

An Overview of Karaite Theology & History



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These facts presented here are from Karaite sources. None of these facts have been created in order to editorialize, but simply to show those still open to truth, adequate information to decide if they desire to be in communion with Karaite doctrines and teachings. The only comments I have added can be found in red. I trust that you will see many reasons to be cautious of all things taught by them and that those who are still teachable will reevaluate the doctrines emanating from the Karaite camp! It is with your best interests at heart as a shepherd of Yisrael that I submit these facts for your consideration. I have no personal agenda or motive to list these facts. My care for you has unctoned me to copy and paste what you need to be aware of.

These facts may often be hard to digest as most were copied verbatim from other sources. Some words will be strange, challenging and unfamiliar. Yet you should be able to glean despite these linguistic obstacles. There are many facts contained herein and sometimes the wording can be difficult, and the English is choppy. Nevertheless it is a worthwhile read.

*****Regardless on how this work affects your view of the Karaites, one overriding principle must be paramount for all Renewed Covenant (New Covenant) believers. If you believe the complete truth, and in the full inspiration of all of the Renewed Covenant from Mattiyahu/Matthew to Gilyahna/Revelation according to Yahshua Himself, you must guard your heart and your ears and never, repeat never, allow yourself to be taught by anyone who does not adhere to the full inspiration of the apostolic writings, as equal to the Torah, regardless of their intellect, or insights. Confusion, fear, doubt and unbelief, is best dealt with by guarding your ears BEFORE confusion sets in. Once unbelief and confusion sets in its usually too late.

If you follow this overriding principle you will be able to keep yourself in your most kadosh faith!

Mark 4:24 A-**And He said to them, *Take heed what you hear.....***

Acts 20:28-Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Ruach Hakodesh has made you overseers, to feed the congregation of Yisrael in יהוה- YHWH, which He has purchased with His own dahm.

First Timothy 4:16-Take heed to yourself, and to your teachings; continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save yourself, and those that hear you.

Shalom,

Rabbi Moshe Yoseph Koniuchowsky

Adereth Elijah ("The Mantle of Elijah")

The most influential Halachic work of Karaism, Elijah Bashyazi (approx. 1430-1490) named for him. It embodies his liberalization of the Karaite *Halacha and his readiness to make use of Rabbinic techniques and sources. Its Hebrew language is clear and exact. It was distributed chapter-by-chapter as they were completed, - such was the need felt in the Karaite communities for a binding work of Oral Law. It included: the ten principles of faith, a new and final formulation of the Karaite credo; the sanctification of the New Moon, for which Bashyazi drew up, for the first time, an official Karaite calendar; the Sabbath laws, which included the liberal innovations of the Bashyazi family and as a result became the subject of much polemic literature among the Karaites; the ORAL laws of Shehi- tah and those of incest and the final formulation of the Karaite laws of divorce. The latter gave the wife rights she did not possess under Rabbinic law, and read as follows: - "Just as the husband is obliged to give a divorce because of anything unseemly in the wife, so the wife can compel the husband to divorce her for anything unseemly on his part by order of the bet din; and just as the wife can be divorced at her will or against her will, so the husband divorces his wife at his will or against his will. We do not share the opinion of those that follow tradition, who declared that the man marries even against his will but divorces only of his own free will, whereas the woman marries of her own free will but is divorced even against her will; they themselves have said that husbands may be compelled by means of the non-Jewish authorities to give a get and that he is compelled to divorce". (From M. Corinaldi, The Problem of Divorce, 1978/80, 116). The innovation here lies in the requirement of a judicial decree, - the free will of both parties is not sufficient. The section on the calendar refers to the year 1457, while the other sections were reported to date from the last ten years of Bashyazi's life. He did not complete the work, and his son-in-law Caleb * Afendopolo (1464-1525) completed most of it. It was printed in *Constantinople in 1530, in *Odessa in 1870 and in Israel in 1966.

The Founder of Karism-

Anan-

Anan had lived in Baghdad, but this city was founded only in 762. Natronai, the Gaon of Sura in 860-870, helps to place Anan's activity in the time of Rav Yehudai Gaon, 758-762, - about a decade after the * Abbasids had taken over the Caliphate.

Later accounts, like those of Elijah ben Abraham and Abraham ibn Da'ud, both of the twelfth century, claim that Anan belonged to the exilarchic family (and was thus a scion of the house of King David) and had indeed been tricked out of becoming an exilarch himself, - a story perhaps adapted from what happened later to his grandson *Daniel. The tale was further embroidered: Anan was supposed to have been arrested and sentenced to death for defying the caliph's confirmation of his brother as exilarch. His fellow prisoner was supposed to have been Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafite school of Muslim jurisprudence (who died in 767), who advised him to bribe some of the court officials, in order to be ushered into the caliph's presence. There he claimed to head a different faith from that of the Rabbinites, and to calculate the calendar similarly to the Muslims, whereupon he was released. Especially Elijah ben Abraham's account is detailed and full of the legends with which the lives of most founders of religious sects are later embellished. But as neither the Gaon Natronai, who lived only ninety years after Anan, nor Kirkisani, mention the matter of his exalted birth, these stories should perhaps not be taken too seriously.

It has generally been accepted that Anan authored the Aramaic language * "Book of Precepts", parts of which have survived. It is a handbook of religious law. Anan's methods of exegesis and interpretation of law therein are very similar to those of the Talmud, showing that Kirkisani's statement about his having been "learned in the lore of the Rabbinites" was quite correct. But his conclusions are often very different from those of the Talmud. He believed that "in case of doubt the stricter alternative is to be regarded as obligatory" and opted for more ascetic interpretations than those of the Talmud. Self denial, fastings, contempt of worldly goods and coarse rainments were elevated to cardinal virtues, as tokens of repentance, in order to bring about an early redemption and the restoration of Israel. His "Sefer ha-Mitz- vot Ie-Allan" ("Anan's Book of Precepts") includes many rulings on such subjects as criminal law, *dietary law, incest (*Rikkuv Theory), divorce, *circumcision and the *Sabbath. For instance on incest it says: - A man may not marry his sister ... The words "their nakedness"(Lev 18:9) are in the plural, because Scripture ... (wished) to tell us that all women who are our full or half sisters are equally forbidden to us, whether they are of full or half brother, even one begotten by fornication or out of a male or female slave" (adapted from L. Nemoy, Anthology, 18, 19).

His six ordinances about forbidden marriages were later interpreted in such an extreme way as to make marriages between Karaites often difficult. Also in other fields he rendered the strictures of traditional law more severe: he added to the number of the fast days; introduced more complicated regulations for the circumcision ceremony; interpreted the prohibition of work on the Sabbath in stricter terms; did not recognize the minimum quantities (shi'urim) of forbidden foods; introduced additional strictures regarding ritual cleanliness and limited relations with non-Jews.

Anan's rulings comprise a compendium of Oral Law, just as do the rulings of the Talmud. This raises the awkward question of just how the founder of Karaism, a sect based on the refusal to accept Oral Law in all its forms, could have acted thus against all its basic

principles. Later Karaite and modern scholars have tried to explain this contradiction in many ingenious ways, but, apparently, there is no possibility of avoiding the conclusion that Anan simply was no Karaite and that only later tradition has made him the founder of the sect. Apparently the eighth and ninth century religious ferment in the outlying provinces east of the Tigris, inspired by the opposition to the Talmud and Oral Law in general, which eventually led to the creation of Karaism, had originally no connection with Anan. Only in later generations did his descendants and followers, the Annanites, became part of the Karaite movement, and indeed came to dominate it, till their founder was accepted as the founder of Karaism itself (probably in the second half of the ninth century).

He was regarded for some time as a foreign element by some of the leading sectarians from east of the Tigris, who initially guided the bulk of the movement, which eventually lead to Karaism. Thus Ishmael of 'Ukbara, the founder of the *'Ukbarite sect, is reported by Kirkisani to have denounced Anan as "a fool and an ass". Even Daniel al *Kumisi called him, after his conversion to Karaism, "first among the fools".

According to Karaite legend Anan died in the year 811, aged 96, and was buried in *Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of Mount Moriah. However this legend expresses already the Jerusalem-centricism of a later generation. Anan himself can be said to have ascribed to a more Babylonian-centric view of the Jewish world.

Karaites were all following some sort of Oral Law. This is not to justify the entire Jewish Oral Law, but to display that the very basic foundations of Karism are Oral law based. Their own that is! This includes calendars drawn up based on their own methods of time reckoning. Even the one many consider Karism's founder was an oral law advocate and made it binding on Karaites. To teach that Karaites reject Oral Tradition is false and a misinterpretation of their roots. Many today find the Karaites appealing as they see them as biblical literalists, when historically nothing can be further from the truth.

Anan the Second, ben Daniel-

Great-grandson of Anan ben David. He lived in Jerusalem and was regarded as a Karaite, while his cousins Josaphat and Tsemah still headed in the ninth century the Rabbinat "Academy of the Land of Israel" in *Tiberias. Michael the Syrian called already his father *Daniel an * Ananite. Al-*Bayruni, around 1000, seems to have regarded Anan the second, and not his great-grandfather, as the real founder of Karaism. Modern scholars have sometimes assumed (probably erroneously) that the Synagogue of Anan in Jerusalem was originally founded by Anan the second.

Ananites-

The sect founded by * Anan hen David and headed mainly by his descendants. *Kirkisani, in the tenth century, mentioned Karaites, the "people of Anan" and Benjaminites (the followers of Benjamin *Nahawendi) as three separate sects. *Mas'udi,

also in the tenth century, claims that the Ananites should be regarded as Jewish followers of the *Mu'tazilite philosophy. He mentions the Karaites as a separate sect, who have, however, their calendation in common with the Ananites. Bayruni (973-1048) mentions the Ananites as a subset of the Karaites, who are particularly strict in their keeping of the *Sabbath. Al-*Shahrastani, in the first half of the twelfth century, mentions some of the customs of the Ananites. Even *Makrizi, early in the fourteenth century, still describes the Karaites and Ananites separately, each with their own ideology and customs. Michael defines him and claims that this sect was observing Wednesday as the and claims that Daniel spoke up against the Mishnah and in favor of the "Talmud" written by his grandfather Anan.

There existed also other Ananites. Modern scholars have assumed Daniel al-*Kumisi, late in the ninth century, originally to have been one of them. His eventual leadership of the Karaite camp indicates the fusion between Ananites and Karaites, and the intellectual domination by the Ananites of what had been up to then, in Z. *Ankori's phrase, "rugged but naive frontiersmen". Other branches of the Ananites have been traced to *Damascus, Egypt and even to *Spain. In the latter country seems to have survived the original, Aramaic, version of Anan's *"Book of Precepts", while in Jerusalem only partial translations into Hebrew and Arabic were available to such scholars as al-*Basir, as late as 1030. In a letter of 1057 Ananite immigrants from Spain to Jerusalem are mentioned, and they might, as shown by H. *Ben Shammai, have brought with them the original Aramaic text, as it was quoted in detail by *Jeshua ben Judah, in the third quarter of the eleventh century. The fusion of the Ananites and Karaites seems thus to have occurred mostly in the ninth century, but not to have been completed till late in the eleventh.

As seen here Karaites are hardly of a single faith and have more divisions and diversity than rabbinic Judaism. Those messianic and Nazarene believers who claim to be followers of diverse Karaite doctrines, the question then is which sect do you follow? Some sects taught a Wednesday Sabbath and other weird doctrines.

Arabic Language-

The founding fathers of Karaism wrote in * Aramaic (* Anan ben David) and *Hebrew (Benjamin *Nahawendi and Daniel al-*Kumisi): But already the * Ananites wrote widely in Arabic, on various halachic subjects, as reported by *Kirkisani. Later most of the Karaite authors of the *Golden Age wrote all or part of their works in Arabic, both in *Jerusalem and in the Diaspora and thus Jacob al-Kirkisani, *Sahl ben Mazliah, *David ben Boaz (Abu Sa'id), *Japheth ben Ali ha-Levi, Abu Sa'id *Levi ben Japheti, *Abu al-Paraj Harun, *Jeshua ben Judah, Yaakub Yusuf al-*Basir, David ben Abraham *Alfasi, *Sahl ibn Pasl and others. In the tenth and eleventh centuries there existed Karaite scribal circles, which regularly copied works in Arabic script. When the Karaite center moved to Byzantium, from the eleventh century onward, the works which were regarded as most

important were translated into Hebrew, as Arabic was not spoken there, and those which were not translated were mostly forgotten and only rediscovered by modern scholars. In the less important centers of the Muslim East Arabic continued to be used by some of the Karaite authors also in later periods, and thus in some ten poems by Moses ben Abraham *Dar'i in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and more widely by *Samuel ben Moses al-Maghribi and David ben Sendel ibn al-*Hiti, both in fifteenth century *Cairo. Arabic continued to be the language of every day life among the Karaites of Egypt in later centuries. From the late nineteenth century onward it was also used again as a literary language. Thus by Murad *Farag Lisha (1867-1956), who published more than thirty books in Arabic in Cairo. Also other Karaites wrote in that language and published also several Arab-language magazines in Cairo, such as al-Tadhib (1901- 1904), al-Irshad (1908-1909), al-Ittihad (1924-1930) and al-*Kalim (1945- 1957).

The original language of the Karaites was Arabic and many considered the original Karaites an Arab sect, which later evolved into a form of apostate Judaism.

Assimilation-

Jews in the Diaspora dared to be different and as a result became the butt of xenophobia and anti-Semitism, but kept their identity and survived. A moment of crisis arrived as a result of the eighteenth and nineteenth century movement of Haskala (Emancipation), first in Germany and later in Eastern Europe, which opened the gates to assimilation. Among the Karaites a similar development took place about a century later. Near the end of the nineteenth century some of them left their old centers in Eastern Europe and started to settle in large towns, where no Karaite congregations had existed previously, such as *St Petersburg, Vienna, *Odessa, *Warsaw, Kharkov etc. After some time most of the new arrivals began to use Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and German in their daily lives, instead of their old Tartar dialect.

In order to cater to the tastes of the new, Russian speaking generation, Karaite students at the University of *Moscow founded in 1911 a Karaite monthly in Russian, "Karaimskaya Zhizn" and other young Karaites started a periodical "Karaimskoye Slovo" in Vienna. Karaites began to write on non- religious subjects and produced ballads, fables, satirical poems and plays in Russian and Polish. Some of them studied at the Jesuit-founded Academy in *Vilna and passed from there on to the universities of central and Western Europe. Many of the Karaites became assimilated to Russian customs and later to those of other nations.

While Rabbinate became, from the late nineteenth century onward, the target of increased anti-Semitism, culminating in repeated pogroms in Russia, in the Dreyfus affair in France and, ultimately, in Nazism in Germany and the Holocaust in most of Europe, the Karaites sidestepped these developments by stressing their separate national identity (*National Karaite Movement) and eventually claiming not to be Jews at all. This saved them from the disabilities to which Jews were subject in Tsarist Russia and even from the Holocaust, but it made them even more susceptible to assimilation. They discarded many of the customs they had initially brought from the Crimea, Lithuania and Volhynia, dressed increasingly like Russians or Poles, inhabited houses similar to theirs and

changed often their Turkish names for Slavonic or German ones. The cemetery of *Troki can serve as an illustration of this development: inscriptions on its gravestones were initially in Hebrew, but later in Polish and Russian, reflecting the language of the rulers.

When, after World War I, increasing numbers of Karaites reached Western Europe and the *USA, assimilation and not anti-Semitism became the main enemy of their continued existence and separate identity. M. El-Kodsi stated in the later 1980's that fully 80% of the Karaites who had settled in the USA were assimilated into the Jewish mainstream or into the non-Jewish world and have not kept their Karaite identity. A Karaite congregation was set up only in the *San Francisco area. In other cities Karaites joined Rabbinate congregations.

A similar development has taken place in the Middle East and especially in Egypt. Under British rule (1882-1945) the Karaites enjoyed more freedom and a much-improved standard of living, but soon assimilated increasingly to their Egyptian surroundings. They all spoke * Arabic and blended much more easily than the Rabbinites into the Egyptian background. They became practically indistinguishable from the local population and were regarded, as the Rabbinites were not, as Egyptians for all purposes. They might thus have disappeared within a few generations, had not the national Arab movement in Egypt targeted them as enemies, just as much as the Rabbinites, as a result of the military catastrophes of 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and practically forced them to emigrate, mostly to Israel.

Even in Israel the chameleon-like ability of the Karaites to blend into their surroundings has been at work. As they visit the same schools, serve in the army, have Rabbinate colleagues at work and play, many of them have come to regard themselves as Israelis first and Karaites second, if at all. The dividing line between Karaites and Rabbinites is thus becoming rather blurred. Many *intermarriages underline the accelerated process of assimilation to mainstream Judaism in Israel. Assimilation is now the main danger to the continued existence of Karaism, both in Israel and the Diaspora.

The Karaites denied being Jewish to save themselves in the holocaust and today boldly proclaim they are the true and pure Jewish sect thus trapping many New Covenant believers into their ability to be chameleon like in their survival techniques. Today Karaites infiltrate the Nazarene and Messianic movements teaching from the New Testament, soliciting their financial support, even though they admit to denying its inspiration as the Torah renewed.

Day of Atonement-

Yom Kippur, in Hebrew. While Rabbinites refrain from food for 24 or 25 hours, Karaites do so for 26 or even 27 hours. They dress in white, as a sign of solemnity and purity. Nearly all the day is passed in prayer in the synagogue, as a substitute for the sacrifices of antiquity. In Eastern Europe, however, sacrifices have not been completely abandoned and a lamb was often to sacrificed before the Day of Atonement. More recently a hen was

substituted. This was called "Korban" (sacrifice) and has, perhaps, a similar background to the Rabbinate "Kapparot".

Babovich, Simha ben Salomon (1790-1855)-

Karaite Hakham in the Crimea and the central figure in the early phase of the *National Karaite movement. He obtained for the Karaites of Russia the exemption from military service, which continued to be compulsory for Rabbinate. The Karaites of *Eupatoria commemorated this event every year by a special prayer. He and his descendants dominated from then on Karaite affairs in the Crimea. His agitation for Karaite interests achieved its main success in 1837, with the granting of religious autonomy. He was helped by Abraham Firkovich, who accompanied him in 1830 on a visit to the Holy Land. In order to be guided in its future policy towards the Karaites, the Russian government instructed Babovich to provide detailed information on the origin, customs and history of the Karaites. He instructed Firkovich to assemble this material. As a result the Karaites were granted in 1840 the status of an independent church, and were put on an equal footing with the Muslims, which gave them far superior rights to those of the Rabbinate. Two dioceses were set up, one of them in *Feodosia, in the Crimea, of which Babovich became the first Hakham. He adopted for the Karaites of the Crimea 19-year cycle of *calendation, originally accepted in Turkey by the Rabbinate.

Well, well. As seen this pattern of denying being Jewish followed the early Karaites equating them more with Muslims than Jews and seeing the printing of a 19 year CALCULATED calendar. So the claim that the Karaites historically did not use calendars that are calculated is blatantly false.

Babovich, Tobiah Simha Levi (1879-1956)-

He was born in *Chufut Kale in the *Crimea and acted there and in *Feodosia as religious teacher. 1910-1930 he served as Hakham in *Sebastopol, but was exiled by the Soviet authorities for four years to *Simferopol (till 1934). His later years, 1934-1956, he spent as Chief Hakham in *Cairo, Egypt. As he was used to the different customs and Halakha of Russia and Turkey, he often opposed the local customs, but was not very successful therein. Also the nationalistic ideology of the European Karaites, who claimed not to be Jews at all, could not be applied successfully in Egypt. Ironically it fell to this outsider to serve as the last Chief Hakham of Egypt. Babovich published many halachic articles, - mostly on calendation, and two books. Many of his homilies have remained as MSS. He tried several times to defend Abraham *Firkovich's writings and theses and also attacked Jacob *Mann's "Texts", claiming (correctly) that his knowledge of the Karaite Crimean dialect was insufficient.

More calendar making.

Babylonian Talmud-

Karaism originated to a great extent as a widespread protest movement against the Babylonian Talmud. This is true for its * Ananite branch, where 'Anan ben David tried

to assemble a handbook of religious law to compete. It, and even more so for its Karaite branch, which developed out of the countries east of the Tigris, directed against the very principle the Oral Law and the Talmud. The academies of Babylonia had considered the themselves, ever since the completion of the mishnah in the Holy Land, to be the link in an uninterrupted chain of oral transmission. They were formulating, developing, editing and writing down the Talmud strengthened their position and stiffened their resolve to force, if need be, even the far-flung outposts of Judaism into obedience and: conformity to the new Babylonian Talmud. By the Gaonite period, in the seventh to tenth centuries, these attempts were not received willingly in some of the eastern communities, which cherished often very different traditions from the ones codified in the Babylonian Talmud. Various sects sprang up, dedicated to fight against the Talmud and the very principle of Oral Tradition. They coalesced eventually under the banners of Karaism.

In later generations the absolute opposition of Karaism to the Babylonian Talmud softened, reaching its climax in the adoption of many of its techniques and teachings by Elijah *Bashyazi, in the fifteenth century. At first study of the Talmud was recommended so that it could be better refuted. Later this pretext was dropped, though the full extent of the borrowing was never admitted.

Baghdad –

Ibn al-Hiti claimed in the fifteenth century that * Anan ben David had lived in Baghdad. This is possible, but actually the city was founded only in 762, when Anan must have been already in his middle years. Later * Ananites might have lived there, but eventually most of them moved to Palestine. Karaism itself originated rather in the small communities east of the Tigris and had little connection with a large urban metropolis like Baghdad, which soon became one of the centers of Rabbinite Judaism. Still, *Kirkisani mentioned a Karaite congregation there early in the tenth century. The Muslim rationalistic philosophy of the *Mu'tazilites flourished in Baghdad and influenced many of the Karaite thinkers of the *"Golden Age" in *Jerusalem and elsewhere. Originally most Karaites came under the rule of the * Abbasid Caliphs, who had their seat in Baghdad. But from the later ninth century onward parts of Persia, North Africa and even Palestine, broke away and became independent and thus also the political connection with Baghdad was broken.

Bakhtawi Academy-

This was the main Karaite yeshiva (academy) in *Jerusalem in the *"Golden Age". It was located in the Karaite Quarter, outside of the city walls, on the "Eastern Hill" where the original city of the Jebusites and King David had stood two millennia earlier. Its seat was in the "courtyard" (meaning the group of buildings surrounding a courtyard) of Joseph ben Bakhtawi, one of the richest and most influential members of the Karaite community, around 1000. The Bakhtawi "courtyard" seems to have served also as the Karaite communal center (maglis) of Jerusalem. Ibn Bakhtawi is mentioned by *Japhet ben Ali as an important grammarian, even before he settled in Jerusalem.

Balaban Meir 1877-1942-

He and other Rabbinic scholars there and in other ghettos) to prepare a study of the ethnic roots of the Karaites, in order to decide on their fate (*Holocaust). All four towns seem to have claimed that the Karaites were not Jews in order to save the lives of the Karaites. Balaban died soon after in the ghetto.

Bali, Abraham ben Jacob Baron -

He was a physician and scholar who lived in Turkey in the second half of the fifteenth century and early in the sixteenth century. In his Rabbinic Shabbetai ben Malchiel ha-Kohen and refers in his work with respect to such other Rabbinic scholars as Mordecai Comtino. Still, he continued to be in favor of upholding the Karaite prohibition against burning lights on the Sabbath ("Iggeret Issur Ner Shabbat"), and wrote on the status of the Rabbinates of priestly descent who became Karaites ("Iggeret ha-Kohanim") *Nem and also various commentaries, such as on the chapter dealing with ritual Amol slaughter in *Aaron ben Elijah the Younger" (Perush Inyan Shehitah"); on al-Bij Farabi's "Logic" ("Perush al harnishah Perakim"); and on al-Ghazali's

Bashyazi Family-

This is the Karaite family that spearheaded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the rapprochement with the Rabbinates in the early Ottoman Empire. It hailed from *Adrianople (hence their cognomen "Adrianopolitans") and was transferred by the Turks in 1455 to newly captured Constantinople. Its main achievements were the liberalization of Karaite laws and customs, thus allowing, for instance, the lightening of *Sabbath candles, and the creation of a written code of Oral Law - the Adereth Elijahu". Its most important members were Menahem ben Joseph, Moses ben Menahem, Elijah ben Moses and Kaleb * Afendopolo. Their rulings became normative for the Karaites of Europe in the post medieval period.

Even Karaites began to light Shabbat Candles.

Bashyazi, Elijah (approx. 1420-1490)-

He was the most prominent member of the Bashyazi family, the ideologist of the Karaite rapprochement with Rabbanism and the main codifier of Karaite Law. He was the son of Moses and grandson of Menahem Bashyazi. He was born in Adrianople and subsequently moved to *Constantinople, studying both with Karaite and Rabbinic teachers and acquiring thus also a substantial knowledge of Rabbinic lore. He undertook the enormous task of providing Karaism with a written *Halacha of its own - against all its principles and most cherished historical traditions. This had become quite essential, as two thousand years of constant change had made the undiluted Pentateuch Law too obsolete. Previous attempts had been made, but never on so large a scale or with equal readiness to adopt Rabbinic rulings. Still, lip service to the clichés of Karaite conventional legal thought had to be paid, in order not to hurt Karaite sensibilities. In 1457 Elijah completed the section on intercalation of his * "Adereth Eli- jahu", in which he adopted the Rabbinic system of starting the year with the month of Tishrei (in

early autumn) instead of in Nissan (in early spring). Other sections, and especially those dealing with the sanctification of the new moon (he was the first to draw up an official calendar for it), the ten principles of faith (the new and final formulation of the Karaite credo) and the laws of the * Sabbath, of Shehitah (*Dietary Law) and incest (*Rikkuv Theory) were mostly formulated in the last ten years of his life. The following is an extract from the Adereth on the subject of conduct to one's fellow man: -

His Hebrew is surprisingly concise and easily understood. He wrote also liturgical poems and hymns (thus "Melizat ha-Mitzvot", recited at Shavuot). Further he composed three epistles, on fasting on the Sabbath ("Iggeret ha-tsom"), on the prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve ("Iggeret gid hanashe") and on the law of inheritance ("Iggeret hayerusha"). His astronomical work, "Keli hane-hoshet", has not survived.

The "Adereth Elijahu" ensured that the liberal attitude of the Bashyazis continued to be normative also after their time. But already in his lifetime Elijah took up close contacts with scholars from the new centers in Eastern Europe, and recommended, for instance, the establishment of a Beth-Din of the fee in *Troki, Lithuania, similar to the one in *Istanbul. Among his pupils was also the Rabbinate, Moses of Kiev.

Bashyazi, Menahem ben Joseph-

He lived in * Adrianople and was the head of the Bashyazi family in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. He started around 1440 to permit the kindling of Sabbath lights. Up to that time Karaite households could easily be distinguished from Rabbinate ones, as they remained dark throughout the, Sabbath. This radical change provoked much opposition even among the Karaites of Turkey. Later, he initiated the custom of reading the Pentateuch starting in the autumn, in the month of Tishrei, like the Rabbinate, and longer in the spring, in the month of Nissan. This, too, caused friction and provoked opposition. Further innovations initiated by him and his family were the introduction of Sephardic Rabbinate cantillation; regulation of the system of prayers and the inclusion of Rabbinate liturgical poetry; acceptance of Rabbinate-patterned ritual fringes (*Tallit); the arrangement of astronomical calendar tables of moladot to assist in fixing the first day of the month, etc. Most of them were accepted in Turkey and Europe in the days of his grandson Elijah: but a few did not survive the sixteenth century. In the countries of the Mid East most of them were not accepted at all.

Bashyazi, Moses ben Menahem-

He was the son of the former and the father of Elijah. He lived in Adrianople and *Constantinople in the middle of the fifteenth century. After death of his father, the Karaite community of Turkey split in two. HI those who followed the new rules. Relations with their opponents were' far from amicable. The rift was overcome in the time of his son.

Bashyazi, Moses-

He was the grandson of Elijah and lived in the sixteenth century. He led the Arabic speaking Karaite communities of the Middle East and wrote there manuscripts in Arabic and some pages of *Anan's "Sefer ha-Mitz' Aramaic. He used it for his own "Zevah Pesah" and "Sefer Re'uven". "Sefer Jehudah" he explains the laws of incest and in his "Matteh Elohi history of the Karaite schism. The latter was included in *Mordecai san's "Sefer David Mordekhai".

As seen here and elsewhere Karaites are not monolithic and hold varying degrees of views. Also note the deep historical connections to the Arabs and the Arabic language. Later Karaites were sometimes viewed as more in tune with Islam than with Judaism.

Basir Yusuf Al-(Joseph ben Abraham ha-Kohen ha-Roeh) (d. 1040)-

Persia or Iraq in the first half of the eleventh century, but worked in Jerusalem. He was reported to have been blind and was called al-Basir, "ha-Roeh" ("the Seeing one"). In spite of this, possibly as a Karaite propagandist. He was well versed in literature and in the Talmud and especially in Islamic philosophy "al- Tamyiz" ("The Distinction") and in his later main work, ("The Comprehensive") (which was three times the size in order to find the common denominator between Karaism and nationalism. He stressed the rational character of ethics and duty of reason over tradition.

Basnage, Jacques (1653-1725)-

He was a Huguenot historian who mentions the Karaites at some length in his pioneering "His to ire des Juifs" (La Haye 1715). He was the first to mention the separate traditions of the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania as to their origins. They regarded themselves as descendants of the ten tribes and thus as Israelites, but not as Jews.

Basra-

City in southern Iraq. *Kirkisani mentions there in the first half of the tenth century, an early Karaite group ("people from among the Basrans and from Fars") with divergent beliefs and modes of life. Afterwards he calls them "the above mentioned Karaites from Basra". *Japheth ben Ali ha-Levi, the foremost Karaite commentator of the Bible, was born there, also in the tenth century, and hence his appellation "al-Basri" when he later moved to *Jerusalem. In the eleventh century a Karaite of Basra, Israel ben Simha ben Saadiah ben Ephraim, dedicated a Ben-Asher version of the Bible to the Karaite congregation of Jerusalem. In the late eleventh century the city was abandoned, as a result of civil wars in Iraq. In the fifteenth century ibn al-*Hiti mentioned the Karaite community which had existed there in the times of Kirkisani.

Bat Yam-

City south of Tel Aviv. Most of the Karaites in the metropolitan area of Tel Aviv have settled there. Thus most of the 200 Karaite households in "greater Tel Aviv", mentioned in 1979 by *Elgamil, refer to Bat Yam. This community had, however, in the early 1990's only one representative among the 37 members of the National Council, in the Karaite World Center in Ramle.

Beghi Moses ben Benjamin-

Second half of the 16th century. He worked in Istanbul. He wrote a book or manmade precepts (Mitzvat Moshe), which included essays on Shabbat laws, Maasat Moshe, and on the calendar, Ohel Moshe.

Book of Gardens and Parks-

"Kitab al-Riyad wa-al Hadaiq" by Jacob al-*Kirkisani, completed in 938. It is a commentary on the non-legal part of the Pentateuch. A detailed discourse on the methods of biblical exegesis serves as its preface. Ankori regards it as Kirkisani's most important work, but it has been far less influential than his *Book of Lights and Watchtowers.

Book of Lights and Watchtowers-

"Kitab al-Anwar wal-Maraqib", was completed apparently in 937 by *Kirkisani. It is divided into thirteen discourses:

1. History of the Jewish sects.
2. On the validity of the application of rational investigation to theology and law.
3. Refutation of the doctrines of Christianity, Islam and the various sects.
4. On the methods of interpretation of the law.
5. *Circumcision; the *Sabbath.
6. The commandments; a treatise on liturgy.
7. The new moon.
8. The feast of Shavuot (*Pentecost).
9. Other holy days.
10. Ritual cleanliness and uncleanness.
11. Incest (*Rikkuv Theory).
12. *Dietary laws.
13. Inheritance.

Kirkisani also touches on witchcraft, the psychopathology, dialectics, and the proper pronunciation of Hebrew.

Another Karaite book of extra biblical writings used widely by various sects.

Books of Precepts-

Contains several important Karaites wrote such works, starting with the eighth century "Sefer ha-Mitsvot le-Anan". It was originally written in Aramaic and included its many rulings on criminal law, *dietary law, incest, divorce, *circumcision than and the *Sabbath. Benjamin *Nahawendi, in the first half of the ninth century, wrote another, in Hebrew. He also wrote a Book of Rules (Sefer Dinim), - both perhaps part of an all-inclusive code of Karaite law.

Also Daniel al-*Kumisi, at the end of the century, wrote a Book of Precepts in Hebrew, apparently on ritual law and the law of inheritance, but not on civil law.

*Sahl ben Mazliah opened in the second half of the tenth century the line Arabic scholars who wrote Books of Precepts in * Arabic. His still had, however, a Hebrew-language introduction. *Japheth ben Ali ha-Levi's Book of Precepts, also from the tenth century, has not survived.

Sounds like Oral Torah to me.

Byzantium-

Karaites seem to have settled in Byzantine governed Asia Minor since the late tenth century. They are mentioned explicitly for the first time in * Attaleia, on its southern coast, in 1028. They settled also in *Nicomedia, Amaseia, 'Gangra and *Trebizond, and in Europe in * Adrianople and *Thessalonica. *Constantinople became their main center. *Benjamin of rudela mentioned there, around 1170, 500 Karaites. Some of them were merchants, others were involved in textile weaving and dyeing or in agriculture; still others were tanners, artisans, peddlers and teachers. They arrived from Egypt and Iraq, with Arabic as their spoken language, but had to switch now to Greek, and developed even a *Greco Karaite vernacular of their own.

Byzantium, and especially Constantinople, became the main Karaite center in 1100 onward, and remained so also later under Turkish rule Constantinople was captured in 1453), till about 1600. Many of the Arabic' language works of the *"Golden Age" were translated now into Hebrew.

While relations with the Rabbinate had been confrontational during the "Golden Age" and deteriorated in later periods in Eastern Europe, they increasingly close and amicable in Byzantium. Rabbinat scholars taught Karaites in the study of Jewish literature and secular sciences, such as physics, astronomy, and mathematics and even accepted Karaites as their students. As a result the Karaites adopted many rules and customs from the Rabbinate, from *calendation to the lightening of *Sabbath candles. While Karaism had originated as a protest movement against Oral Law, several important works of *Halakha were written now by the Karaites them selves, culminating in the *" Adereth Elijah".

By the end of the sixteenth century the great days of the center in Byzantium and Turkey had run their course and the Karaites of the Crimea and of Eastern Europe became now dominant. They accepted, however, many of the rules and much of the Halacha which had been worked out in Byzantium and also the important original works which had been written there and the Hebrew translations prepared there of earlier, Arab language, works. In the cultural, history of Karaism the Byzantine center ranks second only to the creativity during the "Golden Age" in Jerusalem.

Calendation-

Next to the different attitude to Oral Law nothing denotes as clearly the difference between Karaites and Rabbinites as calendation. While the Rabbinic calendar in the Middle Ages was already precalculated, Karaites depended on direct lunar observation in order to fix the beginning of each month, and on top of the observation of the ripening of the barley crop in the Holy Land (*" Abib") difficult in order to regulate the commencement of the calendar year (which took place in Nissan and not in Tishri, as among the later Rabbinites). Leap years, too, depended on the Abib. Thus the dates of festivals were often quite different among Karaites and Rabbinites, and that created much bad blood.

Rabbinites were scandalized to see Karaites eating on their Yom Kippur for instance. The Karaites regarded their different system as so fundamental, that they even mentioned it in some of their marriage contracts. The Karaite system necessitated the presence of Karaites in the Holy Land in order to carry out the necessary observations. They appealed among their coreligionists for settling there, as a prerequisite for full redemption, partly because of the requirement of calendation. Al-Kumisi claimed that a return to Zion would enable the pious to observe properly the ripening of barley and would eliminate thus a source of sin that delays Divine reconciliation with Israel.

But after the end of the "Golden Age" most Karaites were moving to such places as *Byzantium and the *Crimea, to which the observations made in the Holy Land could be transmitted only too slowly to be of much use. Thus the Karaites of Iraq tended to compute the calendar on similar lines to the Rabbinites, and those of Byzantium followed in the twelfth century the Greek Orthodox computation (in order not to have Passover precede Easter, which would have incurred a prohibition of its public celebration). During the following centuries the Karaites of Byzantium accepted the Rabbinic computation on a de facto basis, till a difference of a complete month had opened up by 1336. The *Bahyazi family finally accepted in the fifteenth century the Rabbinic 19-year cycle officially, though upholding for appearances' sake the fiction that this was an ancient Karaite legacy. This solution was later copied in the Crimea by Simha Babovich (1790-1855) and accepted by most of the Karaites of Eastern Europe.

In Egypt, Syria and Palestine the Karaites continued to follow their old system. They encountered however some difficulties, as they were city dwellers and no longer farmers. Already *Levi ben Japheth had complained "Those who preceded us (followed this Abib) on the basis of their own actual acquaintance with, and knowledge of the seeds, since they themselves cultivated and inherited the soil. Thus they used to inform each other (of

the state of the crops) and (their prognosis) would be unquestionably correct. (Nowadays) all these things have become difficult for us, since all the land is not ours and most of us are incapable of recognizing the seed."

When Karaites settled in the State of Israel in the twentieth century they set up two agricultural settlements, mainly in order to be able to overcome these difficulties. Karaites go out now again to observe themselves the ripening of the barley crop (often around Jericho where this happens earliest).

Change-

Another drastic change occurred when the center passed to Eastern Europe, from late medieval times onward. Karaism became the conservative religion of wealthy farmers, who had apparently quite a different ethnic background to that of the Karaites of the Near East and Byzantium. They developed in the nineteenth century a National Movement, which tried to hide their ties to Judaism, which preferred good relations to the authorities and an improved social and political standing to all other considerations, and ended up by cooperating in World War II with the Nazis.

Another, different, Karaism continued to exist in Egypt, which did not accept the norms of Eastern Europe, and sometimes not even those of Byzantium. Though evicted from its homeland, it has come to dominate world Karaism from its new base in the State of Israel, where, for the first time in Karaite history, a central *Karaite World Center has been set up. The old rules of calendation have been reimposed, relations with Rabbinites are again very close, and such rabbinic customs as the Bar Mitzvah have been adopted. It might thus be difficult to find a religious sect the traditions, customs and dogma of which have undergone more radical changes during its history than Karaism. Nor is this a negative characteristic: it shows that the sect has not lost its flexibility, adaptability and creativeness.

Karaism is frightening by virtue of its lack of stability and constant changes of doctrine and can be likened to sects like the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons who change doctrinal views whenever they are seen to be in error or impractical.

Karism and Christianity-

Karism and Christianity have in common that both started out as reforms. Christianity soon became a religion of its own. In Europe, there were tendencies, between 1774 and 1945, to cut off Karism off from its Jewish moorings, but Karaism has remained a Jewish sect.

(Karaism can be compared to Protestantism, as a movement. But its success was nowhere as marked as that of Calvin, who captured the allegiance of a large part of Christianity, while Karaites have always remained a few among Jews.

Their most important settlement on Christian soil took place in Eastern Europe, from the late Middle Ages onward. Here Jews initially helped to fill the void created by the

absence of a commercially active middle class, and enjoyed therefore a reasonably secure and prosperous existence. The situation changed with the Chmielnicky massacres of 1648, from which also the Karaites suffered seriously. From now on the Catholic Church of Poland and Lithuania and the Pravoslav Church of Ukraine and, later, Russia, were even more hostile to Jews and Judaism than in most other Christian countries. The Karaite solution to this problem, from the late eighteenth century onward, was to dissociate themselves as far as possible from Judaism. Such Karaite propagandists as Abraham Firkovich tried to prove that the Karaites had arrived in Eastern Europe in Biblical times, mainly in order to show that they could have had no part in the crucifixion of Jesus.

They were eventually completely successful and were recognized as a separate non-Jewish sect, first in Galicia by the Austrian authorities (1774) and later in Russia (in 1840 and 1863) by the Tsarist government. Thus they were exempted from the disabilities of the Jews and did not serve as targets for the repeated pogroms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the other hand they became particularly vulnerable to complete *assimilation and after the unfortunate episode of close cooperation with the German authorities during World War II (Holocaust), this once largest Karaite center, has been much reduced in size and importance.

Creed-

The Bible is the sole source of Karaite creed and law. All precepts must derive directly from Scripture, based on the literal meaning of the text. Karaite doctrine is characterized in theory by rigidity and immutability of tradition, but at the same time encourages individual probing for the truth to be found in Scripture, in accordance with the dictum ascribed to * Anan "Search in the Torah and do not rely on my opinion".

Initially Karaism was characterized by a multiplicity of opinions, as described by *Kirkisani early in the tenth century. But gradually its creed underwent a process of unification and systematization, as shown in the work of Judah *Hadassi in the twelfth century. Its final form was defined by Elijah Bashyazi, late in the fifteenth century.

He formulated the Karaite creed in ten principles:

1. God created the whole physical world out of nothing.
2. It has been created by a Creator who did not create Himself, but is eternal.
3. The Creator has no likeness and is unique in all respects.
4. He sent the Prophet Moses.
5. He sent, along with Moses, his Law, which is perfect.
6. It is the duty of the believer to know the language of the Law and its interpretation.
7. God inspired also the other true prophets after Moses.
8. God will resurrect all mankind on the Day of Judgment.

9. God rewards each person according to his way of life and the outcome of his actions.

10. God has not forsaken those living in exile, though they are suffering the Lord's just punishment. They must hope every day for his salvation at the hands of the Messiah, the descendant of King David. The hostility to Oral Law, which originally was the mainspring of the Karaite schism, is here only implied (in No 5).

Tefillin-

Contrary to the beliefs of some, Karaites do not wear tefillin in any form. According to the World Karaite Movement, the Biblical passages cited for this practice are metaphorical, and mean to "remember the Torah always and treasure it."

Mezuzot-

Like tefillin, Karaites interpret the scripture that mandates inscribing the Law on doorposts and city gates as a metaphorical admonition, specifically, to keep the Law at home and away. Therefore, they do not put up mezuzot, although many Karaites do have a small plaque with the Aseret haDibrot on their doorposts. In Israel, in an effort to make Rabbinate comfortable, many Karaites there also put up mezuzot.

Russian Karaites-

During the 18th century, Russian Karaites spread many myths externally, which freed them from various anti-Semitic laws that affected other Jews. Avraham Firkovich helped establish these ideas by forging tombstones in Crimea, which bear inscriptions stating that those buried were of the "lost tribes" of Israel. Other myths included the invention of the Khazar origin, or that they were not Jewish, among others. These actions were intended to convince the Russian Czar that they could not have killed Jesus, which was an underlying reason for the anti-Semitic laws.

Intermarriages between Karaite and Rabbinic Jews, however, still took place. Russian Karaites relate that because they were prohibited from learning their ancestors' beliefs under communism, many were taught and believed these myths. Because of the above, and a ruling by Orthodox Rabbis intended to save the Karaites, the Nazis of the World War II generally left the Karaites alone during the Holocaust.

Karaite Anti Missionaries And Ongoing Anti-Yahshua Activity-

Counter-Missionaries are Jews who defend Judaism against the Christian claims that Jesus is the Messiah, and comprise members from all Jewish sects. Modern Counter-Missionary activity is in direct response to organizations such as Jews for Jesus, which are involved with the Hebrew Christianity movement, and spend over 1 billion dollars each year in attempts to convert Jews.

Some modern Counter-Missionary material can be traced to a medieval polemic written by a Karaite, Isaac Troki (d. 1593), entitled הנומא קרויח (Faith Strengthened), which was effective enough that it was later translated into Latin under the name of 'The Fiery Darts of Satan' - despite the fact that it had never been published at the time.

This site http://faithstrengthened.org/FS_TOC.html has a link to Nehemiah Gordon's site. Gordon is a well-known Karaite leader who speaks to believers in Yahshua and promotes his products among them. Yet he is associated with the following anti-missionary activities as seen here at his url <http://www.karaite-korner.org/light-of-israel/>.....and his sympathetic article on the death of another anti missionary (http://www.karaite-korner.org/light-of-israel/death_of_a_karaite_hacham.shtml) who wrote articles on the following anti Yahshua topics.

Part I – Refutations of Christianity's Claims and Objections to Judaism (from http://faithstrengthened.org/FS_TOC.html)

Chapter Refutations of the Following Christian Claims and Objections

Preface

- 1 Why Jews do not believe that Jesus was Messiah
- 2 God's alleged rejection of Israel and the Jews
- 3 Israel's rejection of Jesus left them without a king
- 4 Rabbi Gamaliel's "prophecy" regarding the church
- 5 Gentiles rule over Jews because of the Jews' sins
- 6 No prophecy for current exile proves Jesus is Messiah
- 7 No prophecy for current exile proves curse of Lev 26:38
- 8 Jews cannot receive tribal inheritance because of lost genealogy
- 9 Plurality of Elohim proves doctrine of the Trinity (Gen 1:1)
- 10 Plurality of Elohim proves doctrine of the Trinity (Gen 1:26)
- 11 Adam's fall and Original Sin
- 12 "Prophetic proof" of Jesus' victory over Satan (Gen 3:15)
- 13 Jesus is Abraham's seed, which blesses the nations (Gen 22:18)
- 14 Prophecy of the scepter fulfilled in Jesus (Gen 49:10)
- 15 Jesus argues against kashrut (Matt. 15:11)
- 16 Jews cursed because they cannot keep Torah perfectly (Deut 27:26)
- 17 Israel to have no restoration from current exile (Lev 26:42)
- 18 Torah concerns physical life only, not spiritual life nor afterlife
- 19 Torah was temporary, abrogated by Jesus' new law
- 20 Jesus gave a new law, prophesied by Isaiah 2:3 and Isaiah 51:4
- 21 Isaiah's prophesy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14)
- 22 Jesus, the suffering servant (Isaiah 52-53)
- 23 Man, unable to keep all the laws of Moses, cannot earn salvation (Isaiah 64:5)
- 24 Annulment of the laws of Moses prophesied (Jeremiah 3:16)
- 25 Jesus, the Divine Savior, living among men prophesied (Jeremiah 14:8)
- 26 An everlasting captivity for the Jews without redemption prophesied (Jer. 17:4)
- 27 God's promises to the Jews were conditional (Jeremiah 18:7)
- 28 Herod's slaying of the children of Bethlehem foretold (Jeremiah 31:15)

- 29 New Covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31 fulfilled in Gospel of Jesus
- 30 The Jewish feasts, new moons and Sabbaths revoked by Jesus (Hosea 2:11)
- 31 Judas' betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver foretold (Amos 2:6)
- 32 An everlasting captivity for the Jews without redemption prophesied (Amos 5:2)
- 33 Messiah to be born in Bethlehem, hence must be Jesus (Micah 5:2)
- 34 Jesus alleged to be the glory of the latter house (Haggai 2:9)
- 35 Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on donkey foretold (Zechariah 9:9)
- 36 Prophecy of the Messiah being pierced and slain (Zechariah 12:10)
- 37 Prophecy that Jesus would be smitten and his flock scattered (Zechariah 13:7)
- 38 Widespread acceptance of Christianity foretold (Malachi 1:11)
- 39 John the Baptist the new Elijah who precedes the Messiah (Malachi 3:23-24)
- 40 David spoke of Jesus sitting at the right hand of God (Psalms 110:1)
- 41 Jesus 2nd advent foretold (Daniel 7:13)
- 42 Foretelling of Jesus being cut off childless after 70 weeks (Daniel 9:26)
- 43 The matter of the Christian Apocryphal books briefly dealt with
- 44 Messiah brings one faith & one creed - Judaism (Isaiah 45:23, Zephaniah 3:9)
- 45 Passages from TN"K quoted in the Christian Testament are not applicable
- 46 Divine chastisements of Gentile nations who persecute the Jews
- 47 Was Jesus crucified with his will or against his will?
- 48 A challenge to the doctrine that Jesus' blood could save Christians from hell
- 49 Myriad inconsistencies between Christian doctrines and the teachings of Jesus
- 50 Doctrinal additions to the NT, in spite of their scripture condemning such

Part II – Review and Refutation of the Christian Testament's Inconsistencies

Chapter Topic Examined and/or Refuted

Introduction to Part II

- 1 The genealogies of Jesus according to Matthew and Luke compared
- 2 The virgin birth
- 3 Mary not a virgin after the birth of Jesus, Jesus not called Emmanuel
- 4 Matthew's misapplication of Hosea 11:1
- 5 Matthew's errant use of Jeremiah's prophesy of Rachel weeping
- 6 Matthew's invention of the prophecy of Messiah being from Nazareth
- 7 The temptation of Jesus
- 8 Jesus dwelt in Capernaum, said to be foretold by Isaiah 9
- 9 Fishers of men is bad metaphor (but is appropriate for Christianity)
- 10 Doctrine that the Law of Moses was superceded by Jesus contradicts Jesus
- 11 Matthew's imaginary commandment of Moses to "hate thy neighbor" refuted
- 12 Doctrine of the divinity of Jesus examined
- 13 Jesus claimed to bring strife, not peace, opposing prophecies of Messiah's peace
- 14 Using the reasoning that defends the trinity, it and the apostles are a unity
- 15 Jesus' claim that John the Baptist was Elijah refuted
- 16 A proof by Jesus himself against the trinity doctrine (Matt. 12:32, Luke 12:10)
- 17 Another challenge to Mary's virginity from Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3
- 18 Jesus teaches against kosher laws of Moses (Matthew 15:1-25, Mark 7:1-24)
- 19 A 2nd proof by Jesus against the trinity doctrine (Matthew 19:16, Mark 10:21)

- 20A 3rd proof against the trinity doctrine by Jesus (Matthew 20:23, Mark 10)
- 21 Jesus, because of his self-declared status as servant, is not divine (Matt. 20:28)
- 22 Error regarding death of Zacharius prove non-divine inspiration (Matt. 23:35)
- 23 Disagreement in stories of Jesus' anointment of oil prove non-divine inspiration
- 24 Jesus and God aren't one, especially in will, shown by passion story prayer
- 25 Misapplication of the passage re: 30 pieces of silver examined (Matt. 27:9-10)
- 26 A 4th proof against the trinity doctrine by Jesus (Matt 27:46, Mark 15:34)
- 27 Another proof against the divinity of Jesus from Matthew 28:18)
- 28 Misrepresentation of the passage regarding David eating the showbread
- 29 Mutual discord between Jesus and his family
- 30 Examination of Jesus' cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:11-13, Matthew 21:18)
- 31 A 5th proof against the trinity doctrine (Mark 13:32)
- 32 Inconsistencies in the gospels concerning Mary's disbelief and her revelation
- 33 (?) Perceived as inapplicable by the translator, Moses Mocatta, so not included
- 34 The gospels' own refutation of the miraculous birth of Jesus
- 35 Examination of the incorrect and inconsistent accounts of the genealogy of Jesus
- 36 Non-fulfillment of Isaiah 61 in Jesus, who said he fulfilled it (Luke 4:17-21)
- 37 Jesus and Paul shown not to practice what they preach re: turning the cheek
- 38 One example of illogical replies made by Jesus (Luke 9:37-41)
- 39 Examination of the alleged salvation of Jesus in light of poor Lazarus
- 40 God apparently did not accept Jesus' prayer to forgive the Jews
- 41 John the Baptist denies being Elijah (John 1:21) in contradiction to Jesus
- 42 Another proof against Mary's continued state of virginity after Jesus' birth
- 43 Jesus' unreasonable answer to a request for a sign from the Jews (John 2:18-20)
- 44 A 6th proof by Jesus against the trinity doctrine (John 6:38)
- 45 Jesus own brothers did not believe in him, why should we?
- 46 Tradition of Jesus' teacher exposed in Talmud, against John's assertion
- 47 The adulterous woman given a lax sentence goes against Torah
- 48 A 7th proof by Jesus against the trinity doctrine (John 8:40)
- 49 Union of faith not accomplished by Jesus as claimed in John 10:16
- 50 Refutation of Jesus' claim (John 10:30) that he and God are one
- 51 Jesus uses a psalm that admonishes his claim to be Son of God
- 52 Jesus' examples of unity contradict the Trinity concept or include the apostles
- 53 Jesus claims all power and knowledge from God, yet admits lack of same
- 54 Jesus gives a commandment of Moses, but says it is a new commandment
- 55 Jesus admits to being only God's messenger, not God Himself
- 56 Account of Judas' betrayal differs in John from Synoptics
- 57 The claim that the Jews lost Israel because they killed Jesus contradicted in NT
- 58 Jesus again admits to not being God
- 59 Jesus shows he didn't consider himself to be the restorer of the kingdom
- 60 The duration of a religion does not prove the veracity of its tenets
- 61 The New Testament's error in the chronology of Abraham's migrations
- 62 An example that Jesus' disciples were superficially versed in Scripture
- 63 Six more examples that Jesus' disciples were superficially versed in Scripture
- 64 The apostles misquote Amos
- 65 The irony of modern disbelief in sorcery in conjunction with stories of same in NT

- 66 Inconsistencies in Christian text regarding food
- 67 Paul's error regarding the length of King Saul's reign
- 68 Paul's misuse of Psalm 2 to prove Jesus is the Son of God
- 69 Paul misunderstands Psalm 16:10
- 70 Peter contradicts Jesus regarding obedience to Torah
- 71 James twists Amos 9:12 to say the Gentiles will acquire the Jewish inheritance
- 72 Another inconsistency between Jesus' teachings and additional doctrines
- 73 Paul's example of having Timothy circumcised conflicts with later doctrines
- 74 Paul's example of having Timothy circumcised conflicts with his own teaching
- 75 Paul's answer to "what must I do to be saved" conflicts with Jesus' answer
- 76 Deifying humans was a common pagan practice, explaining Jesus' deification
- 77 Paul says death reigned only until the Mosaic Law, Jesus' death inconsequential
- 78 Paul twists Hosea 1 to refer to Gentiles, when it actually refers to Israel
- 79 Taking Hebrew Scriptures out of context is its own refutation, examples given
- 80 Words of God through Moses in Deuteronomy 30:14 misconstrued by Paul
- 81 Isaiah 59:20 misconstrued by Paul
- 82 Paul says Jesus' death broke Satan's power, yet also says Satan is still in power
- 83 Paul condemns breaking Mosaic laws from which Christians are supposedly free
- 84 Paul's great presumption that man would someday judge angels
- 85 Another example of Paul's inconsistency regarding circumcision
- 86 Another factual error in the allegedly perfect and inspired NT
- 87 Another example of concatenating two unrelated verses to support a doctrine
- 88 Paul contradicts John regarding whether or not Jesus' brother James believed
- 89 Paul's assertion that a shameful death released Jesus' followers from God's law
- 90 Ignorance of Hebrew language leads Paul to the wrong conclusion about "seed"
- 91 Psalm 68 misquoted and misconstrued
- 92 An example of Paul mentioning men first before God leads to questions
- 93 James epistle of works completely contradicts Paul's gospel of faith alone
- 94 Troki notes that the book of Hebrews was rejected as apocryphal by early church
- 95 More verses from TN"K misused in Hebrew to prove Jesus is God
- 96 The strange doctrine that Jesus was lower than, yet worshipped by the angels
- 97 The Christian interpretation of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 is in error
- 98 Psalm 40:7 misquoted to support notion that God did not want sacrifices
- 99 Dan is omitted from list of tribes, suggesting the biblical ignorance of author
- 100 Changes made against Jesus' teachings prohibited by Christians' own scripture

Karaite Customs and Practices-

Karaite customs and practices were often more strict than similar ones among the Rabbinate. Karaites in *Jerusalem, during the *"Golden Age", were forbidden to eat meat. AI-*Kumisi prohibited even the consumption of fowl. The laws of impurity, are far stricter even today, especially those customs ("niddah") after birth (one week of uncleanness plus 33 days of purification after the birth of a male child, and double that period after the birth of a female). During niddah, the woman is segregated in a corner of the house, and should have no contact with others, should not visit the synagogue, should have no sexual intercourse, should eat at a separate table, should not cook, nor even enter

the kitchen, nor clean the carpets. The Karaites have no "Mikvah" (communal bath for ritual purposes), which enables the Rabbinate a rapid ritual cleansing.

Karaism does without some of the objects used by Rabbinate for prayer and services, such as the Shofar, the tefillin (phylacteries) and the *Mezuza (except at the gates of a synagogue). Their *tallit (prayer shawl) is different. They have two prayer services per day, while Rabbinate have three. Only on the *Sabbath and on certain festive days a third prayer is added.

Abu Salid-David Ben Boaz-

Nasi of the Jerusalem Karaites. He added to his translations of the Torah in Arabic commentaries often using arguments from the Talmud to prove his points. Wrote in Arabic for other Arabic speaking Karaites.

Dietary Laws-

Karaite customs were initially influenced not only by Scripture, but also by Islamic practice in their countries of origin east of the Tigris. Thus the Shiite prohibition to partake of food prepared by non-Muslims was mirrored by the Karaite prohibition to consume food cooked by non-Jews. The strict "Congregation of the Roses" in tenth century *Jerusalem went so far as to demand a life of poverty, abstaining from the consumption of meat and wine. Later Karaites differed from the Rabbinate on the regulations of ritual slaughter and therefore often (but not always) regarded the meat of animals slaughtered by a Rabbinic shochet as prohibited.

A further difference was the rejection of the "shi'urim." The prohibition of "boiling a kid in its mother's milk" was not taken by the Karaites as forbidding the consumption of fowl with milk products. But in present day Israel they mostly have accepted in practice the Rabbinic ruling, in order not to become too conspicuous.

Otherwise Karaites are stricter than Rabbinate as to the consumption of meat and remit only that of animals actually mentioned in the Bible. The criteria for mammals and birds, as formulated in the Talmud, are rejected by them. Al-*Kumisi, for instance, regarded all birds, except for pigeons and turtledoves, as forbidden.

Divorce Based on Manmade Rules-

Karaite Halacha gave more attention also to the rights of the wife. Already * Anan ben David took a strong stand on this issue in his "Book of Precepts": "He shall divorce her because he does not want her or because she does not want him" (L. Nemoy, Anthology, 19). Thus the position of the woman is near equal to that of the man, and the will of one of the spouses suffices. Further, if she is pregnant, he cannot divorce her. Benjamin *Nahawendi retreated from Anan's stand, and restricted her rights to divorce in his Book of Rules to certain, specific grounds: "He who withholds from his wife one of these three,

i.e. food, raiment, or cohabitation, is compelled to divorce her with a proper get, and with payment of the full amount of her Ketuvah". But in the absence of any of these grounds, "she cannot be divorced from him, neither by get nor without a get, since divorce of women is in the hands of men and not of women" (Corinaldi, Divorce, 107). Later, *Levi ben Japheth (Abu Said) took an even more liberal stand than Anan, while Yehudah *Haddassi did not allow divorce on the wife's demand, even in cases where the Mishnah allowed it. But the later codifiers of the Karaite Halacha, Aaron ben Elijah and Elijah *Bashyazi, basically accept Anan's stand.

The Birthplace of Karaism-

Was on Persian soil, and this geographical area appears to have influenced the movement or at least provided fertile soil for the rise of sectarianism. **A number of non-Jewish philosophies and sects were to be found in this vicinity and the rise of Islam only appears to have increased this reality.** The ancient religious traditions of Babylon still wielded considerable influence. Manicheism had spread beyond Persia and, various Neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideas were promulgated through the infusion of such philosophies from the Byzantine Empire. As Louis Finkelstein points out, these variegated beliefs found articulation in an assortment of motley sects.

Anan ben David has often been viewed as the individual most responsible for the creation of this movement.

Anan's primary theology is found in a work entitled, "Sefer haMitzvot le-Anan." It was written as a collection of Oral tradition and reflects Anan's own mastery of rabbinic thought and sources. It appears on some level to have been an attempt to counter the authority of the Sages by establishing itself as a counter body of Halakah by rendering alternative decisions to legal issues. In any case, the repudiation of the Talmud as a centerpiece of Karaite thought appears to have been grounded in other groups and not necessarily in Anan's own perspectives or that of his followers. His principle assertions lie in a return to "proper interpretation" of religious law independent from the authority sanctioned by the rabbinic system.

Any Karaite claim to base their faith solely on the Torah is a claim easily disproved by the history of their movement as seen here and throughout this paper.

A Movement of Utter Chaos-

Rabbinate intellectuals were repelled by the chaotic condition of Karaism even as late as the second quarter of the tenth century. **There was as yet not such thing as a unified Karaite sect, rather a mass of quarreling schismatics among whom, as a contemporary Karaite author (Al-Kirkisani) pointedly expressed it, it was impossible to find two individuals in complete agreement with one another."** The very name adopted to represent the groups reveals its core principle. The word "Karaim" has been interpreted to have several possible renderings. **The first rendering is "champions of Scripture" being derived from the word *kara*, "to read." Another possible rendering has been suggested, that the root word *kara* can also mean "to invite, or to call," reflecting the possible**

missionary components of the movement. The last is related to the first and means “expert reader of the Scripture.”

The ongoing targeting by Karaites of born again believers in Yahshua and Torah fits right in line with the historical behaviors of other Karaite splinter groups and sects. One of the favorite tools used, as bait is to appeal to believers’ desire for truth with a visual method of new moon sightings, all the while hiding their past calculated calendars in addition to Aviv sightings.

Serge Von Douvan-

Mayor of Eupatoria in the Crimea. Later moved to Paris and in 1938 came to Germany in order to petition the Ministry of the Interior that Karaites should not be regarded as Jews. His request was granted in a letter dated January 5th 1939, which served as the basis for the later special treatment given the Karaites by the Third Reich.

Iranian Dualism-

AI-Kumisi, who hailed from Damghan in northern Persia, and some of the other early Karaite leaders later active in Jerusalem, might have been influenced by Iranian dualism. They described in some of their work a world deserted by virtue and taken over by the forces of evil. AI-Kumisi speaks in his commentary to Daniel about "the righteous ones" being lost in spite of their righteousness, the land being deserted, people having become like fish, threatened by the sharp teeth of sharks. He believed that the righteous ones would find their recompense already in this world. Such Mazdian and Manichean ideas as the contraposition of light and darkness, good and evil, are translated here into monotheistic terms.

Edah-

Karaite laws thought UNWRITTEN that derive their sanction and authority from the weight OF COMMON observance. In Egypt in 641 CE the Islamic governor of Egypt warns the Jews not to interfere with the ways the Karaites celebrate their holidays. P. 95 Karaite Encyclopedia.

Emergence of Karaism-

Karaites usually date the emergence of their sect back to the time of Jeroboam I, who, they claim, initiated in the tenth century BC the Oral Tradition, opposed by them.

Oral Law appeared actually much later, and was opposed in due time by the *Sadducees, the Qumran Sect, the early Christians, the Samaritans and by other sects. Though there did probably exist links between the sectarians of the early centuries and their successors of the early medieval period, nearly no evidence (except for the Damascus Document) has survived. In the seventh to eleventh centuries, there are many signs of growing opposition to the Babylonian Talmud in some of the outlying districts east of the Tigris. A widespread ferment occurred in Judaism, spreading from its center in *Persia all over

the Near East. It coalesced under the banner of opposition to the Oral Law and the Talmud.

Nor was this a Jewish phenomenon only. Karaite "Scripture orientated views did not evolve in a void, but had many elements in common with contemporary developments in Islam. Other Karaite ideas came from such extreme Shiite sects as the Ghulab and Ali Ilahis groups.

Eshkol Ha Kofer-

80 Karaite hermeneutical RULES of man including some applied to the Talmud. Written by Judah Hadassi in the 12th century. Talmudic legends are attacked BUT ARE DRAWN FROM RABBINIC sources.

Etz Hayyim ("Tree of Life")-

This work by *Aaron ben Elijah (the younger), completed in 1346, was intended to serve as a Karaite counterpart to *Maimonides' "Guide of the Perplexed", an appraisal which L. Nemoy called "more complimentary than justified" (Anthology, 171). It remained closely connected to the Mu'tazilite (Islamic) philosophy and is thus only a restatement of an outworn system, in spite of some borrowing of Aristotelian terminology. Its presentation seems to lack conviction. Still, it is the only Karaite work to present a complete system of philosophy, was often commented upon, and has remained influential.

Firkovich, Abraham (1786-1874)-

He was the central figure of the *Karaite National Movement in nineteenth century Russia and the most important collector of Karaite manuscripts. He was born in Lutsk, Poland, but was active mainly in the Crimea. He was sponsored by such local leaders as Simhah Babovich, who took him on a visit to the Holy Land. Firkovich collected in Jerusalem, Hebron and Cairo numerous old manuscripts. In the years 1831-1832 he transferred his collecting activity to Istanbul, and 1839-1840 to the Crimea (especially Chufut-Kale, which was being left by its Karaite inhabitants). Further he copied old Karaite tombstone inscriptions in the Crimea and Caucasus, many of which he published in his "Avnei Zikkaron" (1872). In 1863/5 he returned to Palestine and Egypt and obtained, now that he was old, experienced and wealthy, perhaps the most important part of his vast collection of over 15000 manuscripts.

His discoveries stimulated wide interest. S. *Pinsker based his "Likkutei Kadmoniyot" mainly on material supplied by him. H.*Graetz and J. Fiirst too used it uncritically. Firkovich's thesis was that the forefathers of the Karaites had come to the Crimea in the seventh century BC and thus could not have been involved in the crucifixion of Jesus. Nor had they any connection with the preparation of the Talmud. He believed the *Khazars to have been Karaites. His views were obviously politically motivated and were intended to give a "scientific" underpinning to the Karaite National Movement. When in

1839 the governor-general of the Crimea, Woronzow, addressed six basic questions on the origins of the Karaites to Babovich, Firkovich was commissioned to answer them. His opinions and writings were used by the Karaite leadership also otherwise in its endeavors to distance itself from Judaism and receive full civil rights for all Karaites from the Russian authorities.

Firkovich often came into direct confrontation with the Rabbinate. In 1825 he submitted a memorandum to the Russian authorities, suggesting that the Jews should be removed from the border areas in Russia's west, in order to prevent them from smuggling. His suggestion was, that they should engage in agriculture instead. The memorandum had no effect, but its sentiments did not endear Firkovich to his Rabbinate contemporaries. He was thus accosted once, publicly, in Berdichev by a Hassidic teacher, who accused him of being an ignoramus and heretic. In reply Firkovich composed his biting *"Masa u-Merivah". In another polemic book, "Sela ha-Mahloket" (1834), he turns, in rhymes, against the Hassidim.

These attacks were however not held against him by most later scholars. What they would not forgive, were the numerous changes and outright falsifications, especially of dates, in colophones, or on tombstones, included in his scientific work and in the publications of the Gozlow press when he was in charge of it, in order to make the Karaite community of the Crimea appear much older than it was. Such scholars as H. *Strack, A. *Harkavy and P.F. *Frankl demonstrated soon after his death, that his publications abounded in such forgeries.

There is now, however, a revisionist trend (Z. Ankori, T. Harviainen, V.L. Vikhnovich) which explains that modern western standards of scholarship were unknown to Firkovich and to his type of oriental manuscript collectors. He is still vigorously defended by the present day Karaites of the Crimea. Some of the original accusations against him have proved unfounded, as, for instance, when the "Mandeglis Document" used by him, which disappeared later, was recently rediscovered. Even some of his claims as to Jewish-Khazar influences in tenth century Crimea and elsewhere, sound nowadays less outlandish than a century ago. Mainly, however, the academic community finds itself deeply in Firkovich's debt, because of the unique collection of manuscripts, which he has bequeathed to it.

Friedlander, Israel (1876-1920)-

He was born in Poland, studied in Berlin and Strassbourg, specializing in Semitic languages, and served as professor of Bible in New York. Karaism was but one of his numerous fields of interest. He was the first to stress the Islamic influences on early Karaism, - as against the tendency of some earlier scholars to concentrate on Jewish roots only. Further he did not believe in the importance of earlier influences and stressed that Karaism has to be regarded as a medieval, intellectual sect, which had taken from the Muslim world its skepticism and its tendency to dissent.

Eden" (Garden of Eden)"-

Aaron ben Elijah's (the Younger) systematic code of Karaite law and belief, composed in 1354. He is concerned there only with the regulations used in Byzantium, and does not bother with any divergent rules of the Egyptian or Palestinian communities. Still, he was dependant to a great extent on his predecessors, but inclined towards a more rigorous interpretation of Scripture ordinances than did, for instance, Aaron ben Joseph (the Elder). Only in the case of certain calamity was he prepared to relax the letter of the law. Yet he followed *Jeshua ben Judah in the more liberal theory of forbidden marriages (Rikkuv theory) and rejected the General prohibition of eating meat in the Diaspora, favoured by extreme Karaite ascetics.

Geiger, Abraham (1810-1874)-

He was born in Frankfurt and served as Rabbi there and in Breslau. He was the main founder of Reform Judaism. He wrote a treatise on Isaac Troki (1853). In his "Das Judentum und seine Geschichte", Breslau 1865-71, he stressed the early Jewish roots of Karaism and assumed that the Sadducean opposition to the Pharisaic way of life embodied in the Talmud, continued uninterrupted till the times of the Gaonate and the Karaites were its direct heirs (mainly because of similar religious practices). This view was very influential till well into the twentieth century.

Gini, Corrado-

He was an Italian anthropologist, who led in 1934, in the heyday of Fascist race theories, a special expedition to study the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania from an ethnic, anthropological and medical point of view. He claimed that the Karaites belong to the Ugrian race ("with a not negligible addition of Turko-Tartar blood"), quite different from the Rabbinic Jews. These findings came in handily when the Karaites of Europe tried to prove to the Nazi authorities that they were not Jews (Holocaust). Much of the material remained unpublished and some of it was not utilized by scholars for fifty years.

Ha'atakah-

Among Rabbinates this term stood for Oral Tradition, but to Karaites it meant literally "transmission". From the eleventh century onward this term (and its equivalents "sevel" and "yerusha") stood for the Karaite *Halacha. First used by Tobias ben Moses ha-Avel, it was a double-edged sword, designed to cut any knot in the legalistic confusion that the Karaites were encountering in their new, Byzantine, environment, but also a contradiction in terms. How could Karaites whose very raison d'etre was opposition to the Oral Tradition, have a Halacha of their own? Still, the need for additional guidance to

Scripture forced the Karaites to take this path, but they were very circumspect and tried not to admit it. To camouflage its real meaning, Tobias claimed that it must have a clear foundation in Scripture. But actually Karaite behavior had become itself tradition, though not of Sinaitic origin. The revolution had become institutionalized. Later scholars carried on this development, till it was brought to its final stage by Elijah Bashyazi.

But even he put the matter rather diplomatically: "The sages pronounced the following: Any tradition (ha'atakah) that has no support in the Written Law, is null and void. Now, the sage, our master Tobias said of those who maintain that some traditions are in vogue which do not have support in the Written Law, that it is rather their mind which falls short of discovering a foundation for those traditions in the law of the Torah." (Adereth Eliyahu, Section Kiddush ha-Hodesh, Ch XV, 9d).

As seen here, any modern Karaite claim that they and their sect are scriptural literalists is fallacious and disingenuous. Now there is a sect based in Jerusalem in modern times since 1948, it is a merely a new version of Karism as the true Karism of the last 1,000 years had multiple matters of recorded Oral law. The claim of scriptural literalism by a few Karaites in Israel today cannot negate the recorded truth of many sects of Karaite history vis-a-vis their succumbing to many oral laws, some more binding than those of the Rabbis.

Hagbarah-

"Hagbarah" or "Hakrabah", meaning "logical deduction" in *calendation, was admitted by Abu Sa'id Levi ben Japheth around 1000 for use in the Diaspora (as against al-Kulnisi's uncompromising demand for a visual sighting of the new barley crop in the Holy Land). This way he tried to establish a compromise, accepting the special needs of the Diaspora, while in principle not abandoning al-Kulnisi's Palestino-centric orientation.

As seen here the truth of Karaite time reckoning has been by a calculated calendar for much of their history. This is an admission that the visual sightings were both limited in scope and practicality, as well a somewhat confusing to most Karaites themselves.

Karaite Oral Law-

Though the opposition to Oral Law was the very reason for the existence of Karaism, the sect developed in due time a respectable body of Halachic law of its own. Its roots should be looked for in the local customs of Persia and the East, termed *"Edah" ("Gewohnheitsrecht"). These were laws, which, though unwritten, derived their sanction from the weight of common observance. But in due time the importance of Edah waned, and more sophisticated written laws took its place.

*Anan's "Book of Precepts" does not properly belong in the Karaite chain of development, but, naturally, achieved a considerable measure of influence on the later Karaite Halacha. Its six ordinances about forbidden marriages, for instance, were later interpreted in such an extreme way as to cause the rise of the Rikkuv" theory, which often made marriages between Karaites difficult. This was in line with his practice, later followed by Karaism, of choosing the strict and prohibitive in preference to the lenient and permissive. Ascetism was elevated by him and by al-*Kumisi into a central principle, in mourning for the vanished Temple and the dispersal of Israel. Anan tried to find biblical support for deviations from Talmudic practice, by the use of analogical

deduction, basing conclusions even on the similarity of single words or letters. This practice, too, was continued later, but while Anan freely used Rabbinic halachic methods, reaching divergent conclusions,

Nahawendi later often employed distinctly Karaite methods, yet reached conclusions similar to Rabbinic legal norms. Nahawendi's early ninth century "Book of Precepts" and "Book of Rules" were strictly speaking the earliest halachic compositions, written by a Karaite. They reflect his down-to-earth attitude as a judge, and concern such mundane matters as property, loans, inheritance, wills, gifts and witnesses. Later in the ninth century al-Kumisi, in his "Book of Precepts" turned to more programmatic matters, demanding that Karaites should settle in Jerusalem, should lead there an ascetic life, should follow the Bible Laws strictly as formulated, imposing far reaching strictures on the food to be consumed and criticizing Anan's and Nahawendi's laxness.

The "Book of Precepts" of Japhet ben Ali al-Basri in the tenth century has not survived, but is reported to have been critical of Anan and Nahawendi too. His son, Levi ben Japhet laid down, in his Sefer Mitsvot (1006/7), very strict rules. He stressed that Karaite legislation can only be derived "from Scripture, and from deduction by analogy" and from seeking for the truth. He was prepared, however, to be more flexible than his predecessors in matters of calendation and admitted the use in the Diaspora of Hagbarah or calculated calendars! Joseph ben Noah, at about the same time, is reported to have rejected deduction by analogy. Later in the eleventh century, al-Basir and Jeshua ben Judah undertook the major task of overhauling the Rikkuv theory, so as to enable most Karaites to marry without committing incest.

This eleventh century trend of lessened strictness and increased flexibility and lenience was reinforced when the Karaite center moved to Byzantium. The prohibition against the eating of meat (and even fowl) was not kept up any longer. The Karaites settled now in urban centers, withdrawing from their original agricultural habitats east of the Tigris, and their legal usage changed accordingly. They were now wealthier and less inclined to self-denial. Tobias ben Moses developed the application of Ha'atakah (transmission), which meant the use of a Halacha of their own, without fully admitting it.

This meant a withdrawal from much that had been typical of the Karaite attitude to the Law and an increasing readiness to accept both the new conditions of life in Byzantium and Rabbinic legal solutions. Aaron ben Elijah, in the fourteenth century, still tried to insist that Ha'atakah had to be backed up by Scriptural support, but the "Adrianople Halacha" and especially Elijah Bashyazi, in the fifteenth century, were already prepared to accept Ha'atakah unreservedly, paying only lip-service to the old clichés of Karaite legal thought. Thus the "progressive" intentions of the Karaite lawmakers in Byzantium could be uncovered, with less need to disguise them. Still, some camouflage could never be completely discarded. When the Bashyazis introduced the revolutionary concept of Sabbath candles, it was done under the fictitious pretense of preserving old precepts. Z. Ankori put it as follows (Byzantium, 251): "Thus toppled the wall of darkness which, literally speaking, used to surround the Karaite dwellings on the eve of the Lord's day and to isolate the sectarians from their Rabbinic brethren. It did not

fall of itself nor by accident. It was pulled down deliberately by consistent action by the Byzantine Karaite leadership the climax of four centuries of mutual borrowing and legal reformation."

Karaism had thus come full circle and was basing its Law increasingly on Oral Tradition, but without admitting it. Even knowledge of the Talmud was no longer frowned upon (but this applied only to its halachic and not its aggadic part). * Aaron ben Joseph claimed already in the fourteenth century that "most of the Mishnah and the Talmud ... are the pronouncement of our (Karaite) fathers" (Introduction to the Mivhar, 9a).

The Karaites of Byzantium moved thus step by step away from their original precepts. They found, as had the Rabbinate many centuries earlier, that they had to bend the Law, in order to come to terms with the changing circumstances of life. But in the process the difference between Karaites and Rabbinate became ever smaller and the raison d'etre of Karaism itself became less clear.

With the sixteenth century Karaism lost much of its creativity in the field of Halacha, as in most other fields. The communities of Eastern Europe accepted the Law in general as worked out in Byzantium and Turkey. There is little that is original in such halachic compositions as early nineteenth century "Zemah David" by Mordecai Kukizow or "Petah Tikvah" by Joseph Solomon Luzki. Yet Isaac ben Solomon introduced around 1800 two new rulings of great importance, one reformed calendation and the other the proceedings in divorce cases.

In Egypt not all of the precepts coming from Turkey and Eastern Europe were accepted. An important halachic scholar there was Israel ben Samuel, ha-Dayyan ha-Ma'aravi, in the first half of the fourteenth century, who brought to a successful conclusion the reform regarding the law of incest and tried, unsuccessfully, to change the law of uncleanness. An Arab-language manual was compiled in 1935 by Murad *Frag, including the rules affecting the personal status. The part about divorce was later translated by L. Nemoy into English. In present day Israel there is a tendency not to regard previous halachic decisions as binding and to turn again to Scripture. If new conditions necessitate new rulings, this is regarded as acceptable.

Note- I wonder who will be making these new condition based oral rulings.....hmmm

In some cases Karaism in Israel tries to show that it is more progressive than the Rabbinic precepts are. Thus, in cases of divorce, women are accorded equal rights to men. In the Karaite view present day medical tests make it possible to establish paternity, and therefore men are allowed to pass on their religious identity to their children, while in Rabbinic Judaism this has to be done through the mother.

Chanukah-

Similar to the Samaritans and Palashas, Karaites do not recognize this Jewish festival as such. Why would they? They often have claimed not to be Jews anyway! In present day

Israel, however, some Karaites are following the example of their Rabbinite neighbors, like in other matters, also in its celebration.

Arabic Writings-

Karaite Writings were originally and primarily in Arabic. Not exactly what you'd expect from a Jewish sect! Jacob ben Simeon translated *Jeshua ben Judah's "Sefer ha-Yashar", which later carried great weight in the legal decisions of the Karaites in Byzantium, while those works which were not translated, were soon forgotten. These translations, and indeed also such original works as "Eshkol ha-Kofer" by Hadasssi (twelfth century) were much influenced by Arabic. The quality of the Hebrew in these translations was poor. Sometimes whole Arabic clauses were incorporated in the Hebrew, without translation. Also Greek glosses were introduced. Jehudas ibn Tibbon, the Rabbinite master-translator, who lived a century later in southern France, claimed that these translators showed an insufficient knowledge of both Hebrew and Arabic, and sometimes even of the subject matter. Further, eleventh century Hebrew lacked basic philosophical terminology and new terms had to be coined as the work progressed. Some of the terms are characteristic of Karaite Hebrew, and do not occur elsewhere, such as "Nizkari" and "Nekevati" for "masculine" and "feminine"; "Adfanut" for "advantage"; Ketem" for "impression"; "Efa" for "event"; "Hejotut" for "existence", etc.

It is not surprising given the Arabic roots of Karism. But what is comical is that the Karaites even invented their own version of Hebrew, often making up words as they went along.

Hermeneutics-

This is the science of biblical interpretation. The Pentateuch was regarded by the Rabbinate as a unified, divinely inspired text, consistent in all its parts. Therefore it was possible to uncover deeper meanings by utilizing certain principles. Rabbinate used for this purpose the seven rules of Hillel, or the 13 rules of R. Ishma'el, or the 32 rules of R. Eliezer ben Yose ha-Gelili. In Karaism, which was so dependant on the authority of Scripture, even more effort was expended on hermeneutics. Its scholars stretched the authorized foundation for hermeneutical deductions from the Pentateuch only, as used by the Rabbinate, to all of the twenty-four volumes of the entire Old Testament. Most of the Karaite Books of Precepts did not start with the Bible, but moved in the opposite direction, taking the established sectarian customs as a point of departure, they looked for the maximum of biblical support by expanding the traditional hermeneutical devices to their very limits. This is what is really meant by the Karaite maxim "Search ye well in the Scripture", which was attributed to Anan. Thus Judah Hadassi established in the twelfth century all of eighty hermeneutical rules, to be followed by Karaite scholars. They were later utilized by the leading Byzantine spokesmen of the sect in their introduction of far reaching changes into Karaite legal concepts. Some of them could be traced to discarded precepts. Others had to be squeezed into the letters of Scriptures by such strained hermeneutical devices as the Hekesh, or Analogical Deduction.

Some Sad History-

How does the history of Karaism look now, after the pioneering works of Z. Ankori, M Gil and H. *Ben Shammai? Karaism was initially not a sect with a founder. The latent discontent with Oral Tradition surfaced in the eighth and ninth centuries, mainly in the outlying communities east of the Tigris, both under Islamic influence and as a result of discontent with the Gaonic spiritual leadership and the fiscal pressure of the Exilarchic administration. The local communities wanted to retain their old customs, while the Babylonian Talmud would have saddled them with an unwelcome, novel, uniform mould. This ferment in eastern Judaism was transformed into a regular sect by the labor of such leaders and thinkers as ninth century Benjamin Nahawendi and Daniel al-Kumisi, and by the gradual unification with a group of Babylonian dissidents, the Ananites, who preferred to follow the precepts of their eighth century founder, Anan, to those of the Talmud. The Ananites soon became the dominant element in the new sect and thus Anan was accepted as its founder.

The missionary zeal of early Karaism might have posed a real threat to the Jewish leadership, had it not been recognized as such in good time by Saadia Gaon, and attacked accordingly. Still, in tenth and eleventh century Jerusalem it experienced a *Golden Age of brilliant intellectuals, who produced some of the most interesting literary, exegetical and philosophical work of medieval Judaism.

A gradual rapprochement with the Rabbinate took place in *Byzantium, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Karaism developed an Oral Tradition of its own and came to accept many of the precepts of the Talmud and of Rabbinic Judaism.

In the *Crimea, *Lithuania and *Poland arose, from the fourteenth century onward, a new type of Karaism, perhaps based partly on different ethnic roots. Efficient farmers and soldiers replaced the brilliant thinkers and scholars of Jerusalem and Byzantium. A Karaite *National Movement sprang into life in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century, claiming that Karaites are not Jews at all. The political results were often surprisingly effective, the Karaites were released of all the legislation and disabilities aimed at the Jews, in imperial Austria, Tsarist Russia, republican Poland, and wonder of wonders, in Nazi Germany. There they even escaped the Holocaust, but with the German defeat they were seriously decimated on the return of the Soviets, and lost their dominant position in world Karaism.

The center of Karaite activities returned to the Middle East, first to Egypt and since 1956 to the new State of Israel, where most Karaites live now and a Karaite World Center has been set up.

Every religion and sect claims that its tenets have been rigid and unchanging throughout history. This is always incorrect, but in the case of the Karaites the changes in their religious practices and ideology have been sometimes quite amazing. The sect was founded in opposition to Jewish oral Law, yet developed later quite a respectable body of

Oral Tradition of its own. In its Golden Age, in Jerusalem, it imposed a Spartan way of life on its members and proclaimed poverty to be one of its aims.

In direct contradiction to the promised blessings of prosperity as outlined for all Yisrael in the Torah!

Yet in later centuries Karaism turned in Istanbul, Cairo and the Crimea into a sect of the well to do. Most interesting is the changing love - hate relationship with the dominant Rabbinic majority. Initially, when early Karaites hoped to take over all of Judaism, there was no gulf at all between the two camps. But after Saadia's spirited defense of the rabbinic position, the Karaite attitude changed to one of strong opposition, and even enmity, toward the Rabbinic majority. Again, under the conditions of life in the Diaspora, in Egypt and Byzantium, both sides drew increasingly together, till the rapprochement peaked in fifteenth and sixteenth century Istanbul. But in nineteenth and early twentieth century Eastern Europe a new estrangement took place, with the Karaite leadership claiming not to be Jews at all. Trying to follow and understand these radical changes in attitude and ideology make Karaite history interesting and challenging to the historian.

Yes but dangerous to the believer, as their support of anti-missionary activity and willingness to infiltrate messianic groups with such activity is shocking.

Holocaust-

The most bizarre chapter in the long history of the Karaites is that of their treatment by Hitler's Third Reich. It was the direct outcome of the ideology and policies of their *National Movement. 18 Karaites, who identified themselves as former officers in Wrangel's White army, were living in Germany and petitioned its Ministry of the Interior in 1938 that they should not be regarded as Jews. Their request was granted, as recommended by the "Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung" (department for racial relations). A letter dated January 5th, 1939 was sent to Serge von Douvan, who had come from Paris to Germany in order to organize this attempt.

As a result of the 1939 Soviet occupation of eastern Poland and in 1940 that of Lithuania, the main Karaite settlements of *Troki, *Vilna, *Halicz, *Lutsk and *Panevezys came under Russian rule. Their communal life was practically destroyed. Amazingly, their condition changed for the better after these places were overrun by the German armies in the summer of 1941. The Polish Karaite Hakham, Seraja Chan *Szapszal, met with the German authorities and convinced them of their non-Jewish background. September 1st an order was issued by the Generalkommissar of Lithuania, confirming their non-Jewish status.

After the conquest of the Crimea by the Germans in the autumn of 1941, they decided to exempt the Karaites living there from the fate of the Jews. Still, the Nazi bigwigs were not completely satisfied. They had the racial background of the Karaites investigated by Alfred Rosenberg's Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete. This was done by

some staff "specialists" and, on their behalf, also by groups of Jewish scholars in the ghettos of Vilna (Z. Kalmanovich), Warsaw (M. *Balaban and Y. Schipper) and Lvov (J. Schall). They were prepared to claim, contrary to their real convictions, that the Karaites were not Jews, in order to save the lives of the sectarians. In Vilna a special confrontation was arranged between Kalmanovich and Szapszal. As a result the Karaites were recognized as a separate ethnic minority and a communiqué was issued accordingly June 13th 1943, by the "Ost- ministerium".

The lives of most of the Karaites of occupied Europe were thus saved and they did not become victims of the Holocaust. Only a few Karaite women at Kiev and in the Crimea, who identified themselves as Jews, were massacred. Some 500-600 of the male Crimean Karaites were recruited into the Wehrmacht, the Waffen SS and the Tartar Legion. The Karaites were also used as interpreters. In Lutsk local Karaites acted as liaison between the Germans and the Lutsk Judenrat. A survivor of the local ghetto has testified to their anti- Jewish activity: they would enter the ghetto, extort big sums of money from the Judenrat and beat up women and children. Worse, they also helped the Germans and Ukrainians in the liquidation of the Lutsk ghetto in August 1942. The Karaites played also an unedifying role in the Vilna ghetto, as reported by one of the Jewish survivors. On the other hand, some Jews in Poland and Lithuania were able to save themselves by posing as Karaites.

In Vichy France it was decided by the Commissariat General aux Questions Juives, that the 270 Karaites living there should be regarded and treated as Jews. However, under German pressure, this decision was retracted in January 1943.

This is so disturbing I can hardly comment on it, as my whole family was liquidated in Lithuania other than my father who escaped. Suffice it to say that modern Karaites deny these charges, yet historian Nathan Shur quotes Karaite historians Firkovich, Nemoy and others. Other Karaite historians affirm these eyewitness testimonies. Even if modern Karaites have no affiliation with these Karaites as surely they will claim, Nazarene and Messianic believers ought to walk circumspectly before them, especially in light of their past activity and current anti-Yahshua missionary activism.

Husni Daud 1876-1937-

Lived in Cairo and was a foremost Karaite composer of Arabic music since most Karaites were in many ways Arabs.

Marriage Oral Torah-Inter-Marriage-

In spite of the often-strained relations between Karaites and Rabbinate, mixed marriages occurred in most periods.

Seems like sex was more important than principle.

This is true even under the Spartan conditions of life in Jerusalem during the *Golden Age. They appear to have become more common under the more relaxed conditions of life in Egypt and Byzantium. Some Ketuvot (marriage contracts) survive from Fustat, Egypt, from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which state in great detail the rights of the Karaite wife, after her marriage. One, from the eleventh century, runs as follows: "He shall not bring into his house, as long as she is his wife, the fat-tail, or the two kidneys, or the large lobe of liver, or the meat of a pregnant animal, or the bread of Gentiles, or their wines and their abominations. Further, he shall not lighten a candle on Sabbath eves, and there shall be no fire in his house during the Sabbaths. He shall not sleep with her on Sabbaths and festivals the way he does on weekdays, and he shall not make her desecrate the festivals of the Lord of Hosts as they fall in accord with lunar observation and the finding of Aviv in Palestine".

Meaning a Karaite wife could not follow the calendar of the rabbis, or she could be divorced! This despite the fact that Karaite men used calendars, especially in the Diaspora. This sure sounds like oral law to me.

The second one, from the twelfth century, stipulates: "He (the bridegroom) took upon himself ... not to desecrate in front of his wife the festivals of God, celebrated according to lunar observation ... and this lady took upon herself ... not to desecrate in his presence the festivals of our brethren the Rabbinate ... and they both bound themselves sincerely, willingly and forthrightly to follow the customs of the Karaites who observe the sanctified festivals according to lunar observation and to the finding of Abib in the Land of Israel" (adapted from J. Mann, Texts and Studies, II, 171-175, 177-180). Thus the main point demanded was consideration by the Rabbinate husband for the Karaite mode of calendation used by the wife. This appears even in the Ketuvah drawn up for the Rabbinate Nasi, David, who married in 1082 in Fustat the daughter of a Karaite notable.

In the thirteenth century Makrizi claims that they are forbidden, yet in Byzantium intermarriages were allowed quite officially, as confirmed around 1530 by the Rabbinate authorities. But from the sixteenth century onward they were forbidden by the Rabbinate in Eastern Europe, on the authority of R. Samson ben Abraham and R. Moses Isserlis. In Istanbul this prohibition was accepted, but in the Near East some Rabbinate accepted it (especially in Safed, where there were no Karaites) and some did not (especially in Cairo, where there were). In the latter city, it was mainly R. David ben Salomon ibn Zimra (the "Radbaz") who fought against it successfully. In nineteenth century Jerusalem both F.G. Ewald and L.A. Frankl report that there were no mixed marriages between Rabbinate and Karaites.

Iraq (Babylonia, Mesopotamia)-

The main roots of Karaism were in Persia, but Iraq was the home of some of the sects which later merged in it, such as that founded around 720 by Sarini (or Severns) in north Mesopotamia; of some of the *Isawites in the eighth and some of the *Tiflisites in the ninth centuries; in the ninth century also of the founders of the *Ukbarite and *Mishawite sects.

Irshad, Ai-

Karaite Arab-language magazine published 1908-1909 in Cairo.

Isaac ben Solomon (1754-1826)-

He was the spiritual leader of the community of *Chufut-KaI in the *Crimea. He was very influential in two fields of the Karaite *Halakha. One was that of *Calendation. He proposed to reform the Karaite calendar, so that festivals and beginnings of months would remain within the confines of calculated dates, though still taking account of the visual observations of the moon. This way the diversities in the religious calendar used by the various Karaite communities were to be overcome. His scheme was put forward in his "Or ha-Levanah" (the light of the moon), written in 1779 and published in Zhitomir in 1872. His suggested reform met with bitter opposition from conservative Karaites, but gained acceptance by 1855, at least in the Crimea.

The other was that of *divorce. In an early nineteenth century divorce case he used, for the first time, his bet din (court of justice), in order to hand down a get (divorce decree), against the husband, a procedure for which there was no precedent. Initially there was strong opposition, but later this procedure was generally accepted by Karaites on his authority.

Islamic Roots of Early Forms of Karaism-

Many of the influences which produced formed and affected Karaism have to be looked for in the early Islamic world. S.W. Baron has written "In the spiritual effervescence, which characterized the first two or three centuries of Islamic rule, all sorts of individual, as well as group manifestations of questioning and discontent came to the fore, of which Karaism may have become the major beneficiary". Since the middle of the seventh century the *Kharijite sect was proclaiming, mostly in *Persia, a simpler, purer and more democratic Islam. There is much similarity in their leveling, combative enthusiasm, in their strict adherence to the Koran as it is written and their opposition to fixed ideological dogmas and authoritarian political institutions, to later Karaite thought and practice, which got their start in the same regions. Karaite "Scripture orientatedness" did not evolve thus in a void.

The extreme Isma'ili creed spread in Iran and adjacent areas at about the same time as the early Karaites. Among their more fanatical sects were the Ghulah, some of whom claimed that the angel Gabriel mistook Muhammad for Ali (the founder of the Shi'ah) when he called him to his prophetic mission, and the Ali Ilahis, who deified Ali. Some similar elements though far less extreme, can be found in early Karaism, with * Anan taking the part of Ali. Further, the Shi'ite prohibition of consuming food prepared by non-Muslims, is mirrored in the Karaite prohibition to consume food cooked by non-Jews. The perpetual mourning of the Shi'ites for Ali's sons, who fell in battle, is often couched in similar terms to the Karaite mourning for the long duration of the forced stay of the Jews in the Diaspora. Daniel al-*Kumisi's commentary to Leviticus

shows Isma'ili influence, mirroring its teachings about the "dahir" and the "batin" - the revealed and the concealed. The preachers of Isma'ilism were called "duai", which can be translated into Hebrew as "ha- Kore", the "caller", and hence, perhaps, the source of the term "Karaite". AI- Kumisi himself was such a preacher or "caller".

Many other aspects of Karaism are, of course, quite different from the fundamentalist teachings of the Shi'ah. Thus several of the Karaite scholars of the "Golden Age" were influenced (as was also their main opponent, Saadia Gaon) by the Islamic rationalistic theology of the Mu'tazilites, who flourished between 750 and 900 in Baghdad and Basra. This is true especially of Yusuf al Basir and Jeshua ben Jehudah. Islamic jurisprudence was based on several principles which were found later also in Karaism. The text of the Koran was used as source material to derive laws from it. The same was done with all of the books of the Old Testament by the Karaites (while the Rabbinate limited themselves to the Pentateuch only). Analogical Deduction ("Hekesh" in Hebrew and "Kiyas" in Arabic) was utilized by the early Karaites in an even more extreme way than in early Islam. The justification of new laws by the consensus of the community ("Edah" in Hebrew and "Lima" in Islam) was again common to both. Only "Sunnah", the equivalent of Oral Law, was regarded as anathema by Karaism. Still, the principles of Karaite Halacha, though often influenced by Islam, are far from being a slavish imitation of Islamic axioms.

The doctrine of metempsychosis (transmigration of souls) seems to have entered early Karaism (or Ananism) from Islamic sources. Anan is supposed to have written a special work on this subject. Rabbinate later hurled the accusation against Anan that he had copied Islam in his new creed. While exaggerated, it cannot be denied that the Karaite defence of their principles of law later took on an Islamic tinge. Islamic influences on early Karaism seem to have been particularly important in the realm of prayer ritual: prostration, the removal of shoes, the washing of feet, the use of the kibla (direction in prayer) and the lack of chairs in the synagogue.

The language of Islam was Arabic, and this, too, was the language used most by the Karaite scholars of the "Golden Age". During this period Karaism continued to flourish near-exclusively in Muslim countries. Even after its center moved around 1100 to Christian Byzantium, there continued to exist Karaite communities in such Muslim centers as Cairo, Istanbul, Jerusalem and Hit, which preserved many of their early customs.

Other, non Islamic, influences helped to shape Karaism too, but the ties between Islam and the early Karaites were strong, and are proving of great interest to modern scholars, who try to unravel the story of the emergence of early Karaism. Daniel J. Lasker has stated (Islamic Influences, 35): "It should be clear that Karaism is first and foremost a Jewish sect, founded by Jews and employing Jewish concepts and practices. At the same time, it is true that there is an undeniable Islamic component to Karaism ... Ananism and Karaism blossomed and flowered under Islam. Were it not for the intellectual cross-fertilization, Karaism would be very different, if it existed at all."

Isma'iah, al- as in Isham-el-

One of the names bestowed on the Karaites by such Muslim authors as al- Bairuni (973-1048) and Taki-al-Din al-Makrizi (1364-1442). It means "those who listen" (to Scripture only).

Istanbul –Arab Center of Middle Age Karism-

*Constantinople was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and renamed Istanbul. For the next hundred years the Karaite center there continued to flourish (*Byzantium), mainly under the leadership of the *Bashyazi family. But later the leadership of the Karaite world passed to the communities of the *Crimea and of Eastern Europe. The congregation of Istanbul remained of secondary importance.

Jacob ben Reuben-

He lived in *Constantinople. S.A. Poznanski at first assigned him to the eleventh century, later to the early twelfth. Jacob traveled to other countries, to spread Karaism and to collect Karaite commentaries, mostly in Arabic. Naturally it includes attacks on Saadia Gaon and other Rabbinic leaders and also opposition to the blowing of the shofar on the Jewish New Year (as this would entail work). But there can be found information about Khazars and Slavs, who started to loom now on the horizon of the Karaites who had moved to Byzantium.

Japheth al-Barkamani-

He lived in *Cairo early in the fifteenth century, and wrote a "Sefer Teshuva" in Arabic. This was a polemic tract against the Rabbinate, but *Maimonides is treated with respect.

Japheth ben Ali (or Eli) ha-Levi-

His Arabic name was Abu Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali. He was called "al-Basri" because he was born in *Basra, Iraq. He lived however later in *Jerusalem, in the second half of the tenth century and was still alive in 1005. His writings show some knowledge of the topography of the city and of the Holy Land. He prepared a monumental literal translation of the Old Testament into Arabic and wrote, also in Arabic, biblical commentaries, which won him considerable renown. L. Nemoy has called him "the foremost Karaite commentator on the Bible during the golden age of Karaite literature" (Anthology, 83). The commentaries have all survived, often in several copies, some of them prepared still in the author's lifetime. They are uniform and detailed and in addition to a thorough explanation of the text comprise also digressions on problems of theology, law, Hebrew grammar and history. He added a glossary of Hebrew words to his commentary on Hosea and suggested that the initial split between Karaites and Rabbinate took place in Hasmonean times, or more exactly, in the days of Jehuda ben Tabai and Simeon ben Shetah. His commentaries are of importance as source material for the understanding of early Karaite thought. They include also attacks on the creed of the Tiflisites, saying in conclusion "God shall cancel these creeds and bring shame on (their

adherents)" (Pinsker, Likkutei, 26), partly, perhaps, because they appeared not to believe in resurrection, while he was convinced of the imminence of the coming of the Messiah. His commentaries included also polemics against Christianity, Islam, Rabbinates in general and *Saadia Gaon specifically. Yet he was quite prepared to make use of works by Rabbinite scholars, and when occasion arose, was critical of * Anan and *Nahawendi.

The Jeroboam Doctrine-

Falsely teaches that Jeroboam son of Nebat introduced the Oral Law to rabbinical Judaism and thus is to be held responsible for the destruction of the Temple, the Diaspora and the split between Karaites and the Rabbis.

Jeshua ben Yahudah-

His rulings were accepted by later codes of Karaite law, including the *"Adereth Elijah". His main works are the two commentaries of the Pentateuch, which are called "the longer" and "the shorter" one. This is, however, rather relative: the "shorter" one numbers 270 manuscript pages for Exodus XV-XXV alone! Of the "longer" one less has survived, all on Leviticus. He started on the "long" one first, and the dates 1048 and 1050 are mentioned therein. The "short" one he prepared for a rich Egyptian Karaite, named Abu al-Hassan Daud, who wanted it to be used for the instruction of his son. Jeshua started writing it in June or July of 1054, before the "long" one was finished. Each is independent of the other and intended for a different audience. Each includes in addition to the exegetical material also halachic elements. The "short" one is perhaps the more important, as it covers most of the Pentateuch and is one of the most notable medieval Jewish works of exegesis. Jeshua did not try, like *Japheth ben Ali, to cover all of the Old Testament, and tried to say what he felt that should be said, in conjunction with only some of the books of the Pentateuch.

Two philosophical tracts are ascribed to him. He was influenced by the rationalistic theology developed by the *Mu'tazilites in Islam. He held that knowledge of the creation cannot be derived from Scripture alone, but is subject also to rational speculation. He tried to define God and held that He is bound by good and evil. Jeshua tried to explain why God does good, though able to do evil, and what was his purpose in creating the world. His line of thought is interesting and often surprisingly modem. He and al-Basri broke with the tradition of their predecessors and introduced philosophy into the Karaite curriculum.

Jesus-

Karaites historically defend Jesus against his murder by the "rabbis" They hold the rabbis accountable for his death. They also accept Mohammad as a prophet a fact alone that shows they are not historically not solely a Jewish sect but a Muslim one! No wonder modern Karaites see Jesus as a man that they can use in their struggle against the rabbis a true Jewish sect.

He was regarded by such pre-Karaite sects as the *Mishawites, the *Isawites and Isfahanians, as a prophet (so was Muhammad), a claim criticized later by *Kirkisani. Still, he too claimed "The Rabbinate plotted against Jesus until they put him to death by crucifixion" (L. Nemoj, Anthology, 51). He said further about Jesus that he prohibited divorce that he issued no new religious ordinances, but said that religion consists solely of humility, and that he permitted the eating of the flesh of all animals "from the gnat to the elephant". In his opinion it was St Paul who invested Jesus with a divine nature. The Karaite *Firkovich, tried to show for political reasons, that their forefathers had nothing to do with the Crucifixion.

Joseph ha Mashbir-

Wrote a COMMENTARY on Karaite prayer in 1700 called Ner Hachohma and one on the Torah called Birkei Joseph.

Kabbalah-

A term amazingly enough invented by a Karaite leader Levi ben Jaopheth in his Book of Precepts and later by Tobias ben Moshe.

Karaite World Center –

Throughout Karaite history there never existed one formal, administrative center. One has been set up, however, around 1980, in the town of *Ramle. In Israel are concentrated now more than two thirds of all Karaites, a much greater numerical concentration than existed in any of the sect's historical centers in the past. Further, the strong *Jerusalem-centric attitude of Karaism has always endowed the Holy Land with a special aura. Only the minuscule size of the congregation of Jerusalem between 1250 and 1948 had kept it from playing a more dominant role in Karaite history. The new center is called "Hayahadut ha-Karaite ha-'olamit be-Jisrael" ("The Karait (sic) Judaism of the World in Israel"). The merit of setting it up belongs exclusively to the Egyptian Karaite immigrants to Israel, who brought with them a tradition of communal organization. Special headquarters have been set up in Ramle, and also an impressive synagogue was erected there. They were built to a great extent by members of the community themselves, many of whom had experience in the building trade. In the headquarter building, special rooms are allotted for meetings, for the Bet Din, for the library, for the secretariat, for the office of the Chief Hakham and there are large rooms for study and lectures.

The organization is controlled by a Council of Hakhamim, of eleven members, which decides in matters of Halakha; a Religious Council of 25 delegates, who nominate the members of the Council of Hakhamim; and a National Council of 37 members, who represent the main Karaite congregations of Israel (six each from Ramle and *Ashdod, four from *Ofakim, three from Jerusalem, *Beer Sheva, *Mazliah and *Ronen, and one each from Bat Yam, Kiryat Gat, Or-Yehuda, Ramat-Hasharon, Herzliah etc). The main work of the National Council is done by committees, such as that for juridical affairs, for publications, for property, for burial services, and for contacts abroad. The set-up is

similar to that which used to exist in Cairo, down to the fact that final control in most fields lies in the hands of laymen.

The center publishes a well-produced newssheet ("Bitaon Bnei Mikra") and has also reprinted prayer books and some classical Karaite works. A Karaite Yeshiva (academy) was founded in 1991 to train Hakhamim. The Beit Din (court of law) is not recognized by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

A Sanhedrin and Bet Din has been established by those that claim that a Sanhedrin of rabbis is not Scriptural and refuse to obey the one that last sat in judgment over Yisrael! Yet they have a rebellion based Sanhedrin in Israel today, not surprisingly rejected by all Jewish leaders of all denominations worldwide, except some deceived Nazarene and Messianic Ephraimites attracted by their moon reckonings.

"Keter Torah"-

The name of a Hebrew language commentary on the Pentateuch, written by *Aaron ben Elijah (the Younger) in 1362. He usually preferred simple explanations, according to the literal meaning, but did use sometimes allegorical interpretations. He was influenced by such Rabbinate as Abraham ibn Ezra.

Ketuvah (Marriage Contract)-

Of special interest are the detailed Ketivot prepared for mixed marriages, which insist on the rights of the Karaite bride, above all in matters concerning *calendation, *dietary law and the lightening of *Sabbath candles. Thus, for instance, an eleventh century formula as used in Palestine (published by J. Mann, Texts, II, 168-171): "And further they discussed and both of them agreed to observe the festivals of God by way of lunar observation and through the finding of Aviv in the Land of Israel".

Kharijites-

A Muslim sect founded in the mid-seventh century, which proclaimed a simpler, purer and more democratic Islam. Possibly the true origin of the term Karaites.

The members believed in more puritanical religious practices and customs. Their many subdivisions and subjects had often divergent views on Islamic dogma, but were usually *Mu'ta- zilite in outlook. They developed strongly in *Persia, where they infected local Jewish communities with their levelling, combative enthusiasm, their strict adherence to the Koran as it is written, and in their opposition to fixed ideological dogmas and authoritarian political institutions. The Jewish religious ferment, which followed in this area and out of which eventually evolved Karaism, was influenced by their teachings and example.

Jacon Karkisani- aka Abu Yususf Yakub ibn Ishak ibn Samawayh al Kirkisani-

Lived in northern Iraq. "Kumisi's belief in the overriding importance of settling in Jerusalem. He seems to have known well the lands of the Near East and, possibly, might even have reached northern India. His opinions are in many areas very different from those of the scholars of tenth century Jerusalem and were influenced by the symbiotic cultural climate of Upper Mesopotamia. Thus he believed, for instance, in the importance of the study of philosophy. He influenced, however, the eleventh century Karaite thinkers and scholars of Jerusalem. He had a good knowledge of the Talmud and other Rabbinic works, had read most of the Koran and the New Testament, and was on friendly terms with some Muslim, Christian and Rabbinic theologians. He wrote with clarity and logic. L. Nemoy has called him "the greatest Karaite mind in the first half of the tenth century" (Anthology, 42).

His "Book of Lights and Watchtowers" (Kiffib al-anwar wal-marakib) is a monumental and systematic code of law, in which he comes out, for instance, in favour of the full strictures of the *Rikkuv theory. It includes also material on many other subjects, from Jewish history to the importance of rational investigation into theology. His many references to Anan, Nahawendi and others, make him the most important surviving source on early Karaite history. He censured al-Kurnisi for calling Anan "first among the fools", but was not much more considerate himself. When discussing Anan's opinion on a problem of the law of incest he said: "I wish to goodness I knew whether Anan was asleep or out of his mind when he uttered this opinion".

His other main work is the "Book of Gardens and Parks" (Kitab ar-riyad wal-hadaik), completed in 938, which contains a comprehensive commentary on the non-legal parts of the Pentateuch. It is prefaced by a detailed discourse on the methods of scriptural exegesis.

He wrote some further works, such as commentaries on the Books of Genesis, Job and Ecclesiastes; treatises on the oneness of God and in refutation of Muhammad's claim to prophecy; and essays on the art of textual interpretation and translation, - all of which have not survived. Yet in spite of their wide scope and the bulk of his surviving two books, he was little known in his own time, rarely quoted by his Karaite contemporaries and never by *Saadia Gaon. His work was not translated into Hebrew and remained therefore completely unknown to the Karaites of Byzantium and, later, Eastern Europe. The larger has been, however, his credit with modern scholars. The history of Jewish sects in his Kitab al-Anwaar is certainly the most quoted early Karaite text.

Kumisi, Daniel ben Moses 880CE-

He was born in Damghan, in the province of Kumis, in northern *Persia, in the middle of the ninth century. H. Ben-Shammai has suggested that initially he should be classified as an * Ananite, and that he became a Karaite only after arriving in *Jerusalem. M. Gil suggests that he has to be understood against the background of the rising *Isma'ili movement in Persia. Its preachers were called *duai, which can be translated into Hebrew as "hakore", "the caller", and hence perhaps the source of the term "Karaite". Al-Kumisi

was such a preacher or "caller". Some of his commentary on Leviticus shows Isma'ili influences, mirroring its teachings about the "dahir" and the "batin", the revealed and the concealed - in the Koran. Kumisi introduced self-mortification and self-torture to the Karaites customs of mourning.

Daniel Lasker 1949-

Wrote Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions showing that starting with Anan and stressing its Islamic roots and its moving into phase 2 of its Saducean roots till its modern day status as a Jewish sect.

Abu Said-Levi ne Japheth-

1006 CE- He influenced Karaite Halacha stating that those outside of Yisrael had to resign themselves to logical deduction of calendation, while Jerusalem Jews could observe the barley crop.

Karaites in Europe and Diaspora Followed a Calculated Calendar-

Students from Lithuania had studied already in the fifteenth century with Elijah *Bashyazi in Istanbul. Through the Hebrew translations prepared in Byzantium the Karaites of Lithuania could draw freely on the classical sources of the Karaite *Golden Age. They accepted most of the innovations of the Bashyazis, such as the lightening of *Sabbath candles, the beginning of the annual circle of Pentateuch readings in the month of Tishri (instead of Nissan), the arrangement of astronomical tables of moladot, etc. In Lithuania in addition new customs of defilement were introduced, regarding the touching of the dead, with the Karaites shirking the obligation of helping with the burial of their own coreligionists, in order to avoid defilement. The Karaite religious writings in Lithuania were initially in Hebrew, but later they prepared translations into Karaimsk and wrote also original works, such as prayers, hymns and songs of mourning for departed leaders in that language.

They were influenced by the spiritual flowering among the Rabbinate of Lithuania from the later sixteenth century onward. Some of the main Karaite writers and thinkers there were Isaac ben Abraham *Troki (1533?-1594?); his pupil, Joseph ben Mordecai *Malinovski; Zerah ben Nathan of *Troki (1576).

Aaron ben Joseph (the Elder)-

1250-1320) Arranged Karaite liturgy in a way that met with general approval. He introduced in his Manual of Liturgy a number of his own hymns, and thus sanctioned the abolition of the old principle of using biblical prayer only. In his footsteps many other hymns by Karaite poets (down to some of the nineteenth century) were included in the liturgy and so were poems by some Rabbinic poets, including *Judah Halevi.

In 1460 Menahem *Bashyazi introduced the custom of starting the reading of the Pentateuch in the autumn, in the month of Tishri, as done by the Rabbinates, and no longer in the spring, in the month of Nissan, as had been the Karaite custom hitherto. The result of this lengthy evolution is the present Karaite prayer book, a voluminous work, which shows the order of the prayers for daily and festival service, and for special occasions, from childbirth to burial. Prayer consists of seven parts: shevahim, hoda'ah, viddui, bakkasha, tehinnah, Tze'akah and keriah, - and the confession of faith.

There remain some who believe that the rabbis alone make use of the Siddur, or liturgical prayer book. As can be seen here above, the Karaites while claiming to be Scriptural literalists, even in their prayers, use their own compositions all manmade for their guidance.

Moses Luzki –

Helped Karaites avoid Russian military service in 1770-1845. Composed a manmade commentary on another work by Aaron ben Joseph's Sefer Mivhat a KAIRITE CALCULATED CALENDAR for the years 1859-1901. Commentaries and calendars made by man fill Karaite history in their exile!

Shima Isaac ben Moshe Luski- Wrote some 20 works on theology, philosophy Karaite halacha, the kabalah, or sefirot, creation and other works. **So much for Karaites being Scripture literalists.**

Joseph ben Mordchai Malinovski-1624- Wrote "Kitzur Inyan Sheitah" on Karaite halacha for ritual slaughter published in Vienna in 1830 and includes several hymns. His Sefer Minhagim or book of CUSTOMS appears in the modern Karaite prayer book.

Heretical Creationism-Major parts of Karism taught that YHWH sent an angel to create the world and teach the prophets. Pure heresy. These traditions were taught by both Kimisis and Nahawendi based on the Arabic Persian based sect of the Manicheans.

Maria Theresa 1740-1780-Austrian Karaites were granted the same status as Christians and thus were seen as Christians as opposed to Jews, or a sect of Judaism as they claim they are in the present day!

Mas'udi, Abu-ai-Hassan' Ali - He was an important Arab historian of the early tenth century. A *Mu'tazilite himself, he relates in his AI-Tambih w-al-Ishraf, that the *Ananites can be regarded as Jewish followers of the Mu'tazilite philosophy, who believe in Scripture and the absolute unity and goodness of the divinity. He mentions the Karaites as a separate sect, who have, however, their calendation in common with some of the Ananites.

Messiah, Messianism-

Messianic hopes were part of the eighth and ninth century ferment in the Jewish communities east of the Tigris, out of which evolved the pre-Karaite sects. They were incited both by the spectacle of the "Sons of Ismael" triumphant over the "Kingdom of Edom" (Byzantium) in their advance to the gates of Constantinople and by the example of such messianic Islamic sects as the *Kharijites. Z. Ankori has written (Byzantium, 10):

"The expected Redemption under the guidance of a militant messiah seemed to provide both an answer to the challenge and the opportunity inherent in the general political situation, and relief from the grip of the central Jewish authorities. Indeed, messianism and sectarianism during early Muslim times march inseparably hand in hand in an endeavor to remold the fate of the Jewish people and the heart of that people as well." In the ninth, tenth and early eleventh centuries Karaites came to *Jerusalem to accelerate the coming of the Messiah by a life of poverty and prayer. Belief in the imminent advent of the Messiah was widespread, as shown by various Karaite texts. In some cases specific years or months were mentioned as the time of his coming. Particularly detailed were *Japheth ben Ali's calculations in his "Commentary on the Book of Daniel". When nothing happened at the stipulated date, various excuses and explanations were put forward, but the basic belief endured.

Sounds awfully similar to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

A Karaite pseudo-Messiah, named Salomon, was reported for instance in 1121 at *Baniyas, in northern Palestine. But as Karaism became more mature the belief in the advent of the Messiah was stressed no longer any more than in Rabbanism. Sometimes less so. While Elijah *Bashyazi in the fifteenth century mentioned in the last of his ten principles of the Karaite creed the hope for redemption by God with the help of a Messiah of the seed of David, some earlier Karaite creeds omitted the mention of the Messiah all together.

Metempsychosis-

The UNSCRPTURAL doctrine of transmigration of souls entered Karism from Islamic sources. Anan wrote on this subject.

Mezuzahs-Not used by Karaites. Seen as unbiblical though some Karaites in Israel have begun to use them.

Miladiah- Name for Karaites from the Hebrew word Molad meaning dark moon. Many ancient Karaites did their observation from the dark moon and not the crescent moon. As can be seen it is a sect of historic uncertainty, confusion, and unending changes.

The Desecration of The Memory of Moses-

In Karaism, as in Rabbanism, Moses is the greatest of all the Jewish teachers, the man with whom God speaks "face to face", the intermediary between God and man, the master of the prophets and the recipient of God's law for mankind. But no more. The utmost care is taken to avoid the ascription of divine or semi-divine powers to him. This stands in contrast to Samaritanism, in which his position has been much bolstered. There the Pentateuch, in which he stars, rules supreme, without any competition from the books of Prophets and Hagiographa, and he has become a semi-divine being, "the Son of His House" or "God's Man". Among Karaites a contrary attempt was made by Benjamin *Nahawendi and Judah Hadassi to reduce his stature, as an angel was supposed by them to have received the Scriptures from God, and to have passed them on to Moses, so that thus there would have been no face to face meeting between God and Moses. Daniel al-*Kumisi and later scholars did not accept this interpolation of angels. *Aaron ben Josaph

(the Elder) moved in the other direction and, like *Maimonides, believed that Moses had become an angel himself.

So much for scriptural literalism.

Mu'tazilite Philosophy -

The Core of Karaite Doctrine. Its founder was Wasil ibn-Ata (d. 748) in *Basra. He and his followers developed a rationalistic theology, based on a belief in the unity of the Godhead. They were called Mu'tazilites (seceders) because of their secession from the pleasures of this world, or because of their doctrine that those who commit a mortal sin secede from the ranks of the believers (but do not become non-believers). Their favorite appellation for themselves was, however, "the partisans of justice and unity". They flourished between 750 and 900 in *Baghdad and Basra. They endeavored to check the Persian dualistic tendencies in Islam, proclaiming (like Anaxagoras, over a millennium earlier) that doubt was the first requirement of knowledge. They achieved a dominant position under the Khalif Ma'mun (813-833). Abu-al-Hassan Ali Ash'ari led, however, a violent reaction against them, rejecting all causality and scientific thought. Authoritarian and deterministic Ashiarism emerged victorious, demanding a strict adherence to the literal meaning of the Koran.

Karaism did not evolve thus in a void, and had many elements in common with contemporary developments in Islam, such as its "Scripture orientated-ness" with Ash'arism. Mostly it was however Mu'tazelite philosophy which influenced its thinkers, such as Yusuf al-*Basri, *Jeshua ben Jehudah and *Aaron ben Elijah (the Younger), - and its main adversary, *Saadia Gaon, as well. Thus al-Basri tried, in his "al-*Muhtawi", to find the common denominator between Karaism and Mu'tazilite rationalism. He stressed the rational character of ethics and the priority of reason over tradition. His pupil Jeshua ben-Jehudah held that knowledge of the creation cannot be derived from Scripture alone, and is subject also to rational speculation. He tried to define God, and held that He, too, is bound by good and evil. In the footsteps of the Mu'tazilites he held that God had a choice between good and evil, but always chooses the best. Aaron ben Elijah, in the fourteenth century withdrew from the *Aristotelianism of his predecessor, *Aaron ben Joseph, and returned to a renewed adherence to Mu'tazilite principles. The Arab historian al-Mas'udi (d. 956) called even all the *Ananites "Jewish Mu'tazilites".

Nahawendi, Benjamin ben Moses -

Now that *Anan's real position in Karaite history begins to be better understood, Benjamin Nahawendi looms much larger, as he was the first real leader and unifier of the sects which eventually made up Karaism. He hailed from Nihavend in *Persia (in the province of Media), and might have lived (in the first half of the ninth century) in Persia or in *Iraq. He was still much nearer to the roots of Karaism, east of the Tigris, than any of the later Karaite thinkers.

*Kirkisani said that he was "learned in the lore of the Rabbinate and he was strong in Scripture; he is said to have served as a judge for many years". Thus it is not surprising that his main surviving works (written in fluent and idiomatic Hebrew) are apparently part of a comprehensive work on law, - his "Book of Precepts" (Sefer Mitzvot), on religious law, and his "Book of Rules" (Sefer Dinim) on civil and criminal law. The latter was first printed by A. *Firkovich, in 1835 in *Eupatoria. Nahawendi's rulings are down to earth and practical, obviously the work of an experienced lawyer. He is conscious of the importance of property (if a man does not pay his debts, his sons can be taken from him as payment, and so can his orphans, if he has died in the meantime), - a far cry from R. *Mahler's picture of early Karaism as a movement of social upheaval and liberation.

The following are some of his views on inheritance and wills-

"If a man's lawful heir has migrated overseas, and if the man, not knowing whether the heir is still among the living, bequeaths his property to someone else, and if the lawful heir later returns to claim his inheritance, the man's will must be set aside, inasmuch as he has disregarded his lawful heir and has bequeathed his property to one who has no right to it, except when the man has dismissed his lawful heir with some bequest, regardless of the amount". (L. Nemoy, Anthology, 26).

Some of his other more innovative ordinances are:

* The New Moon is to be proclaimed by sight, and that in the months of Nissan and Iyar only.

* He stipulates a leap month of thirty days for every sixth year.

* The Passover sacrifice should take precedence over the Sabbath (Anan's rule was the opposite).

* Regarding Yibum (marrying one's deceased brother's childless wife) he insisted on a blood brother, while Anan was prepared to settle for some relative other than a brother. Just like Anan he forbids the consumption of any type of meat in the Diaspora.

A man must not marry a woman who has suckled at the breast with him, as she has thus become his sister.

* One should not resort to non-Jewish courts or law to adjust differences with a fellow-Jew, but one may apply to them in the case of non-observant Jews.

Nahawendi is reported by *Japhet ben Ali to have stated that every person should be guided in legal matters by his own judgment, but it is doubtful if these were indeed his views, - it is more likely that they were those of Japhet. Nahawendi believed in the duty of corporal punishment, to be meted out by parents to disobedient children, by husbands to wives, by teachers to pupils and by masters to slaves. In a colophon to his Sefer Dinim the term "Karaites" is mentioned for the first time.

Nahawendi wrote also commentaries on the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes and Daniel, though most of them have not survived. He was of the opinion that God sent an angel to create the world and to instruct the prophets, - a view influenced possibly by *Manichean traditions.

It seems however, that he was the first important Karaite exegete, and his commentaries were highly regarded even by a Rabbinite like Abraham ibn Ezra. Nahawendi's importance is attested to by medieval Arabic accounts, which call the Karaites "the followers of Anan and Benjamin". Saadia Gaon and Judah Halevi regarded Anan and Nahawendi as the two founders of Karaism. Kirkisani speaks about "Benjaminites", as distinct from Karaites and Ananites. Only when a generation after him al-Kumisi guided the Karaites in their settlement in *Jerusalem, did these differences disappear.

Meaning of The Name-

The name "Karaites" is generally assumed to be derived from "Mikra", Scripture. But there are also other possibilities. It has been pointed out by M. *Gil that *Isma'ili preachers were called *"duai", which can be translated into Hebrew as "hakore" (the caller), and hence this could also be the source for the term "Karaite". Al-*Bairuni (973-1042) mentions the Arabic appellations of the Karaites: al-*Miladiah and al-Isma'iah, the first because of their way of *Calendation (as they start their month according to the lunar sightings), and the second (derived from "hearing") from their attachment to the text of scripture.

Nasi-

Anan's descendants were accorded for many generations by all Karaites the title of "Nasi". This term has been translated into English as "Patriarch" or "Prince" and means "President" in modern Hebrew. A separate branch of Nasiim existed in Fustat, Egypt, starting with Anan's descendants Josiah and Hezekiah. The later Nasiim there were Hezekiah's descendants. In the eleventh century they had close ties to the powerful *Tustari clan. Their title was in later periods "Nasi of Israel and Judah". Further Nasiim survived in *Damascus, till late in the eighteenth century.

Nissi ben Noah-

He lived in *Persia between the mid-twelfth and the late thirteenth century (according to Z. Ankori; A. Harkavy had dated him to the eleventh century). The "Sefer 'Aseret ha-Oevarim" (a copy of which has been identified in the *Firkovich collection in St Petersburg) has been attributed to him. This is a commentary on the Ten Commandments. Another work of his, "Bitan ha- Maskilim", on the precepts of Jewish law, has been lost. Elijah *Bashyazi has stated in the *" Adereth Elijah": "Rabbi Nissi ben Noah has said that our people are obliged to study the Mishnah and the Talmud". Nissi ben-Noah himself is more careful, and though he does give this recommendation, he does so conditionally, and also states that in the Mishnah and the Talmud both good and bad can be found. Elijah Bashyazi, in his drive for a rapprochement with the Rabbinates, was interested to stress only that part of the message, which strengthened his case.

Oral Law, Oral Tradition-

Already in the times of the Second Temple Oral Law had developed in Judaism, in addition to Written Law, the Pentateuch. This answered an obvious need, as many of the

older laws and precepts had to be adapted to the different conditions of a new age. But soon this innovation met with criticism from many elements, which would not accept a tradition, which lacked the authority of Scripture. Thus Oral Law was not accepted by some of the Sadducees, by the Qumran Sect, by the early Christians, by the Samaritans, etc. Oral Law was later collected, edited and written down in the form of the Mishnah and Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud is one of the high-water marks of the Oral Tradition. In the Geonic period, from the seventh to the eleventh centuries, a tremendous effort was made to force, where necessary, even the far-flung outposts of Judaism into obedience and conformity to the new Babylonian tradition. But these attempts were not received willingly in some of the Jewish communities, and especially those east of the Tigris, which harbored different traditions from those codified in the Babylonian Talmud. A widespread ferment occurred in Judaism, which coalesced under the banners of opposition to Oral Law.

Karaism was thus born primarily as a movement of antagonism and opposition to Rabbinic Oral Law, and throughout its existence, up to the present, Oral Tradition has remained the main object of abomination for Karaites everywhere. In most debates between Karaites and Rabbinites the acceptance or non-acceptance of Oral Law has been the main subject, or one of the main subjects, under discussion. Thus *Saadia Gaon (882-942) can be said to have belonged to the same rationalistic school of the *Mu'tazilites as his Karaite opponents. He, too, attempted to reconcile Scripture and philosophy, reason and revelation. The reason why, in spite of these similarities, the disputation between them was so bitter, was their different attitude to Oral Law. Saadia believed that human rationality is reinforced in its attempts to understand the Divine Will, by both Written and Oral Law, while the latter was completely unacceptable to the Karaites.

Yet there was also quite a different development. The same need for additional interpretation of the Written Law, to answer the everyday needs of a society very different from the one which had developed the laws of Scripture, was felt increasingly also by the Karaites, and brought about the creation of a respectable body of Oral Law of their own.

Shavuot-

Reckoned to start on Sunday every year. Straight from the school of Sadducean thinking.

Persia-

The main roots of Karaism are to be looked for in the vast territories east of the Tigris, called Iran or Persia. The reason for this has to be understood both in the Jewish and the non-Jewish background. Persia has always been a fertile ground for innovative religions and sects. *Manichaeism might have influenced also some of the Jews living there. So might the activity there of the *Kharijite sect, early in the Islamic period. Much similarity can be found between later Karaite thought and practice, and the levelling, combative enthusiasm of the Kharijites, in their strict adherence to the Koran as it is written, and their opposition to fixed ideological dogma and to authoritarian political institutions. Other elements of Karaism might have been influenced

by the extreme Shi'ite sects of Iran, such as the Ghulah and the' Ali Ilahis.

Karaites of Poland-

Between 1483 and 1487 students from *Lutsk studied in *Istanbul with Elijah *Bashyazi. The close relationship with Istanbul caused the Karaites of Poland to accept most of the innovations of the Bashyazi clan, such as the lightening of *Sabbath candles, the beginning of the annual cycle of Pentateuch readings in the month of Tishri, instead of Nissan, the arrangement of astronomical tables to assist in fixing the first day of the month and the year (*calendation).

The Karaites of Poland profited from the Hebrew translations prepared in Byzantium. Their religious writings were first in Hebrew, but later in Karaimsk. They themselves were not called "Karaites", as this meant in Polish "black dog", but "Karainim", with a Hebrew ending. After the translations came original works, such as prayers, hymns and songs of mourning for departed leaders. Their spoken language remained similar to that of the Karaites of the Crimea, but their written language followed a separate path. Most of them were conservative in their religious customs. They requested in 1920 to be granted a similar autonomous status to the one they had enjoyed under the Tsars. In 1936 their request was granted by the Polish diet, which declared that "The Karaims Religious Union in the Polish Republic is autonomous and independent of any foreign authorities, either spiritual or secular". They were headed since 1927 by Seraya M. *Szapszal, who influenced them in the spirit of Karaite extremism, tried to strengthen their use of Karaimsk, as their national language, and to weaken their ties to Judaism.

The events of World War II see under *Holocaust. The Karaites survived it, while most Jews did not. Some years after the war took place an exchange of population between Russia and Poland, and some 200 Karaites moved to Poland, where they settled in *Warsaw, Cracow and Gdansk. In spite of their small numbers the Karaites of Poland requested the Communist authorities to recognize their special status, as it had existed before World War II. This was granted in May 1974, a "Great Karaim Religious Board" was set up and a first congress of Karaite delegates met in Podkowa Lesna. This board was designed to serve as supreme Karaite authority, and not just as a consultive organ. It received some financial support from the government. In 1991 M. El-Kodsi found some 150 Karaites in Poland. 50 each in Warsaw, Gdansk and Varcelova and 4 in Pele. None were left in Cracow.

Title of Rabbi-

By the time of Aaron ben Elijah in the 14th century most Karaites scholars were called rabbi just as is customary in Judaism. This from a sect that was birthed as an opposition sect to anything rabbinical. Today they try and convince people to "call no man rabbi" when all Karaites leaders from the 14th century onwards were called rabbis.

Rosh Hashanah-

The festival of the New Year, called by Karaites usually "Iorn Teru'ah". Till the days of Eliahu *Bashyazi it was celebrated in spring, on the first day of Nissan, but since the fifteenth century, this has been transferred to the first day of Tishri, in early autumn (except for Eastern Europe, where the old system still prevails). Karaites do not blow the Shofar. It is a joyous holiday, when one wears new garments and visits ones parents and grandparents. It is forbidden throughout the day to mention those who have died in the synagogue.

Sabbath-

There is a curious dichotomy about the Karaite celebration of the Sabbath. On one hand they considered it a day of joy and on the other their interpretation of the rules and laws for this day is much more rigorous and severe than that of the Rabbinate. Apparently in line with the prohibitions of the Essenes of old the early Karaites forbade on that day the use of fire, even if lighted previously; the nursing even of the severely ill; sexual intercourse; circumcision; and the visit of localities not inhabited by the sectarians.

Anan had the following to say: "Carrying a burden ... is forbidden on the Sabbath ... It is forbidden to light fire in Jewish homes on the Sabbath ... One might perhaps say that it is only the kindling of the fire on the Sabbath which is forbidden, and that if the fire had been kindled on the preceding weekday it is to be considered lawful to let it remain over the Sabbath ... even if the fire has been kindled on a weekday prior to the arrival of the Sabbath, it must be extinguished ... In the case of work, just as one is forbidden to perform it himself, so also is he forbidden to have others perform it for him", (adapted from L. Nemoy, Anthology, 17, 18).

The *Bashyazis lifted in the fifteenth century the ban on lighting the fire, but this was not necessarily accepted by Karaite communities everywhere, and especially not by those of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Some such present day Rabbinate expedients as using electrical devices to keep food warm, or lighten an oven or stove, or having lights turned on automatically, are not acceptable to both Karaites and Samaritans. M. El-Kodsi describes however the good food eaten on that day, how everybody was well dressed and "a joyous feeling filled the air" (Egypt, 145). The Karaite Havdalah at the end of the Sabbath, is shorter than that of the Rabbinate. El- Kodsi reports from Egypt that the Havdalah blessing of the wine was read outside of the synagogue.

Sabbath Candles-

While among Rabbinate the lightening of the Sabbath candles by the lady of the house has always been among the highlights of the ceremonies on the eve of the Sabbath, its absence among Karaites has been one of the sect's outwardly most visible differences. Together with the absence of any fires or lights on the Sabbath, it made the darkened Karaite abodes immediately identifiable. This was noted already by *Petahia of Regensburg in 1180. Around 1440 Menahem *Bashyazi started to permit the kindling of Sabbath candles and lights. This was not, however, easily accepted, even in the community of *Istanbul, and only his grandson Elijah succeeded to have it generally

accepted at least there. It was sometimes adopted also in Eastern Europe, but not everywhere in the Middle East. In 1839 *Bonar and McCheyne stressed that the Karaites of the Crimea did not kindle any fire on the Sabbath, even "in the coldest winter."

Sadducees-

Karaism was influenced by early Islamic sects and philosophies, but its main roots were Jewish. Quite a few of its ideas and customs were not new, but went back to the times of the Second Temple. What had characterized that period was its extreme factionalism, usually on a combined religious, political and social basis. Later Rabbinic Judaism was basically a continuation of the ideology of the Pharisees, which stressed Oral Tradition. Later Christianity had its roots in the spiritual world of the Essenes and other sects, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Sadducees, who were the dominant group in the time of most of the later Hasmoneans, bequeathed to later generations their opposition to the Oral Law. In the nineteenth century A. *Geiger, A. *Harkavy and others believed that there was a clear connection between the Sadducees and the Karaites. When S. Schechter discovered the Damascus Document in the Cairo Geniza, and identified it as a Sadducean document, this theory was even strengthened. Some of the later advocates of the "Sadducean Theory" were S.A. *Poznanski and S. W. *Baron. But when the *Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, this theory lost most of its adherents, and the more adventurous spirits in the academic world moved to the greener fields of Qumranian studies.

Does this mean that the "Sadducean Theory" is dead? Not quite. It is true that there are no surviving literary remains of, or references to, dissidents who opposed the Oral Tradition, between the destruction of the Second Temple " and the rise of Karaism. Early Karaite tradition is hazy about links to the Sadduceans. Instead, the medieval accounts of both Karaites and Rabbinates revolved around the personality of * Anan.

Still, most scholars agree that there was no complete break between the sects of the Second Temple period and the sectarians east of the Tigris of the Geonite period. Certain beliefs, such as the opposition to Oral Law - tend to be transmitted, like links in a chain, from earlier sects to later ones. A similar process can be followed in Christianity and Islam. Early sects, though persecuted by religious and secular authorities, often do not disappear completely, but reappear after some time, under a different name, and in a new location. Thus, for instance, on the fringes of medieval Christianity, Manichean traditions, reformist tendencies and opposition to the central authorities, resurfaced (with the Manichean element becoming progressively weaker) as Paulicians in ninth century Armenia, as Bogomils in tenth century Bulgaria, as Cathars or Albigensians in twelfth century southern France, as Lollards in fourteenth century England, as Hussites in fifteenth century Bohemia and as Protestants in sixteenth century Germany and Switzerland.

Sahl ben Mazilah Abu-

A Suri wrote a bible commentary in Arabic called Book of Precepts. Another Arabic Karaite author.

Samaritans and Karaites-

When, for instance, a Samaritan was forced in the nineteenth century to spend a night in *Jerusalem, he would prefer to lodge there with a Karaite. The Samaritan "Rab Simha" synagogue in *Cairo was transferred to the Karaites for safekeeping. More important - the Samaritan laws of inheritance were originally largely derived from the Karaites, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. A Samaritan manuscript from 1348, now in the Bodleyan Library of Oxford, was found to be a Karaite text of 1053, indicating further Samaritan borrowings from the Karaites in the Middle Ages.

There exist a few similarities in customs and festivals between Samaritans and Karaites. Both do not have *Hanukkah, nor do the Samaritans have Purim, while the Karaites do, but without the Fast of Esther. The laws of ritual impurity and purity of both sects are similar and both are more severe about keeping the Sabbath than the Rabbinate (They do not use a "Shabbat Goy", nor automatic electronic devices to keep the food warm, or turn on the lightening). A major point of similarity is that both do not have the Talmud, nor the Rabbinic Oral Tradition. But there are two major differences: The Samaritans venerate the Pentateuch only, while the Karaites hold all of the Old Testament as holy, and to the Samaritans Mount Gerizim is the most holy place, while the Karaites share the Jewish veneration for Jerusalem.

Their present size is very different; there live now fewer than 600 Samaritans, but slightly more than 20,000 Karaites. But while the "national morale" of the Karaites is often rather low, and they are prone to *assimilation, the Samaritans are mostly aggressively proud of their separate identity. It can be claimed that Samaritan history in its early phase is three-dimensional, while Karaite history, till the late eighteenth century, is two-dimensional: it lacks the political dimension. There were no Karaite wars, uprisings, or secular politicians. Nearly all their history took place on the cultural and religious plane. But in that field the quality and importance of the Karaite achievement was of a much higher caliber than the Samaritan one.

Samuel ben Moses al Maghribi-

Physician and scholar in 1434 CE completed his own code of Karaite oral law written in Arabic call "Al Murshus" or The Guide.

Sefer ha- Y ashar" (Book of the straight Path)-

This is *Jeshua ben Judah's eleventh century treatise on the law of incest (*Rikkuv Theory), as translated into Hebrew by his pupil *Jacob ben Simeon. No relation to Sefer Yahshar mentioned in Scripture.

Sefer Mitzvoth (Book of Precepts)-

Compositions carrying this name were written by * Anan, *Levi ben Japheth and others, often of widely diverse content, mirroring different strands of tradition.

"Sefer Otzar Nehmad" (Book of the delightful Treasure) –

Tobias ben Moses' halachic commentary on Leviticus (eleventh century).

Sexual Intercourse-

Rabbinic law recommends sexual intercourse even during the Sabbath, on the basis of Isaiah 58: 13, "Call the Sabbath a pleasure". Karaite law forbids it, as it could be regarded as labor. It interprets the a.m. term of "pleasure" as spiritual pleasure only. * Aaron ben Elijah claimed "One of the Rabbinate told me that in their view it is merely permitted, and is not compulsory, except for scholars, so that they may be free to attend to their scholarly business during the rest of the week". Elijah *Bashyazi was even more skeptical and cited a pun "this (Rabbinic custom) is not pleasure ('oneg) but pother (yega) and plague (nega)".

Spain-

When Christian polemicists started to attack Jews in the 13th century, they often used Karaite arguments against the Talmud and the rabbis. Many Karaites converted to Judaism in 1224 at a time when they were being persecuted.

Moedcahi ben Joseph Sultansky-

Pioneered the approach later developed by Firkovich of **STRESSING THE SEPARATENESS OF KAIRISM its antiquity and its INDEPENDENCE FROM THE REST OF JUDAISM.** This thinking evolved into the National Karaite Movement.

Mosque Styled Worship in Karaite Synagogues-

The customs pertaining to the services in the Karaite synagogues had their roots in the Near East. Not only hands, but also feet were to be washed before entering, like in a mosque. But already in the time of the *Bashyazis the washing of the hands was regarded as more important than that of the feet, and later the latter was discontinued. Still, many Karaite synagogues still have the little fountain outside, used for this purpose in the past. Also the obligation to enter the synagogue without shoes is oriental, though officially based on Exodus 3:5, where God commands Moses to take off his shoes. The shoes are placed outside the entrance on shelves, like in a mosque. Entry to the synagogue is forbidden to women during menstruation and after having given birth to a child, and to both sexes after they have been in contact with a corpse, and during the seven days of mourning. In some synagogues the women are placed in an upper gallery. Both women and men cover their heads in the synagogue. Its eastern side, facing towards Jerusalem, is regarded as holy, and the congregation faces that way throughout. Its floor is covered

with carpets, and usually there are no chairs or other seats, so that those praying can kneel and touch the ground with their foreheads, or adopt any other position on the ground.

Szapszal, Seraya Markovich (1873-1961)-

He was born in *Chufut-Kaie (Bactchiserai), studied at St Petersburg University, where he completed Ph. D. studies in philology and Oriental languages, served as personal tutor to the Iranian Crown-Prince, Muhammad Ali, and when he ascended the peacock-throne in 1907, Szapszal became a minister. He is, however, rumored to have been at the same time a Russian spy. In 1911 he left Persia and became Chief Hakham of all the Crimean Karaite communities. From 1919 to 1927 he lived in *Istanbul. 1927-1939 he served as ecclesiastic head of the Karaites of Poland. He pushed in these years the *National Karaite Movement to new extremes, denying all ties to Judaism, even on the religious level. Further, he tried to encourage the use of Karaimsk, as their national language. In 1941 he met the German authorities, after the invasion of Russia, and convinced them of the non-Jewish background of the Karaites (see *Holocaust). Under their rule he served as Ha-kham of *Vilna and was used by them in 1942 for confrontations with Rabbinite scholars, such as Zelig Kalmanovich, on the subject of the racial roots of the Karaites. After the war he lived in *Troki and Vilna, where he taught at the Soviet dominated Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. He was co- author of a Karaim-Russian-Polish dictionary (published in 1974) and wrote articles on the Karaites of the Crimea. His "History of the Karaites" has not been published so far. Part of his collections and books are kept in a small museum in the old synagogue of Troki.

Boy, wouldn't that be interesting to read his version of Karaite history.

Tobias ben Moses HaAvel-

His main claims to fame are the translations from Arabic into Hebrew, which he and his friends and pupils prepared, such as that of Joseph al-Basir's Sefer Ne'imot" (Book of Melodies), "Sefer Mahkimat Peti" (Book for the Enlightenment of Fools) and "Sefer Moladim" (Book of Festivals), and also works of other authors. Those works, which were not translated, could not be used in Byzantium, as the scholars of later generations spoke no longer any Arabic. Hence the vital importance of Tobias and his project of translations. Z. Ankori stresses "Tobias' indelible contribution to the subsequent history of Karaism. For his literary initiative, based to such a great extent on translation, was in the full sense of the word, an epoch making work of transmission - transmission that is, of the sect's tradition which Tobias and his colleagues had studied and observed in Palestine; transmission to Byzantium of the cumulative literary and scholarly attainment of four generations of Jerusalem masters, transmission of the new spirit of the Late Golden Age of Palestinian Karaism, showing the way towards an independent reinterpretation of the ancient lore and towards its further development on the banks of the Bosphorus" (Byzantium, 450).

There is however a problem. Tobias' work is phrased in such a way that it is not always easy to know where the translation ends and his original contribution commences (though occasionally he starts his own part with "However, I, Tobias say...").

His translations are not his only claim to fame in Karaite history. Living in Byzantium he was aware of the different requirements of life in the Diaspora and, as a result, started the revolutionary move towards an eventual rapprochement with the Rabbinate. He had no hesitation to adopt from them details of biblical exegesis and to quote from their homilies. He has left a unique statement on the relative seniority of Karaism and Rabbanism: "The Rabbinate were our ancestors; in their fold we grew up; in their communities and synagogues we were raised ... Had these (late Rabbinic practices) been known for sure, we could not have hardened our heart and not let any doubt enter it"; (Otzar Nehmad, Bodl. MS 290, 110b).

Furthermore Tobias established the term and idea of "Ha'atakah" which came to describe a Karaite *Oral Tradition of its own. If this sounds like a negation of all that Karaism stands for, it was the more revolutionary and consequential. To camouflage its real meaning Tobias claimed that it must have a clear foundation in Scripture: "Those who say that ha'atakah exists without support from Scripture, merely show that they lack the intelligence to find its legal validity in the Torah."

At the same time there existed in Karaism a corresponding trend whereby the concept of "Community" (*edah) was assimilated within the comprehensive context of tradition. Tobias' broader concept of ha'atakah absorbed the ingredients of the Karaite principle of "Consensus of the Community", which had been one of the earliest sectarian obstructions to halachic initiative, and paved the way to the radical reforms carried out by the later scholars of Karism.

Troki-

A small Lithuanian town. Settled by Karaites in 1392 and by 1441 had their own courts and not part of the Jews. In 1940 during WW 2 the Karaites were not touched, as the Nazis considered them as non-Jews.

Troki, Isaac ben Abraham (c. 1533 - c. 1594)-Karaite Anti-Missionary

He was born in *Troki. He spoke also Latin and Polish and held conversations on theological subjects with Catholic, Protestant and Greek Orthodox clergymen. As a result his famous apology of Judaism, "Hizzuk Emmunah" (the strengthening of faith), though published only a century after his death, was widely acclaimed and copied. Its penetrating examination of the vulnerable points of Christianity caused it to be translated into Latin with an extensive refutation, under the name "Tela ignea Satanae" (the fiery darts of Satan). Voltaire used some of its arguments and mentioned it as a masterpiece of its kind. Troki might have been dismayed at its notoriety, - he had intended it for use by Jewish scholars only.

Some of his hymns are included in the official Karaite prayer book. He is said to have written also some works on Karaite ritual law.

Vilna- The Capital of *Lithuania-

Karaites settled initially in nearby *Troki, while Vilna had a large Rabbinate congregation. Some Karaites moved however also to Vilna, and their synagogue was built of stone, in the Crimean style. During the nineteenth century their numbers increased, while such old communities as *Brizai were abandoned. In 1899 they numbered 155. The congregation of Vilna had a more urban character than those of Troki and *Halicz. A few Karaites studied at the local Academy, which had been founded by the Jesuits. Between the two world wars Vilna belonged to Poland. Quite a few of the Karaites of Troki moved to Vilna, but the Hakham continued to reside in Troki. They numbered some 250. They did not have a quarter of their own, and their center was in the Zwierzyniec quarter, where their synagogue stood. They cooperated with the Germans in World War II, and one Rabbinate survivor reports that some of them played an unedifying role in the Vilna ghetto. On the other hand, some Rabbinate there are reported to have survived the Holocaust by posing as Karaites.

Zionism-

The Karaites of Eastern Europe were far from harboring any Zionist sentiments, - mostly they did not regard themselves as Jews. But also in Egypt, Zionism was not very popular. In the twice-monthly magazine of the Karaite community, "Al-Itihad al-Israili" (The Israelite Union) there appeared in the years 1924-1930 often articles about the Zionist movement, but only as a matter of general interest, without any thought that it could at any time have any direct implication for Egyptian Karaites. No Zionist association was formed, nor any affiliation with the Zionist movement looked for. After World War II the Egyptian government outlawed any Zionist activities. As the situation of all the Jews worsened in Egypt, the interest in Zionism became more real also among the Karaites.
