains! His brother is dead. Behold, he greets him but there is no answer. There is only the silence of the grave. "I come to your dwelling place but you do not come forth to greet me. You no longer smile with me. I see thee not and thine eyes do not behold me for the Sheol has become thy dwelling place and the grave thy abode."

But yet the nagid consoles himself with the thought that his righteous brother has found eternal peace, that God's spirit hovers over him. Sadly, the poet continues, "I return to my land for they have closed thee in the ground. I slumber for a time and then awake but thou sleepest on forever. Therefore, until the day of my change (death) the fire caused by thy departure will burn continually in my bosom."

48. Lamentation over his brother's death. The poet addresses himself to time and asks, "Treacherous time, why is it my fate to long continually for my brother?" Time it is that has stolen him. When will it return him so that he might enjoy his presence? From much weeping his eyes are swollen.

In despair the poet calls to his brother: "Because of you, Isaac, you who have gone into oblivion and can not return, I cry and wail. During thy lifetime I imagined thou wouldst live forever but with thy death I have acquired new wisdom, for time did not thus design."

49. This poem was written by the nagid when he no longer received letters from his brother while he continued to receive other letters. "In my soul is the memory of a brother whose letters were as water to my parched soul. And if today a letter came from his place, the memory of his letters would return and a burning fire

would be kindled within me."⁴²

50. Written when the nagid, hearing other people bewailing the death of brothers, remembered his own and mourned with them. He recalls his own elder brother and cries among them. And when he observed them forgetting their loss, he reproved them for their sin as though they had mourned and wept for his own brother.

51. A year after his brother's death the nagid wrote the following poem of which the end is missing. "A twelve-month has passed and thou hast not found succor from the trap or perhaps the clods of earth have become sweet and thou dost prefer decay and the worms to the company of men?"

Again, as though expecting an answer to his plea, the nagid adjures his brother to return and assume his rightful position of honor among the elders of the city. But then, realizing that all is in vain and that his brother is dead never to return he cries out, "But how can he rise whose flesh is withered and whose bones have dried like dry trees and he is wrapped in the earth while his spirit and soul are bound up in heaven, whose flesh the worms devour...."

Again, we observe the constant feeling of pain and sorrow that continually filled the consciousness of the nagid, giving him no rest.

From here on Harkavy records in his *זכרון אברהם*, the poems of the second manuscript of the nagid's poetry. Here, as in the first manuscript, we also have the headings written by his son Jehosef who edited these poems. According to his testimony, the poem was written by his father to Abu Abraham. Some of it is missing, making its meaning obscure.

(1) Abu Abraham expresses great sorrow in this poem. He refers to some sorrow that has come upon him and has robbed him of peace and contentment. The corpse is laid in the grave and its bones wither. There remains without tears and darkness has no light. He

has no more strength. In this poem is a petition. Had time not left him his son Joseph then he would have died of thirst in trouble and siege. May God be with Joseph in time of trouble and may they both be blessed by the great God.

(2) Addressed to Abu Abraham, a friend. The poem is written in a cheerful mood adjuring his friend to enjoy happiness and light. Uprightness is his because his actions are righteous. His soul is pure as the unblemished sapphire stone. He is the chosen and best of all God's creations. Why is his soul disturbed and his heart stirred so sadly? Why has he become tired of living because of temporary evil? Why should he fear the consequences of time when God has given him a special purpose? It is as though he rebelled against God at the burning of Korah,⁴³ and as though he had complained against Moses at the waters of Mara.⁴⁴

The poet goes on to address himself to his friend. "Know," he says, "time is like a young wife in pregnancy. Even as you know not to what she will give birth, so you do not know what time will bring." Part of the next line is missing and its meaning is, therefore, obscure. But in the following line we find the nagid quoting from his friend's letter. His friend complains that time has dealt treacherously with him, "that his joy passes like the dew." But the nagid tells him not to be sad for he will defend him and afford him so much pleasure that he will cause him to forget all his trouble. "Thou sayest that I have swept over thee like a flood which leaves nothing in its wake, if because of my unconcealed love I did reprove thee, then like the sea I will bring thee much good which will be related to the last generation. And when my deed is mentioned you will praise my name."

The nagid then continues to console his friend telling him

that he need not fear "that he will die of thirst." The nagid tells his friend that he will ^usibjugate time so that it conducts itself favorably and properly. His friend will be able to work his will and play with time as with a bird. "And if people should wonder when they behold how I have sweetened that which was at first bitter, the wise men will answer that even as it is miraculous to go forth in battle and conquer David or his general Joab,⁴⁵ so time can not do battle and prevail against the nagid."

(3) In response to the letter of the nagid advising trust in God and optimism in the future course of events, we have the poem which Abu ⁴Abraham sent to Samuel. He complains bitterly that he is caught in the pits of wickedness and given over to treacherous servants. He is being punished for his sin and is as prey in the mouths of wild animals, each of which works its destruction upon him. All his glory has departed. He is tired and exhausted. His soul mourns within him and his heart is in pain and his beard unkempt. He goes on to describe his poverty and his ragged condition. He despairs of relief. It seems to him that his suffering will be endless.

But he feels that he is being righteously punished for his sinfulness, that he can not raise his head and ask pardon of God. Were not God his refuge he would have become like Sodom. He then appeals to Samuel and his son Jehosef as one who was born in their house. He lauds the nagid for his name and renown which has spread far and wide. He has naught to fear. God who has led him thus far will guard him further. He need not fear for good is laid up for him. Time is his obedient servant. He tells him that he will return to his former position of glory and remove all pain and sorrow. He will pierce the eyes of his enemies and he will trumpet forth in victory. He speaks also of his departure.

(4) In answer to his friend's letter the nagid writes that his

words are deeply planted in his heart. He praises his friend for the wisdom of his remarks as well as their poetic balance and beauty. "Thy mouth prepares kisses for thy friends while thy right hand is ready to administer blows to thine enemies." "If thy sharp words were applied to treacherous time it would wound it mortally" (so that it could not work evil). Why does he revile time for repaying him with evil for his good deeds? while it makes prosper the evil doers? He is not the only one who is righteous and suffers. Many of the just are deprived of all goodness. If time has hastened to do him evil, so is its way among the great men. "And if time seeks to excuse its evil by claiming to seek your sin, you will say that it was your evil inclination and your unworthy thoughts as though you really had sinned." But the day will come when the records will be opened and the righteous separated from the wicked; then his righteousness will stand clear. If time has wronged him up to now the nagid is ready to save him from the evil consequences brought about by time. The nagid swears to subjugate time and prevent it from doing evil. If at present his friend suffers want and sorrow the time will come when he will have plenty. He will yet defeat the evil machinations of time.

The nagid then refers to his friend's letter in which he asked why Samuel is concerned and fearful as a man in great sorrow when success attends all his efforts and time is subservient as a slave to do all his bidding. To this the nagid now answers that the wise man is always concerned and worried about the future and is dissatisfied with the temporary success of small aims and seeks new fulfillment of ever higher aims. There is no good in mere contentment and physical satisfaction for the man of spirit. Though he may remain silent, his deeds, he hopes, will relate his greatness even as trumpets and shofars. If he did hide himself his deeds would

tell his story until the end of days. Though he walk in the valley among men his heart is directed towards the heights. In answer to his friend he asks that he (Abu Abraham) does not leave (as he wrote) for he is a real friend whose love is in his heart. Samuel would ~~be dwell~~ ^{dwell} with him who is wise, learned, and noble even though in suffering than to dwell in security.

(5) In this poem of consolation⁴⁶ Ibn Khalfon praises the noble characteristics of Samuel, his generosity, his uprightness, simplicity, and sincerity, so rare a group of qualities that they are far from most men. He mentions that Samuel is ever ready to help those who come to him for help. He has not been spoiled by rulership for, while all princes seek only their own gain, his only desire is goodness.

He sympathizes with Samuel in his sorrow. His sorrow is great and his cry reaches even unto God Who hears cries. God has tested Samuel and found him pure gold, not wanting in faith. He has tested him with suffering as one tests the loyalty of his only son in order to give him understanding that it may be accounted unto him as righteousness.

Therefore, he feels mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. When he sees his present trouble he is in sorrow; but when he thinks of his future greatness, his heart rejoices. God has engraved his greatness and will restore him to honor. He concludes by adjuring the nagid to dwell quietly and in certainty, to guard himself. "And may the sleep of thine eyes be forever sweet."

(6) This poem is headed "And Ibn Khalfon, in the letter which he enclosed with these strophes, refers to the affairs of the nagid's enemies who rejoiced on hearing of these unfortunate events, and he wrote in this letter ~~many~~ strophes in which he curses these enemies."

The face of the world is like the neck of the leper, therefore, she merits to be spat upon even as a leper. The world punishes those who love her and the revealed nakedness of her lovers is immutable. Therefore, if you can, let them drink wormwood that its sweetness may deceive them and satisfy their thirst, etc.

(7) This poem is answer to the poems written to the nagid by R'Isaac ben Khalfon when Samuel was removed from his government position to which he had been appointed because of the libel which was spread about him by his enemies. Two of his friends were killed and his own life was in danger.

The nagid writes that the two friends have become as one due to the great love which exists between them and which serves as a unifying bond. Were anyone to inscribe love upon the heart of the nagid which was not as indestructible and as loyal as that of Ibn Khalfon, he would remove it, for only true love had the right to a place in his heart. He likes and dislikes what his friend does. They are of one spirit. Not all friends are so. There is the friend who shows great grief at your sorrow but who inwardly rejoices at your sorrow. There is also the friend who remains loyal so long as good fortune accompanies you but when you are beset by trouble, becomes your enemy and refuses you any aid.

The poet then goes on to describe the wickedness of these men who ostensibly appear friendly but who are ready to take advantage of one at the first opportunity.

But then turning gratefully to his friend, he says, "But thou art not so: thy heart remains loyal to a friend and thy hand is heavy upon thine enemies." He is sincere in his loves and hates and employs no dissimulation.

Then turning once again to his enemies, he goes on to say that though his friend Ibn Khalfon regards them as snakes and

scorpions and even though they, because of their treachery feel themselves to be such, he, the nagid, considers them nothing more than worms who have no strength and are trampled under foot. They envy his position and wealth but they battle against him to no avail, for what can the mosquito do to the lion. Their lies can not prevail against him. He predicts their defeat and flight.

Again, overcome with his affection, he turns to his friend and testifies to the fact that he joins with him in his sorrow and that he, the nagid, can depend upon him to feel with him in his trouble.

The poet then asserts his faith, He justifies God for having brought these troubles upon him and prays that God will remember the trouble He has brought upon him and will recall his good deeds.

He grieves over his friends who were killed because of the accusation levelled against him. All bitterness is as sweet as honey to his taste except the knowledge of their death. He rejoices that he did not fall but that he had merely to relinquish his prestige which was but a burden depriving him of all freedom. Now, since his position has been taken from him, they have gained their desire and will no longer seek his life. The loss of his position has proved his salvation.

Confidently, he believes he will reach a still greater position. He thanks his friend for his words of good cheer. They have mollified his pain and God will surely consider it unto him as a righteous deed. He will surely fare well and no cry will be heard in his home.

He further apologizes for having written so hurriedly and compares it to a leaf whirled around by the wind. For who can write a poem like his friend, which pours honey and fine oil upon the head. "But even as the poor man who can not sacrifice a bull or a sheep is permitted to bring two doves for sacrifice, so will you accept

this poor offering of mine."

(8) This poem⁴⁷ was written when the nagid visited a group of people studying the Talmud with great exactness. He characterizes them and their teacher. The nagid was very much displeased with the garrulousness, asperity, and anger of the disputants. He compares their talk to the braying and bellowing of cattle. They think that with their affected piety, their zizioth, beards, and turbans they can be leaders and teachers of the academy. He also criticizes the impoliteness and uncouthness of their teacher.

From this general description, if we are to accept the word of the nagid, it appears that there was much ado about the study of the Talmud but that little was actually known. Those who could cry loudest were given the position of authority and affected piety was prevalent.

(9) Written to R'Samuel ben Joseph, one of the Babylonian ר'סמאל who came to Spain and became a strong friend of the nagid.

The poet says that in the middle of the night his heart reproves him and orders him to leave off slumbering, to look to the heavens and bless Him who stretched them out; to behold their hosts and to relate their grandeur, to know their Creator Who alone knows their number, and the sun which stalks among them majestically, all of whom God has strewn over the heavens. They revolve in the heavens and do the will of their Master.

To these stars who cast such glorious light add a friend whose light is as great as theirs. He is the man who sat in the gate of the city as a judge in Babylon. He chastized the rich and mighty of the land, paid no heed to their position nor to the resplendent garments which they wore. He remembered only the righteous and innocent and healed their hurts.

He then exhorts Samuel ben Joseph to hearken to him whose words

are engraven out of sapphire. For the place does not honor the man, the man honors his place. Having previously spoken of Babylon he adds that its greatness is due only to the presence of scholars and men of understanding. However, when great men leave a country then the land remains desolate and their houses of learning like deserts. Therefore, who will despise this great man (R'Samuel) who is the leader of this people. Since he has departed from Babylon the schools of Sura and Pumbedita have become desolate while Spain, the present dwelling place of Samuel, drinks to the full from the well of his learning. Were he now in Babylon, where the tabernacle of Abbaya once rested, then he would take the place of Rav Hai Gaon and his Torah would become widespread among the people and he would become the leader of the generation.

The nagid then returns to the poem written to him by R'Samuel and says that he rejoiced in it and praised its understanding, and wisdom which combined all of its separate subjects into a poem. "All that was difficult he strove to explain. Its words are beautiful and its contents are as pleasant as flowers and as mysterious as the new moon."

He has a greater portion of endowment with pen and paper and all poor find refuge in his home. The nagid would have him here also teach his people. With his help and with the aid of his friends the nagid will be able to destroy his foes.

The nagid concludes by saying that if there is any merit to his poem, it is because the object of his writing was such as to inspire its writer. However, if there is any flaw in it, it is due to his own weakness and inability to write a poem properly.

(10) This poem written by the nagid is a prayer to God to destroy his enemies. He asks God to save His people from the oppres-

scribes

sors who wrap themselves in pride. May God punish those who transgress His covenant and confirm His oath to the house of David. "And against those who harm Thy sheep Thou wilt cause Thy anger to burn as fire."

(11) The circumstances which motivated the writing of this poem have been discussed earlier. It takes the form of a last will and testament, giving Samuel's advice to his son, Joehosef, if he (Samuel) should never see him again.⁴⁸

In the poem Samuel addresses his son and says that it is only on his account that he endures pain and trouble; only for his sake does he put his soul in danger. Were it not for him Samuel would have spent his life as a wanderer over the face of the earth, enjoying a carefree existence as many do. This letter Samuel believes to be written in all truth as only a father can to his son. He wrote it even as death grinned before him with gaping jaws. For when the enemy rises to do battle on the morrow he knows not whether death is in store for him or for the foe. And if he is destined no longer to see his loved son and Jehosef is not to behold him, then he adjures his son to pay heed to this last word of his night and day. If he should slumber then this letter will awaken him that he may again peruse its contents. When there are none to teach him and when his guides are not present then let him make this letter his master and teacher.

Then follow the specific exhortations. With all his soul and wealth and in all his paths he is to fear his Creator and Protector; he is to acquire wisdom and understanding for understanding is his praise and discernment his glory. He is to be obedient to his mother and other relatives, to be friendly to all people and above the acquisition of great wealth he should be eager to acquire a good name. He should always be ready to assist those in need but if

he can not, he should be careful with his answer to those who appeal to him for aid. He also advises his son to exercise thrift so that when he does dispense charity he be mindful also of his own needs and not give too liberally. The nagid further advises his son not to rest upon his father's laurels but to acquire greatness and wealth for himself if he expects to be respected and admired among men. He spurs him on to achieve greatness and position, even higher than his own and yet not to revile and abuse smaller and unimportant people. The nagid concludes by saying that there is much that he has not written but that his son is to inquire and live according to the moral precepts that he finds to be good - then will he be blessed.

(12) This poem, written exultantly by the nagid, was inspired by his miraculous victory at Lorca. The enemy upon hearing of the approach of Badis and his army fled in rout while Badis entered the city. Samuel, who had been expecting death as a result of the battle, addresses himself saying, "Send a dove as a harbinger of good tidings and though she speaks not, send her with a little scroll tied to her wings, perfumed and exuding pleasant fragrance."

The poet then goes on in his soliloquy by saying that when the dove has soared aloft he send another after it so that if the first is snatched by a hawk or is delayed, the second will hurry and reach its desired destination. When it reaches the house of his son it will chirp at the gate of his home and when it descends upon his hands he will untie the bonds and take the scroll attached to its wings and will read: "Know, my son, that the cursed company of evil-doers has fled and dispersed to the hills as the stubble of the field and scattered over roads as sheep without a shepherd."

The poet goes on to describe the tidings that his son will read. The enemy did not even see its foe against whom it planned.

When the army of Badis approached to do battle they fled in the morning and were destroyed and slew one another in their confusion in the narrow pass. They had hoped to conquer the fortified city but their hope was gone. They were ashamed even as the thief who is discovered in his stealthy entrance into the house in order to steal. Before the battle, Samuel had been seized with fear and trembling but God sent healing upon him as the blessed rain upon the earth in time of drought. Therefore, Samuel is now happy and sings his rejoicing while the enemy speaks its lamentation and cries in bitterness.

Turning to God, the poet sings out in a rapture of thanksgiving, "To Thee my Rock and refuge, to Thee my soul sings. To Thee in time of trouble did she make her supplication." Then to his son, he adjures him to turn his heart to God and to read his poem *afan* in the congregation and on holidays to make it for a sign bound upon his hand and to write it upon his heart with a pen of iron and ophir.

(13) This a song of laudation⁴⁹ and praise of God and His many benefits. The poet exclaims that his soul cries out continually to its God. Agag did plan....and this enemy was likewise destroyed.... His heart was haughty and as the sea he did trust in his waters and the fire of the Lord did flame against him.

Then, to a friend: "My friend, drink a cup of victory and thanksgiving to Almighty God and let me also drink."

(14) The circumstances of this poem have been described earlier. At the head of it we find the inscription: In the year 1043 Abbad Motadhid went to the old Mohammed Ibn Abdallah ibn Mirsel in Carmona and they both made a treaty to help one another in battle⁵⁰..

In this poem as in many others Samuel shows his love and faith

in God Who had rescued him from many difficulties and Who would continue to guard him from all danger. He praises God because whenever in trouble he called upon Him, He did answer his prayer. In time of trouble he depends on three things: First, his prayer to God; second, a poem expressing the certainty that God will answer his plea; and, third, a heart ready to be glad when there is sound of rejoicing.

He then continues, accusing Abbad Motadhid of treachery against Mohammed, relative of Badis. Again we see the supreme confidence and faith of the nagid in the face of all difficulty. The time was a very dangerous one. The continued victories of the faithless Abbad Motadhid threatened not only the life of the nagid but also the security of Berber rule in Spain.

Manuscript Number 3. A song of praise in honor of the nagid. This is a poem of praise and glory to the nagid.⁵¹ The inscription at the beginning sings the praise of the nagid - righteousness prevailed during his life. Because of his influence danger was averted. All trusted in him. During his days all fear vanished. And the spirits of righteous men came forth from hiding unafraid.

The poet here begins with adoration of God and His many great deeds, a fragment of which man can not discern. He who rides upon the clouds and enshrouds Himself in darkness, the Creator.... The poet goes on to describe the constellations and the planets. Yet against everything that God created was set up the figure of man, the completion of all creations. Here an interesting simile is drawn between man and physical nature - mountains and bones, blood and water, herbage and hair. This parallelism is carried out. But man's soul is like its creator in which is understanding. And the choicest of men are the fathers and the prophets whom God has chosen to perform His will.

And, the writer continues, his time is the same as that of the nagid whose paths have reached high renown. Verily, it is for him that people call: "Samuel has smitten in thousands and Jehosef in myriads." These servants of God who do His work, who come to the gates of the Lord with singing and the voice of thanksgiving.

The poet asks that his song be exalted above all others even as the nagid was elevated above all men of his generation. For he did give gifts as the sands of the sea, as many as the hosts of heaven.

(P.113 ¶3-8) He himself is a Levite yet, besides the Maaser and Terumah which he donated to other Levites and priests (scholars) he gave more. And when the country was thirsty for three years, he increased his generosity three-fold. If he had lived during the days of Elijah, like Elijah when he spoke, it would come to pass.

His goodness the poet would reward with the fruit of his mouth and thus repay him for his wisdom and goodness. He would continue to bless the nagid with double-fold blessing, as a prophet of God.

At the end of this poem we find the following inscription: "The introduction is complete; and after it the author said...." This indicates that not only the middle of this poem is missing but that what we have here is an introduction to the main poem which has been lost. It probably would have given us many details of the nagid's activities which the author mentions generally in the introduction.

See also introduction to the main poem

Ben Mishle
of
Samuel Hanagid

We are about to consider the collection of the nagid's writings known as the Ben Mishle. As we have previously stated, it contains much of the folk-lore and proverbs of foreign peoples as well as maxims contained in Jewish writings. We will make use of the collection as it is presented in Harkavy's *פיללוגים* as well as the notes given in these pages. In his introduction Harkavy gives us the sources from which he derived his collection. R' Abraham Berliner, upon his journey to Italy, went to Parma upon the advice of Harkavy and copied the rest of the manuscripts of the nagid's writings, that is, the Ben Mishle, and sent it to Harkavy who was at the time busy editing the Ben Tehillim of the nagid. Harkavy goes on to say that a number of the sayings and proverbs which were omitted by Berliner were copied and sent to Harkavy by the Christian scholar in charge of the library at Parma, Abbate Ferreau. To complete further his work, Harkavy makes mention of the sayings which have already been printed elsewhere and of which we make use.⁵²

The first part of the collection is arranged alphabetically. This extends to the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The second half is entitled "Proverbs of the Nagid Gathered from Various Books." The inscription at the head of the part of this collection reads as follows: Ben Mishle of R'Samuel Hanagid, the remnant remaining in manuscript at Parma at the head of which is written as follows: Verses which were copied from the book Ben Mishle written by the honored sage, R'Samuel Hanagid.

Aleph

1. Truth is difficult and the end comes fast and wisdom and understanding cover myriads and their way is far. Since it is impossible to achieve all, whatever you do attain see that it finds favor in God's eyes.⁵³

2. There are men for every task and God has made the task that each man chooses great in his sight. There are men who were created to pasture flocks and there are those who were created to accumulate and hoard riches without enjoying it themselves but merely laboring for others.

3. After having ridiculed men in their pursuit of wealth, the poet commends those who seek wisdom by saying that they who study rise to the heights while without it even great men go down into obscurity, regardless of their wealth. Besides, the effort to gather great wealth will not always succeed and the wisdom of a man will not help him in this endeavor if God does not help him.

4. Truth enriches its possessors and the practice of righteousness without deceit gives a man strength. Sorrow will come to him who turns to falsehood, vanity, and guile and evil shall come upon him who leads his heart to pasture in the field of deceit and to eat of the grass of faithlessness.

5. The Lord of the world has signs which point to His existence and omnipotence, such as the parting of the Red Sea and stopping of the sun for Joshua. But there is in all of these no wonder as that which is seen where all men praise and glorify the man who is upright in heart and righteous in deed.

6. Who may consider himself a man of good character and right deeds? The man whose thought and counsel are clear of physical desire, neither does he sleep the sleep of the indolent nor enslave

himself in the chains of the appetites; he whose thoughts are as strong as fortresses, whose ideas are lofty, and who is concerned over the welfare of his friends, careful to do nothing to harm or shame them.

7. He who is envious of thee rebukes thee in thy house and if he is silent, you may be sure he speaks against you when he goes on his way. When you hear it, make yourself appear as though you had heard nothing.

8. He who is ungrateful for the good other people perform in his behalf is as bad as the man who is ungrateful for the goodness of God. However, the man who boasts because he helped his friend in time of trouble is as though he had never helped him.

9. He who troubles to gather many books but whose heart is empty of their contents is like the lame man who draws a picture of a leg upon the wall and then attempts to rise but can not.

10. He works to gather wealth and stores it away is like the man who ~~draws~~ ^{pours} water from one ditch into another. For what value is there for a man that he labor and acquire wealth and deprive himself of its benefits over him that gathers wheat and buries it underground?

11. The fool, after he has performed good deeds, destroys whatever good he has created. For a time he poured blessing as the rain upon the fields but when it begins to bloom he comes with hail and stones.

12. That man who restrains himself from asking of others something which he desires in order that he does not suffer any loss of dignity as a consequence of his request is more praiseworthy than those who ask anyone for their desire and care little for their own honor.

13. This saying is in direct opposition to the one above. Its purport is to show that everything has its time; that in a time of absolute necessity one should call upon a friend for aid and if he fails to do so, he himself is to blame for whatever happens. He who does not call a physician for his illness sins against himself.

14. One who tells you that you are a truthful man and he can not distinguish between men of truth and men of violence and merely praises you, his praise is valueless for it may as suddenly turn into revilement on first glance even as the fool who is first to go into battle but when beholding its danger is the first to flee.

15. He who has no wealth is liberal with his words for soft speech, philanthropy, and goodness are related. The proper word stimulates philanthropy in the rich man.

16. He who wishes to acquire happiness seeks for wealth while the sluggard rests lazily. Learn, oh sluggard, learn from the animals. The stork crosses seas to find food.

17. Do not wonder at learning of the lowly man who makes for himself an indestructible name, for from a little spark comes a burning fire and a vineyard grows from a single seed.

18. If God pours forth His goodness for your sake, use it to perform some good deed; for if you do not use it it will leave you never to return.

19. If you are silent you may speak after you have remained silent, but once having spoken you can not restrain that which has been spoken.

20. Consider your words well and you will speak your words in righteousness and will not sin. So does he who instructs well in the making of arrows consider his work and sins not against the stalks.

21. If I go to seek pleasure, I can not find it without encountering pain and sorrow. But one should praise God for the good and in a time of trouble trust in God for salvation.

22. I suck bitterness from the breast of a poisonous snake and I ^{be} ~~am~~ carried into the ^{den} ~~hall~~ of the children of poisonous snakes. I would rather ~~go there~~ than encounter a miser or to eat of the bread of a detestable man.

23. If wise men speak about marvelous things of which you do not know, keep silent and say, "This I do not know." But if you are commanded to do something, perform it and do not remain idle, telling another to do it.

24. Do not entrust your possessions to a man who wrongs people with his words and who reveals secrets to others. If he is not reliable for words which have been entrusted to him, how can you trust him with gold and silver?

25. I rejoice in that which God desires to bring upon me, though it comes with much pain and sadness. And that which is desired by me and God wills that it come not, I rejoice when it does not come.

26. The love of the righteous is as a silver spoon which has great value. If it is broken it may be restored to its former state, but the love of the wicked is as pottern. If it is broken it can never be restored.

27. A man who has found greatness and understands its value will strengthen with it that which he already possesses; like he who grasps a string of rare pearls and takes care of it and will not lose it.

28. If you perform a good deed for a good man he will not rest until he has returned the favor while a wicked man will not be thankful for the good you do him nor will he reciprocate goodness.

29. A man who has sinned against God all his days and his friends transgresses against him and his anger arises is in great error. Will he not fear in his day of anger that God will remember his sins and His anger will be great?

30. It is truth that there is no righteous man who does not offer to his Maker one hundred blessings each day, nor a rich man who does not benefit a thousand nor a wise man who has not a hundred pupils.

31. If you become wise and acquire understanding then your wisdom will permit you to look into the future. A man can not be called a poet unless he is able to restore the expression of the ancients.⁵⁴

32. Were the hate of the wise man and the love of the fool placed on the scales by testers, they would find that the hatred of the wise man is as light as the chaff against the love of the fool. Rather than be loved by the fool, one should prefer to be hated by the wise man. It is easier to bear.

33. He who does wrong, lack of insight will trap him in a net of evil. And he who does wrong, one who is full of wisdom will turn him from the way of error. He who calls upon one who is devoid of understanding for aid will not be helped; and a man who is a brother to frivolity and carousal can not rule a people.⁵⁵

34. If a man chooses you as his companion, be his support; and in his darkness you will become as a spark of light. When he strikes thorns, be to him like a cedar and instead of the brambles he meets be to him like the eucalyptus tree.

35. Say 'no' without shame to one who asks of you a difficult thing. Do not waste your years on wine and women.

36. The earth is to people like a market and they are all like

storekeepers; and there are both wicked and upright among them; and there is the noble man who has no flaw except his poverty.

37. The fool will be angry and depart from him who criticizes but will draw near to him who speaks nonsense and makes hilarity.

38. Eat mere vegetables with your family and wear a sack on your loins and you will despise good food and fine clothes if you are a stranger.

39. Eat vegetables (poor food) in security rather than meat in danger. Take one portion which rightfully belongs to you rather than a thousand as a gift.

40. People will answer a rich man with great honor and support his word with authority; and they will despise the poor man and will accuse him when he is innocent.

41. A man who tries to succeed without justice and righteousness is like one who tries to put up his tent without foundation and ropes to hold it.

42. Why shall I not seek my sustenance because its gates are shut before me? It is for me to hope and seek in the power of God to complete my search.

43. He who needs my help seeks to please me as if I were his king but he whom I need mocks and despises me.

44. If a man does things which the righteous will not approve then his 'yezer' entices him on the morrow to do others which they will not perceive.

45. A tree which has been cut down by the axe may grow again. A clump of carobs may live but a group of men who speak evil and wound hearts can not exist.

46. He who fed you with kindness and you are not able to return his goodness, give him as recompense for his deeds the affec-

tion and love of your heart.

Beth

rebellious

47. If you should seek to know what is the beginning of wisdom and the beginning of sin, then you will find that bitterness is the beginning of sin and the fear of God the beginning of wisdom.

48. The man who is self-respecting and knows how to conceal his desire in the end achieves his desire. But the man who reckons not with his own honor and lets his purpose become known, in the end does not achieve it.

49. In the heart and mouth of the righteous man God is found continually; and even if he says little the glory of God and His wonder are all around the righteous man.

50. When victory comes to a noble prince, in his joy he will pardon sinners for their wrong doings. But if assistance comes to a wicked prince, in his joy he will destroy those who have sinned against him.

51. When scholars sit and interrogate and answer each other their tongues stir up wonders even as hate stirs up contention.

52. When you lower your dignity in asking help of your friends then you descend from greatness. With all your strength suffer your need and you will be honored. But if your need becomes very great and your soul becomes weaker and weaker, ask of God Whose hand sustains all.

53. When you promise your friend to help him as he desires, do it with dispatch; for of what value will your help be when you have delayed it so much that he no longer finds it valuable.

54. Many times the later scholars do not know what the ancients knew.

55. By acquiring much wealth and understanding you become leader of all and all together will bow before you, in order that with your wealth you will rule the simple and govern the learned with your understanding.

56. One must speak softly to these three even though they answer with harshness and anger - to the king who rules over you, to the man who is very ill, and to the woman.

57. ¹⁸⁴With three things can a kingdom be established - ¹⁸⁷with true judgment which is equal for rich and poor, ¹⁸⁷with the sword which destroys enemies, and ¹⁸⁷with gifts to the poor which stirs up love.

58. From six one can not receive wise counsel - from the poor who ask for help, the sad from pain, the thirsty, the man attacked by an enemy, the hungry, and he who must excrete.

59. With wisdom you may rise in the ^{council}~~secrets~~ of the great and walk among the rich with pride. The intelligent man who is poor is not considered lightly while the fool who is rich is not honored.

60. Do not be helped by falsehood because you will become involved with the words of a man of falsehood who will beautify your sins. He will bring near what is far and further that which is near.

61. Before you answer prepare a proof with which you may be able to escape when they speak falsely against you and accuse you of having erred in your answer.⁵⁶

¹⁸⁴62. To do thy good deeds choose righteous men and do no goodness for the wicked. It will then be as though you had abandoned the planting of fruitless trees and instead of that chose to plant fruitful trees.

^{Tilman}63. With satin and gold necklaces and with powder do the women adorn their beauty while the adornments of men's affection are long suffering, gifts, and love.

64. Choose men of wisdom for your associates and counsel and despise fools. With the wise you may uproot the rock and come safely through trouble and be victorious over strong men who do evil.

65. In the heart of the wicked man your transgressions are nursed while your sin is forgotten by the noble man. Acquire goodness, acquire wisdom but before you purchase them cultivate a noble spirit.

66. In the house of a king do not praise a prince and in the presence of a prince do not try to elevate the lowly. Is he wise who gives a morsel to the foxes in a den of lions?

67. He who criticizes others brings upon himself the eyes of critics and he who speaks against others himself will be spoken against.

68. In God's hand is provision for all and He places the sustenance of men in the hands of men. He gives little to him who closes his hand to the poor and multiplies the wealth of him who cares for their wants.

69. In the hand of the ruler is the salvation of the great. He is not helped whom the ruler robs. If the one who is supported to be leader and the personification of virtue and strength, if he himself is brought to judgment, then there is no hope, no help for the virtuous man.

70. It is in man's hand to acquire loved friends and to remove from himself the hatred of others. For, if he pursues righteousness all those who are about him will be his well-meaning friends; but if he pursues vanity and evil then contentious people will surround him.

71. Men are what they are because of their parents. Nobility has its birthplace in the father's house and iniquity has there its

source.

72. Men of wealth are few and even so, men of understanding. But fewer than both of these are those men in whom are both of these qualities.

73. A wise son has three characteristics. His mistakes and follies are few in number. He will appear to be humble because of his small station but he is elevated above all by reason of his understanding.⁵⁷

74. Chastise thy son with a rod and he will turn to the good, but not with an old rod. With a dried, old wood he will not be improved but he will be bettered while it is still soft and springy.

75. My son, if the doors of understanding have been closed in a generation when folly has overcome understanding, do you open them with your wisdom, the gates which have been closed to the people of your city.

76. My son, if you desire to be master over your soul, give it as a gift to your understanding. Do not relinquish the reins of your appetites to your soul lest you be caught in its meshes.

77. My son, do not establish a kingdom with iniquity nor a group with contention and strife. He who wishes to acquire a real friend must do so by self-effacement and modesty before him even as to think himself the ground and his friend the skies.⁵⁸

78. When a day of trouble comes upon a man of understanding and his time does him evil and gives him up to his enemies, then he will go forth with a joyous sound against it as a lion roaring from its illnesses.

79. In a day of evil you can recognize the bravery of a man at a time when hearts melt with fear. There are those who, like the soldiers, grasp swords and bows in a time of peace but when the battle begins, are filled with fear and trembling. Therefore, a

man is to be judged only by his behavior and in a time of great danger.

80. Choose one man of understanding rather than a hundred fools for companions even as the merchant who chooses one circlet of gold rather than a talent of lead. *coin*

81. When you are poor suffer any pain and endure any danger to find provision for yourself rather than ask help of men; and do not envy others for in your envy you will cause yourself pain more than you can harm others.

82. When you radiate goodness upon him who is noble in heart he will be gladdened by your prosperity and he will glorify you as his master. But if you shine upon a man of evil heart, though his face may change, he will despise you in his heart.

83. When you meet a man of wiles watch his ways lest he ensnare you with his guile. For if you do not do this you will be caught, for how can the simple, foolish goat stand be~~o~~re the wily wolf who knows how to mislead?

84. When a noble man rises to a position of greatness he will bring his friends along with him in his love. But if a vain man rises he leaves his friends in the lower depths and elevates himself alone.

85. When your friend argues with you in his anger, answer with soft answer and good words and you will cleanse the dirt which his heart has brought up against you.

86. When your friend calls to you to tell you that he is in danger and is placed in darkness, hasten to his aid when he calls even though you may harm yourself.

87. Seek a man wise of heart and of dignified appearance and wealthy and go and dwell beside him....You will be satisfied from his goodness and will become esteemed from his glory and he will aid you in his wisdom.¹⁹

88. When God is with you every tree of the forest will bear fruit. When God is not with you even the vine over which you have labored will yield only bad branches.

89. When people invite you to speak then you may speak but in a time of silence then you remain silent. A thing done in its time is like fruit-bearing trees which bear fruit in their time.

90. When your people sing your praises give heart to their words. If they have praised you for what you do not possess, be diligent until their praise is just.

91. If a man walks with the wise he will discourse with them; and walking with those who are known for evil harms a man. It is like the wind. When it passes by perfumes it is scented; when it passes by corpses it is ill-smelling.

92. In days of famine when the poor are in need, even though you have wealth be hungry. When they are satisfied then you, too, satisfy yourself. If you wish to live long then fear God.⁶⁰

93. He who knows to arrange these three ways will dwell secure and prosper in the land. These are: First, the way of life for himself and his children, the way of life between man and God, and the way of life between man and man.

94. In wisdom you are the brother of learning but in act you are the brother of transgression. Learning without doing or carrying into practice is like the tree of the forest which yields no fruit.

95. In testing and verifying a thing with reason the heart finds peace and security. The man who reviles and abuses his friends will never have a friend to whom to turn.

96. In the Torah there is a righteous saying spoken by him who was both priest and prophet (Ezekiel). As the mother so will be the daughter and man is like his father.

97. The medicine of fear will heal the sickness of heart and eyes. And by means of doing you will justify that which your tongue spoke.

98. In the mouth of the wise there is just counsel for he is careful lest he sin; after the desire of his heart and eyes the fool does incline.

Gimel

99. The nagid invites his friends to approach and enjoy the fruit of the garden of his knowledge, perfect trees laden with the fruit of life. He invites them to surround the chamber of his knowledge and to quaff from the vessels of understanding which he has filled with fine wine.⁶¹

100. Rise above your friends by these three virtues - an understanding heart, good speech, and deeds. Do not make thyself great by means of a vile tongue, with the brute strength of the lion and with the wile of the fox.

101. There is a man who is like food - all need him; and one who is like a healing for illness and wounds. There is a man like a moth-eaten loin-cloth who succeeds at nothing and one like poison who puts to death in a moment.

102. A man may ascend by these three - in saying 'yes', in long suffering, and in persevering through difficulty; and may be degraded by three - with anger, weakness in time of trouble, and saying 'no'. *The heart is a - the way*

103. If ~~an enemy army is discovered~~, weapons will set them back or the making of a truce. But how can you conquer those who show you goodness without sincerity or how can you conquer the deeds you have done.

104. There is bravery in the ways of the skies and every star

read the line of the stars

which is joined with them. But the man of understanding who knows their nature and their process is to be considered as greater than they.

105. There is bravery in all the broad land and its animals and all creatures in it and man rules them all with his understanding. And if he is wise he is glorified.

106. Rains bring life to the earth but if they increase they destroy that which they bring to life. But the rain that falls from the lips of the wise, whether little or much, come to make live.

107. Fear the Lord and trust in Him for to do thee good He does wonderfully; and say ever in the fear of God, "What is my life that God does for me?"

108. The wise men berated their sons in order to put them on the right path. But who will become angry at the wise man who strays to put him on the path of right?

109. Delay your retribution to the evil man until you have the strength to kill him. Learn from the birds who dwell in the heights of the rocks, who do not move until they have their wings.

110. There are two kinds of haughty hearts; he is called proud of heart who elevates himself above his brothers with disdain. The other kind of pride is the praiseworthy one in that it causes one to remove himself from all degrading and evil things.

111. A man who divides his time among the following three things, a part to God, a part to living properly, and a part to his food will merit Eden and be wise. His wealth shall not decrease nor his family be stricken with want.

112. He who performs good deeds, his goodness is praised if he does not speak of it to people and does not exalt himself with them. However, if he reveals them to people then he destroys his goodness. For who can erase goodness as he who boasts of it?

113. Because of three things bravery deserts the brave and covers the heart of the wise with folly as a blanket so that his wisdom is not ^urvealed. Association with cowards, much sitting around with women, and slothfulness. *involuntarily*

114. Even as the stars show the laws of the skies, so the man of understanding shows by his words and deeds the laws of earth.

115. Wisdom is shown by the words spoken. But it is the too-abundant talking that is a sin.

116. Men are tested by five things which indicate their understanding: in their walk, talk, movement of the head, anger, and laughter.

117. A man who has favored me much and afterward become my enemy I can forgive; and so also he who is angered against me if his heart and action are one.⁶²

Daleth

118. Know your Creator with a perfect heart and acknowledge Him for good and evil and ^serve Him in love; and know that your good deeds are considered by God as a loan to Him.

119. Concern yourself about your transgressions and in a time of need and trouble place the Lord before you; set your heart to do good and if you are not able to do it, the thought will be considered as the deed.

120. There are things ~~in the heart~~ hidden by many days but in the end, with the passing of days, they are expressed. For the days are commanded by God and they hasten to do what He commands.

121. There are words which are as a well of water; to those who are thirsty in the wilderness it quickens the heart; and there are words which are as deep as wounds which enter the innermost parts.

122. A wise man's likeness may be found in his sons....And there is one who excels his father in judgment and another who is deficient when he sits in judgment among his elders.⁶³

The second line of the saying is obscure.

123. There are two true friends who, if they grow old, a man should never change for others. The old glory of the house, the wife - do not change her and your old brother.

124. a. Know that he who is big of body is not honored; but he is great who dwells with his friends.

b. A man is not poor who needs bread; rather he is poor who lacks wisdom and counsel.

c. The man who has wealth is not rich save he guards his possessions from waste.

d. The true king is not he who has servants but he who serves the people.

125. The good king is one who punishes severely those who do evil so that righteous ones behold his ways and learn to do likewise.

Sayings of the Nagid

Collected from Various Books

126. Woe is unto the man who is awake and yet sees not the evil of his ways; and blessed is the man who is asleep but who guards his heart.

127. The father who has striven to educate his son in the ways of morality and wisdom may later leave him secure in the pathway of life, for he will not stumble in his going.

128. The love of men is the fruit of modesty and the fruit of him who is happy with his share is contentment; and the fruit of him who hearkens and remains silent is that he enjoys peace and security; and his soul rejoices.

129. a. The wise man who is aroused will often argue with himself if he finds himself thinking improperly.

b. The springy tree while it is still soft may grow and flourish but an old beam can never again grow luxuriant.⁶⁴

131. If you desire to enjoy peace control your appetites; and battle with yourself as you would battle with the armed foe.

132. If you desire wisdom, choose righteous deeds and despise bitterness, Consider that wisdom has been likened to a tree and the deeds of wisdom its fruit.

133. The land is *marked with flowers* fringed by zizioth and interwoven (in color) like the snake whose garment is golden clothed; it is like the snake in whose mouth is death and yet it is smooth as butter when the hand of man touches it.⁶⁵

134. He who eats the proper foods for his body, his eating will benefit him. He who eats improper foods, his food will be upon him and benefit him not at all.

135. He who is wise in his own eyes will consider his mistake as correct. Even the cloud of darkness will appear to him as the light of the sun and the light of the sun as the cloud.

136. He who sits and reads books whose contents he does not understand is like the baker who prepares a feast and is hungry while others eat it.⁶⁶

137. Study much in outside books and you will find that which will help you in judgment. Your speech will be ordered among the great and your name will be revered among your comrades.

138. a. Take counsel with a loved and wise friend and do not trust to your own counsel.

b. If you incline after the desire of your heart your desire will blind your eyes and will hide the real truth.

c. Because you have desire your heart will make it worthy in

Th

your eyes.

139. Can kings make righteous a bad nation when they themselves practice unworthy deeds? How is it possible to repair the shadows without repairing the trees which cast the shadows?

140. a. A wise man is loved of all and loves all who come to him.

b. The fool is hated by all and hates all who see him.

c. Therefore, be diligent and seek that you become the brother of wisdom.

d. And further your name from him who is a brother to any vanity and folly.

141. A wise man will give up peaceful rest and will find real rest in the reading of books. There are blemishes in men if you seek but the blemish of the wise in heart is forgetfulness.

142. What good is there in life if my work today is the same as it was yesterday....⁶⁷

143. He who walks in the counsel of the fool is hated by the fool's enemies; and he who disregards the word of doctors will fall into illness.

144. A garment of wisdom is worn by the good student and the learning of youth is strength and pleasantness; and he who learns in old age and not in youth will die without wisdom or pleasure.

145. Depart from the man who commands righteousness and he is a man of sin. How can he cure the illness when he himself suffers it?

146. Forgive the rebelliousness of the son and the woman and repeat your commands to them; just one sharpens the sword by moving it to and fro.

General Evaluation
of the Nagid's Poetry

Abraham Ibn Daud, in speaking of the nagid's poetry, attributes to his day the real efflorescence of Spanish-Jewish poetry.⁶⁸ Yet, Judah al-Charizi has relegated him to a secondary position in the ranks of the great Hebrew poets of this period. While he considered him of importance, he felt that much of his poetry was difficult and obscure and required great study.⁶⁹ On the other hand, we have the testimony of Moses Ibn Ezra which attributes great talent and genius to the poetry of the nagid.⁷⁰

Simchoni has pointed out⁷¹ that Samuel's poetry reveals the entire personality of the nagid. His amazing versatility found expression in his poetry which expresses his various interests and attitudes. In addition, it contains a certain classical stamp. To this may be attributed the fact that his poetry in its very name has reference to the Biblical books. One is aware that the nagid felt himself the spiritual heir of the ancient writers. In his victory over the foe one is conscious of the psalmist's exultation, in his faith and reliance upon God's help, in his eulogies at a time of bereavement, the mind of the reader harks back to the ancient books where similar sentiments were expressed in the same vein. It should likewise be remembered that the greater part of the nagid's poetry was written after he had attained the position of vizier. As a result, many of them were written in great haste, in spare moments, on battlefields. He did not have the quiet and the solitude of a private life. It was in the midst of a tumultuous life of variegated activities that he hastily inscribed the emotions and the moods that stirred within him. Moses Ibn Ezra has justly defended the nagid against the attacks of his critics in referring to his many

activities.⁷² True, one is conscious of a certain pedantry and didacticism in the nagid's poetry. There are references made to Halachic dicta, sometimes entire laws being given and the result is a somewhat forced and stilted style. Also, upon many occasions, he introduces terms which are impossible of translation. However, these faults, if we may call them such, were inevitable. The nagid was thoroughly at home in rabbinic literature. It is hard to imagine that he could have avoided being influenced in some degree by the rabbinic terminology. As to his introduction of new words, these are for the most part well integrated into the verse. It is only infrequently that we are conscious of a certain heaviness in the mode of expression.

In addition to the influence which the Biblical and rabbinic style had upon the poetry of the nagid, Arabic poetry likewise left its imprint upon him. Since he was thoroughly conversant with the whole field of Arab poetry he unquestionably was influenced by it stylistically. According to Simchoni, all of his poetry, religious and secular, shows his adaptation of the imagery and lyricism of the Arabic poetry. This is especially true in his love songs and songs of wine and merrymaking as they are contained in the Ben Koheleth.⁷³

Even as the form and style of the nagid's poetry comprise a number of different influences so its content is varied. One of the most powerful of its themes is that of Israel's lot. The nagid felt that his own elevation to greatness was part of God's scheme to protect His people, Israel. He, the nagid, was to serve as the tool, the medium through which Israel was to be saved from its enemies. His own lot, his success or failure, he felt would reflect similarly upon all Israel. His great epic poems which we have discussed, the *Song of Songs*, *Alfama*, *Alfama*, are unparalleled in any of the Hebrew poetry

of Spain. There is in these poems a whole series of mood and emotion. We find the individual feeling of the warrior on the field of battle, the prayer for salvation coupled with the intense hatred of the enemy; the faith of the believing Jew trusting in God and in His succor in time of trouble; his reliance upon a miracle which alone can save him. Above all, one is struck with the simple belief, the childish faith which the nagid expresses in his poems. In the midst of difficulties he prays to God and is certain that his prayer will be answered. It is almost with naivete that he lifts his voice in prayer calling upon God to come to his aid. Here, indeed, was a striking duality of personality. On the one hand, the learned scholar at home in the sciences and philosophy and on the other, the simple, trusting believer. Certainly, he did not merit the proverb "Cold as the snow of Hermon, or as the songs of the Levite, Samuel." One can not but feel the overwhelming grief that the nagid felt over the death of his brother R'Isaac. In the poems which he dedicated to him there is a beautiful simplicity, unaffected love, and a genuine feeling of bereavement that show how deeply the nagid felt his loss.

Notes on Chapter III

1. Harkavy's introduction to *שירי חסידות*, Petersburg, 1879.
2. Dukas, *Nahal Kedumim*, Hanover, P.34.
3. Kitab al-Mahazara, *ספר המהזרה*, ed. Halper, P.65. The head and most honored among them was R'Samuel....His songs are like the everlasting fountain, base on beautiful thoughts, many colored, strong in their essence, beautiful in their understanding, original in their thought, brilliant in their expression.
4. Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.81.
5. Tachkemoni, ed. Kaminka, Gate 3, P.40.
6. Ibid., Gate 18, P.181.
7. Bialik-Ravnitzki, ed.Dvir, P.60, Number 25. — *הנהגת הנגיד*
8. Harkavy, Introduction to *שירי חסידות*, VIII.
9. Harkavy, *שירי חסידות*; cf. Measef; Brody - *הנהגת הנגיד*.
10. Sassoon, *The Newly Discovered Diwan of the Vizier Samuel Hanagid*, London, 1924.
11. Sassoon, *על שירי הנגיד*, Oxford, 1928. P. 3.
12. Dukas, *Nahal Hedumim*, Hanover, P.35.
13. Dozy, *Moslems in Spain*, P.609.
14. Ben Jacob, *Ozer Haseforim*, P.656.
15. Sassoon, *על שירי הנגיד*, Oxford, 1928. P.18.
16. Harkavy, *שירי חסידות*, P.1, describing the nagid's early trials, his wanderings - the beginning of this poem is missing.
17. Harkavy's manuscript does not contain this poem which is a letter of consolation to R'Nissim ben Jacob when his son Jacob died. Brody's collection contains the manuscript found in Oxford, Brody *הנהגת הנגיד*, P.16.
18. The rest of this poem seems to have no place here and was probably included through an error of the copyists. Brody, P.19, Note 16.
19. Ibid., P.102, Note 1. Since the first few lines are missing we can not be sure of the contents of the following verses.
20. Ibid., P.103, Note 3. Uses two expressions employed by many of the later poets - 1. that tears are an expression of the inner sorrow; 2. that man who is awake all night is as one who is assigned to guard the stars.
21. This poem was probably written during his enforced wandering after the destruction of Cordova.
22. Ibid., P.94, Note 1. This might refer to Isaac ben Baruch Albalia, although Harkavy doubts it.
23. Ibid., P.28, Note 1. He was probably referring to his own domestic trouble and the lawsuit brought against him by Ibn Khalfon, his father-in-law.
24. Harkavy, *שירי חסידות*, pp.21-22. Lacks the end.
25. Harkavy, Measef, P.7.
26. Harkavy, *שירי חסידות*, P.23; Brody, *הנהגת הנגיד*, P.115.
27. It appears that he was not in any particular danger. Persons under stress of great emotions can not be so exact in their description of details. After the nagid has described the passengers, including himself, as being overwhelmed with fear, he proceeds to give the exact dimensions of the huge monster!
28. Brody, *הנהגת הנגיד*, P.121, Note 22. This credo of Samuel Hanagid contains many points of similarity to the Maimonidean Creed as Harkavy has pointed out. There are five points that agree with Maimonides' later formulation of faith although

- the latter does not mention "that the words of the sages are true."
29. Hai died in 1038. This poem is written in Mishnaic Hebrew. It is a tribute by Samuel to a man whom he revered as a leader and teacher of all Israel.
 30. Ket. 67b.
 31. This poem is believed to have been written after the destruction of Cordova during the wandering of the nagid when he settled in Malaga. Harkavy, Measef, P.9.
 32. Written in Granada after the nagid was raised to the position of vizier under Habbus after the death of Ibn al-Arif.
 33. Written to a friend who warned him to be careful in reviewing the manuscript of the Bible which he wrote.
 34. The occasion for the writing of this poem was the battle with the Khady of Seville. It was written in a prayerful mood and, according to Harkavy, was composed and prayed as a Mincha prayer. Harkavy, Measef, P.23. Cf. פ'יהק"ל פ"ג, P.56.
 35. Written after Samuel had won a victory on the field of battle. The army of Ibn Abbad was put to flight and the Khady slain.
 36. Lev. 13:23.
 37. This poem was preceded in the manuscript by another of which only the heading has remained. It was written when his brother became ill. Upon his death the nagid wrote the poem contained in Harkavy, פ'יהק"ל פ"ג, P.81, cf. P.80.
 38. Brody, פ'יהק"ל פ"ג, P.81. This poem also mentions the death of three people. We do not know to whom he referred.
 39. Ibid. P.75, Note 5. His reference to the /JA as wailing follows after the Biblical passages Micah 1:8, Job 30:29. The /JA referred to has a strange wail.
 40. Ibid., P.76, Note 1. Brody points out that this was a very unusual procedure and that it demonstrates the nagid's love for his brother.
 41. Harkavy, Measef, P.29. Probably has this poem in mind when he states that R'Isaac filled a very important position in his community.
 42. Harkavy, פ'יהק"ל פ"ג, P.89. This poem was written by the nagid when receiving letters from others, he recalled those received from his brother.
 43. Numbers 11.
 44. Exodus 16:23.
 45. II Samuel 23:26.
 46. This poem is considered by Sassoon to be the oldest dated poem. Sassoon, The Newly Discovered Diwan of Samuel Hanagid, P.3. "The translation of the heading of this poem reads: "And when my father was removed from being governor over the frontiers,and his father-in-law and the son of his sister were slain on the highways which happened in 1020, then Ibn Khalfon wrote to him this, etc." This heading, according to Sassoon, was written by Samuel's son Eliasaf, who started with the copying of his father's manuscript at the early age of six and a half (about 1056).
 47. Ibid., P.12.
 48. Written at Lorca prior to the battle in 1042. with the coalition that was formed against Granada.
 49. Harkavy, Measef, P.31. This poem was written in 1043 when Naga and his army were defeated at Malaga.

50. Ibid., P.31. Harkavy tells of the treachery of Abbad Muta-dhid, his murder of Mohammed, and his unsuccessful attempt to conquer Carmona from al-Aziz, son of Mohammed.
51. According to the Harkavy manuscript the middle of this eulogy is missing. It appears to have been written by a contemporary. Cf. P.112, line 6; P.113, line 11.
52. Samuel David Luzatto. Literaturblatt des Orients; Dukas, Ozar Nechmod; Dukas, Rabbinische Blumenlese; Zur Rabbinischen Spruchkunde; Nahal Kedumim, etc..
Harkavy also mentions the fact that wherever he found the notes of Luzatto he brought them in their entirety out of sincere regard for this great scholar who devoted himself so tirelessly to the study of Jewish poetry. פ'יהם פ'יהם, Intro.XI.
53. Harkavy, פ'יהם פ'יהם, P.115. Cites comment of Samuel David Luzatto that the nagid, wise in the learning of many peoples, began his sayings in the same manner as did Hippocrates, father of medicine, who finally despaired of being able to master the whole field of medicine which he had originally intended to do. "Vita brevis, ars longa."
54. Ibid., P.124, Note 3. There are two distinct thoughts in this saying, having no relation to each other. Also proverb 35.
55. Ibid., P.125, Note 1. Proverb refers to the nagid's relationship to Badis and his councillors; also proverb 34 in which Samuel adjures himself to loyalty.
56. Ibid., P.133, Note 1. Harkavy maintains that this proverb was written at a time when disputation and debate were frequent among Jews and Arabs.
57. Ibid., P.136, Note 3. This saying of the nagid refers to his son R'Jehosef who, while he seemed to lack modesty (according to Abraham Ibn Daud, Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.73, א"ב א"ב), acquired this fault when he was raised to a position of authority after his father's death, but not before.
58. Ibid., P.137, Note 4. Harkavy notes that there are two distinctly different ideas incorporated in this saying. The first has to do with the nagid's counsel to his son. The second is parental advice on acquiring a friend; also proverb 95, P.144 where two different ideas are found in one saying.
59. Ibid., P.141, Note 2. This saying has been somewhat distorted due to faulty copying of the manuscript.
60. Ibid., P.143, Note 1. Two different subjects are contained in this saying. The first refers to the rabbinic maxim, א"ב א"ב; the second is based on the passage in Proverbs 10:27 - "Fear of the Lord multiplies days."
61. Ibid., P.145, Note 3. This saying could well serve as an introduction to the entire book of Ben Mishle.
62. Ibid., P.150. The meaning of this saying is somewhat obscure. The text probably was corrupted by copyists.
63. Ibid., P.151, proverb 122. The second line of this saying is obscure.
64. Ibid., P.154, Note 2. Two separate thoughts here.
65. Ibid., P.155. Meaning is obscure. Why should the nagid have spoken in such terms of the world? Perhaps the nagid felt that the world was treacherous and had many pitfalls. It held much promise but, like the snake, when experienced it brought pain and death.
66. Ibid., P.156, Note 3. Harkavy doubts whether this proverb belongs to the nagid. It differs from the standpoint of language and style.

67. Ibid., P.158, Note 3. Last part missing.
68. Abraham Ibn Daud, Sefer Seder Hakabala; Med. Jew. Chron., P.81. קדוש ר' חסדאי בנאי בתלמי' וזכר ר' שמואל בנאי בתלמי' קול
69. Judah al-Charizi, Tachkemoni, ed. Kaminka, Gate 3, P.40. זה הא בנאי הסבול ר' שמואל האזי ובין שיריו בסיקס וראשית וזכרנו חסדאי וחזק'ן. אך זה שיריו דמוקין וקטין וצריכין אפרוסיק
70. Kitab al-Mahazara, עירת ישיבה, ed. Halper, pp.65-66.
71. Simchoni, Hatekufo, Vol.10, pp.169ff.
72. Kitab al-Mahazara, P.67. ובאז שירי קודם שהאשית האזן לא האזן לו
אלה אשמה'יו האדואל וסכחו אלה דקדומו הפוריה ואז יציראליו האצ'ולוג קול
דמפי ה'האכה וחכמום האזן ואלה פדואתיו לזוהר האשמה.
73. Simchoni, "Iyim," London, 1928. שירי' בין של ר' שמואל בנאי

CHAPTER IV
Activities of

R'Samuel Hanagid as Grammarian

Among his many versatile accomplishments, the nagid acquired a real knowledge of the science of language. His teacher in the rules of Hebrew grammar was R'Judah Chayyuj. When the master died, his pupil continued his work. The nagid defended his teacher from the attacks of other Jewish grammarians. He thus earned the hatred and enmity of Jonah Ibn Janah who was foremost among the critics of Judah Chayyuj although he had received his own early training from him. The nagid composed twenty-two treatises on grammar in Arabic known as the "Book of Riches."¹

Of special interest is the conflict that arose between the nagid and R'Jonah Ibn Janah (Abulwalid) when the latter criticized the nagid's esteemed teacher Judah Ibn Chayyuj.² The literature that arose as a result of this controversy has been lost for the most part, both the writings of Janah in his defense and those of the nagid. But there were references made to this quarrel by other writers. R'Solomon Parchon tells us of this quarrel³ in his introduction to his *Machberes Hearuch*. "In the generation of Jonah Ibn Janah a great man in Israel whose name was R'Samuel Hanagid was angered because Janah had caught his master in many errors and disclosed his mistakes and he (the nagid) hastened to answer his critics. Therefore, R'Jonah had to compose a book to show that what he had done was right and just." We also find a reference to this quarrel made by R'Jehuda Ibn Tibbon in his introduction to the *Sefer Harikma*, a translation of Janah's Arabic work *Kitab al-Luma*.⁴ "And after him (Chayyuj) came two great men in wisdom, with

great strength and power, R'Samuel Halevi, the nagid and the sage and teacher R'Jonah Ibn Janah....and they studied his work and they gathered up their strength to bring its secrets to light and they were victorious in their work and they fought....and the content of their battle....behold they are written in their books."

The quarrel seems to have had its beginning in northern Spain, in Saragossa, at the home of one Aby Suleiman ben Troka whose home was a gathering place for scholars and learned men. One day there came a visitor from southern Spain and related the fact that the nagid and his friends, upon examination of Jonah's ספר השו"ת in which the latter had criticized the work of Chayyuj and pointed out its insufficiencies, that they were preparing to compose an answer to Janah's criticism. Janah's inquiry as to the points of difference elicited a partial answer from the visitor whose name has not been preserved to us. However, on the basis of the information he had received, Ibn Janah composed a small book in defense of his stand called ספר השו"ת which he offered to the stranger asking him that he transmit it to the nagid. This the man refused to do, maintaining that Janah had better wait until the criticism which the nagid was preparing was completed. Ibn Janah refused to do this and rewrote his book in defense. In closing his book he challenged his critics and maintained he was interested only in the truth and that he would be ready to trample his foes should they attack him further.

Thus was begun a conflict around which a whole literature grew up. Unfortunately, most of the material of this controversy has been lost. Only fragments of it have remained. From these we can see that the battle was a bitter one indeed. Both camps reviled and excoriated each other. The work of Samuel Hanagid and his followers is known as ספר השו"ת. Rager maintains that the twenty-two works of grammar which are attributed to the nagid were written during

this conflict with Jonah Ibn Janah. In answer to the attacks of the nagid, Ibn Janah wrote four essays or books in defense of his philological ideas and interpretations of the Bible. These he later incorporated into one book called Sefer Hahachlama. In referring to this book⁵ he shows how necessary its contents are to a thorough knowledge of the Bible and Hebrew grammar. Although he does not call the nagid by name, he refers to him in a very derogatory manner as being "debased because of lack of knowledge." Of the Sefer Hahachlama only one small fragment of the first part is extant.⁶ Here he refers to Samuel's criticism as being motivated only by slander and jealousy. He (Janah) would not demean himself to answer these scurrilous attacks. He needs must guard the purity of his soul. "For the plague of jealousy there is no cure and there is no means of controlling its evil...."

In such strong language did Ibn Janah refer to the nagid. It becomes apparent that he considered him ignorant of the knowledge of Hebrew grammar and its rules. He probably felt that it was jealousy rather than love of truth or reverence for his master that motivated the nagid's criticism.

Bacher feels that the animosity that Jonah Ibn Janah felt for the nagid might have had its origin earlier when they both lived in Cordova and that it was this old hatred that found renewed bitterness in the controversy over Judah Ibn Chayyuj.⁷ We have no evidence to prove this. There is no doubt that Jonah Ibn Janah overstepped the bounds when he referred to the nagid as he did. The nagid was unquestionably skilled in the knowledge of Hebrew language and grammar. Both Janah and he had received their grammatical training from Judah Ibn Chayyuj.

Bacher is of the opinion that Jonah Ibn Janah was more meri-

torious in this argument than the nagid. As proof he offers the really fine work that Janah did in his Sefer Hadikduk which remains a memorial to his knowledge in the field of Hebrew philology and interpretation of Scripture while/the nagid's grammatical work little or nothing has remained, *למה לא נשאר שום דבר*.

Undoubtedly the criticisms of the nagid and his followers served to clarify the thinking of Jonah Ibn Janah. The dispute compelled him to deepen his studies and to define his grammatical principles. In this light, the nagid also made his contributions to the final work of Ibn Janah.

Benet has published some fragments of the *פרקו נאכ*, termed in Arabic the Alrasail Alrefakia (*رسائل الرفاعية*) which contain the controversy between the nagid and Ibn Janah.⁸ According to Benet, the subject of these fragments are in answer to the Sefer Hahachlama which Ibn Janah wrote in defense of his grammatical principles. One finds here the bitterness and sarcasm which the nagid employed in criticizing Ibn Janah who, as we have seen, did not hesitate to return the compliment with similar revilement. The nagid refers to the lack of understanding of Ibn Janah. He speaks also of the fourth part of the "Alrisail Alrefakia" which were intended as an honest criticism of Janah, which the latter (impertinent one) did not understand. He rebelled and refused to listen, arguing that he was the master of the language and the leader of Israel. "He became arrogant and separated himself in wrath and hurt dignity. We do not know why for he succeeded in nothing."

Willensky differs with Benet and attributes these fragments to Jonah Ibn Janah, maintaining that they belong at the end of Janah's *ספר הדקדוק*.⁹ He gives as his reasons, first, that Janah could not find sufficient terms to vilify the nagid upon every

occasion. Even in the Sefer Harikma and Sefer Hasheroshim written long after the controversy, in his old age, Ibn Janah refers derogatorily to the nagid. Further, the reference to the man who "thinks himself the leader of Israel," according to Wilensky, could not possibly mean Ibn Janah who was not especially active in general affairs. It undoubtedly had reference to the nagid and was, therefore, written by Ibn Janah. Wilensky points out further to certain statements in the fragments which have remained of this conflict and on the basis of them comes to the conclusion that they are the writing of R'Jonah Ibn Janah and not the nagid's.

The Nagid as Talmudist

We have previously referred to the nagid's talmudic work. Abraham Ibn Daud tells us of his interest in the gaonic decisions made by Hai Gaon through the mediation of their mutual friend, Jacob ben Nissim of Kairuwan.¹⁰

We do not have the talmudic works of the nagid in their entirety. He is the author of two talmudic works of which we know. They are the Mevo Hatalmud and the Hilchatha Gavrasa.

The Mevo Hatalmud is divided into two parts. The first contains a list of the bearers of tradition from the members of the Great Assembly down to Enoch, Samuel's teacher. The second part contains a methodology of the Talmud. What we have of this work is only a digest. The nagid divides the Talmud into Mishna and commentary on the Mishna. The former is called the Torah Sheb'al peh, the oral tradition begun by Moses and ending with R'Jehuda Hanasi. The commentary on the Mishna comprises two sorts of content. One is the established halacha and the other the halacha which was not established, that is, not accepted. The established halacha is the correct

tradition which was received from Moses and which he received from God, *מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם*. The Mevo then defines the methodology of the Talmud, the various terms of talmudic usage, e.g., Tosefta, Beraitha, Pirush, Sheelah, Kushia, Piruk, Tiyuvta. He also discusses the question of authority in the case of dispute. Wherever there is no indication as to the author, he supplies it. *כִּי מֵיָד מֵיָד מֵיָד*. He also establishes the priority and authority of the statement of one scholar over another.

כִּי מֵיָד מֵיָד מֵיָד הַלְכָה כִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן יוֹחָנָן; וְלִמְנָחֵם בֶּן עֲזַרְיָהוּ; וְלִמְנָחֵם בֶּן עֲזַרְיָהוּ; וְלִמְנָחֵם בֶּן עֲזַרְיָהוּ

These rules are provided for the purpose which we find stated at the head of the work. It is to supply the student of the Talmud with a method of procedure and an understanding of the terminology and the general rules of Talmudic learning.

In addition to the Mevo Hataalmud, Samuel Hanagid was also the author of a talmudic work, the *סֵפֶר הַחַיִּים* which has been lost. Sassoon maintains that the nagid derived the name for this work from the Talmud.¹¹ The first to have made use of this work of the nagid was R'Judah ben Barzilai in his Sefer Haitim.¹² Sassoon has also brought the names and works of many of the early Posekim who used this work and quoted from it, including some of the nagid's decisions in their halachic works.¹³ The Sassoon manuscript gives us further information about a battle at Golah in 1056. The armies were led to the battle. The people of Malaga deserted causing the defeat of Badis and the capture of Samuel Hanagid. Samuel managed to escape, almost miraculously. At that time the nagid vowed to compile a book which he called *Hilkatha Gavaratha*. The book is described in a poem called *Todah*, containing the aims of the book, the battle at Golah, and his escape. Sassoon brings this poem in its entirety.¹⁴ This poem is of great importance in showing the characteristics of Sam-

uel as well as the state of talmudic knowledge at that time. He thanks God that He has made him worthy to learn and to teach the Torah to Israel. All turn to him to interpret the Torah and tradition. He continues to describe the chain of tradition. "And from Moses they have been received orally and in the midst of the heart, not in writing and retained. And from prophet to prophet were they given, and from master to pupils delivered." This law was guarded until a time of misfortune. "And the bread of knowledge decreased in the academies and the water of understanding from the wells." Then Samuel speaks of the dispute over the tradition between Sham-mai and Hillel. Rabbi Judah Hanasi is praised "for he arose and stored up six storehouses of the Oral Torah and he illumined the face of the universe by the Mishna, its orders spreading forth like the planets." Besides R'Judah Hanasi, Samuel speaks of the other scholars who endeavored to collect mishnayoth. Halachoth were fixed, ritual and halachic distinctions clearly made. Then, with new difficulties, the people were inclined to forget. New doubt and confusion arose. Then came the Amoraim who solved the difficult mishnayoth for the people. Rabina and Rav Ashi placed all this material in the Talmud. "They erected for the Torah a wall and castles; they raised for the religion enclosures and palaces; they pressed all the secrets of the Torah like the man who treads the clusters of vine and the winepresses and they brought forth what was closed up from them like bringing out the fruit of the grapes with the kernels." Samuel attacks the opponents of the Talmud and those who opposed the rabbinite authority and tradition. He accuses their leaders of misleading their people and of deliberate forgery in their attempt to invalidate the authority of tradition. Some of the lines of this poem express one of the chief aims of the Hilkatha Gabaratha to be to refute the erroneous

notions of the Minim. "And, therefore, I made further researches according to my ability and capacity in the religion of God. I mention their deception in order to refute them. I write the correct teachings in order to establish them, and I engrave the opinions which are undivided in clear language and upright ways. I release all that is straight from graves and cast all that is crooked into the graves." All of the talmudical material in this poem is drawn from the Bavli. It contains also some of the gaonic dicta, especially those of Hai Gaon whom he regarded and respected. He says of him, "I draw from his well, his bread I eat and find no bitterness. From his clouds I will quench the thirst of the thirsty and I will cause wells to spring up in Israel." Samuel was very careful in collecting the decisions of all the rabbis and gaonim.¹⁵ He was especially meticulous in mentioning the source of each statement and decision, giving its rabbinic or gaonic author. The poem goes further in thanking God for his deliverance from certain death and declaring his purpose of writing this book and devoting his life to it in gratitude for his escape so that all who sought to study the Torah could derive inspiration from it. The epilogue of this poem is characteristic of Samuel's modesty. We read, "In my book thou shalt see the words of the earliest and latest authorities and thou hast no need to search. And if thou findest in my subjects a blunder - for there is no one who does not err - I look to you, my friends, to judge me, who has worked hard, favorably. What the Lord has taught me, take; but what my God has not given me to understand, how can I grasp it?"¹⁶

Mann has reconstructed some of the contents of the Hilkatha Gabaratha on the basis of Genizeh fragments.¹⁷ Mann tells us that when Samuel Hanagid spoke of the "minim" he alluded to the Karaites

and their perversion of the laws of Judaism. His entire aim was to refute their statements and show, on the basis of tradition, what the true laws were. The meager contents of the Hilchatha Gabaratha, as we now have them, could not achieve this aim. But it is probable that the main contents of this book, which have unfortunately been lost, dealt with this problem. Although the nagid maintains in his poem that he bases his work on the Talmud, supplemented by the gaonic opinions, especially those of Hai, yet he criticizes their views and is aware that others will question his right to do this.¹⁸ According to Mann, the book had for its aim the collection of gaonic views, especially, Hai on sections of the Talmud, examining them critically.

The text of the work as we now have it consists of four leaves with their contents barely legible. There does not seem to be any particular method of procedure as far as can be seen. There is no conscious order, a passage belonging to one masechta following another of another masechta. A thorough appreciation of the work is impossible now. We can only hope for additional material to turn up. It would be valuable not only in adding to the merit of their author but also because it contains many gaonic dicta, especially those of the renowned Hai whose decisions were respected throughout the Jewish communities of his time.

According to Mann,¹⁹ the work was begun during the lifetime of Hai. Therefore, it must have been before 1038. However, later on in the manuscript the nagid speaks of Hai as having died. It is, therefore, to be concluded that while the nagid began his works earlier it was only during certain leisure periods that he could continue his work. And it was not before 1056 that he began the collection and his own annotations to the gaonic responsa.

Correspondence of the Nagid

Abraham Ibn Daud tells us²⁰ that the nagid "did great favors to Israel in Spain, Maghreb, N.Africa, Egypt, Sicily, reaching to the academy of Babylon and the Holy City." It is evident that due to his widespread beneficences in all of these communities that the nagid carried on a great correspondence with their leaders. Unfortunately, most of these letters have been lost. In the appeals which were sent to him for aid there was probably a description of the internal state of affairs of the Jews of these various lands. If we had some of these in our possession they would have shed light upon the spiritual and cultural life of the Jews of that period. Abraham Ibn Daud tells us further²¹ that the nagid corresponded with Hai Gaon, Rabbenu Nissim, and his son Chananel.

Mann, in his discussion of the problem of Chushiel and his supposed two sons Chananel and Elchanan,²² refers to the letter of consolation which the nagid sent to Chananel on the death of his father Chushiel. He eulogizes him for having merited a learned son (Hananel) who is called by many complimentary titles.²³ We have already referred to the elegy which the nagid wrote upon the death of Hai.²⁴ "And though he departed leaving no son (as his successor) he has spiritual children all over the dominions of Islam and Christendom."²⁵

William Daniel ben Azarya, nasi and gaon of *שורק* / *שורק*, the school of Fustat (1051-62) corresponded with both Samuel Hanagid and his son Joseph. Mann maintains that he and his school no doubt benefited by their bounty.²⁶ He also rewarded them with honorary titles in connection with the academy and his additional dignity as nasi. Of these relations we learn from a letter sent to Joseph and his brother Eliasaf by Ali ben Amram, supporter of Daniel ben Azariah in Fustat.²⁷

The letter refers to his former correspondence and mentions the memorial service which was held in Fustat when his father Samuel Hanagid died. The letter further mentions a new title of honor which Daniel had given to Joseph. What this new title was we do not know. Mann suggests that these titles were similar to those bestowed on other benefactors of the Academy, Behir Hayeshivah, Ahuv Hayeshivah. In another letter sent by Ali Ben Amram to the nagid, Jehosef ben Samuel, he mentions the donations sent by Jehosef. He adds that whenever he prays for the health of his spiritual head, Daniel ben Azarya, he couples with it that of the nagid Jehosef.

Conclusion

Thus we have attempted to present the life and work of the nagid Samuel Halevi, this loved son of Israel, who rose from obscurity to assume a position of fame and importance unparalleled in the history of Israel in exile up to his day. We can but marvel at this man of greatness, Statesman, poet, linguist, man of general science, halachist, he amazes us with his versatility and intellectual acquisitions. Benefactor to scholars far and near, supporter of schools of Jewish learning, man of faith and nobility, he was ever responsive to the needs of Israel in exile. Indeed, this Godly man deserved the tribute of the Chronicler, Abraham Ibn Daud²⁸ that "he merited the four crowns: the crown of Torah, of greatness, leadership, the crown of a good name, and above all these, the crown of good deeds."

Finis

Notes on Chapter IV

1. Simchoni, Hatekufo, Vol.10, P.166; Dozy, Moslems in Spain, P.609.
2. Bacher, Introduction to Sefer Hasheroshim XV; Poznansky, J.Q.R., Vol.16.
3. Zalman ben Gottlieb, Machberes Hearuch of R'Solomon Parchon, Pressburg, 1844. *Introduction* xxi
4. Judah Ibn Tibbon, Sefer Harikma, ed. Goldberg, Frankfort, 1856.
5. Ibid., end of introduction.
6. Bacher, Introduction to Sefer Hasheroshim XVIII.
7. Ibid.
8. David Benet, Kiriath Sefer, Vol.2, pp.150ff, 1925-6.
9. Michael Wilensky, Kiriath Sefer, Vol.7, pp.585ff, 1930-31.
10. Abraham Ibn Daud, Sefer Seder Hakabala, P.73; Mann, Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature, Vol.1, P.112.
11. Sassoon, *ענין גורן 700*, Introduction, P.3, Oxford, 1928.
12. Judah ben Barzilai, Sefer Haitim, ed. ~~Levin~~ *Albeck*, Breslau, 1911, P.2.
13. Sassoon, *ענין גורן 700*, Introduction, P.6.
14. Ibid., P.14.
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18. Ibid., P.631.
19. Ibid., P.632.
20. Sefer Seder Hakabala; Medieval Jewish Chronicles, Neubauer ed., P.72.
21. Ibid.
22. Mann, Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series, Vol.9, P.166.
23. Hakarmel, VIII, pp.245-246.
24. Harkavy, Diwan ed., P.48.
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26. Mann, H.U.C. Annual, Vol.3, Second Supplement to "The Jews in Egypt and Palestine Under the Fatamid Caliphs, 1926.
27. Ibid., from manuscript Adler No.3765, folio 8.
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