doubts about the right interpretation of the Law. While earlier in Mohammedan times the Yemenite Jews were closely connected with the seats of learning in Babylon [1], so that Yemenite coins were very common in the treasuries of the Yeshivot there [2], already in the xith century we find that R. Yishaq b. Shemuel Has-sefaradi of Alexandria [3] received various questions from 'diyar al-Yaman', which obviously means 'upper Yemen' as opposed to Aden [4]. Even more instructive is a very detailed legal deed [5] concerning a Jewish ship lost in the Indian Ocean, which was drawn up in Aden in 1152. The members of the Jewish court of that town, although including a Nasi, 'the head of our Galuyoth', and a Nagid and his son, confess (*verso*, lines 29-31, cf. *ib.*, 52-53) : 'We have no right either to loosen or to bind (to approve or to disapprove) anything in this matter in the presence of our masters, the judges—Dayyanim—of Misraim' (Misr, Fostat). This as well as other documents dating only a short time before Maimonides' letter to the Yemen, shows that the supreme position of Maimonides in the religious belief of the Yemenite community was not an isolated phenomenon, but was preceded and—we may add at once—succeeded by reliance on

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[1] B. M. Lewin, *Ginze Kedem*, III, p. 14-23. San'a and even Sa'da, high up in Northern Yemen, are mentioned in those documents, which, by the way, have been found in the Cairo Geniza.

[2] Responsa of the Geonim, edited by Harkavi, no. 286, p. 202. That the financial assistance of Aden Jews was requested even in Egypt is shown in a most interesting letter sent in 1135 by an Aden worthy to a Palestinian refugee living in Egypt (published by J. Mann, *Jews in Egypt*, vol. II, 366-367).

[3] David Sassoon, *Ohel David*, p. 1081 *b*, and J. Mann, *Tarbiz*, vol. 6, p. 76. Mann's criticism of Sassoon's understanding of the text and his own interpretation are not correct. In the opening passage the author of the anonymous Arabic commentary on Hullin says that *his* master had asked Yishaq Has-sefaradi various questions, among them one the answer to which is given in full. By the way, the question concerns a typical Yemenite feature : the eating of raw, completely uncooked meat. This custom has been preserved among Yemenite Jews until the present day, as is the case with other mountain peoples, e. g. the Lebanese and the Abyssinians, cf. my remarks in *Magnes Anniversary Book*, p. 91, n. 8.

[4] See below, page 25.

[5] Edited, with copious annotations by E. Strauss, *Zion*, vol. 4, p. 217-231.