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**Three Phases of Notification (*moda'ah*) Reflecting  
Three Periods within the Geonic Era**

This article presents three phases in the development of notification (*moda'ah*) cancellation that occurred during the Geonic era. The article's central argument is that these three phases arise from historical-social changes within this era and reflect them. The notification appears as a tool for annulling some legal actions in advance, devised for the purpose of protecting vendors at a time when criminal elements were increasingly coercing people to make sales. This tool, however, also created a problem over the ability to rely on Bills of Divorce and contracts under halakhah, leading to the introduction of notification cancellation. Notification cancellation only appears in the Talmud in the context of compelled divorce, although its use expanded in the Geonic era. The article seeks to show that the introduction of notification cancellation for all bills of divorce, comprising the first phase of the notification cancellation regulations, is connected with the Rebellious Wife Regulation introduced in 651. This was at the time of the Muslim conquest and means were needed to deal with the phenomenon of Jewish women converting to Islam to gain release from their husbands without receiving a halakhic bill of divorce. This is a halakhically intolerable situation, as under these circumstances the woman would be living in sin and her children would be illegitimate. The Rebellious Wife Regulation expedites the process of compelling the husband to issue a halakhic bill of divorce; according to this article, in order to prevent the husband from holding up imposition of the divorce, notification cancellation was applied to all bills of divorce. These two operations correspond to the first period, in which the Geonim regarded themselves as possessing the authority to introduce regulations deviating from the Talmud. In the second phase of the notification cancellation regulations, the application of the notification cancellation was extended to all legal documents. This move corresponds to the second period, during which in the late 8th century and in the 9th century the Sura Geonim came to terms with the Jews' transition from agriculture to commerce. This transition did not take place immediately following the Muslim conquest, but the Muslim conquest initiated this process, which continued for about a century. When commerce became their main occupation a method was needed to ensure that the legal operation was not annulled, achieved by applying notification cancellation to all legal documents. During this period numerous other regulations arising from the Jews' transition from agriculture to commerce were introduced, such as

the 781 Regulation for collecting debts from movable assets rather than land following the Jews' abandonment of agriculture and their no longer holding land. The third phase involved the limitation of the Regulation only to bills of divorce, corresponding to the third period in which the 10th century Geonim felt unauthorised to amend, but just to interpret, and therefore attempted to comply with what was stated expressly in the Talmud. This process arose from the weakening of the standing of talmudic academies throughout the Jewish world, the economic security enjoyed by the Jews, who were no longer in need of the Regulations, and the canonisation process underway here within Islam also influencing Jews to focus collectively on the Talmud. Thus the application of the notification cancellation was limited to bills of divorce as laid down explicitly in the Talmud, with the stipulation that it was only applicable in cases where in the Talmud it is valid under coercion. The limitation of deviations from the Talmud during this period was also manifested in other areas such as the start of the compilation of Talmud interpretations by Rav Sherira Gaon and Rav Hai Gaon.