

is the last of the prophets, and that [his teaching] supersedes all doctrine that preceded him. He calls to all nations to convert to Islam. The reward [after death] for one who follows Muhammad is the return of the soul to the body, which will dwell in the Garden of Eden. Such a person will lack no delight — food, drink, women, and all that his soul desires. But he who rebels against Islam will descend to a never-ending fire, and his suffering will last forever.”

6. The Kuzari responded: “If you want to prove that God exists and that God communicates with humans, and the person whom you are attempting to convince is a non-believer, then you need to begin with an account of famous miracles that are irrefutable. Only then is there a chance that the person will believe that God communicated with man. You claim that the wondrous text of your holy book proves the existence of God [and that this can only be appreciated in the original Arabic]. That may be so, but for a foreigner such as myself who does not understand Arabic, this proof is meaningless. You can read the Koran to me all you want, but I cannot tell the difference between one Arabic book and another.”

7. The wise Muslim responded: “Our prophet did perform great miracles. However, [knowing] the story of these miracles was never deemed

ושגביאנו הוא חותם הנביאים ומבטל כל תורה הקדומה לו, וקורא כל האמות אל תורת ישמעאל, וגמול השומעו השבת רוחו אל גופו בגן עדו. ונעמיות לא יחסר מאכל ומשתה ומשגל וכל אשר תאנה נפשו, וענש הממנה, הליכתו אל אש לא תכבה, ולא יתמו יסוריו לעולם.

ו. אמר לו הכוזרי: מי שרוצין לישר אותו בדבר האלהים ולברר אצלו כי האלהים מדבר עם בשר ודם והוא מרחיק זה, צריה לברר אצלו דברים מפרקמים שאין מדחה להם, ולואי שיאמין עם זה כי הבורא דבר עם אדם. ואם ספר תורתכם מופת לכם והוא בלשון ערבי, אין מכיר מופתו והאות שלו לועז כמוני. וכאשר יקרא באזני אינני מבדיל בינו ובין זולתו מלשון ערבי.

ז. אמר לו החכם: וכבר נראו על ידו

conformity with logic and also dismiss various phenomena as being logically impossible. But if you demonstrate to them empirically that something they had previously dismissed actually exists, they are forced to revise their theories and find a way to explain the new phenomenon based on the stars or other spiritual forces. Because ultimately, you cannot deny your eyes.

[3] “In your case, however, you have not shown me any physical evidence to substantiate your beliefs. Furthermore, what you suggest is totally foreign to me; I was not raised with these ideas. Therefore I need to search more thoroughly until I find the truth.”

[4] Afterwards, the Kuzari called for a wise Muslim, and asked him about his ideas and practices.

[5] The Muslim said: “We uphold the beliefs in the unity and eternity of God, that the world is God’s creation, and that all men are descended from the first man, Adam. We reject the possibility of corporeality in God. If you find anything in our literature (the Koran) that seems to indicate otherwise, we would explain that those passages are written metaphorically, to bring certain esoteric ideas closer to man’s grasp. We further believe that our holy book is the word of God, and that indeed the wondrous text itself proves this. No mortal could ever write a book such as ours, nor even a single sentence such as those in our Koran. We also believe that our prophet (Muhammad)

הם רואים, שאם יספר להם עליהם מבלי ראותם, מבחישים אותם, וכאשר רואים אותם מתחכמים ושמים להם סבות מן הפוכים והרוחניות ולא ידחו הראות.

אבל אני אינני מוצא דעתי נוחה לקבל הדברים האלה, מפני שהם חדשים לי ולא גדלתי עליהם, וחובה עלי לחקר בשלמות עד שאמצא העקר.

ואחר כן קרא להם מחכמי ישמעאל, ושאל אותו על חכמתו ומעשהו.

ואמר לו: אנחנו מקימים האחדות והקדמות לאלהים יתברך, והחדוש לעולם, והיחס אל אדם, ונרחיק הנשמות בכלל, ואם יראה ממנו שום דבר בדברינו, נפרשהו ונאמר כי הוא דרך העברה וקרוי לשכלנו, עם הודאתנו, כי ספר תורתנו דברי אלהים, והוא בעצמו מופת, התחייבו בקבולו בעבור עצמו, מפני שאין אדם יכול להבר ספר אחר כמוהו ולא כפרשה אחת מפרשיותיו.

denies that God brought retribution upon Pharaoh, that He split the Red Sea to save His chosen nation, that He drowned the Egyptians,²⁵ that He brought the manna²⁶ and the quail²⁷ from the heavens to feed the Children of Israel for forty years in the desert, that He spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai, that He made the sun stand still for Joshua,²⁸ and that He helped Joshua defeat the mighty giants living in Canaan.²⁹ And certainly, what God did before the advent of the Israelite nation, such as the great flood³⁰ and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah³¹ — these are events that are well known. No one would suggest that these miracles were performed through trickery, or that they were figments of the imagination!”

10. Said the Kuzari: “If the miracles experienced by the Children of Israel are the entire proof to any believer in the Bible that there is a God in the world, then I see that I have to ask the Jews, for they are the descendants of the Biblical Children of Israel.” And so he summoned a Jewish sage,

25. *Shemos*, Ch. 14.

26. *Ibid.*, Ch. 16.

27. *Ibid.*, 16:13.

28. *Yehoshua* 10:13.

29. *Ibid.*, 11:21.

30. *Bereishis*, Ch. 7.

31. *Ibid.*, Ch. 19.

שְׁעֵשֶׂה בְּפָרְעוֹ, וְשִׁבַּקְע אֶת הַיָּם, וְשִׁהַצִּיל אֶת בְּחִירָיו, וּמַטְבַּע אֶת אֲשֶׁר קָצַף עֲלֵיהֶם, וְהוֹרִיד לָהֶם הַמָּן וְהַשְּׁלֹו אֲשֶׁר הָאֲכִילֵם אַחֲרָי כִּן אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה בְּמִדְבָּר, וְשִׁדְבַר עִם מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי, וְהַעֲמִיד הַשְּׁמַיִשׁ לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְעֲזַר אוֹתוֹ עַל הַגְּבוּרִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק, וְמַהֲפַכַת סָדֹם וְעִמְרָה, הֲלֹא זֶה דְבַר יָדוּעַ וּמְפָרָסִם, וְאִין בְּכָל זֶה צַד סְבָרָא שֶׁהִיא בְּתַהֲבֻלָּה, וְלֹא בְּדַמְיוֹן!

י. אָמַר הַכּוּזָרִי: אֲנִי רֹאֶה שְׁצָרִיךְ אֲנִי לְשָׂאֵל לַיהוּדִים, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵם שְׂאֵרֵית בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֲנִי רֹאֶה שֶׁהֵם הִטְעֵנָה וְהִרְאִינָה לְכָל בַּעַל דָּת כִּי יֵשׁ לְבוֹרָא תוֹרָה בְּאַרְצָא, וְאַחַר כֵּן קָרָא חֲכָם

necessary for acceptance of our religion.”²⁴

8. The Kuzari said: “It does not make sense that the Creator would communicate with a mortal without there being some supernatural phenomenon accompanying the experience. This would be the only way to prove that it was really the Creator communicating. Furthermore, the supernatural effect would have to be a public spectacle, so that the adherents of the religion would see it with their own eyes, instead of having to believe an account of it from their prophet. This way they could believe the communication without any shadow of a doubt and without questioning that perhaps it was the result of a rich imagination or black magic. Only then could we hope that these people would accept such a concept — that the Creator of this world, the World to Come, the angels, the heavens, and the constellations, would attach Himself to this lowly corporeal creature, man, and further, that He would speak to him, and fulfill his requests and desires.

9. The wise Muslim responded: “But is not our holy book [the Koran] full of miracles related about Moses and the Children of Israel? No one

24. That is, our religion is based on rational principles; no miracles are required to accept what is already completely rational and reasonable (O.N.).