

universally accepted, even by those who initially disagreed with it? How long did it take your faith to take root, grow, and become completely strengthened? [There must have been some evolutionary process,] for all faiths undoubtedly begin with a few individuals, who fortify themselves so that they can disseminate that which God wants them to. They then gradually grow in number, either because of their own might or because a ruler helps them by forcing the masses to convert to their religion."

81. The Rabbi responded: "Only rational religions that have originated from human sources evolve this way. Then, when this type of religion succeeds, the founder will say that he was aided and taught by the Creator, and the like. On the other hand, a religion that actually originates from the Creator will arise instantaneously. God just says, 'Let it be...,' and it will be, just like the creation of the universe."

82. The Kuzari said: "You astound me with your words, Rabbi."

83. [1] The Rabbi said: "It gets even more astounding. Long ago, Jews were slaves in Egypt. There were 600,000 men aged twenty and above, who all traced their ancestry to the twelve tribes of Yaakov. Not one Jew left the

פְּשִׁטָּה וְנִרְאָתָה, וְאִדָּה נִתְחַבְּרוּ הַדְּעוֹת אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ חִלּוּקוֹת, וּבְכַמֵּה שָׁנִים נִתְיַסְדָּה הָאֱמוּנָה וְנִבְנְתָה עַד שֶׁנִּתְחַזְּקָה וְנִשְׁלְמָה, כִּי הַתְּחִלּוֹת הַדְּרוֹת מִבְּלִי כִּסְפָּה לֹא תִהְיֶינָה כִּי אִם בְּיַחֲדָיִם, שְׂמִתְגַּבְּרִים לְעֵזֶר הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִרְצֶה הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִרְאוֹתוֹ, וְהֵם הוֹלְכִים וְרִפִּים, וְנִעְזָרִים בְּעֲצָמָם אוֹ שְׂיָקוּם לָהֶם מִלְּפָּנַי עוֹזֵר וְיִקְרִיֶה הַמִּטְוֶן עַל הַדָּבָר הַזֶּהוּ. **פ.א.** אָמַר הַחֹבֵר: לֹא יָקוּם וְיִגְדֵל עַל הַדְּרָה הַזֶּה אֱלֹהֵי הַנִּימוּסִים הַשְּׂכֻלִיִּים, אֲשֶׁר הִתְחַלְתֶּם מִן הָאָדָם, וְכֹאֲשֶׁר יִגְמַר וְיַעֲזֹר יֵאמַר כִּי הוּא יַעֲזֹר מִן הַבּוֹרָא וְיִמְלִיכֵם וְהַדּוֹמָה לָהֶן, אֲבָל הַנִּימוּסִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְחַלְתֶּם מִהַבּוֹרָא הוּא קָם פִּתְאֹם, וְאָמַר בּוֹ: הִנֵּה, יָהִי, בְּכִרְיַאת הָעוֹלָם. **פ.ב.** אָמַר הַכּוּזָרִי: הַבְּהִלַת אוֹתֵנּוּ בְּדַרְבֵּי, הַחֹבֵר. **פ.ג.** אָמַר הַחֹבֵר: אֲבָל הַעֲנִן מִכְּהִיל יוֹתֵר, כִּי הָיוּ כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־שָׁעֲבָדִים בְּמִצְרַיִם שֶׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֱלֹף רִגְלִי, מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְיָמָעֵלָה, מִתְיַחֲסִים אֶל שָׁנִים עֶשְׂרִי שְׁבַעִים, לֹא נִמְלַט מֵהֶם

What they do not realize is that the real remedy is the prescription of the wise doctor, who mixes the compounds and knows exactly what and how much to dispense to each patient. The doctor would also prescribe for the patient the right diet, exercise, sleeping habits, environment, marital conduct, and the like.

[3] "This is how people were before the advent of Moshe. With the exception of a few individuals, people were seduced by belief in the power of the stars and other natural forces. They wandered from religion to religion, from god to god, some even adhering to several gods. Eventually, they forgot the One Who conducts and manages these forces and Who placed them in the universe to benefit mankind. Instead, these forces became a source of harm to man because of man's inadequate preparation [to receive influence]⁶⁸ and his improper use of them. Ultimately, then, the only truly beneficial tool is the Divine [Torah], and the lack thereof causes harm."

80. The Kuzari said: "Let us get back to the subject.⁶⁹ Tell me, how did your religion originate and spread? How did it eventually become

אֵלָיו; וְלֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי הַמוֹעִיל בְּעֲצָמוֹתוֹ אֲמָנָם הוּא עֲצַת הַרוֹפֵא הַהוּא הַחֹכֵם, אֲשֶׁר חֹבֵר הַרְפּוּאוֹת הַהֵם, וְהָיָה מוֹשֵׁר אוֹתָם כְּרֵאוֹ, וְהָיָה קוֹעֵז הַחוֹלָה שְׂוִמּוֹן מִה שְׁעָרֶיהָ לְרַפּוּאָה מִמֵּאֲכָל וּמִשָּׂקָה וּתְנוּעָה וּמְנוּחָה וְשֵׁנָה וְקִיּוּצָה וְאוֹר וּמִשְׁגֵּל וְזוֹלָתָם. וְעַל הַדְּרָה הַזֶּה הָיוּ בְּגֵי אָדָם קִדְּם כּוֹשָׁה, זוֹלָתִי מַעֲט כּוֹשֵׁר, נִפְתָּיִם בְּנִימוּסֵי הַבּוֹכִיכִים וְהַמְבַעֲעִים, וְנִעֲתָקִים מִנִּימוּסֵי אֵל נִמוּסֵי, וּבִאֲלוֹתָהּ אֵל אֱלֹהֵהּ, וְאִשְׁשֵׁר שְׂמִתְחַזְּקִים בְּרַפִּים מֵהֶם, וְשׂוֹכְחִים מִנְהִיגֵם וּמְנַהֲלֵם וּמְשִׁימֵם סִבָּה לְהוֹעִלוֹת, וְהֵם בְּעֲצָמָם סִבָּה לְזִנּוּקִים, כִּפִּי הַהֲקֵנָה וְהוֹפְנוֹן. אֲבָל הַמוֹעִיל בְּעֲצָמוֹ הוּא הַעֲנִן הָאֱלֹהִי וְהַמִּצְוָה בְּעֲצָמוֹ הוּא הַעֲדָרִי. **פ.א.** אָמַר הַכּוּזָרִי: נָטוּב אֵל עֲנִינֵנוּ וְהוֹדִיעֵנִי, אִידָּה קָמָה תוֹרַתְכֶם וְאִידָּה

68. That is, these forces are only beneficial to the righteous, who have prepared themselves by having Divinity rest upon them (K.Y.).
69. The Kuzari is returning to the discussion that was interrupted in Kuzari 1:27, concerning the concept of the Jewish Torah.

It took just one moment at midnight [during the final plague] for all the firstborn children in each household to perish. There was not one home where death was not present,⁷³ except for the homes of the Jews. These plagues were preceded by warnings,⁷⁴ threats,⁷⁵ and guarantees of when they would occur⁷⁶ and when they would stop.⁷⁷ This was to prove that all these acts were intentionally brought by a God of will — Who carries out that will when He so desires — and not by the stars, nor by happenstance.

[4] "Afterwards, the Jews left Egypt by God's command, on the very night that the Egyptian firstborn perished. They traveled toward the Red Sea, guided by a pillar of cloud [by day] and a pillar of fire [by night]."⁷⁸

(2) Frogs both afflicted the simplest creation, water; (3) Lice sprouted from the earth; (4) Wild Beasts and (5) Animal Pestilence affected the domain of animals; and (6) Boils affected human bodies. (7) Hail was a product of the air; (8) Locusts affected plants; (9) Darkness affected air once again; and (10) the Plague of the Firstborn took away the souls of the Egyptians.

73. *Shemos* 12:30.

74. For example, "Let My people go!" (*Shemos* 7:16).

75. Such as, "For if you refuse to release [them], I will plague your entire country with frogs" (*ibid.*, 7:27).

76. Such as by the plague of wild beasts, when Moshe said, "Tomorrow there shall be this sign" (*ibid.*, 8:19).

77. Such as when Moshe promised that the frogs would disappear "tomorrow" (*ibid.*, 8:6).

78. *Ibid.*, 13:21.

פחצות לילה כל בכור בבתיהם, ואין בית אשר אין שם מת וולתי בתי בני ישראל, וכל המפוח האלה היו באות באזהרה ובהתראה ובמועד, ומסתלקות, כדי שיתברר כי הם בקנה מאת אלוה חפז, עושה חפצו בעת שיהפז, לא מועד הטבע ולא מועד הכוכבים ולא מועד קשפים ולא במקרה.

ואחר יצאו בני ישראל בדבר השם, פלילה הוא בעת שמתו בכוריהם, מעבודת פרעה, והלכו דרך ים סוף, ומתהלם עמוד הענן ועמוד אש, הולכים לפניהם ומנהיגים אותם.

fold nor fled to another land, nor was there any intermarriage.⁷⁰ They were all awaiting the time that God had promised to their ancestors — Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov — when He would give them the Land of Canaan as their inheritance.

[2] "At that time, Canaan was inhabited by seven nations who were at the height of their success and strength. The Jewish people, by contrast, were at their lowest point of misery and impoverishment; they were in the hands of Pharaoh, who killed their babies so that they would not increase in number."⁷¹

[3] "It was then that God sent Moshe and Aharon, despite their position of weakness, to stand before Pharaoh, despite his position of strength. They evoked supernatural signs and wonders. Miraculously, Pharaoh was powerless to deny them an audience, nor could he cause them any harm. He was also unable to protect himself from the ten plagues, which began in the water and spread to the land, the air, the plants, the animals, and finally to the bodies and souls of the Egyptians."⁷²

70. The Pesach Haggadah makes this comment on the verse, "And they became a great nation" (*Devarim* 26:5): "This teaches that they remained distinct there." See *Shemos Rabbah* 1:28.

71. *Shemos* 1:22.

72. *The Kuzari* shows the wisdom God exercised in bringing the particular plagues that He did. God wished to demonstrate that he was the Master over all creation, from its simplest to its most complex components. Thus, God brought the plagues as follows: (1) Blood and

84. The Kuzari said: "All this must certainly have been an act of God. It is only fitting, then, to accept those commandments that are related to the Exodus, because no one can dismiss these events as magic, illusion, or hallucination. Even if they did hallucinate the plagues and the splitting of the Red Sea, they could not hallucinate their salvation from slavery, or the deaths of their captors, or their taking and keeping of spoils from their captors. Those who suggest otherwise are perverse heretics."

85. The Rabbi said: "Even more convincing is that afterwards the Jews lived in the barren desert for forty years. God miraculously rained down upon them a special bread which was created anew each day (except for the Sabbath), and this is what they ate for the entire forty years."⁸²

86. The Kuzari said: "This too cannot be dismissed [as mere hallucination] — that for forty years this bread fell in the desert for 600,000 men and their families, six days a week except for the Sabbath. What also follows is that one should be obliged to accept the commandment [to observe the] Sabbath, for we see that Divinity is attached to it."

פד. אמר הכוזרי: זהו הענין האלהי באמת, ומה שנתלה בו מן המצוות, ראוי לקבלו, כי אין נקנס בלב מאמנתו ספק, לא מקשפים ולא מתחבולה ולא מדקיון, ואילו נדמה להם המפוח והבקע הים ועברם בתוכו לא ידמה להם העלאתם מן העבודות ומות מעבדיהם וקחת שללם והשאיר קמונים אצלם, וזה עקשות מאפיקורסים. פה. אמר הקבר: ואחרי זה יומר מזה — שעמדו בפני ארבעים שנה מקום אין זרע, והוריד להם לחם נקרא יום יום, מלבד השבת, אכלוהו ארבעים שנה.

פו. אמר הכוזרי: גם אלה אין פהם מדה, מה שמתמיד ארבעים שנה לשש מאות אלה איש והנלוים אליהם, ירד ששה ימים וקשתלם יום השבת, אם כן חובה לקבל השבת מפני שהיה הענין האלהי נדבק בו.

[5] "Their leader and their priest, namely, the Divinely favored elders Moshe and Aharon respectively, were eighty or more years old when they prophesied. Up until that time, the people did not have any commandments other than the few commandments that they had inherited from the superior individuals [in the generations] from Adam to Noah.⁷⁹ Moshe did not nullify those commandments; rather, he added to them."⁸⁰

[6] "Afterwards, Pharaoh pursued the Jews [into the desert]. However, the Jews did not require weapons with which to protect themselves, nor were they trained warriors. Instead, God miraculously split the Red Sea for them, and the Jews walked safely through. God then drowned Pharaoh and his soldiers, and cast their corpses on the shore where they were seen by the Jewish people.⁸¹ The story is long and well known."

79. This refers to the seven Noachide laws. According to tradition, Adam was given six of the Noachide laws. These were passed down by the elite individuals in each generation until Noah, who was given the seventh law, the prohibition of eating from a live animal (*ever min hachai*). See *M.T., Melachim*, Ch. 9.

80. The Rabbi feels it necessary to point this out, based on what he stated in *Kuzari* 1:81, that Judaism, unlike other religions, sprouted instantaneously. One may challenge this by arguing that first there existed seven commandments, which then evolved into many more. But the Rabbi rejects that. The original seven were not given exclusively to the Jewish nation as part of their new religion (unlike the new laws that Moshe introduced); rather, the Noachide laws are binding on all mankind, and were therefore not part of the