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An Annotated Translation of Selected Passages
From Herev Pifiyot By Yair Ben Shabbetai Da Corregio

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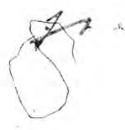
TABLE OF CONTENTS:

| DIGEST | r | | | | | | | | iv |
|--------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|-------|
| PART | : INTE | RODUCTI | ON | | | | | | |
| | Chapter | I - Hi | storical | Back | ground | 1 | - 1 | | |
| | A) Ref | | Renaissa on | | | | | 1 | . , 2 |
| | B) | The H | ouse of | Este. | | >\d | | ····· | 5 |
| | C) | Yair | Ben Shat | obetai | | | | | 7 |
| (| Chapter | II - Y | air's Ir | ntelle | ctual I | Enviror | ment | | |
| | A) | Famil | iarity W | with C | hristia | an Thou | ight | | 9 |
| | B) | Arist | otelian | Influ | ence | | | | 10 |
| | C) | The M | aimonide | ean In | fluence | e | | | 12 |
| | D) | Abray | anel | | ., | | | | 14 |
| | E) | Kabba | listic 1 | Influe | nces | | | | 15 |
| | F) | Human | ism and | the C | hristi | an Kabi | oalah. | | 17 |
| | Chanter | TTT - | The Text | t of H | erev P | iffive | t | | |
| | 2 | | s Writin | | | | | | 21 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | B) | | e Types | | | | | | 22 |
| | | 1. 2. 3. | Exeget: Histor: Ration | ical . | | | | . 24 | |
| 9 | | | air and | | | | | | 25 |
| | Col | 1. | Isaiah | 7.14 | 10.00 | | | 26 | 25 |
| | | 2. | Mary's | | | | | | |
| | | ٠. | the Bi | | | | | | |
| | | 3. | Micah | | | | | | |
| | | 4. | Hagga1 | | | | | | |
| 7. | | 5. | Various | s Mean | ings o | f Eloh | im and | 1 | |
| | | | the us | e or Y | nwn in | names | | .30 | |

| | Chapter v - some observations |
|------|--|
| PART | II - THE TRANSLATION |
| | THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE36 |
| | THE FIRST QUESTION40Opening Statements |
| | THE SECOND QUESTION40The Davidic lineage of JesusMessianic lineage |
| | THE THIRD QUESTION43 The Virginity of Mary The question of the "Almah" in Isaiah 7:14. Jesus' brothers and sisters |
| | THE FOURTH QUESTION49Bethlehem as birthplace of the MessiahThe Donkey and the Ass |
| 1 | THE EIGHTH QUESTION |
| | THE TENTH QUESTION85Jesus' status as a prophet, God, and Son of GodThe Trinity |
| CONC | UDING REMARKS116 |
| BIBL | OGRAPHY119 |

Full bibliographic details of the works quoted here will be found in the Bibliography.

The text which I have used for my translation is <u>Herev</u>
<u>Pifiyot</u>. ed. Yehuda Rosenthal, Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav
Kook, 1958. In the translation, those footnotes followed
by (R) are the notes of Yehuda Rosenthal. Those footnotes
followed by (B) are my own.



DEDICATION

To my family:

My parents, Sidney and Sophie Black who have instilled within me a love of Torah and provided me with two incredible examples of what it means to live life fully as a Jew and a good human being; my sister and brother-in law, Nina and Avery Black-Hart, along with their children Ari and Mira, who never cease to bring me joy; and above all, my Grandmother, Esther Koven, who radiates life and love in all that she does.

To my Hevruta:

We have studied, struggled, played and prayed together and, in the process, grown to love and appreciate each other for who we are and what we can become.

I also want to express my gratitude, appreciation and admiration to my advisor, Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski, for all of his help, encouragement, enthusiasm and wisdom. It is rare to find a combination of such true scholarship and menschlichkeit in one person. I am enriched by having met him.

DIGEST

Yair Ben Shabbetai Da-Correggio was a prominent 16thcentury Italian Jewish Intellectual. His book, Herev Pifiyot -- "A Two Edged Sword" -- was written during the 1560's (the exact date is unknown). The book was written during a period of intense "official" Christian anti-semitism during which Pope Paul IV's Counter Reformation Church launched several campaigns against the Jews in order to stem what it saw as a rising tide of heresy in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. This period was marked by widespread Jewish persecution, including public disputations with Church officials. Jews were forced to attend church services where they were subjected to intense proselytizing. More often than not, those who were sent to preach to the Jews were, themselves, apostates who used Rabbinic and kabbalistic literature as a basis for their arguments.

Herev Pifiyot is Yair's reaction to this campaign. The book is written as a dialogue between a Jew and a Christian-presumably an apostate Jew. During the course of their conversation, the Christian brings forward many of the traditional "proofs" of Christianity - using Rabbinic as well as Biblical sources for his prooftexts. The Jew not only answers each and every one of his opponent's questions and charges, but he is so effective in doing so that he convinces him of the error of his ways and shows him the

path to the true faith of Judaism.

The purpose of <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> was not to convert Christians to Judaism or even to "win back" those who had already become apostates. Rather it was to serve as a kind of "morale booster" for those Jews who found themselves in dire straights as a result of the Counter-Reformation Church's policies of religious persecution.

This thesis is a translation and analysis of selected passages from <u>Herev Pifiyot</u>. In the pages below I have attempted to demonstrate how Yair's writing can be seen as an excellent source for understanding the intellectual, political, and religious climate within the Jewish community of post-Renaissance Italy.

Herev Pifiyot follows the classical format of Christian - Jewish disputation. Yair utilizes exegetical, historical and rational proofs to support his claims. Almost all of his argumentation can either be traced to or found replicated in other manuscripts from the same period. The influence of Aristotle, Maimonides, Abravanel and kabbalistic writings are also very evident.

Psalm 149

- 1 Hallelujah, Sing to the Lord a new song; His praises in the congregation of the faithful.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in it's maker; let the children of Zion exult in their king.
- 3 Let them praise His name in dance; with timbrel and lyre let them chant His praises.
- 4 For the Lord delights in His people; He adorns the lowly with victory.
- 5 Let the faithful exult in glory; let them shout for joy upon their couches,
- 6 with paeans to God in their throats and two edged sword in their hands,
- to impose retribution upon the nations, punishment upon the peoples,
- binding their kings with shackles, their nobles with chains of iron,
- 9 executing the doom decreed against them.
 This is the glory of all His faithful.
 Hallelujah.

CHAPTER ONE - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A) From Renaissance to Counter-Reformation.

In his book, The History of the Jews of Italy, Cecil Roth writes:

The History of the Jews of Italy ... becomes in great part a history of their relationship with the Papacy, which, in a considerable area of the country, was immediately, and in nearly the whole of it, ultimately responsible for their fate. 1

Christian polemic, Herev Pifiyot (a two-edged sword), in the middle of the sixteenth century². This period in history marked a turning point in the lives of Italian Jewry. Prior to the ascension of Paul IV to the Papacy in 1555, the Jews of Italy lived in relative harmony with their Christian neighbors. When the center of Italian Jewish life shifted from the southern to the northern portion of the country after the end of the thirteenth century, most Jewish communities had very little difficulty fitting in with Italian society. Roth describes the Jewish Community during the Renaissance as "...a Renaissance society in miniature." Jewish households were virtually indistinguishable from their Christian counterparts in terms of their opulence and "Italian" character. Jewish

¹ Cecil Roth, The History of the Jews of Italy, p.42.

²Yehuda Rosenthal, ed., <u>Herev Pifiyot</u>, p. 7.

³Roth, "Jewish Society and the Renaissance" in <u>Jewish</u> Society Through The Ages. Ben-Sasson, Ettinger, eds. P. 243.

physicians, artists, merchants, and financiers all served vital roles in Northern Italian society. In addition, Italian Jewry during this period was able to capitalize on Renaissance Humanism and the interest in Christian Hebraism which it spawned. Intellectual as well as economic barriers between Jews and Christians were broken down by this relationship. In reference to this period of Italian Jewish history, Israel Abrahams writes: "Never were the spiritual relations between Judaism and Christianity closer than in the era at which a deep cleft began to make itself permanently evident between their lives." This "deep cleft" was known as the Counter Reformation.

On July 12, 1555, Pope Paul IV issued the following Bull, know as Cum Nimis Absurdum:

Forasmuch as it is highly absurd and improper that the Jews, condemned by God to eterna! slavery because of their guilt, should, on the pretext that they are cherished by Christian love and permitted to dwell in our midst show such ingratitude to Christians as to insult them for their mercy and presume to mastery instead of the subjection that becomes them; and forasmuch as we have been informed that in Rome and elsewhere their shamelessness is such that they presume to dwell among Christians in the neighborhood of churches without distinctions of dress, and even to rent houses in the more elegant streets and

⁴ S. W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews Vol. XIII, pp. 162ff.

This does not mean that Jewish-Christian relations were perfect, however. There were many incidents of anti-Jewish legislation, and religious and economic persecution, especially in the areas bordering the Papal States. For an excellent summary of Renaissance life amongst the Jews of Italy see Roth ibid.; and op. cit., Chapter V.

⁵Israel Abrahams, <u>Jewish Life in the Middle Ages</u> p.421.

squares of the cities, villages and places in which they live, to purchase and possess real property, to hire Christian* maidservants and wetnurses and other salaried attendants, and to perpetuate divers other misdeeds to the shame and contumely of the Christian name; and considering that the Roman Church tolerates the Jews in the witness of the true Christian faith...we do therefore order the following measures, which are to be perpetually valid...5

These new laws were the dulmination of a process which began in 1542 with the establishment of a Supreme Tribunal of the Holy Office designed along the same lines as the Spanish Inquisition. In one fell swoop much of Italian society appeared to be transported to an earlier period of time which did not know of the artistic, philosophical, and legislative initiatives which were inspired by the Renaissance in Italian society. Luther's Reformation in Germany caused a shockwave of conservatism within the Papal hierarchy and, as Roth writes, 7

No longer were the Popes to be pre-eminently enlightened patrons of literature, science and the arts, with worldly inclinations and interests. Henceforth they were chosen among those in whose eyes the requirements of the Church, spiritual and temporal, were paramount; who looked for inspiration to the most narrow of the Church Fathers and enactments of the Church Councils; who considered Canon Law in all its severity to be the standard of Christian practice, whatever inconvenience might be caused to groups or individuals; who, like some of their eminent predecessors, regarded the Jews as a leaven of disbelief which positively endangered Christianity and Christendom — at least, unless they were segregated from intercourse with other men, as the Lateran Councils had prescribed three and a half centuries before.

Thus the Ghetto, the monti di-pieta8, and the Jewish badge" replaced the elegant homes, fine business rela-

⁶The text is taken from Roth, History, p. 294.

⁷Ibid. p. 289.

⁸A communal loan bank set up to challenge and uproot the system of Jewish moneylending. See <u>Ibid</u>. pp166-176.

characterized Renaissance society only a few years previously. Jewish books were burned. Jews were forced to attend marathon Church services at which they were subjected to intense pressure to convert. Special institutions were created whose sole responsibility was to work towards the goal of converting as many Jews as possible. Often, the most active proponents of Jewish conversion were apostate Jews themselves who, whether on the basis of religious conviction, self-hatred, or economic greed, were merciless in their persecutions of their former co-religionists.

B) The House Of Este

Not all of Italian Jewry was subjected to the same degree of pressure, however. Yair ben Shabbetai's name is connected to the city of Corregio. This city was closely linked to the city of Ferrara and was under the control of what David B. Ruderman terms the "enlightened despotism" of the House of Este.9 Ferrara and its neighboring cities Modena and Reggio, as well as a number of smaller cities such as Carpi, Cento, Pieve, Lugo, Finale, and Corregio managed to maintain a degree of autonomy which sustained numerous attempts by the Papal authorities to encroach upon their sovereignty. They all prospered under a system of economic and political stability which stressed tolerance

⁹David Ruderman, The World of a Renaissance Jew pp. 13-14.

and mutual understanding of all members of society. The Jewish colony in Ferrara openly welcomed Jewish immigration and had one of the largest settlements of Marranos and others who were fleeing from the Spanish inquisition. It also supported a wide variety of Jewish scholarship and artistic endeavors. Among the most notable of these former Spaniards10 residing in Ferrara were the Abravanel family, who arrived after being expelled from Naples in 1541.

Judah, Joseph, Samuel and Isaac, the descendants of Don Isaac Abravanel, the famous financier, commentator, and philosopher, became known as leading political and intellectual figures in Italian Renaissance society.

The Ghetto was not introduced into the cities under the control of the House of Este until late into the sixteenth and in some cases, seventeenth centuries. It is interesting to note for the purposes of this study that a ghetto was never introduced into the city of Corregiol. The Dukes of the house of Este profited greatly from the economic, artistic and intellectual talents of their Jewish residents. The Jews, for the most part, were rewarded for their contributions with a relative calm existence. 12

This does not mean to say that there were no difficul-

¹⁰ The family actually originated in Portugal, not Spain.

¹¹Roth, History, pp. 328, 340.

¹²Roth, Ibid. pp. 187ff.; Ruderman, Ibid. pp. 13-15.

however. There were many incidents of public disputation, humiliation, condemnation, and persecution of Jewish residents. 13 However, it must be noted that many of the more serious aspects of the Counter-Reformation did not profoundly affect the Jews of Northern Italy until the end of the sixteenth century. It is against such a background of new legislation and anti-Jewish fervor, which seemed to be completely in opposition to the atmosphere of tolerance to which Yair ben Shabbetai had grown accustomed to, that Herev Pifiyot was created.

C) Yair Ben Shabbetai.

In his introduction to the critical edition of the text, Yehuda Rosenthal writes that there is very little information available on Yair be Shabbetai. We do know, from Yair's introduction to the text, that he was a pupil of Emanuel Berekhia ben Yizhak of Fanol⁴. Yair came from a very prominent family and Rosenthal postulates that it is

¹³A branch of the Holy Office was established in Ferrara some time around the year 1560. Tsaac Abravanel (son of Judah, grandson of Don Isaac) was even jailed for a short period of time as a result of the publication of a controversial document. Abraham Farissol wrote his polemic, Magen Avraham, sometime around the year 1512 after having taken part in a forced disputation at the ducal court of Ercole I in Ferrara. For more information about this and other tensions between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities of Ferrara and its environs see Ruderman, pp. 57-64; Roth, History, pp. 289-328.

¹⁴ Herev Pifiyot, pp. 7, 12.

possible that his grandfather could have been Yedidyah ben Moses (Amadeo de Moise), the man responsible for the Italian translation of Maimonides' <u>Guide of the Perplexed.15</u> This is pure speculation on Rosenthal's part, but it is interesting to note the degree of influence that Maimonides appears to have had on Yair - as is evident from his writings¹⁶.

Although there is very little extant material on Yair himself, we do know quite a bit about others who lived during this period. As Rosenthal writes, "Yair, the author of this book, was a typical intellectual of the 16th century." 17 He is well versed in both Biblical and Rabbinic texts. Both of his disputants quote from memoryalthough they occasionally misattribute certain passages. 18 He is familiar with Christian scripture as well, and utilizes it to his advantage when it is appropriate. He is

¹⁵ Yedidyah dedicates his translation of the Moreh to an "Emanuel da Fano". Rosenthal postulates that this could be the same man to whom Yair dedicates his text. M. Friedlander, in his introduction to his translation of the Moreh, identifies him as "...the Kabbalist Menachem Azariah [Recanati]...". This could possibly be of great importance to further study of this text since Yair made such extensive use of Recanati's commentary in his polemicizing. See Ibid. pp. 5, 7; also, M. Friedlander, The Guide of the Perplexed by Maimonides, III:xvii; see also, footnote #19 below.

¹⁶ See below.

¹⁷Rosenthal, p. 6.

¹⁸ See below, p. 57, note #133; p. 60, note #137; p. 78
note #184; p. 88, note #215.

able to make use of Aristotelian logic and quotes from Aristotle. He is able to cite Jewish commentators and philosophers such as Albo, Nahmanides, Abravanel, and Maimonides. He is also familiar with many Kabbalistic sources such as Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut, Sefer HaBahir, Akedat Yizhak, the Zohar, and the Torah commentary of Menahem Recanatile. It is this wide variety of sources from which Yair draws his arguments that can tell us more about who he was and the era in which he lived.

CHAPTER II - YAIR'S INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENT

A) Familiarity With Christian Thought.

Yair is obviously familiar with Christian scripture and philosophy. For example, he utilizes the second - century Church Father Tertullian's argument that Mary was of Davidic descent in his second question²⁰. Yair is able to utilize Christian scripture to call attention to what he sees as contradictions in traditional Christian theology. In his second question, he parallels the concept of the Virgin Birth with the New Testamental claim that Jesus' lineage can be traced back to King David through the line of Joseph.

¹⁹A 13-14th century commentator who was very well known in 16th century Italian Jewish circles. See Ruderman, p. 29.

²⁰ See below, note #91 (p. 42).

Daniel Lasker writes that Jewish knowledge of Christian source material usually did not come from study of Christian text. Although Jewish scholars studied Christian Scripture, Yair's ability to quote Christian sources probably came from one of two sources: a) the Jewish polemics out of which he formulated his arguments, and/or b) his exposure to conversionary attempts by Christian missionaries. Lasker posits that although Jews were aware of many of the major doctrines espoused by Christianity, they were, for all intents and purposes, unaware of the more subtle philosophic concepts21.

B) Aristotelian Influence.

In Question Number Eight, the Jew answers the Christian's charge that the Third Temple will never be built by using Aristotle's Four Causes as a way of showing how the Third Temple will be superior to the two which preceded it. The text states:

And now that you shall have been convinced that there are three Temples, I must enlighten you about the fact that the future third Temple will be far superior to the two which preceded it according to four causes: workmanship, materials, design and function.22

Yair's familiarity with the works of Aristotle is not at all uncommon for enlightened Jews of the Renaissance era.

²¹Daniel Lasker, <u>Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against</u> <u>Christianity in the Middle Ages</u>, pp. 161-2.

²²See Below, p. 71.

According to David Ruderman, the 16th century intellectual, Abraham Farissol, taught his pupils the importance of the inclusion of Aristotle's Four Causes in all written or spoken addresses. 23 Jewish thought was heavily influenced by Plato and Aristotle. Other Jewish literature from the same period which utilized Aristotelian concepts includes Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, Arama's Akedat Yizbak, Albo's Sefer Ha-Ikkarim, and Moscato's Nefuzot Yehuda, 24 many of whom Yair uses in his text. In fact, the knowledge of "secular" philosophic concepts was so widespread throughout the Italian Jewish population of the 16th century, that some individuals found it necessary to take steps to regulate their study within a Jewish framework. In his book, The Jew In The Medieval World, Jacob R. Marcus provides us with a document from 1564 in which David Provenzalo and his son Abraham, two prominent Jews from Mantua, attempt to set in motion a charter for a new university which would combine Jewish study with secular learning. One of the provisions of this charter is as follows:

Those who are versed in Latin can read the scientific books dealing with logic, philosophy, and medicine and thus get acquainted with them step by step, so that anyone who wishes to become a physician need not waste his days and years in a university among Christians in sinful neglect of Jewish studies. On the contrary, through his

²³Ruderman, p. 17.

²⁴ Ibid. 178, note #39.

own reading he should inform himself gradually of all that he need to know, and then if he should study in a university for a brief period he can, with God's help, get his degree.... 25

C) The Maimonidean Influence.

One of the most striking aspects of Herev Pifiyot is the influence that Maimonides appears to have had on Yair. This is especially evident in the translated sections below on prophecy. The Jew, in the course of his argumentation, claims that prophecy is a manifestation of "...the ultimate state of perfection..." in Man. This state has only been reached within individuals, however, "...when the Creator breathed Holy Spirit into them...".26 This is similar to Maimonides' third position on prophecy found in II:32 of the Guide. This goes one step beyond the second position27 by stating that God withholds prophecy from individuals and prevents them from prophesying. Similarly, Yair's statement concerning superiority of Mosaic prophecy over ordinary prophecy28 is a basic Maimonidean tenet first expressed in the Mishneh Torah (Sefer Mada', "Yesodei Ha-Torah", VII:6) and further elaborated upon in the Guide (II:34, 35, 45).

²⁵ Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World, p. 385.

²⁶ See below, p. 94.

²⁷I.E. - The view of the Philosophers -- that prophecy necessarily occurs in individuals who are both physically and intellectually at the peak of their capabilities.

²⁸ See below, pp.95-6.

Another Maimonidean influence on Yair is his assertion that "...concerning Him you must make three negations: corporeality, divisibility and change..."29, Yair attributes this to Sefer Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut - a 16th - century Kabbalistic work printed in Ferrara and attributed to Rabbi Perez Ha-Cohen of Barcelona. 30 The Maimonidean influence on Yair could have come via this and other philosophic works of this period, but it is very evident nonetheless. 31

Lasker writes that Maimonides' writings often served as a framework around which religious polemicists could build their arguments. In section III:15 of the <u>Guide</u>, Maimonides distinguishes between that which is rationally possible, though naturally impossible, from something which is totally impossible due to the limits of reason. 32 Since Jews saw Christianity as an illogical system, these ideas were seen as referring to Christianity and served a valuable function by directly challenging Christian

²⁹See below, p. 107.

³⁰ Sefer Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut was one of the first books printed in Ferrara after the burning of the Talmud in 1554 changed much of the focus of Jewish study and printing from Talmudic to Kabbalistic works. See S.Assaf, "Ha Polmus al Hadpasat Sifre Kabbalah" in M'korot Umekhkarim B'toldot Yisrael. pp.238-9. For more information on Sefer Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut, see Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 158, 232, 353, 378, 385, 402; Sefer Ozar Hag'dolim, ed. Rabbi Naftali Ya'akov Ha-Cohen, pp. 30-31.

³¹ See footnote #277 (p.107) in the translation below.

³²C.F. Guide, ed. Pines, Vol II, p. 460.

beliefs.33 In addition, in section I:50 Maimonides denies the Trinity,34 and in section II:6 he appears to deny the logical possibility of the Virgin Birth.35 Although Maimonides never mentions Jesus directly by name, Abravanel, in his critique/commentary on the <u>Guide</u>, states that in section II:37, Maimonides is referring to Jesus and Mohammed when he says that God withholds prophecy from lawgivers, statesmen and visionaries who possess a perfect imagination but an imperfect intellect. Abravanel writes:

There is no doubt that by this (remark) Maimonides alludes to the prophet of the Muslims and also to the prophet of the Christians. 36

D) Abravanel

In addition to using Maimonides extensively in his work, Yair also relies upon the scholarship of Don Isaac Abravanel (or, as he calls him, "Abravanelo")³⁷. As mentioned above, Abravanel was one of the most important intellectual and political figures in medieval Jewish society. He wrote commentaries on the major and minor

³³Lasker, p.43.

³⁴ Op. cit. section I:50, Vol. I, p. 111.

³⁵ Ibid. pp.263-4.

³⁶C.F. A. Reines, <u>Maimonides and Abravanel on Pro-phecy</u>, pp. 94-95.

³⁷Abraham Farissol, in his <u>Magen Avraham</u>, made extensive use of the writings of Abravanel as well. See Ruderman, p.113.

prophets. He was also noted for his writings which attempted to convince Spanish Jewry of the immanence of the coming of the Messiah. These works are included in the collection Migdal Yeshu'ot, and include a commentary on Daniel, an interpretation of Rabbinic dicta on the Messiah and a commentary on messianic prophecies in the prophetic literature.38 His work was noted for its utilization of several Christian sources such as Nicholas De Lyra and Paul of Burgos. Contrary to Maimonides, he was a traditionalist and rejected outright any attempts to apply philosophical interpretations to traditional texts and was especially critical of Maimonides' naturalistic view of prophecy. 39 Yair's utilization of both Maimonides and Abravanel within the same section of the text is in keeping with his tendency to use a wide variety of sources and styles of exposition in his polemic (see below).

E) Kabbalistic Influences

In the course of his argumentation, Yair is very thorough and takes great pains to utilize many levels of Kabbalistic hermeneutics - including the Emanation Theory of the Sefirot, Gematria, and Notarikon - as developed and

³⁸ See Abraham Grossman's article, "Abrabanel as Biblical Exegete" in EJ, Vol II, cols. 105-107.

³⁹ See Reines, Op. cit. lxvii-lxxii, 1-24, and "Abrabanel's Philosophy" in E.J., Vol II, cols. 107-109; Graetz, History of the Jews Vol. IV p. 342.

systematized by the early Kabbalists Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla (c.1247 - 1305) and Abraham Abulafia (1240c.1292)40. The number of Kabbalistic references in Herev Pifiyot is not unusual for a document written in this period. In 1554, orders came from the Vatican that the Talmud was to be burned throughout Italy. This caused a shift in focus in Jewish study away from traditional Rabbinic sources towards the Rabbalah and the Zohar, which were not perceived as heretical by the Catholic Church. 41 The first printing of the Zohar in 1558 made it accessible to a wider audience of readers and, consequently, it became a much more important and influential work than it had been at any other period in Jewish history. There was a great deal of conflict over the study of Kabbalah, with some scholars following the traditional Rabbinic line of thought and arguing that it should not be studied at all, 42 while others praised its virtues, and others, (primarily those who had made a practice of Kabbalistic study prior to the burning of the Talmud) cautioned against making what once were secret documents available to all who wanted to study them. One of the major concerns over the study of the Kabbalah was the influence that it was having on certain

⁴⁰ See J. L. Blau, The Christian Cabala pp. 8-9.

⁴¹ See below, section on "The Christian Kabbalah".

⁴²Cf. Genesis Rabbah, I:10. Also, Scholem, Major Trends, p. 24ff.

Christian scholars and especially their apostate followers who used it as a basis for their anti-Jewish and prosely-tizing efforts.43 These scholars formed the basis of what was to become the "Christian Kabbalah." (See below)

F) Humanism and the Christian Kabbalah.

As previously mentioned, Christian study of the Kabbalah was a major intellectual pursuit during the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the Reformation in Italy. Some Christian scholars, most notably the humanists Pico Della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin saw in the Zohar and other Kabbalistic works proof of Christian doctrine. Ironically, this interest in Christian study of the Kabbalah was one of the main reasons that the Zohar was not destroyed along with other Rabbinic texts in the aftermath of the Counter-Reformation⁴³.

Pico, whom Roth describes as the "Knight-errant of Humanism" 44 became interested in the Kabbalah when he was introduced to it by his Hebrew teachers. The interest in discovering new philosophic concepts which was characteristic of Renaissance Humanism placed Jews in the unique position of serving as teachers to their Christian neigh-

⁴³ See Rosenthal, pp.8-9; Assaf, pp. 238-240; Baron, Vol. XIII, pp.172ff.

⁴³ See Roth, History, pp.303-304.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 205

bors 45. This was due, in large part to the existence of Medieval Hebrew versions of Plato, Aristotle, and other previously unattainable documents. Hebrew teachers and translators were suddenly entrusted with a considerable amount of prestige and importance in Renaissance society. Knowledge of Hebrew became, for all intents and purposes, a pre-requisite for serious scholarship 46.

In his book, The Christian Cabalah, J. L. Blau writes:

The primary intention of the Christian interpretation of cabała, as first shown in the earliest of the Christian interpreters, was to seek for new means of confirming the truths of the Christian religion; and Pico makes the point... according to his own opinions, that a Hebrew cabalist must inevitably agree with the doctrine of the Christians in the matter of the Trinity. 47

In other words, the <u>Zohar</u>, along with all of the other available Kabbalistic writings were not Jewish, but Christian documents. In this light, the <u>sefirot</u> came to represents different attributes of the Trinity: <u>Keter</u> represented the Father; <u>Hokhmah</u> - the Logos, and the Son; and <u>Binah</u> - the Holy Spirit⁴⁸.

Since the primary goal of Christian kabbalists during the Renaissance was not to convert the Jews, but rather to strengthen their own beliefs, the reaction of the Jewish

⁴⁵cf. Baron, vol. 13, pp.160ff.

⁴⁶Roth, op. cit. pp.204-5

⁴⁷Blau, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 14-15. See also below, note #293 (p. 112).

community to their efforts was mixed. As Ruderman writes:

The process of Christian attraction to Jewish Kabbalistic sources offered renewed possibilities of mutually informed dialogue between Jew and Christian; but at the same time it signified the initiation of an informed and intellectually sophisticated assault against the conviction of the Jews.49

On the one hand, since these fledgling Hebraists needed the help of their Jewish tutors and translators to unlock the secrets of the Kabbalah, a kind of reciprocal relationship developed. The Jews gained societal prestige while the Christians gained the knowledge which they desired. In addition, Graetz writes that the enthusiasm displayed by Christian kabbalists encouraged more Jewish study of the Kabbalah⁵⁰.

On the other hand, many followers of those Christian Kabbalists were, in fact, apostate Jews who used the Kabbalah as a way to both validate their apostasy and to attack Judaism. As is evident from his introduction, it is against those individuals that Yair directs much of his attack.

Among those apostate Kabbalists was Paul (Pablo) De Heredia who wrote the Kabbalistic forgery, <u>Iggeret Ha-Sodot</u>, mentioned in our text, and Pedro de la Cavalleria who, as is evident from the translation below, also had an influence on Yair. It would appear that Yair was very much

⁴⁹Ruderman, p. 146.

⁵⁰H. Graetz, The History of the Jews, Vol IV, p.481.

aware of these Kabbalistic forgeries and was directing much of his efforts towards exposing them as such⁵¹. This could be another reason for the amount of Kabbalistic references included in the text.



⁵¹ See below, notes #224-5 (p.90).

CHAPTER III - THE TEXT OF HEREV PIFIYOT

As Rosenthal notes in his introduction, Yair does not break any new ground in the course of his writing. All of the arguments listed within the text are taken from other sources with one exception: his listing, in Question #9, of the most complete list to date of reasons why the Messiah has not yet arrived 52 Nonetheless he provides us with an excellent example of the variety of sources and styles used in apologetic literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A) Yair's Writing Style

Yair writes in a very elaborate and effusive style. There is a distinct sardonic and biting tone which is carried throughout the pages of his work. He also writes with a sense of humor. For example, when, in dealing with the Christian's assertion:

...as the Evangelist [Luke] states in chapter two, (i.e.), that our Messiah was born in the place mentioned and between the ox and the ass⁵³, as is written: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib..." (Isaiah 1:3)⁵⁴

Yair borrows from Toldot Yeshu and states:

And how is it that you are not ashamed to insult your most beloved woman by saying that she

⁵²See Rosenthal, p. 8; Ruderman, p. 205, note #45.

⁵³Luke 2:7

⁵⁴ See below, p. 50.

delivered between an ox and an ass? This makes it appear as though she hid herself from the eyes of her husband and concealed herself as though being defiled. 55

And similarly, when commenting on the verse "B'terem Shanim hayehu" (Habakuk 3:2) in the same context, Yair writes:

For if you were to interpret this as being about Jesus, I could also cite the following text concerning the matter: "You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together." (Deuteronomy 22:10). It is plausible to infer from this that one should not follow the ways of him who has been born between the ox and the ass. 56

B) Three Types Of Argumentation In Herev Pifiyot

Scholarship has shown that there are three basic catagories of apologetic argumentation which arose during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These are:

- Exegetical arguments (Min Ha-K'tuvim): the socalled "battle of the proof texts."
- 2) Historical arguments (Min Ha-Metziut): proofs from within historical experience which would either validate of falsify claims of Jesus! Messiaship, etc.
- 3) Rational arguments (<u>Min Ha-Sekhel</u>): using formal logic or philosophic proofs to support claims of Religious truth. 57

Yair, throughout his polemic, utilizes all three of these catagories. What follows is a brief examination of the way that he incorporates them into his text:

⁵⁵ See below, p. 52.

⁵⁶See-below, pp. 52-3.

⁵⁷Lasker, pp. 3-11.

1. Exegetical Arguments:

On one level, all of Herev Pifiyot can be classified as an exegetical argument. The battleground around which the Jew and the Christian spar is full of citations from Biblical, Rabbinic, and Kabbalistic text. What is important to note, however, is that wair is very careful, as previously noted, to utilize as many different sources as possible in his refutation of the Christian's arguments. The Jew in our text is not merely content to respond to a verse with another verse, but rather, he retorts with at least two or three in rapid succession - often they may even contradict each other. For example, in dealing with the Eighth Question regarding whether Haggai 2:9 58 refers to the fact that the Messiah was supposed to have been revealed during the time of the second Temple, he provides us with prooftexts that prove:

a) that the text does, in actuality, refer to the Second Temple, and that the Second Temple was superior to the First Temple,

as well as

b) that despite this, the Third Temple is what the text really wants to stress. 59

⁵⁸ The text reads: "The glory of the Latter house will be greater than that of the former..."

⁵⁹Cf. below, pp. 60ff.

2. Historical Arguments:

Well. As mentioned previously, the one feature of Herev Pifiyot which distinguishes it from other polemics of its genre is Yair's listing, in Question Nine, of 100 reasons that the Messiah has not yet arrived. He also quotes from Yosef Bin Gurion - author of what was considered to be, at that time, the most authoritative history of the Jews since the Babylonian Exile60 - when he supports his claim that there will be a Third Temple in the future.

3. Rational Arguments:

Yair's use of Aristotle, Maimonides, Albo, and other medieval philosophers, as mentioned above, attests to his utilization of this genre of argumentation. His negation of God's corporeality, divisibility and ability to change in Question Ten and his reference to Aristotle's claiming that the lineage of a fetus is determined through the father in Question Two are all evidence of his ability to use this form of argument in his polemic.

⁶⁰ See below, note #174 (p. 74)

CHAPTER IV - YAIR AND THE HIZZUK EMUNAH: A COMPARISON

Although Rabbi Isaac of Troki, the Karaite author of the anti-Christian Polemic, <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u>, lived during the same period in history as Yair, he came from a completely different background (16th - century Lithuania). There are many differences between the two works. R. Isaac, being a Karaite, does not utilize Rabbinic or Kabbalistic materials to support his arguments. In some cases he even refutes Talmudic claims and appears to be doing battle with Rabbinic Judaism as well61. He also is confronting not only the Catholic Church, but also Lutheran, Greek Orthodox, and Aryan Christianity 62. Nonetheless, there are also many similarities.

Despite the fact that the <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u> was written in the end of the 16th Century, is still perceived today as an important work. Many books such as A. Lukyn Williams' Christian Evidences For Jewish People have been written as recently as 1919 for the purpose of countering Troki's defense of Judaism and his attack on Christianity. R. Isaac's work is valuable because it contains most of the major scriptural arguments used against Christianity. As can be expected, much of what Yair wrote in his work can

^{61&}lt;sub>C.F.</sub> <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u> section I:34, p.170 in the Mocatta translation. Troki directly refutes <u>Baba Bathra</u> 3a where it states that the Second Temple stood longer than the First Temple. (All further references to the <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u> will correspond to the Mocatta translation.)

⁶² See F.E. Talmage, Disputation and Dialogue, p.10.

also be found in the <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u>. What follows is a brief summary of a few of the major similarities and differences between the two works in the order that they appear in <u>Herev Pifiyot</u>.

1. Isaiah 7:14.

"Behold the Alman shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call his name Emanuel."

Both Yair and R. Isaac use the same the basic exegetical, and historical arguments to counter the Christian claim that this verse proves the Virgin Birth of the Messiah. These can be found in Yair's Third Question and Troki's sections I:21, II:1 and II:2 63. These are a) that the word Almah does not mean virgin, but young woman; and b) that the Almah's giving birth was meant to be a sign to King Ahaz at that particular time and not a prediction of events which would occur far in the future.

2. Mary's virginity before and after the birth of Jesus:

Both Yair and R. Isaac use the same arguments in this context as well, namely a) that Matthew 1:25 states that Joseph had not had intercourse with her until <u>after</u> Jesus was born⁶⁴; and b) the New Testament states that Jesus had

⁶³Hizzuk Emunah, pp. 95-99, 230-31; See also, note #104 (p. 46) below.

⁶⁴ See below - p. 47; Hizzuk Emunah, II:3, p.231

brothers and sisters65

3. Micah 5:2

"And You, Bethlehem Efrata, though you are little among the thousands of Yehuda, yet out of you shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel; and his goings out are from ancient time, from days of old."

Christians applogists used this verse to show that the Messiah would be born in the city of Bethlehem - thereby proving the Messiahship of Jesus. Yair and Troki use, different approaches in their refutations.

R. Isaac's response can be found in section I:33.66
His argument is threefold, namely: a) That the text does
not specifically mention Jesus by name and therefore is no
proof of the Christian claim; b) that Jesus was never a
ruler; and c) that the text does not state that Bethlehem
is the birthplace of the Messiah. Note that in our text,
the Christian quotes from the Targum which does ascribe the
birthplace of the Messiah to Bethlehem. Troki does not
have to deal with the Targum since, being a Karaite, he
argues strictly from the P'shat level of the text⁶⁷.

Since the Jew in our text argues from the perspective of a Rabbinic Jew, he must accept the Targum's claim that the Messiah will come from a city called Bethlehem. He

⁶⁵ See Below p. 47; Hizzuk Emunah, II:17, p. 241.

⁶⁶Hizzuk Emunah, pp.163-168

⁶⁷ See below, p. 49.

also must contend with a Midrash which states that the Messiah was born there on the day that the Temple was destroyed⁶⁸. His refutation, therefore, is very different from that of Troki. His argument is as follows:

- a) He differentiates between Bethlehem Efrata mentioned in the Biblical text and Bethlehem Yehuda where Jesus was supposedly born.
- b) He points out the chronological discrepancies between the Midrash's claim that the Messiah was born on the day that the Temple was destroyed and the Christian assertion that Jesus was born 70 years before this.

4. Haggai 2:9

"The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former..."

The Christians state that this verse proves Jesus' existence during the second Temple period. Yair and R. Isaac use completely different approaches in dealing with this claim.

Troki's refutation revolves around the meaning of the word <u>kavod</u> (glory). He states that it refers to spiritual, not physical glory. He then goes on to refute the passage in <u>Baba Bathra</u> 4a which states that the greatness of the Second Temple was due to both its size and its longer duration than the First Temple. He states that the

⁶⁸ See below, pp. 49-50, also note #115 (p. 50).

Biblical text, therefore, must refer to the Third Temple, and consequently it has nothing to do with Jesus. He supports his argument by listing the five things missing from the Second Temple which were in the First. 69 What is interesting here is that Troki appears to be arguing both against the Rabbinic view, as expressed by Yair, and the Christian view.

Yair's treatment of this verse is very interesting.

Unlike Troki, the Jew cannot state unequivocally that the text refers to the Third Temple because of the aforementioned passage in Baba Bathra. At the same time, however, he must be careful not to support the Christian's claims.

His argumentation begins with the Christian making the following argument:

- The Messiah was to have been revealed during the period of the Second Temple.
- Haggai 2:9 refers to the Second Temple.
- Kavod does not refer to physical glory. He cites Yoma 4b to support this claim.
- <u>Kavod</u>, therefore, refers to the revelation of Jesus during the period of the Second Temple.
- Only two Temples will be built.

The Jew responds with the following argument:

- He begins with a lengthy treatise on the existence, superiority, and perfection of the future Third Temple.
- The sins of Israel caused the Fall of the Second Temple due to divine punishment.

⁶⁹Hizzuk Emunah, I:34, pp.169-173

- God will one day forgive Israel, return and build the Third Temple.
- 4. Haggai 2:9 refers to the Second Temple. <u>Kavod</u> can refer to either spiritual or physical glory. In relation to physical glory, he cites <u>Baba Bathra</u> 4a. In relation to spiritual glory he cites J. <u>Megillah</u> 1:12 and B. <u>Yoma</u> 9b. 70
- 5. The five things missing from the Second Temple were taken away as a punishment of Israel due to their sins. However, they were supposed to have been included in the Second Temple as well.
- Therefore, the text does not refer to Jesus' revelation.

In other words, the Jew does not directly dispute with the Christian over whether the text refers to the Second or Third Temple, but he also argues over the meaning of the word Kavod. He shows that it can mean either physical or spiritual glory, and therefore cannot be interpreted exclusively as referring to Jesus. At the same time, he finds it necessary to include passages which refer to the Third Temple, for this is the real refutation of the claim that the Messiah had already come.

5. Various Meanings Of Elohim - the Use of YHWH In Names:

Both Yair and R. Isaac utilize the same sources when dealing with the issue of divine names. This comes up in both the <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u> and <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> in the context of the Christian claim that a multitude of divine names or the use of the plural in <u>Elohim</u> refers to the Trinity. The

⁷⁰Cf. below pp. 72-3.

arguments used are as follows:

- a) In regards to the claim that <u>Elohim</u> is plural and therefore refers to a plurality of the godhead both Yair and R. Isaac cite the fact that the word "<u>Elohim</u>" can be used interchangeably for God, angel, leader and judge. 71
- b) Both Yair and Troki state that YHWH has been connected to the name of Moses' altar (Exodus 17:15), and the name of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 48:25). Troki uses this refutation in regards to the Christian claim that Isaiah 14:9 "...and they shall call his name Emanuel", refers to Jesus because of the inclusion of the name of God (E1) in the child's name. Yair uses it in the midst, of his refutation of the claim that God is referred to, in several places by three different names, "E1, Elohim, and YHWH" thereby proving the Trinity. 72
- C) Genesis 1:26 "...let Us make Man in Our Image..."

 Both Yair and R. Isaac refute the Christian claim that
 the use of the plural in this verse refers to a
 plurality in God. Yair quotes from the Midrash which
 states that He consulted with the heavenly angels and

⁷¹See below pp.89, 99-101; <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u>, I:9, pp. 45-46.

⁷² See below, pp. 89-90, 101; <u>Hizzuk Emunah</u>, I:20, p.103.

the earth73. Troki uses an elaborate grammatical response which demonstrates that the plural is often used as a way of marking high distinction. He ends his statement with the assertion:

"We see clearly that the New Testament affords not a single evidence to authorize a change from the pure belief in the Divine Unity to the complex and unintelligible dogma of that of the Trinity."

⁷³ See Below, p. 105

⁷⁴ Hizzuk Emunah, I:10 pp.46-50.

CHAPTER V - SOME OBSERVATIONS

Herev Pifiyot is a relatively unimportant document in terms of its role in the literary history of Jewish-Christian apologetics in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It breaks no new ground. Yair's chief strength is as a collector of traditional arguments. And yet, it is an important work from the perspective that it provides us with insight into some of the major historical and intellectual changes which occurred during the period in which Yair lived. From its pages, as has been demonstrated above, we can see the many changes that the Counter-Reformation brought on Jewish society in 16th - century Italy. The influence of the Catholic Church, medieval philosophy, the burning of the Talmud, the Kabbalah, and the apostate Christian Kabbalists can all be traced through its pages.

A question that I often asked myself during the course of my examination of the text was, "How convincing is Yair?" I tried to place myself in the role of the Christian apologete and examine my reactions to his responses. I found that often Yair's answers to the Christians's arguments were difficult to follow; many times he attempted to cover so many different areas in the course of his refutation that it was difficult to trace the logic of his answers. This was very different from my reading of the Hizzuk Emunah, which I found to be cogent and concise.

Upon further examination, I realized that the reason for this confusion was that Yair did not write his polemic for the purpose of converting Christians, but rather, as Rosenthal writes in his introduction,

Yair wrote his book with the goal of providing ready answers against learned apostates, who knew the Rabbinic literature from the inside and directed their arguments towards intellectual circles.75

The fact that <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> presents the reader with a detailed summary of Christian argumentation, is written in. Hebrew, and assumes knowledge of Rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature on the part of the reader all point in this direction 76. In other words, rather than a diatribe or polemic, <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> is a kind of sourcebook for combatting the many changes which were occurring in Italy and throughout Europe during the Counter-Reformation. In this light, it is unimportant that Yair's arguments occasionally do not correspond exactly to the Christian's claims; or that he uses a wide variety of sources which, in some instances, are in opposition to each other.

Another way of looking at <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> is as a kind of "morale booster" for Jews who were suddenly thrust upon difficult times after becoming accustomed to a life of relative comfort and stability. In the end of the text, the Christian realizes the folly of his ways and decides to

⁷⁵ Rosenthal, p. 8

⁷⁶See Ruderman, p. 69.

return to his Jewish roots. Yair writes:

THE NINETEENTH QUESTION:

The Christian: The spirit of God speaks through you, my brother, as if to my very soul; answering every question that I posed, a phrase well turned 77, so that you have caused a new will to open up within me to receive the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the divine service - as you have - this very day, and to rid myself of these imaginary beliefs, which until today had been for me as a mask which covered my eyes from looking at the bright light which is the faith of Israel. And now, my soul rejoices in the Lord, for He has clothed me in garments of salvation, 78 and taken me under the shadow of his wings so that I might be among the Children of Israel, His chosen ones, His treasured people. 79

This can be seen as Yair's hope for a better future. Its almost Messianic tone belies the sense of frustration and fear that Yair and his contemporaries must have felt in the face of a rapidly changing, and increasingly hostile world.

⁷⁷ Proverbs 25:11 (R)

⁷⁸ Isaiah 61:10 (R)

⁷⁹ Herev Pifiyot, pp. 105-6.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

"With The Help of God."

When I saw the oppressive hand of the enemies of Truth directed against the necks of the soft hearted Children of Israel, some of whom became so frightened and scattered away from the flash of the sharpened presentation of their claims - which are merely conjuring tricks - that they hid themselves and placed their hands over their mouths and bent over double and stuck their heads between their legs, and allowed themselves to be seduced by their lies when they bade them a friendly welcome, I said that it was time to act for the sake of God; to take the vanguard and to take up an avenging sword of the covenant; to shake the sleeping spirits of our people and to wage a war against the enemies of God - thereby saving the souls of these wretched Jews - so that they will not bow down and prostrate under their feet. And as our holy Sages warned us when they stated: "Be alert in the study of Torah and know how to answer an apostate, "80 I have entitled this treatise, Herev Pifiyot ('A Two - Edged Sword')81, for a

⁸⁰Abot 2:14. (R)

⁸¹ Taken from Psalm 149,5-7:

[&]quot;Let the faithful exult in glory; let them shout for joy upon their couches, with paeans to God in their throats and two edged sword in their hands, to impose retribution upon the nations, punishment upon the peoples,"

sword devours in two directions when it has two edges - to smite the scalp of the children of the giant whose evil inclination overpowers them to blaspheme the battle lines of the Living God. And it will appear to the eyes of the reader of this tract of mine as though he were looking through the eyes of two armed men who are combatting with each other over the ownership of an article, and when one of them falls and his opponent triumphs he pleads with him and states: 'Spare my life and take my property!'

It is for this reason that I have divided it into a question and answer format - contrasting stories with each question and rules with each answer - in order to counterbalance both sides and differentiate between the impure and the pure. This is so that the spectators will recognize and know the identities of the two combatants: who is the one who draws a bow towards an intentional target and overpowers him - smiting the flinty rock82 with his sword; and who is the one who breaks all the rules83 - as though he placed a mask on his face and his hands are unable to grasp a weapon.

And also, I know the insignificance of my worth-

⁸²A reference to Psalm 114:7-8:

[&]quot;Tremble 0 earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flinty rock into a fountain." (B)

⁸³Literally: "goes beyond the boundries"(B)

worthy of putting this heavy burden on my shoulders, for I have not yet attempted to wear a coat of mail or wield my sword against those who those who boast of their imaginary bravery. Despite this, I have directed my heart heaveward for it is well known before Him who is blessed that I have not done this for my own glory, but rather that I have been obsessed with a great zealousness for the holiness of His name and His Torah and His people. And He, in His great mercy will grant me the shield of His salvation and will cause His sword to flash and be my helper. For my heart will not be afraid, and my arm will not rest from pursuing those who leave the faith as long as my soul is within me.

To my shining companion, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance84 - I refer to the great one, as he was known-Emanuel Berekhia, may God preserve him, son of the honorable exalted teacher and Rabbi, Isaac of Fano, may his memory be a blessing.85

Since God has awakened my spirit to write this book of polemic in order to get rid the complaints of those who speak against the Lord in error, and to smite the hands of

⁸⁴ A reference to Song of Songs 1:12.(B)

⁸⁵Rosenthal, in his introduction writes that we do not have too much information about this person, Yair's teacher. It is possible that Amadeo de Moise dedicated his Italian translation of Maimonides' <u>Guide Of The Perplexed</u> to him. It is also possible that he was the son of Rabbi Isaac of Fano, financier of the congregation in Ferrara. See Rosenthal's introduction to the text, p. 7. (B)

the counterfeiters of our Divine Torah, I have set my feet on the way, after God, may He be praised, has found me to be worthy to apply the weapon to its task, as it is for the coming of this day, to greet your exalted Excelling with the gift of this, my young labor, — so that you may see with your eyes and understand with your heart in order to correct what is false, if I have in any way made a mistake in this. For I am not relying on my own insight to publish this until you have looked at it with your mind's eye, preparing it and sustaining it.

And may the Lord, who is blessed, for the sake of His righteousness, bring near the day of our salvation, for then it will be known to all of the upright of our faith, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, to challenge the principles of his faith on this day of peace.

The youngster, your servant who pours water upon the hands of your Highness, [i.e. your student] Yair, the son of his honorable Highness, Shabbetai Da - Correggio - may his Rock and Redeemer preserve him.

THE FIRST QUESTION:

The Christian: I am most happy to see you this day, for I wanted to speak with you, if you would but listen to me, about the (true) faith, and to prove to you that all of the qualities and the awesome deeds that the prophets prophesied concerning the Messiah have been fulfilled in our Messiah.

THE ANSWER:

The Jew: If you want to argue with me, I won't stop my mouth from answering you very tastefully and knowledgeably according to the explicit words of the Torah, in such a way that you will bow your head and acknowledge the truth of what I am saying and [consequently] believe in what I believe.

THE SECOND QUESTION:

The Christian: It is well known that the Messiah will come from the seed of David as it is written: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse." (Isaiah 11.1)86. And we have found that [in the case of]

⁸⁶This argument can be found as early as the third century CE in Justyn Martyr's, The Dialogue of Trypho. See Williams, Adversus Judaeos pp.40-41. (B)

Jesus 87 that [he] was born of the seed of David because of the mention of his birth in many places, and his name and birth place are known in two words, "Yishai" and "Nezer" for these are the letters of Yeshu Nozri (Jesus of Nazareth). 88

The Jew: Your words are not true when applied in a general fashion, but rather [apply only] in [one small] detail, for you were correct when you stated that the Messiah would come from the seed of David, but you lied when you said that Jesus was born of the seed of David; for behold, according to your opinion he has no father—if [in fact] he was born through the agency of the Holy Spirit through his Father who is in Heaven and not by [a man of] flesh and blood. And there is no reason to suspect Joseph, Mary's husband, even though he was of Davidic descent⁸⁹, and he was attached to his father's tribe, as God commanded in

⁸⁷Literally ,"oto ha-ish"-- that very man'. Jesus is never mentioned directly by name in this and other polemical texts. He is either referred to as "The Nazarite," "that very man" as above or other, more derogatory terms. The author's reticence to write out the name of Jesus is standard practice in most apologetic pieces of this period. See Sefer Nizahon Yashan, ed. Breuer, p195. (B)

⁸⁸ The text in its complete form reads as follows: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse (Yishai), and a twig (Nezer) shall grow forth out of his roots." (B)

⁸⁹See Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 1:27, 3:23ff. (R)

Numbers 36:90, for you believe that he never came near unto her to lie with her, to be with her [as husband and wife]. And if you were then to say that his mother was of Davidic descent, the text [in your interpretation] connects her with Davidic descent⁹¹, there is testimony [to the fact] that the offspring of the mother is not called "family" as it is written: "...according to their families—to the house of their fathers..." (Numbers 1:2).92 Furthermore the scholar⁹³ wrote that the form of the fetus is created from the stock (lit seed') of the male and not from the stock of the female, and we also have a tradition that the Messiah will come from two tribes—his father from the tribe of Judah and his mother from the tribe of Dan—for of

⁹⁰ Numbers 36:7:
"So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the Children of Israel shall cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers."(R)

⁹¹The second century Church Father, Tertullian, already had claimed that Mary was of Davidic descent. He translated hoter as virga, a word which is similar to the word virgo - b'tulah. This would mean that Mary, the mother of Jesus, would come from Davidic stock. See Williams, 49. The Christian theologians of the Middle Ages defended the concept of Mary being of Davidic descent. See also ibid. pp. 155, 185. (R)

⁹²The text refers only to the house of the fathers, not to the mothers, therefore the claim of Jesus' Davidic lineage through his mother's household is invalid.(B)

⁹³Aristotle, De Generatione Animalium XXI(R)
Cf. The Basic Works of Aristotle Translated Into English.
Vol V. p. 727b.(B)

these two [tribes] it is written "Gur Arieh"94 as it is found in Bereshit Rabbah95.

And how long will you twist the words in order to establish the name of your Messiah in the letters "Yishai" and "Nezer"? For if "Nezer" refers to the Messiah, you wouldn't be able to use it in the same context as "Yishai" - for "Yishai" Is the root from which "shall come forth a shoot", and "Nezer" is the branch which will grow forth out of the root.

THE THIRD QUESTION:

The Christian: Our tradition has it that our Messiah was born of a virgin, for when the angel appeared to her and said: "...behold, you shall conceive and bear a son..."96 she had not yet entered into marriage. [This was so] in order to prove true the prophecy, "Behold the Almah shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)97 And concerning this wonder it is

⁹⁴ In Genesis 49:9, Deuteronomy 33:32, Nahum 2:12 the words <u>Gur Arieh</u> are used to refer to both the tribes of Judah and Dan. <u>Gur Arieh</u> mean's "lion's whelp".(B)

^{95 &}quot;See Yom Tobh Lipmann Mulhausen, <u>Sefer Nizahon</u>, Hochspan ed. 116: "The Christians interpret the new concept that a young woman gives birth without a man." (R)

⁹⁶ Luke 1:31 (R)

⁹⁷ As found in Matthew 1:22-23--Jesus' birth fulfilled the prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14. Here <u>Almah</u> is translated as Virgin--according to the LXX.(B)

written: "The way of a man with an Almah ... " (Proverbs And almah comes from the root alam which means 30:19). "hidden", for it (i.e. the virgin birth) was hidden from all mankind98. And this is hinted at in Isaiah 9:6 : "l'marbeh ha-mis-rah" (lit. "...for the increase of the realm...") [where we find a] closed Mem99, contrary to custom. [This is in accordance with] Ezekiel 44:2 where it states: "... This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, neither shall any man enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it,... " Now "this gate" is a reference to the womb of the Virgin, for it was closed before the birth, and after the birth it did not have sexual intercourse with any man. 100 [And we also see this in] the beautiful parable by King Solomon--may he rest in peace--as a locked garden as it is written : "A locked garden is my sister, my bride..." (Song of Songs 4:12). And concerning this new creation the prophet stated: "...a

⁹⁸ See Ozar Vikuhim, 95, 9 (Prophiat Duran in his letter "Al T'hi Ka-avotekha"). Also Yehoshua HaLorki derived almah from alam in the argument in Tortosa. See REJ, volume 74, p. 37. This interpretation is already found in the argument of Nicholas De Lyra (1270-1349). See Williams 413. Also Yehoshua HaLorki in his argument against the Jews in Tortosa (1413-1414) comes back to this claim. See Posnanski, 380.(R)

⁹⁹ In the masoretic text, the word "marbeh" is written with a final Mem. (B)

¹⁰⁰ This argument can be found in Nicholas De Lyra's treatise, "Against a Certain Jew Who Denounced The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. See Williams, Adversus Judaeos. p 413. (B)

woman shall court a man." (Jeremiah 31:21)101. And his birth was also hinted at [in the events surrounding] Aaron's staff (Numbers 17:23)102. For just as Aaron's staff budded without drawing nourishment from the soil, so was he (Jesus) born without sexual intercourse having taken place.

The Jew: Our redeemer and saviour will be born in the natural way--from a woman who has had sexual intercourse, and not from a virgin. The proof that you brought from the saying of the prophet: "...behold the almah will conceive..." is void for two reasons. The first is that this prophecy came to fulfillment at that time. The second is that if you will attempt to say that it (i.e., the prophecy) was not fulfilled at that time, you would still be unable to interpret almah as "virgin", because it means "young woman". And when I said that [the prophecy] was already fulfilled in the days of Isaiah, the verse after it proves it: "Yea, before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou

¹⁰¹ The entire verse reads as follows:
"How long will you turn away coyly, 0 backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth: A woman shall court a man." (B)

The text reads as follows:

"And it came to pass on the following day, that Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and, behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded and put forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and bore ripe almonds."(B)

hast a horror of shall be forsaken." (Isaiah 7:16). For he prophesied concerning the exile of the ten tribes, which occurred at that time103. And furthermore, its (i.e. the text's) language is exact when it states: "Behold the Almah has conceived...", which means that [at the time of the prophecy] the woman had already become pregnant. There is no doubt that the prophet wanted to give this sign to Ahaz in order that he should believe in the word of God¹⁰⁴. And what I said about almah and betulah not being synonymous, there is proof for the matter when Saul asked concerning David, "Find out whose son that young fellow (elem) is..." (I Samuel 17:56), for you do not refer to a young man as "virgin" (Batul). 105

And concerning the verse which you used to prove about the woman "The way of a man with an almah..." (Proverbs 30:19), [it is said] not for the purpose of showing or proving [your case], but rather for shame and also for disgrace, because it is connected to the verse which follows it "Such is the way of the adulteress..."(Ibid vs.20).

And if Joseph never came unto her (Mary) then that which is written about him in Matthew 1:25--that he never

¹⁰³See Albo, <u>Sefer Ha Ikkarim</u> III:25, p.235-6 in the Husik translation.(B)

¹⁰⁴ See Troki, I:21, pp. 96-98; II:2 pp.230-31. (B)

¹⁰⁵ See Troki, Ibid. p.96 (B)

had intercourse with her until his firstborn son was born 106-is a purposeless thing, for this implies that after his son was born he had intercourse with her. And how much more is this so in light of the fact that it is written that he (i.e. Jesus) had brothers and sisters. 107

Nehemiah 2:13, "Asher hem R'rutzim" (lit. "...which were broken down...") you would know how to interpret "closed" mem in "lemarbeh hamisrah" in Isaiah 9:6. For the enlightened one will understand that this hints at the future rebuilding of Jerusalem 108, as is written: "...your eyes shall behold Jerusalem as a secure homestead, as a tent not to be transported..." (Isaiah 33:20). And the verse "...This gate is to be kept shut and not to be opened!" (Ezekiel 44:2) never leaves its literal meaning for, behold, close to it [we find] "Only the prince may sit in it and eat bread..." (Ibid vs. 3). This proves that when that prince enters and leaves, the gate is open, as it

¹⁰⁶The text reads as follows:
"Rising from sleep Joseph did as the angel had directed him; he took Mary home to be his wife, but he had no intercourse with her until her son was born. And he named the child Jesus. " (B)

¹⁰⁷ See Matthew 12:46-60, 13:55; Mark 6:3. See also Magen V'Herev of Leon Modena Section IV, chapter 11, ed. S. Simonsohn, p.61; Albo, Sefer Ha - Ikkarim III:25, ed. Husik, pp.234-5; Troki, II:17, trans. Mocatta, p. 241. (B)

¹⁰⁸ See Midrash HaGadol on Genesis, section Mikez, p. 682 in the Margolot edition. Also see Rabbi David Kimchi's commentary on this verse, p. 62 in the Finkelstein edition. (R)

is written: "...he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate and shall go out the same way." (Ibid).

And do not err concerning the verse "A locked garden is my sister, my bride," (Song of Songs 4:12) for it certainly speaks of the modesty of the congregation of Israel. For the congregation of Israel is compared to a bride who enters the wedding canopy on the day of the giving of the Torah109. And the divine attachment to the nation of Israel is the same sort of attachment that a man has with his wife by virtue of marriage, as the prophet said: "..and I betroth you to me forever." (Hosea 2:21)

And the new idea that the prophet told, "...and a woman shall court a man..." (Jeremiah 31:21) is due to the fact that the man courts the woman, as the Sages state "The one who has lost something goes looking for what he has lost." 110 But at this time the opposite will occur: the woman will go around courting the man. And this verse is interpreted nicely in Rashi's commentary.

And Aaron's staff is not a sign of the birth of the Messiah, for if the staff were to be a sign of this, Judah's staff should have been flowering.

Listen and consider well that which the master of all

¹⁰⁹ See Pirkey D'rabi Eliezer, 43; Deuteronomy Rabbah 3:12; see also L. Ginsberg, The Legends of the Jews 6:36, note 200. (R)

¹¹⁰ Kiddushin 2:2(R)

prophets¹¹¹ spoke about [when he said]: "If your brother or your mother's son should entice you..." (Deuteronomy 13:7) The text specifically specifies <u>Imkha</u> (your mother). He who listens carefully will hear [and understand]. 112

THE FOURTH QUESTION:

the Christian: I have found that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, as it is written: "And you, Bethlehem Efrata..." (Micah 5:1)113--and the Targum translates, :...from you will come forth the Messiah. "And we find in the Midrash that the savior of the Jews will be born in Beyt 'Arbah114, in Bethlehem--Eikha Rabbati on the verse :...the comforter is far away from me..."

¹¹¹ Moses. See question #10, pp.95-6 below, for textual citations.(B)

¹¹² Normally, the Bible refers to Ben Avikha--"your father's son"--the fact that the text specifically refers to Ben Imkha is seen as a direct prophecy concerning Jesus.
(B)

⁻⁻ See <u>Nizakhon Yashan</u>, 51: When Moses said if your brother or Mother's son should entice you...'he was referring to Jesus who denied his father and said that he has a mother, but no father. (R)

¹¹³ The continuation of the verse reads:
"...though you are little among the thousands of Yehuda, yet out of you shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel; and his goings out are from ancient time, from days of old." (B)

¹¹⁴ The text reads Birath 'Arbah, not Beyt 'Arbah. (B)

(Lamentations 1:16)115 . And moreover, the prophecy was fulfilled—as the Evangelist [Luke] states in chapter two, (i.e.), that our Messiah was born in the place mentioned and between the ox and the ass116, as is written: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib..." (Isaiah 1:3) And it is concerning this that the text hints [when it states] "B'terem shanim hayehu..." (Habakuk 3:2--lit. "...renew them in these years..."), which has been interpreted as follows: do not read shanim (years), but rather shnayim (two).117

¹¹⁵ Midrash Eikha Rabbati 1:51.(R)

This can also be found in J. Berakhot 5a.

The text is referring to a Midrash which tells the story of a Jew who, is informed by an Arab that the Temple is destroyed, but at the moment of its destruction the deliverer of the Jews was born. Nahmanides, in the Barcelona Disputation of 1240, uses this Midrash as a point of departure to explain his unwillingness to accept conflicting aggadic material as evidence in the course of scholarly debate. See Maccoby, Judaism On-Trial, pp. 42, 44-48, 110. Also, Rankin, Jewish Religious Polemic, pp. 187-9.(B)

¹¹⁶ Luke 2:7 (R)

translates Shanim as duo. And the Church interpreted this verse as concerning Jesus--who was born between two animals, the ox and the ass, or that he was hung between two murderers, or as a reference concerning father and son. See Milhemet HaShem of Ya'akov Ben Reuven (section 7). Church father Tertullian interpreted between the two as between Moses and Elijah. Ante Nicene Fathers III:385. Church Father Origin interprets it as being between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. See Ibid. Vol IV:253 and Vol. VI:386. This claim is repeated continually throughout the disputations of the Middle Ages. See Nizahon Yashan, Wagenseil edition, p.119; Williams, 287, 323. Also see Abravanel on this verse. He states: "B'Kerev shanim bayehu' - this should be understood as between the two

The Jew: It appears to me that there is a bit of a difference between the words of our prophet and your words, for the prophet mentions "Bethlehem Efrata," but Jesus 118 was born in Bethlehem Yehuda." commentators have already pointed out that there were two places called Bethlehem119. And even if I were to agree with your assertion that the two cities were actually one, the text does not decree that the Messiah has to be born there. Rather its purpose is to state that the Messiah will be born of the seed of David, who was born in Bethlehem, as it is written, "...your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite" (I Samuel, 17:58) 120. He would emerge as the future ruler in And even if the Midrash were to support your assertion about the place, it does not support your assertion about the time, for it says "...close upon his arrival it was destroyed." - for he was born on the day that the Temple was destroyed. "And afterwards he was hidden in the Garden of Eden - until the last generation." And you can also find this in the Zohar, Parashat V'Eleh

exiles; the Babylonian exile and the Roman (Edom) exile."

The Septuagint also translates <u>hayehu</u> as <u>hayot</u>--animals.
(B)

¹¹⁸Literally, "The Nazarene". (B)

¹¹⁹ See Radak and Abravanel's comments on Micah 5:1.(R)

¹²⁰ The text reads as follows: And Saul said unto him (David): 'Whose son are you, lad?' And David answered, 'I am the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite.'"(B)

Shemot.121 And how is it that you are not ashamed to insult your most beloved woman by saying that she delivered between an ox and an ass? This makes it appear as though she hid herself from the eyes of her husband and concealed herself as though being defiled. 122

Now that which the prophet said against Israel,
"...the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's
crib..." was said in the context of a rebuke - i.e., that
an animal has superiority over sinful man. 123 And
similarly in another place we find: "Even the stork in the
sky knows her seasons..." (Jeremiah 8:7) 124.

And you should not attempt to change the meaning of the verse, "B'terem Shanim bayehu" (Habakuk 3:2), which is that it was his will that the God of Israel would keep him alive in the midst of the year of distress. For if you were to interpret this as being about Jesus, I could also cite the following text concerning the matter: "You shall

¹²¹ Zohar II,7b. (R)

¹²²Rosenthal writes: "This charge, which hints as to the bastard status of Jesus, is found in the Talmud and Toldot Yeshu. (R)

¹²³ Cf. Ecclesiastes 3:19
"For in respect of the fate of man and the fate of beast, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies so dies the other, and both have the same life breath; man has no superiority over beast, since both amount to nothing." (B)

¹²⁴ The verse continues:
"...and the turtledove, swift, and crane keep the time of their coming. But my people pay no heed to the Law of the Lord."(B)

not plow with an ox and an ass together." (Deuteronomy 22:10). It is plausible to infer from this that one should not follow the ways of him who has been born between the ox and the ass.



THE EIGHTH QUESTION:

The Christian: When you look into the Holy Scriptures you will find that the Messiah was supposed to have been revealed during the period of the Second Temple, as it is written, "... [he] will suddenly come into his Temple" (Malachi 3:1)125 And you already know that, at the start of the building of the second Temple, the prophet prophesied concerning the precious and splendid grandeur of the Temple when he said, "The glory of the latter house" shall be greater than that of the former ... " (Haggai 2:9). And it cannot be said that he said this only because of the beauty of its building, or for its worth, for it was like nothing compared to the first one, and furthermore there were five things missing from the second Temple which were in the first: Heavenly fire, Ark, Urim V'Tumim, anointing oil and the Holy Spirit. 126 And it is concerning this that (the prophet) said: "Who is left among you that saw this house ... "(Ibid 2:3)127And you are forced to admit that when

¹²⁵ The complete text reads as follows:
"Behold I send my messenger, and he shall clear
the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek,
will suddenly come to his Temple; and the
messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight,
behold he comes, says the Lord of hosts."(B)

¹²⁶B. Yoma 21B. (R)

¹²⁷ The complete text reads as follows:
"Who is left among you that saw this house in its
first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it
not in your eyes as nothing?"(B)

the texts states "...the glory of this latter house..." it refers to the revelation of our redeemer in order to save all of the peoples of the world and to save their souls from the judgement of Hell. 128 And it was concerning this that David prophesied "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." (Psalms 118:22) 129 And it was in order to rebut those who think that this "glory" is temporal and physical that the text states "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine says the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2:8), which means that salvation is not to be given in great amounts of riches or property, as people imagine, but rather it will come in the form of eternal justice to end transgression and to put an end to sin. And it is to this that Scripture refers when it states: "...and the precious things of all nations shall come [here]." (Ibid. 7). And therefore when, in seeing by means of the Holy Spirit during the period when the Israelites were expecting the third Temple to be built, the prophet warned and said: "Don't put your trust in illusions and say 'The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these buildings."

¹²⁸Literally, "the judgement of Gehennom." (B)
The Vulgate had already attributed the Prophecy in
Haggai 2:6-9 as concerning Jesus, as far as can be detected
from its translation of the words <u>Uva-u hemdat kol ha goyim</u>
- Et venict Desiratus gentibus. See also - Posnanski 339,
344, 355, 404, 414; Troki 1, Chapter 34. (R)

¹²⁹ Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11. (R)

(Jeremiah 7:14)130 That is to say, do not think that three Temples will be constructed for only two were to be built, as we see ourselves. For if you were to look into the Torah, you would not find more than two houses of Israel. And furthermore, there are three testimonies concerning the Messiah's arrival prior to the destruction of the second Temple: A biblical verse, a selection from the Targum and a Midrash.

The biblical verse:

- as is written: "Before she labored, she was delivered." (Isaiah 66:7).131

The Targum:

- as Jonathan translated: "Before she has pains, she will be redeemed and before she has the trembling of birthpangs the Messiah-King will be revealed."

The Midrash:

- as is stated: "Before the last King of Israel was born in the last diaspora, the redeemer was born." 132

¹³⁰ Radak deals with this in his commentary on Jeremiah 4:7.(R)

¹³¹ The complete text reads as follows: "Before she labored, she was delivered, before her pangs came she bore a son."(B)

¹³²In Bereshit Rabbah, 85,1 we find the following:
"Before she travailed she brought forth' (Isaiah 66:7): Before the last who will enslave [Israel] was born, the first redeemer was born."(B)

And similarly, I have found in Bereshit Rabbah133 "On the day that the Temple was destroyed, Elijah the prophet - may his memory be for a blessing - was walking along the way when he heard a heavenly voice that said: "The Temple is destroyed." Another heavenly voice came forth and said: "It has been granted to you that a redeemer has already, been born unto Israel." Elijah said: "Where is he?," the heavenly voice answered: "Beyt Lehem (Bethlehem) Yehudah." And should you ask and say 'What need would there have been for the coming of the Messiah if the Temple had not yet been destroyed and Israel had not been exiled from their land? Wasn't the Temple to be rebuilt in the future, and aren't the exiled of Israel to be gathered together [when the Messiah comes]?' Against this as well will I answer you, for have not the Sages of the Talmud stated: "The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to appoint Hezekiah as the

¹³³ This should be corrected to <u>Bereshit Rabbati</u>. See <u>Bereshit Rabbati</u>, Albeck edition, p.131. Also see Yehuda Even Shmuel (Kaufman), Midrashei Ge'ulah p. 304 (R.).

The B'reshit Rabbbati text reads as follows:

"And how do we know that on that day [that the Temple was destroyed] the Messiah was born? As it is written, "Before she labored, she was delivered (Isaiah 66:7)." And Elijah - may his memory be for a blessing - was walking along the road on the very day that the holy Temple was destroyed and he heard a heavenly voice calling our and saying to him - 'your holy Temple is in ruins.' Another heavenly voice called out and said, 'be comforted, a Messiah is already granted to you. He said unto her [the heavenly voice] 'And where is he?' She said unto him, 'in Beyt Lebem Yehudah.'" (B)

Messiah and Sennecharib as Gog and Magog134," And the Temple was still standing, and the priests were performing their holy services, and the Levites were upon their platforms, and the Israelites were at their appointed Rather , this comes to show us that this services. 'building' that the Messiah was to build was to be a spiritual and divine building. This is consistent with the way that a righteous person is called the 'dwelling of the Lord'-as has been interpreted from the verse, "And God went up from Abraham" (Genesis 17:22), as meaning that "The forefathers are God's heavenly chariot."135 ingathering of the exiled of Israel by the King-Messiah refers to the congregation of men of the faith who were scattered to every corner of the world, who have taken upon themselves the yoke of the Kingship of the Messiah as we have - to this very day .

¹³⁴ Sanhedrin 94A.(R)
The complete text reads as follows:

The Holy One blessed be He wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah and Senacherib as Gog and Magog; whereupon the attribute of Justice said before the Holy One, blessed be He: "Sovereign of the Universe! If You did not make David the Messiah, who uttered so many hymns and Psalms before You, will You appoint Hezekiah as such, who did not write hymns to You in spite of all of the Miracles that You did for him?"(B)

¹³⁵ B'reshit Rabbah 47, 6. Theodor-Albeck edition p. 475.(R.)

This verse, in the <u>Midrash</u>, is interpreted in a literal sense. The word <u>Me-'Al</u> - from you' - is understood as though God was actually upon the forefathers themselves.(B)

Behold you see with your very eyes, my dear brother, that there are waters going forth from the sanctuary 136, and the source of my proofs is drawn from a well of living water - which is divine teaching.



[&]quot;In that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, part of it to the Eastern Sea and Part to the Western Sea, throughout the summer and winter." (B).

The Jew: The roaring of the waves of your proofs do not frighten me or make me retract my position, for I have a strong defense on every side, which will save my soul from the depths of your ideas.

First of all, I can't help but reveal to you some of the wonderful things which proceeded from the holy mouth of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yohad who wrote the following in Parashat Pinchas - concerning this interpretation which you espouse: "When Israel went out of Egypt, God wanted to make them on earth like the holy angels above..137in the image of As it is written: "...the place which you have made to dwell therein..." (Exodus 15:17)138. This is the first Temple"...the sanctuary of the Lord which your hands have established...", this is the second Temple - and both were to have been works of the Holy One, blessed be He. But since they provoked God in the wilderness, they died there, and God brought their children to the Land, and the house was built by human hands, and because of this, it did not endure. And King Solomon knew that since the Temple was to be built by human hands, it would not endure. And

¹³⁷ The text is not quoted in its complete form. The missing lines are as follows:

[&]quot;...and to build a holy house for them which was to have been brought down from the highest heaven and to have planted Israel as a holy seedling..."(B)

¹³⁸ The complete text reads as follows:
"You bring them in and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance, the place, O Lord, which you have made to dwell therein, the sanctuary of the Lord which your hands have established."(B)

concerning this he wrote: "Unless God builds the house, those who build it labor in vain..." (Psalms 127:1). And in the days of Ezra, their sins forced them to build it themselves, and therefore it did not endure. And until this time, the building which God had originally planned had not yet been built, as it is written: "The Lord builds Jerusalem..." (Ibid 147:2), 139and it is for this building that we wait. The first Temple will be hidden and the second Temple will be revealed. And even the (future) city of Jerusalem will not be the work of human hands, as it is written: "And I shall be unto her as a wall of fire round about, says the Lord..." (Zechariah 2:9). This work should have been completed when Israel first went out from Egypt, but it was put off until the end of days, in the time of the final deliverance." 140

It is generally known that the earthly Temple corresponds to the heavenly Temple, as it is written: "The place you made to dwell in, O Lord..." (Exodus 15:17).141 And the heavenly Temple is called the first Temple, and the

¹³⁹ Omitted: "He and no other." (B)

¹⁴⁰ Zohar Pinchas: 221a, Vol. III in Margoliot ed. (R)

¹⁴¹ See Mekhilta, Shirata, 10. Lauterbach ed. Vol 2, p.78. See also A. Aptowitzer, "Beyt Ha-Midrash Shel Ma-alah 'Al Pi Ha-aggadah", in Tarbiz II, 147. (R)

earthly Temple is called the second Temple.142 And the two previous temples, which were built by human hands--which caused them to be weakened--did not endure and were not directed heavenward, and therefore they were destroyed. But the Third Temple, which will be built by the power of the Creator, and by His utterance, will endure, and will be directed heavenward, and therefore will be eternal.143

And should you somehow find yourself in doubt, and cite the Scripture which states: "Behold, a man called the Branch shall branch out from the place where he is and build the Temple of the Lord." (Zechariah 6:12), and the Targum translates this as: "This man is the Messiah," this proves that it is a man-made building. But another text states, "... For God will build Zion ... "(Psalms 102:17). This proves that it is a divinely created building. How is This can be reconciled in three this possible? interchangeable ways: The first is that it is possible that the walls of the building are made by God through a miracle in the blink of an eye - and the rest of the building is man-made through a period of time; like the way that the Ark and the tablets were sculpted by Moses, and

Naso. 19: "Seven things preceded the world...". See Also Aptowitzer. Ibid. p.137 (R).

¹⁴³ Tanhuma. Noah, 17, ed. Buber, p.22b.(R)

the writing was that of God.144 The second answer is that the entire building will be the handiwork of the Messiah-by God's command. And the nobles of the Children of Israel will support him, as it is written, "...that they may faithfully follow its entire plan and all its laws."145 And Scripture ascribes to God praise, fame and splendor—to the worker and the activity. To what may this be compared? To a king who hires an architect to build a building. Those aspects which do not please him are called a disgrace and are attributed to the architect. Those aspects which do please him are attributed to himself as praiseworthy.146

¹⁴⁴Exodus 34:4; 35:16. The Talmud ascribes the creation of the Ark to Moses. See Baba Batra 14a: Aron She-asah Moshe.(R)

[&]quot;When they are ashamed of all they have done, make known to them the plan of the Temple and its layout, its exits and entrances—its entire plan, and all the laws and instructions pertaining to its entire plan. Write it down before their eyes, that they may faithfully follow its entire plan and all its laws."(B)

¹⁴⁶ Rosenthal writes: I was unable to find the source of this midrash. It is possible that its origin can be found in the well known midrashic parable of Rabbi Berekhia. See Breshit Rabbah 26:4, in the Theodor edition, p. 258. See also Midrash Ha-Gadol, Margolot edition, p.142. Professor Saul Lieberman brought my attention to the following Midrash which is found in the Pesikta D'Rav Kahannah (Buber edition p.128b):

[&]quot;Rabbi Berekhia said in the name of Rabbi Levi: [This can be compared] to a king who had a vineyard and placed it under a caretaker. When [the vineyard] produced good wine, he would say, How fine is the wine from my vineyard! But

The third answer is that all of the building will be the work of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written, "...Zion has been established by the Lord..." (Isaiah I wish to state that the Creator will bring it forth by the breath of his mouth in the same way that He brought forth the natural things -- by utterance, without any outside help--like the planting of the Garden and the cedars of Lebanon, which are called divine works in the Torah, as it is written: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden" (Genesis 2:8), and it is written, "The cedars of Lebanon that He planted ... "(Psalms 104:16). And the reason that the text connects the Messiah [to the building of the Temple] is that it is through his merit that he will build the Temple. And Scripture considers him as though he were a partner of the Holy One, blessed be He, in his building of it. This is what the Sages meant when they stated that the Holy One, blessed be He, who is called "First" (Rishon), will build the Temple, which is called "First", by the virtue of the Messiah-King who is called "First". (Bereshit Rabbah, Chapter Toldot Yizhak147

And now that you shall have been convinced that there are three Temples, I must enlighten you about the fact that

when it would produce bad wine he would say, 'My tenant produces such bad wine!'"

See also Midrash Kohelet Rabbah, 6:10.(R)

¹⁴⁷ Bereshit Rabbah 63,8. p.687 in the Theodor-Albeck edition.(R)

the future third Temple will be far superior to the two which preceded it according to four causes: workmanship, materials, design and function 148. Therefore It will be eternal from the perspective of its workmanship, for the Lord, who is blessed, Himself in His glory, will build itas I have already proved to you. And just as He lives forever, thus the third Temple will endure forever.

And when I state that the Messiah-King will build it149, it is because he will be of the finest of all of the Israelites— worshipping the Lord with love and fear—and therefore, it is fitting that the divine presence will dwell on all that he does. But the first Temple was built by King Solomon, who, on the day that he started building it, wed the daughter of Pharaoh¹⁵⁰, and he transgressed the prohibition, "...do not intermarry with them." (Deuteronomy 7:3). And similarly with the second Temple which Zerubbabel built. Although he was a God fearing man, he

Metaphysics 1.3; Physics 2.3; For a general explanation, see J. H. Randal, Jr., Aristotle pp. 123-25, 181-82. References to Aristotle in Jewish the literature of this period are not uncommon. David B. Ruderman writes that the 16th - Century Ferraran Jew, Abraham ben Mordechai Farissol taught his elementary rhetoric pupils the necessity of the inclusion of Aristotle as a sermonic tool. See Ruderman, World, pp. 16-17, 178 - note #39. (B)

¹⁴⁹ See Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim 11:1
- "Hamelekh ha-mashiah...u'boneh ha-mik-dash."(R)

¹⁵⁰ The Midrash states: "On the day that he finished building it." See Midrash Mishle Rabbati, chapter 31; Yalkut Shimoni, 2, paragraph 964.(R)

only built it under the authority and permission of Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede--who were not sons of the Covenant--and the Temple was named after them.

And from the perspective of the materials, the Holy Land will be abundant with gold and silver and precious stones and the cedar from Lebanon—all for the use of the building of the Temple, as is written: "Instead of copper I will bring gold..." (Isaiah 60:17) and: "I will lay earbuncles as your building stones..." (Ibid 47:11), and: "The majesty of Lebanon shall come to you..." (Ibid 60:13) and there will be no need to send far and wide in order to purchase building materials. But Solomon had to purchase his building materials from Hiram of Tyre, such as cedar and cypress and gold (I Kings 5).151 And similarly you will find, that the second Temple was built from the treasuries of the King of Persia, as is written: "...For the building of the House of the Lord: the expenses are to be paid out of the resources of the King..." (Ezra 6:8).

From the perspective of design, it is because the Temple would be built according to the very same design about which Ezekiel prophesied in Chapters 40ff. But with

¹⁵¹In I Kings 5:20 we find King Solomon requesting the following from Hiram of Tyre:

[&]quot;Please, then, give orders for cedars to be cut for me in Lebanon. My servants will work with yours, and I will pay you any wages you may ask for your servants; for as you know, there is none among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."(B)

the first Temple, we do not find that the prophet prophesied concerning its design, in order that it should be properly erected. And nothing was added to, or subtracted from it. But rather, the Holy Spirit, which was upon Samuel, taught him, as is written in the Mishnah: "The Temple Mount was five hundred cubits by five hundred cubits..."152. Samuel interpreted the length of the courtyard as one hundred per cubit, etc. 153. And thus Rashi interpreted in relation to ,"He made ten lampstands of gold in the prescribed manner..."(II Chronicles, 4:7):

He interpreted from the Torah: flowers, buds, cups shaped like almond blossoms 154 - the intent

of the court, shall be of copper. (B)

¹⁵² Mishhah, Midot 2:1.(R)

¹⁵³Exodus 27:18. Concerning the scroll of the Temple that Samuel passed on to David see J. Talmud, Megillah, section 1 p. 70a in the Krotoshin ed.; Midrash Shemuel, 15, p.92 in the Buber edition. (R)
The Biblical text to which the author refers is as follows:
"The length of the enclosure shall be a hundred cubits, and the width fifty throughout; and the height five cubits - [with hangings] of fine twisted linen. The sockets shall be of copper: all the utensils of the Tabernacle, for all its service, as well as all its pegs and all the pegs

¹⁵⁴ This refers to Exodus 25:31-33 where it states:
"You shall make a lampstand of pure gold; the
lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its
base and its shafts; its cups, calyxes and petals
shall be of one piece. Six branches shall issue
from its sides: three branches from one side of
the lampstand and three branches from the other
side of the lampstand. On one branch there shall
be three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each
with calyx and petals; so for all six branches
issuing from the lampstand."(B)

is clearly so that there should be seventy (lights) - for every candle had seven lights.155

And therefore Samuel did not publicize the plans of its design or its measurements round about and its height and the number of every single vessel, but rather he passed this information on secretly to David in writing, as it is written: "All this [I give you] in writing, as the Lord has made me wise by His hand upon me..." (I Chronicles28:19). And he passed it on to Solomon, his son, 156 so that its quality and quantity should not be known until it passed from potentiality into actuality. And it is possible that since he expected that it would be destroyed in the future, the scripture left it unspecified.

And thus the Lord did not command concerning the design of the second Temple, for the emigrants from Babylon erected it according to the very measures which the King of Persia desired—as in Ezra 5. And it does not have to be said that the design of the building which Ezekiel envisioned was built — not more and not less — for these plans were prophesied concerning the future third Temple. And the proof is that twenty—one differences and steps were explicitly mentioned of which not one existed at the building of the second Temple. This is according to the

¹⁵⁵ See Rashi's commentary to this verse. Also see Midrash Tadshe, 2. (R).

¹⁵⁶ See Midrash Shmuel 15, Ed. Buber, p. 92. Also see Radak's commentary on I Chronicles 28:19. Also Rashi's commentary on this passage.(R)

ordering of the sage, Rabbi Isaac Abrabanelo (sic.) in the end of his commentary on the book of Ezekiel.

From the standpoint of purpose, (it will come to pass) that the Lord, may He be blessed, will unite with the Congregation of Israel in an eternal union by means of the pure sacrifices which will be offered up there. This is in the same way that the intelligent soul is united with the body by means of food. And this is the meaning of the "...that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel..." etc..(Ezekiel 37:28)157 And the permanence of this union will result in the ending of the evil inclination, as it is written, "...and I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh..." (Ezekiel 11:19).158 But it is not for this purpose alone that the divine influence works upon the Nation of Israel, rather, it comes so that a small portion of its light might also spread amongst the nations of the world, so that all will recognize its Creator, as it is written: For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord..."(Zephaniah 3:9). And they shall also pray in our holy Temple, as it is written, "...for my house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples ... "(Isaiah 56:7). And they

[&]quot;And the nations shall know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever." (B)

¹⁵⁸ Tanbumah, Toldot 13, Aggadat Bereshit 23:3, ed. Buber, p. 40.(R)

shall bring their sacrifices, as it is written, "...their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable on my altar..."(Ibid). And they will celebrate the festivals, as it is written, "...and they shall go up every year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to observe the festival of Tabernacles..."(Zechariah 14:16).

But during the period of the first and second Temples the Children of Israel did not persist in their union with the divine due to the multiplicity of their sins - as you can see from the rebukes of the prophets - until at last they were delivered into the hands of their enemies, for He hid His face from them. But, with the ending of the (Divine) anger, and the coming of the time of redemption, He will save us for the sake of his name.

And there are, in our holy Torah, many hints about three Temples, and especially in the wells that Isaac dugwhen he called them: <u>Esek</u> (Contention), <u>Sitnah</u> (Enmity), and <u>Rehovot</u> (Room) (Genesis 26:22)159, and this is enough for the one who knows.

¹⁵⁹ See Torah Shelemah, Bereshit, Vol.4, p.160.(R)

And now that you have become enlightened to the fact that the future Third Temple is better and grander that the first two, all that remains is to remove a stumbling block from the road upon which you have been travelling, and to explain the writings and sayings which you have brought forth as proofs to strengthen your beliefs, in such a way as to diminish all doubt.

The prophet said: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall clear the way before me, and [he] will suddenly, come into his Temple..." in the end of the Book of Malachi¹⁶¹. The essential meaning of the text is that God will send a messenger, who will change the course of the wicked and who will come to pray and to intercede for mercy on Israel's behalf, and who will place his hand¹⁶² on the area of the temple -for from there is prayer heard - for ever since the Temple was destroyed the Divine Presence did not leave the Western Wall, as it is maid, "...Behold He stands behind our wall..." 163 (Song of Songs 2:9). And maybe it is the will that He should come there to make order and to begin to make a foundation for the building of

¹⁶¹ Malachi 3:1. (B)

¹⁶²i.e., point out the exact location of the Holy of Holies. (B)

¹⁶³ The complete Biblical text reads as follows:

[&]quot;My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart; behold, he stands behind our wall, He looks in through the windows, he peers through the lattice."(B)

the Temple. However, the verse which states: "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former..." (Haggai 2:9) does not contradict this, for our ancestors understood this as referring to the Second Temple, as we have learned in the first chapter of Baba Bathra, in the accompanying passage(s):

"The glory of the latter house shall be greater..." Ray and Shemuel disagreed, one said [the 'greatness' refers to] the size and splendour of the building itself and the other said it (i.e., the 'greatness') refers to the number of years that it stood164, and both are correct165....

...Concerning the building itself, it is said, Whosoever has never seen Herod's building (i.e., the Temple) has never seen a building 166 for it was built with alabaster and marble, as we know that they i.e., its stones) were yellow and white. And the intention is not that it (i.e., Herod's Temple) was bigger than Solomon's building, but rather that it appeared from a distance as the perfection of beauty - since it looked like waves of the sea, since the eye could not distinguish between them. 167

[Concerning the interpretation that] 'greatness' refers to years, as it states in <u>Seder Olam</u>, the First Temple stood for 410 years and the Second Temple stood for

¹⁶⁴ The First Temple was understood to have stood for 410 years. The second, for 420.

See Seder Olam Rabbah, ed. Ratner, p.130; also Yoma
9a. (R, #33, p.30)

¹⁶⁵Baba Batra 3a. (R)

¹⁶⁶ Also found in Sukkah 51b. (B)

¹⁶⁷ Rosenthal cites Baba Batra 3a, but it can be found on 4a.

420 years.168 And some say that it was greater than the first from the perspective of glory in relation to God, as we have a received tradition which states that the men of the First Temple eagerly pursued idolatrous practice—there was no idolatry that they did not practice—and, moreover, Jeroboam, the chief seducer forbade pilgrims, as it is written, "...you have been going up to Jerusalem long enough..."(IKings 12:28);169 and abolished the mitzvah of appearing in the Temple, as the Lord, who is blessed, commanded: Three times a year..." (Exodus 23:17)¹⁷⁰ But during the period of the Second Temple they did not worship idols¹⁷¹ and all with one heart united would go up to Jerusalem.

And if, indeed, there were five things missing which you enumerated which were in the First Temple [but were not

¹⁶⁸ See footnote #164.(B)

¹⁶⁹ The complete verse reads as follows:

[&]quot;So the King (Jeraboam took counsel and made two golden calves. He said to the people (lit. "them") You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. This is your god, O' Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"(B)

¹⁷⁰ The complete verse reads as follows:
"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the Lord."(B)

¹⁷¹ J. Talmud, Megillah, chapter 1, section 12, p. 70b; Also Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 9b. (R)

The Yoma text reads as follows:
"But why was the second Temple destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, Mitzvot and Charity? Because there was ungrounded hatred in it." (B)

in the Second], this is because the repentance of Israel was not proper. For the intention was that Ezra's second entering [into the land] would be like Joshua's first entering -i.e., by strength and miracle, but instead [their] sins caused [the miracle to be withheld].172

And I have seen someome interpret the verse, "And I will shake all the nations..." (Haggai 2:7) [and those which follow] as referring to the Third Temple, for only then 173 will the text which states, "...and at this place will I grant peace..." etc. (Ibid, 9) come to fulfillment. For during the period of the Second Temple - from its beginning until its end - there was no peace, only war, as

The text reads as follows:

¹⁷²Berakhot 4a.(R)

[&]quot;....it has been taught: Till Thy people pass over 0' Lord, till the People pass over that which Thou hast gotten' (Exodus 15:16). Till Thy people pass over 0' Lord...'-- This is the first entry [into the Land]. 'Till the people pass over that which Thou hast gotten' is the second entry. Hence the Sages say: 'The intention was to perform a miracle for Israel in the days of Ezra, even as it was performed for them in the days of Joshua bin Nun, but sin caused [the miracle to be withheld].(B)

Rashi, commenting on the phrase "...to perform a miracle for them..." writes that the reason for this was so that the Israelites would be able to leave Egypt "with an upraised hand" as is written in Exodus, 14:8. (B)

^{1731.}e., at the time of the Third Temple. (B)

was made known from the words of Ezra and Josephus 174. See Rabbi Isaac Abravanelo's commentary on this prophecy which is mentioned [in the text]. 175

And the verse, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." (Psalms 118:22) was said by David about himself, as was translated [in the Targum] - "The artist who was abandoned in his youth...etc." 176

It is possible that he said this about the community of Israel, as it is written, "...from there, the shepherd, the rock of Israel..." (Genesis 49:24). And if you were to interpret this as concerning the Messiah—who is called "the rock (even), as is written, "...a stone was hewn out, not by hands..." (Daniel 2:34)177 This stone has not yet

¹⁷⁴ Literally: "Yosef Bin Gurion". This is probably the author of Sefer Yossipon - the standard historical source for this period in the Middle Ages. He claimed to be the historian Flavius Josephus in order to lend authenticity to his work. Abraham Ben Mordechai Farissol, in his 16th century polemic, Magen Avraham quotes extensively from this source. See Ruderman, The World..., p.73, 203 (Note #22); also, D. Flusser's article in EJ 10:296-8, "Josippon". (B)

¹⁷⁵ See Akedat Yizhak, Sha'ar 5. ed. Warsaw, 2. p.169b; Abravanel, introduction to the commentary on Haggai. Also see the disputation of Rabbi Azaria De Rossi against them, Meor 'Eynayim, Chapter 51, 418. (R)

¹⁷⁶See Torah Shelemah on Genesis 49:24, p.1856:332. (R)

¹⁷⁷ Torah Shelemah 334. Also see Bereshit Rabbati, ed. Albeck, 180, 249. (R)

The verse reads as follows:

"As you looked on, a stone was hewn out, not by hands, and struck the statue on its feet of iron.

struck the statue on its feet of iron (Parzela) and clay (haspah) -- which really refer to Esau and Ishmael.178

And the meaning of the prophet when he states, "the silver is mine and the gold is mine..." (Haggai 2:8) is "I wish to state that I will give it to whomever I wish, for the treasures that the nations have illegally stored are safeguarded for the righteous in the future. 179

And when the prophet states, "Do not trust in illusions...etc." (Jeremiah 7:4) His rebuke should be understood in its literal sense—that the false prophets were misleading them, saying that God did not destroy His Temple for the sake of the glory of His name, but rather so that they should sin more. And the repetition serves the purpose of emphasis, as in "O land, land, land hear the word of the Lord." (Jeremiah 22:29). And it is possible that the word Heykhal is said three times in order to correspond to the three divisions of the Temple: Ulam,

and clay and crushed them. "(B)

¹⁷⁸Concerning the connection between parzela (iron) and Edom see <u>Tanhumah</u> B -- on <u>Shemot</u> 46:2, section 8, p. 46b in the Buber ed.; concerning the connection between <u>Haspah</u> (clay) and Ishmael, see Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon on Daniel 2:34, in <u>Mikraot Gedolot</u>, Venice 277-278. Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon writes:

And the fourth kingdom is the Romans--they are the iron thighs--and after this the kingdom is split--one half Ishmaelites [i.e. Arabs] and one half Romans [i.e. Byzantium]...For the Ishmaelite king is the king of the south, ... and the Roman king is the king of the north.(R)

¹⁷⁹ See Midrashei Ge'ulah 333, 340, 345. (R)

Heykhal, and Devir.180 And this is apparent from the continuation of the prophecy until its end that this is the meaning of the text. And this can be grasped from a different perspective; he changed the language first, and explained it afterwards; for this is what the sinners of Israel used to say: "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these."—as if to say, 'Know then, and see that the Creator has ordered that there are to be three Temples, and since the first ones have been destroyed—for His decree is never wrong—what is the use of repentance? 181

And the clear interpretation is that which is found in Targum Yonatan: "Don't trust in the sayings of the false prophets who state, Come and worship before the Temple of the Lord; come and sacrifice before the Temple of the Lord; come and bow down before the Temple of the Lord. Three times a year you shall come and appear before him."

And the correct meaning is that this was said against Israel, who used to think that despite the fact that they continuously sinned, it was because of the sacrifices and the peace offerings of the festivals that they would offer up on the three pilgrimage festivals that they would be granted atonement. In this manner they could be compared

¹⁸⁰ See Radak on Jeremiah 7:4. (R)

¹⁸¹ See Eyn Ya'akov to Nazir 32b. (R)

to a religious hypocrite182_-for there is no use in sacrifice if one does not forsake one's sins, as is written: "...surely obedience is better than sacrifice..."

(I Samuel 15:22). And I have found the correct interpretation in the commentary of Rabbeynu Babya, may his memory be blessed--look there. 183

And now, listen very carefully to the interpretation of the verse "...before she labored, she was delivered..."

(Isaiah 66:7)—the verse upon whose literal meaning you have built a very detailed argument with which to battle against me. For in this world a woman gives birth in pain and suffering on account of Eve's sin, as is written:

"...in pain shall you give birth to children..." (Genesis 3:16), but in the future, in the days of the Messiah, what is written? "...before she labored, she was delivered..."——this is in Leviticus Rabbah, chapter Mezora. 184

And the meaning of the translator who translated:
"When she will no longer have troubles she will be
delivered..." (Isaiah 66:7) is in the time of the war of
Gog and Magog--when the Savior will be revealed--for until
that time Israel will be steeped in troubles as it is

¹⁸²Literally: "One who immerses himself with a worm in his hand." (B)

¹⁸³ See the commentary of <u>Rabbeynu Babya</u> on Leviticus, chapter 96. ed. Warsaw 9,1. (R)

¹⁸⁴ It should state <u>Tazria</u>. See <u>Leviticus Rabbah</u>, end of chapter 14. (R)

written: "...it will be a time of trouble..." (Daniel 12:1)185 And it is written: "...it is a time of trouble for Jacob..." (Jeremiah 30:7).186

And I have passed over the midrashic passage which you misquoted, stating: "Before the last king of Israel was born in the last exile, the redeemer was born." For it does not state this, rather, "Before the last who will enslave [Israel] was born, the last redeemer was born." 187 And the beginning of the passage is as follows:

Rabbi Shemuel stated: "For I know the thoughts... (Jeremiah 29:11)188 The brothers 189 were occupied with the selling of Joseph, and Joseph, in turn, was occupied with his sackcloth and his fasting, and Judah was occupied with acquiring a wife, and the Holy One, blessed be He, was occupied with creating the light of the King-Messiah. And it is he to whom the text refers when it states: "Before she labored she was delivered..." (Isaiah 66:7).

¹⁸⁵ The complete text reads as follows:
At that time the great prince, Michael, who stands beside the sons of your people, will appear. It will be a time of trouble, the likes of which has never been seen since the nation came into being."(B)

¹⁸⁶ The complete text reads as follows: .

Ah that day is awesome; there is none like it!

It is a time of trouble for Jacob, but he shall be delivered from it."(B)

¹⁸⁷ See in Theodor's Minhat Yehudah in Genesis Rabbah, p. 1030. (R)

¹⁸⁸ The complete text reads as follows:
For I know the thoughts that I think towards you,
says the Lord-thoughts of peace, and not of
evil, to give you a future and a hope."(B)

¹⁸⁹Literally: "the tribes"(B)

This can be found in <u>Genesis Rabbah</u>, chapter <u>Vayeshev</u>, on the verse, "And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down..." (Genesis 38:1-2).190 And its interpretation is that even though the brothers were busied with all of their efforts in selling Joseph to get rid of him, God had actually circumvented their plotting and stopped them from thinking [and inserted His own agenda]—this was the descent into Egypt. And it is concerning this that [Joseph] stated: "You thought to do me evil, but God meant it for good..." (Genesis 50:20).

And similarly, if the nations of the world should rise up against Israel to rid them from the world, the Divine Intention, which is a-priori in its essence and superior to their thoughts, will circumvent their plotting in order to save them (Israel) from them--for He places the cure before the Wound. And this is the meaning of "Before the first oppressor was born, the last redeemer was born."

It is fitting to state that before Pharaoh was born-who was the beginning of Israel's troubles, Perez, the son
of Judah, was born--who was the beginning of the line of
the Messiah who would save Israel in the end of days. For

¹⁹⁰ See above, note #187, for Midrashic source.
The complete text reads as follows:
"And it came to pass at that time, that June

[&]quot;And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain 'Adullamite whose name was Hira. And Yehuda saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shu'a, and he took her, and went in to her."(B)

it is from Perez that the family line of our righteous savior begins--of whom it is said: "What a breach (Perez) you have made for yourself!" (Genesis 38:29).

And therefore you will find that when Adam and Eve sinned, the Holy One, blessed be He, diminished all of the genealogies (Toledot) in the scriptures—that is to say, that the word, "Toledot" was written without a "vav", but as soon as Perez arose, his Toledot were written in the complete manner 191—for the Messiah was to descend from him. (Exodus Rabbah, Chapter Mishpatim). 192

There is nothing to be surprised about in the statement: "...the last redeemer was born...", for this is the same as stating that the "beginning" 193 or "light" of the last redeemer was born, for what begins as a thought ends as a deed. Possibly the Messiah was Perez himself-as those who believe in reincarnation postulate. 194 They have said that the text refers to David himself, as is written: "... and they will seek the Lord, their God, and David, their king..." (Hosea 3:5)195

^{1911.}e. with the letter vav. (B)

¹⁹² Exodus Rabbah 30:2. (R)

¹⁹³ literally "head". (B)

¹⁹⁴ See Targum Yonatan on Genesis 38,29. (R)

¹⁹⁵ See Sanhedrin 98b; Louis Ginsberg, The Legends of the Jews Chapter 6, p.272, comment 128. Also see Gershom Scholem, in Tarbiz 16, p. 149 comment 62.(R)

But the true answer is that it was the opinion of our fathers - may their memories be for a blessing - that immediately after the Temple was destroyed, the Messiah was born, as Rabbi Emanuel - may his memory be for a blessingquoted concerning the verse "...and she called him Shelah ... " (Genesis 38:5) 196 And similarly you will find this in Midrash Eykha, on the verse, "... for far away from me is any comforter ... (Lamentations 1:16), from the words of an Arab who testified that the Messiah was born on the day that the Temple was destroyed. And in the end of the passage it is written: "Why should I learn this from the Arabs when there is a complete text which states: 'And Lebanon shall fall by a great one' (Isaiah 10:34)? And this is followed by, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse and a twig shall go forth out of its roots." (Ibid. 11:1)197 "Lebanon" can only refer to the holy Temple, as is written, "...that goodly hill country, and the Lebanon." (Deuteronomy 3:25) 198 And it (Lebanon) received its name because it whitens (Malbin) the

¹⁹⁶ The Torah commentary of Rabbi Emanuel the Roman is not yet published. (R)

¹⁹⁷ Lamentations Rabbah 1:51. Ed. Buber p. 45b (R).

¹⁹⁸ Song of Songs Rabbah 7:4 (R).

The complete Biblical text reads as follows:
"Let me, I pray you, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that goodly hill country, and the Lebanon." (B)

sins of Israel, 199

And similarly, you will find in Numbers Rabbah, section Naso, that on the day that Jerusalem fell, the comforter (Menabem) was born - who is the Messiah - and on that very day Israel received a pardon for their sinsthat is forgiveness and atonement. And immediately afterwards the heavenly angels brought him to the Garden of Eden. 200 And this I have found in chapter 11 of b. Sanhedrin that the Messiah dwells in the Garden of Edenon the very side which is across from the Roman Gate. And understand this!

And you should not be surprised at the Midrash which our fathers - may their memories be for a blessing-interpreted: "The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah and Sennacherib as Gog and Magog, "201 which is not logically impossible. After all, it was known that the King of Assyria had already exiled ten of the tribes, and if he would have also captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, it is possible that this could have completed the punishment of Israel, and they would have been worthy of complete redemption by the redeemer--for the salvation of the Lord comes in the blink

^{199&}lt;u>Sifre'</u> to Deuteronomy, <u>pizka</u> 28, ed. Finkelstein, p. 45.(B)

²⁰⁰ Numbers Rabbah 13:5. See Also Midrashei Ge'ulah, 306. (R)

²⁰¹ Sanhedrin 94a. (R)

of an eye. 202

Up until now I have desired to direct my speech towards the purpose of cleansing the well of your reasoning of its bitter waters. May God direct your heart to understand.

²⁰²See Abravanel, Yeshu'ot Meshibo, 2:3. Koenigsburg ed., p. 29a.(R)

THE TENTH QUESTION:

The Christian: It is not hadden from the eyes of the reader of the Holy Scripture that the divine Holy Spirit had to reveal himself and to reside in the perfect body of the Messiah and to be connected with him like a flame to a coal, as is written,"...and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him... (Isaiah 11:2)203. And thus it is with our Messiah, who is called, in the books of our religion, the Word of the Lord. Thus his being a prophet was superior to all of the other prophets who existed in the world, for concerning him, it was stated, "...a prophet from your midst, from among your brothers, like me..."(Deuteronomy 18:15);205 and similarly, as was interpreted concerning the verse, "Indeed, my servant shall prosper..." (Isaiah 52:13)206; he will be exalted over Abraham and raised up higher than Moses, and brought to

 $^{^{203}}$ The Christian Church referred all of Isaiah 11 to Jesus.(R)

²⁰⁴ John 1:1-- "When all thing began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was." (B)

²⁰⁵ The complete verse reads as follows: The Lord you God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like me; him you shall heed." (B)

²⁰⁶The complete Biblical text is as follows:
"And Indeed, my servant shall prosper, be exalted
and raised to great heights." (B)

greater heights than the ministering angels.207 Thus it was because God breathed into him Divine Wisdom until God and Man dwelt together - as is written concerning him, "...He has been named 'The Mighty God is planning grace.-.."(Isaiah 9:5), 208 and it is written, "...and this is the name that he will be called 'The Lord is our Vindicator.'" (Jeremiah 23:6), 269

And it cannot be said that he did not exist until the time of his birth, Heaven forbid, for I must state that he had already existed eternally - prior to the creation of the world, as is written: "...when the dew of your youth was upon you, fresh from the womb of dawn." (Psalms

²⁰⁷ See Tanhuma II, chapter Toldot 70:1. See also Martini, 389, 413,428,535,769; Galatinos, 472. Also see footnote #260 below.(R)

²⁰⁸ The complete Biblical text is as follows: For a child has been born unto us, A son has been given us. And authority has settled upon his shoulders. He has been named, The Mighty God is planning grace; the Eternal Father, a peaceable ruler"--(B)

All of these verses were interpreted by the Christian Church as referring to Jesus. See Posnanski, 317 (From his passage on a theologian concerning Matthew, ninth century), 386 (Joshua De-Lorki). Also see Nizahon Yashan, ed. Wagonziel, 94ff. (R)

²⁰⁹ The complete Biblical text reads as follows:
"In his days Judah shall prosper and Israel shall dwell secure. And this is the name by which he shall be called: The Lord is our Vindicator.'"
(B)

This name, "The Lord is our Vindicator," was interpreted as referring to Jesus from the earliest recorded time. See Posnanski 19,38. The Sages explained this as referring to the Messiah. See Baba Bathra 75b. (R)

110:3)210 - that is to say, before the womb from which you were to have been born was created, your birth was prophesied,' - as has also been stated concerning this, "...his name has existed since the sun..." (Psalms 72:17).211

The name of the Messiah was also made known as an acrostic in the phrase. "Yenon Sh'mo Va-yit-bar-kho" 212

["...May his name continue forever and they shall be blessed..."] (Ibid.) 213

It is he (Jesus) who eternally sits at the right hand of the Lord, as is written: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand...'" (Psalms 110:1)214 And the creators

²¹⁰ The meaning of the Hebrew of this verse is uncertain. In the most recent JPS translation we find:
"Your people come forward willingly on your day of battle. In majestic holiness, from the womb, yours was the dew of youth." (B)

²¹¹ See Bereshit Rabbah 1:4. Ed. Theodor - Albeck,

The author is referring to a <u>midrash</u> which lists six things which preceded the creation of the world: The Torah, the Throne of Glory, the creation of the Patriarchs, Israel, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah. See Rosenthal's reference in this footnote. (B)

²¹² The Hebrew letters, Yud, Shin, and Vav spell out the name, Yeshu - Jesus. (B)

²¹³ See Delyra concerning this verse. (R)

²¹⁴See Matthew 22:44, 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62,16:19; Luke 20:42-3, 22:69; Acts 2:34. (R)

of the Midrash were already aware of this when they wrote concerning the passage: "The spirit of God 215hovered over the face of the waters..." (Genesis 1:2): "...the spirit of the Messiah ... ". 216 And similarly, concerning the passage, "...let us make Man..." (Genesis 1:26) (they wrote), "...He [God] consulted with his heart ... "217. This means to say that the three Divine attributes - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit / united in his creation and they are always in a state of eternal unity, and they will never be separated and they will never separate themselves unto eternity, as is written: "A threefold cord is not readily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:12)218 And in order to hint concerning this secret they were accustomed to writing the Divine Name with three Yuds punctuated with one Kamaz like this: > >> ,219

²¹⁵ The text uses the word M'rafefet instead of M'rahefet as is written in the Biblical text. (B)

²¹⁶ Genesis Rabbah 2:4. Ed. Theodor-Albeck p. 17. (R)

²¹⁷ Ibid. 8:3. Ed. Theodor-Albeck, p.59. (R)

²¹⁸ See Galatinos 2:4, p. 53. (R)

²¹⁹ Rosenthal writes:

I was unable to find the source of this claim. See above, chapter nine, footnote #13. Concerning the writing of the Divine Name with three Yuds, see the article by Bezalel Lauterbach in Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research (1930-31). pp.52ff.

Thus the Divine Presence appeared to Abraham as three men and he bowed down to one, as is written: "...behold, he saw three men standing before him..." (Genesis 18:2)220

In <u>Sefer Hatagim</u> we find that King Solomon hinted concerning this when he used the following language:

"I saw all of the living walking underneath the sun, with the second child." (Ecclesiastes 4:15)221

For the Messiah is the second aspect of the Godhead, and the Holy Spirit is the third. 222

And the belief in the Trinity will become clearer in the understanding of the words of Elihu when he states: "Truly God does all these things two or three times to a man." (Job 33:29) And following directly after this we find: "--to bring him back from the pit..." and understand this.223

Thus, God is referred to, in several places, by three different names (such as) "El Elohim YHWH..." (Psalms 50:1)

²²⁰Justin Martyr had already used this verse as a proof of the trinity. See Justin, <u>Dialogue With Trypho</u> 56. See also my English essay on <u>Hiwi ha Balkhi</u>, 19; Williams, p. 79. (R)

²²¹ See the commentary of the eighth century Christian commentator Alkuin in Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus. vol 100 p.687.(R) See also Rosenthal's note #13 in Chapter Nine of the Hebrew text in connection to Sefer Tagim.

²²²See Matthew 28:19. Also see in the Catholic Encyclopedia (English) the article on "Trinity." (R)

²²³ See the commentary of Rupert, a twelfth - century Christian - theologian, in <u>Patrologiae Latinae Cursus</u> Completus vol. 168, p. 1124. (R)

and "... Holy, Holy, Holy..." (Isaiah 6:3).224

In the book, <u>Iggeret Ha-sodot</u>²²⁵ I have found and understood a praiseworthy essay on the essence of the Trinity. It reads as follows:

"Antoninus, the Roman Commander, requested from our holy Rabbi²²⁶ that he teach him the truth of the divine names: a name with four letters, a name with twelve letters, and a name with forty two letters²²⁷. He said to him: "A name with four letters can be derived from the words, The Lord will cause to give birth," as is written, "Shall I who bring on labor not bring about birth...?" (Isaiah 66:9). And from this the ineffable name was derived.²²⁸ A name with

Parissol, in his Magen Avraham, chapter 72, also records hearing these claims by apostate kabbalists of Spanish Origin in Ferrara. Farissol attributed the origin of this false Midrash to Paul De Heredia (see footnote below). Ruderman, in his The World of a Renaissance Jew, claims that Galatinos took it from De Heredia. It probably originated, however in the writings of another apostate kabbalist in the same circle, Pedro de la Cavalleria. See Ruderman, pp.44f, 192 (notes #63, #64); and Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, XIII p.173. (B)

Nehunia Ben Hakanah. Authorship is generally ascribed to Paul de Heredia, a Jewish convert who composed several such works and attributed them to various Tannaim. See my introduction to the translation, Chapter II, section F. See also, Rosenthal's introduction to the Hebrew text, p.15; Scholem, Kabbalah, p.197, Essays Presented to Leo Baeck on the occasion of his Eightieth Birthday (London, 1954) pp. 180ff; Baron, Vol. XIII pp. 172ff. (B)

²²⁶ Rabbi Judah the prince - redactor of the Mishnah.

²²⁷ For more information on the role of names of God of varying lengths in Jewish tradition see Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, pp.90-97, 260-264. (B)

²²⁸ This argument is based on the literal meaning of the tetragrammaton: "he will cause to be" - i.e. God, in His quality of 'causing to be'. (B)

(Father), Ben (Son), V'Ruah Hakodesh (and Holy Spirit) - which are comprised of twelve letters. And since you will never find anything in God which is not God, from this we may derive a name with forty two letters, namely, Av Elohim, (Father of God), Ben Elohim (Son of God), and Ruah Hakodesh Elohim (Holy Spirit of God)-shloshah b'ehad, ehad b'shloshah (three in one and one in three) - which comprises forty two letters."229

Thus, we have no choice but to believe that the Messiah is the actual, natural son of God - there is no need for clarification²³⁰ - as is written concerning him: "...I have fathered you this day..." (Psalms 2:7).²³¹

How pleasant and beautiful are the words of the Sages in the Midrash on Psalms to the verse, "Nashku Bar" (Psalms 2:12):232

²²⁹ This argument, in its complete form, most probably originated in Reuchlin's <u>De Arte Cabalistica</u> ("On The Kabbalistic Art") written in 1517. See Blau pp.49-59 (esp. p. 59). Also see Scholem, <u>ibid</u>. pp. 197-8. For a listing of several common Christian kabbalistic apologetic arguments see Ginsberg, <u>The Kabbalah</u>, pp.138-141. (B)

 $^{^{230}}$ According to Galatinus, the essay is longer an is in a different version: (R)

²³¹ The complete text reads as follows:
"Let me tell you of the decree: The Lord said to
me, You are my son, I have fathered you this
day.'"(B)

²³² The Hebrew word, "bar" is difficult to translate in this verse. The most recent JPS translation has:

[&]quot;Pay homage with good faith, lest He be angered and you way be doomed in the mere flash of His anger. Happy are all who take refuge in him."

While the University of Chicago translation has:

"What does the word, "bar" refer to? A son,233 as is written: 'No my son, no, 0 son of my womb!...'(Proverbs 31:2)."234

This can be compared to a king who was angry at the young men of his kingdom. They approached the prince and asked him to appease his father. The son went and appeased the father. As soon as he was appeased, the young men of the kingdom sang a hymn of praise to the father. He said to them: 'Unto me you are singing a hymn of praise? Go and sing it to my son, for were it not for him, I would have lost the kingdom. 235 Therefore, "Kiss the Son"

"Kiss the chosen one, lest He be angry and you perish in the way; for His wrath is soon kindled. How happy are they who take refuge in Him!"(B)

233 The Peshitta had already translated <u>bar</u> as meaning son (<u>ben</u>), and this was the accepted meaning in all of the Christian translations. (R)

See footnote #233 above. (B)

234 See Ibn Ezra and Rabbi David Kimbi (Radak) on this verse. Radak's commentary on Psalms without Christian censorship was published by Berkenstein by the Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1945. (R)

235 See Midrash on the Psalms, ed. Buber, p.17. According to the Midrash, the son is Israel, as is seen from its conclusion:

Thus the nations of the world give a hymn of praise to the Holy One Blessed be He...the Holy ne Blessed be He says to them: Unto me you are singing a hymn of praise? Go and sing it to Israel, for were it not for them, the world would not have continued to exist.'

The Christians distorted the <u>Midrash</u> and manipulated it to refer to the Messiah. See Abravanel, <u>Y'shu'ot M'shiho</u>, section 3, Chapter 5, ed. Koenigsberg 53b. The Christian version of the <u>midrash</u> was taken from Martini's book,

(Nashku Bar) for he is the Messiah.

From these proofs you have been shown that the Messiah is called prophet, God and Son of God. And now, look, I pray you, at the fruit which I have plucked from the Tree of Life. It is fine and beautiful and good to eat. Therefore, reach out and pluck it; taste, and your eyes will be opened.

Pidyon Ha - Emunah See Baer, "Ha Midrashim Ha-M'zuyafim Shel Raymundus Martini" in Sefer Zikaron L'Asher Goluk V'Shmuel Klein, pp. 33ff. (R)

The Jew: It was not only forbidden to eat of the fruit of the tree which you plucked in your deceitful thoughts because of the viperous poison in its midst, but I will also keep my distance from it lest I glance at the primordial snake in its branches. Because of this I will lift up the fiery torch of the Torah which is likened to a fire which will ignite the light from a distance and will burn it completely from the world until nothing whatsoever remains.

And I will state that in order for most men to achieve the ultimate state of perfection, it is fitting that the overflowing of the Holy Spirit should overflow upon an individual who is more prepared (to receive) than his fellow man - i.e. that he should be a vessel and a means unto them. Furthermore, all are equal in regards to humanity - in the same way that the heart is a tool and a means for life to reach all of the other limbs. therefore, even if this prophetic overflow were to overflow onto the Messiah-King, as you have argued, you will not find this to be such a wondrous thing when you will find that in the case of the prophets which preceded him, the creator breathed Holy Spirit into them, as is written: "and I have filled him with the spirit of God ... " (Exodus 31:3) and it is written, "...and the spirit rested upon them..." (Numbers 11:26). And Even Balaam - "...and the

spirit of God came upon him." (Numbers 24:2)236

And do not think that our righteous messiah will rise to a greater level of prophecy that Moses, our teacher, for sealed into the very end of the Torah (are the words):

"And there has not risen a prophet in Israel like Moses since." (Deuteronomy 34:10)237

And Rabbi Isaac Karo interpreted thusly - that the Torah tells us in three places of the superiority of Moses over the rest of the prophets:

- 1) In portion <u>Vaera</u> it tells us of his superiority over the forefathers who preceded him when it states:
 "...but my name, YHWH, I did not make known to them."
 (Exodus 6:3).238
- 2) In portion <u>Vha'alotekha</u> his superiority over the prophets of his generation is made know when it states: "My servant Moses is not so..." (Numbers 12:7).²³⁹

²³⁶ See Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed II:32. (B)

²³⁷ See Toldot Yizhak 136:1. (R) See also, Maimonides, <u>Guide</u>, Sections II: 34, 35, 45. (B)

²³⁸ The complete text reads as follows: (Exodus 6:2-3) And God spoke unto Moses and said to him: "I am the Lord; and I appeared to Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as God almighty. But my name, YHWH, I did not make known to them." (B)

²³⁹ The complete text reads as follows: (Numbers 12:6-

And he said: "Hear now my words; if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord do make myself known unto him in a vision--I do speak with him

3) And thus, this also refers to the prophets who came after him, as it is written, " And there has not risen a prophet in Israel like Moses since," for God had already favored his request when he asked "so that we my be distinguished, your people and I, from every people..." (Exodus 33:16).240

And when Scripture states, "...a prophet from your midst, from among your brothers, like me..." (Deuteronomy 18:15) it really means that the prophet does not prophesy with tricks and conjuring, but rather because God chose him. Thus, "like me" is really God chose me and he called me to prophesy when I was a shepherd.' And this is the interpretation which obviously is most fitting to the crux of the matter.

The Sages' interpretation concerning the Messiah that "he will be exalted over Abraham, raised up higher than Moses and brought to greater heights than the ministering

in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is trusted in all My house; with him do I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches..." (B)

²⁴⁰The complete text, in context, reads as follows: (Exodus 33:15-17)

[&]quot;And he (Moses) said to Him," Unless you go in the lead, do not make us leave this place. For how shall it be known that you people have gained your favor unless you go with us, so that we may be distinguished, Your people and I, from every people on the face of this earth?"

The "request" to which this text refers is Moses' asking God to let him "behold his presence" in Exodus 33:18. (B)

angels" does not worry me at all, for their intention in stating this is that he will be raised up higher than Abraham in the degree of divine faith - as is written, "And he believed in God." (Genesis 15:6) For during the time of Abraham, our father, belief in God was fixed in the hearts of very few. But when the redemption will come, it will be fixed in the heart of every Israelite, as it is written, "Then the Lord, your God, will open up your heart..." (Deuteronomy 30:6).241

He will be raised up higher than Moses in the degree of Torah, for during the time of Moses our teacher - may peace be with him - the Torah was written on the stone tablets and forgotten by Israel. But when the redemption will come, it will be inscribed on the hearts of every Israelite, as is written, "...I will put my teaching in their inmost being and inscribe it upon their hearts..."

And (He will be) brought to greater heights than the ministering angels in the degree of kingship, for in the days when the guardian angels of the nations who dwelt in the land, each of their peoples were then in the land-Israel was unable to change their customs of behaviors. But when the redemption will come, all of the powers of the

²⁴¹ The complete text reads as follows:
"Then the Lord your God will open up (Lit. circumcise') your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live." (B)

guardian angels of the nations land will be punished, as is written: "In that day, the Lord will punish the hosts of heaven in heaven..." (Isaiah 24:21)242

And as is written in the Zohar, Parashat Vaera: "The Holy One Blessed be He will wipe out every army of the upper world, and no army of the upper world will remain to rule over the nations of the world except for the army of Israel."243 And the Kingdom of Israel will then be fixed and eternal, as is written, "...all peoples and every nations of every language must serve him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion...", etc. (Daniel 7:14).244

If you will look in the book, Akedat Yizhak, in Parashat Vayeshev, you will rid yourself of any doubt with

²⁴²the verse continues as follows:
"...and the kings of the earth on earth." (B)

²⁴³ Zohar, II:32a. (R)

The passage preceding this quote in the Zohar as follows (Taken from the Soncino translation, p. 103):

"Then a nation from the furthest ends of the earth will rise against wicked Rome and fight against her for three months, and many nations will gather there and fall into the hands of that people, until all the sons of Edom will congregate against her from all the ends of the earth. Then the Holy One will rise against them, as it says: "A Slaughter of the Lord in Bazrah and a great slaughter in Edom" (Isaiah 34:6)

The author of our text is indirectly referring to the ultimate downfall of Christianity. (B)

²⁴⁴ The complete text reads as follows:
Dominion, glory, and Kingship were given to him;
all peoples and nations of every language must
serve him. His dominion is an everlasting
dominion that shall not pass away, and his
kingship, one that shall not be destroyed." (B)

this interpretation. 245 Also, in <u>Bamidbar Rabbah</u> on the verse, "...now it is said to <u>Vacob...</u>" (Numbers 23:23)246 the Sages stated that even the Ministering Angels are unable to enter into the division where Israel will be in the world to come. 247 Now, you have learn that every righteous person is greater in stature than an angel of God, 248 and whosoever occupies himself with the study of Torah is called <u>Malakh</u> 249 as is written: "...and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the <u>Malakh</u> of

Now it is said to Jacob and to Israel. What has God wrought!" Balaam's prophetic eye beheld Israel sitting before the Holy One, blessed be He, in the world to come, like a pupil before his master, and asking Him, in regards to every Torah portion, the reason that it was written....The Ministering angels, upon seeing them, will then ask them: What has the Holy One, Blessed be He taught you?' - for they will not be able to enter into the division where Israel shall be... (B)

²⁴⁵Akedat Yizhak. Ed. Levov (?), section I, pp. 238b, 241b. (R)

²⁴⁶The complete text reads as follows:
Lo, there is no augury in Jacob, no divining in Israel: Now it is told unto Jacob, unit Israel, what God has planned." (B)

²⁴⁷ Numbers Rabbah 20:19. (R)

In Numbers Rabbah 20:20 we find the following:

²⁴⁸ Sanhedrin 93a. (R)

²⁴⁹Either "angel" or "messenger". In this context the word is translated as `messenger.' (B)

the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi 2:7).250

And what additional proof could I possible have need to ask for, if the text explicitly states that Jacob our father, triumphed over the angel, as it is written:

"...for you have struggled with Elohim..." (Genesis 32:29).

And it is written: "He struggled with an angel and prevailed..." (Hosea 12:5)

God forbid we should think that the Messiah will be the Lord, Himself - rather, he will be human like us, and not divine. The text states: "...for I am God, and not Man..." (Hosea 11:9) And if you should attempt to say that the Messiah is called God (E1), this is only metaphorically speaking - to emphasis his honor - for the name of the Creator is carved within him.

Every Jew knows that the name, "Elohim" is used for God, Angel, judge, and leader 251, as is written "...for you have struggled with Elohim 252 (Genesis 32:29); "...see, I have made you as Elohim 253 to Pharaoh." (Exodus 7:1); "...the owner of the house shall depose before the

²⁵⁰ Rozenthal writes:
In Exodus Rabbah 38:3 we find: "But if he is a student of Torah, it as though he were an angel..." See also, Aaron Heimann, Otzar Divrei Hakhamim U-fitgameyhem: "Kol ha-oseh ba-Torah." (R)

²⁵¹ See Troki I:19

²⁵²Here as a angel. (B)

²⁵³Here as a leader. (B)

Elohim²⁵⁴..." (Exodus 23:7); "...and the house of David like an Elohim..."²⁵⁵

And something which is even more wondrous than this is that the altar which Moses built was called by the name of the Lord - as is written: "...and he called it YHWH Nisi..." (Exodus 17:15). And also Jerusalem is called YHWH Shamah 256 as is written, "...and the name of the city from that day on shall be, YHWH Shamah." (Ezekiel 48:25)257.

And the reason is evident with just a little bit of contemplation that the adjectives used by the prophet"...Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God..." (Isaiah 9:5)258
refer to the Lord who called the name of the child who is mentioned, 'Prince of Peace' and testified by that which follows it in the text "Of the increase of [his] government

²⁵⁴Here as a judge. (B)

²⁵⁵Here in the sense of a divine being. (B)

²⁵⁶Literally, "the Lord is there." (B)

²⁵⁷ See Troki, I:20

²⁵⁸ The complete text reads as follows: (Isaiah 9:5-6)

[&]quot;Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: on his shoulders shall be the government: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of [his] government and peace there shall be no end [without end, heb.] upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgement and with justice, from henceforth and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall bring this to pass." (B)

and peace there will be no end..." that this is the reason that he is called 'Prince of Peace259. And this is how Jonathan translated. For if this were not (the proper way to understand the text,) the text would have stated "...and his names shall be called..." instead of "...and his name shall be called..."

And even If the prophets prophesied the birth of the Messiah prior to his birth, there is nothing unique about this in comparison to the other prophets, 260 for after all, we have found that God announced to Abraham when his wife Sarah was barren that she would give birth to Isaac for him in Genesis 17:19. And the angel told Hanah when she was barren that she would give birth to Samuel (I Samuel 1:17). And Jeremiah wrote concerning himself when God said to him: "Before I created you in the womb, I selected you; before you were born I consecrated you..." (Jeremiah 1:5). And similarly, the Sages stated that the angel who is in charge of pregnancy brings the child before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and says to Him: Master of

²⁵⁹ See Troki, 1:20 (B)

²⁶⁰ Many sages dealt with the well known Midrash on Isaiah 52:13, "...he will be exalted over Abraham and raised up higher than Moses, and brought to greater heights than the ministering angels...", which the apostates interpreted as referring to Jesus. See note number 113 above. It is known that Maimonides felt that the Messiah will be a great prophet, "...almost like Moses, our teacher..." (Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot T'shuvah 9b). See Also Albo, Sefer Ha-Ikkarim 3, 20. Koenigsburg Press, 47b. (R)

the Universe, this child, what will be his fate?" This is in tractate Nidah, chapter 2.261

And now, what is the value of that which you attempted to state - i.e. that the name of the Messiah was made known prior to the creation of the world - if the Sages have already stated that there were six things which preceded the creation of the world: Torah, the Throne of Glory, the Forefathers of Israel, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah is the very last of all of them. 262

The name of the Nazerite that you went through so much trouble to prove through the means of an acrostic does not make sense - seeing as you left out one letter, since he was known as Yeshu'a. For when the Sages of Israel saw that he had become mad²⁶³ and had perverted his Torah learning²⁶⁴ they took the 'ayin away from him and gave him the deragatory acrostic²⁶⁵ - as is made clear in Sefer

²⁶¹ Nidah, 16b. (R)

²⁶² Genesis Rabbah 1:4, p. 6 in the Theodor-Albeck edition. (R)

²⁶³ Literally, Shanah Ta'amo - "Changed his demeanor".
A reference to Psalm 34:1. (B)

²⁶⁴Literally, "burning his stew in public". This is a reference to B. Berakhot 17b where it states:

"...we should never have a son or a student who perverted his Torah learning such as Yeshu Ha-Nozri." (B)

²⁶⁵ Yemah Shemo V'Zikhro. - may his name and memory be blotted out. (R)
For more information on the kabbalistic practice of Notarikon, which appears in the Hebrew text, see Trachtenberg, pp.262-3.(B)

HaToledot.266 And the verse to which you hold fast: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand...'" (Psalms 110:1) is merely a parable.267 And similarly, they268 interpreted concerning the verse, "...and all of the hosts of heaven standing in attendance to the right and to the left of Him." (I Kings 22:19) Is there really a right or a left to the Holy One, blessed be He? Will you say the same thing concerning the verse, "And Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord...?" (I Chronicles 29:23).

The statement, "The spirit of the Lord..." (Genesis 1:2). which was interpreted as referring to the Messiah in Genesis Rabbah²⁶⁹ had laready been preceded by <u>Tohu</u>, <u>Bohu</u>, <u>Hoshekh</u>, and <u>Tehom</u> - which were interpreted as referring to

²⁶⁶ Toledot Yeshu. See Krauss, 39, 68. (R)

²⁶⁷ Hizzuk Emunah I:40, pp.191-195. (B)

^{,268} i.e. the Christian apologetics.(B)

²⁶⁹ Genesis Rabbah 2,4. P. 17 in the Theodor - Albeck edition. (R)
The Text reads as follows:

R. Simeon b, Lakhish applied the passage to the [foreign] powers. "Now the earth was Tohu..." (unformed) symbolizes Babylonia. "...and Bohu..." (void) symbolizes Media. "...and darkness..." symbolizes Greece, which darkend the eyes of Israel with its decress, "...upon the face of the deep..." - this wicked state [i.e. Rome/Christianity]: just as the great deep cannot be plumbed, so one cannot plumb [the depths of iniquity of] this wicked state. "And the spirit of God hovered..." - this refers to the spirit of the Messiah...

Taken from Genesis Rabbah, Soncino translation, Vol I p.17.
(B)

the four (evil) kingdoms. 270

And the passage, "...let us make man..." (ibid.), in the plural, when it would be proper to state "I shall make", can be interpreted in light of the midrash - i.e., that He consulted with the heavenly angels, and the Earth271 - for it was His will that the divine forces which brought forth the upper and lower worlds whould agree on the creation of man, so that these two forces should be united in him: the general power which determines general characteristics, and the individual power which determines individual characteristics - as Albo explained in Book I, chapter eleven. 272

The three men who appeared to Abraham, our father, were three angels. One (had the function of) healing Abraham, our father; another one — to bring good news to Sarah; and another one — to overthrow Sodom. 273 And Ibn Ezra — may his memory be for a blessing — has already contradicted you274 when he stated: "Those who have been led astray have said that the three men were one. They

²⁷⁰ See above, #270. This would appear to put Jesus in a lesser light than all of the evil kingdoms who precede him in the listing of the Midrash. (B)

²⁷¹Cf. Genesis Rabbah p.59in the Theodor Albeck edition.(R)

²⁷² Sefer Ha Ikkarim, ed. Husik, p.110. (R)

²⁷³B. Baba Mezia 86b. (R)

²⁷⁴ literally, "hit you on the head" (B)

were three. For behold, it looks as though [those who would claim that the three men were actually one] forgot [when the text states] 'and the two angels came to Sodom' (Genesis 19:1)."

The Sages did an excellent job of interpreting the verse, "I saw all the living walking underneath the sun..."

(Ecclesiastes 4:15)275 - this is the generation of the Flood; "...with the second child..." - this is the generation of Noah. And how can your heart mislead you to interpret "...the second child..." as referring to the Messiah if immediately following this it is said concerning him: "surely this is a vanity and a striving after wind!"

Now the verse, "Truly God does all these things two or three times to a man..." (Job 33:29) has already been interpreted by the Kabbalists as referring to reincarnation. For the Holy One, who is blessed, contemplated upon concepts without having one of them slip away from Him. Therefore the soul is reunited and recycled two or three times until she finds a place for herself. 276

²⁷⁵ The compete text reads as follows:

I saw all the living walking under the sun, they that were with the second child that was to stand up in his stead. There was no end to all of the people, even of all them whom he did lead; yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this is a vanity and a striving after wind!" (B)

²⁷⁶ See Zohar, III:178a. See in Radak on Psalms 104:30, Ed. Brikenstein, p.218. (R)
For more information on the concept of Gilgul Neshamot (reincarnation) as found in kabbalistic literature, see

And the reason that we sometimes find three names of God chained together is to show that God is exalted in the past, present and future. And a multiplicity or diversity of divine names teaches of the multiplicity and diversity of His actions - as perceived by those who receive themfor He is singly blessed with an ultimate unity as is written, "...the Lord, our God, the Lord is One." (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Furthermore, concerning Him you must make three negations: corporeality, divisibility and change, as the author of Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut wrote in Chapter Two. 277

Blau pp.6-7, 12; Kaplan, The Bahir, pp.XII, XIII, and sections 122,155,185; Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 243, 250, 278, 281ff.(B)

²⁷⁷ See Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut, ed. Mantua 5b. (R)
This concept can also be found expressed in the Guide and
was probably inspired by Maimonidean influence. In III:15
we find:

Likewise that God should bring into existance someone like Himself, or should annihilate Himself, or should become a body, or should change - all of these things belong to the class of the impossible; and the power to do any of these things cannot be attributed to God. (Pines, Vol., II, p.460.)

See above, in my introduction to the translation, Chapter II, section C: "The Maimonidean Influence". See also, Lasker pp.28-33.(B)

And why is the divine name written with three yuds?

To hint at the three yuds found in the priestly benediction

- and these [interpretations] are ancient.278

Now, in relation to that which you stated in the name of our Holy Rabbi Judah the Prince - may his memory be for a blessing - which you claimed to have found in the book, Iggeret Ha-sodot, on the essence of the Trinity, I cannot conceive of these words coming out of his mouth. Rather, the practitioners of the "new religion" attributed this to him in order to make him a strong foundation on which to rest their claims. God forbid that a man of his staturewho enlightened the eyes of all Israel with his compilation of the Mishnah - should support a false religion in his writings. For lo, it has been said concerning him, in the preface to Nahalat Avot, that the holy Rabbi Judah lived more than one hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple. 279 And it is not necessary to state [that he lived] after [the time of] Jesus. 280 And not only did he pay no attention to the words of Jesus, 281 but he also

²⁷⁸ See Midrash Legah Tov on Leviticus 6:22. ed. Buber 93a. Also see Midrash Legah Tov on Exodus 3:15. Ed. Buber 10a; Ginsburg, Genze Schechter, I 246. (R)

²⁷⁹ See Pirke Avot with the commentary of Nahalat Avot to Abravanel (New York, 1952) p.26: "And he compiled the Mishnah...on the year 3600 of the Hebrew Calendar...and the 110th year after the destruction of the Second Temple." (R)

²⁸⁰Literally, "The Nazerene". See footnote #87 in the translation above (p.41). (B)

²⁸¹ Ibid.

wanted to keep others from contact with those who believed in him, as is argued in tractate <u>Avodah Zarah</u>. ²⁸² And in the Palestinian Talmud, in Tractate <u>Megillah</u>, it is written:

He went and circumcised himself and came to Rabbi etc. He converted the Emperor Antonius and taught him Torah in secret, for he had a subterranean corridor which led from his house to the home of Rabbi. 283

And we need not suspect that he [Rabbi Judah] afterwards became a heretic, since we find in tractate <u>Kilaim</u> of the Palestinian Talmud that, when Rabbi died, all the towns came to eulogize him, and all the Sages of Israel honored him greatly.²⁸⁴

And furthermore, I saw that this number which you presented is not correct, for you added an extra <u>vav</u> in the beginning which you included in the Name with Twelve Letters. And later, in the Name with Forty - Two Letters it is missing. This is not the way that someone such as he, who has such a precise mastery over the language, would use it. And the wondrous thing about (your statement) concerning the wisdom of our holy Rabbi is (the question of) how is it (possible) that he did not look into <u>Sefer Ha-Bahir</u> - where it is written that a divine name with twelve letters is three

²⁸²See Avodah Zarah, 27b: "A person should not do business with the heretics." (R)

²⁸³ J. Megillah I, ed. Krotoshin, p.72b. (R)

²⁸⁴ J. Kilaim IX, 4, ed. Krotoshin, p. 32b. (R)

times the tetragrammaton - with the punctuation severed?285 And the Name with Forty Two letters is seven names - each with six letters²⁸⁶, and here they did not deal with this matter at all.

And also, concerning your statement that I will have no choice but to agree since the words which you spoke came from the lips of that holy man, I will not clarify them according to your beliefs, but rather in a way which is in accordance with our holy belief for words of Torah have many different aspects to them. "The righteous shall walk by them and the wicked shall stumble in them." 287 Thus I say, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit which were mentioned are references to the Holy One, blessed be He, the Congregation of Israel, and the Torah, far all three of these cling together: the Torah with Israel, and

²⁸⁵ See Sefer Ha-bahir 111, ed. Margoliot (5731) p.49. Also see, Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed I,62. The commentary of Shem Tov Ben Yosef Ibn Shem Tov, Vilna Press, 93b. Also see the article "Shemot" in Otzar Yisrael, Vol 10, p.162. (R)

²⁸⁶ See the She-elot Ut'shuvot of Rabbi Shimon ben Alkabetz I, 220: The question: "...What is the proper way of understanding a (divine) name with forty - two letters?..." The answer: "..And concerning the proper way to read this there was a disagreement...Some read it with seven words - each with six letters, and the Sages of our land and its teachers felt that the proper way to read this was with seven letters, according to that which we have heard and also the received tradition form the Hai Gaon, may his memory be for a blessing. (R)

²⁸⁷Hosea 14:10 (B)

Israel with the Holy One Blessed be He. 288

The Lord, who is blessed, is the Father, as is written: "Is He not the Father who created you...?" (Deuteronomy 32:6); the Congregation of Israel is called the Son, as is written, "Truly Ephraim is a dear son to me..." (Jeremiah 31:20), and, "... My son, My first born, Israel..." (Exodus 4:22); and the Torah is the Holy Spirit, as is written, "...where is He who placed in their midst His Holy Spirit?" (Isaiah 63:11) and it is written, "You endowed them with Your good spirit to instruct them ... " (Nehemiah 9:20). And since Israel and the Torah are eternal, as is written, "For the mountains may move ... " etc. (Isaiah 54:10)289. Therefore he said that you will never find anything in God which is not God in order to distinguish between the divine clinging in those like yourself, and in Israel, by that which was written about them: "...and your name is attached to us..." (Jeremiah 14:9);290 and the Torah - about which it was common

²⁸⁸ Zohar III 73a: "Three things are connected to each other - the Holy One Blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel."
(R)

²⁸⁹ The complete biblical verse is as follows:

[&]quot;For the mountains may move and the hills be shaken, but My loyalty shall never move from you, Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken said the Lord, who takes you back in love." (B)

²⁹⁰ The complete text is as follows:
Why are you like a man who is stunned, like a
warrior who cannot give victory? Yet you are in
our midst 0 Lord, and your name is attached to us

knowledge among those who are learned in Kabbalah - that its entirety consists of names of the Holy One, blessed be He.291 This statement will be further clarified by means of the Kabbalah in the following manner.

From a name with four letters - which is the Tetragrammaton, which teaches of the divine essence 292 - a name with twelve letters is derived - i.e., the holy Sefirot - the divine vessels with which He does His will. He calls them Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - which correspond to Greatness, Power, and Beauty - which are the essence of the structure of the Universe.

Greatness (<u>Gedulah</u>) is called Father in that it is the measure of Abraham, our father - Peace be upon him. Power (<u>Gevurah</u>) is called Son in that it is the measure of Isaac. Beauty (<u>Tiferet</u>) is called Holy Spirit²⁹³ in that it is the measure of Jacob, as it is written, "...the spirit of Jacob

⁻ do not forsake us." (B)

²⁹¹ See Nahmanides' introduction to his commentary on the Torah:

[&]quot;We still possess a tradition based on truththat the Torah, in its entirety, consists of names of the Holy One, blessed be He." (R)

²⁹²See note #228. (B)

²⁹³ This could very well be a response to the Christian kabbalistic doctrine which held that certain <u>sefirot</u> were, in fact, representations of the Trinity. <u>Keter</u> was seen as a manifestation of the Father, <u>Hokhma</u> - the Logos, <u>Binah</u>the Holy Spirit, and <u>Tiferet</u> - the Son. See Blau, p. 15.

revived." (Genesis 45:27)294

And note, these are the three legs of the Merkavah (Chariot) upon which rest every judgement of the upper and lower courts. And you will find in Sefer HaBahir, that Michael, who stands at the edge of Greatness, is called the captain of all the Holy Forms on the left side 295 - Keter (Crown), Hakhmah (Wisdom), Bina (Understanding), G'dulah (Greatness), G'vurah (Power) Tiferet (Beauty), Nezah (Victory), Hod (Splendor), Yesod (Foundation) - and Uriel, who stands in the middle section is called the captain of all of the Holy Forms in the middle. 296 And each of these sefirot has three sides 297 - above, below, and in the middle so that you will find that they are nine sefirot, and each section has twelve letters, and the enlightened one 298 will understand.

And following this it states that a name with forty two letters is emanated from a name with twelve letters. And its explanation is that from the joining together of

²⁹⁴ The complete text reads as follows:
"But when they recounted all that Joseph had said
to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph
had sent to transport him, the spirit of their
father Jacob revived." (B)

²⁹⁵ See Sefer HaBahir, section 108. p.57 in the Margoliot edition. (R)

²⁹⁶ Sefer HaBahir, 107, 110. (R)

²⁹⁷¹it. "faces". (B)

²⁹⁸ i.e. one who is familiar with the Kabbalah. (B)

nine sefirot which together make up three names, which are comprised of twelve letters, the Sefira of Malkhut is emanated. Even though it (i.e. Malkhut) is with them in its aspect of emanation, it is not with them in unity. Nonetheless, it receives (emanations) from the Sefirot which are above 299 to it. This Sefira is called by a divine name with forty two letters. That is to say, just as the name is made up from the seven names [which are above it], also the Sefira is made up from the seven extremities. In order to understand this many introductions are necessary [i.e. one must be an advanced scholar of Kabbalah] without which you will not be able to grasp the truths. I will leave these out, however, for fear of being long winded.

And the parable which our Sages taught in connection with the verse, Nashku Bar (Psalms 2:12) I will explain in this manner: The nations of the world which will remain, who will have rebelled against God, when they see that the Holy One, blessed Be He, will be filled with wrath against them will entreat the Messiah King that he should intercede for them and ask for mercy on their behalf. And he will pray for them until his prayer will be accepted. And then, when they will want to glorify and exalt the Lord, who is blessed, it will be as though He were saying to them that they should first direct their praise to the Messiah King

²⁹⁹ Or "superior" (B)

and that they acknowledge that he is the Messiah as was prophesied by the prophets. For were it not for him, they would have been destroyed. And now the interpretation is properly interpreted.

And do not be surprised if the Messiah is called the son of God. For just as Israel is called His son, as is written, "Out of Egypt I called out to My son..." (Hosea 11:1), so the Messiah, who is the Messiah King, is called His son in His love for him. And the verse, "Shall I bring to the birth..." (Isaiah 66:9)300 serves the function of answering those who would be surprised at the masses of Israel who are called "...seed of Elohim..." (Malachi 2:15).301

And now that the Lord has found me worthy to uproot with the breath of my utterances the tree which you have planted. I shall spread out my hands to the Lord [in the prayer] that He may make me "an iron pillar and a bronze wall" 302 against all who would render decisions of iniquity.

³⁰⁰ The complete verse reads as follows:
"Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? Shall I who causes to bring forth shut the womb? Says the Lord." (B)

³⁰¹ See Abravanel on Isaiah 66:9. (R)

³⁰²Cf. Jeremiah 1:18. (B)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Herev Pifiyot served a valuable function for its readers. Yair, in writing his polemic, was able to give voice to the anger, frustrations and fears of his people as they faced the challenge of an educated and well organized attack from within on the religious, economic, and socio-political status of the Jews of Italy. He provides us with practical advice in dealing with apostacy while, at the same time, he bolsters the spirits of a community facing an everdeepening crisis.

What value can <u>Herev Pifiyot</u> serve for us today in our modern, sophisticated world? We are all aware of the so-called "Messianic Jews" who claim to have become "fulfilled" due to their acceptance of Jesus as their personal Savior. Can the arguments of a Yair ben Shabbetai or an Isaac of Troki be utilized to counteract the missionizing attempts of such missionaries?

The answer to this question is two-fold. On the one hand, the literature of the Messianic Jews is replete with the traditional scripture-based proofs of Christianity. Isaiah 7:14, Haggai 2:9, and many other Biblical quotes are cited time and again over the radio and television airwaves as well as in the tracts and pamphlets which are distributed on the street corners and college campuses of America. These "Jews for Jesus" seem to be saying that if

we would only open our eyes we would "see the light" and become saved by virtue of the logic and indesputable truths of their argumentation.

On the other hand, there are many differences as well. Yair's disputants argue from the perspective of mutual knowledge of Judaism and its sources. Both are able to cite Scripture, Rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature at will. Both are confident that their opponent will understand and assimilate the logic of their argumentation and consequently be swayed to their position. Modern-day missionaries to the Jews do not possess or need this kind of knowledge. In a pamphlet entitled, "How to Witness Simply and Effectively to the Jews," Moishe Rosen, founder of the Messianic Jewish group, Jews For Jesus, writes the following:

Presume your Jewish friend does not know anything at all about the Scriptures. You will probably be closer to being right than if you presume that he has a complete knowledge of the Holy Writ. Less than 50% of the Jewish children are receiving religious education in most communities. Even those who are receiving formal training concentrate on a curriculum which heavily emphasizes Jewish culture, customs, liturgy, holidays, and history rather than religious doctrine. Very little Bible is taught.1

In other words, the arguments of the Christian would have very little effect on a Jewish population today which has

¹Taken from an internal manual distributed to members of the Jews For Jesus. No bibliographic material is available at this time.

no conception of concepts such as the superiority of Mosaic prophecy, the rebuilding of a future Third Temple, etc. Rabbinic source material, in this light, would also be totally irrelevent.

The threat that the Jewish community faces today from these groups - if, indeed, such groups can be perceived as threatening - is not that which is derived from their logical argumentation, but rather, from their spiritual and emotional appeal. The concept of being "fulfilled" as a Jew by accepting Christianity implies that Jews today are unfulfilled - that something is missing from our Jewish lifestyles. This, I fear, has an edge of truth. Yair's Two-Edged Sword was able to swiftly and deftly cut down the argumentation of his opponent. Every argument was counter _ balanced by a refutation - with no room for doubt that the Jews had emerged victorious. Our battle today is not so much with those who would wish to impose their beliefs upon us, but rather with our inability or unwillingness to come to grips with our own spirituality or faith. In this light, our weapons must not be directed outwards, but within. We must work towards educating ourselves not so that we can defend our beliefs, but rather so that we can appreciate them for the depth, beauty, and inspiration that they provide.

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