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KHAZARS AND KARAITES
IN HALEVI'S KUZARI

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of Requirements for Ordination

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Preface

In this study, I examine sections of Halevi's Kuzari and and demonstrate how those sections relate to his anti-Karaite polemic. The web of political, social and religious issues and interrelationships which gave impetus and form to the details of Halevi's composition are complex and often elusive. I endeavor here to unravel some of these threads to see how they relate to both the general and some specific issues which arise in the Kuzari. The work has just begun. With God's help, it will never cease.

I have used as my basic text the edition by David Z. Baneth, Kitāb al-Radd wa-'l-Dalīl Fī 'l-Dīn al-Dhalīl (Al-Kitāb Al-Khazarī), prepared for publication by Ḥaggai Ben-Shammai (Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1977). I used extensively the Hebrew translation by Yehuda Even Shmuel, Sefer Ha-Kuzari (Dvir, 1973). I supplemented these with Judah ibn Tibbon's translation (Vilna, 1904) and the English translation from a highly defective manuscript by Hartwig Hirschfeld (Schocken, 1964, originally 1905).

I acknowledge first of all the wise guidance of my advisor in this endeavor, Dr. Leonard S. Kravitz, who first introduced me to the discipline of medieval religious thought. I have benefitted exceedingly from his kind encouragement, concern, respect and counsel. Mr. Philip E. Miller sat with me patient hours over the Arabic text of the Kuzari. I have turned many of

his thoughts into words. Many of my friends and teachers at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion have tolerated my aggressive academic style and critical poignancy. They have helped me to widen the human perspective into which academic achievements fit as one component part. Particular thanks belong to Ms. Donna B. Berman who helped me prepare an earlier draft of this work.

I began this work while at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem during a leave-of-absence granted to me by the faculty of the College. Ms. Ilana Ben-Ezra, Esq. helped me through the formative stages of this study. My teacher, Professor Jacob Neusner established the intellectual standards to which I aspire and Professor Ernest S. Frerichs created the model for humanity, kindness and warmth which I covet. My parents supported me through many years of school and probably can best judge the progress I have made. Words can ill express my thanks to them.

The work is dedicated to Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel, for several critical years, my I's Thou.

I

In 1956, Shlomo Dov Goiten published four letters written by Judah Halevi.[1] In the fourth of these, Halevi writes to his friend Ḥalfon Dimyati of Cairo, mentioning inter alia his desire to travel to Palestine, and espressing his sorrow for having not yet forwarded to Ḥalfon a copy of his Al-Kitāb Al-Khazarī, The Book of the Khazars. Halevi submits that he wrote the book because of "the request of a devotee to Karaism from Christian Spain who questioned me about a variety of matters, and I sent it (the book) to him." Halevi notes that the book has not yet reached its final form, but adds that he expects to complete the work for Halfon before he sees him in Egypt.[2] The letter constitutes prima facie evidence attesting to Halevi's original inducement to author the Kuzari: It began as a reply to a Karaite scholar's inquiries concerning the Rabbanite form of Judaism.

To my knowledge, no one has attempted to study the Kuzari to see how the author's stated primary intent relates to the details of his argumentation within the work. In 1957, D.Z. Baneth of The Hebrew University briefly evaluated the letter's contents in the light of some of the general philosophical issues in the work.[3] He notes that, in concert with the letter, the Kuzari emphasizes (1) that proximity to God depended not upon attainment of philosophical truths, but rather upon adherence to the performance of mitzvot, and (2) that one derives knowledge of God's will as revealed

in writing and orally to Moses and the prophets through authentic tradition, transmitted from the days of prophecy until the present by trustworthy witnesses. We note, moreover, that Halevi was certainly not trying to convince either pagans, Christians, Moslems or even philosophers to convert to rabbinic Judaism.[4] Rather it appears that his polemic-apologetic is directed at Jews, struggling with the confrontation of traditional Jewish concepts with philosophic truths in an attempt to reconcile and accomodate both.[5] Indeed, after the first article, the king is a converted Jew who himself wrestles with medieval rationalism's challenge to traditional Jewish belief and practice. But were the Karaites the only Jews engaged in this struggle, or were there others living in Halevi's environs whom Halevi addressed?

Before we pursue this question, let us take a brief look at the social, political and religious conditions under which Halevi wrote the Kuzari. Abu ʿl-Hasan Judah b. Samuel Halevi was born in northern Spain in about 1075, but lived a substantial portion of his life in the cities of Andalus, before returning in his latter years to the expanding Christian portion of the Iberian peninsula.[6] With the Almoravide seizure of Andalus in 1086, the political fortunes of the Jews of the south began to recede. While some, like the ibn Ezras, had been forced by the new political situation to flee northward, Jewish cultural life, at least for a few decades, remained concentrated in the southern cities of Andalus ——

Cordova, Lucena and Granada. There Halevi spent his formative and early productive years. There he was schooled in Arabic, rabbinics, medicine, philosophy and astronomy. It is difficult to date his return to or the course of his subsequent travels in Christian Spain. As the Christians pushed southward towards Cordova and Seville during the third and fourth decades of the twelfth century, Jews began to immigrate to northern towns now securely under Christian control. Toledo had become a center for this migration, and Halevi is known to have gone and practiced medicine there.[7] By this time, Halevi had become disallusioned, not just by Muslims and Christians who regularly persecuted Jewish communities, but also with his fellow Jews who, in the face of these persecutions, continued to court the favor of their gentile overlords at the cost, Halevi thought, of Jewish tradition. His poetry in this later period reflects his concern about the rapid state of decline of the Jewish community and his skepticism about concessions made in the social and philosophical realm to non-Jewish ways of conduct and belief. His later writings, including the Kuzari, signify both his rejection of sophistic doubts and speculative philosophy as a sufficient method for discovering God's will, and his renunciation of the social order and values which supported and affirmed such a view.

We are not concerned here with the full context of Halevi's philosophical doctrine, but with one aspect of it in particular:

the Kuzari as an anti-Karaitic polemic, and so as an apologia for Rabbanite faith in the face of that challenge. If the stability of the Jewish community was precarious during Halevi's lifetime, a schism within the community would have been perceived as even a more serious threat. The Rabbanite-Karaite controversy had been proceeding apace for years elsewhere, but from the end of the eleventh century, during the fall of Jerusalem, and through the middle part of the twelfth century, that controversy took root and grew in Spain.

Abraham Ibn Daud's Sefer Ha-Qabbalah (1160-61), is the foremost source for the history of Karaism in Spain. In this twelfth-century polemic against sectarianism, Ibn Daud claimed to trace the thirty-eight generations in the chain of transmission which vouchsafed the antiquity, as well as the legitimacy and reliability, of an unchanging oral tradition spoken to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Written from a venomously anti-Karaitic standpoint, it claims to trace the history of Karaism in Spain through the time of Ibn Daud himself, after whom the movement barely existed.[11] In his work on Sefer Ha-Qabbalah, Gerson Cohen describes the history of the Karaites in Spain.[12] Though Ibn Daud asserts that it was Abu ʿl-Taras who introduced Karaism into Spain during the later half of the eleventh century, Cohen has gathered together sources which suggest a presence of Karaites in Spain at an earlier period.

First of all, it should be noted that if not a Karaite presence, then certainly their influence had been felt in Spain

as early as Dunash ibn Labrat (mid-twelfth century) or even R. Natronai Gaon (mid-ninth century). Spanish Muslim encyclopedist Aḥmed ibn Ḥazm (994-1064) describes the Karaites already as a settled and recognizable community living in Toledo and Talavera as early as 1064.[13] The "origins" of the Jews in Spain are consequently to be pushed back at least a generation before the time of Abu ʿl-Taras.[14] Abu ʿl-Taras was a Castilean Rabbanite Jew, who during the mid-eleventh went to Jerusalem, and there, through the influence of his teacher Abu ʿl-Faraj Furqam ibn Asad (Hebrew: Yeshu ʿa ben Yehuda), adopted Karaism. Abu ʿl-Taras' return to Castile and missionary activities marked a short renascence of Karaism in Spain, and particularly in Toledo, during Halevi's lifetime. After Abu ʿl-Taras' death, his wife continued his work,[15] until 1090 when Karaism was checked in Spain. Through the efforts of Joseph ibn Ferrizuel "Cidellus," physician to Alfonso VI, the king expelled Karaites from all but one city on the Iberian peninsula (probably Toledo). A short revival of the sect after the death of Alfonso VI (ci. 1110) was subdued by his successor, Alfonso VII, but Karaites nevertheless continued to thrive in limited quarters.

The activity of the Karaites seems to have been concentrated in Toledo, a home of Judah Halevi (in his later life), of Abraham ibn Ezra (after 1140), Judah ibn Bal ʿam (born in Toledo before moving to Seville).[16] and Abraham Ibn Daud.[17] Cohen notes that in Toledo during the mid-twelfth century "the sect may well have shown signs of recouping its strength

and of making overtures to the ruling powers to grant them the same autonomous privileges accorded to the Rabbanite community."[18]

No writings of Abu ʿl-Taras have survived, but works of other Karaites were well-known in Spanish Rabbanite circles. Up until its dismantling during the first Crusade (1099), the Jerusalem school under Joseph al-Basir and Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda constituted the unifying cultural and religious axis for diaspora Karaism.[19] The Bible commentary of Jephet ben ʿAli, the tenth-century Palestinian Karaite exegete, exerted "tremendous influence" on Spanish Biblical exegesis, and particularly upon that of Abraham ibn Ezra.[20] The exegetical and philosophical work of Abu ʿl-Taras' teacher Yeshuʿa also seems to have flourished in Spain.[21] Finally, under Yeshuʿa's "guidance", Abu ʿl-Taras himself "composed a work," according to Abraham ibn Daud, "animated by seduction and perversion, which he introduced into Castile and (by means of which) he led many astray."[22] Without a doubt, then, in the Spain of Judah Halevi's day, and even in his own Toledo, Karaism had become a practical issue of concern among the Rabbanites.

Old diatribes and counterattacks were rehearsed on both sides. Karaites had dogmatically argued, for instance, that the Tanach does not provide for the enactment of law outside of its own, so that later rabbinic texts, just like Karaite speculation, was not divinely inerrant, but subject to human fallibility. Indeed, the Karaites claimed, rabbinic law often

contradicted revelation, Moreover, they claimed that Rabbanite sages contravene one another. Even among themselves, there was no common consensus (idjmaʿ). The Rabbanites, and Halevi among them, argued the legitimacy of an oral law which represents the revealed will of God, and so demands adherence. There is moreover among Rabbanites a consensus on what constitutes the authentic will of God as revealed to Moses and the prophet and transmitted by trustworthy witnesses to the present.

More specifically the philosophical doctrines of the al-Baṣir-Yeshuʿa school of thought, transmitted and espoused in Spain by their faithful pupil, Abuʿl-Taras of Castile, should give us a clearer picture of the doctrine of that "devotee to Karaism" whom Halevi mentioned in his letter.[23] Most researchers have alluded to the virtual identity in the thought of Joseph al-Baṣir and his student/colleague Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda.[24] We shall not trace their thought in full here, but treat only issues relevant for our later discussion. Both thinkers accepted the radical rationalism of the Muʿtazilite form of Kalam. This doctrine manifested itself most clearly with regard to their insistence on the logical priority of reason over other sources of knowledge. Creation and the truth of revelation both depend upon establishing the existence, wisdom and omnipotence of God from a source of knowledge independent of revelation. The Kalam is more "radical" than that of Saadia, in that Saadia considered revelation

binding, even if it was not understood. For these Karaite thinkers, first one establishes the existence of God through the ratio. The rest may then follow. So, for instance, though Yeshu'a was an atomist, he believed that the accidents in atoms proved that they were created in time, obviously by a Creator. Creation was not a necessary consequence of the divine essence (lest the world be co-eternal with Him), rather, out of His goodness, God, the willing "agent" chooses that the world be created. Revelation and miracles too display a pre-disposition about God's existence and goodness. Both al-Basir and Yeshu'a accepted the legitimacy of prophecy, but neither believed that it offered knowledge unattainable by means of the rational thinker, at least potentially. Even moral acts are not tied to divine commandment alone, but are part of that store of knowledge accessible independently from revelation, by man's reason. In any case, prophecy which opposed logic certainly could not be considered real prophecy. This unreserved rationalism marks the thought of the al-Basir-Yeshu'a school of Karaite thought during the time of Abu'l-Taras of Castile.

Despite the prima facie evidence, not all of Kuzari can be said to have been written in direct reply to the Karaite scholar's challenges. First, it seems that only the second half of Article III deals directly with the problems related to the Rabbanite-Karaite controversy. As a whole, then, the work would represent Halevi's effort to vindicate

rabbinic Judaism before a general court of rational inquiry, and even to proclaim the court unfit to judge. More particularly, Halevi aims at an audience dominated by enlightened Jews, grappling with the conflicting claims of traditional Judaism and science of reason. The Karaites may have constituted for Halevi the best example of that type of Jew whose philosophical disposition accurately coincided with that brand of philosophical speculation which Halevi contended. In fine, the Karaites were the carriers of the method of logical inquiry which Halevi opposed.

Second, Halevi describes his work to Halfon as a "trifle," currently in an incomplete stage of production. Halevi's own report has led to a consensus, first proposed by Goitein himself, that, at the time of the composition of the letter, the Kuzari, qua reply to the Karaite sage, had only reached its first edition. D. Z. Baneth developed this hypothesis into a theory about the "genesis" of the Kuzari. He suggested that in its first stages the composition emphasized primarily (not wholly) Rabbanite-Karaite issues. Later, Halevi expanded his investigation into other areas of philosophical inquiry, molding the entire work into a more general, pro-rabbinic apologetic.[24a] Without now considering the specifics of Baneth's reconstruction, we may consider the question, what was the shape of that "edition" of the Kuzari which Halevi sent to the Karaite prior to the time of his correspondance with Ḥalfon? Basing himself upon the dates in the three other letters he

found with the letter to Ḥalfon, Goiten dates our letter to 1125, sufficient time for the Kuzari to have been thoroughly revised before Halevi set sail for Palestine. As Halevi himself states in the letter, "I held it back...," that is, from his friends until he could improve upon it, and also, perhaps, widen its scope. But he expresses surprise that fifteen years should have passed between Halevi's display of eagerness to travel "eastward," and his realization of this longing.[25] In an article published several years later, Goiten indicated that he had accepted most of the corrections and clarifications made by Baneth in the latter's notes on Goiten's findings. Baneth detects many signs within the text of the letter to confirm Goiten's hypothesis that, at the time of the writing of the letter, the text of the Kuzari, as we have it, had yet to be completed. On Goiten's supposition that the dates on the other three letters in the collection should affect the dating of the fourth letter, the letter concerning the composition of the Kuzari, Baneth concludes: "One need not necessarily fix the composition of the first version of the Kuzari on or before 1125. Again, one may assume that the book was written not very long before the author's journey to the East."[26] In other words, the time differential between the two versions cannot be fixed, but a date closer to 1140 for the edition which went to the Karaite scholar is preferable. One may not therefore assume that a great passage of time figured in any differences between a

first and second edition.[27] In that case, the chances that the edition that we now have of the Kuzari represents a thoroughgoing revision of the first edition in which the Karaites are featured appears less likely.

Let us here call upon several other matters related to the form of the Kuzari. Here we simply wish to indicate some yet-unrecognized problems related to the composition of the Kuzari which may help us to see why Halevi structured his arguments as he did. Structure often relates to meaning. By raising some issues, we hope to open up the question of structure for investigation.

First, Halevi called his book Al-Kitāb Al-Khazarī, which indicates that even in its earliest stage, as a response to the Karaites, Halevi used the conversion of the Khazar nation as his historical backdrop.[28] We ask, is there any symbolic-thematic parallel in Halevi's mind between the conversion of the Khazar king and his people and the need for the "heretic" Karaites, in a sense, to "convert" to the faith of the Rabbanites.[29] We shall discuss this possibility further.

Second, in the opening line of the Kuzari, Halevi describes the circumstances under which he wrote the work, and so too the purpose for the composition: "I was asked for arguments and rejoinders which I had in reply to the claims of those who take issue with our religion, including those attracted to philosophy, those devotees to other religions, and those Karaites[30] among the children of Israel." The

king, ostensibly acting as Halevi's mouthpiece,[31] contravenes in succession the arguments brought by the philosopher (I:2,4) and the sages of Christianity (I:5) and Islam (I:6,8). But the king never addresses a Karaite directly. Later Halevi devotes a full section to a refutation of Karaism (III:22-74). But on the basis of his opening statement in the Kuzari and the subsequent pattern of confutation, one would expect that the king would confront a Karaite as well. It is surprising, indeed, that a literary technician like Halevi would be so careless. Or could it be that indeed the rest of the composition is directed to Karaites? Again, we shall discuss this possibility in Chapter Six.

Finally, in II:81, the king proposes an outline of the topics which he wishes discussed in his subsequent deliberations with the haver: "Now I would request from you that we turn to (1) a description of the servant of God according to your view. Then I will ask you for (2) your arguments against the Karaites. Then I will request from you (3) the principles of the opinions and beliefs (of the neoplatonized Aristotelians and the Kalam philosophers), and then I will ask you for (4) those things out of the ancient sciences remaining among you." The order of the list is problemmatic. The section on the servant of God (III:1-21) and the discussion of the Karaites (III:22-74) follow according to plan. At the end of III:74, however, the king asks the haver to explain the names of God, which follows (IV:1-23), and then requests a description of the

sciences (IV:24-31), skipping over his request for a description of the formal positions of the two major theosophical schools of Halevi's period in Spain. We are thus confronted with three configurations:

II:81	Actual	III:74
(Attributes)	II) Attributes	
Servant of God	III) Servant of God	
Karaites	Karaites	
	IV) Names of God	Names of God
Principles	Sciences	Sciences
Sciences	V) Principles	(Principles?)
	Epilogue	

It would appear furthermore that Article II, which begins with a description of divine attributes according to the principles of Kalam, should logically be followed by Article IV:1-23, which also discusses divine attributes — the names of God. Article III interrupts the flow of the discussion of God, and His relationship to humanity. Indeed, Article II describes the external qualities necessary for prophecy — the land, the cult, the climate, while IV:1-23 takes up the issue of the inner conditions of the individual, the qualities of the pious person who may receive prophecy. Article III:1-21, on the other hand, discusses the servant of God in a more general way (see Chapter Three). In fact, Eliezer Schweid has suggested that Article III may have been written separately, perhaps first, and inserted between Articles II and IV, which really belong together.[32] More work must be done on the plan of the Kuzari to confirm or reject such a hypothesis. But issues such as this still need

to be addressed in the study of the Kuzari.

In any case, the form of the Kuzari is problemmatic. We do not propose to solve all those problems here. In this thesis, we plan to proceed with the most obvious references to the Karaites and proceed to more difficult and even hidden references to them. We continue to be guided by Halevi's own words which clearly state the original intention of his composition. It is our task to see where his statement to Halfon leads us in the investigation of various sections of the Kuzari. To that end, we proceed in the next chapter to discuss Halevi's frontal attack on the Karaites (III:23f.). In Chapter Three, we shall see how the first half of Article III (III:1-22), relates to that attack. In the fourth chapter, we shall discuss references to the Karaites in Article V. In Chapters Five and Six, we shall discuss the literary form of the Kuzari, the dialogue, and Halevi's choice of the Khazar king and his people and show how it relates to Halevi's apologetic-polemic. This conclusion will summarize the findings. We shall discover that Halevi considered the Karaites' philosophical and social opposition to the Rabbanites a real threat to the stability of the Toledan Jewish community. It was primarily with reference to them that Halevi's arguments against rational speculation take shape. Halevi's polemic against the vehicle of pure reason to attain truth was directed at them in particular, for it was they who posed the major threat to the future of a unified front in the face

of the political insecurities which the Jewish community was experiencing. Certainly, Halevi discussed a wider range of issues. Of course the Karaites were not the only source of Halevi's despair. Already he questions the doctrines of Jews who may have concurred with the doctrines of neoplatonized Aristotelianism, a theosophical school becoming popular in the Spain of Halevi's era. Jews accepting this doctrine, perhaps unwittingly, also conspired against the rabbinic tradition. But the Karaites were already established in Toledo as a powerful social and religious force within the wider Jewish community. For this reason, the Kuzari is addressed to them and is about them.

II

The main polemical section against the Karaites begins in the middle of the third article of the Kuzari (III:22). In the first section of the article, which we review below, Halevi discusses the Socratic model for discovery of the truth and places it in contrast to the rabbinic model. In the first model, individuals accompany their search for a knowledge of truth by induction and logical abstraction with ascetic practices and monastic retirement. Rabbanites, on the other hand, believe that the human mind is incapable of knowing the whole truth or how to achieve it without direct divine intervention. Revelation contains the whole truth; to attain that truth one must follow the prescripts of that revelation as understood by the Rabbanites. As if by example,[1] Halevi directs attention to the Karaites as schismatics. In III:22-23, the king analogizes the search for the truth accompanied by asceticism and monasticism (פרישות, הסתגפות) against which he polemicizes in the first section of Article III, with similar efforts by Karaites which accompanies their search for truth. The operative idea guiding Halevi's anti-Karaitic polemic, as we shall see, is a reaction to the Moslem legal principle idjtihād. It is this principle which prohibits the Rabbanites from overseeing a unified religious practice based on unchallenged authority over an authenic, divinely revealed tradition which the entire Jewish community acknowledges.

J. Schacht describes the principle of idjtihād:[2]

> Idjtihād, literally 'exerting oneself', is the technical term in Islamic law, first for the use of individual reasoning in general and later, in a restricted meaning, for the use of the method of reasoning by analogy (ḳiyās)3....According to the classical doctrine of Islamic legal theory, idjtihād means exerting oneself to form an opinion (ẓann) in a case (ḳaḍiyya) or as a rule (ḥukm) of law... This is done by applying an analogy, ḳiyās....
>
> The duty and right of idjtihād thus did not involve inerrancy... only the combined idjtihād of the whole Muslim people led to idjmaʿ, agreement, and was inerrant.

Schacht further discusses the eclipse of idjtihād.

> During the first two and a half centuries of Islam...there was never any question of denying to any scholar or specialist of the sacred law the right to find his own solutions to legal problems...By the beginning of the fourth century, (about A.D. 900) the point had been reached when the scholars of all schools felt that all essential questions had been thoroughly discussed and finally settled, and a consensus gradually established itself to the effect that from that time onwards no one might be deemed to have the necessary qualifications for independent reasoning in law, and that all future activity would have to be confined to the explanation, application, and, at the most, interpretation of the doctrine as it had been laid down once and for all. This 'closing of the door of idjtihād'; as it was called, amounted to the demand for taḳlid, the unquestioning acceptance of the doctrines of established schools and authorities.

We shall see in this chapter that the brunt of Halevi's attack against the Karaites comes as a reaction to their deleterious influence upon the fabric of Halevi's Jewish community. On the philosophical level, it is in particular their use of

the logical analogy (ḳiyās)[4] which Halevi will claim does not bring certainty inasmuch as those who used this principle agree that it "did not involve inerrancy." We emphasize, however, that the problem of the Karaite schism was not simply a theoretical problem for Halevi, but a real one, for, as we noted, Halevi may have composed the Kuzari in the very city where Spanish Karaism was flourishing.

In the same statement (III:22), after the king asks the ḥaver to clarify the Karaitic practice of idjtihād, Halevi announces the other axis for discussion which governs his polemic against the Karaites: If indeed one may not derive his own conclusion about the meaning of Torah by logical analogy, what then is the correct interpretation and on what basis has this judgment been made? Halevi seeks unity in the Jewish community, halakhic and political. If the mind is not deemed a reliable resource for discovering the whole truth, what is? For Halevi only the Written and Oral Law, reliably transmitted from Sinai and the prophets, contain the whole truth. Halevi thus draws the necessary conclusion about the Karaites: Though they begin with the right fundamentals, the Karaites have strayed from the truth by rejecting oral tradition. Instead, they interpret Torah in a fashion which leads inevitably to error. The Rabbanites, on the other hand, have preserved, accurately and fully, the whole of God's revealed truth from Sinai and the prophets.

Abraham Ibn Daud wrote Sefer Ha-Qabbalah (ci. 1151) as

an open polemic against the Karaites, who, despite Rabbanite efforts, maintained influence in some northern Spanish towns. Both Halevi and Ibn Daud wished to prove that, in addition to the Written Torah, God revealed an Oral Torah to Moses, which "completes" the Written Torah, and which the Rabbanites have accurately transmitted to the present day. The issue then to which Halevi reacted so strongly, the Karaite schism, continued to burn twenty years after Halevi had tried to snuff it out. Ibn Daud still had to fight the sectarian Jews in Toledo's Jewish community. Like Halevi, he identifies only the Karaites as schismatics in his age. When we look for evidence of other schismatics in both of their works, we find none.[5] In sum, Halevi wished to "close the door" upon the idjtihād of the Karaites, and thereby re-enfranchise and reunify the Jewish community of his time. The remaining part of this chapter describes in detail how Halevi argued his case.

First in III:23, Halevi notes that all philosophical groups employ speculation (עיון), reasoning (הקש), and logical deduction (קבלה), when they endeavor (נתכוונו) to attain "a closeness to God." In that case, he claims, the Karaites are no different that dualists, materialists, worshippers of spirits, anchorites and others. The mental processes are the same. Halevi claims that it is not the mental process which differentiated Rabbanites from others, but their performance of mitzvot. Referring to his earlier

statement (III:11), Halevi's spokesman, the haver, reminds the king that a Jew can "draw near to God only by the commandments themselves, their measure, proportion, time and place and every other requirement which causes the Inyan Elohi to become attached." For proof Halevi directs attention to two "irrational" mitzvot which he employs regularly to illustrate that even commands whose purpose is unintelligible may the nevertheless bring the Shekinah (which Halevi associates with the Inyan Elohi). The first is the order of sacrifice. According to Halevi, the human mind cannot and never will be able to fathom the reason for, much less the intricacies of, the sacrificial system. A person, therefore, who would act according to reason alone, would never participate in the cult, and, even if he wanted to, he would not know what to do, for such knowledge may not be attained through the rational process.[6] Perhaps because sacrifice was hardly a live issue[7] in twelfth century Spain, Halevi offers a second, more abstract example of the limitation of the human mind. According to Halevi's physical theory, when what the Rabbanites call God and what naturalists call "nature" gives a specie-determining form to matter, that matter must be suited to receive that specific form. The failure of attempts by physicians to produce from raw matter whatever they wish simply by preparing it correctly indicates that humans will never attain knowledge of the delicate proportions of moisture and heat necessary in order to, in a sense, call forth the

desired form for raw matter. Surely, trial and error has produced a type of knowledge a posteriori. But the physical causes linking action and result can, according to Halevi, never be known. Again, even in the natural sphere, some knowledge is exclusive to God.[8] The analogy may be drawn to the issue of the performance of mitzvot. Again, one knows that he must plant a seed, water and otherwise properly nurture it for the seedling to sprout. That person does not know why his action produces the desired result, and why others (too much water, too little light, etc.) fail. Halevi likens this case even to rational mitzvot. "Logically", we should give alms, but how much? Says Halevi, one may not be arbitrary as are the Karaites, each of whom will arrive at a different conclusion. Rather, there must be one correct and unifying measure proscribed by God. That answer may be found in the "traditional" law. As Halevi puts it to the king at the end of III:23: "According to you, which strategum should we adopt so that we resemble our parents (in thought and deed) and do not speculate on the Torah?" Halevi seeks that unity, both within the community and with earlier generations of Jews which the Rabbanites emulate and the Karaites undermine.

The rhetorical question at the end of III:23 links the discussion to Halevi's next set of arguments (III:25-38) on the principle of transmission. Here Halevi constructs an a fortiori argument which supports the transmission of the

interpretation of law by word of mouth. He does so in the following manner: First, he notes that textual and grammatical problems in the Written Torah could have shaken the unity of the accepted reading of Torah, i.e. how certain words were to be pronounced.[9] Without regard to the difficulties in the written texts, all agree to the pronunciation of Torah as transmitted orally by scholars through the generations from Sinai.[10] But there are also many possible ways to interpret that text. As much as the reading of the text is crucial for its proper understanding, is it not more likely that the meaning of the text, which is even more crucial, was also transmitted with the proper reading? Once the ḥaver draws the king into admitting that there is an authentic oral tradition deriving from Sinai for the pronunciation of Torah, he may, with more confidence, claim the same for the oral interpretation of Torah.[11]

In III:24, the king outlines two requirements for the proper transmission of tradition: (1) trustworthy witnesses, and (2) proof that collusion has not occured among witnesses. The ḥaver declares that Oral and Written Law, in detail and interpretation, meet those requirements (III:24). Only the greatest of Jews, Halevi explains in III:31, memorized the tradition and guided the proper reading of the text. Lest a scheme be exposed, consensus omnium testifies to the absence of collusion. At the end of III:31, the ḥaver asks the king a second rhetorical question: "Would you consider

these activities (on the parts of those great sages) superfluousness or idleness, or idjtihād because of the obligation?" The king avers, "Only an obligation entails idjtihād" (III:32). Halevi here puns on the word idjtihād: Just as the Karaites zealously endeavor through deep, logical reasoning to discover truth, so too the Rabbanites exert great effort — to preserve the oral tradition! Halevi thus demonstrates that the Karaites have not cornered the market on idjtihād (qua zealotry). The struggle to preserve accurately the Sinaitic revelation and subsequent prophecy did not come easily for the Rabbanites.

In III:32 Halevi uses the king to refine his requirements for proper transmission of the tradition. True tradition emerges either from "the religious community" (consensus omnium) or from "an individual favored by God," by which Halevi means a prophet or pious man. This axiom becomes important later in this section, and we shall reintroduce it there.

After the king demonstrates that both Rabbanites and Karaites agree that the text of the Written Torah is, indeed, Moses' Torah (III:34), and the ḥaver presents the a fortiori syllogism for the Oral Torah, Halevi lists gaps which the Written Torah manifests and which the oral law will complement. These gaps, but for the oral tradition, would leave the Jew groping for guidance for proper conduct. The list includes many civil and ritual issues known to have been subjects

of debate between Karaites and Rabbanites: calendration, ritual slaughtering, forbidden fats, Shabbat laws, Succah and others. The ḥaver ends for a third time with a rhetorical question to the king: "Have you heard, O King of the Khazars, of any composition by the Karaites on the subjects which I have just mentioned which is authoritatively fixed, based upon an incontrovertible tradition whether dealing with (Torah's) reading, vowel signs and accents, ritual prohibitions and releases, or civil matters?" The ḥaver challenges the practices of the Karaites who, on so many occasions, allow arbitrary reason to guide them. As Halevi notes later in the chapter (III:49), even if one sequesters ten Karaite scholars in one house, they will still emerge with ten separate opinions. Reason alone is incapable of attaining full knowledge of truth.

The next statement by the king (III:36) sets up the ḥaver's presentation of the contrasting Rabbanite perspective. He reviews his opening remarks about the Karaites (III:22): They have no such composition, "but they are zealous" (קנאים הם)[12], i.e. they strive in their own ways to be fit to attain full knowledge by logical inquiry (idjtihād). The ḥaver then refers to his earlier reply to the Karaitic notion (III:23): Certainly those whose aim it is to understand "the work of heaven" strive harder than "those who do the work of the Lord." For the former must fear lest they err, and the latter may rest easy, confident

that their action reflects God's will. Though the attitude of the Rabbanites may manifest a certain negligence or laziness (עצלות)[13], the opposite of idjtihād, it is because they have found comfort in ancient truths. Because the Karaites reject that order of truth, they are condemned to struggle exclusively with their own human resources.

In the next segment III:39-III:43, Halevi extends his examination of Rabbanite belief based upon a unified and uncontrived authentic tradition in contrast to the precarious fallibility of the Karaitic method of individual reasoning and its consequent baneful effect on the community's unity. In the haver's statement in III:39 Halevi lists general issues, instead of special, case-by-case examples, upon which Rabbanites and Karaites disagree. Indeed, the king notes at the end of the section: "With these irrefutable general principles which you have mentioned, you have annulled some small matters which I had thought to present to you from the arguments of the Karaites which I thought you could not dispute."[14] There are six general challenges to the Rabbanite position by the Karaites: First, because the Karaites permit usage of free, individual interpretation by scholars using logical analogy (ḳiyās) and the Rabbanites do not, the Jewish community has split. Second, the Karaites maintain an oral tradition as well, based on sayings of ʿAnan b. David and other early Karaites. But the accuracy of transmission of these sayings are in doubt, because only individuals have

maintained a knowledge of them, not the public. Third, the Rabbinic sages claim that their traditions date to the time of prophecy, but the Karaites never make such a claim. Fourth, the Rabbanites agree among themselves, but Karaites do not. Fifth, while the Rabbanites claim to derive their tradition from the place which God chose to give prophecy, the Karaites do not make such a claim. Finally, using the example of intercalculation, Halevi notes that indeed the Karaites do agree with the Rabbanites on some points in oral tradition, but reject others. The point Halevi seems to want to make is that the Karaites have adopted a portion of the tradition of the Rabbanites, even that not based on logical analogy, but stop short of full acceptance of Rabbanite positions.

Halevi's ḥaver then explores what the Torah itself tells us about the process of transmission, for if the Torah itself refers to the passage of oral tradition, can the Karaites' allegation that no oral tradition at all accompanied the written text from Sinai endure? Halevi first cites several passages in the Bible which describe various community officials (judges, priests, etc.) passing on an oral tradition, received form Sinai. The presence of the Inyan Elohi in the form of the Shekinah in these instances helped the officials recognize the truth of the law.[15] The tradition thus could not have arisen because of human scheme or collusion. With that mandate, Halevi may assert a divine basis for the non-

Biblical holidays of Purim and Hanukkah, "the washing of the hands" and other customs as mitzvot, and not simply human ordinances. Indeed, only if these practices are considered divine commandments are the benedictions recited for them justified. In any event, as a result of this analysis, Halevi places all Jews into one of two camps.[16] There are those who stand by the edict of Deuteronomy 4:6, which declares that God has given to the Jews "all these laws" and will find them in the Mishnah and Talmud. These are the Rabbanites. The Karaites, claims the ḥaver, gainsay this verse.[17] True, admit the Rabbanites, not all the laws come from Sinai. Some come with the prophets. But both Moses and the prophets received their knowledge from a single source. The truth of the words of these pious people should not be questioned.

The king counters the ḥaver's claim (III:40) with another Karaitic principle which would restrict the legal rulings to the Torah only, not recognizing the legal authority of the later prophets: If you accept non-Mosaic prophetic law, how does one interpret Moses' own statement in Deuteronomy 13:1, "You may neither add to nor subtract from it (the law)". The ḥaver explains (III:41) that this restriction pertains to the general public, not to the prophets.

Finally, the ḥaver reviews the main points of this section: The Bible itself confirms the existence of trustworthy transmitters of tradition, whose authenticity is confirmed by

the presence of the Shekinah as they performed their religious tasks, and whose great numbers neutralizes any chance of collusion.

The next segment of Halevi's polemic (III:43-53) has as its main purpose to demonstrate that the cause of the greatest ill in Jewish society, sectarianism, results from the persistence of the Karaites in holding to the doctrine of idjtihād (see especially III:50). Halevi again reviews the limitations of the human mind on the one side, and the benefits deriving from the practice of the law revealed by God, on the other. It is the Karaites, and no other group, which Halevi identifies with that practice which dismembers the unity of the Jewish community.

The segment begins (III:43) with the haver's affirmation of the king's statement (III:42) that one should not reject the general truths of the Rabbanite doctrine because of small details which the general truths appear not to encompass. Halevi has the king request an explanation of just one last matter, the apparent contradition between the Biblical lex talionis and the Rabbanite understanding of the law. The haver's answer does not concern us here.[18] What is crucial is the fourth of the rhetorical questions which the haver poses to the king at the end of his answer. That question announces the theme for this section: "Why should I discuss those de ails after we have already discussed (III:39,41) how great the need is (1) for the tradition and (2) for its devotees,

their greatness, their deeds, and their zeal (idjtihād)?" As we saw in III:31, the word idjtihād applies to Rabbanite practices according to its more general meaning, as "zealous execution" of tradition's demands. For the Karaites, idjtihād refers to their method of discovering truth. It is again this pun on the word idjtihād which invites the discussion to follow. From this point, Halevi underlines the deleterious effects which Karaite idjtihād brings upon the Jewish community.

Halevi initiates the discussion of this principle by having the haver reply to the king's question on ritual purity (III:48). The Karaites diligently maintained a strict code of ritual purity. Unlike the Rabbanites, who, Halevi tells us, were more lax (III:37), the Karaites maintained purity regulations which they derived from Torah. The haver recognizes this condition (III:49). But, he argues, save for dietary regulations and rules concerning menstruating women, which the Torah prohibits separately, all ritual purity law has been suspended since the destruction of the Temple, and the consequent passage of the Shekinah from amidst the congregation of Israel. The Karaites, however, still recognize the validity of these regulations, and out of the ignorance (שגגה) caused by sophistry, they "extend the Torah" to include greater ritual purity. Sophistry and its consequences "bring heresy (מינות), that is to say, sectarianism (פרישה), the inception of the annulment of a

(unified) religious community (כנסת ישראל), a schism (פרוד) from the principle 'one law and one regulation'" (Numbers 15:16). Halevi illustrates: "Though we may allow ourselves" to touch repulsive things" (נגיעות), at least we are unified in our principles. As for the Karaites "were ten of them to happen into one house", where the chances to come to agreement is greatest, "there would emerge ten differing opinions." Why? When a group follows the principle of idjtihād, each member depending upon "logic" (kiyās) and "personal reasoning" (דעה), that group will conceive as many different conclusions as there are members. The most harmful aspect of this activity is the destruction of a unified Jewish community. Again, we note that, for Halevi, the Karaite schism in Toledo had become a matter of great concern. Halevi apparently feared the political repercussions which could result from disunity in the Jewish community. Halevi thus attacks this principle of individual investigation as the cause of the "sectarianism" of the Karaites. Their foolishness prevented them from accepting "the religious law" of the Rabbanites. The schism split the community and endangered Jewish fortunes in Toledo. Here Halevi cites the different philosophies as the cause of the schism, the political consequences as the effect. He does not mention the possibility that a power struggle may have been the underlying cause, which fomented religious disjointure. We shall return to this point below.

Halevi uses the balance of the haver's discussion of purity (1) to question some Karaite views on ritual purity, showing either that they rule inconsistently or subvert common sense, and (2) thus to stress that it is not superficial logic which promises truth, but God's word, even when it is not given to human understanding. Halevi underscores again the limitations inherent in logical inquiry, the search for truth by logical analogy:

> "Indeed, those judging according to personal reasoning (סברא) and intellect (שכל) will arrive at an opposite conclusion (than the rabbis). It is therefore better that you not follow your personal reasoning and logical analogy (קיוס) regarding the branches of the religious law (דברי סופרים) lest they bring doubt which leads to heresy (מינות), and not harmonize with your associates on these matters. For each has his own reasoning and method of logical analogy. Be mindful, therefore, of the roots of traditional and written law (משנה ומקרא) and the reasoning employed in the traditional law in order to trace the branches to the roots."

In the examples which follow Halevi demonstrates how one may use the analogy to understand by deduction how the "branches" of the tradition relate to the source, but one may not construct rules at which one arrives through an inductive method based on personal opinion, reasonable though that extension of law may appear to be. The relative simplicity of Rabbanite purity law is attributable not to sh llow personal taste, but to a "heritage" and "tradition": "One who does not attain wisdom, but understands the

Rabbanite sages no more than the masses understand physicians and astronomers.

At the end of his statement, Halevi must justify several practices which the sages prohibit, but which, according to the letter of the law, should be permitted. Having brought his argument in principle against idjtihād to the fore, Halevi discloses that he does not entirely reject idjtihād. It must, however, be placed within the context of the halakhic framework (הלכה ומנהג): "...both are necessary, for if one is content with the halakhic framework alone, he will find within these borders many opportunities to circumvent prohibitions. But if one rejects the halakhic framework, the fence around the Torah, and relies on idjtihād alone, this then brings heresy and all is lost." Halevi proscribes then that one begin with the law, written and "traditional," and from that point one may begin to improvise protective layers which contribute to the preservation of the core. The king summarizes more subtly the contrasting Rabbanite and Karaite doctrines in III:50: "I agree that one who employs both these approaches (the halakhic framework and private zeal) surpasses the Karaite both in theory and in practice." Because trustworthy sages have accurately transmitted revelation from Sinai, an individual may rest assured that he is following the correct path. "The Karaite, on the other hand, his idjtihād not withstanding, will never be sure of (the truth of) his doctrine, for idjtihād is associated with the use of the logical

analogy and sophistry." Halevi takes one step further. He notes that the Karaite is not sure "if the deeds (עמלך) which he performs... are pleasing to God (אלמרצ'י ענד אללה)." This statement recalls the words of the angel to the yet-unconverted king at the beginning of the Kuzari: "Your intent is pleasing to God, but your deeds are not" (עמלך גיר מרצ'י). We note here simply that, according to Halevi, both the king and the Karaite share the same relationship to the rabbinic view of God's expectations: Your attitude is correct, but your actions are not. We will return to this suggestive point below.[19]

Finally, the king repeats a frequent charge made in the polemic against the Karaites, namely, many religious communities zealously search for truth, some even more fervently than the Karaites. What distinguishes their idjtihād? If sophistic zeal guaranteed truth, the Jewish communities would have no particular claim upon it. Since, according to Halevi, even the Karaites must affirm their own particularity as Jews, they must accept a truth outside of that obtained by the methods employed by other communities, that is, logical inquiry alone. If so, the Karaites should take note and act accordingly. They should return to the Rabbanite fold, and so secure the political stability of the Jewish community by combatting its greatest enemy, divisive sectarianism.

The remainder of this segment (III:43-53) reviews previous arguments (III: 23,35,39) on the mind's incapability to grasp

by its own resources, the divine "rationale" behind either divine commandments, like laws of purity, sacrifice and offerings or the proper measurements, proportions, time and place for even rational and social commandments. God has a priori knowledge, man a posteriori knowledge. God knows why and how, for instance, an apparently meaningless act like sexual intercourse operates to produce offspring of the same specie, or why and how sacrifices cause the Shekinah to dwell over Israel. Man becomes aware of these cause-and-effect phenomena through trial and error. He never knows why or how these operations work. That knowledge may come only directly from God, through revelation to a prophet or pious man, both of whom are worthy of the Inyan Elohi[20]: "One may therefore draw near to God only by divine mitzvot and the only road to the knowledge of the divine mitzvot is by prophecy, not by logical analogy nor by reasoning, for the only tie between us and the mitzvot is genuine tradition." In the first section of this final soliloquy in III:53, Halevi rehearses the first axis of discussion in his polemic against the Karaites, logical analogy versus mitzvot. In the second half of this statement, Halevi presents the second theme, the problem of trustworthy transmission. This topic will occupy Halevi for the balance of Article III: "So those who transmitted to us these mitzvot were not separate individuals, but a multitude of great sages, approaching (the greatness of) the prophets." When prophecy ended, the sages received the tradition from its bearers:

priests, levites, and the seventy elders "so that the Torah did not cease from the days of Moses." Halevi tells that story in III:64f.

The description of the tradition is side-tracked by a discussion of two live issues which challenged the continuity of that tradition. The king[21] refers to a passages in the book of Nehemiah which suggest that the law in Deuteronomy 23:3 regarding an Ammonite entering the congregation of Israel, had been forgotten by the sages. In Nehemiah 13:1, the text reads, "they found written" from which the Karaites infer that the sages had forgotten the tradition and had to be reminded by the written text. If so, the Bible itself would contain evidence that the tradition had been (and could be) sundered. The king points out further that second Temple sages had forgotten the law of Succah and later "rediscovered" its source. To those claims, Halevi responds in three ways: (1) True, some may have forgotten the tradition, but most remembered, and we have the latters' information (III:55). (2) Had second Temple sages forgotten the written or traditional law, the Israelites would not have been able to rebuild the temple properly when they returned home from the Babylonian exile (III:57). The king adds that had the priests not retained perfect knowledge of the laws of sacrifice, they would not have been able to perform the cult, and he Shekinah could not have reappeared as it did (III:60).

So Halevi asks, because they remembered the Temple's blueprint and the order of sacrifice, both very technical issues, shall we not take for granted that these same individuals would take care to remember everything as it came from Sinai and the pre-exilic prophets, including the law of the Ammonite and the law of the Succah? (3) Finally, Halevi interprets the phrase "they found written" to mean, the people "paid attention to what was written", and acted accordingly. They had never really forgotten, but only failed to obey (III:63).

After clarifying these two matters, Halevi delineates the chain of tradition (III:64-67). The focus here will be Halevi's description of the sectarian movements in Judaism, particularly of Karaism, and once more his comparison of their methods with the Rabbanite method of discovering truth.[22] What emerges is, at one and the same time, an apology for the continuity of the rabbinic tradition and its unity through history and a polemic against any who would undermine and disrupt this unity. Halevi mentions only Sadducees Boethians, Christians and Karaites (and not Samaritans!) as sectarian schismatics against rabbinic Judaism. Lest the reader think otherwise, the only group germane to this discussion for Halevi in twelfth-century Spain, the only individuals he names as Jewish sectarians in his own time, whether in Article III or anywhere in the Kuzari are the Karaites, no others. The relevance of this point shall become clear in later chapters.

The haver notes that the Sadducees and Boethians established "the principle of denominationalism" (דנומינציונליזם). But he focuses his discussion on the Karaite schism. King Yannai found himself in a political struggle with the sages who, because of Yannai's defective priestly background, wanted to prevent him from assuming the high priesthood. He did not want to lose the support of the rabbis, his ideologues. He conceded to their view until a friend told him that he could abandon the rabbis and their oral law, and adopt the Karaites as ideologues. They, Yannai learned, extended the Torah's written law through a series of logical analogies. The Karaites' star receded when Yannai died and Simeon b. Shetaḥ returned to Jerusalem.

The Karaites, reports Halevi, began as ideologues supporting a substantially political cause which ran counter to Rabbanite tradition. That political history, furthermore, may be traced to a defective priest and power-lusting king, while the Rabbanite lineage extends back to the saintly Simeon b. Shetaḥ, and thence to Moses and the prophets. Clearly, Halevi wishes to associate the Karaites with degraded political interests. That attribution may well reflect Halevi's view of the political posture of the Karaites of his own time.

Rabbanites and Karaites begin with the same "roots", but the latter group diverges in three ways: (1) The Karaites reject oral law. (2) Like the Karaites today, the Karaites tried to logically reason from the Torah. (3) Through

sophistry, the Karaites have extended primarily the "branches" (ענף) of the law, leaving the "roots" substantially in place. Any destruction to these roots certainly was done unintentially through ignorance (שגגה).[23]

In the balance of Article III, the ḥaver (1) delineates and solves some of the more specific charges which the Karaites bring to controvert Rabbinic texts and (2) rehearse some of the general arguments in the polemic against the Karaites. Halevi must justify the rabbinic tradition in the face of charges that, because the rabbinic sources contain tales and stories about the sages, the efficacy of which the intellect must reject, the whole of the rabbinic tradition becomes suspect. Halevi must also explain why the rabbis understand the meaning of verses differently in homiletic interpretation than in halakhic contexts (III:68). He brings a battery of vindicative arguments.[24] Finally, having set idjtihād in its proper context, Halevi evaluates the variety of and obligation toward the traditions of the Rabbanite sages: "The tradition is obligatory, as it is made clear by their wisdom, their piety, their idjtihād and their great numbers ..." (III:73).

Halevi uses Article III:22f, to polemicize against the divisive influences of the Karaites of Toledo. This section of the Kuzari probably constituted a central portion of that document which the Rabbinite poet and philosopher sent to the Karaite scholar who had requested that Halevi reply to

questions about the faith of the Rabbanites. In this section the Khazar king plays the part of the Karaite. He presents the points of controversy, general and specific, separating the two Jewish schools of thought. He lays out the two axes of controversy in his opening question: how to use idjtihād in guiding one's conduct, and the genuineness of Rabbanite tradition, that is, oral law and interpretation (III:22). He is aware of a whole range of legal questions and problems of interpretation current between Rabbanites and Karaites. And he assumes the role of a Karaite, grilling the Rabbanite Halevi on the burning issues of the day. Halevi hardly disguises the equation of the king with an open-minded Karaite sage. He disregards the fact that a recent convert in Turkey, who had not known even the basic religious doctrines of Christianity and Islam, could hardly have been expected to have been aware of the general, much less the particular, points of controversy in the Rabbanite-Karaite disputation. The king/Karaite submits to Halevi's claim that one may not depend for truth upon logical reasoning alone. Rather the Jew must perform mitzvot as recorded in the Torah and transmitted orally from Sinai and the prophets, a tradition carefully and zealously preserved by great masses of sages who have affirmed its authenticity.[25]

For reasons which will soon become clear, we turn to an analysis of the first section of Article III.

III

In the first half of Article III (III:1-21), Halevi describes the "servant of God" and compares his activities with the ways of ascetic and monastic devotion. The Jews, he claims, serve God by performing divinely revealed mitzvot. God, in turn, protects His people. The ascetic abhors his physical needs and withdraws from his social contacts in order to devote himself to knowing God. He acts as he deems necessary, so as not to divert his attention from the search for that knowledge. At the end of the section (III:21), Halevi caricatures both processes in order to underscore his point. In an analogous parable, the king is God, and His ministers are the angels. A certain man has managed to forge a relationship so close to the king that the latter comes to the man's house regularly with his ministers. But when the man is negligent and sins against the king, not even his ministers appear at the man's house. The other inhabitants of the state call directly upon the king only in the hour of need. Otherwise, each one serves the king in his own way, indirectly, according to his own taste. When the other inhabitants criticize the man for his conduct, he retorts, "Everything which I did was according to his command and instruction, but you served him according to (the results of) your logical analogies (kiyās) and personal opinions" ('تنوّع). He claims that he will surely be saved when his life is endangered, proposing that none but he can be certain of salvation. Why? "I did not take chances like you, but I trusted in justice", he says. The

parallel between the description of the Karaites in the balance of Article III and the non-Rabbanite model of the "servant of God" who acts according to his own views, informed primarily by the results of the logical analogy, is too obvious to disregard. But there is more. Halevi as much as identifies the group against whom he polemicizes in the first half of Article III when he discloses the purpose for the presentation of his analogous parable: "For the parable is meant only for one who is stubborn and does not accept (the words of) our sages." As we have pointed out above, the only group to which Halevi could have been speaking was the Karaites. He has no hope to convert Muslims or Christians. And he names no other sectarian group, whether in the north or the south of the Iberian peninsula who did not accept the sages, even the neoplatonized Aristotelians. Our analysis of III:1-21 will confirm this notion.

At the inception of his description, the haver contests an apparently popular view that asceticism will somehow bring an individual closer to God. He claims, though, that the determinative factor for the attainment of "the divine level" must be "the knowledge of Torah and its commandments." Socrates represents the archetype of that ascetic individual and the lifestyle against which he argues. Asceticism, withdrawl from the bonds of physical need, Socrates and his circle argued, facilitated the development of the tools for logical inquiry. Indeed, Halevi admits that they attained a level of human knowledge no longer achievable. Clearly Halevi was awed by

the wisdom of Socrates. Still, Halevi argues that not even the incomparable Socrates could attain complete knowledge of God by rational means. Divine knowledge, knowledge of the divine, eludes even the greatest mind, for that knowledge may be gotten only directly from God. As we saw in the last chapter, the Karaites, far more than the Rabbanites, but like Socrates, set both rigorous intellectual standards and established demanding rules for purity. But because of the asceticism with which they were associated, they drew the angry resentment of the Rabbanites.[1] And it was Joseph al-Basir and Yeshu'a ben Yehuda, the teachers of the late eleventh-century Spanish Karaite Al-Taras, who agree that one must first know God through rational processes, and so must subject himself to the rigors of intellectual training, before one can interpret revelation.

Before analyzing the major issues under scrutiny in the first half of Article III, we outline its contents. As noted, Halevi hoped to demonstrate that the ascetic practices associated with intellectual inquiry would not help, and might even hinder one from obtaining the Inyan Elohi which he covets (III:1). Since only those born of the Jewish seed could receive the Inyan Elohi, Halevi could be referring only to Jewish schismatics. Halevi traces his image of his servant of God over Plato's blueprint of the philosopher-king in the Republic (III:3 5). His wishes to illustrate that the truly pious individual seeks the Golden Mean between abstinence and its

harmful effects and overindulgence and its negative consequences. That Golden Mean is achieved by one's observance of mitzvot. Halevi then describes briefly the three categories into which the mitzvot fit according to the source from which man derives consciousness of them. They are social, rational and divine (III:7). After the king has noted some practical advantages to performance of mitzvot, Halevi puts into the mouth of the haver more details on the activities of the servant of God, some of which are ordained in the Written Torah and others in the oral tradition (III:11). Finally, Halevi discusses prayer, the tool which enables man in particular to acknowledge God's physical gifts (III:13f.). In sum, Halevi maintains that one need not abstain, he need not strive to strengthen his powers of intellectual inquiry at the cost of all else, to draw near to God. That is what the inhabitants of the king's realm did in Halevi's parable. One prays and performs the mitzvot to achieve proximity to the divine. These are the contrasting typologies for the servant of God which Halevi identifies in twelfth-century Spain.

The question of how divinely ordained deeds supercede ascetic practices constitutes the central thematic focus of the first half of Article III. Halevi discusses three areas related to the topic of divine mitzvot familiar to the reader from our analysis of III:22f. (1) In addition to rational and social mitzvot, there are divine mitzvot, for example, the biblical laws of sacrifice, the secret power of which is

revealed only to holy men who are fit to ascertain divine knowledge and transmit it. But it is not only the divine deeds which God ordains, but also the "amounts and proportions" related to the performance of societal and rational mitzvot (III:7). Only God has a priori knowledge of the proper measures; human knowledge, such as it is, can only be a posteriori. Halevi relates this conclusion to natural phenomena, as he does in the second half of Article III: One knows how much sun or water a plant may require, but this knowledge comes through one's experience, by trial and error. One can never know why, for instance, one plant needs more water, another less. The rational mind knows that God/Nature plans, arranges, orders and proportions, but is incapable of explaining some "natural", much less divine, matters. The mitzvot, then, even social and rational ones, have, in some measure, a divine element, knowledge of which may only come directly from God through revelation.

(2) On the assumption that sensual gratification inhibits one's concentration in the search for God, should not the servant of God be anxious to eliminate from his experience these distractions? Halevi responds to this issue in several ways. First, he notes that, while prophets sometimes achieved the angelic realm where they do not require food, sleep and other physical relief, the situation of the Jews and the Holy Land was such that no prophets could arise in Israel. Indeed, as we recall from III:50, all purity laws connected with the

temple and the land of Israel had been annulled. Only with the rebuilding of the temple would the Shekinah return. The practice of most laws concerning ritual purity then had necessarily been suspended. They might even have constituted an impediment to the practice of the remaining mitzvot. Additional ascetic practices could only encumber one's path. Second, even if ascetic practice produced some positive effects for the individual vis-à-vis the faith, denial eliminates joy and distorts love, emotions which, when balanced with awe, constitute one half of a Jew's proper relationship to God (III:11). Third, a mature individual in particular can respond to physical gratificatin by praising the Creator responsible for that gratification. He does so through the recitation of prayers appropriate for acknowledging and thanking God for physical comforts (III:15,17,20). Finally, because of the system for reward and punishment for mitzvot, the Jew may wish to live a full life, not abhoring his body, but benefiting from it. Because of it, he may perform mitzvot, and so increase his chances to earn a good life in the world-to-come (III:1). Only proper religious activities ensure one a favorable accounting (III:21)[2].

(3) Finally, the theme of the unity of the religious community emerges from the contrast between the ascetic's intense private devotions and the standardization of Rabbanite ritual with a single order of prayer including even the regulation of the formulae for the Baqashot of the Shemoneh Esrei (III:17-19)!

Just as when war threatens the security of the nation and all become obliged to fight a coordinated battle, so too one prays only in and for the Jewish community, not for the sake of oneself. Those who busy themselves with selfish inner devotion abandon their halakhic responsibility to the community.

These three aspects of mitzvot: (1) the divine basis for all rabbinic mitzvot and man's inability to derive some or know the measure of others through logical processes, (2) the relationship to God through mitzvot rather than by the relatively arbitrary processes of the human mind, and (3) the nature of mitzvot as a politically unifying factor in the Jewish community, all recur in the second half of Article III, where Halevi supports them against Karaite practices. The unity of the Jewish community was most critical to Halevi, and the Karaites endangered unification. Practice (asceticism versus mitzvot) and prayer interface with the everyday life of the Jewish community. By going their own way, whether in ascetic practice or private prayer, the Karaites, Halevi claimed, unravelled the fabric of the Jewish community and menaced its political viability.[3]

In sum, Halevi's model for the Jewish ascetic may be found among the Karaites. Their doctrine stipulated that they delve thoroughly into matters of rational speculation before they acknowledge the verity of revelation. It was practice among them to be strict on matters of ritual purity, far exceeding Rabbanite strictures. In III:14 and 18 in particular and in III:16 in a different way the king debates with the haver as an opponent of the Rabbanite model would. In III:22,

moreover, after the king has recognized the truth of Halevi's claim -- that the servant of God need not practice "asceticism and monasticism" - he continues, "And I want (ואבקשך) you now to clarify (for me) your arguments against the Karaites...." For Halevi, the Karaites constitute that group who best portray the ascetic model in the Jewish community. They exemplify the typology which Halevi attacks. Why did Halevi precede his direct discussion of the Karaites with this comparative study of servant-of-God typologies? It would appear that in III:1-22a Halevi patiently built the theoretical model into which he would place the Karaites as examplars, and then attacked the theoretical model. The parable at the end of the section indicates that such was Halevi's motive. The man fits one type, the Rabbanite; the other inhabitants fit the other type, the ascetic Karaites. Practice and prayer could not, according to Halevi, be a matter of individual imagination. One could not appraoch God that way. Moreover, the health of the Jewish religious community vis-à-vis the outside world rested upon its inner stability. So says III:1-22a. From III:22b, Halevi draws attention to the specific problem, the group which upsets the solidarity of the Jewish community and so weakens its political strength.

IV

Article V is divided into three sections. In the first two sections, Halevi outlines the rational foundations of the two major theosophical schools of thought on the Iberian peninsula during the time of Halevi: The Al-Farabi-Avicenna-Avempace school of neoplatonized Aristotelian thought (V:1-14) and the Saadia-Baḥya-ibn Ṣaddik, but especially Karaite school of Muʿtazilite Kalam (V:15-22).[1] In the third section, the composition's epilogue, Halevi describes the ḥaver's preparations for his journey to Palestine.

We discuss the second section initially. The king opens by requesting that the ḥaver give him a "concise statement of the views which are manifestly well-founded among those who are concerned with the principles of the religion whom the Karaites call 'The Masters of Kalam'" (V:15). Here Halevi betrays the fact that for him the carriers of Kalam on the Iberian peninsula were the Karaites. They were the Jewish mutakallimūn. In the end of his statement, Halevi notes that one who does not approach God through prophetic means may require recourse to Kalam, but that "this knowledge may not aid him, and perhaps he may be harmed by it" (V:16). Compare this warning with Halevi's statement about the philosophers who affirm the neoplatonized Aristotelian point of view (V:14,end). In that case, the ḥaver equivocates his criticism: "One cannot blame them; on the contrary one should praise their achievements... for they were not obligated to accept our view. Rather we were

obligated to believe in everything which our eyes saw, and the tradition which is tantamount to eyewitness testimony." One perceives the sympathetic way in which Halevi deals with non-Jews who could not know any better. It is only Jews who can do themselves harm by pursuing Kalam's rational approach to the knowledge of God. But is Halevi necessarily addressing the Karaites in his polemic in this section of Article V, or does he imply that other Jews fall into the framework of this criticism? In V:16, Halevi leaves very little doubt that indeed the immediate target in his polemic against Kalam is Karaism. First, the haver states that the knowledge of God, which the Kalam philosopher reaps through intensive study, the simple believer acquires naturally. We saw this idea expressed in Halevi's comments on the Karaites in Article III. But Halevi goes on to describe one of the arguments his Kalam opponents use against Rabbanism: "It is possible that Kalam will undermine among its devotees much of the true faith by doubts and contrasting views which arise and are transmitted by various sages." Halevi has then reproduced one of the classic criticisms employed by the Karaites in their war of words against the oral law. They claim that the sages do not hold to a unified view, and point to the Talmud itself as proof of that contention. That the sages do now express a unified view of what constitutes God's law, as it was received and transmitted by the Rabbanites over the centuries, constitutes one of the two major apologetic thrusts in the second half of Article III. In any case, had

the haver been addressing himself simply to adherents to Kalam in general and not to the Karaites in particular in V:16, the haver's final comment would have been superfluous. It would appear then that Halevi polemicizes in Article V:15-22 specifically against the carriers of Jewish Kalam in his community, the Karaites.

Near the end of V:22, moreover, the haver describes the type of philosopher who contemplates the world of the spheres, souls and intelligences. He observes that one"deceived" by this type of knowledge associates himself with "heresy" (מינות). We noted elsewhere that when Halevi refers to heretics and heresy, he means precisely Karaites and Karaism.[3] This view is confirmed when we turn to the example Halevi uses to support his claim that cosmic speculation may lead to heresy: "And do not heed the proofs which the Karaites deduce from the command which David ordered his son to do, "And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve Him" (I Chronicles 28:9). From this citation, the Karaites sought to contend that even before an individual is obligated to serve God, that person must know God -- know Him through rational means. We noted in Chapter One that the Karaites Joseph al-Basir and Yeshu'a ben Yehuda exceeded the rationalist approach of Saadia. They believed, in concert with Halevi's description here, that a rational knowledge of God must precede a belief in the prescripts of revelation.[4] Thus they focused upon the rational

processes alone, an approach which Halevi attacks here and indeed throughout the Kuzari.

It would, of course, be helpful to compare various aspects of Al-Baṣir and Yeshuʿa's thought, particularly the proofs for creation, with those presented by Halevi as elements of the doctrine of Muʿtazilite Kalam (V:18f). That study cannot be undertaken here. But even a cursory reading reveals some correspondances. Wolfson noted, for instance, that Halevi's second axiom for creation, the impossibility of infinite succession, matches a similar view on creation held by both Al-Baṣir and Yeshuʿa.[6] In addition, we observe that Yeshuʿa's third and fourth proofs of creation, on the intransversability of the infinite, corresponds to proofs offered in the first and third parts of Halevi's first axiom on creation according to Kalam.[5] Again, the full study is required.

It is by all means then these Karaites in particular whom Halevi designates as the carriers of Muʿtazilite Kalam on the Iberian peninsula, and against whom Halevi polemicizes in V:15-22. If the second section of Article V describes Halevi's attitude towards the formal doctrines of Kalam held by the Karaites, the first section describes that other dominant school of Arabic theosophy, namely neoplatonized Aristotelianism. Though this doctrine was not found among Spanish Karaites at that time, when introducing his exposition of this doctrine, Halevi says through the rabbi, "I will not make you travel the road of the Karaites who went up to theology without a flight

of steps (מַדְרֵגָה), but I will provide you with a clear outline, which will allow you to form a clear conception of matter and form, then of the elements, then of nature, then of the soul, then of the intellect, then of theology."[8] Wolfson acknowledges that the Karaites undertake the study of theology with no physical studies. On the other hand, Al-Baṣir and Yeshuʿa did not plunge directly into theology. As Wolfson notes, they begin "with a discussion of the needs of rational speculation in dealing with theological problems. They then go on with explanations of certain terms and concepts used in the physical sciences, in the course of which they discuss the proofs for the creation of the world. It is only then that they take up the discussion of purely theological problems, such as the existence, the unity, the incoporeality of God, and attributes."[9]
I use Wolfson's interpretation of Halevi's comment through the haver: "Unlike the Karaites, such as Joseph al-Baṣir and Jeshua ben Judah who, as followers of Kalam, preface their exposition of theology by a discussion of such concepts as thing, existent and non-existent, eternal and created, atom and accident, motion and rest, I shall preface my exposition of theology with a discussion of concepts more fashionable in the current philosophy of emanation and shall begin with the lowest matter, and go up step by step to form and element and nature and soul and intellect until I ultimately arrive at a discussion of theology."[10] What is important for us in this description is Halevi's presentation of the contrast between the neoplatonized

Aristotelian school of theosophy and the system of the Karaites. First, unless the reader of Halevi's tract is familiar with the views of the Karaites, and had some contact with them, such a contrast would have been irrelevant. The Karaites must have been a meaningful and significant referent, not just for Halevi's contrast, but also for those for whom Halevi was writing. But Halevi's use of the Karaites here may be even more revealing. If indeed Halevi wished to designate an examplar of the neoplatonized Aristotelian school, why did he not name another Jewish group as representatives of this school according to the pattern by which he named the Karaites as representatives of Muʿtazilite Kalam? We recall, for instance, that Ibn Daud, Halevi's younger contemporary, lived in Toledo, but opposed Halevi's anti-intellectualism in favor of this neoplatonized Aristotelianism. Could it be that Halevi tried to avoid direct conflict with a fellow Rabbanite, even if this theosophical position was different? Instead, Halevi again names the Karaites, this time as examplars of individuals who do <u>not</u> profess this neoplatonized Aristotelianism. Why did he choose to designate the Karaites in particular as an "anti-example"? Again, Halevi probably did not wish to blame a fellow Rabbanite. But, with this choice, a pattern emerges. Halevi has identified each of the major theosophical schools of Halevi's time, first by contrast and then by comparison, to the Karaites of his society, and to no other group. He places each school as a pole on the axis of the use of Karaite physics and metaphysics,

while both are subject to the type of criticism which Halevi lodged against the Karaites because of their method for knowing and approaching the deity.

Finally, at the beginning of Article V, Halevi reports that very few people in his time go through life without adopting a heresy which impedes the path to true faith. Indeed, even among Jews, there is hardly a "tranquil soul" to be found. To whom is Halevi referring here? Is he referring to troubled souls both from among the adherents to Kalam methods and from neoplatonized Aristotelian Jews of Ibn Daud's ilk? He does, as we mentioned above, note that "one cannot blame them (the philosophers); on the contrary one should praise the achievements they have attained in abstract speculation...(They have) determined what is good, have founded rational laws, and have despised this-worldly pleasures... They, in any case, have an advantage. For they are not obliged to accept our views, though we are obliged to believe in eyewitness evidence and in tradition tantamount to eyewitness evidence" (V:14). Who among the Jews is obligated, but does not believe in the efficacy of the tradition? The Karaites are in that group for certain. If there are others, Halevi does not name them as a group posing a serious threat to the "tranquility" of the Jewish soul nor to the stability of the Jewish community.

In sum, Halevi considers Karaism to be a powerful force with which to reckon in his own Jewish community. It is their philosophical method of inquiry, their rationalist approach,

which alienates them from authentic tradition. Halevi does not oppose rationalism per say, but he decries its limitations. Reason cannot bring one full truth. As for Halevi, no matter the ultimate theosophical position, be it neoplatonized Aristotelianism or Jewish Kalam, it is the dependence on reason for tradition's authentication, or possible rejection (!), which Halevi mistrusts and opposes. Since Halevi associates the use of that method with the method of the Karaites, they become not only the particular point of reference for Halevi's polemic, but also seemingly the object of its wrath.

V

The conversion of a pagan king to Judaism and his dialogue with a Jewish sage traveling through the area on his way to Palestine (an unlikely route!) constitute the narrative framework wherein the religious philosophy of Halevi emerges in the Kuzari. In this chapter we investigate some of the possible reasons why Halevi chose this framework. In Chapter Six we hope further to investigate the relationship between this framework, and particularly the personage of the Khazar king, to Halevi's letter to Ḥalfon Dimyati of Cairo in which he states that he had originally intended the composition to be a reply to inquiries made to him by a Karaite sage of Northern Spain.

The Khazars[1] were a nomadic ethnic group of Turkish descent, who, by the beginning of the seventh century, had settled in Southern Russia. By the second quarter of the eighth century under their King Būlān, at least part of the Khazarite populace had converted to a type of Mosaic monotheism, which included a tabernacle and sacrifices.[2] By about 800, Obadiah, a descendant of Būlān, conducted a religious reform which apparently channelled this Mosaism of the Khazars into the rabbinic mold. Finally, written testimony demonstrates an uninterrupted presence of the Jewish Khazarite stock in Khazaria through at least the beginning of the tenth century.[3]

An exchange of letters between Ḥisdai ibn Shaprut and King Joseph of the Khazars (ci. 947) testifies to the interest

of at least one Spanish magnate to this independent Jewish stronghold several generations before Halevi's birth.[4] Ḥisdai ibn Shaprut (ci. 915-ci.970), a well-known Jewish Spanish dignitary, actively supported the development of a Spanish Jewish culture, separate from the influences of the East. While his backing of native poetry and scholarship contributed to a disengagement of Iberian Jewish cultural development from the direct influence of Babylonia, he still sought ties with the Jewish communities around the world, as his letter clearly indicates.[5] In the letter,[6] Ḥisdai indicates that he knows of two Spanish Jews, Meir ben Nathan and Joseph Haggaris, who visited the Khazar community and returned to Spain. In addition, Ḥisdai reports that he had received information that a former resident at the Khazar court, a Mar Amram, had arrived in Spain, but that he had not been able to locate him. Finally, Ḥisdai's letter discloses the existence of oral traditions about the Khazars within the Spanish Jewish community antedating the most recent reports. These traditions of "our fathers...handed down from ancient times" depict the original location of the Jewish community of Khazaria, the persecutions rained upon the Jews there, a mention of the "cave" and the holy books found there, and the religious revival.[7]

In his reply, Joseph claims that his records show that correspondance had been exchanged between the Khazar community even prior to Ḥisdai's initiative. He furthermore verifies

the accuracy of the Spanish oral traditions regarding Jewish Khazar history, by noting the account's harmony with that found in "our books."[8]

Thus far, we have reviewed the pre-Halevian references to Jewish Spanish interaction with their Khazarian co-religionists. In his Sefer Ha-Ittim, the Spanish jurist Judah ben Barzillai al-Barceloni wrote, during Halevi's lifetime, of his familiarity with Ḥisdai's letter to the Khazar king. He moreover mentions a separate document, written in Greek, which discusses the military successes of King Aaron and King Joseph of Khazaria. Though he treats with skepticism the authenticity of the reply of Joseph, his treatment of the issue of the Khazars illustrates a knowledge and interest in Khazarian history which had spanned practically the whole of Spain from Ḥisdai's native Cordoba (Andalusia of southwest Spain) to Barcelona (by Judah ben Barzillai's time, already a part of Christian Catalonia).[9]

Finally, Halevi's younger contemporary and fellow-resident of Toledo, Abraham Ibn Daud, describes the religious preference of the Khazars in his anti- Karaite polemic Sefer Ha-Qabbalah (1160-1161). After identifying Rabbanite communities throughout the East, Ibn Daud notes:

> In the latter area (the Volga region) there were a nation of Khazars who converted to Judaism, and their King Joseph sent a letter to R. Ḥisdai the Nasi b. R. Isaac b. Shaprut informing him that he and all of his people pursue Rabbanite usage scrupulously. (We have also seen

some of their descendants in Toledo, scholars who informed us that their legal practice conforms to Rabbanite usage.)10

Clearly then, before, during, and even after Halevi's death, Khazarite history and customs had captured the attention of several important Spanish dignataries and bellettrists.[11] How then may one use this data to explain the reason that Halevi chose the motif of the conversion of the Khazar king as the narrative framework for his dialogue? True, many scholars, who associate Spanish Jewish interest in the Khazars with Halevi's choice of this theme, also intimate a kind of causal relationship between them (as if asking, what else could he have chosen?). But by demonstrating that a certain historical motif, was extant, even widespread in contemporaneous literature and oral tradition, one surely does not clarify why a particular author in a particular work elects to exploit that endemic motif. At most, one may conclude that, due to a romantic fascination with the conversion of the Khazarite people to Judaism as an historical phenomenon, the episode became accessible for literary and religious exploitation. Moreover, we are not interested in whether the events actually took place in history. It is clear that these individuals believed the conversion to be historical. For us, only that fact is critical.

Halevi's work stands near the beginning of a series of literary productions generated in the Middle Ages which mimicked

the Platonic dialogue.[12] In the majority of these dialogues, the author's philosophic ideas do not gestate in the give-and-take between teacher and student. Actually, these compositions constitute little more than sustained philosophical treatises, interrupted on occasion by a short, non-provocative comment by a second party. Solomon ibn Gabirol's Mekor Haim exemplifies this formalistic mimesis of the Hellenic great: Questions by the inquirer rarely redirect, or even affect, the planned lecture by the rabbi. In the Kuzari, on the contrary, the dialogue is, for the most part, instrumental in the development of Halevi's argumentation.[13]

Halevi uses a religious debate as the springboard for his dialogue. Religious debates and disputations motivated much literary activity of the Jews prior to Halevi's lifetime. Certainly Saadia's Polemic against Ḥiwi al-Balkhi issued from such a debate; and his Emunot v'Deot incorporates and summarizes religious controversies rife in his time. As noted previously in the quote of Ibn Daud, Halevi's own age witnessed literary disputations between Karaites and Rabbanites. In fact, according to Halevi himself in a letter to a Cairene Indian merchant, Ḥalfon Dimyata, Halevi describes his motivation for the production of the Kuzari: "And the reason for this work was the request of a sectarian (Karaite) in the Land of the North (Christian Spain), who asked me about various matters, so I sent it (the book) to him."[14] This letter confirms Halevi's opening statement in the text

of the Kuzari, which describes the original inducement to create the work: "I was asked for arguments and rejoinders which I had in reply to the claims of those who take issue with our religion, including those attracted to philosophy, those faithful to other religions, and those Karaites among the children of Israel. And I was reminded of what I had heard not long ago --- the arguments which a Jewish sage used about four hundred years ago before the king of the Khazars..."(1:1).[15]

As Halevi's statement indicates, disputations crossed religious boundaries. The Moslem theologian Aḥmed ibn Ḥazm (994-1064) engaged a fellow native Cordovan, Samuel ibn Nagrela ha-Nagid in a debate over the latter's anti-Islamic treatise.[16] Elsewhere ibn Ḥazm criticizes the rabbis on the one hand for their belief in anthropomorphisms and on the other for their alteration of the biblical text in order to substantiate changes brought by Mohammed against Jews (and Christians) for falsifying their holy writs.[17] It is evident then that an atmosphere of formal debate on questions of philosophical and religious import certainly pervaded Halevi's world.

In fact, the sources which Halevi utilized for his portrayal of the Khazarite conversion attest to such a debate.[18] According to one account, the Khazar's leader had already become circumcized when hesitant ministers invited "wise men of Greece" (Christians) and "wise men of Arabia" (Moslems)

to testify before them.[19] Apparently, without special invitation, Jewish wise men also joined the debate (והתיצבו חכמי ישראל). In the end, it was only the Jews' claims, based on a literal interpretation of the Torah, which went uncontested by the other religious thinkers (for the Moslems and Christians alike confirmed the truth of the Old Testament). Another account resembles Halevi's version more closely. In it the debate occurs <u>before</u> the conversion. After a general debate between the Christian and Moslem, the two are interviewed privately by the king. As a result of these interviews, the king chooses to become circumcized and convert to Judaism. The king does not interview the Jew.

Before we analyze the written source material related to the conversion of the Khazar king, it should be remembered that the Letter of Ḥisdai attests to the existence of a considerable oral tradition from which Halevi may have drawn directly.[21] On the other hand, Halevi refers three times to the "historical documents" of the Khazars ("ספרי דברי הימים") to which he accredits his information concerning them (I:1; II:1).

In addition to Halevi, three documents have been utilized by scholars to build the historical picture (or tradition history) of the Khazarite conversion: the Letter of Ḥisdai ibn Shaprut to King Joseph (HL), the Reply of Joseph to Ḥisdai (RJ), and the Cambridge Document, published by Schechter (ED).[22] There are two versions of RJ: the Short

Version (S.V.) first published by J. Buxtorf in 1660 in Qol Mebasser, a book written in 1577 by Isaac Aqrish, and the Long Version (L.V.) first published in 1874 by A. Harkavy in Measeph Nidahim, I, no. 8. Most scholars agree that both versions derive from the same tradition. Furthermore, as early as Harkavy, opinion has been almost unanimous that L.V. constitutes at least a better preserved version of the tradition in the Vorlage than does S.V.[26]

No researcher has yet solved the synoptic problem related to the overlapping, and sometimes conflicting versions of the conversion. Since the objective here is not to unriddle the historical problem, or even to judge its overall historicity, but to identify the "traditions" from which Halevi drew, the attempt will be made solely to compare the historical information in the Kuzari with the other versions. If successful, we shall be able to specify Halevi's emphases and interests in the utilization of his sources.

(1) Halevi's nameless king is described as a devout pagan. In CD, the general (beg) came from Jewish descent, the tribe of Simeon. He was among those whose ancestors had fled pagan worship, had come to Khazaria, but who subsequently intermarried and no longer followed Jewish law. The general's "conversion" is not really a conversion at all in CD, but an act of repentence. The general was circumcized and re-introduced into the religion of his forefathers. The contradiction then between the Kuzari and CD is clear, but illusory.

The king of Khazaria and the general of CD are not either Būlān and/or Obadiah as Schechter suggested.[27] The offices of the king (kagan) and the general (beg) were distinct positions during the time of the Khazars. Their relative powers at any time in history varied, but clearly they are separate offices.[28] Indeed, Halevi himself distinguishes between the two: both king and general go to the cave where they are circumcized (II:1). RJ claims that the writer and his ancestor Būlān both had descended from the tribe of Japhet, clearly confirming his requirement for "conversion" and not simple "repentence." A note by an early tenth century Karaite scholar, Jacob al-Ḳirḳisānī in his Book of Gardens and Parks confirms this detail. To the statement in Genesis 9:27 יפת אלהים ליפת , Ḳirḳisānī appends the notice: "The majority of people will interpret these words to mean loveliness and beauty. In their opinion, the sense of the verse is that the Lord will beautify Japhet to the extent that a number of his descendants will enter into the Jewish faith.... Some interpreters believe that this reference describes the Khazars who converted..."[29] Like the Kuzari, RJ also stresses that the king was devout in his service to God.

(2) Halevi attributes the initial impulse influencing the king to call for the debate among the representatives of the three major religions and the philosopher to a series of dreams which the king had experienced. The dreams of the

king incited the call for the religious debate also in RJ. In the latter document, the king has two dreams -- the first which promises the king prosperity, and the second, which _inter alia_ notes, בני ראיתי את דרכך, ורציתי את מעשך.

(3) Halevi notes that the king and the general kept their conversion in the cave a secret for a long time, and then only slowly leaked their deed to their close associates. When finally they had integrated their faith into larger sections of the populace, they "admitted the rest of the Khazars to the religion of Israel" (II:1). In CD, the religious debate follows the general's act of repentance and the discovery of the Mosaic law in the cave, at which time "Israel with the men of Khazaria repented with complete repentance."

We note, therefore, that CD distinguished "Israel" from the "men of Khazaria". As in the _Kuzari_, a period of time separates the general's repentance from that of the people. In RJ, on the contrary, the impression is given that the king, his intimates (שריו ועבדיו) and subjects converted simultaneously.

(4) According to Halevi, the king and his general journeyed to a cave where a group of Jews had established a prayer house. There they accepted the Jewish faith and became circumcized. RJ does not allude to this incident. HL and CD share mention of a detail concerning this cave, not noted by Halevi. The cave about which they speak contained the books from which their ancestors had studied, the ancient law upon which the

Mosaic Judaism of the Khazars would be based. Both the Kuzari and HL recall that praying was done in the cave, but CD diverges from the Kuzari, by not mentioning a cave in connection with the circumcision. Finally HL notes only that a "certain Israelite" visited the cave, not Halevi's king and general nor CD's delegation of penitent Jews.[30]

(5) In the Kuzari, as in RJ and CD, after the conversion wise men explain the Jewish texts to the nation. Only in the former two versions does the text relate that those teachers were imported for such a purpose. In CD, the teachers, like Sabriel's father-in-law, may have been native. All versions likewise refer to the great successes in the battlefield following the conversion process.

(6) Halevi reports that the Jewish Khazars loved Jerusalem so much that they built a model of the Mosaic tabernacle (תבנית המשכן). Likewise in RJ, the construction of a tabernacle (אוהל) ensues upon the conversion. It is in connection with this prohibition upon sacrifices outside the Temple in Jerusalem that Judah ben Barzillai al-Barceloni discusses the contents of RJ.[31]

(7) The religious debate forms the backbone of the three primary accounts —— the Kuzari, CD, and RJ. According to Halevi, as a result of his dream, the king invites for special audiences a philosopher, a Christian sage, a Moslem sage, and, slightly less willingly, a Jewish sage, to present their views and to represent their schools of thought. The

discussion with the philosopher appears only in the Kuzari. The king rejects the philosopher's solution to the dream, which he interprets as a method to purify the soul. But, the king claims that his soul is already purified, that his dream had told him that it was his deeds that were wanting. Of greater interest for comparative purposes are the statements of the Christian and Moslem sages. Both statements divide easily into two sections: The first section of each statement confirms, in greater or lesser detail, the authenticity of the Tanach (I:4,5); the second half of each focuses upon specific truth claims of the respective traditions subsequent in time to the revelation to Moses. Finally, the Jew testifies before the Khazar, and manages to convince the pagan king to convert to Judaism.

In CD, the religious debate took place after the general had repented. The king invited wise men of Greece (Christians) and of Arabia (Moslems) and the Jews volunteered (והתנדבו) to participate. In CD, the order of the testimony of the Christian, then the Moslem matches that of the Kuzari. The Christians testified, and their arguments were successfully rejoined by the Jews and Moslems. Then the Moslems testified, and their testimony was successfully rejoined by the Jews and Christians. Finally the Jews testified about creation, the exodus from Egypt and their entry into Palestine. As in the Kuzari, both the Christians and Moslems certified this Biblical account as true. It was only subsequently that "there

arose also dissension amongst them."[32] Among the shared details between this account and Halevi's, one may note in particular the illusion to the bi-partite character of the statements by the Christian and Moslem in the Kuzari: They confirm the Biblical account, but in the second half of their statements, where they go beyond the Tanach, the seeds of "dissension" spring up.

RJ recounts that the debate, and subsequent discussion, takes place between the king's acceptance of Judaism through the dream and his actual circumcision.[33] Like in the Kuzari, therefore, the actual conversion takes place subsequent to the religious discussion. According to RJ, upon hearing of the king's choice to become a Jew, the Christians and Moslems send delegations to the king and endeavor to have him change his mind and join their respective religious camps. The version reports that a Jewish sage interviewed the Christians and Moslems separately, and then assembled them to defend their principles, but each one controverted the other. The king intervened by sending both the Christian and Moslem away to be reconvened in three days. On the first day, he recalled the Christian and asked, "Between the law of the Jews or Moslems, which is better?"[34] Here the Christian notes that God chose Israel, brought miracles, including the exodus from Egypt, manna, and water in the desert. He gave them the Torah and the temple. But their sins against his law, they claim, angered God, who punished them by scattering them all over

the world. Finally, the Christian compares the Jews to the Moslems, who, when they do not keep the law, become like the rest of the nations. On the second day, the king repeats his question to the Moslem, this time comparing Jewish and Christian law. The Moslem answers that Jewish law is the true law, but that when God became angered by Israel, he punished them. Even so, says the Moslem, the Jews merit redemption and salvation. The Christians on the other hand, face a hopeless situation. On the third day, the king reassembles all, and after some preliminary arguments, reintroduces his questions of the first two days to the mixed company. Both the Christian and the Moslem answer as they had before, that Jewish law was the more "honorable" (יהודים מכובדה). The unanimous opinion confirmed the king's original decision to convert to Judaism.

The version in RJ manifests two particular characteristics in common with Halevi, unshared by CD. First, RJ reports separate interviews with the Christian and Moslem. We may suggest here that as Halevi expanded the interviews with these sages, he may well have decided to create an accompanying interview with the Jew. Second, the words of the Christian sage in RJ and the remarks by the Jewish sage in his opening statement before the king in the Kuzari depict the Jews in a very similar fashion:

Kuzari I:11	RJ	
אני מאמין באלהי אברהם, יצחק ויעקב. (1) באותות ובמופתים (2) אשר הוציא את בני ישראל (3)	הקב"ה בחר בישראל מכל אומה ולשון וקראם בני בכורי. ועשה עמהם נפלאות גדולות. והוציאם מארץ מצרים והצילם מתחת יד פרעה.	A
אחרי אשר העבירם את הים (4) ובלכלם במדבר (4)	וממצרים העבירם בין גזרי הים בחרבה ואת רודפיהם טבע במצולות ים. והוריד להם את המן לרעבם. ומים מן הצור הוציא להם לצמאם	B
ואשר נתן להם את משה בתורתו (5) והנחילם את ארץ כנען ... האמורים (5)	ונתן להם את התורה מתוך האש ולפידים. עד הביאם ארץ כנען. ובנה להם בית מקדש	C
...שכולם קבלו את תורתו שיעדם שכר טוב לכל שומרה וענש לכל עובר עליה....	ואחר כל זה מרדו וחטאו וקלקלו את הדין וכעס עליהם. והגלה אותם והגלים מעל פניו והצרם לארבע רוחות	D

The resemblance between these two passages in theme and order of presentation is striking. On the other hand, all is rather familiar from general Jewish liturgy and especially from the Passover Haggadah. Both the passages begin with the concept of the chosen people. They then move to the exodus

and the miracles associated with it (A), including the miracle at the sea and the sustenance provided during the desert wandering (B). They both acknowledge God's implementation of entry into the land of Canaan, though only RJ mentions the building of the temple. Both assert that God gave Israel the Torah (C), and describe the accompanying system of reward and punishment (D). Though, as we said, these themes are not uncommon in Jewish literature, the similarity in the general order and limits of the two statements, and even their comparatively equal lengths make literary dependency a reasonable hypothesis. If indeed RJ was known to Halevi in approximately its present form, the Christian's speech before the king regarding the Jews would seem to have been utilized by Halevi for the framework and content of the Jewish sage's opening remark to the king.[35]

In the foregoing survey, many points of similarity have surfaced between the Kuzari and RJ, sometimes in contrast to, and sometimes in agreement with CD: (1) the dream which praises the king's reverence and devotion, but which also stipulates the requirement for correct deeds; (2) the conversion of a pagan king devout in his service to God; (3) the forced conversion of the population; (4) the import of Jewish teachers to instruct the masses after the conversion; (5) the successes in war after the conversion; (6) the erection of a tabernacle; (7) the religious debate before the actual conversion and circumcision; the order of debate: Christian, then Moslem;

the certification of the truth of biblical revelation by Christians and Moslems, and the dissension between them after this common agreement;[36] (8) the separate interviews with the Christian and Moslem; the resemblance of the Christian's statement in RJ and the Jewish sage's opening statement in the Kuzari.

At some points the two versions diverge. In the Kuzari, prior to the religious debate, the king inclines away from the religion of the Jews, but in RJ the king already makes the choice in principle to convert to Judaism, a decision reflected in his expulsion of the "sorcerers and idoloters." Second, in the Kuzari the conversion seems to have taken place over a period of time, a detail not mentioned by RJ. Third, as mentioned before, in the Kuzari the king interviews four personalities (philosopher, Christian, Moslem and Jew), but in RJ only two (Christian and Moslem).

The incident at the cave constitutes the only major event found in the Kuzari, but lacking in RJ. Although both CD and HL make mention of the cave and its special significance as the storehouse for the holy books; neither designate it as the locus for conversation. HL, on the other hand, does allude to the centrality of the cave in the early days of the Khazars as the sect's place of prayer and study.[37]

In his description of the sources for Khazarite history, D.M. Dunlop divides the four documents examined here into two groups: RJ / Kuzari and CD / HL. About the former group

he writes:

> In view of the differences we cannot roundly say that Jehuda ha-Levi was acquainted with the Reply, but the probability seems to be that he was, and took such liberties with it as suited him. Certainly both the Reply and the Kuzari represent the same general form of the story. 38

And about the latter group, he concludes:

> We may see therefore in Hasday's letter, which claims to give a tradition current among the Jews in Spain, traces of the account of the conversion differed by the Cambridge Document, diverging in certain respects from what may be called the primary account in the Reply, e.g. the man of Israel who enters the cave bears a strong resemblance to Būlān-Sabriel as he appears in the Document. But if the Document contains existing tradition, it is an indication of authenticity. The Spanish tradition, so to call it, seems also to have left a trace in the Kuzari, viz. the visit to the cave. 39

As regards the RJ / Kuzari group, the evidence indicates, if anything, even a closer relationship between the two documents than Dunlop grants. The disparities between the texts are few and minor in detail, sometimes explicable simply by positing Halevi's embellishment of the text of RJ (participants in the debate; cave incident, from another source). On the other hand, Dunlop's theory on the relationship between JD and HL is, at best, based upon meagre evidence—the allusion to the holy books found in the cave. Even with

regard to this detail, the circumstances surrounding the detail conflict: In CD, a delegation of people was sent by the official authorities to the cave, while HL reports upon the free initiative of a single individual who journeyed to this cave. This simple mention of the cave hardly qualified CD, or even part of the document, for inclusion into the "Spanish tradition" to which Dunlop, following Ḥisdai, refers. HL's formulation of the incident at the cave differs from that of Halevi. But, as we noted, Ḥisdai attributes his brief account to an oral tradition whose emergence in written form a few generations later may account for some of these variations. The account of the history of the Khazars in the Kuzari can with some certainty be established as deriving from a source very similar to the account in RJ, plus details from the Spanish oral tradition to which Ḥisdai refers.

Six motifs in RJ return as constituent elements in the general composition of the Kuzari:

(A) In RJ, the king interviews the parties to the debate. In the Kuzari, the king, in a sense, interviews the Jewish sage throughout the entire work. In RJ, the Jews are not represented in the interviews, so that the Kuzari may adumbrate Halevi's fanciful reconstruction of that interview.

(B) One may derive from S. Baron's reconstruction of Khazarite history yet another possible motive for Halevi's choice of the tradition history of the Khazars as the framework for his discussion.[41] Jewish life during Halevi's lifetime

had suffered an emotional shock due to the march of the Crusades through the central portion of the Iberian peninsula, Halevi's birthplace. Halevi reflects his sensitivity to his people's suffering in poems, especially from the latter part of his career, and in his philosophical work. All were meant to enable his co-religionists to weather the storm of political and social depression. The existence of an independent political entity of Jews in Khazaria, as we have shown, captured the popular imagination, and made his work all the more meaningful. The example would have been particularly meaningful for Halevi, who abandoned Spain in hope of attaining some greater fulfillment in Palestine.[41]

(C) In both RJ and the Kuzari God is described as pleased with the king's devotion and faith, but dissatisfied with his religious acts. This theme reflects one of the two main apologetic claims which form the warp and woof of the Kuzari's fabric: (a) Uninterrupted tradition transmitted by trustworthy witnesses substantiates the truth of Judaism; (b) the strength of the relationship of God to an individual is a positive function of that person's adherence to the commandments. The dream in RJ which relates the theme of the second of these claims may have induced Halevi to choose the traditions about the Khazars as his narrative framework.

(D) If adherence to the mitzvot functions as the woof of the apologetic, appearing in the dream of the king, trustworthy transmission of the tradition by the sages, as we said,

forms the warp. This theme appears secondarily to be sure, in RJ and the Kuzari. Both versions relate that the king sent for wise men of Israel (trustworthy witnesses) to explain the written Torah. These sages would stand, therefore, in that line of people who have transmitted the oral Torah (for thirty-eight generations, according to Ibn Daub) from Sinai.

(E) Eliezer Schweid has stressed the importance of the neutrality of the king for the development of Halevi's philosophy within the dialogue form. In other words, in order to properly implement the literary form which demands a give-and-take, the king may not possess a priori ties, even by birth, to any philosophic or religious school of thought. The pagan king is represented as a thinking person, open to, though not always accepting of, the truth claims of both religion and philosophy.[42] He is, at once, morally virtuous, sensitive to the religious impulse, but convinced that truth, at least in part, can be derived through rational processes. Because the historical figure of the Khazar king displays the seeds of these characteristics, one may propose that he became a natural and convenient choice for Halevi's dialogue.

(F) Finally, both in RJ and in the Kuzari, the king established a type of Mosaic sacrificial cult, based apparently on a literal rendering of the Torah which, of course, provides for sacrifices. (Only later did a religious reform transpire, bringing with it a rabbinic form of Judaism.) In the Kuzari, the sacrificial cult plays a major role, first as the proto-

typical example of the non-rational status of many of the commandments, and, second, as the religious practice without which the Divine Influence cannot appear in man (I:79; I:99; II:16; II:48; II:50). The temple service constitutes that type of religious ritual which the human mind cannot comprehend rationally, but which harmonizes the world order with the divine order (I:99; III:57, 59). Thus, for one to be called a pious man, revealed law requires that he participate in the sacrificial cult (III:21-22, 53).[43] The return of the cult heralds the return of the Divine Influence on earth. If so, Halevi may have been attracted to a type of Judaism described in RJ which had already initiated a sacrificial cult based upon the biblical code.

An attempt to isolate a single reason that Halevi chose to relate his apologetic within the historical framework of the conversion of the Khazars demands still closer examination. It is probable that Halevi had more than a single reason for his decision to utilize these traditions in the Kuzari. The selection of one reason over another, therefore, is not necessarily a desideratum. Still, by investigating the thought of the Khazar king in relationship to the positions propounded by the philosopher and the Christian, Moslem and Jewish sages more carefully, we may, as we did in Article III, discover a familiar pattern of thought which may help to identify a personality represented behind the image of the king.[45] We reserve this task for the next chapter.

VI and Epilogue

In the opening passage in the Kuzari, Halevi announces that he intends to refute the arguments of philosophers (I:1-4), of leaders of other religions, Christian (I:4-5) and Muslim (I:5-9), and of אלכ'וארג', the schismatics, whom Halevi associates with Karaites (III:49,65).[1] The king successively confronts and rebuffs a philosopher, Christian and a Muslim sage, but he apparently does not, in this sequence, oppose a Jewish schismatic. Indeed, if, as Halevi says, he has written the Kuzari to repudiate philosophy, other religious traditions and Jewish schismatism, outwardly it appears that Halevi devotes only small portions of his work directly to this task. The key to this dilemma lies in a pattern of correspondance between the philosophical orientation of the Khazar king as it emerges in the debate with the non-Jewish figures early in the dialogue, and Karaite thought. We found in Article III many points of comparison, both theoretical and practical, between the challenge of the king to the ḥaver and the challenges of the Karaites to the Rabbanites in general. Halevi uses the king as a literary device for the Karaites in Article III. We shall attempt to see how Halevi employs this device at the beginning of the Kuzari.

Before discussing specific philosophical issues, we restate and expand a point made in our analysis of Halevi's anti-Karaite polemic in Article III.[2] After the ḥaver has suggested a compromise between conduct which limits itself to the letter of the law, and religious zeal which helps protect that core

(III:49 end), the king (!) adds (III:50) that the Karaite cannot be sure that the deeds (אעמאלה) which he performs "are pleasing to God" (אלמרצ'יה ענד אללה). The king thus reiterates the words which the angel spoke to him in the dream (I:1): "Your intention is pleasing to God, but your deeds are not pleasing" (לכן עמלך גיר מרצ'י).

But the correspondance between Halevi's characterization of the king and the Karaite vis-a-vis the Rabbanite position extends beyond even this telling parallel. After the description of the dream, Halevi notes that the king "was so zealous in the practice of the Khazar religion that he himself attended to the temple and sacrifices" (I:1). The Arabic text is broken at the beginning, but from the Ibn Tibbon translation, ... והוא היה מתעסק מאד , Baneth correctly restores the text to read וכאן יתולי ד'לך . In other words, Halevi's haver praises the king's efforts to practice his own religion even though he knows and, eventually, the king realizes that despite his idjtihād, the king's deeds themselves are not pleasing to God. In Article III, Halevi invites zealotry as long as it is expressed in connection with proper deeds. The correlation between Halevi's description of the king and the Karaite's relationship to mitzvot and idjtihād is thoroughgoing and precise.

According to Halevi, then, the king and the Karaites share the same relationship to the Rabbanite view of God's expectations from him: Your attitude is correct, but your actions are not. In this connection, we recall Halevi's note (III:49,65)

that the Karaites had left the "roots" of Judaism substantially in place, but, because of sophistic reasoning, had extended the "branches" of the law. As we shall see shortly, many of the basic philosophical positions held by the king in relationship to his partner-in-dialogue in the first section of the Kuzari participate in the agreement which Halevi submits characterizes Karaite and Rabbanite thought on "root" issues. In contrast to the philosophers, Christians and Muslims, the basic religious philosophies of the king and the Karaite are similar to those of the ḥaver. They share common differences with the Rabbanite sage in the area of mitzvot, and by what authority one is commanded to do them. For reasons made clear in Chapters One and Four, we take as our model for Karaite thought the religious philosophy of the leaders of the school which the Spanish Karaite sage, Abuʿl-Taras, attended, the school of Joseph al-Baṣir and Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda.[3]

First, in I:1 Halevi sets forth his view that the philosopher, though not an advocate of Kalam, shares with the mutakallimūn the view that one must purify the soul in order to know God, the philosopher's Active Intellect.[4] The king replies (I:2) that his soul has already become purified, and adds that one does not earn God's favor by the soul's purification alone: Worthy conduct must accompany the correct attitude. As we saw already in Article III, the Karaites sought purification of the soul. More than the Rabbanites, they engaged in ascetic practices, and even abstinence.[5] They too emphasize proper conduct, even

if that conduct and the method of attaining knowledge of it differed in many details from Rabbanite ways. The Karaites, in fact, maintained their own "oral tradition" (III:39). They fought bitterly with the Rabbanites over specific legal issues, especially in ritual law — an area in which they had control as a minority group in a Muslim society (calendar, family law, Sabbath and holidays, purity, dietary law, liturgy).[6] The king and the Karaites thus agree that if knowing God (or the Active Intellect) depended upon the purity of one's soul, then the philosophers should expect to be in contact regularly with the divine. Rather, both agree that the secrets of knowing God depend upon proper conduct as well.

Second, in his reply to the philosopher, the king challenges the latter's stand on the question of creation and revelation of God to man in history (I:4). The philosopher rejects the notion that God acts in history. The king, who has just heard from God's angel, believes that God does create and reveal. As we mentioned above,[7] creation by God in time was a dogma of the Al-Baṣir-Yeshuʿa school, in contrast with the Aristotelian purists who claimed that the world is eternal. It follows that if God can act in history by creating, then surely he can interfere in history and communicate with human beings. This doctrinal position again accords with the view common to both the king and the Karaites, as well as the Rabbanites. The king and the Karaites, however, join in agreement on one additional stipulation which contrasts them with the Rabbanites. In his response

to the Christian's argument for truth of the immaculate conception, again the king does not discount miracles in principle. In fact, he criticizes the natural philosophers who reject the efficacy of "miraculous" events, unless they themselves have witnessed them; and even if they do observe such events, they explain them as evolving because of the natural movement of the heavenly bodies. On the other hand, the king admits that he cannot accept the truth of a vision or prophetic experience which would contradict reason. In other words, he holds that a truth claim involving a miraculous event must obtain some measure of confirmation from an independent source of truth, namely, logic. This view matches the position of the Al-Baṣir-Yeshuʿa school, which, as we have said, actually grants logical priority to rational truth over revelation, while not denying the feasibility of one-time, miraculous events on the order of creatio ex nihilo. More telling is the fact that the view corresponds to the thought of the Karaite as described by Halevi in Article III. The king argues (I:5) in reply to the Christian's proof for immaculate conception (I:4), that the event cannot be confirmed by 'logic (ḳiyās), for logic would rescind most of these things (which you claim)." He submits that their adherence to the Christological framework has deceived them to the point that they seek devices to skirt the ḳiyās which will overturn their beliefs. In fact, the ḥaver describes the king's phiosophical predispositions perjoritavely in I:13 when he says, "That which you say agrees with ḳiyās...."

The basis of belief in miracles for him is whether or not logic can tolerate them. In other words, the king considers necessary to confirm the feasibility, even the truth, of miracles, that process of ḳiyās which, in his direct polemic against the Karaites in Article III, Halevi submits cannot be used exclusively for an individual who hopes to draw near to God. For both the king and the Karaites, truth is contingent on reason's acceptence of the possibility of any particular event, while Halevi's ḥaver believes that ḳiyās may not be the final and absolute judge of truth.

There is a third area, corollary to the subject of the truth of miracles, upon which the king and the Karaites agree in opposition to the Rabbanites. In I:6, responding to the Muslim's claim that the Koran is the speech of God, the king remarks that such a claim must be accompanied by (1) "well-known facts" which are (2) "irrefutable." The king thus suggests that not only must an alleged divine act be widely accepted as factual, but that also the event cannot contravene reason — that it must be possible even if reason cannot confirm it as necessary. The king adds, however, that even in that case, "it will be difficult to affirm that God speaks with man." Kalam philosophers also hesitated when anything but "the necessary" was considered to be true. We recall Schacht's description of the "closing of the door of idjtihād" by a principle called idjmaʿ, that is, consensus omnium. Schacht notes that the acceptance of the principle of idjmaʿ as a measure for truth came about

slowly inasmuch as the mutakallimūn had been committed to the individual's right to attain truth. When idjmaᶜ emerged as a barometer for truth, a miracle did not have to be "necessary," but it did have to be "irrefutable," logically. As we saw in Article III, Halevi associates this Muslim legal process with its Jewish counterpart as practiced by the Karaites.

The ḥaver avails himself also of the principle of idjmaᶜ as a method of proof. For him, however, universal agreement based on eyewitness testimony, sufficiently confirms truth. One need not submit this testimony to logical inquiry to determine its feasibility. The mind was not, according to Halevi, able to understand everything, even supposed "natural" things. Thus widely-accepted tradition, transmitted by trustworthy witnesses could suffice. Six hundred thousand witnesses stood at Mt. Sinai. None contested the authenticity of the message to Moses. Whether the mind accepts it or not, according to Halevi, that virtual consensus validates the legitimacy of the Rabbanite position on the issue. For both the king and the Karaite, confirmation of the rationality of the tradition is a minimal requirement for its acceptance as binding. The Rabbanite position would, on the face of it, be unacceptable for both the king and the Karaites.

When we analyze further the speeches of the philosophers, the Christian and the Muslim sage and extract as clues to his philosophy that which the Khazar king does not reject from their doctrines, we may learn more about the king's thought. We

employ this argumentum ex silentio advisedly, only to support proofs already brought. The king, for instance, does not object to the philosopher's commitment to rationalism as the way to the soul's purification. But he does not believe that ideas alone can bring one into the divine light. The philosopher seeks communion with the Active Intellect by exercizing his mind; the religionist, on the other hand, must also act according to God's will.

The king likewise does not object to the part of the Christian's speech which affirms God's creation, eternality and involvement in history. He objects only to the Christology in the second half of the speech. That material does not meet the standards for truth discussed above, for reason negates the possibility of such an event as the miracle of immaculate conception. The king moreover does not object to the Muslim's claim for the unity of God, creation, truth of Torah, rejection of anthropomorphism, acceptance of freewill and its complementary rewards and punishments, nor to his claim that miracles are insufficient to obligate the acceptance of commandments unless they are "irrefutable." The Rabbanites and Karaites agree on all these points with the king (i.e. the "roots"), except for the last one, which, as we saw, the king and the Karaites aver, but the Rabbanites do not.

We have now observed the virtual identity of the philosophical vi ws of the king and the Karaite, sometimes in joint opposition to the Rabbanites. We now turn to another instructive

issue which arises from Halevi's description of the king's dream. The dream induces the king to conduct a series of discussions, first with a philosopher, and then successively with a Christian, Muslim and Jewish sage. Though many other benefits may accrue to him, he realizes that, as a convert to Judaism, he would never attain medieval theology's highest status, that of the prophet. He nevertheless becomes convinced by the haver's argumentation and converts with his entire nation. Why does Halevi choose this pagan king who, according to Halevi's own system, can never attain the highest level of religious experience? One may be inclined to see the king, as Schweid sees him, as a literary device, used by Halevi for the unfolding of his religious thought. But the presentation of a philosophic doctrine was not Halevi's primary purpose, as the Goitein letter shows, and as the subtitle of Halevi's composition confirms -- "The Book of Refutation and Proof on the Despised Faith." Furthermore, against Schweid, by the second article, the king is a Jew, no longer a "neutral" pagan arguing out of a non-partisan, non-Jewish position. The object of Halevi's attack is not an abstract philosophical position, but real people whose viewpoints Halevi considers dangerous for the Jewish community.

An answer to why Halevi chooses the pagan king for his literary device begins with an analysis of another question which arises in connection with the dream. Despite its various uses in the Kuzari, the Inyan Elohi is a sine qua non for divine

revelation, and Halevi leaves no doubt that the king's dreams were actual divine communications. The dream then is a communication from God, the God of the Jews, through an angel to a pagan. If only born-Jews may benefit from the Inyan Elohi, how does one explain God's communication with the king? The temptation to identify the image of the king as the Karaite whom Halevi is endeavoring to attract into the Rabbanite fold is compelling. From all that we have already seen, the hypothesis is reasonable. First, we know that Halevi wrote the book originally as a refutation of Karaism, and as a proof for Rabbanism. Yet, from almost in the beginning of the work, Halevi's haver refutes arguments brought by the king and proves the truth of Rabbanism to him. Second, the "conversion" theme of the story of the Khazar king is figuratively applicable to the Karaite. Rabbanites considered Karaism, superficially at least, if not in fact, a co-equal among heresies.[10] A heretic who had never been a Rabbanite, would theoretically require a type of "conversion" to Rabbanism. Thus, if a Karaite does stand behind the figure of the king, the "convert" of course would have been born of Jewish blood, and thus genetically capable of benefitting directly from the Inyan Elohi as Halevi reports. The king's dreams at the beginning of the Kuzari would thus no longer require interpretation as exceptional divine communications to a pagan, but would instead be understood as expressions of the divine will to communicate with a son of Israel. Finally, in Chapter Five we characterized the

apologetic in the Kuzari as a loom, the warp and woof of which are comprised of two basic claims: (1) the proximity of an individual to God is a positive function of the measure of that person's adherence to the mitzvot; (2) the truth of Judaism's mitzvot is confirmed by an uninterrupted tradition transmitted from Mt. Sinai by trustworthy witnesses. This apologetic reproduces precisely the basic arguments in the Rabbanite polemic against Karaites during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in general[11] and in Halevi in particular. With these proofs, it would not be unreasonable to risk the conclusion that a Karaite, perhaps the Karaite sage of Halevi's letter to Ḥalfon, is adumbrated by the Khazar king.

How would the reader know that the king is the Karaite? First, Halevi let it be known to his friends, to whom he distributed the book, that the Kuzari was written as a refutation of the Karaites. He told Ḥalfon straight-out. Ḥalfon and Halevi's other friends would have understood the analogue instantaneously. Second, as we have stated above, the correlation between the thought of the king and that of the Karaites was so striking, particularly in those areas where they jointly disagree with the ḥaver and affirm the doctrine of the Karaite in Article III, that the reader would not have had to struggle to extrapolate and identify the figure behind the king. Certainly one sufficiently schooled to read the Arabic of Halevi would have been able to recognize the similarities between and associate the king's ideas and Karaite doctrine. He would notice, for

instance that the pagan was not only pre-disposed to accept many positions held by Jews in general, such as the truth of Old Testament history but not New Testament, but he also seems to have acquired considerable knowledge in these areas. That same individual would also notice the similarity between the words and content of the charge which God's angel made to the king regarding good intention but improper deeds, particularly in relationship to the principle of idjtihād, and the same charge made by the ḥaver about the Karaites. Third, efforts by Rabbanites to "convert" Karaites and Karaites to "convert" Rabbanites during the early to mid-twelfth century in Spain (see Ibn Daud) may have made the analogy of the conversion of the Khazars self-evident. Finally, we noted that in the first sentence of the Kuzari, Halevi announces his intention to refute, among others, the schismatics. The king then refutes the philosopher, Christian and Moslem, but the ḥaver, beginning in I:13 with the charge that the king argues according to kiyās, shows that the king's thought matches that of the Karaites. The king is one of the Jewish schismatics whom, as we have shown, Halevi identifies with the Karaites. The book then may proceed as a "refutation" by the ḥaver of the king/Karaite and a "proof for a despised faith." Halevi dresses his opponents in the garb of the romantic Khazars, the tale of whose conversion had captured the hearts and the fancy of twelfth-century Jewish Spanish intelle tuals. According to reports, they pledged themselves to Rabbanite Judaism after a decision-making process

which included a debate. More importantly, according to Halevi, the king resisted the views of the haver at first because he felt that (1) their tradition had been cut off, and that (2) their views were narrowminded (I:12). Remember that the Karaites had accused the Rabbanites of error on these grounds (III:48f.). The haver's reaction is to begin to attack the king, who, even after his conversion, still acts as the "outsider," who is a Jew, but who, by his own admission, "has not been granted perfect faith, free from doubts "(V:1).

What is more, by veiling his anti-Karaite polemic, he may indirectly attack the Karaite schism, and the presuppositions upon which they or any schism is based. He confines his direct attack to Article III, which, as we said,[12] may have originally been separate from the rest of the composition. Why is Halevi not direct from beginning to end? Halevi hoped that he would not only "refute" the Karaites, but that he would also draw the schismatics (חוצנים ="outsiders" literally) into the fold of rabbinic Judaism. He wishes to draw the community together, not to further polarize it. We have noted the similarities between the "roots" of Rabbanism and Karaism which Halevi viewed as the starting point for unity. There was, after all, at least one more politico-theological trend, potent among the Karaites, which found its most ardent adherent among the Rabbanites in Halevi. It supports the notion that Halevi in particular hopes to attract the Karaites, not polarize them. Since the time of ʿAnan ben David, Karaism had

expressed itself in "nationalist" movement for political independence in Palestine.[13] A corresponding doctrine of ethnic purity had flourished among Moslems in Spain under the leadership of the Muslim theologian Abu Mohammed ʿAli ibn Ḥazm al-Zahīrī during the first half of the eleventh century.[14] He employed as his lever of attack Rabbanite and Christian transmission of the Bible, which in their hands had become a "changed and altered book," falsified for their own debased purposes.[15] Karaite exclusivism, expressed for instance in the limitation of their missionary activity to Jews only, could have only been fired by such claims as these which characterized segments of Muslim society.

Even more obvious among Karaite thinkers was the call for the return to Zion.[16] Daniel al-Qumisi's appeal for mass migration of the Jews to the Holy Land found solid support among his Karaite successors. One finds mention of Zion in almost every Karaite prayer. Indeed, Baron reminds us that "long before Halevi, Karaite poets life Jephet composed Zionide elegies."[18]

Halevi's doctrine certainly reflects racial elements (animal:man:: man:Jew). In his poetry, Halevi observes that obedience to the mitzvot requires that the Jew maintain his separateness from the Gentile.[19] Baron establishes the specific context for Halevi's racial consciousness during the twelfth century: "Halevi was undoubtedly familiar with the epistle (risālā) of Ibn Garcia, a Muslim of Basque origin who, in Halevi's

youth, had sharply attacked the dominant Arab element for its racial content."[20] Halevi manifests a particular sensitivity on the issue of ethnic and racial particularism.[21] The most obvious case, of course, is his own view that, biologically, even a righteous convert to Judaism cannot become a prophet. But even the claim that the language of prophecy was Hebrew, which the pagan king accepts, reflects this ethnic exclusivism.

Surely, Rabbanite Jews other than Halevi harbored hopes for political independence. These feelings were usually coupled with a belief in the advent of the Messiah.[22] But it was Halevi, alone and even in opposition to other Rabbanite philosophers and belletrists in Spain, who actually followed the lead of his Karaite predecessors. The Karaites had sacrificed the relative comfort and security of their native lands to settle in Palestine. Halevi did the same. On the issue of ethnic exclusivity and return to Zion, Halevi stood shoulder-to-shoulder with his Karaite confreres. They shared these common interests, even while they differed so greatly on some philosophical issues, methods and matters of law. By attacking them indirectly in the Kuzari through the personage of the king, Halevi avoided driving a wedge between Karaites and Rabbanites. Instead, he attempted to "prove" to schismatics and convince them of the truth of the Rabbanite tradition and faith. That goal constitutes the central purpose for the composition of the work.

There is then considerable evidence supporting the contention

that the king in the Kuzari masks a Karaite whom the ḥaver tries to win over to Rabbanite Judaism. Clearly the "roots" of the philosophical views of the king, the Karaites and the Rabbanites resemble one another on the issues of creation, God's unity and eternality, freewill, reward and punishment, the rejection of anthropomorphisms, faith in biblical history and God's involvement in history, including revelation and Hebrew as the language of revelation. Halevi, in particular among the Rabbanites, shares the Karaites' long-standing devotion to ethnic exclusivism and religio-national independence in Palestine. Indeed, the Khazars were said to have achieved such independence in southern Russia. What distinguished the king and Karaites from Halevi and the Rabbanites of his ilk was the former group's insistence that, even if it is witnessed by multitudes, the human mind cannot accept as authentic a miraculous event which is found to contradict logic (ḳiyās). They presume that the rational process constitutes the necessary fulcrum of verification. The king does not suggest that the human mind has yet attained perfect knowledge. He asserts, however, that it can recognize that which conflicts with logic. This position explains why the king will become a convert neither to Christianity nor to Islam. That is also why Karaites and Rabbanites differ on ritual issues, the "branches."

If Halevi deems rationality an insufficient barometer of truth, what does he substitute? He claims that authentic tradition constitutes the only genuine measure of truth beyond

Torah. Oral tradition, like Written Torah, has been loyally preserved by the Jews from Moses and the prophets. Halevi, and Ibn Daud after him, believed that they needed only to verify that the tradition had remained one, unified and unbroken since the days of prophecy in order to defeat the challenge of the Karaites. The arguments in this controversy rested upon a few theoretical and some emotion-filled ritual issues. They galvanized the community and divided Rabbanites and Karaites absolutely.[23] How does one derive knowledge of God's will, after all agree in the truth of Written Torah? The argument for authentic tradition constitutes the core issue in Halevi's apologetic from one philosophical perspective and in Ibn Daud's polemic from a different one.[24]

We have suggested several reasons why Halevi may have chosen to cast the Karaite in the role of the king. The "poet" Halevi found an attractive historical metaphor to convey this apology and polemic and exploited it. Conversion of a pagan king to Judaism symbolized the desired conversion of a Karaite to Rabbanism. By using this image, moreover, Halevi could confront the Karaites without alienating them through personal attacks. His purpose was to consolidate the Toledan Jewish community, not to crystallize the rift between Rabbanite and Karaite. He hoped that Karaites would "return" to Rabbanism, and that perplexed and disgruntled Rabbanites would maintain their allegi nce to the "despised faith." Perhaps the schismatics would realize, as the king did in the dream, that his

actions "were not pleasing to God," even if his attitude was. Halevi felt that the symbol of a pagan opting to convert to Judaism despite the degraded condition of the Jew in society, and despite the fact that neither he nor his people could benefit from the Inyan Elohi, would be sufficiently dramatic and powerful to influence the "outsiders," the schismatics and potential schismatics, to desist from their opposition to Rabbanism. In that way, Halevi hoped to unify, and so strengthen the Jewish community during troubled political times.

Epilogue

In the introduction to the dialogue in the Kuzari (I:1), Halevi claims that he is reporting the story of the discussion between the king and the haver because the latter's views resemble his own. He then adds a final, oft-quoted and enigmatic statement from The Book of Daniel (12:10): "And the enlightened ones (ha-maskilim) will understand." What is it that is hidden or so difficult to comprehend that only the enlightened will be able to fathom it? Certainly, the phrase may be taken, as it frequently is, to refer to the hidden secrets of Halevi's doctrine, and its implications (see commentators). But the phrase could also be taken to refer to Halevi's portrayal of the Karaites in the person of the king. And there is some support for this contention. In the glossary of Jacob Mann's

Texts and Studies (Vol. II, p. 1503), under the heading משכיל, one finds the definition, "Kar. scholar." Indeed, Karaites used the term maskil to designate their scholars, much as the Rabbanites employed the term ḥakham (sage).[25] Still, Halevi, probably aware of the title by which Karaites referred to their scholars seems to pun on the term: Both the "enlightened" Rabbanites and the maskilim, the Karaite scholars (and perhaps the Karaite scholar to whom Halevi originally adressed the Kuzari) would "understand" the real personage hidden behind the image of the king.

Much work remains to be done on the analysis of the Kuzari from the standpoint of its purpose as an anti-Karaite polemic. I have turned my attention to some of the parts of the Kuzari where the polemic appeared to be more obvious. But I have not thoroughly analyzed Articles II, IV and I:13ff. Moreover, many questions with regard to the form and composition of the Kuzari remain. The information to be gathered from the analysis of this material bears upon the meaning of Halevi's work. We continue to probe in search of answers.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

1 S.D. Goitein, "Autographs...," Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 393-412.

2 Ibid., p. 408-410.

3 D.Z. Baneth, "Some Remarks on the Autographs...," Tarbiz XXVI (1957), p. 297-303.

4 L. Strauss, "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," PAAJR XIII (1943), p. 47-96.

5 Hardly a scholar still considers Halevi "anti-philosophic" in the mold of his Muslim counterpart, al-Ghazzali. See D.Z. Baneth, "Rabbi Judah Halevi and al-Ghazzali, Knesset 7 (1942), p. 311-329.

6 Most of the biographical and historical data quoted about Halevi may be found in J. Schirmann, "The Life of Jehuda Ha-Levi," Tarbiz IX-XI (1937-38), and in F. Baer, "The Political Situation of Spanish Jews in the Age of Jehuda Halevi," Zion I (1935-36); see also E. Schweid, "Judah Halevi," EJ Vol. 10, col. 355-366.

7 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah VII, l. 465; Epilogue, 101f.; E.A. Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vol. 1, p. 211f.

11 Born c. 1110; died c. 1180: from H. Hirschberg, EJ Vol. 8, col. 1159.

12 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. xlvi-xlix.

13 S. Baron, SRH VII, p. 271. Baron regards the lack of data on Spanish Karaism as "itself proof of the paucity and relative insignificance of Karaite settlements on the Iberian peninsula" (SRH VII, p. 288, 412). Ankori blames this lack of material on the "ruthless anti-Karaite policies of Spanish Rabbanite dignataries" (Karaites in Byzantium, p. 359n.). In contrast with this sweeping judgment, we know that Karaism seemed to have flourished in Toledo for a period before, during and even after Halevi's lifetime.

14 See Z. Ankori, "Elijah Bashyachi...," Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 183f.

15 S. Baron, SRH V, p. 243; Abu'l-Taras' wife "like her husband, may have been a converted Rabbanite who, while in Jerusalem, had come under the spell of the distinguished Karaite Bible exegete and philosopher, Yeshu'a ben Yehuda."

16 See S. Poznanski, "Ibn Ḥazm über Judische Secten," JQR XVI o.s., p. 769.

17 See B. Revel, "The Karaite Halakah and its Relation to Sadducean, Samaritan and Philonian Halakah," in Karaite Studies, ed. P. Birnbaum, p. 7-8.

18 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. xliv.

19 S. Baron, SRH V, p. 233-235. Z. Ankori, Karaites in Byzantium, p. 346n.

20 Z. Ankori, Karaites in Byzantium, p. 378. J. Mann, Texts and Studies II, p. 303. See Abraham ibn Ezra's introduction to his Bible commentary. Also S. Pinsker, Likute Kadmoniot, p. 76f.

21 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. xliv, 99-100.

22 Ibid., p. 94-95.

23 We look forward to the forthcoming Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy, Harvard, 1979. The manuscripts of al-Baṣir and Yeshu'a are in Leiden and unavailable to us.

24 J. Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, p. 78-81, et passim. I. Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy, p. 48-54 et passim. L. Nemoy, Karaite Anthology, p. 123-124. S. Baron, SRH V, p. 237f.

24a S.D. Goitein, "Autographs...," Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 402, n. 33. D.Z. Baneth, "Some Remarks on the Autographs...," Tarbiz XXVI (1957), p. 297-303.

25 Both Goitein and Baneth (see references in above note) hold S. Pines' theory, apparently orally transmitted, concerning the later composition of the fifth article of the Kuzari.

26 We deal with this issue, in part, below and in Chapter Six.

27 See footnote 24a.

28 The title of the book seems to indicate, at least superficially, that Halevi wanted his book to appear to be a tradition of Khazarite origin, thus the name, "The Khazarite Book" (D.Z. Baneth, Tarbiz XXVI, 1957, p. 297, n. 3). The introduction to the treatise establishes the whole dialogue within a received tradition, subsequently related by the author. For himself, the writer claims to have remembered this dialogue from elsewhere, not to have composed it.

29 Goitein suggests that Halevi's "jesting" attitude brings a "light tone" to the book, as in a "conversation," instead of a treatise written in the "formal style of a theological explanation"of the materials (Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 402, n. 33).

30 The central question may be, does this term refer to groups of "sectarians" living in Spain at the time. All medieval and most modern commentators agree that Halevi refers to the Karaites here. See, for instance, Z. Ankori, 'Elijah Bashyachi...," Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 184-185.

31 L. Strauss, "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," PAAJR XIII (1943). Strauss claims that the haver does not talk to the philosopher. His comment, if correct, would strengthen the view that Halevi focuses the work not on a general attack against philosophy, but against sectarian Jews in particular.

32 E. Schweid, "The Art of Dialogue in Sefer Ha-Kuzari and its Philosophic Significance," Ta'am v'Hagasha, p. 37-79.

33 G. Cohen notes: "Ibn Daud explained the essence of religion in accordance with the new philosophical mode that had made its way into Spain, namely neoplatonic Aristotelianism. As a sign of his reaffirmation of the approach, and of his total rejection of the anti-intellectualsim represented by Judah ha-Levi's Kuzari —— the subtitle of which was 'Arguments and Proofs in Behalf of the Despised Faith" —— Ibn Daud produced a work with a title which, as Bacher noted long ago, was obviously and defiantly directed at ha-Levi —— The Sublime Faith.... Views and acts life those of Judah ha-Levi were not only misinterpreting the tradition as a whole. They were also precipitous and pregnant with disaster," Sefer HaQabbalah, p. 301-302.

Chapter Two

1 We shall explain this qualification below.

2 J. Schacht, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. III, p. 1026-1027.

3 In Hebrew, [illegible].

4 I emphasize this point, lest the reader fabricate possible schismatic groups of which both Halevi and Ibn Daud knew nothing.

5 The Karaites maintained that one must know something before one acted. A knowledge of God thus had to precede the belief in revelation. The Saadian claim —— that all law was rational, so that one should not perform mitzvot on faith, lest the mind never attain full knowledge —— was not perative for the Karaites.

6 God's knowledge is a priori.

7 No pun intended.

8 Again, God's knowledge is a priori.

9 [illegible] Sounds like [illegible], for example.

10 In III:32, Halevi has the king remark that the grammar of Biblical Hebrew manifests an "order" which would be ascribed only to the genius of the divinity.

11 Karaites excelled in the study of Hebrew grammar: see S. Baron, SRH V, p. 237.

12 It is interesting to note that, for a convert, the king knows quite a lot about Karaite practices and customs. We shall call attention to this phenomenon throughout this chapter. When I try to prove that the Khazar king masks a Karaite philosopher about whom Halevi speaks in the Goitein letter, these rhetorical questions assume a poignant tougue-in-cheek quality.

13 We discuss their ascetic practices in the next chapter.

15 We note again that this king is aware even of the small details of the Rabbanite-Karaite controversy.

14 Halevi reveals a sore spot among Rabbanites vis-a-vis Karaite diligence.

16 The issue of just how this occured is not of interest to us here.

17 Halevi does not discuss disenfranchised Jews other than Karaites. There are only two types of Jews, according to Halevi, and no more. Though the reader is tempted to add other sectarian groups, there is no evidence that such groups existed. Abraham ibn Daud, writing only twenty years later, designates the Karaites as the sole sectarian Jewish group in northern Spain.

18 Halevi must explain to his public why the Talmud does not manifest the wisdom of the Rabbanite sages in the formal sciences. Halevi deals with this matter at length in IV:24ff. He asserts here that they indeed had mastered the formal sciences, and do so even to this day. See also III:41.

19 He argues that the Bible refers to punishment equal to "the value of...," not punishment-in-kind.

20 See footnote 15.

21 We do not discuss that process here.

22 Qua Karaite!

23 It is not within the scope of this paper to compare Halevi's description with other accounts, particularly with that of Abraham ibn Daud's Sefer HaQabbalah. M. Avot 1:1 certainly provides the "historical" framework for Halevi's discussion.

24 Cp. III:49.

25 (a) The Mishnah and Beraitot, Torah-like in their precision, order and language must be divine. One who thinks differently has not bothered to study the tradition (III:67, 69). (b) Some of the events reported in the story may have actually taken place (III:67). (c) Homiletic interpretations are used only in public prayer (III:67). (d) What is more, how could such great sages contradict themselves? (III:70) (e) The king notes that the interpreters of halakah may not have been the same individuals who interpreted the homilies (III:72). The homilies then may simply constitute tales which the rabbis told in order to personify ideas which they wished to inculcate, so as to intensify faith in the tradition (III:73). (f) Our own perceptions may be skewed (III:73).

26 See footnotes 11, 14, and 21.

Chapter Three

1 See S. Baron, SRH V, p. 239-240. S. Poznanski, in Karaite Studies, ed. P. Birnbaum, p. 167.

2 Some minor themes which Halevi touches upon here are: (a) God is Creator of an order with purpose, despite human failings to perceive that purpose (III:17, on Yoser prayer). (b) Israel has exclusive rights to prophecy (III:17, on Ahavat Olam prayer).

(c) Though God's power is felt on earth (Avot and Gevurot prayers), God is not , in any fashion, a material being (III:17, on Kedushat ha-Shem prayer). (d) God has knowledge of the particulars (III:1, 11).

3 Halevi notes, moreover, that some of the mitzvot about which he speaks in the oral tradition alsone (III:11). As if pointing directly at the Karaites, Halevi introduces and interprets the practice of putting on phylacteries, a practice which the Karaites rejected. Confirming our notion that the objects of Halevi's polemic here are the Karaites, Halevi presents a skirmish over the efficacy of an issue in oral tradition.

Chapter Four

1 See Chapter One.

2 See discussion ir Chapter One.

3 See III:65.

4 H.A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of Kalam, p. 86f.

5 The manuscripts of Al-Basir's Sefer ha-Ne'imot and Makhimat Peti are in Leiden and have yet to be published. Yeshu'a's proofs for creation may be found in Martin Schreiner, Studien uber Jeschu'a ben Jehuda, Berlin, 1900, p. 23f. See H. A. Wolfson, Repercussions of Kalam in Jewish Philosophy, Harvard, 1979.

6 H. A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of Kalam, Harvard, p. 398-400.

7 M. Schreiner, Studien uber Jeschu'a ben Jehuda, p. 23-24.

8 Translated by Wolfson, The Philosophy of Kalam, p. 87.

9 Ibid., p. 87.

10 Ibid., p. 88.

Chapter Five

1 For details, see D.M. Dunlop, A History of the Jewish Khazars, index. The best critical summary is in S. Baron, SRH III, p. 196-206, and his notes, p. 323-329. For a fluid, but not sufficiently critical account of the Judaism of the Khazars, see E.A. Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vol. 1, JPS, p. 194f.

2 See S. Baron, SRH III, p. 201-202. Especially interesting are the customs mentioned by Petachiah (Sibbub, in English translation by Benisch, p. 6f.).

3 D. M. Dunlop, EJ Vol. 10, col. 944. See also G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. 92-93.

4 See M. Landau, "The Present State of the Khazar Problem," Zion 8 (1943), p. 94-106, and Z. Ankori in a review article, Judaism Vol. 5, p. 115-118. Very few opinions about the documents have changed since A. Harkavy first published the long version of the Reply of Joseph in Measeph Nidahim, Vol. 1, No. 8 and No. 10, p. 117, p. 149-152. S. Schechter addedthe information found in "An Unknown Khazar Document," JQR n.s. III. p. 185-203. See also J. Mann, Texts and Studies I, p. 7-9.

5 For more on Hisdai, see E.A. Ashtor, Korot I (1966), p. 103-172.

6 See P.K. Kokovstov, Evreisko-khazarshaya perepiska v X viekie, for a critical edition of all the basic texts; Hisdai's letter, p. 7-19. English available in E.N. Adler, Jewish Travelers, second editi n with preface by Cecil Roth, p. 22-32.

7 P. Kokovstov, Perepiska, p. 16-17; E. Adler, Jewish Travelers, p. 29-30. When Hisdai complains that "no account of your kingdom has reached us"(Kokovstov, p. 13; Adler, p. 25), he obviously refers to written accounts.

8 Kokovstov, Perepiska, p. 20; E. Adler, p. 33-34.

9 This portion of Sefer ha-Ittim was written between 1090 and 1105: See D.M. Dunlop, EJ Vol. 10, p. 951. S. Assaf re-evaluates the texts in the light of new materials in Zion VII (1942), p. 48-50. He notes that Judah ben Barzillai maintained a critical attitude about the texts he received. He concludes that "Judah's remarks...prove conclusively that in the eleventh century copies of the letters of Hisdai and Joseph were in the hands of the Jews of Spain" (p. 50).

10 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. 92-93. The date for publication is cited in Haim Z'ew Hirschberg, EJ Vol. 8, col. 1159.

11 See S. Dubnow, "Final Conclusions on the Question of the Khazars," Poznanski Memorial Volume, Warsaw, 1927, p. 3.

12 See E. Schweid, "The Art of Dialogue...," in his Ta'am v'Haqasha, p. 37-78.

13 S. Baron, SRH VIII, p. 62, and "Yehuda Halevi: An Answer to an Historic Challenge," JSS III (1941), p. 257. It is difficult to agree with Schweid's assesment that "indeed, R. Yehuda Halevi managed to demonstrate his ability as an attentive and sensitive student of Plato in the formation of the art of dialogue," as distinguished from other imitators. Plato's dialogue-form varies from work to work, sometimes, as the The Laws or Timaeus, long soliloquys are only infrequently interrupted by aggressive inquiry.

14 Translated from the Arabic to Hebrew by S.D. Goitein, "Autographs...." Tarbiz XXV (1956), p. 410. See the comments by D.Z. Baneth on this article, "Some Remarks...," Tarbiz XXVI (1957), p. 297-303. There is no doubt that by the word Minim (sectarians) Halevi means Karaites. Goitein, p. 411; G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. xxviii; J. Mann, "New Studies in Karaism," CCAR Yearbook XII-XIII (1934), p. 222; and "An Early Theologico-Polemical Work," HUCA XII-XIII (1937-38), p. 427.

15 See previous note.

16 H. Ben-Sasson, EJ Vol. 6, col. 91.

17 H. Hirschfeld, "Mohammedean Criticism of the Bible," JQR 13 o.s. (1901), p. 222-240, especially p. 225-232. Also M. Perman, JJS 18, p. 274f.

18 To be discussed in detail below.

19 S. Schechter, An Unknown Khazar Document," JQR III, n.s., p. 204f.

20 A. Harkavy, Measeph Nedahim, I, No. 8. P. Kokovstov, Perepiska, p. 19ff.

21 Abraham ibn Daud also benefited from the oral traditions passed on to him by descendants of the Khazars residing in Toledo. See G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. 93.

22 P. Kokovstov, Perepiska, p. 9ff. and see note 4.

23 See previous note; also M. Landau, "The Present State...," Zion VIII (1943), p. 96.

26 See D.M. Dunlop, A History of the Jewish Khazars, p. 131. The most complicated question for historians of the Khazars is, does the L.V. derive from actual tenth century correspondence or is it an apocryphal creation of the eleventh century. See M. Landau, Zion VIII (1943), p. 101-103 and Z. Ankori, Judaism Vol. 5, p. 115ff. Because we are concerned here with literary traditions and not history per say, the question which will face us is, did Halevi utilize L.V. or L.V.'s source for his historical survey, or vica versa. We are not concerned with real history, but with tradition-history.

27 S. Schechter, JQR III, p. 181ff. D.M. Dulop takes Schechter to task on this point in his History, p. 158-159.

28 Ibid., index. In the translation of Ibn Shamu'el, the beg is called a vizier after the Spanish model. A vizier need not have been a general.

29 M. Landau, "The Present State...," Zion VIII (1943), p. 96 gives a Hebrew translationof the Arabic.

30 We recall once again that CD does not describe this group as "converts."

31 S. Assaf, "R. Judah al-Barceloni on the Letter of King Joseph of the Khazars," Jeschurun XI (1924), p. 113-117.

32 See note above.

33 The statements of the Christian and Moslem also fall into two sections in RJ: Both assert that biblical "Judaism" is true, but because of a subsequent sin, Israel must pay for her transgression.

34 See p. 23.

35 Great doubt has been placed on the history as recorded in RJ. See note 26. Here we are interested only in tradition-history and literary dependence. Our doubts, therefore, focus on the possibility that the creator or editor of RJ knew the Kuzari and copied the opening speech of the Jewish sage into the mouth of the Christian. We hope to support the opposite thesis below.

[36] The Muslim doctrine of idjmaʿ holds that universal consent of the masses about any given datum was in itself a proof for the veracity of that datum. Even Abraham ibn Daud, a stunch literaist with reference to halakha, accepted consensus omnium as a basis for taqqanot. G. Cohen, Sefer Haqabbalah, p. xxxi, lix, 3, 106, 143, et passim. Halevi also used this principle for his religious claims throughout the Kuzari

[36a] In note 35, we suggested that RJ may have been forged from the Kuzari. If so, the information on the differences between RJ and the Kuzari reduces the possibility. A purposeful forgery could hardly have been molded in light of the differences noted, especially that one involving the incident in the cave.

[37] D.M. Dunlop, A History of the Jewish Khazars, p. 155.

[38] Ibid., p. 167.

[40] We may propose provisionally that parallel to the story of the "conversion" of King Būlān, a devout pagan, there arose another story, now told in CD, describing the act of repentnece by Būlān's general, Sabriel, an ancestor of the Jewish refugees who had fled to a religiously tolerant Khazaria as a result of persecutions elsewhere. It appears that CD relates a different story from that told in the other documents. We note from the outset, for instance, that in CD, the story is told of a general (beg) who is born of Jewish blood, but non-practicing, not even circumcized, who repented and returned to the faith. The other versions stress that a pagan king converts. Most of the incidents in CD, though sharing some general similarity with the Kuzari, RJ and HL, differ greatly in detail. It is possible that while the latter three documents discuss the conversion of the pagan King Būlān, CD discusses the "return" of his general, Sabriel, a descendant of the Jews. CD would then tell the same story from the perspective of the population in Khazaria of those born-Jews who had re-discovered the Jewish faith, while the other three versions discuss the pagan, who converted. All the preceding is, of course, merely speculation, demanding much further study.

[41] S. Baron, SRH III, p. 204.

[42] It is relevant to recall Hisdai's remark in his letter to King Joseph. He mentions that if, indeed, he would find Khazaria to be an independent Jewish kingdom, "then despising all my glory, abandoning my high estate, leaving my family, I would go over the mountains and hill, through seas and lands, till I should arrive at the place where my Lord the King resides, that I might see not only his glory and magnificence, and that of his servants and ministers, but also the tranquility of the Israelites. On beholding this my eyes would brighten, my reins would exult, my lips would pour forth praises to God, who has not withdrawn his favor from his afflicted one" (E. Adler, Jewish Travelers, p. 32).

43 E. Schweid, Ta'am v'Haqasha, p. 39-40. S. Pines apparently agrees with Schweid's analysis, Encyclopedia Brittanica, 15th edition, Vol. 10, p. 210.

44 It is a fact that Halevi believed that the Inyan Elohi can only be received in the Holy Land (as near to the altar in Jerusalem as possible). He believes that the performance of sacrifices is a sine qua non for the appearance of the Inyan Elohi. Full performance of the mitzvot requires, unquestionably for Halevi, the building of the Temple and the reinstitution of sacrificial worship.

45 Hardly a scholar still considers Halevi anti-philosophic according to the precedent of his Muslim counterpart, al-Ghazzali: see notes to Chapter One, n. 5.

Chapter Six and Epilogue

1 See Chapter Two, p. 30.

2 See p. 34-35.

3 See p. 8-11, 50ff.

4 Halevi is not concerned with the differences in the meaning of "purification of soul" between Kalam philosophers and the pure Aristotelians.

5 L. Nemoy in Karaite Anthology, p. 123-132. S. Baron, SRH V, p. 239-240, 245.

6 Ibid., p. 123f.

7 S. Baron, SRH V, p. 213 et passim. Z. Ankori, Karaites in Byzantium, p. 346.

8 See p. 19.

9 See p. 87.

10 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. 94.

11 D.Z. Baneth, Tarbiz XXVI (1957), p. 298-299.

12 See p. 15-16.

13 S. Baron, SRH V, p. 219, 258.

14 H. Hirschfeld, "Mohammedean Criticism of the Bible," JQR 13 o.s. (1901), p. 225-228. S. Baron. SRH V, p. 211.

15 H. Hirschfeld, JQR 13 o.s. (1901), p. 226-228.

16 S. Baron, SRH V, p. 282.

17 Ibid., p. 185-186.

18 Ibid., p. 260.

19 H. Brody, Diwan Judah Halevi, III, p. 72; IV, 1, v. 2.

20 S. Baron, JJS III (1941), p. 226-227.

21 I:27 : white/black distinction.

22 J. Mann, "Messianic Movements during the Time of the First Crusade," Hatekufah XXII, p. 243-261; XXIII, p. 335-358.

23 L. Nemoy, Karaite Anthology, xxiii-xxiv. A. Harkavy, JE, p. 438.

24 G. Cohen, Sefer HaQabbalah, p. lix. S. Baron, SRH V, p. 228.

25 S. Baron, SRH VII, p. 226; V, p. 233. J. Mann, "Early Karaite Bible Commentators," JQR XII n.s., p. 515-516. P. Birnbaum, "Introduction," Karaite Studies, p. v. L. Nemoy, HUCA VII, p. 321.

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