

SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

Judah Halevi wrote from his heart tens and hundreds of poems and also described the whole philosophical system in order to persuade *am jisrael* living in the diaspora (*galut*) that their only proper place to live is the Eretz Jisra'el. To convince them that only there the Jews are near to their G-d and only there they can fulfill their mission of the chosen people and their part of the Covenant which they sealed on the Mount of Sinai. After all Israel is the part of the Promised Land given by G-d to Izraelites and we read about it in the Torah repeatedly. Halevi himself saw tragic times in the history of the Jewry reappearing again and again, times that do not skip any generation. Do not Jews pray toward Jerusalem, do not they pray for renewal of glory of Israel and Jerusalem? At the same time Halevi respected it was on every individual to decide for himself. But he himself felt urgent need to set for the journey. Finally he left his home and family and board the ship to the Eretz Jisrael (via Egypt). It was not a pilgrimage he was leaving for ever. It was *aliya* (emigration). He wanted to die in the land of forefathers, in the Holy Land where he was according to his conviction near to his *Adonai*.

This my thesis deals with the life and work of Judah Halevi. The stress is put on those events and that work of his which illustrate the fact that he has been preparing internally for his final journey quite a long time. Although he lived quite comfortable childhood and youth, although he gained acknowledgment and got quite a credit as an adult still he was feeling deep dissatisfaction with his own life. He considered it empty and not properly lived.

Halevi loved Andalusia and it was very hard for him to leave the country of his family and his forefathers. His act was quite extraordinary and exceptional. He set for the journey alone as he did not succeed in persuading other people to join him. Travelling both on the sea and dry land was uncomfortable and dangerous. The target itself, Jerusalem, was in the hands of hostile Crusaders and it was not allowed for Jews to settle there anyway.

Halevi was long time known mostly for his only philosophical work *Kuzari* and some poems which became preserved as the part of the liturgy. It was very little known about his life and there was only a legend concerning his death. Only during the late 19th century there were unexpected and breaking discoveries made and they provided new knowledge about his life and above all tremendous number of his poems. The timing of

those discoveries was admirably in accordance with the beginning of sionism which took Halevi as one of his own. This brought the new life for the work of this excellent Hebrew poet and Jewish philosopher.

One wants to believe that Halevi indeed got to Jerusalem itself. Even if not let's just imagine he could come and see Israel today and see millions of Jews living in the Eretz Jisrael, praying by the Wailing Wall, studying in all those *jeshivot* and schools. Surely he would consider it a miracle. A miracle to which he contributed with his life and work.