

# Reuven Fahn and the Karaites

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## **Abstract**

The article, divided into five chapters, is devoted to the corpus of works by the Hebrew writer Reuven Fahn (1878–1939?) about the Karaites. The works consist of both research and literary writings. The article emphasizes the fact that Reuven Fahn was the only author who wrote stories about the lives of the Karaites in Hebrew. In the first chapter, parts of his life are depicted, emphasizing the period when he lived in the town of Halicz. The second describes briefly the variety of research and literary works he produced. The third deals with his approach as a religious Jew to research on the Karaites. The fourth studies his stories about various characters in the Karaite community and their customs. The stories demonstrate Reuven Fahn's close familiarity with the Karaites, the compassion he felt toward them, as well as his criticism of them. The fifth is devoted to a description of seven Karaite legends which he personally heard from them and then put into writing in Hebrew. To finalize the picture, the history of the Karaites in WWII is briefly mentioned, as well as the immigration of part of the community to Israel in the 1950s. A list of selected works by Reuven Fahn concerning the Karaites is included in the article.

## **Keywords**

Reuven Fahn, Karaites, Nurit Govrin

## **Reuven Fahn and the Karaites**

### **1. From his history**

Reuven Fahn was born on 21 February 1878 in the village of Starunia, near Sołotwina (Soltvyno), in Eastern Galicia. He most probably died at the end of 1939. His father, Avraham ha-Levi, was a manager in an earth wax and crude oil mine. His mother, Zissel, was a descendant of Rabbi David ha-Levi

Segal (1586–1667), who was nicknamed *Baal Turei Zahav* (Author of “Rows of gold”). He served as a rabbi in Kraków (Cracow) and Lwów (Lemberg).

In his youth, he was educated by private teachers. After his marriage at the age of 19, he moved to Halicz in 1897, where his wife resided. He became a widower at the age of 25, when his wife died, leaving him with two little girls. One daughter from the family of his firstborn daughter, Hana, who was killed in the Shoah, survived and raised a family in France. The family of her other daughter, Etká, lives in Israel. In 1905, Reuven Fahn married another woman from the city of Bolechów (Bolekhiv). He had a son and a daughter with his second wife. His daughter, Yafa, died at the age of nine during World War I, when the family was living in Vienna. His son, Yosef, who was a sickly boy, gave Reuven Fahn a grandson, but his entire family was later killed in the Shoah.

Until World War II, Reuven Fahn lived in Halicz (from which Galicia, the name of the region, derives), where he became rich working in trade. Besides trade, he was also engaged in literature at the time. Fahn became closer to the community of Karaites in Halicz and decided to study their history and literature. He was active in the society for nationalism and Zionism in the city, particularly in the religious-national-Zionist organisation “Ha-Mizrahi”. He continued his research and belletristic writing while making his living from trade. During World War I he was forced to leave Halicz; his houses were burnt and destroyed, and all his goods were plundered. In 1914, he migrated to Vienna and worked in the “Adat Yisrael” library of the Jewish community. There he dedicated himself to the study of the Haskalah movement. On 1 December 1914, he was enlisted into the Austro-Hungarian army, where he served until 2 November 1918, the day the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed. At the end of 1918, he returned to Galicia. As his house in Halicz was now in ruins, he went to live in Stanisławów (Stanyslaviv), now Ivano-Frankivsk, which was then the capital city of Eastern Galicia, where the West Ukrainian Republic had just been founded. Jews had begun to participate in the National Council of the Republic, which had at its head “the Council of Eastern Galicia Jewry”. Reuven Fahn served as secretary of that institution, which existed until the Ukrainian government was toppled by the Poles in May–June of 1919. Between 1919 and 1926, he returned to his work in trade. He visited Palestine as a tourist in 1924. He undertook efforts to establish a rural settlement for Eastern Galicia Jewry in Palestine, but these plans failed. In 1925, he prepared to move to Palestine and liquidated his business. At that time, Palestine was facing a crisis, so his

Aliyah was postponed, and meanwhile his economic situation deteriorated. In 1927, he assumed the position of secretary in the community of Stanisławów and founded a library there. When the Red Army invaded Eastern Poland (1939), he was arrested by the Soviet secret police, sentenced, and sent to Siberia, where he disappeared without a trace. He was 61.

## 2. From his writings

Reuven Fahn began his activity in the Hebrew press in Galicia when he was 15 (1893). This included works in *Ha-Maggid (he-Ḥadash)* (Cracow), *Ha-Mitspe* (Cracow), and later also in the Hebrew press in other places, for example, *Ha-‘Olam*, *Ha-Tor* and *Ha-Ḥed* in Jerusalem) and *Ba-Derekh* in Warsaw. At the same time, he published in literary collections which originated in Galicia, Warsaw and Palestine. Various literary works by Reuven Fahn describe the vicissitudes of life, represent the influence of historical events, the places where he lived and was active, and his personal experiences. He received a traditional Jewish education combined with a classical European education, and study of the German language. He was well versed in the Hebrew Bible, traditional Jewish literature, and contemporary Hebrew literature. In addition, he was familiar with European classical literature, mainly in German translation. His works include various literary genres: stories, poems, legends, studies in ethnography and folklore, journalistic writing, translations, literary criticism and memoirs. He published “Sipur aggada le-bnei ha-neur’im” (A legend for the youth) and *Yosele Teglasher* (Lwów, 1922). In his youth, his writing was first influenced by the Hebrew Bible, the nature of the Carpathian Mountains, and the village of Starunia where he grew up, which is close to the town of Sołotwina. The landscape of these two places was described in his story “Be-harei ha-Karpat” (“In the Carpathian Mountains”, 1925–1926), which was dedicated to Rabbi Moshe Solotviner. It seems that these are the only descriptions of these two distant places in Hebrew literature. Starunia: “There are fields of crude oil in the village of Staruna. What the Creator skimmed from the oils of the earth above, he added to the oils of the earth below. On the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, there is the residue of salt land. No weeds grow green and no plants grow there. Only in a few places, the land reveals liquid matter and it is black and oily, and anyone who touches it cannot wash it off quickly... People say it is the entrance to hell”. Sołotwina: “The town of Sołotwina is located at the edge of the

mountains. The Carpathian Mountains surround it at all the cardinal points, they rise as if they want to raise their head to the summit of the skies. The eye is not satiated with seeing, and it cannot reach to the end of the mountain range, which extends without end and limit". In the second stage of his life, when he encountered the community of Karaites in Halicz; he took interest in their lives and books and studied their past. Later he became like one of the family in the Karaite community. He published studies about their history (1910), stories about their ways of life, and collected legends that he heard from them. In the third stage of his life, at the beginning of World War I, he was obliged to move to Vienna, where he was drafted into the Austrian army. No details about the military period of his life are known. It seems that he successfully combined his life as a soldier with his work as a librarian. Vienna enabled him to move from the province to the centre and gave him the opportunity to pursue his studies in history, literature and Judaism in its libraries. At the same time, he was exposed to the vigorous cultural life there. During that period he published the history book *Tkufat Haskalah be-Vienah* (The Haskalah Period in Vienna; 1919), which "was written during sleepless nights when I served in the army", *Otobiografya* (Autobiography) [late 1920s], and *Ketavim* (*Ketuvim*, p. 260). The second part of his studies was published in *Pirkei Haskalah* (Chapters in Haskalah; Stanisławów, 1937).

His unknown booklet in Yiddish, entitled *Geshikhte fun der yudisher national-oytonomie inem period fun der Mayrev-Ukranisher Republik* (Jewish national autonomy in the period of the West Ukrainian Republic; Lwów 1933), is particularly fascinating. It was published during the formation of the West Ukrainian Republic (1918–1919) and focused on the Jews of Eastern Galicia in the period after World War I. Reuven Fahn was involved in the Jewish movement there and knew it inside out. This chapter in Jewish history, which is known to only a few, took place within the Ukrainian independence movement, before it was brought under the wing of the Soviet Union. It is also the only work published about that autonomous Jewish body during the time of Ukrainian rule in West Galicia.

Reuven Fahn sent Bialik the first volume of *Sefer ha-Kara'im* (The book of Karaites). Bialik added a note on the margin of his thank you letter of 22 March 1929 sent from Tel Aviv: "The word 'קראים' (Karaites) has two *kamats* vowels, thus it is 'קְרָאִים'". For some reason, the vocalisation of the word on the title pages of chapter two of Reuven Fahn's first volume is 'ספר הקראים' (i.e. the

first vowel is *shva* and the second *kamats*). On 2 November 1930, he wrote a letter from Stanisławów to Bialik in Tel Aviv, asking for advice on where to publish the historical chapter he had written about the Ukrainian Autonomy; as an insider, as someone who took part in the events, he reveals the harsh conditions he experienced and the enormous solitude he felt in an unsupportive environment: “In addition to this, here I am asking for advice: the years 1918–19 were an important chapter in Eastern Galicia, after the World War ended, when the Ukrainians assumed government of the state. The Jewish inhabitants deliberated during these events, organised and protected themselves, demanded national autonomy, etc. It would be a pity if this chapter disappeared from Hebrew history. At that time, I was the ‘secretary’ of the ‘Jewish National Council of Eastern Galicia’, and understood all the events and paths of diplomacy at the time. I risked my life to save important documents, and for several years I worked hard to save the surviving papers from total destruction (because the archive had been hidden for fear of the Polish state, which assumed authority over Eastern Galicia, and this archive was lost...) in order to write this part. In my opinion, the book will be 15 press sheets. [...] I am asking for a reply as I am alone in my area, and there is nobody for me to consult with. I turned to you as my soul mate and guardian of our Hebrew literature – as I consider you exceptional”.

### 3. Reuven Fahn and the Karaite studies

Reuven Fahn was modest, yet recognised his own value and the significance of his studies. He felt that he should give expression to his contribution to research in accordance with the rule: “Let a stranger praise thee – if not – thine own mouth”. In the marginal notes on the bibliography added to his *Otobiografiya*, which was written during his last years, he also said: “It is worth mentioning that in the matter of the Karaites, Samuel Poznanski, Meir Balaban and Christian historians relied on my studies, and they have mentioned me in their books. Also, my studies on the history of the Haskalah have served as a source for many authors”.

Reuven Fahn’s attraction to the Karaites stemmed first and foremost from his natural identification with the weak, deprived and rejected, and also from his curiosity with regard to “the lost tribe” of the Jewish nation, his close relative. His implicit goal was to prove that what is common is more relevant than

what divides. This was in defiance to the position of Rabbi Saadia Gaon in the tenth century who saw them as a danger to rabbinic Judaism and to whom the following sentence is attributed: *Ha-Kara'im (Kera'im) 'einam mit'ahim le-'olam* ("The Karaites would never be reunited" or "The tears could never be repaired").<sup>1</sup> This goal of Reuven Fahn was not explicitly formulated in his writings, but was the implicit assumption in everything he wrote about them in research and belles lettres, that everything must be done to bridge the gap and unite with the Karaites: "Life inserted a separating sword between the sons of one origin and made two completely separate communities from one. The Karaite way of life differs from the Jewish one, and their way of thinking is also particular. [...] There is no more obvious sign of the Jewish origin of the Karaites than their cemetery" (*Sefer ha-Kara'im*, p.60). Nonetheless, more than once there has been indecision in seeing them as "our brothers – a depleted organ of the nation", "children of one nation who were separated to flocks and moved away by force!" and the awareness that there were periods when the Karaites made efforts to not only separate themselves from the Jews, but to humiliate them before the authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 111). Thus they widened the separation (*Ibid.*, p. 112).

It is clear that great courage was required from Reuven Fahn, who was a religious man, to go against the current, and to write positively about the Karaites and do everything he could to bring them closer to the Jews. While he described the negative and positive attitudes of Jewish sages towards them in his studies, in his stories about their ways of life, a positive and consoling attitude is dominant. He saw a "rejected brother" in them, a minority struggling for their faith in a hostile environment. In his stories, he identified with

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<sup>1</sup> Israel Cohen, my father, published in the periodical *Ha-Po'el Ha-Tsa'ir* a paper entitled "Bikur bi-Kfar ha-Kara'im" (A Visit to the Village of Karaites) on 26 December 1950, which could also be found in the book *Siyah Sugeyot* (Discourse on problems) under the title "Ha-Kara'im mitahim" (Karaites reunited). As a person who was born in Eastern Galicia, he described his visit to the Karaite community in Halicz and mentioned the polemic with Firkowicz together with statements against the Karaites attributed to Rabbi Saadia Gaon, as well as the objection of the poet Yehuda Leib Gordon to them. Its heading implies his feeling that "the return to Zion will form a scab on this wound, [...] and the tears will be repaired". He also added a remark against someone who wrote against him and against a union with the Karaites in the religious newspaper *Ha-Tsofe*. It is also worth mentioning that with the creation of the State of Israel, Karaites came to Israel from Egypt and Iraq and established the villages of Matsliah and Rannen.

their distress, the hardship of their existence and their devotion to their faith. He seemed unsure of how to deal with the matter, as a storyteller and a researcher. As a result, he consciously tried to merge these two, and combined belles lettres and ethnography in his stories and legends. In the preface to *Sefer ha-Kara'im* (1929), he wrote: “And despite the difficulties of compromising between the scenic form and the ethnographic and cultural content of this book, a new perspective has emerged”. Because of this dilemma and the combining of the two fields, he received lashes from all directions, both from literary critics and from researchers.

Reuven Fahn's interest in the Karaites started already at the age of 16, when he visited his future father-in-law's house in Halicz, where a Karaite community lived. On 7 June 1894, he published his first article about them, i.e. “Ha-Kara'im be-Halicz” (Karaites in Halicz) in the periodical *Ha-Maggid he-Ḥadash* “a national paper for all issues of the Jewry”, which originated in Kraków and was edited by Jacob Samuel Fuchs. It was based on a text about the Karaites in that town translated from German. According to young Reuven Fahn, who had already moved past self-deprecation, the German author did not know the Karaites and provided a superficial description of them: “like a guest for the night”. With his permanent move to Halicz, his interest in them intensified. His descriptions of the town of Halicz are, most likely, among the very few detailed descriptions of this town in the Hebrew language. The town was “a ducal settlement” in the Middle Ages, and the region of Galicia was named after it: “The eldest town among the towns of Galicia is the town of Halicz located on the right bank of the Dniestr river, three leagues from the town of Stanisławów and a three-hour journey by train from younger and bigger Lwów. In the past, this town was the capital city of the part of Galicia which was called ‘Red Russia’ and was always the seat of Ruthenian rulers”.

His studies entitled “Kara'im be-Halicz” (Karaites in Halicz) and “Halicz” were first published in serial form in *Ha-Magid he-Ḥadash* in April 1897, and again in 1898–1899. As his self-confidence grew, he prepared and collected them, and they were published in more highly regarded national periodicals, e.g. *Ha-Kedem: Sefer-‘et lidi'ot shemiyot u-le-ḥokhmat Yisra'el* (The East: Periodical for Semitic and Jewish Studies), which appeared as a quarterly in Petersburg “with the participation of significant experts” and was edited by Yitshak Duber-Markan and Dr. Avraham Sarsowsky. This was during the third year of the periodical's publication, in editions 1–4 (1909–1910; 1912),

pp. 160–173. Later, an article consisting of 18 pages was published separately in a hard cover edition in Berlin under the title *Le-korot ha-Kara'im be-Galitsia* (On the history of the Karaites in Galicia) (1910). This was his visiting card as a researcher of Karaism and the Karaites.

When this study was published, he was still a novice in the field. Admittedly, he mentioned the names of the researchers who preceded him in Karaite studies in general, but he felt that he was a precursor in terms of interest in Karaite studies in general, and in Galicia especially. The opening sentence testifies to this: “The history of Karaites in Galicia is virgin ground. This is material which has not been prepared and which has not been touched by the researchers of Antiquity”. He felt a sense of mission in his research, as someone who was going “to reveal only a little of the mysteries of the past and to save only the fragments which are worthwhile in themselves and are material for research into their happenings, details which are of value and importance for history”. The words of his apology in the preface to the study indicate that he was aware that he was researching in a vacuum to some extent, “especially because of the lack of books”, and thus his conclusions were likely to be incomplete and even erroneous: “And because there is no possibility to arrive at a definite and completed work, it is possible that some of the conclusions might be false”. In his modesty, he distanced himself from his statements in advance and invited “experts” to establish what “the truth” was. Yet the desire to know the history of the Karaites in Galicia was great and his living among them, especially in the town of Halicz, gave him the opportunity to get to know the people, their way of life and converse with their sages. In particular, he traced the succession of rabbis and cantors. The fact that he could easily visit their cemetery in Halicz, as well as other Karaite cemeteries in Galicia (e.g. in Lwów, Kukizów/Kukizov), to read the tombstone inscriptions and learn from them about their histories, helped him greatly. He returned to this topic later in “Sde ha-kvarot li-Keraei-Halits” (The grave-fields of the Halicz-Karaites), which was included in *Sefer ha-Kara'im* (1929, pp. 60–64).

In his thin 1910 booklet, he had already touched upon the issues to be developed and expanded in *Sefer ha-Kara'im*. Reuven Fahn continued to delve into his subject. He was acquainted with the studies of significant Karaite scholars, and was assisted by them. Nevertheless, in all his modesty, he felt that he had something to contribute and to add as an insider, as being almost a member of the household, someone who knew them closely. The opening chapter of *Sefer ha-Kara'im*, entitled “Li-tsemiḥa shel kat Kara'im” (On the

growth of the Karaite sect), written in 1924 but updated in preparation for the publishing of the book, following the remarks of Dr. Joseph Klausner, who wrote about the Karaites: “The best scholars have already discussed the formation of the Karaite sect and the reason for that; however, the whole issue has not yet been clarified, and there remains room to focus on it more”. Still, the opening sentences phrased in 1910 remained unchanged in the chapter “Le-korot ha-Kara'im be-Galitsia” (On the history of the Karaites in Galicia), which was part of *Sefer ha-Kara'im* (pp. 25–38), with many changes indicating in the preface that the chapter almost doubled in length. As mentioned above, what remained was his feeling that there was something he could add, as he was close to the communities and involved in their lives. Thanks to this geographical and emotional proximity, he felt he had an advantage over others. When quoting the conclusions of his predecessors, he hinted at his criticism of them and at the same time his advantage over them: “From the end of 1840, Jewish writers and *maskilim* [intellectuals], who were distant from the Karaite communities, busied themselves with the Karaite issue [...]” (*Sefer ha-Kara'im*, p. 103). Contrary to them, he mentioned the fact that “there were Hebrew writers and *maskilim* in Russia who promoted the Haskalah among local Jews, who walked closely and friendly with Karaite sages because of their racial brotherhood” (p. 107). Among others, he praised the researcher Simcha Pinsker (1801–1864) who “worked for the good and the praise of the Karaites and who was the advocate of the feelings of his fellow *maskilim*” so “that the latent hatred which is between the men of one true Torah and sons of one true God would end” (pp. 110–111). At the same time, he did not spare his criticism of the Karaites, and this was not hidden from his readers: “Although, on the one hand, the closeness between *maskilim* and the Karaites was very great, the reality showed numerous instances of Karaite ambitions to raise the value of the members of their sect in the eyes of the authorities by degrading the respect for Rabbinates” (p. 111).

Reuven Fahn divided those involved in the subject of the Karaites into those inclined to strengthen the schism and those who sought to “unite the separated” (p.120). Needless to say, his heart was with the latter. The process of mutual rapprochement between the Karaite and Jewish community in Halicz, which he saw with his own eyes in Halicz – “The prodigal son longed for a return to his mother’s bosom” (p.115), particularly between the “moderate and non-zealous” on both sides (p.115), for him was indicative of the goal to which

they should aspire: “If not a complete religious combination, then perhaps at least a racial and national integration” (p.123). For this reason he wrote harsh words against Avraham Firkowicz, who did all he could to cause “complete estrangement from the Jews [...] [and] managed to evoke the spirit of objection and rejection, the constant values in Karaism, and kept it from getting too close to Rabbinic Judaism” (p.124). In order to demonstrate how successful Firkowicz was in his goal of separating the Karaites from the Jews, and how much he harmed the former, Reuven Fahn quoted words he had heard “from one of the survivors, one of the remnants of the Karaite *maskilim*”: “That from day to day the flame of the people of the homeland will be extinguished among members of our nation, and they all look to their own way, everyone for his own gain, and soon they shall not be reckoned among the nations” (p.141). This is the last accord that completes *Sefer ha-Kara'im*.

As someone who comes from the field of literature, I have no qualifications to evaluate Reuven Fahn’s position, significance and contribution to the study of the Karaites and Karaism. This will be carried out by specialists and experts. Here, I have briefly described the main objectives which he focused upon in his studies of the Karaites, the research in which he engaged himself, with its branches and offshoots, beginning from the time he arrived in Halicz as a 19-year-old man through the rest of his life.

#### **4. Reuven Fahn, the Storyteller of the Karaites**

As far as I know, Reuven Fahn is among the few, if not the only one, who introduced the subject of the Karaites to the belles lettres in Hebrew. His stories about the Karaites are divided into two areas: short stories (1908) and legends (1921). Later, he collected them into one volume (1929) and wrote the preface in Stanisławów (1928): “This book is divided into two [sections]: scientific and literary”. “The first part includes works from *Me-Ḥayye ha-Kara'im* (From the life of the Karaites) and *Aggadot ha-Kara'im* (The legends of the Karaites) which describe the Karaite present. In this edition, a number of corrections and addenda were made – and the scene “Shnayim she-nifgeshu” (Two who met) is totally new – on the basis of what I learnt when I continued to penetrate the hidden life of the above-mentioned. And despite the difficulty in compromising between the scenic form and the ethnographic and cultural contents in this book, eventually some point of view was illuminated”.

Reuven Fahn wrote of his attraction to the Karaite sect in one of his first articles in *Ha-Mitspe*, published in Kraków under the title “Min ha-tiyul” (From the trip, 12 July 1904). With all the sympathy he had for them, his critical sense was not impaired, and he did not falter in describing their weaknesses and faults: “I always yearned to see with my own eyes the last remnant of a Hebrew sect fighting the traditional texts (Massorah) and the Rabbinate, and to know the secret of its existence, until I happened to live among them. I realised that their vigour of life was great only in resistance. In protest against the Rabbinate. However, as many of them have become ignorant...there is no future for them.”

His success in winning their trust was not an easy thing to achieve. The Karaites hated the Jews of Halicz and there was almost no contact between them. However, as he came to the town as a stranger, it was easier for him to get closer to them. The effort it took to win the trust of the Karaites, “and to penetrate their innermost life”, becomes evident from the comments he added to the introduction of the first volume of his writings: “The writer Sholem Ash told me that he wanted to spy after the Karaite life closely for a literary purpose. For this he travelled to Troki and arranged a place to stay in the house of a Karaite *shammash*, but he was sent away from his lodgings the next day because they were suspicious of him as a writer, and he returned without any achievement”.

His stories of Karaite life are essentially no different from his stories of Jewish life. The novelty is mainly that of the subject, his entrance into a domain unknown in Hebrew literature. The stories are based on a human appreciation of the people, whom he describes with great empathy, as human beings. He is free of the prejudices about Karaites which were common among Jews and were nourished by their historical separation and hatred. He felt great compassion towards the Karaites’ inferior status and their suffering. They seemed to him like rejected brothers who had strayed. Everybody who writes stories about a different way of life, foreign and remote, is in danger of external folkloristic exotics. Like a tourist who sees through his eyes, and not his heart. In stories of this kind, about an alien way of life, an author is likely to highlight the different and the external, instead of penetrating the nature of the inner life. There is a danger of wonderful and alien elements taking over at the expense of deepening the perspective of the individual and his fate in the society in which he lives. On the other hand, there is also a desire to discover affinity at all costs, and like contrasts everywhere, this can cause a distorted view of the Karaites, their

world and their problems. Reuven Fahn was aware of these dangers and did everything he could to avoid them. He tried to show both sides: to express human resemblances in the man as such and the resemblance between Karaites and Jews, while at the same time emphasising the difference that resulted from their different ways of life and beliefs concerning the individual and society as a whole. He strived to see the common ground and the dividing line, without diverging to any of the sides. Needless to say, that he did not always manage to do that, since there is almost no possibility to not be deceived by appearances in this new and unknown subject. At the same time, his stories are a good example of his emphasis on the suffering man as a human being and his identification with him. The hardship of an individual Karaite and the Karaites as a community was greater mainly as a result of their hard living conditions, small number, feeling of loneliness and persecution they have faced. The rules they live by are strict and extreme, there are no half measures, no room for compromise or interpretations intended to ease daily life.

The similarities between the Karaites and the Jews and the problems they both have faced in terms of spiritual and physical existence have had their source in the life of a minority in exile among great nations for a long time, a minority that regarded itself as the chosen one and the holder of a faith and various ancient customs that differed from those of its neighbours. These differences also involve their refusal to become assimilated into their neighbours, or to assimilate their neighbours into themselves.

In the case of the Karaites, the difference between themselves and the Jews also originated in the scale of these problems, including the community's limited number, which does not give them the feeling of being a nation, their poor education, their very strict laws, their scattering and internal divisions.

Eighteen stories in *Me-Ḥayye ha-Kara'im* (From the life of the Karaites) deal with the individual and his fate, with the fate of one family, and with what they experience in their community. Each story focuses on a certain aspect of the Karaite way of life, and as a whole they create a diverse and rich mosaic of pieces – the life of the Karaite world. The titles of the stories themselves are indicative of the gloomy atmosphere which governs the Karaite street. For instance: “Ḥurban Mishpaḥa” (Destruction of a family), “Dikhdukḥ nefesh” (Despair of a soul), “Sevel ha-Yerusha” (Misery of the legacy), “Be-'ein takhlit” (Without a purpose), “Ḥayye ta'ut” (Mistaken life), “Kemisha” (Withering). In the eighteen stories and seven legends collected in the second book of the first volume

of Reuven Fahn's writings (1929), changes were made from one version to another, including the titles and their order. Some of these changes resulted from a critical commentary written about the first edition of the stories. However, the changes were especially influenced by the development of the Hebrew language in Palestine, which made them less flowery and more precise. This happened after Reuven Fahn's visit to Palestine in 1924, where he spent about half a year. The story "Shnayim she-nifgeshu" was also added to the collection. It was written against the background of the end of World War I. This addition indicated that Reuven Fahn's interest in the Karaite life continued, as he said in the preface "To the edition of the first part" (1929): "The scene 'Shnayim she-nifgeshu' is completely new, based on my deeper insight into their concealed life".

The subtitle of the opening story "Siyyur ba-rehov (Me-'ein hakdama)" (A walk along the street; a kind of preface) points to the role of the story as a framework for understanding the Karaite way of life and as preparation for later descriptions of customs and characters in the stories. This story was also placed first in the later version. It provides a general picture of the Karaite way of life, whereas the other stories illustrate the realisation of a singular authority in Karaite families. This is a travel-story on the Karaite street made by "a foreign Jew", similar to Reuven Fahn, the storyteller, "hosted here accidentally", who has "always" heard about the Karaites, and now that an opportunity has arisen, he is searching for a way to get to know them. One should compare his portrait at the beginning of the book with his literary description: "His clothing is clean and beautiful, his face serious and noble, his gaze sharp and piercing, his moustache is grown in contrast to the shaved beard". This travel-story conforms to one of the fixed rules of the genre, whereby one of the two characters is the stranger, the traveller, and the other one is the inhabitant, the local who accompanies the stranger on his tour. The traveller's questions, representing the reader, offer the inhabitant an opportunity to describe the local way of life, and thus the former gets acquainted with the reality unknown to him, with numerous details provided. The traveller moves from one place to another, and by means of his eyes and ears, his queries, and the answers of the local people whom he meets on his way, the reader gets to know the Karaites and their customs.

In the first part of the story, the stranger asks "an old Jew" whom he meets accidentally on the street to tell him about the Karaites, and the latter is surprised at this very desire: "What is there to know? Men of strange faith... They are in a sense 'neither a wolf nor a dog'. [...] Here we as Jews and non-Jews pay

no attention to them at all". Nonetheless, when the stranger insists on hearing something about them, the old Jew replies: "And what is there to tell? They are physically coarse and spiritually awkward. Everything is strange and refuted. They have 'the Torah' and do not accept all the commandments (Mitsvot)". Later, he continues to enumerate the differences between Jewish and Karaite customs. The old Jew's reply to the interested stranger indicates to the relationship, and actually the lack of it, between the Jews and the Karaites living in the same town: "I myself was born here and visited their house of worship only once, in my childhood days". Then the stranger continues his journey along the street on his own, and while taking in the views revealed to his eyes and listening to the foreign language, he tries to understand what he sees and hears. This is an opportunity to be impressed by what he sees with his eyes and hears with his ears on the Karaite street, including the synagogue, where "Hebrew inscriptions are displayed". While observing, he compares Jewish customs known to him with the Karaite ones, which are unknown to him.

His second companion is "a shaved Karaite" from whom the stranger successfully hides his Jewishness "as he heard that here they like to get closer to a Christian more than to a Jew who knows their faith and likes to ask questions..." The Karaite takes trouble to explain the advantage of Karaites over Jews to the European guest: "Our prayers are entirely different and the language of prayers is the real Hebrew not like the distorted ridiculous accent among the Jews". Also: "We are the real 'Israelites', heirs of the pure Torah of Moshe and it is more comparable to Christianity than to the corrupted Judaism... Jews have Gemara..."

The third companion is a Karaite "ḥakham" from whom the stranger does not conceal the fact that he is a Jew. From him he learns about Karaite books, manuscripts and language: "Our language is Turkish-Tatar like you have your Judeo-Germanic jargon". It is in addition to the "holy language, the language of prophets, and the grammar [which is] a great principle to us in the knowledge of the language". The stranger feels that the *ḥakham* answers unwillingly to "questions about practical religion". Because "this way members of the sect are withdrawn like a lizard in its shade if surrounded with religious questions...". Still, the stranger continues to ask the *ḥakham* about the difference between Karaism and Rabbinic Judaism" and his answer is: "We believe in the Written Torah as commanded upon Moshe [Our Rabbi Peace Be Upon Him] in Sinai...". Then he adds more detailed questions about their special commandments which "are the basis of their Massorah, which is called the

'burden of legacy' by them", and about "kohanim", and "priestly blessing". The answers of the *hakham* reveal more and more controversies and expose the hatred between the Jews and Karaites. To the question whether "there is hope to unite the camps as it was at one time, in the beginning?", the *hakham* replies with a typical Jewish answer "when the messiah will come" and adds: "that only Karaism will prevail in the future". The story concludes with a positive description of Karaism from the mouth of the *hakham*: "you will not find a Karaite charged because of insult or beating, or a drunk one" and the stranger's conclusion from the conversation with him is: "and the *hakham's* face which is always furious and inscrutable, receives a gleam of radiance of from his inner confidence that 'the truth' is his, this is the confidence which gave the insignificant sect the strength to survive to this day...".

In the story entitled "Sevel ha-yerusha" (Burden of the legacy), the difficulty in keeping specific and extreme Karaite commandments in one Karaite family is illustrated. At the centre, there is the death of an old father in the house of his daughter and her husband. Sorrow over the death of a loved one is common to all, to Christians and Jews, but the Karaite customs which accompany a man's death exacerbate and amplify the sorrow. This is because Karaism is strict concerning the laws of impurity and purity. One has to remove the furniture and utensils prior to the man's death so that they will not receive impurity. In the story, the noise of furniture being moved reaches the daughter's and the dying father's ears, who do not know yet their fate, and only the noise tells them what is coming. Moreover, the husband has to remove the furniture on his own, as his wife is in menstruation impurity and is "impure". She has to sit in the corner of the room on a bench covered with a sack for seven days, and she must not move from the place or touch any utensil or furniture in the house. Therefore, she also cannot attend her father's funeral, and she mourns him in isolation in her room. "Lonely in her pain, her suffering is doubled at the loss of the father and inability to accompany him on his last journey...". [All quotations from the stories and legends are from the first version]. However, you also cannot cry freely, as Karaites are ashamed in the presence of others, Jews and Christians, of the death of the deceased, which signifies a decrease in the number of the members in their community. Therefore, in the presence of a stranger they stop crying and to his question: who is the deceased, they lie and answer that a little weak boy is the dead one and: "[They] live in shame, [are] ashamed of death...".

The stories about the Karaite way of life emphasise the irony of history. Karaites of different generations sought to ease the heavy burden of the commandments which were imposed by Talmudic Judaism, and here the Karaite religion has evolved, because of extraordinary reasons and conditions, into a religion of extreme severity that is highly meticulous. The matter of menstrual impurity is particularly strict, which distorts family life. In the previously-discussed story, Shimeon the Carpenter comes back after a hard day's work and wants to eat. He finds his wife in an impure condition, and in addition she has contaminated some of the food with her touch; he complains bitterly under his breath: "Raising and raising the axe, cutting and cutting the planks, and for the payment eating is impossible... the 'uncircumcised' is free, he eats and acts as he sees fit, the Jew turns around and around the strict laws, only the Karaite is cursed to work and suffer...". These customs and many others are described in Reuven Fahn's Karaite stories, and they include all stages of life and all kinds of people: the educated and the ignorant; all events of life: birth, circumcision, studies, match-making, marriages, family life, old age and death. The way of life is the central character of these stories. The many characters presented in them exemplify almost all types of possibilities of the control that the stringent laws have over community life and that of the individual Karaite. Yet, the stories together create a feeling of the fullness of life.

In the story "Ha-Mityahed" (Becoming a Jew), the tragic position of the Karaite from the perspective of Judaism is presented. From this perspective, his position is inferior to that of the Christian. The main character of the story, Shmuel, is overwhelmed by doubts whether the Karaite way is not a mistake. After a serious mental crisis, he decides to convert to Judaism. However, when he appears before the rabbi in a town nearby to ask him about a way to convert to Judaism, at first the rabbi warns him that there are restrictions in the matter and dismisses his enquiry by saying that he will review the matter and consult with other rabbis, and afterwards inform him of the answer. Shmuel is greatly agitated when after a long time he receives the answer that in order to be brought under the wings of the Shekhina and to convert to Judaism, he must first change his religion to Christianity and then as a Christian enter the Jewish covenant. Can this be true?! He shouts from the moaning of his heart: "To be an apostate first? To deny all the principles of the Torah so as to accept it anew?!"

The tone in this story as in others indicates that the heart of Reuven Fahn the author was overwhelmed with mercy for his characters – members of the

Karaite community – and that he identified with their pain, insult and sorrow. It can be seen that Reuven Fahn the man and author objected to Reuven Fahn the religious researcher.

Throughout their history, Karaites have deliberated on their attitude towards Judaism and Christianity. Their deliberations are theoretical and practical, like those of the strangers who deliberate on their attitude towards Karaism. The characteristic of the dilemma is revealed in a conversation about identity among three young men: the Christian, the Jew and the Karaite in the story “She’ifa la-ḥuts” (The drive outwards) that takes place in a school yard:

“Yudki stands alone observing from aside. Until a Christian boy approaches him and asks:

– Are you a Jew?

– Me, a Zhid?

– What? A Christian? But the teacher called you Yehuda?, the youngster philosophises.

– Indeed my name is Jewish, but my religion is Karaism, different from Judaism.

– And it is therefore Christian?

– Yes... It is almost equal to the Christian religion...agrees Yudki in the language of flattery.

The boy leaves, exclaiming mockingly: Friends! Look at this companion, that one... he calls himself a ‘Karai’... the devil knows what it is!

– What is his name? – many mouths ask.

– His name? The teacher called him Yehuda Eshvovich.

All the boys surround him and look at him as if he were a freak of nature.

They have already heard there are Chinese, Japanese – but Karai?!

Yudka cannot bear the piercing looks and turns to one of the Jewish pupils who came closest to him and says to him in the Jewish language:

Why are you looking at me? Did I not, like you, learn the Torah of Moshe...

Just as the expression leaves his mouth, he evades the group by entering the classroom. The rest philosophise about him.

– This is a kind of Jew – says a young Christian.

– This is a kind of ‘goy’ – says a Jew expressing his opinion.

– You are mistaken – the second says, demonstrating his expertise – I know: this is a kind of half-Jew and half-Christian”.

A feeling of betrayal is at the centre of the story entitled “Dikhdukh nefesh”. The story describes a situation characteristic of all closed societies which prohibit marriage outside it, and whose members have to pay a heavy price, the denial of their heritage, to succeed on the outside. This story is particularly close to every Jew’s heart. A boy, Zerah, falls in love with a girl who is not a member of his people, and in order to get a position in the majority society he has to change his religion. In doing so, he betrays his family and his people. He feels like a traitor and knows that if they find out, they will denounce him. He cannot decide between his love for his mother, his father’s legacy, his past, and his beloved, as well as his promising economic future outside. Zerah, the protagonist of the story, is very successful outside the Karaite community and becomes “a manager of oil wells and receives a great monthly salary”. He unexpectedly comes to the house of his mother, a widow, after being away for ten years. The mother is very happy about his arrival, and does not ask him about anything, and he too says nothing. Like every mother in this situation, she prepares him a meal, “strives to please him and forces him to eat”. In his passing thought, it turns out that indeed he succeeded in getting an important position, but that the price was high: “He compromised. He made a concession with regards to Karaism”. In addition to that, he fell in love with a young woman who was not a Karaite and thus ponders: “The wife or the mother? Not allowed to betray the maiden of pure soul, [...] and unable to betray the mother whom he loved so much!... One moment the mother won and the power of his blood overcame his mind, the next – he remembered her and her love [...] and the feeling won. [...] And contradictory feelings fought and wrestled in his heart which became a battlefield desolated by this war...”. His visit to his mother’s home is in fact, “an escape from the front line” to “find his peace of mind”. Members of the community come to visit the guest and feel honoured by the “rich uncle” who came from afar, but while they are “cheerful and happy”, “he himself sits immersed in his inner-being deep and in thought”. In his mother’s house, Zerah still cannot decide between his Karaite past and a future connected with the girl: “On the one side, his austere Karaite father threatens him not to betray his past, and on the other side, the Christian girl gives him to understand that she loves him and begs him not to trample his future...”; “And the old man battles with the tzitzit tassels, and the young battles with an iron-cross.” Eventually, the “hard iron” breaks off the “weak tassels”. Despite his desire to confess to his mother and ask her “forgiveness”, he parts with her not having “expressed his sorrow” and without “informing her so as not to

consider him a traitor if he follows the girl". He is also ashamed in the face of his community, and leaves. They feel that "his coming and going hides a sad secret, his reason for coming unclear, and his departure covert...". At the end of the story, Zerah leaves the mother, pursued by "anxiety, anxiety...".

The "Dildul" ["Kemisha"] (Decline; Wither) story is a female variation of "Dikhdukh nefesh". The central character is Esther – "called Stesia", who knows that she cannot find a spouse among the Karaites. She falls in love with "the tall Vasil" who reciprocates her love and tempts her to change her Karaite faith so that they can get married. "She frequently fights a hard battle with the temptation of betrayal"; there is no one for her to consult with and she felt the world closing on her with no future.

The fate of the Karaite woman is a most difficult one. The decrees, the rigid and strict commandments, regulations and customs, hurt her in particular. She is also in an inferior position in the family. Female characters feature in almost all the stories: wives, daughters, mothers and grandmothers. Sometimes as central characters and sometimes as marginal ones, whose role is to make the male character prominent, either as his opposition or completion.

The character of Mintsī (Menuḥa) stands in the centre of the "Ben" (Son) story. Although she is pregnant "She performs all work by herself". [...] "She experiences the sufferings of pregnancy in silence, and only prays in her heart that 'the Lord will endow her with a son'". Apparently, she is not different in her longing from many people who prefer a boy over a girl. However, in the course of the story, it turns out that her preference is connected with being a Karaite. The rigorous laws of impurity applied to the Karaites in general, and to the Karaite women in particular, are different for the birth of a boy or a girl. The following laws of impurity apply to her as a Karaite woman: "double impurity at the birth of a girl than at the birth of a boy: by that when she gives births to a male, she will sit only six weeks in her impurity, she is obligated to sit impure twelve consecutive weeks when she gives birth to a female". Later in the story, her difficult and bitter memories from the birth of her daughter in the past are described: "It is forbidden to go outside, it is forbidden to do any tasks, to touch any food except the bowl and the spoon set aside for her, and the food which she has to wait for others to serve her...". Also, it turns out that in fact her husband, Yeshua, "clandestinely wishes she would bear him a daughter" in order to "commemorate his first wife". In the end, a boy is born and the story describes customs connected with this birth, including expressions and prayers during

the circumcision ceremony. Reuven Fahn's translations of the Karaite expressions and his explanations of customs and prayers show the extent to which he was a member of their world and knew their most intimate elements of life thoroughly and closely. The atmosphere in this story, unlike in many others, is joyful: the mother expresses joy at the birth of her son. Nonetheless, the narrator cannot abstain from putting in her mouth sad thoughts about the baby "who is unaware of his fate in life". After she returned, according to the Karaite custom, from the cemetery, "which was to purify", the baby breathes "the air brought from the cemetery. The air coming from the past and inhales the past with no future..."

The character of Rahel in the story "Ha-Mitnatser" (Conversion to Christianity) [entitled "Ḥurban Mishpaḥa" in the later version] is equivalent to the character of her husband, Noaḥ Mordkovich. She is against his desire to convert to Christianity and does not join him: "The weak woman fights for her soul and tries to dissuade him from his intention by means of flattery". At the same time, she does not leave him in the hope that "he will return from his way". After she despairs and comes to the conclusion that "there is no return from his way for her husband" she "felt in her misery some closeness, some hidden emotion, some communion with the Jews". The Jews actually "sympathise and console her" but it is not within their power to help her. The story ends with the breakdown of the family: on the one side is the father who does not heed his wife's pleas and who is determined to become a Christian together with his eldest daughter who supports him; on the other side is his wife with a little son in her arms: "an invisible abyss opens, hence eternally dividing kindred spirits, and in the air in the room there is the feeling of the struggle of a bitter and noisy dying of the past [...]".

### **5. *Me-aggadot ha-Kara'im* (From the Karaite legends) (1921; 1929)**

Seven legends were collected in the first version of *Me-aggadot ha-Kara'im* (1921), and these legends returned in the collection in the 1929 edition in a different order and rewritten. Also, at this time the language was freed from floweriness, and the words made more precise, influenced by the development of the Hebrew language, to a great extent, as a result of his visit to Palestine (1924–1925). Five among them are centred around the tensions between Karaites and Jews: "Ba-Nekhar" (In a foreign country), "Milḥama be'ad

yerushat ha-'arets" (The fight for the inheritance of the land), "Tsaddikim-Tsedokim" (The Righteous-Sadducees), "Bnei-Segulla" (People of virtue), and before "Ṭahara" (Purity); one is about the tensions between Karaites and Jews: "Ha-Nahar ha-yashan" (The old river), and one about tensions among the Karaites themselves: "Ha-Na'ara ha-moḥorama" (The ostracised girl). These legends are generally etiological and causal, explaining by means of a legend the causes of various phenomena and elements in nature, for instance: the course of the river ("Ha-Nahar ha-Yashan") and howling of the wind ("Ha-Na'ara ha-moḥorama"). History is likewise explained, for instance: the reasons for the small number of Karaites in Jerusalem ("Milḥama be'ad yerushat ha-'arets"); the meaning of the inscription on the synagogue in Istanbul ("Tsaddikim-Tsedokim"); the Karaites' first arrival in Halicz ("Bnei-Segulla").

The majority of these legends begin with descriptions of the landscape and nature, which convey the atmosphere of a specific place where an event occurs, because the location is of essence. Words of comfort and self-encouragement are also inserted in the legends. For instance, the opening of the story "Ba-Nekhar": "We are few in number, but precious. We are insignificant, yet we are actually prominent. Yes, a small amount of gold but of high quality". A similar sentence can be found in the story "Ha-Kara'it u-shekheni'a" (A Female Karaite and her neighbours): "But we have this saying: there are many Jews, there are many Christians, for their value is low, only Karaites are few like gold of high quality, which is rare".

The legend "Milḥama be'ad yerushat ha-'arets", which opens *Me-aggadot ha-Kara'im* (1921) is set in Jerusalem. As mentioned before, it provides an explanation for the small number of Karaites in Jerusalem and their practice of public prayer. The legend is written as objectively as possible, and it describes the fight for the land like "a war of opinions between descendants of one nation whose unity ended and they became two nations. The first holds only the Written Torah, whereas the other also acknowledges the Oral Torah". The issue of number is not decisive for the two sides contending for the ownership: "This war continues during the long exile, in different lands [...]. The long chain of the competition in the interpretations of the words of the Torah. The spiritual war and the war of opinions about the religious legacy and precedence, its origin is in the ancient past, and its end cannot be foreseen". The origins of this war were in a dispute "over the promise of the inheritance of the land" which is common to the nations and religions living in Jerusalem. They

all claim its ownership: Jews, Arabs, Christians and Karaites. What happened to the Karaites is that “many years ago, when Karaites were a significant community in the Holy City, they became proud. And because of this haughtiness they ridiculed Rabbinic Jews, until the day of vengeance and recompense came”. Their sin was abasing Rambam’s books. They put them “under the threshold in their house of prayer so that they were trampled. When the Jewish Rabbi Ḥakham Bashi came to the Karaite house of prayer, he went over the threshold and fainted as he had humiliated “The Holy Book” by doing so unknowingly. After he recovered, he cursed the Karaites: “From now and forever the number of adult Karaites (over 13 years of age) will not reach ten in Jerusalem”. “Thenceforth the ‘community’ was ruined. The Rabbi’s curse was fulfilled”. In order to cope with the curse, the Karaites decided that the “minyan” does not require ten but “three adult men are enough for public prayer”.

This objective perspective is also characteristic of the other legends, which describe the Karaites’ view on history, customs and reality. Sometimes this balance is disturbed in favour of the Karaites. For example, in the legend “Bnei Segulla”, told in two versions, the first one, the positive one, is the “Karaite version”, the other one, the insulting one, is the “Jewish version”.

Needless to say that, this required a lot of mettle from Reuven Fahn, who was a devoted observant Jew, to present the Karaites in this manner, with their different “truth” despite it being contrary to the Jewish truth. The Karaites were a small and persecuted minority; however, on various occasions they went against the Jews and joined their enemies.<sup>2</sup>

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Upon the completion of the reading of the stories and legends, the reader is overcome with sadness. He is inclined now to see the Karaite community with a sympathetic eye, to get closer to them and understand them better. This ethnic group is “a depleted organ”, like in the title of one of his stories, struggling in their life, suffering torments, but unwilling to give up their past and traditions.

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<sup>2</sup> During World War II Karaites fought in Europe to prove their non-Jewishness in the eyes of the Nazis, who indeed treated them as such a race, a sect of Turkish-Tatar-Mongolian origin. This saved them from extermination, as did Jewish scholars (Meir Balaban) who saved them by testifying to their non-Jewish origin.

Reuven Fahn tried to describe the Karaite life from within, as if he were one of them, or at least as someone who managed to approach them and identify with them. He does not criticise them, neither because of their attitudes to Christians, nor to Jews. Here and there he assumes the position of a stranger, a visitor, an external observer, yet also in this position, he understands their spirit and attempts to be for them the speaker among the Jews who have reservations towards them.

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*Le-korot ha-Kara'im be-Galitsia.* "Special edition of 'Ha-Kedem', year 3, booklet 3–5". Printed at H. Itzkovski Printing House, Berlin, 1910. 16 pages.

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*Kitvei Reuven Fahn. Ḥelek rishon. Sefer ha-Kara'im. Bi-shnei sefarim* (The writings of Reuven Fahn, Part 1. Book of the Karaites. In two volumes). Va'ad ha-yovel Publishing House. 1929. Printed at N. Kronenberg, Bilgoraj. 263 pages. The first book includes five chapters about the Karaites: their history, the Karaites in Palestine and Galicia, the cemetery in Halicz, relations between Jewish *maskilim* and Karaite *ḥakhams*. Pages 1–141. The second book includes eighteen stories and seven tales taken from Karaite life. Pages 142–264.

The second part of *Pirkei Haskalah* (Chapters in Haskala). Published in Stanisławów, 1937, 663 pages, with monographs of the authors of the Haskalah and its journals.

*Mivḥar ketavim by Reuven Fahn.* (Selected writings of Reuven Fahn). Selected and prefaced by Nurit Govrin. Published by the Hebrew Writers Association in Israel, Tel Aviv. Masada Publishing, 1969. This book includes a summary of Reuven Fahn's history and literary activity written by the editor, and a selection of stories from his book: *Me-Ḥayye ha-Kara'im* (Drohobycz, 1908); a selection of legends from his book: *Aggadot ha-Kara'im* (Vienna, 1921); and a selection of his stories and writing published in various journals over the years. Appendices include: an autobiography, the letter to the poet Ḥayyim Naḥman Bialik and his

response, and a translation of Frug's poem *Ha-Kos* (The cup). There is also a detailed bibliography of Fahn's books and other works of his, and information on the authors who wrote about him, reference books and academic literature.

The above-mentioned book is an abbreviated version of graduate work by Nurit Govrin, under the supervision of Professor Dov Sadan, Department of Hebrew Literature at Tel Aviv University, June 1967. It is a detailed and documented study of Reuven Fahn's life and literary activity. Both this book and the one mentioned above (*Mivhar ketavim*), form the basis for the research presented in the current article.

**Nurit Govrin**, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Hebrew Literature at Tel Aviv University, is one of the most prominent scholars in Hebrew literature. She is the author of 18 books and numerous articles, and also the editor of 15 books. A detailed bibliography of her works, collected by Joseph Galron-Goldschlager, was published in her jubilee volume "Mi-merkazim le-merkaz: sefer Nurit Govrin" (Perspectives on Modern Hebrew Literature: in honor of Professor Nurit Govrin), ed. by Avner Holtzman, Tel Aviv University 2005, pp. 519–597. Nurit Govrin is a laureate of many awards, among them, the Bialik Prize (1988) and Ramat-Gan Municipality Prize for lifetime achievement (2010).

# מת"י הקראים

צוירים ופוסטום.

(עם תמונת המחבר)

סג

הוצאת מ. אבסלר.



האליטיש, תרס"ח,

ברוס א. ה. הופניק, ק. אונד ק. האליטעראנט, דראהוביטש.

## M'CHAJE HA'KRAIM

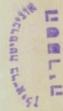
SKIZZEN UND TYPEN

AUS DEM LEBEN DER KARAITEN

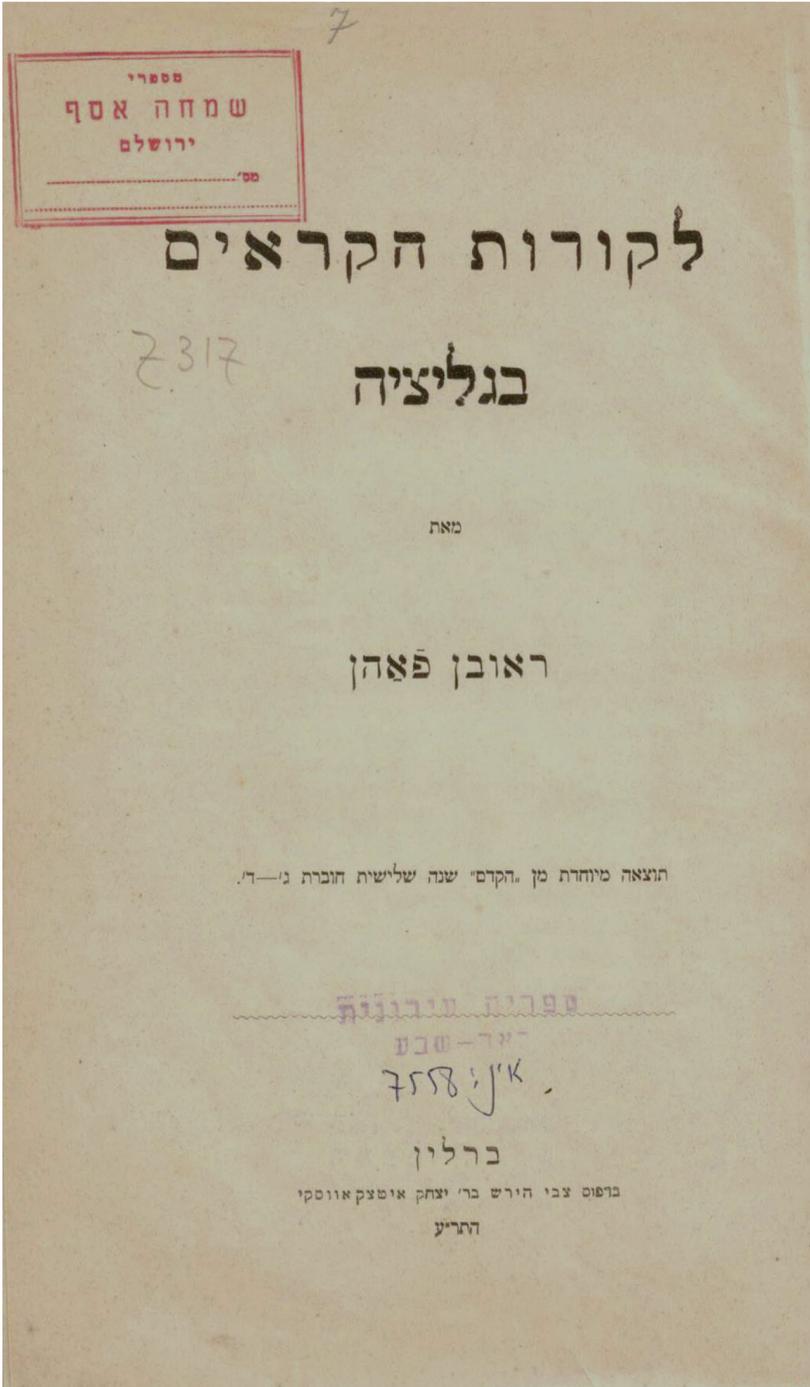
VON RUBIN FAHN.

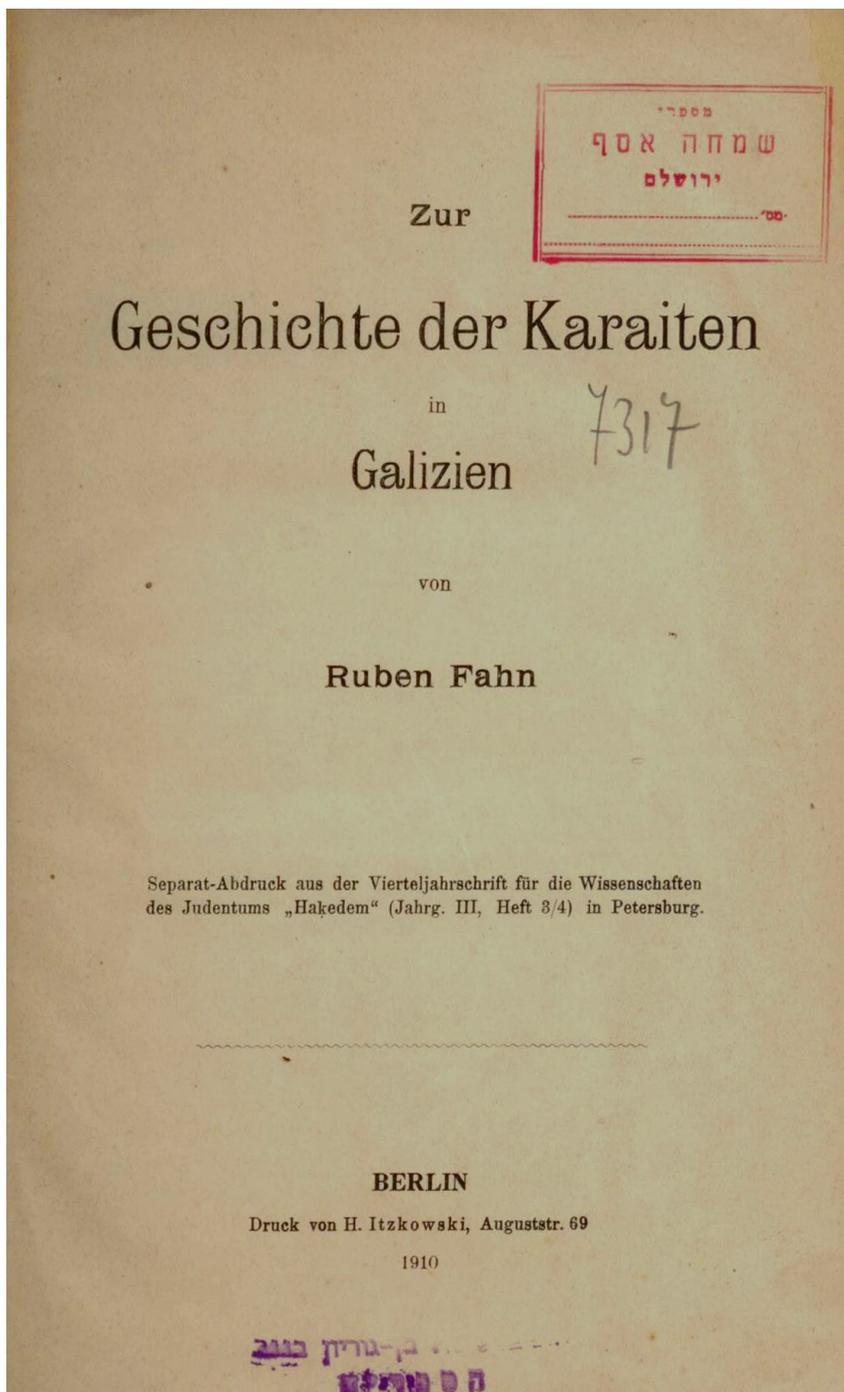
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רובין פאן





# כְּתָבֵי רְאוּבֵן פֶּאֶהוּ

חלק ראשון

## סֵפֶר הַקְּרָאִים

בשני ספרים.

הוצאת „ועד היובל“

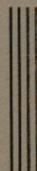
תרפ"ט.



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נסדר בדפוס נ. קרוינברג, בילגורין.

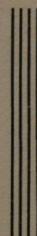
ספרי 'נפש'



ראובן פאהו

כּוּבַחַר

כּתבֵּים



בחרה והקדימה מבוא  
נורית גוברין



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