

# THE KUZZARI



J U D A H   H A L E V I



**Judah Halevi**

# **The Kuzari**

**Book of Refutation and Proof on Behalf of the  
Despised Religion (Kitab al Khazari)**

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# PART ONE

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I WAS asked to state what arguments and replies I could bring to bear against the attacks of philosophers and followers of other religions, and also against (Jewish) sectarians who attacked the rest of Israel. This reminded me of something I had once heard concerning the arguments of a Rabbi who sojourned with the King of the Khazars. The latter, as we know from historical records, became a convert to Judaism about four hundred years ago. To him came a dream, and it appeared as if an angel addressed him, saying: 'Thy way of thinking is indeed pleasing to the Creator, but not thy way of acting.' Yet he was so zealous in the performance of the Khazar religion, that he devoted himself with a perfect heart to the service of the temple and sacrifices. Notwithstanding this devotion, the angel came again at night and repeated: 'Thy way of thinking is pleasing to God, but not thy way of acting.' This caused him to ponder over the different beliefs and religions, and finally become a convert to Judaism together with many other Khazars. As I found among the arguments of the Rabbi, many which appealed to me, and were in harmony with my own opinions, I resolved to write them down exactly as they had been spoken.'<sup>1</sup>

When the King of Khazar (as is related) dreamt that his way of thinking was agreeable to God, but not his way of acting, and was commanded in the same dream to seek the

God-pleasing work, he inquired of a philosopher concerning his religious persuasion.

1. The philosopher replied: There is no favour or dislike in (the nature of) God, because He is above desire and intention. A desire intimates a want in the person who feels it, and not till it is satisfied does he become (so to speak) complete. If it remains unfulfilled, he lacks completion. In a similar way He is, in the opinion of philosophers, above the knowledge of individuals, because the latter change with the times, whilst there is no change in God's knowledge. He, therefore, does not know thee, much less thy thoughts and actions, nor does He listen to thy prayers, or see thy movements. If philosophers say that He created thee, they only use a metaphor, because He is the Cause of causes in the creation of all creatures, but not because this was His intention from the beginning. He never created man. For the world is without beginning, and there never arose a man otherwise than through one who came into existence before him, in whom were united forms, gifts, and characteristics inherited from father, mother, and other relations, besides the influences of climate, countries, foods and water, spheres, stars and constellations. Everything is reduced to a Prime Cause; not to a Will proceeding from this, but an Emanation from which emanated a second, a third, and fourth cause.

The Cause and the caused are, as thou seest, intimately connected with one another, their coherence being as eternal as the Prime Cause and having no beginning. Every individual on earth has his completing causes; consequently an individual with perfect causes becomes perfect, and

another with imperfect causes remains imperfect, as the negro who is able to receive nothing more than the human shape and speech in its least developed form. The philosopher, however, who is equipped with the highest capacity, receives through it the advantages of disposition, intelligence and active power, so that he wants nothing to make him perfect. Now these perfections exist but in abstracto, and require instruction and training to become practical, and in order that this capacity, with all its completeness or deficiencies and endless grades, may become visible. In the perfect person a light of divine nature, called Active Intellect, is with him, and its Passive Intellect is so closely connected therewith that both are but one. The person (of such perfection) thus observes that he is The Active Intellect himself, and that there is no difference between them. His organs--I mean the limbs of such a person--only serve for the most perfect purposes, in the most appropriate time, and in the best condition, as if they were the organs of the Active Intellect, but not of the material and passive Intellect, which used them at an earlier period, sometimes well, but more often improperly. The Active Intellect, however, is always successful. This degree is the last and most longed-for goal for the perfect man whose soul, after having been purified, has grasped the inward truths of all branches of science, has thus become equal to an angel, and has found a place on the nethermost step of seraphic beings. This is the degree of the Active Intellect, viz. that angel whose degree is below the angel who is connected with the sphere of the moon. There are spiritual forces, detached from matter, but eternal like the

Prime Cause and never threatened by decay. Thus the soul of the perfect man and that Intellect become One, without concern for the decay of his body or his organs, because he becomes united to the other. His soul is cheerful while he is alive, because it enjoys the company of Hermes, Asclepios, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle; nay, he and they, as well as every one who shares their degree, and the Active Intellect, are one thing. This is what is called allusively and approximately Pleasure of God. Endeavour to reach it, and the true knowledge of things, in order that thy intellect may become active, but not passive. Keep just ways as regards character and actions, because this will help thee to effect truth, to gain instruction, and to become similar to this Active Intellect. The consequence of this will be contentment, humility, meekness, and every other praiseworthy inclination, accompanied by the veneration of the Prime Cause, not in order to receive favour from it, or to divert its wrath, but solely to become like the Active Intellect in finding the truth, in describing everything in a fitting manner, and in rightly recognizing its basis. These are the characteristics of the (Active) Intellect. If thou hast reached such disposition of belief, be not concerned about the forms of thy humility or religion or worship, or the word or language or actions thou employest. Thou mayest even choose a religion in the way of humility, worship, and benediction, for the management of thy temperament, thy house and (the people of thy) country, if they agree to it. Or fashion thy religion according to the laws of reason set up by philosophers, and strive after purity of soul. In fine, seek purity of heart in which way thou art able, provided thou

hast acquired the sum total of knowledge in its real essence; then thou wilt reach thy goal, viz. the union with this Spiritual, or rather Active Intellect. Maybe he will communicate with thee or teach thee the knowledge of what is hidden through true dreams and positive visions.

2. Said to him the Khazari: Thy words are convincing, yet they do not correspond to what I wish to find. I know already that my soul is pure and that my actions are calculated to gain the favour of God. To all this I received the answer that this way of action does not find favour, though the intention does. There must no doubt be a way of acting, pleasing by its very nature, but not through the medium of intentions. If this be not so, why, then, do Christian and Moslim, who divide the inhabited world between them, fight with one another, each of them serving his God with pure intention, living either as monks or hermits, fasting and praying? For all that they vie with each other in committing murders, believing that this is a most pious work and brings them nearer to God. They fight in the belief that paradise and eternal bliss will be their reward. It is, however, impossible to agree with both.

3. The Philosopher replied: The philosophers' creed knows no manslaughter, as they only cultivate the intellect.

4. Al Khazari: What could be more erroneous, in the opinion of the philosophers, than the belief that the world was created in six days, or that the Prime Cause spoke with mortals, not to mention the philosophic doctrine, which declares the former to be above knowing details. In addition to this one might expect the gift of prophecy quite common among philosophers, considering their deeds, their



knowledge, their researches after truth, their exertions, and their close connexion with all things spiritual, also that wonders, miracles, and extraordinary things would be reported of them. Yet we find that true visions are granted to persons who do not devote themselves to study or to the purification of their souls, whereas the opposite is the case with those who strive after these things. This proves that the divine influence as well as the souls have a secret which is not identical with what thou sayest, O Philosopher.

After this the Khazari said to himself: I will ask the Christians and Moslims, since one of these persuasions is, no doubt, the God-pleasing one. As regards the Jews, I am satisfied that they are of low station, few in number, and generally despised.

He then invited a Christian scholastic, and put questions to him concerning the theory and practice of his faith.

The Scholastic replied: I believe that all things are created, whilst the Creator is eternal; that He created the whole world in six days; that all mankind sprang from Adam, and after him from Noah, to whom they trace themselves back; that God takes care of the created beings, and keeps in touch with man; that He shows wrath, pleasure, and compassion; that He speaks, appears, and reveals Himself to His prophets and favoured ones; that He dwells among those who please him In short (I believe) in all that is written in the Torah and the records of the Children of Israel, which are undisputed, because they are generally known as lasting, and have been revealed before a vast multitude. Subsequently the divine essence became embodied in an embryo in the womb of a virgin taken from the noblest ranks

of Israelitish women. She bore Him with the semblance of a human being, but covering a divinity, seemingly a prophet, but in reality a God sent forth. He is the Messiah, whom we call the Son of God, and He is the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We condense His nature into one thing, although the Trinity appears on our tongues. We believe in Him and in His abode among the Children of Israel, granted to them as a distinction, because the divine influence never ceased to be attached to them, until the masses rebelled against this Messiah, and they crucified Him. Then divine wrath burdened them everlastingly, whilst the favour was confined to a few who followed the Messiah, and to those nations which followed these few. We belong to their number. Although we are not of Israelitish descent, we are well deserving of being called Children of Israel, because we follow the Messiah and His twelve Israelitish companions who took the place of the tribes. Many Israelites followed these twelve (apostles), and became the leaven, as it were, for the Christians. We are worthy of the degree of the Children of Israel. To us was also granted victory, and expansion over the countries. All nations are invited to this religion, and charged to practise it, to adore the Messiah and the cross on which He was put, and the like. Our laws and regulations are derived from the Apostle Simon, and from ordinations taken from the Tōrā, which we study. Its truth is indisputable, as is also the fact that it came from God. It is also stated in the New Testament: I came not to destroy one of the laws of Moses, but I came to confirm and enlarge it.

5. Then said the Khazari: I see here no logical conclusion; nay, logic rejects most of what thou sayest. If both appearance and experience are so palpable that they take hold of the whole heart, compelling belief in a thing of which one is not convinced they render the matter more feasible by a semblance of logic. This is how natural philosophers deal with strange phenomena which come upon them unawares, and which they would not believe if they only heard of them without seeing them. When they have examined them, they discuss them, and ascribe them to the influence of stars or spirits without disproving ocular evidence. As for me, I cannot accept these things, because they come upon me suddenly, not having grown up in them. My duty is to investigate further.

He then invited one of the Doctors of Islam, and questioned him regarding his doctrine and observance.

The Doctor said: We acknowledge the unity and eternity of God, and that all men are derived from Adam-Noah. We absolutely reject embodiment, and if any element of this appears in the Writ, we explain it as a metaphor and allegory. At the same time we maintain that our Book is the Speech of God, being a miracle which we are bound to accept for its own sake, since no one is able to bring anything similar to it, or to one of its verses. Our prophet is the Seal of the prophets, who abrogated every previous law, and invited all nations to embrace Islam. The reward of the pious consists in the return of his spirit to his body in paradise and bliss, where he never ceases to enjoy eating, drinking, woman's love, and anything he may desire. The

requital of the disobedient consists in being condemned to the fire of hell, and his punishment knows no end.

6. Said to him the Khazari: If any one is to be guided in matters divine, and to be convinced that God speaks to man, whilst he considers it improbable, he must be convinced of it by means of generally known facts, which allow no refutation, and particularly imbue him with the belief that God has spoken to man. Although your book may be a miracle, as long as it is written in Arabic, a non-Arab, as I am, cannot perceive its miraculous character; and even if it were read to me, I could not distinguish between it and any other book written in the Arabic language.

7. The Doctor replied: Yet miracles were performed by him, but they were not used as evidence for the acceptance of his law.

8. Al Khazari: Exactly so; but the human mind cannot believe that God has intercourse with man, except by a miracle which changes the nature of things. He then recognizes that to do so He alone is capable who created them from nought. It must also have taken place in the presence of great multitudes, who saw it distinctly, and did not learn it from reports and traditions. Even then they must examine the matter carefully and repeatedly, so that no suspicion of imagination or magic can enter their minds. Then it is possible that the mind may grasp this extraordinary matter, viz. that the Creator of this world and the next, of the heavens and lights, should hold intercourse with this contemptible piece of clay, I mean man, speak to him, and fulfil his wishes and desires.

9. The Doctor: Is not our Book full of the stories of Moses and the Children of Israel? No one can deny what He did to Pharaoh, how He divided the sea, saved those who enjoyed His favour, but drowned those who had aroused His wrath. Then came the manna and the quails during forty years, His speaking to Moses on the mount, making the sun stand still for Joshua, and assisting him against the mighty. (Add to this) what happened previously, viz. the Flood, the destruction of the people of Lot; is this not so well known that no suspicion of deceit and imagination is possible?

10. Al Khazari: Indeed, I see myself compelled to ask the Jews, because they are the relic of the Children of Israel. For I see that they constitute in themselves the evidence for the divine law on earth.

He then invited a Jewish Rabbi, and asked him about his belief.

11. The Rabbi replied: I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt with signs and miracles; who fed them in the desert and gave them the land, after having made them traverse the sea and the Jordan in a miraculous way; who sent Moses with His law, and subsequently thousands of prophets, who confirmed His law by promises to the observant, and threats to the disobedient. Our belief is comprised in the Torah--a very large domain.

12. I had not intended to ask any Jew, because I am aware of their reduced condition and narrow-minded views, as their misery left them nothing commendable. Now shouldst thou, O Jew, not have said that thou believest in the Creator of the world, its Governor and Guide, and in Him



who created and keeps thee, and such attributes which serve as evidence for every believer, and for the sake of which He pursues justice in order to resemble the Creator in His wisdom and justice?

13. The Rabbi: That which thou dost express is religion based on speculation and system, the research of thought, but open to many doubts. Now ask the philosophers, and thou wilt find that they do not agree on one action or one principle, since some doctrines can be established by arguments, which are only partially satisfactory, and still much less capable of being proved.

14. Al Khazari: That which thou sayest now, O Jew, seems to be more to the point than the beginning, and I should like to hear more.

15. The Rabbi: Surely the beginning of my speech was just the proof, and so evident that it requires no other argument.

16. Al Khazari: How so?

17. The Rabbi: Allow me to make a few preliminary remarks, for I see thee disregarding and depreciating my words.

18. Al Khazari: Let me hear thy remarks.

19. The Rabbi: If thou wert told that the King of India was an excellent man, commanding admiration, and deserving his high reputation, one whose actions were reflected in the justice which rules his country and the virtuous ways of his subjects, would this bind thee to revere him?

20. Al Khazari: How could this bind me, whilst I am not sure if the justice of the Indian people is natural, and not dependent on their king, or due to the king or both?

21. The Rabbi: But if his messenger came to thee bringing presents which thou knowest to be only procurable in India, and in the royal palace, accompanied by a letter in which it is distinctly stated from whom it comes, and to which are added drugs to cure thy diseases, to preserve thy health, poisons for thy enemies, and other means to fight and kill them without battle, would this make thee beholden to him?

22. Al Khazari: Certainly. For this would remove my former doubt that the Indians have a king. I should also acknowledge that a proof of his power and dominion has reached me.

23. The Rabbi: How wouldst thou, then, if asked, describe him?

24. Al Khazari: In terms about which I am quite clear, and to these I could add others which were at first rather doubtful, but are no longer so.

25. The Rabbi: In this way I answered thy first question. In the same strain spoke Moses to Pharaoh, when he told him: 'The God of the Hebrews sent me to thee,' viz. the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For Abraham was well known to the nations, who also knew that the divine spirit was in contact with the patriarchs, cared for them, and performed miracles for them. He did not say: 'The God of heaven and earth,' nor 'my Creator and thine sent me.' In the same way God commenced His speech to the assembled people of Israel: 'I am the God whom you worship, who has led you out of the land of Egypt,' but He did not say: 'I am the Creator of the world and your Creator.' Now in the same style I spoke to thee, a Prince of the Khazars, when thou

didst ask me about my creed. I answered thee as was fitting, and is fitting for the whole of Israel who knew these things, first from personal experience, and afterwards through uninterrupted tradition, which is equal to the former.

26. Al Khazari: If this be so, then your belief is confined to yourselves?

27. The Rabbi: Yes; but any Gentile who joins us unconditionally shares our good fortune, without, however, being quite equal to us. If the Law were binding on us only because God created us, the white and the black man would be equal, since He created them all. But the Law was given to us because He led us out of Egypt, and remained attached to us, because we are the pick of mankind.

28. Al Khazari: Jew, I see thee quite altered, and thy words are poor after having been so pleasant.

29. The Rabbi: Poor or pleasant, give me thy attention, and let me express myself more fully.

30. Al Khazari: Say what thou wilt.

31. The Rabbi: The laws of nature comprise nurture, growth, and propagation, with their powers and all conditions attached thereto. This is particularly the case with plants and animals, to the exclusion of earth, stones, metals, and elements.

32. Al Khazari: This is a maxim which requires explanation, though it be true.

33. The Rabbi: As regards the soul, it is given to all animated beings. The result is movement, will power, external as well as internal senses and such like.

34. Al Khazari: This, too, cannot be contradicted.

35. The Rabbi: Intellect is man's birthright above all living beings. This leads to the development of his faculties, his home, his country, from which arise administrative and regulative laws.

36. Al Khazari: This is also true.

37. The Rabbi: Which is the next highest degree?

38. Al Khazari: The degree of great sages.

39. The Rabbi: I only mean that degree which separates those who occupy it from the physical point of view, as the plant is separated from inorganic things, or man from animals. The differences as to quantity, however, are endless, as they are only accidental, and do not really form a degree.

40. Al Khazari: If this be so, then there is no degree above man among tangible things.

41. The Rabbi: If we find a man who walks into the fire without hurt, or abstains from food for some time without starving, on whose face a light shines which the eye cannot bear, who is never ill, nor ages, until having reached his life's natural end, who dies spontaneously just as a man retires to his couch to sleep on an appointed day and hour, equipped with the knowledge of what is hidden as to past and future: is such a degree not visibly distinguished from the ordinary human degree?

42. Al Khazari: This is, indeed, the divine and seraphic degree, if it exists at all. It belongs to the province of the divine influence, but not to that of the intellectual, human, or natural world.

43. The Rabbi: These are some of the characteristics of the undoubted prophets through whom God made Himself

manifest, and who also made known that there is a God who guides them as He wishes, according to their obedience or disobedience. He revealed to those prophets that which was hidden, and taught them how the world was created, how the generations prior to the Flood followed each other, and how they reckoned their descent from Adam. He described the Flood and the origin of the 'Seventy Nations' from Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah; how the languages were split up, and where men sought their habitations; how arts arose, how they built cities, and the chronology from Adam up to this day.

44. Al Khazari: It is strange that you should possess authentic chronology of the creation of the world.

45. The Rabbi: Surely we reckon according to it, and there is no difference between the Jews of Khazar and Ethiopia in this respect.

46. Al Khazari: What date do you consider it at present?

47. The Rabbi: Four thousand and nine hundred years. The details can be demonstrated from the lives of Adam, Seth and Enōsh to Noah; then Shem and Eber to Abraham; then Isaac and Jacob to Moses. All of them represented the essence and purity of Adam on account of their intimacy with God. Each of them had children only to be compared to them outwardly, but not really like them, and, therefore, without direct union with the divine influence. The chronology was established through the medium of those sainted persons who were only single individuals, and not a crowd, until Jacob begat the Twelve Tribes, who were all under this divine influence. Thus the divine element reached a multitude of persons who carried the records further. The



chronology of those who lived before these has been handed down to us by Moses.

48. Al Khazari: An arrangement of this kind removes any suspicion of untruth or common plot. Not ten people could discuss such a thing without disagreeing, and disclosing their secret understanding; nor could they refute any one who tried to establish the truth of a matter like this. How is it possible where such a mass of people is concerned? Finally, the period involved is not large enough to admit untruth and fiction.

49. The Rabbi: That is so. Abraham himself lived during the period of the separation of languages. He and his relatives retained the language of his grandfather Eber, which for that reason is called Hebrew. Four hundred years after him appeared Moses at a time when the world was rich in information concerning the heavens and earth. He approached Pharaoh and the Doctors of Egypt, as well as those of the Israelites. Whilst agreeing with him they questioned him, and completely refused to believe that God spoke with man, until he caused them to hear the Ten Words. In the same way the people were on his side, not from ignorance, but on account of the knowledge they possessed. They feared magic and astrological arts, and similar snares, things which, like deceit, do not bear close examination, whereas the divine might is like pure gold, ever increasing in brilliancy. How could one imagine that an attempt had been made to show that a language spoken five hundred years previously was none but Eber's own language split up in Babel during the days of Peleg; also to trace the origin of this or that nation back to Shem or Ham,

and the same with their countries? Is it likely that any one could to-day invent false statements concerning the origin, history, and languages of well-known nations, the latter being less than five hundred years old?

50. Al Khazari: This is not possible. How could it be, since we possess books in the handwriting of their authors written five hundred years ago? No false interpolation could enter the contents of a book which is not above five hundred years of age, such as genealogical tables, linguistic and other works.

51. The Rabbi: Now why should Moses' speeches remain uncontradicted? Did not his own people raise objections, not to speak of others?

52. Al Khazari: These things are handed down well founded and firmly established.

53. The Rabbi: Dost thou think that the languages are eternal and without beginning?

54. Al Khazari: No; they undoubtedly had a beginning, which originated in a conventional manner. Evidence of this is found in their composition of nouns, verbs, and particles. They originated from sounds derived from the organs of speech.

(55. The Rabbi: Didst thou ever see any one who contrived a language, or didst thou hear of him?)

56. Al Khazari: Neither the one nor the other. There is no doubt that it appeared at some time, but prior to this there was no language concerning which one nation, to the exclusion of another, could come to any agreement.

57. The Rabbi: Didst thou ever hear of a nation which possessed different traditions with regard to the generally

acknowledged week which begins with the Sunday and ends with the Sabbath? How is it possible that the people of China could agree with those of the western islands without common beginning, agreement and convention?

58. Al Khazari: Such a thing would only have been possible if they had all come to an agreement. This, however, is improbable, unless all men are the descendants of Adam, of Noah, or of some other ancestor from whom they received the hebdomadal calculation.

59. The Rabbi: That is what I meant. East and West agree on the decimal system. What instinct . induced them to keep to the number ten, unless it was a tradition handed down by the first one who did so?

60. Al Khazari: Does it not weaken thy belief if thou art told that the Indians have antiquities and buildings which they consider to be millions of years old?

61. The Rabbi: It would, indeed, weaken my belief had they a fixed form of religion, or a book concerning which a multitude of people held the same opinion, and in which no historical discrepancy could be found. Such a book, however, does not exist. Apart from this, they are a dissolute, unreliable people, and arouse the indignation of the followers of religions through their talk, whilst they anger them with their idols, talismans, and witchcraft. To such things they pin their faith, and deride those who boast of the possession of a divine book. Yet they only possess a few books, and these were written to mislead the weak-minded. To this class belong astrological writings, in which they speak of ten thousands of years, as the book on the Nabataean Agriculture, in which are mentioned the names

of Janbūshār, Sagrīt and Roanai. It is believed that they lived before Adam, who was the disciple of Janbūshār, and such like.

62. Al Khazari: If I had supported my arguments by reference to a negro people, i.e. a people not united upon a common law, thy answer would have been correct. Now what is thy opinion of the philosophers who, as the result of their careful researches, agree that the world is without beginning, and here it does not concern tens of thousands, and not millions, but unlimited numbers of years.

63. The Rabbi: There is an excuse for the Philosophers. Being Grecians, science and religion did not come to them as inheritances. They belong to the descendants of Japheth, who inhabited the north, whilst that knowledge coming from Adam, and supported by the divine influence, is only to be found among the progeny of Shem, who represented the successors of Noah and constituted, as it were, his essence. This knowledge has always been connected with this essence, and will always remain so. The Greeks only received it when they became powerful, from Persia. The Persians had it from the Chaldaeans. It was only then that the famous (Greek) Philosophers arose, but as soon as Rome assumed political leadership they produced no philosopher worthy the name.

64. Al Khazari: Does this mean that Aristotle's philosophy is not deserving of credence?

65. The Rabbi: Certainly. He exerted his mind, because he had no tradition from any reliable source at his disposal. He meditated on the beginning and end of the world, but found as much difficulty in the theory of a beginning as in

that of eternity. Finally, these abstract speculations which made for eternity, prevailed, and he found no reason to inquire into the chronology or derivation of those who lived before him. Had he lived among a people with well authenticated and generally acknowledged traditions, he would have applied his deductions and arguments to establish the theory of creation, however difficult, instead of eternity, which is even much more difficult to accept.

66. Al Khazari: Is there any decisive proof?

67. The Rabbi: Where could we find one for such a question? Heaven forbid that there should be anything in the Bible to contradict that which is manifest or proved! On the other hand it tells of miracles and the changes of ordinary, things newly arising, or changing one into the other. This proves that the Creator of the world is able to accomplish what He will, and whenever He will. The question of eternity and creation is obscure, whilst the arguments are evenly balanced. The theory of creation derives greater weight from the prophetic tradition of Adam, Noah, and Moses, which is more deserving of credence than mere speculation. If, after all, a believer in the Law finds himself compelled to admit an eternal matter and the existence of many worlds prior to this one, this would not impair his belief that this world was created at a certain epoch, and that Adam and Noah were the first human beings.

68. Al Khazari: Thus far I find these arguments quite satisfactory. Should we continue our conversation, I will trouble thee to adduce more decisive proofs. Now take up the thread of thy earlier exposition, how the great conviction



settled in thy soul, that the Creator of body and spirit, soul, intellect and angels--He who is too high, holy and exalted for the mind still less for the senses to grasp--that He holds intercourse. with creatures made of low and contemptible material, wonderful as this may seem. For the smallest worm shows the wonders of His wisdom in a manner beyond the human mind.

69. The Rabbi: Thou hast forestalled much of my intended answer to thee. Dost thou ascribe the wisdom apparent in the creation of an ant (for example) to a sphere or star, or to any other object, to the exclusion of the Almighty Creator, who weighs and gives everything its due, giving neither too much, nor too little?

70. Al Khazari: This is ascribed to the action of Nature.

71. The Rabbi: What is Nature?

72. Al Khazari: As far as philosophy teaches, it is a certain power; only we do not know what it really is. No doubt philosophers know.

73. The Rabbi: They know as much as we do. Aristotle 13 defined it as the beginning and primary cause through which a thing either moves or rests, not by accidents, but on account of its innate essence.

74. Al Khazari: This would mean that the thing which moves or rests on its own account has a cause through which it moves or rests. This cause is Nature.

75. The Rabbi: This opinion is the result of diligent research, criticism, and discrimination between accidental and natural occurrences. These things astonish those who hear them, but nothing else springs from the knowledge of nature.

76. Al Khazari: All I can see is, that they have misled us by these names, and caused us to place another being on a par with God, if we say that Nature is wise and active. Speaking in their sense, we might even say: possessed of intelligence.

77. The Rabbi: Certainly; but the elements, moon, sun and stars have powers such as warming, cooling, moistening, drying, etc., but do not merit that wisdom should be ascribed to them, or be reckoned more than a function. Forming, measuring, producing, however, and all that shows an intention, can only be ascribed to the All-wise and Almighty. There is no harm in calling the power which arranges matter by means of heat and cooling, 'Nature,' but all intelligence must be denied it. So must the faculty of creating the embryo be denied to human beings, because they only aid matter in receiving human form from its wise Creator. Thou must not deem it improbable that exalted divine traces should be visible in this material world, when this matter is prepared to receive them. Here are to be found the roots of faith as well as of unbelief.

78. Al Khazari: How is this possible?

79. The Rabbi: These conditions which render man fit to receive this divine influence do not lie within him. It is impossible for him to gauge their quantity or quality, and even if their essence were known, yet neither their time, place, and connexion, nor suitability could be discovered. For this, inspired and detailed instruction is necessary. He who has been thus inspired, and obeys the teaching in every respect with a pure mind, is a believer. Whosoever strives by speculation and deduction to prepare the

conditions for the reception of this inspiration, or by divining, as is found in the writings of astrologers, trying to call down supernatural beings, or manufacturing talismans, such a man is an unbeliever. He may bring offerings and burn incense in the name of speculation and conjecture, whilst he is in reality ignorant of that which he should do, how much, in which way, by what means, in which place, by whom, in which manner, and many other details, the enumeration of which would lead too far. He is like an ignoramus who enters the surgery of a physician famous for the curative power of his medicines. The physician is not at home, but people come for medicines. The fool dispenses them out of the jars, knowing nothing of the contents, nor how much should be given to each person. Thus he kills with the very medicine which should have cured them. Should he by chance have effected a cure with one of the drugs, the people will turn to him and say that he helped them, till they discover that he deceived them, or they seek other advice, and cling to this without noticing that the real cure was effected by the skill of the learned physician who prepared the medicines and explained the proper manner in which they were to be administered. He also taught the patients what food and drink, exercise and rest, etc., was necessary, likewise what air was the best, and which place of repose. Like unto the patients duped by the ignoramus, so were men, with few exceptions, before the time of Moses. They were deceived by astrological and physical rules, wandered from law to law, from god to god, or adopted a plurality at the same time. They forgot their guide and master, and regarded their false gods as helping causes, whilst they are