

## BACKGROUND IN JUDAISM

Both Christianity and Islam come out of the diversity of the Jewish traditions. Today it is known that there was a much wider intellectual tradition within Judaism than was previously thought

Many books have been written about how Jesus would have gone to India, Tibet, Japan, etc. to get his ideas. We know now that everything he taught was available within his own background and he had no need to go anywhere.

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We have always assumed that the four sects or parties mentioned in Josephus "Histories" were all that existed in New Testament times> However, there were evidently others.

First, of the four mentioned, three are found in the New Testament. These are the Pharisees, basically a lay movement of men who tried to keep the law and the only group to survive the fall of the temple in 70 CE.

the Saducees, who were the group associated with the temple, the priestly/aristocrats who ceased to exist when the temple fell

Finally, the Zealots, the group who brought about the fall of Jerusalem when they rebelled against Rome in 66 CE. They tried again in 135 in the Bar Kochba rebellion but this time Rome finished them off.

The only other group mentioned by Josephus was the Essenes so when the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered it was assumed that this was a group of Essenes. However, upon further examination, Jewish scholars now believe they were not Essenes but rather a

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group that split from the Temple after the Macabean revolt because they felt the priesthood had been co-opted by the "wrong" group of priests.

Whoever this group were, they expected two messiahs; one a priestly messiah who would get the temple back, the other a military one who would get rid of the Romans.

They also had taken many ideas from Persia and the Zoroastrian beliefs for they saw an apocalyptic end of time when the sons of light would defeat the sons of darkness.

This apocalyptic bent was also part of the earliest strands of Christianity but reflects the major writings within Judaism for the previous 300 years or so. Only one apocalyptic book got into the Hebrew Scriptures, and that is Daniel, written around 168-163 BCE. It got into the scripture only because the Rabbies at the Council of Jamnia around 93 CE thought it was from the time of Nebucunesser's rule in Assyria. However, there were many such writings around in this time, and they were very popular.

Christianity was born in this apocalyptic milieu and, unfortunately, many sects still are into it.

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#### THE WISDOM TRADITION

An aspect of Judaism that only recently began to be studied is the Wisdom movement. Many teachers were around and writing in the few hundred years before the Christian era. One of the greatest was Ben Sirah, a teacher whose notes go to make up one of the great wisdom books of the apocrypha, Ecclesiasticus, or Ben Sira. It is part of the Catholic bible, but the rabbis at Jamnia

rejected it since it dated from the time after Ezra. Ie, the time of inspiration had passed after this time.

#### PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA (20 BCE - 50 CE)

Probably the greatest of the Jewish thinkers and a contemporary of both Jesus and Paul was Philo, a neo-Platonist from Alexandria, Egypt. His influence was seen on the latest of the gospels, John, and upon later Christian and Jewish thinkers.

surprisingly, it was the Christian church that preserved Philo's writings and Jerome even mentions him as one of the church Fathers. His significance for Christian spirituality proved to be of primary importance but for Judaism his writings were lost until the 16th century. I will discuss him more when dealing with Spinoza.

Basically then, Philo's ideas were picked up by other philosophers, both Christian and Islamic and added the neo-platonic element, along with Plotinus work, to the mystical traditions of both.

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Other tensions existed within Judaism of this time as well for there were those Jews who were willing to compromise with the world, ie, take on aspects of the Hellenization that Alexander the Great began, even exercising in the gymnasium in the nude. Others wanted to remain pure and distinct with no such compromise

This tension still exists today, particularly in Israel where the Orthodox Jews attempt to impose their views on those coming from the Reform movement. In fact, Orthodox Rabbies will

not readily recognize marriages, divorces, etc of the Reform Jews in Israel.

The fact is, that the Orthodox originally were against the Zionist movement as they believed only the messiah could re-constitute Israel and founding Israel as a secular state was usurping the messiah's prerogative. However, once founded, the Orthodox didn't hesitate to impose their ideas and will in Israel.

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#### TWO COVENANTS/THREE MACRO-STORIES

Two other things need to be pointed out in regard to the Jewish background. First, there are two traditions in regard to the covenant of Israel with God.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE is actually the oldest strand and goes back to the Jewish writer (the royal story) where David is given a relationship with God that has nothing to do with his deeds. It is forever regardless of actions. This is why David tells Solomon to do whatever he wants since God will not disown him as he did Saul. This covenant is read back on Abraham.

THE COVENANT OF LAW is basically from the priestly version and says that God will keep his covenant with Israel as long as Israel obeys God. This is a very different concept and the church through the ages have used both of these to prove text. However, the one used the most to chastise people (heretics?) is the covenant of law.

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### THREE MACRO STORIES.

This comes from Marcus Borg's book Meeting Jesus again for the First time. He points out that within the Hebrew bible there are three main stories.

The EXODOUS is the first, the idea of God calling people out of Egypt, however one interprets this. to go to a land where he will be their God. The Neo platonc writers saw this as an allagory of the human souls journey. Many people see themselves as on this journey.

The EXILE is the second macro story and this one speaks to those who may not have a concept of being sinful but rather, feel somehow they are in Exile from God or other people. This is one of the major themes of the Hebrew scriptures and has been a minority way of understanding the human predicament.

finally, and the one most often used to interpret Christianity, is the Priestly story of the SACRIFICE FOR SIN that is called for by God to expiate sins. Unfortunately, this is the way the "Jesus story" has most often been interpreted by the church but it is not the only way. However, it is this way which makes the church exclusive in the sense that unless one accepts this "sacrifice" one is not "saved". It is this interpretation that has been used against heretics, Jews, Witches, etc. with great effectiveness.

To conclude keep these ideas in mind as we look at Jewish, Christian and Islamic "heretics".

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## KABBALISTS:

Unlike Christianity and Islam, heresy within Judaism was not persecuted with fire and sword. In fact, often the heretical nature of some mystics was not recognized by the community, particularly if the mystics succeeded in using "orthodox" vocabulary. This is, in fact, what many mystics have done. Thus there have been few times of overt persecution, with a couple of exceptions.

## SOURCES OF TRUTH:

For the Jewish mystic there are two sources of truth. The most important is the MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE itself. This experience is seen as a continuation of the revelation given on Sinai.

The HEBREW BIBLE, which is the revelation of God to Israel is the second source of truth but is interpreted in light of the mystical experience.

The main "heresy" of the kabbalists, then, has to do with the original act of revelation on Mt. Sinai. To the mystic, this revelation appears as something whose true meaning has yet to unfold itself. The secret revelation is to him the real and decisive one. Thus the canonical text is melted down and given another form as it passes thru the mystical consciousness.

Since all mystics must keep the Torah, both written and oral, what they DO is thus ORTHODOX, which is what is important in Judaism.

So, what is KABALLAH: it means "tradition" and it must be remembered it is not the name of a dogma or system but a general term for the mystical movements dating from the 2nd temple thru to today.

Within Kaballah there is a considerable variety of religious experience from the MERKABAH SCHOOL, from the 1st to 11th century. to the writings of the SPANISH KABBALISTS and those who later flourished in SAFED, Israel in the 16th century. The HASSIDIC movement today is nothing like any of these. However they are all connected by certain ideas and presuppositions, especially the eschatological nature of mystical knowledge.

## HERETICAL THOUGHT IN JUDAISM

### INTERNAL UNITY OF GOD:

Jewish Mysticism in its various forms represents an attempt to interpret God's unity in light of God's acts of creation, revelation and redemption. This gave birth to the idea of a whole realm of divinity, which underlies the world of our sense data and which is present and active in all that exists. This is called by Kabbalists the WORLD OF THE SEFIROTH.

God in itself cannot be known for it is an absolute being so its very nature is incapable of becoming the subject of a revelation to others. This God is not the God of the canonical writings.

Thus the God of the canonical writings is known by various attributes or his manifestations on this side of creation. God as It is in Itself is impersonal.

The unknown God, EN SOF which means basically "That which is infinite". The Spanish kabbalists also used phrases like "root of all Roots", "Great Reality". Thus Kabbalism abandons the personalistic basis of the Biblical conception of God.

The mystic strives to assure himself of the living presence of God, the God of the Bible, The God with attributes like goodness, wisdom, etc. but at the same time is unwilling to renounce the idea of the hidden God who remains eternally unknowable in the depths of Its own self, or of Its nothingness.

the God of all religion must have attributes, which on another plane represent also the mystic's own scale of moral values. God is good, merciful, just, etc. The Kabbalists do not even recoil at the idea that in the higher sense there is the root of evil in God. This found in the attributes of severity and stern judgement. This to many Jews is heretical.

### MERKABAH MYSTICS: 1st to 11th century

This is the earliest of the mystical schools and lasted for about 1000 years. It was Gnostic and proves that Christianity was not alone in absorbing the apocalyptic, or end time, theology that was prevalent at this time. The BOOK OF ENOCH particularly ETHIOPIAN ENOCH was associated with this school.

## HERETICAL THOUGHT IN JUDAISM

The point of their practice was, thru various secret words, to pass thru the heavens to the seventh heaven where one would see the MERKABAH. One would not see God, only the throne.

The vision one would see was the same one Ezekiel saw and which Isaiah (6) saw when he was called as a prophet.

The 14th chapter of Ethiopian Enoch contains the oldest description of the throne. However, the HEKHALOTH books describe the heavenly halls or palaces thru which the visionary passes. One must know the secret words, sometimes pages of them, to pass safely.

Only the initiated could learn the secrets and often ones palm would be read or other magical ways of determining who could become initiated. It had nothing to do with moral or social status, Tho earlier, morality played a big part.

ASCENT OF THE SOUL from the earth thru the spheres of the hostile planet-angels and rulers of the cosmos and its return to its divine home in the "fullness" of God's light, which to the gnostic signified redemption.

There are ascetic practices before one can make the ascent lasting many days. Fasting, prayer, hymns and songs, etc. After going thru all this he perceives the interior and the chambers, as if he saw the 7 palaces with his own eyes.

In GNOSTIC thought there are 7 planetary spheres ruled by archons who are opposed to the liberation of the soul and must be overcome. These have been replaced in Jewish thought by gatekeepers who are posted to the right and left of the entrance to the heavenly hall thru which the soul must pass in its ascent. In either case, the soul requires a pass word and a magic seal made of a secret name which puts the demons and hostile angels to flight.

There is a great deal in common with the Christian Gnostics, who also must somehow come thru the 7 heavens. The difference was, Jesus was the heavenly revealer who taught them what they needed to know to pass safely. We will discuss them beginning next week.

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#### SABBATIANISM AND MYSTICAL HERESY

Sabbatai Zvi (1626-1676) was a Jewish mystic whose claim to be the Messiah gave rise to a worldwide Jewish messianic fervor. He was the central figure in messianic movement whose vitality didn't wane until the 18th century.

Sabbatai was born in Smyrna, where he received a thorough education in the Talmud. As an adolescent he immersed himself in kabbala and followed a strict ascetic regimen. Throughout his life he was a manic/depressant. In his exalted states he trespassed Jewish law and committed outrageous deeds.

In 1648 he publically announced that he was the Messiah and after wandering thruout Greece and Turkey, he returned to Smyrna and eventually settled in Jerusalem and Cairo.

In 1665 word reached Sabbatai of a yourn Kabbalist, Nathan of Gaza, who was reputed to cure afflicted souls. Nathan was

convinced, and succeeded in convincing Sabbatai, that his (Sabbatai's) psychological states were proof of his messianic destiny. Throughout 1665 Nathan spread the news of Sabbatai's identity as the Messiah.

Nathan's letters ignited an enthusiastic response throughout the entire Jewish world. Sabbatai eventually traveled to Constantinople hoping to convert the Sultan to Judaism. After a complicated series of events, perhaps under threat of execution, ended up converting to Islam.

When news of his apostasy spread the high pitched excitement died down. He lived for 10 more years surrounded by his devoted believers, who interpreted his paradoxical behaviour as one more phase in the tormented life and necessary sufferings of a messiah.

Sabbatai's conversion marked the true beginning of the Sabbatian movement, which was energized by a passion for revolution. The advent of the messiah meant release from the oppressive status quo and the creation of a new world order and new norms of behaviour which, to the orthodox, were heretical in nature.

When Sabbatai converted to Islam this opened a gap between the two spheres of inner and outer experience, of redemption and it was a conflict for which no one was prepared. Everyone had to ask themselves whether they were willing to discover the truth about the expected redemption in the distressing course of history or in the inner reality which had revealed itself in the depths of the soul.

The Sabbatians disparaged the 'unknown' god. They believed that in the martyrdom of exile Israel had lost the true and pure knowledge of God. The object of religion can only be the 'god of Israel' and its unity with the Shekinah. The Sabbateans developed a Trinity of the unknown God and the idea developed that the completion of salvation is dependent upon the separate appearance of a messiah for each of these three aspect of trinity, with a female messiah for the last (the shekinah).

Even the moderate Sabbatians tried to evolve a conception of 'God which conflicted with the fundamental tenents of Judaism. The reaction of of orthodoxy and also of orthodox Kabbalism against an attempt to tear the God of Reason and the revealed God asunder, is very comprehensible.

The Sabbatian emphasis on the redemptive personality of the leader and its identification of psychological states with divine processes helped prepare the way for the Hasidic movement.

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#### HASIDISM IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EASTERN EUROPE.

after the bitter disapointment of the messianic hopes and apostasy of Zevi, as well as a widespread massacure of the jewish population in Poland, even the best intentioned rabvbinic leadership struggled in vain to preserve Jewish morale in declining Poland. Modernity was beginning to unravel the patterns of adjustment that characterized Jewish life throughout the medieval period.

After Sabbatai Zevi the mystical ideals of communion with kGod and ;the hope for ultimate redemption were living realities

for these Jews. FHasidism repudiated Asceticism, defused a messianism that called for a change in historical circumstances and taught that true redemption was to be found in the internal religious spirit of each individual.

Baal shem Tov, or Master of the Good name, was the founder in the 1730's. He attracted a select circle of preachers, scholars and mystics who spread the ideals of spiritual renewal. The leaders were very charismatic, and by many rabbis, considered illiterate. It was a powerful movement but by the middle of the 19th century it began to stagnate for several reasons. Internally because of the institutionalization of charisma, and externally because of persistent rabbinic opposition and the growing forces of Jewish secularism.

However, after the holocaust, what had been considered heresy became the bastion of orthodoxy in both America and Israel. It is staunchly orthodox and is characterized by its refusal to accommodate to modernity.

There are several schools of Hasidim and each has a Zaddik, a highly charismatic rabbinic leader. Their doctrines are all over the scale, including theocentricism to humanism, from affirmation of this world to denial of the world; from zionism to anti-zionism, from sober intellectualism to exuberant emotionalism. Often all of these polarities are found in a single zaddik.

The two things all are agreed upon that are foci for the hasidic thought are the notions of DVEKUT (adhesion), or communion with God's presence in all things , and the nature of

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The Zaddik, or hasidic master. Inspired by the example of the Zaddik, Each Hasid strives to sanctify the everyday.

Thus Hasidism is that rare paradox of a heresy that has become the prevailing orthodoxy.

... of the ... inspired by the ...  
... each Hasid strives to rectify the error of.

Thus Hasidism is that rare paradox of a heresy that has  
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BARUCH SPINOZA (1632-1677)

It is thought today that Spinoza most likely developed his  
heretical views out of the heterodox controversies within the  
Amsterdam Jewish community. He raised questions on whether Moses  
wrote the Pentateuch, whether Adam was the first man and whether  
the Mosaic law took precedence over natural law, among other  
things. On July 27, 1656, Spinoza was anathematized and cursed  
and excommunicated from the Jewish community. The hostility of  
the Jewish community even extended in an attempt to kill him.

He managed to live out his life w/o joining any sect or  
church. He was constantly accused of being an atheist for he  
critiqued revealed religion, justified intellectual and religious  
freedom and political freedom. He was under attack, literally,  
and in 1671 sent a long letter to the Jewish leader defending  
himself against charges of atheism and irreligion.

Spinoza laid the basis for all later critical work on the  
Bible. He developed what he believed to be the true method of  
biblical interpretation. Every person has the right to engage in  
biblical interpretation; it does not require supernatural  
illumination or special authority.

His supreme principle was that the Bible must be interpreted  
on its own terms. He argued that to deduce thru legitimate

inference the intention of the authors of scripture there had to be three aspects.: 1. an ananlysis of the Hebrew language. 2. the compilation and classification of the expressions of each of the books of the Bible; 3. research as to the origins of the bivblical writings, as far as they can still be ascertained. The questions Who wrote?, What was the occasion of writing? Whom did he write for and In What language. Also, one should inquire into the fate of each book, how it was received, into whose hands it fell, how many different versions were there, why and how it became part of the Canon and finally, how all the books now universally accepted as sacred, were united into a single whole.

In short, all the principles now used in modern Biblical scholarship were developed origanally by Spinoza. He discovered discrepencies in the prophets, and argued that the Jews were not alone in having prophets, Thus, the election of the Hebrews should not be understood as an indication that they were different from other people in intellect or virtue; their election refers only to their kingdom and it ended with the latters collapse.

According to Spinoza, stories in the Bible are not to be believed literally; they are intended to instruct the people, who could not comprehend abstract concepts, definitions and deductions.

Spinoza states emphatically that any difficulties with the text do not touch the central content of faith; that there is one God, who demands justice and neighborly love and forgives those who repent. Faith is independent of philosophical thought.

## SPINOZA'S PHILOSOPHY

Spinoza argued that nature is governed by eternal and necessary decrees of God. NOTHING can be contrary to natural laws! Nothing supernatural is possible (no miracles) since god determined nature lawfully.

True knowledge by which one could achieve genuine happiness is reached thru perceiving things solely through their essences or proximate causes. In this way one knows why something is what it is. Skepticism is only the result of lack of understanding.

In his ETHICS Spinoza develops his startling conclusion that God or Nature is the only possible substance, and that everything in the world is an aspect of God, and can be conceived in terms of one of God's two knowable attributes, thought or extension.

If God or Nature is the only substance, everything else is understood in terms of Him, and is deducible from His essence. God acts solely by the laws of his own nature. In terms of this, the world is a logical order, following necessarily from God's nature, and nothing could be different than it is.

God is not a purposful being. There are no goals being achieved. He lacks nothing, needs nothing. He just Is and due to his being everything happens, and happens of necessity.

Spinoza's uniqueness lies in being the first person in the Judeo-Christian world since Philo to construct a world view involving no axioms or principles based on revelation.

Spinoza, like Philo, teaches a doctrine of eternal creation and places at the forefront of his proofs for God's existence a version of the ONTOLOGICAL argument, ie, the presupposition of

God is God) The human mind is a fragment of the Divine Mind, a finite mode of the absolutely infinite intellect.

Like Philo, the highest knowledge is direct knowledge of God. the human's highest goal is to attach oneself completely to God, his mind absorbed in intellectual prayer. One becomes rational instead of irrational.

Spinoza has been called "God intoxicated" with the main difference with Philo being the neo-platonic rhetoric and mysticism used by Philo. It is unfortunate that Philo's writings were not accessible to the Jewish Philosophical community for Spinoza probably would not have been excommunicated.

The image of Spinoza is as one of the great heroes of free and modern thought and he has provided one of the fundamental ideologies for the modern secular world.

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To conclude: These are the major heresies within Judaism. Karl Marx could be called a Jewish heretic, tho he is seldom classified that way. However, his idea of bringing about heaven on Earth, as he wanted in the Communist Manifesto is certainly an idea based in the Judeo Christian tradition. His father was a rabbi, and his concept of the proletarian revolution was certainly an attempt to create heaven here. The problem is, he left out the concept of Sin, which is at the basis of the human predicament in Jewish/Christian/Islamic thought.



## The Qaraites

*Qaraites* (Karaites) are members of an Jewish "back-to-the-Bible" reform movement. And this is most likely the basis of BÇnĒ MiqrÁÛ, or "sons of the "Bible" used as a self-determination. Qara'im could mean either "Readers" or "Assemblers" stemming from "to read" (*qara*) or some say to "gather." While it is possible an emphasis is placed on "preaching" and gathering adherents, the Qaraite emphasis on individual responsibility of reading the Scriptures and allowing latitude of interpretation suggests the source *qara* "to read." Arabic *qarra'* means "scripture expert" and the Arabic for Qaraites is *Qara'iyyun*. Qaraites of earlier periods were often found in Arab lands.

Historical Qaraism traces back to Anan ben Dawid (fl. 770) who was the first to pen sentiments possibly found earlier at Qumran, and first century non-rabbinic movements, and also those of Ovadyah (Abu 'Isa 'Abd Allah) and Yudgan.

Ovadyah started a rebellion against the Muslim authorities during the reign of the Khalif 'Abd al-Malik (CE 685-705), coming from Itsfahan, al-Jibal, Persia. This was a "nationalistic" rebellion to establish Jewish sovereignty in the area. He was quickly defeated and killed. His successor and pupil was Yudgan ("Yehudah"), who turned his efforts to more spiritual things. Neither wrote anything that has survived, and possibly wrote nothing. But Ovadyah and Yudgan both, it is said, recognized the prophetic positions of Yahshua ben Yosef and also Mu'ammad.

Anan was from a rabbinic family in Iraq. It was he who clearly set aside rabbinic traditions and their Oral Law, in favor of the Torah as written. The story of how this transpired is offered by rabbinites, author unknown:

"Anan had a younger brother named Üannanyah. Although Anan exceeded his brother in both learning and age, the contemporary Rabbanite scholars refused to appoint him exiliarch, because of his great lawlessness (*peritsut*) and lack of piety. They therefore turned to his brother Üannanyah, for the sake of the latter's great modesty, retiring disposition, and fear of Heaven, and they set him up as exiliarch. Thereupon Anan was seized by wicked zeal---he and with him all manner of evil and worthless men from among the remnants of the sect of Tsadoq and Boethus; they set up a dissident sect---in secret, for fear of the Muslim government which was in power then---and they appointed Anan as their own exiliarch." (Nemoy, Leon. *A Karaite Anthology*. p. 4.)

This is the rabbinic side of the story (similar in spirit to the church fathers' view of the 'Evyonim). But some important facts come through. Anan attracts "remnants" of the Sadduqim ("Sadducees"). This tells us that there were still Sadduqim to be found in the eighth century, and that their rejection of "Pharisee" (becoming the later rabbinic Judaism)

Oral Law tradition was still an issue. There was a continuity between the first Qaraites and the earlier <sup>Sadducees</sup> Paddûqīm. Today it is realized that there were more than one group of Paddûqīm, one Herodian collaborators with Rome who were represented by the Temple hierarchy in the earlier first century and during Roman occupation of Palestine, and another branch represented by "true sons of Tsadoq" described in the documents from Qumran. Even the mention of two founders of the Paddûqīm reflects this state of affairs. (The 'Evyonim also at least partially find their origin in ideas prevalent in the Qumran documents, including the term "Evyonim.")

According to the story, Anan is arrested because of the Jews and his rebellious words and is to be hanged. But he gets advice from a Muslim scholar to claim the Jews have no authority because he is starting a new religion. He bribes the Muslim authority, and deceives his followers claiming inspiration from 'Eliyah the prophet in a night vision.

As the same report above continues, two more items of belief surface: an admiration for 'Eliyah and also the fact that Qaraites determine the calendar based on a visible new moon and intercalations according to the ripening of green (barley) ears (as do we) by the biblical method.

Because of the rigidity of Qaraite observance, and their poor circumstances, they attracted not many especially among those who were poor already. But here is a tie to holy poverty /humility ('evyon), taken as a title by the 'Evyonim, and employed in Qumran documents to describe members of the Community. Avraham ibn Da'ud, a rabbinic writer (in 1162) claims that Anan was of the House of Dawid.

Some more similarities between the <sup>Sadducees</sup> Paddûqīm and Qaraites are the literal interpretation of the lex talionis ("eye for eye, etc."); Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) always falls on the first day of the week (Sunday); and Qaraite writers of the tenth century claimed they had Paddûqīm writings in their possession---and indeed the Genizah at the Ezra Synagogue, where the Damascus Document (CD) describing a sect of the "sons of Tsadoq" was found half a century before discoveries at Qumran, is believed to have been a Qaraite synagogue at one time.

The Qaraites have always been greatly outnumbered by the adherents of rabbinic Judaism, and today there are small communities spread over Eastern Europe, and a fairly large community at Ramla near Tel Aviv, Yisrael.

## Some Aspects of Qaraism

- ① ■ One major characteristic of Qaraism is its conservatism and has changed little doctrinally from its inception. Only slight changes to law concerning forbidden marriages, the adoption of a prayerbook (as opposed to previously only using scripture passages), and a streamlining or elimination of early ascetic practices have been the only real changes to the faith.
- ② ■ The literalist approach to scripture has precluded the extended application of Torah, and metaphysics of Rabbinism.

- ③ ■ There are core beliefs shared with Rabbinism: Total monotheism; the omnipotence of YHWH; man's responsibility for his actions; the messianic hope; prohibitions against human sacrifice, homicide, adultery, theft, and perjury; originating in sacred scripture.
- ④ ■ Marriage laws are enforced and interpreted more strictly than in Rabbinism, but polygamy is theoretically permitted (though usually avoided according to local governments and practicality).
- ⑤ ■ Shabbat observance is more strictly enforced.
- ⑥ ■ Kashrut (dietary laws) is in some ways stricter, but the separation of meat and dairy is not observed except literally to not boil a kid in its mother's milk. (We also interpret this literally.)
- ⑦ ■ Holy Days are set mostly by sighting visible new moons, so days can differ according to country locations. Also, non-biblical (and post-biblical) holy days observed by Rabbinic Judaism are not observed. (This has been our practice also.)
- ⑧ ■ Tefillin ("phylacteries") and mezuzzot ("door amulets") are not used. (We have left this to individual choice, but also interpret figuratively as can be seen in our view of the "beast mark" of *Revelations*.)
- ⑨ ■ The laws based on "eye for an eye" are taken literally, though like Rabbinism, local governments really dictate laws concerning damages and criminal offenses. So sectarian laws are moot in these areas.