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**A Lost Meta-Halakhic Genre Discovered in the Genizah Collection and its Contribution to Understanding the Development of Jewish Law**

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The Geonim were generally regarded the spiritual leaders of world Jewry in the early medieval era, by virtue of the secular and religious authority they wielded over Jews in Islamic lands. The Geonim specialized in the composition of legal monographs, a genre I am studying in my PhD dissertation titled: *Manuals for Judges ادب القضاة)): A Study of Genizah Fragments of a Judeo-Arabic Monographic Legal Genre*. This genre has yet to be subjected to a dedicated study, mainly because the scholarly community hitherto lacked the scientific research tools currently at our disposal. The lacuna can be only filled by identifying and contextualizing individual Genizah fragments. New findings from this previously unknown genre have significant ramifications for our understanding of the development of court procedures in Jewish civil and criminal law, as well as shedding light on the character of Jewish judges and their ethical, juristic duties from late antiquity to the present day.

I will propose that a relatively long Genizah fragment (T-S Ar. 46.156) is a remnant from the introduction to כתאב לַוַאזם אלחֻכַּאם (Kitāb Lawazim al-Ḥukkām/*Book of the Duties of Judges*), written by Rav Samuel Ibn Ḥofni Gaon (d. 1013). It includes a theological introduction—the type used in halakhic discourse, common in the writings of the late Geonim, and representing an imitation of the Muslim literary practice of providing theological context as an introduction to a legal discussion. The discussions presented in this fragment are deeply rooted in *Usūl al-Fiqh*, reflecting ideas identified exclusively with the Jewish Mu’tazilite Kalam. The fragment employs classic, Muslim dialectics (*Taqsim),* seeking to prove the validity of monotheism by arguing that the existence of a second god would contradict the concept of God’s infiniteness and preclude the absolute harmony of the universe.

The theological discussion tends to provide a basis for the theoretical authority of the judge in the Rabbinic court. The ideal characteristics of a flesh-and-blood judge and an earthly court are compared to the attributes (اَلصِّفَات) of the true judge, God, a comparison supported by Exodus 22:7: וְנִקְרַב בַּעַל הַבַּיִת אֶל **הָאֱלֹהִים**  [the householder shall approach the judges;- literally ‘God’].