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NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ACCORDING TO DIVRE SHALOM VE-EMET: A TEXTUAL-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

by

Joseph Allen Edelheit

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Hebrew
Letters and Ordination

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

June, 1973

Referee Professor Michael A. Meyer

To Naomi who has made me REAL

Acknowledgments

This thesis has been one of the most important learning experiences of my academic career. It represents not only the interest and investment which I passionately gave it, but also the energies of others without whom it could not have been done. Words may well fail to express the true respect and gratitude I have for these individuals but each knows within his heart how deeply appreciative I am.

This topic which deals with the inception of modernist Jewish pedagogy in Europe was first suggested by Professor Uriel Tal of Tel Aviv University while he was a visiting professor at the college. His sincere interest and encouragement during the earliest stages of the research strengthened my own motivation. I am very appreciative of both his ideas and his concern, without which I would never have had a sense of direction in my research.

There are no words which can express the awe and admiration I feel for Professor Michael Meyer, my advisor. He has become in the truest sense, my rabbi--my teacher. As a guide into the world of historical scholarship, he was both gentle and relentless. He urged and encouraged me to work beyond the level of scholarship I had experienced at any time. Dr. Meyer was always on hand for the most trivial to the most perplexing problem of research or writing. I am forever indebted to him for his personal concern and guidance and his ability to share with me his own love for history. I sincerely hope that this thesis reflects in some measure my desire to live up to his academic standards and his faith in me.

The final manuscript was ably and cheerfully typed by Mrs. Betty Finkelstein. She was never adverse to making a last minute change. I am very thankful for her work, her interest, and most importantly, her friendship.

Last and by no means least, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my wife Naomi. Without Naomi who so tirelessly worked on the early drafts of the manuscript and later proofread, there would be no thesis. More important than even her time and energy was her constant presence and encouragement. Her love for me has been the well from which I have drawn strength these last five years. For her endless hours of labor, her being alone, and her unending patience with me, my grammar and my handwriting, I can only offer her my love and eternal devotion.

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Digest

Naphtali Herz Wessely represents the transition of Jewish education from the ghetto to modernity. Wessely was a renown exponent of the early Haskalah while also being highly respected by the most traditional rabbis of the community. Wessely's primary work in education, Divre Shalom Ve-emet, is a collection of four public letters. These letters provide the essential starting point in understanding modern Jewish educational philosophy.

Chapter I: The first chapter presents Jewish education in an historical perspective. It stresses that education reflected the importance of the Law. By the eighteenth century Talmud was the all important goal of Jewish education. The chapter also makes the point that the Ashkenazim and Sephardim held different educational views.

Chapter II: Wessely's educational philosophy must be placed within the context of the educational developments of the Enlightenment. This chapter establishes that context by discussing the pedagogies of Basedow, Pestalozzi, Kant, and Rousseau.

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Chapter V: The focus of the thesis, an analysis of Divre Shalom Ve-emet, is found in this chapter. The chapter confronts specific terms that reflect Wessely's view. One such term is Derech Eretz which becomes for Wessely a bridge between secular and religious knowledge. He stresses the need for a balanced, graded, organized pedagogy.

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Chapter VIII: This chapter contains a sketch of Wessely's immediate affect on Jewish education in Europe. It carefully considers the limitations of extending Wessely's affect to far beyond the European experience. In a short epilogue Wessely is placed within an almost contemporary context.

PREFACE

"Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes him."[1] In this statement, Immanuel Kant, the great exponent of the German Enlightenment, underscores the importance of education. Made at the end of the eighteenth century, his view represents a turning point in the philosophy and application of education throughout Europe. For the European Jew, too, Kant's statement is of significance. To the degree that education became an undeniable asset in Jewish society's transition to modernity, it must be reckoned as an important factor in the Jew's cultural emancipation as well. Jewish education, as promulgated by the Haskalah, the Jewish counterpart of the Enlightenment, became the key which unlocked the cultural ghettoes of Europe's Jewry. In its pursuit of educational reform, the Haskalah was largely motivated by the writings of Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725-1805). Wessely was one of the earliest noted authors and poets of the Haskalah, as well as a renowned scholar of the Hebrew language.[2] He was also an ardent supporter and colleague of Moses Mendelssohn, the philosophical progenitor of the Haskalah. But Wessely's most important role was in the transformation of the European Jew through his influence on Jewish education.

Wessely's philosophical pen produced the vanguard of all proposals for Jewish educational reform in his pamphlet Divre Shalom Ve-emet, (Words of Peace and Truth).[3] It consists of four public letters written during the period 1782-1784. In these epistles the author urges the Jewish communities in the greater Austrian-German area to introduce relevant secular studies

into Jewish schools. Although there are other specific changes for which Wessely argues, the essence of his work lies in its insistence that religious and secular studies be integrated. "The work is the first methodical composition in Hebrew on Jewish education written in the spirit of the Haskalah."[4] Thus, Wessely and his works deserve special attention in any discussion of Jewish education's transition from the heder to the Jewish religious school of today. It will be to better understand that transition that this thesis pursues an analysis of Naphtali Herz Wessely's educational philosophy, as it is presented in Divre Shalom Ve-emet.

It should be noted that to date there are two works, both in manuscript form, that would greatly broaden the scope of information at hand, but unfortunately they are unavailable.[5] Although there is also an earlier rabbinic thesis by Louis Segal on this very topic,[6] I shall attempt to move beyond it by more fully reconstructing the historical milieu of Wessely and by considering the implications of his educational philosophy. I shall not merely provide a translation or paraphrase of his work. Nor will I use published articles and books on Wessely[7] except as background for this dissertation. Essentially it is based upon his own words in Divre Shalom Ve-emet and his other works, and from them alone does it draw conclusions.

In the attempt to better understand the dramatic change in Jewish educational institutions and Wessely's role in those changes, several questions must be brought to the fore. To what degree did the general philosophical tenor of Europe stimulate changes in Jewish education? Was the immediate political stimulus to educational reform misunderstood as emancipatory? To what extent was the problem of secular studies in Jewish

education unique to Ashkenazi Jewry? Was the Orthodox opposition to Wessely's pamphlet a valid prophecy of Wessely's ultimate assimilatory influence? In what respect can Wessely's educational reform be considered original, either philosophically or practically? These and other questions have spurred my research for this thesis, and the reader should note that the discussion which follows will reflect my attempt to deal with them.

In light of these questions, this thesis sets out two basic goals. The first is to establish some clearly defined connections between the general historical situation and the public letters of Wessely. Within my analysis of the overall historical setting I include the state of Jewish education at that time and the corresponding development of general education, the European philosophical enlightenment, and finally the Edicts of Toleration of Joseph II. A probe of each area should clearly reveal that Wessely was directly influenced by his historical situation. The second goal will be to provide some detailed specific insights into Wessely's educational philosophy. Here I shall endeavor to advance beyond earlier works on this topic that do not offer adequate comparisons between Wessely and contemporary general and Jewish educators.

Chapter I

Jewish Education in Historical Perspective

Professor Charles Ozer very concisely states the intent of Jewish education prior to the modern period: "Jewish education before Wessely was quite uniform, because all Jewish communities, in all regions, agreed on its ultimate aim. This aim was to develop and foster a deep and abiding loyalty to Jewish tradition."[1] Thus, the purpose of Jewish education was to sustain Judaism. The methodologies used in this pursuit had varied little since the earliest post-biblical period. During talmudic times education depended upon the Oral Law for interpretations of the biblical law. "The general Jewish school systems dealt neither with Greek culture nor with their language...the basic intention was to make the boy participate in public study of Torah and to encourage him to take part in the development and broadening of the Oral tradition."[2] The Torah is the essential content of education through the talmudic period, but as the dispersion of the Jews increased and we move into the medieval period, the balance shifts. From the tenth century onward, the Pentateuch continues only as the stepping stone in the Jew's studies. In this period, when Spain and Southern France produced the great Jewish commentators and philosophers of the Middle Ages, the Law of the Rabbis was emphasized. Mastery of Mishnah and Gemara became the goal of education. Proficiency in these works meant survival for Judaism's way of life. Most curricula provided courses in prayer, some history, and basic writing in the vernacular. A few had courses in secular areas. However, everything was studied either

in connection with, or as secondary to, the Rabbinic law.

The development of Talmudic studies reaches its height by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By now Jewish communities financially support assorted hadarim and yeshivot. "The emphasis in the curriculum was given to the Talmud and this fact aroused considerable protest, especially from those who were shocked at the neglect of the Bible and Mishnah."[3] Although Torah had to be taught first, the study of Talmud was the essence, and as before, everything else was secondary. "The student who knew Bible and especially Talmud could proceed by himself to understand Jewish literature: the Siddur, the Mahzor, the commentaries, the codes, the ethical books, homiletical writings, casuistic writings and the philosophical writings."[4] By Wessely's time Jewish education had evolved into a pedagogy specializing in Judaism's canon law, the Talmud.

Together with the formal study of Talmud in the schoolroom, the family and its way of life played a central role in Jewish education. "The family... unconsciously served as an educational instrument when it fulfilled its social functions. Since it provided the principal framework for adult social activity, children, too, took some part in it...."[5] Children lived what they learned. Either they individually participated, as in prayer, or they shared in the experience of the family, as in the laws of Kashrut. The Jewish child throughout history has seen in his family and community the values, rituals, and laws he has studied, as they were practiced in daily life. Thus, an important relationship existed between education and practice. This relationship will help us to understand the nature of Wessely's reforms and his influence on Jewish education. Realizing that the aim of

Jewish education throughout history has been to perpetuate Judaism by using the Written and Oral Law as its primary medium, we must now consider in historical perspective each period up to Wessely's time.

During the tannaitic (70-220) and amoraic (220-500) periods, Jewish education introduced the importance of the study of the Law. Whereas in all later periods, the fruits of Jewish learning were either commentaries or codifications of the Law, the talmudic period produced the actual literature, mastery of which was to become basic for all later educational goals. The Oral tradition was an integral part of education on all levels, but in order to develop this Oral tradition students engaged primarily in the study of the biblical text, usually beginning with Leviticus. This enabled them to understand the basis of Oral legislation and interpretations, as well as to arrange their lives around the mitzvot. Study was universally obligatory, since education, considered a form of Divine worship, was itself commanded. Hence the student was fulfilling a commandment, while gaining knowledge. However, in this period knowledge was secondary to actual involvement in Jewish life:

> The Jewish school was intended to instruct the pupil in the reading and understanding of Scripture, in the knowledge of the traditions of the Oral Law so as to prepare him for the study of Torah and for Divine Worship.[6]

Already in this early period of diaspora history, Jewish education was closed to the secular subjects of other schools. This fact becomes one of the central points of reference in all later reform of Jewish education.

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and the other phase, the Oral tradition, as early adolescents. "According to the Mishnah, the period of study is divided into two stages. At five years one begins the study of Torah, at ten years, the study of Mishnah."[7] Not only was the age of the student a matter of concern, but also the teacher and his pedagogy. We know from references in the Mishnah and Talmud that if fathers could not teach their sons Torah, they were obligated to procure a tutor for the child.

The basic pedagogy used during the tannaitic and amoraic periods was oral repetition and listening rather than writing. Students would learn to read by listening to the sounds of letters after having learned their shapes. Teachers repeated passages several times so that by oral repetition the students actively or passively memorized the material. This pedagogy reflects the means by which the Jews established an entire series of laws and collected their oral arguments. The methodology was also consistent with the rigid nature of the curricula: having a determined amount of material, the student could master it by repetition rather than by conceptual learning. Thus, students were trained not only in the necessary source material, but also in the actual method of developing and transmitting the Oral Law.

The educational process of the talmudic period provided one more important social function: it made for equality within the Jewish population. This is not to say that there was no elite scholarly class, but rather that the general level of literacy was high. "There can be no doubt that for the duration the tannaitic and amoraic periods, the spread of education served as one of the important causes for the disappearance of the Am Haaretz as a

distinctive group, and created a feeling of social and spiritual equality among all sectors of the people."[8] Thus education played a role in sustaining the faith and social morale of the people.

In sum, Jewish education in the tannaitic and amoraic periods sets down the essential format which is followed with some slight alterations in the future. The study of the Law is the basis of individual involvement in Jewish life; thus the Law becomes the center of concern in education. The Torah is fundamental to the early period, and with the Pentateuch as its foundation, the Oral Law was developed and finally compiled in the Mishnah and Gemara. This period of the Oral tradition produced the source of study for all later generations, a source devised to preserve a people in diaspora.

The growth and development of the Law was the central issue for education during the talmudic period, but in the medieval period we shall find an added issue of concern. During this span of Jewish history (ca.750-ca.1600) there developed a clear distinction between the philosophies and life-styles of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jew. Taking account of this difference is absolutely essential in any attempt to understand Wessely, though writers on Wessely have tended to ignore it. The Sephardim, most specifically those who were active during the Golden Age of Spain, represented the first great diaspora Jewish community to produce scholars in secular fields. That is to say, the Law was still essential and still the foundation of all education, but now Jewish minds had an opportunity to come in contact with secular subjects. There is a very important reason for this Sephardi characteristic: "More than the rest of the Jews in the Diaspora, the Spanish Jews were rooted in the life of their country and specifically in

the surrounding Christian culture; they were working partners in the formation of that culture."[9] Thus coming in contact with at least two rich cultures, Christian and Arab, they did not develop a closed, protectively particularistic attitude to the outside world.

The Sephardi educational structure closely resembled a modern system of Jewish education. It had a curriculum which, in addition to rabbinic works, included a systematic study of the Hebrew language and its grammar, the Prophets and Wisdom literature of the Bible, and Hebrew poetry. An extant curriculum, used in Spain in the twelfth century, reflects not merely the essential Jewish subjects, centered around the Talmud, as above, but also the following secular areas: philosophy, logic, mathematics, geometry, optics, astronomy (including astrology), music, mechanics, natural sciences, medicine and metaphysics.[10] Graetz aptly characterized the Sephardi Jews of this period when he stated, "The knowledge of the period was neither one-sided nor barren; on the contrary, it was full of healthy life, useful and productive."[11] The importance of the introduction of secular subjects was far-reaching, for it became an essential difference between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The educational implications of this difference were not confined to the Jews of Spain; rather, we see the Sephardi curricula of Italy and Holland similarly open to a systematic approach in Jewish areas as well as to secular subjects. The essence of the educational goal in the Sephardi communities became "...to train individuals to be at ease in Italian [general secular] life and society as well as faithful Jews, rather than talmudic or

halakhic scholars."[12] The Sephardi curriculum which included secular studies along with the study of the Law, reflected itself in the totality of religious life.

> ...The Sephardic communities evolved their specific form of Judaism. It was an eclectic form, combining the truth of the Bible and Talmud with the wisdom of Aristotle and Plato, the liturgical poetry of the prayer books with the style of the Arabian divans. The Sephardic heritage became a colorful mosaic of mysticism and rationalism, philosophy and talmudism, poetry and science.[13]

In contrast, the Ashkenazi communities developed an educational system along very different lines. Unlike the Sephardi Jews who mixed socially as well as economically with their surrounding communities, the Ashkenazim made up almost totally autonomous enclaves set apart from the outside world. Their way of life was completely oriented to the exacting regulations of Jewish law. "Knowledge of Torah, strict observance of the commandments and complete devotion to G-d and to Israel were the exclusive objectives in the rearing and teaching of the young generations."[14] Talmud, not the developing secular sciences and arts, was the foundation of <u>all</u> education in these communities. During the medieval period "Ashkenazi Jewry was somewhat monolithic,"[15] and this is apparent in its approach to education. For the Ashkenazi communities continued solely to develop the study of Talmud.

> Unlike the Sephardic Jews, the Ashkenazim were isolated from their neighbors, by edict and also by preference. In their centers of learning, traditional talmudism remained 'uncontaminated' by non-Jewish culture. There was no place in their writings for worldly poetry and philosophy, but only for heavy volumes of rabbinical commentary and discussion. All life was oriented toward

> rigorous fulfillment of the commandments, reported in the Torah and expounded in the Talmud. No detail was too trivial to have a root in some religious prescription; the word of G-d resounded through every act of daily life.[16]

This situation continued almost completely unchanged until Wessely's time.

The curricula and the pedagogy used in the schools of the Middle Ages were approximately the same as in the earlier periods. During the eighth and ninth centuries in Babylonia the intent of the curricula was toward involvement in Jewish life. "The elementary school's chief aim was to prepare the boy for participation in the synagogue service. The ability to read was the first objective...."[17] Teachers still used repetition and memorization as the basis for learning. The basic Jewish curriculum, one graded by natural age, was a progression from Torah to Mishnah and then to Gemara. Within the framework of these three subjects Ashkenazim and Sephardim received the fundamental education that allowed involvement in Jewish life. The extent of the Jew's dispersion motivated the curricula to also provide the kind of education that would maintain some form of community among the people. This resulted in uniform religious practices implying a unity of the Jewish people.

Jewish learning could be maintained with only the Hebrew language, but secular studies required knowledge of the vernacular. For the Sephardim the knowledge of Arabic was essential for any worldly venture. "Judah ibn Tibbon (1120-1190), in his testament to his son, stated that 'as you know, the great men of our people did not achieve their high position except through their knowledge of Arabic.'"[18] No similar need for the vernacular

was felt in the Ashkenazi school. "The Ashkenazim banished all foreign languages from their literature, which was written only in Hebrew, the language of the Bible. For everyday use, Yiddish became their language and it has remained theirs through years of migration and change."[19] This language difference was reflected in the respective scholars of the period. The Sephardim produced poets, philosophers, and scientists in areas dependent upon secular studies in Arabic. The Ashkenazim produced the great commentators, Rashi and the Baale Tosafot, as well as some early codifications of the Law, all reflecting the unified thrust of Jewish studies in these communities. With this understanding of the developments of the medieval period, we can now approach the period just preceding Wessely.

In the late medieval period (16th-18th centuries) the Jewish educational system of Ashkenazi Jewry was fully developed and extensive, but it remained isolated. For the Ashkenazim continued to live as they had for centuries before in closed autonomous communities, almost completely shut off from the outside world. It should again be noted that this was both forced and voluntary segregation. The influence of this segregation on European Jews between the 16th and 18th centuries produced very little exposure to secular education. "In considering the range of studies in the Jewish schools during our period (16th-18th centuries), it must be borne in mind that the secular school was inaccessible to the Jewish child, since in Christian countries education of any kind was confessional. In consequence, the subjects he studied were all related specifically to Jewish learning, extending from Aleph Bet to the Talmud with all its commentaries."[20] For the mastery of this knowledge there were various levels of hadarim, Talmud Torahs (for those who could not afford heder) and yeshivot for advanced students.

All facets of this Jewish education were controlled by the kehillah and the local rabbinate. If one couples this autonomous, insulated rule with a Christian community that is closed to the Jew, then one can understand the basis of Jewish educational philosophy. The exclusive nature of Jewish education isolated the Jew from the outside secular world. "These schools, though they taught some elementary arithmetic and the reading and writing of Judeo-German, were otherwise devoted exclusively to religious subject matter."[21] The absence of secular subjects was basic to Wessely's concern, but his criticism of the heder included other factors as well.

The heder was the center of education for most people. Lilenthal described one of the hadarim in Vilna: "All [the teachers] were teaching at once, so that the noise and confusion made by the teachers and pupils were insufferable."[22] The physical size and quality of the facility was also lacking, but this criticism could be cited against all educational facilities in this period. The heder system in Poland and Galicia, for example, educated the child from age three to thirteen. There were three stages: elementary heder, Humosh heder, and Talmud heder. Each had its particular goal, but all of them taught only the essential religious subjects. After completing the Talmud heder, the student, if able, continued to the yeshiva, which was only concerned with Talmud and its commentaries. This system had long ceased to be subject to reevaluation, so that by the time of Wessely, the heder system of education was not only rigidly talmudic but also educationally insufficient in the general preparation of the child. "The heder lacked homogenity, gradation of study, and failed to provide for those children who had neither the capacity nor inclination for Talmud study."[23]

The same failure to separate the students into viable groups was also present in general education at this time. We will see later that reforms in this area directly motivated Wessely to more properly grade students in Jewish schools. Further, there was a lack of curricular integration between the hadarim, even sometimes within the same heder. Each teacher followed his own plan and often this meant some areas were lacking. For instance, not every child completed the Torah, for it was taught according to the sidrah and often the complete portion was not taught or there was no reinforcement. "Not every part of the Sidrah was studied but only such portions as the child could learn well in one week, even if it was only a single chapter. The aim was to develop general familiarity with this source and an extensive Hebrew vocabulary, rather than teach grammar or history or interpretation of the Bible."[24] Hence, the Bible was for some a medium for learning Hebrew, since as a language, Hebrew was not included in the curriculum. "The curriculum was strictly Jewish. Only in a few rare cases was a smattering of arithmetic included. The Hebrew language and grammar, as well as Bible, were neglected. Mishna, too, was omitted to a large extent. Talmudic study was the order of the day...."[25] The method used for learning Talmud was rote memorization, and rapid mechanical reading. "It /Talmud/ was taught, in parrot-like fashion, to every child from the earliest age, even though the entire subject, in many instances was above the child's level of comprehension."[26] Rote learning was not unique to the study of Talmud; for on the lowest level of the heder, "the process of learning is the endless repetition of unfamiliar

Hebrew words, memorizing each letter, each syllable, the rote meaning of each word, translated separately without reference to grammar or derivation. Real understanding of the text is left for later."[27] This rigid pedagogy which sought knowledge without understanding is evaluated by Jacob Katz:

> By any rational criterion, this method of teaching must be considered unsatisfactory. Despite the considerable public attention paid to education, some persons remained unable to read, write or even sign their names. But even those who did absorb the knowledge which the heder was in position to transmit were equipped with formal achievements of an unquestionably fragmentary nature.[28]

A prime factor in the deficiency of pedagogy and curriculum was the quality of the teacher in the hadarim. Although there were exceptions, the melamed in central and eastern Europe in general did not have the competence to teach. "...In essence, heder education was entrusted to teachers who were not distinguished, either by their knowledge or their formal preparation for the task."[29] Of a later period Zborowski notes: "The dardeki melamed /elementary teacher/, who lives by selling what should be given, is not even a learned man. If he were, he would be a rabbi or a teacher of advanced students."[30] It is true that yeshiva graduates or more learned men taught in the upper levels of heder and in yeshivot. Since more often than not the melamdim were from countries other than the ones in which they taught and were unable to reside in them permanently, there was always a fluctuation in faculty. Aside from teacher incompetence and frequent change of teachers, students were sometimes plagued by an atmosphere of fear generated by their instructors. "Memories of childhood often include accounts of the melamed's punishments - a field in which he usually showed

more energy and enterprise than in the field of letters."[31] Often this system of corporal punishment was used to coerce the children to recite or memorize better. But these inadequacies in the heder system of Ashkenazi Europe never prevented the aim of Jewish education from being realized, the aim being the continuation of talmudic scholarship.

The heart of the heder and the yeshiva was the Talmud. Everything else, religious and secular, was pushed aside and the student was expected to pick it up on his own or with a private tutor. "The study of Talmud, which occupied so much of the time of the heder and the yeshiva, was not a means to an end but an end in itself."[32] Talmud precluded the study of secular areas because it provided a direction and fulfillment for every Jew's life; hence the teacher did all he could to guide the student to the Talmud. "The teacher's aim was to hasten the child on to Talmud as quickly as possible mainly to please the parents and consequently most of the other subjects were lightly touched upon or ignored altogether."[33] The main object was ultimately to have the student in the yeshiva study the Talmud by himself. The heder and yeshiva in their maintenance of the Talmud's hegemony, reflected the Jew's way of life in the ghetto. "In the enclosed life of the ghetto there was little need of anything outside of distinctive Jewish learning."[34] Talmudic studies began at age seven or eight and for the scholar continued the rest of his life. The Talmud became for the Jew of the ghetto his guide for both his holy and profane existence. Since external pressures prevented him from participating in the outside Christian society, the Jew voluntarily stayed within his world of the Law and strict religious life. The removal of the realm of study from reality is indicated by a

method of learning, called pilpul, developed by students and teachers. With the beginning of the sixteenth century this casuistic logic of argumentation allowed scholars to perform mental gymnastics in hilukim (dialectical talmudic discourses) as an exercise in talmudic expertise. Some scholars admitted that little if any practical value was derived from this, yet minds were sharpened for the continued study of Talmud.

Besides the basic characteristic of studying the Law, one finds an even closer relationship between Jewish education and the family and its practices at this time. The aims of the entire Jewish society and its values were reflected in the heder system of this period: "...The institutions of education present the values of society in their purest form in addressing themselves to the rising generation."[35] The family a microcosm of society synthesized the facts into a way of life. "Its /the family's/ educational influence was dependent on the breadth of the social base...the structure of the family was similar to that of society."[36] Thus if the family's or society's way of life stressed the importance of every jot and tittle of Rabbinic law, then the heder reflected this pattern in its curriculum. Katz concludes, "The heder supplemented the knowledge of tradition which the child absorbed from the direct social channels (the family, the synagogue, the street...)."[37] As in the previous periods of Jewish history discussed, education and daily life tended to dovetail if not completely duplicate one another. "The whole life in the heder was religiously Jewish. The child learned in heder what he had to do at home or in the synagogue and, at times, life in heder was but a reflection of these institutions."[38]

There are two basic conclusions that can be drawn from this historical survey of Jewish education before Wessely. First, the essence of Jewish education lay within the limits of the Law, in the Torah and the Talmud. By the time of Wessely, the Ashkenazim of central and eastern Europe maintained an elaborate system of hadarim in which the curricula were directed to Talmud. In contrast, the Sephardi curricula, while giving a central role to Jewish learning, reflected a broader goal in education and encouraged secular subjects that were excluded in the Ashkenazi curricula. Second, education served to perpetuate a particular way of life. The family and the heder were tightly interwoven. The harmony between the way of life and education was maintained as long as Jews lived in their own closed-off communities; but as emancipation approached this was no longer true. As the pressure of a new age mounted and ghetto life changed, some began to feel that a shift was called for in educational goals and methods. It became desirable to shift from a rigid heder system to some mean between religious and secular education. Understanding the nature of the traditional Jewish educational goals and methods as they developed historically is necessary background for an analysis of the early Enlightenment's influence on Jewish educational philosophy.

Chapter II

The Enlightenment and Its Influence on Education

The philosophical mood of the eighteenth century is best represented by the movement termed Enlightenment. The Aufklärung of Germany, which carried the banner of reason against the superstitions and conservative theologies of previous centuries, had its counterparts in England and France. In the seventeenth century in England John Locke stressed rationalism. In the late eighteenth century in France Rousseau traced the origins of rationalism to the state of nature. The Enlightenment awakened man's reason so that past beliefs were critically reevaluated. It was an age in which the state was called upon to function for man rather than man for the state. This utilitarian political philosophy focused on the effectiveness of man's actions; hence, man's preparation to live in the world became important; and thus, the Enlightenment was very concerned with the role of education:

> The philosophy of the Enlightenment insisted on man's essential autonomy, man is responsible to himself, to his own rational interests, to his self-development, and, by an inescapable extension, to the welfare of his fellow man. For the philosophers man was not a sinner, at least not by nature...the individual may hope for improvement, through his own efforts - through education....[1]

If man needed improvement and the state was dependent upon his ability to reach his highest potential, then education played an essential political as well as philosophical role in the Enlightenment. "Whatever the government is, such are the schools. Education should be an integral part of the state for two reasons; it shapes it, and it is shaped by it."[2] Education

in the Enlightenment also had power: the power to provide the state with good citizens, who had the necessary rational knowledge to work effectively for their own welfare as well as that of others. This basic tenet of the Enlightenment influenced those men who attempted sweeping reforms of Europe's educational systems.

There was a need for reforms in general education, since schools did not provide students with the essentials necessary to live in an enlightened society. The schools were conservative institutions that maintained the status quo of previous centuries without preparing students for their immediate real world. "What he /the student/ had learned during his brief scholastic career bore little, if any, relationship to the kind of life he would lead in society...."[3] Two prominent philosophers of the French Enlightenment evaluated the state of education as follows:

> The French curriculum, he (Diderot) thought, produced graduates who are thoroughly tired, thoroughly bored, thoroughly chastened, and thoroughly ignorant...Voltaire summed up these charges...about the educational standard in his day. "I learned Latin and nonsense."[4]

Besides schools providing the "nonsense" of theology, there were poor teachers and ungraded non-structured classrooms:

> Teachers, either poorly prepared or totally unfit for the classroom, accepted teaching positions when they could find nothing else to do or accepted their appointment and tried to teach besides engaging in their regular occupation or trade...classes were ungraded; boys and girls - if girls went to school at all - were herded into the same schoolroom, and studied whatever the teacher happened to be able to teach. Neither a student's maturity nor his scholastic achievement counted...[5]

The critical tenor of the Enlightenment pointed up these insufficiencies in education and proposed a new set of goals. Education was to be no longer

considered a matter of social refinement for gentlemen only, but rather a means of producing good citizens with sound minds. "It should encourage the free development of the pupil's most promising faculties, and not confine them in a strait jacket."[6] Education became the medium for a relevant preparation for life. The Enlightenment suggested reforms in education that took the school room out of the Middle Ages.

The need for sweeping reform in the general educational systems of the eighteenth century was not a unique need. The atmosphere of reform had an influence on the corresponding Jewish educational system. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the state of Jewish education (the heder system) was no better in terms of curricular structure and teachers. Thus we shall find elements of the Enlightenment--relevance, graded pedagogy, and refinement of language--in the reforms of Wessely. The Enlightenment concept of education during this period gave Wessely some of the impetus to criticize Jewish schools. The following discussion of educational philosophies and reforms presents some points of reference for an understanding of Wessely and his relationship to educational reform in the Enlightenment.

Three philosophers best represent the kind of educational philosophy that influenced Wessely. John Locke (1632-1704), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788) all show their intense concern for the present status versus the potential of education in an age of reason. Locke began the battle for educational reform in his essay Some Thought Concerning Education. Locke was one of the first to argue for relevancy in the curriculum, and to urge education for future careers rather than the study of

polished classical Latin texts. Further, he criticized the age-old pedagogy of the schools. "Locke denounced the traditional method of teaching by rote, and thought it wholly inappropriate to beat children..."[7] He argued for reforms in education under the aegis of rationalism, thus making corporal punishment and memorization the antithesis of man's aim in education. Nearly a century later Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher, took up the fight for better schools in his essay Education. Kant saw education as the untapped well of man's future perfection. Education should improve man's life with his fellow man. "The basis of a scheme of education must be cosmopolitan... It is through good education that all the good in the world arises."[8] Kant's vision of education stressed the destiny of man, not his immediate future. For Kant, the lack of uniformity in education resulted in man's sorrowful disunited state of existence. He wanted a system to educate men to fulfill their common natural potentials, "for with education is involved the great secret of the perfection of human nature."[9] The last philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, represents the French Enlightenment. Rousseau was a naturalist and in his famous work Emile he discussed a naturalistic educational philosophy. For Rousseau there was a direct correlation between the status of education and the status of society; hence, educational reform became political reform:

> Rousseau approached the issue of educational reform from the point of view of social theory, he began in Emile, to remold society by remolding the individual. His aim of education was to make the person a unit, a whole being, capable of finding himself in society.[10]

This philosophy of naturalism stressed man's need for a natural, unhindered development of skills and knowledge. Any application of Rousseau's educational concepts took into consideration the student's natural ability and the relationship established between pupil and teacher. The critical aspects of education proposed by these thinkers were reflected in the actual reforms of education proposed and attempted in the eighteenth century.

The two educators who most influenced Wessely were Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724-1790) and John Henry Pestalozzi (1746-1827). Both of these gentlemen will receive more attention in a later chapter dealing with the specific influences on Wessely's educational reforms. They not only wrote about pedagogy during the Enlightenment but used its theories in their classrooms. Basedow was the German educator who brought to actuality the educational philosophies of Locke and Rousseau. In his basic pedagogical formulation, Elementarwerk, Basedow provided a handbook for teaching and caring for children. In 1774 he completed this work of four parts, and it quickly became a landmark in Enlightenment educational theory. Basedow's concept of progressive education, which stressed the use of the vernacular rather than Latin, was partially a product of his own enlightened education. In 1774 after his Elementarwerk received popular support, Basedow, unable to receive royal support for a special school, opened his Philanthropinum in Dessau.

Basically, he developed the Philanthropinum in order to have an opportunity to apply his theories. It was a strictly non-denominational boarding school for boys and girls. Basedow wanted his Philanthropinum to cultivate the students' love for all humanity. "The objective of education

must be to educate...a European, whose life will be as blameless, useful, and as contented as can be brought about through education."[11] Basedow's pedagogy was radical in many ways; for instance, he had children play games rather than memorize. In order to learn, children had to experience, so Basedow used "object lessons" to convey concepts. He graded all classes according to ability and fixed a curriculum that was followed throughout all grades. A product of the Enlightenment's Deism, he fought against the church's domination of the school system. Basedow's Dessau Philanthropinum directly influenced Wessely but we shall wait for a detailed comparison of the two educators.

The other great educator, representative of the Enlightenment's educational reform, was John Henry Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator. Pestalozzi furthered the educator's psychological concern for the pupil. He was one of the first men to propose schooling for the very poor as social reform. He was influenced by the Enlightenment and soon after he left home, he abandoned his family's Reformation piety for a view of life more compatible with naturalism.

The first and foremost aim of education for Pestalozzi was the perfection of mankind:

> Pestalozzi was certain that by this time education would have provided the means of giving the right experiences, the right training and environment, to produce the right kind of citizen for the state. Both of Pestalozzi's chief goals - improving the condition of the individual man and improving society by the cumulative bettering of members of society - would be achieved by education.[12]

Pestalozzi pursued these goals in his educational work, How Gertrude Teaches

a handbook of fourteen letters published in 1801, and in his Institute of Education. More important than anything else was Pestalozzi's desire for universal education. His work with the poor proved to him that even seemingly untalented children responded to love and could learn a great deal if there was concern on the part of the teacher.

The democratic ramifications of educational theories and practices like these of Basedow and Pestalozzi were immense. Not only had they reformed educational structures but they had also established education as a powerful medium in the emancipation of all underprivileged peoples and classes. Through the schools that were created by the philosophers came people who were educated and prepared to live in the real world. The movement stimulated a political universalism -- a universalism that precipitated a unique Jewish response within the weakening ghetto walls. That Jewish response was the Haskalah:

> The Haskalah thus marked the penetration of a new set of values in Jewish life which dictated that the Jew free himself from his unnatural existence and return to the world of reality.[13]

Generally speaking the Haskalah borrowed directly from the Enlightenment both "its admiration for reason" and "its devotion to the humanitarian ideal of the brotherhood of man." Its third basic concern was directed specifically to the Jewish situation in "its desire to restore the Jewish people to the world of reality."[14] Two indications of this transition to a world of reality were the figure of Moses Mendelssohn and the role of education in the Haskalah.

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) was the first important personality to

bridge the ghetto and the outside world. Mendelssohn showed how a Jew could remain faithful to Judaism yet be welcomed into Berlin's great intellectual circles. He was a philosopher in the strain of a Maimonides and an accomplished German writer. Mendelssohn, who was sometimes called "the Jewish Plato," was the spiritual and intellectual progenitor of the Haskalah. He was a representative not only of the great cultural surge of the Enlightenment but also of the new social openness. His relationship with the great German playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing reflected the new relationship that was possible between Jew and non-Jew. Lessing was a great influence on Mendelssohn. "Through his friend, who by reason of a genial, sympathetic nature exerted great attraction upon talented men, Mendelssohn was introduced into his circle, learned the forms of society, and threw off the awkwardness which was the stamp of the Ghetto."[15] Mendelssohn, responding to Lessing, represents a fine example of Enlightenment toleration - a love for humanity. In his writings he tried to synthesize the two worlds in which he lived, Jewish and German. His ties to Judaism were unbreakable, as manifest in the Lavater controversy; yet his deftness and tact in dealing with the Christian world made him a universal man. So much so did Mendelssohn transcend the gap between the ghetto and Berlin cultural society that Lessing modeled the main character in his famous didactic play "Nathan the Wise" on his Jewish friend, Mendelssohn. Lessing showed that religious differences were not important in an age of reason. Lessing and Mendelssohn's philosophical and spiritual relationship is paradigmatic of the Enlightenment's universal tenor.

A second important aspect of the Haskalah found in the transition from the ghetto to the outside world, was the reevaluated role of education. "The Maskilim well realized that the implementation of their ideas would not become feasible unless a new school system was to disseminate them among the young."[16] Education was the most important medium for breaking down the old values and replacing them with new ones. The outside world of the Enlightenment was creating radical changes in education, changes that resulted in socially relevant curricula and an attitude of universalism:

> It was in the field of education that an open clash first took place between the old and new. In non-Jewish society an educational philosophy was now being expounded which advocated a uniform education of all religions. This was put into practice in the philanthropic pedagogic trend in places as the school of Basedow in Dessau, where children of different religions were taught side by side.[17]

Hence, the Haskalah confronted both an educational philosophy of universalism and reformed curricula. The Maskilim's response to the new curricula of relevancy was to stress the importance of secular subjects. Through secular subjects the Maskilim hoped to educate a generation that would be economically productive and not starkly different from Gentiles. "The Maskilim believed that the only way to avoid the tragic results of fanaticism in the future was through the dissemination of secular learning."[18] A specific secular area that was to become the battleground in the future was the teaching of the vernacular language. The Jews spoke Yiddish, a mixture of Hebrew, Polish, and German, which separated them from the general community. "It [Yiddish] was unintelligible to the German speaking gentile. The Jews were scarcely more able to understand German."[19] The Jewish school system

that taught only in Yiddish and only Jewish subjects was confronted by the forces of the Enlightenment. It was at this point that Wessely entered the cause for educational reforms in Jewish education.

The immediate impetus for Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet however, was the political toleration that corresponded with the Enlightenment. The eighteenth century not only strove toward an age of reason and naturalism but also political tolerance. This was the century of enlightened despots and revolutions for democracy. The role of education, as mentioned above, played a central part in the preparation of "good citizens" that would live in these enlightened societies. The segregation of the Jew in his ghetto world was questioned, and the educational philosophy of the Enlightenment was a primary factor in this reevaluation:

> Contemporary pedagogic thought became even more significant than... general philosophical ideas. The separate ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Campe [director of the Dessau Philanthropinum], Basedow, and Kant all quickened the desire to liberate the most oppressed and abased section of the population from its segregated status and through education and culture, guide it to "humanity."[20]

There is expressed the relationship between education and the emancipation, and it brings us to the immediate political stimulus to Wessely, Joseph II's Edicts of Toleration.

Chapter III

The Role of Education in the Beginnings of Emancipation and the Edicts of Toleration

The philosophical spirit of the Enlightenment gave birth to a political egalitarianism; a new sense of tolerance emerged from the philosophical tracts of the eighteenth century. During the last quarter of this century America and France revolted against an old-world view of man and his relationship with his government. The egalitarian outlook of the Enlightenment had its ramifications in the political realm producing a demand for natural rights, equal opportunities, and tolerance. European Jewry was permanently changed during this period. Jews, who had lived under the oppression of either the church or harsh secular rulers, were now talking of emancipation, civil equality; the age of reason had found receptive ears in the ghettoes. A similar call for religious and social equality for Jews was heard in the courts of Europe's rulers. These enlightened men realized that no amount of civil reform could be complete without confronting the problem of the status of the Jews.

In addition to the philosophical motivations, there were economic ones as well. The Enlightenment had a utilitarian philosophy about people and the economy of the state; hence, Jews should be emancipated because they could help the state economically. For instance, there are some convincing arguments that the emerging trend of mercantilism in Germany encouraged the settlement and emancipation of the Jews.[1] Jews were needed to further this new kind of economy because they were merchants and some had capital and hence, it was the reasonable function of the state to insure its economic prosperity by granting certain equalities to the Jews. An extension

of this theory is that the impetus and ultimate reality of emancipation is solely based on the development of capitalism. The Jews were emancipated in response to a direct need of the capitalist economic system of nineteenth century Europe. Professor Rivkin argues, "Capitalism and capitalism alone emancipated the Jews."[2] His analysis concludes that such an economy requires freedom "to pursue profits" and this in turn requires personal freedom. Thus, the emerging economic systems of the late eighteenth century produced free-thinkers who saw profit and wealth as the result of a free society. Whether or not Professor Rivkin's hypothesis is absolutely correct is irrelevant; the point is that definite economic pressures further catalyzed the process of reevaluating the status of Jews. If the Jews could be "improved" and the economy benefit thereby, then the state was obligated to educate them and open economic opportunities to them. The economic function of the Jews is essential in understanding political attitude toward the Jews.

An analysis of the problem produced the understanding that the Jews could become useful members of the state. Emancipation became a natural function of the Enlightenment. The view of the Jew was radically changed because of the tolerance of the age; the distortions of the Jew's economic practices and his anti-social demeanor would be reduced en-route to his emancipation:

> The supposed characteristics with which the Jews were reproached, such as their alleged greed, desire for litigation, religious fanaticism, "unsocial separation from the rest of mankind" were to be eradicated by the Enlightenment; they were to become a respected part of mankind by liberation from the chains of orthodoxy and the Talmud.[3]

Emancipation was to be attained by the process of disseminating the Enlightenment through education. With the proper education Jews would be freed from the particularistic mentality that separated them from the surrounding gentile community. Very simply put, the Jews needed "improvement" before emancipation was merited, and this was accepted as a valid argument.

Education became the center of the early Haskalah's battle, for the Maskilim knew that only by reforming education was there a chance for civil emancipation. The enlightened gentiles who argued on behalf of the Jews' cause also tried to convince their Jewish friends that education was the key that would open the ghetto door:

> The enlighteners maintained that the spiritual emancipation had to precede the civil emancipation. They hoped that if Jews would renounce their segregation and isolation and adopt the language and general education of the country, the entire social and legal status of the Jewish people was bound to improve radically.[4]

It thus seemed that Jews had to participate in their own emancipation; emancipation was offered, but it was an offer of social acceptance based on conditions.

The first important argument in favor of Jewish emancipation was written by a civil servant in the Prussian government, who respected the ideals of the Enlightenment and the brilliance of Mendelssohn. Christian Wilhelm Dohm gave Western Europe its first manifesto on the "Jewish question." Dohm's "Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews" is an excellent example of an Enlightenment rationale for Jewish emancipation and the role of education in that emancipation. Dohm set out to convince the government that the Jews, who lived within the state's boundaries, were

useful. He systematically went through a historical analysis of the Jew's position economically and the merit that Jews had brought to previous societies. Dohm argued that the general welfare of the state depended upon properly using the resource of its citizens. In other words, it was necessary to make a resource like the Jews a recognized group of citizens in order to benefit from them. His critique of the theory which held that the Jews' lack of business scruples was inherent stressed the possibility of improvement. Dohm did not deny the undesirable role that Jews had played in European societies; he merely justified their actions by blaming historical situations:

> Everything the Jews are blamed for is caused by the political condition under which they now live, and any other group of men under such conditions, would be guilty of identical errors. For those common traits of thought, opinions and passions which are found in the majority of people belonging to one nation and which are called its individual character, are not unchangeable and distinctive qualities stamping them as a unique modification of human nature.[5]

Dohm argued that the emancipation of the Jews was a cure for the disease which infected them. The cause was "Oppression and restricted occupation;" hence, social equality would vastly improve the Jews and their functional worth to the society. Dohm then proceeded to propose nine specific actions that would emancipate and simultaneously improve the Jews.

Dohm proposed that Jews be given equal rights and opportunities as all other citizens. He limited the freedom of opportunity to those areas that would facilitate improvement of the Jew's character. He further agreed with the regulations that required the Jews to use only the vernacular in business, for their Judeo-German language was to become one of the central

issues in the Haskalah and emancipation movements in the coming years. Most importantly, Dohm thought it was the society's obligation to properly educate and enlighten the Jews:

> It should be a special endeavor of a wise government to care for the moral education and enlightenment of the Jews, in order to make at least the coming generations more receptive to a milder treatment and the enjoyment of all advantages of our society. The state should not look further into their religious education than would perhaps be necessary to prevent the teaching of anti-social opinions against men of other persuasions.[6]

Education was fundamental to Dohm's position that the Jews could be improved so that they might add to the prosperity and welfare of the state. Dohm, like many of the enlightened, saw the Jews bound by the shackles of a rigid ceremonial law, obscure Rabbinical decrees, and a language that was intelligible only within the confines of Jewish society. He and his fellow liberals sincerely wanted to free the Jews from the yoke history had placed upon them, but in order to accomplish this emancipation a radical change was necessary because of the nature of Jewish learning:

> The basis of all intellectual existence was still the science of the Talmud, guarded by the rabbis and scholars, studied and pondered over day after day, taught in the talmudic academies and transmitted to the youths. The Talmud was for the Jews school and university, Weltanschauung and science, a mental system and innermost personal experiences.[7]

With the proposals of Dohm and the edicts that would soon follow, the role of the Talmud had to be reevaluated. Could the Talmud give the Jew all he needed to know if he was to go out into the general community? Before the call for emancipation, the Talmud had prepared Jews for positions solely within the kehilah as teachers, slaughters, scribes, judges,or rabbis. Now,

with the opening of the ghetto doors to general occupations, the Jews' educational system seemed lacking; thus, if emancipation was to become a reality the older heder system had to be reformed. "It is important...to remember that every sound and comprehensive plan for Jewish amelioration during the past century[19th] has included educational reforms, and instruction in the vernacular as essential elements."[8] Basic reforms in Jewish education meant that emancipation demanded a change in the Jew. He could still be a Jew, but a different Jew. No longer isolated by language or a differentiating religious education, the Jew would be expected to be a worthy and loyal acculturated citizen.

The most far-reaching measures in this regard were the Edicts of Toleration extended by Joseph II, the Emperor of Austro-Hungary. These edicts continued from 1781 through 1782 and were heralded as some of the most important pieces of social legislation to come from an enlightened despot. Joseph radically changed the station of the Jews in his Empire. His mother, Empress Maria Theresa, had hated Jews; it had taken great pressure to prevent her from expelling all the Jews from Bohemia. She had said, "I know of no greater pest to the state than this [Jewish] nation."[9] Her son Joseph reversed his mother's thinking and pursued a liberal enlightened policy of religious tolerance. "He regarded the Jew as a human being having the same spiritual and moral predispositions as Christians had."[10] Emperor Joseph was paradigmatic of the Enlightenment; he was influenced by the philosophies of Locke and Diderot. As a man of the Enlightenment, toleration of all of his subjects was fundamental. For Joseph the state was obligated to act in

a way which reflected the highest virtues of his age. "The men of the Enlightenment believed that the destruction of the barriers of privilege, ignorance and superstition would lead to the galvanization of the latent energies of the state. The happiness of the individual citizens and the power to the state were seen to be interdependent."[11] Joseph saw the state as the foundation for enlightened morality and tolerance, and the most efficient means to establish this morality was through education. He shared the belief with the majority of the enlightened in society that education was the key to a new life. "A properly organized educational system would lead men out of the medieval gloom of prejudice and superstition into the sunny pastures of enlightenment."[12]

On October 18, 1781, Emperor Joseph II took what he felt were the first steps to opening the "sunny pastures" to the Jews. He issued a series of edicts which freed the Jews from the oppressive restrictions of earlier generations. His first act was to nullify the decree that required the 360,000 Jews in the Hapsburg empire to wear the badge of Jewish identification on their clothing. The state was now officially tolerant of the Jews' right to worship like all other citizens. Certain professions, previously prohibited, were now open to Jews. Most significant for our discussions were his edicts concerning the role of education. Jews were free to go to any school and university, even a Christian one. Jews could also found their own schools in order to educate their children. For the first time in modern European history, Jews were encouraged to take advantage of secular education. Joseph added one restrictive element to these sweeping

reforms in education. He stipulated that German must be added to all curricula in Jewish schools; that meant teaching could not be done in the familiar Yiddish. Thus Joseph did not interfere with the "religious education" of the Jews, but he did dictate certain aspects of the secular curriculum of the Jewish schools. Before more specifically considering the results of the edicts, it will be worthwhile to examine the intent of Joseph in issuing them.

Joseph II was interested in establishing a unitary state; though an enlightened state, the Hapsburg empire was to reflect the single-mindedness of its emperor. "The Emperor's great aim was to create a uniform state with right-thinking subjects. Hence his schools were formalized and rigid. Joseph did not want thinkers or free spirits; he wished to have disciplined subjects and obedient soldiers."[13] This purpose of unity and single-minded thinking extended into the rationale for the Edicts of Toleration. Since Joseph wanted a functional state, "...in order to render the members of the Jewish nation more useful for the state," it was necessary to grant them education and to extend the circle of their occupations.[14] Joseph also wanted to use education to unite the state. Although differing groups would still exist, like the Jews and Protestants, Joseph's decree requiring German in the curriculum in all "normal" schools was intended to blur distinctions. Thus Joseph's intent, although humanitarian in scope, was more utilitarian in essence. By his edicts he made the Jews useful as well as less obvious. Understanding this general intent, we can now examine the specifics of the edicts and their most immediate results.

Joseph II tried to follow the advice given by the French philosopher Rousseau. In 1771 Rousseau had written to the Polish government that education was the best means of directing the tastes, souls, and minds of the people. In Joseph's attempt to glorify the German language and culture, he opened public schools to groups previously forbidden entry to them. The decree on education went beyond the permission to attend; it stipulated that such schooling was mandatory. Not only was public school attendance required, but Jews were required to establish these schools themselves or send their children to Christian schools. For Jewish students, "study only lasted for four hours a day in these (German-Jewish) schools, as the pupils also attended heder or Talmud-torah."[15] Hence, the kehilot of Moravia and Bohemia now had the task of supporting the general schools as well as those of their own religious school system. The Kehilla used its own funds and the government assisted "...by allocating a share of the special fees (marriage/minyan payments) for this purpose."[16]

In addition to the mandatory education edicts, there was another edict requiring the use of the German language in all schools. This meant the end of Yiddish and Hebrew in any public fashion. Joseph made German the official state language and required all ethnic groups, Jews, Hungarians, Bohemians, and Walloons to be bound by this edict. In order to immediately implement this decree, the Emperor allowed for a two year period before disallowing any language but German in contracts, accounting books, or legal matters. Jews who refused to follow this edict, were liable to nullification of their business or legal documents. Although the decrees on the

German language and mandatory secular education were seemingly restrictive in nature, they can also be understood as important stimuli to immediate emancipation. "The importance of such instruction in the vernacular, as a factor in the actual emancipation of the Jews and their preparation for equal civil rights in the countries of their residence, cannot be exaggerated ...."[17] Other historians agree that the required language change provided the opportunity the Jews needed to end their isolation.[18]

These were not the only edicts that Joseph promulgated which affected the Jews. As was mentioned earlier, one of the motivating factors for the tolerance of the Jews was their economic usefulness. In the end of seventeenth century Jews were readmitted to certain areas of Prussia "for purely economic reasons: 'the promotion of trade and commerce.'"[19] It was an accepted fact of political reality that religious equality was essential "for the political and economic interests of the state..."[20] After the specific edicts of Joseph II were issued, the economic situation of the Jews improved and thus the prosperity of the state was proportionately increased. "Of fifty-eight Bohemian textile factories, fifteen were in Jewish hands."[21] Joseph gave wealthy Jews exceptional freedom in the growing economic prosperity of the state. These Jews were "the 'Imperial and Royal Privileged Merchants.' The privilege was extended to them only if they could satisfactorily show that they were worth at least 30,000 florins."[22] Hence, Joseph was shrewdly aware of what the Jews could do to help increase the wealth of his empire. In so much as the Jews were historically known as ingenious merchants and had many contacts in commerce, the new equality resulted in growth of the state's economy.

Joseph, although enlightened, was less than benevolent in his later decrees to the Jewish population. Whereas the mandatory nature of the education and language edicts indicated an assimilating tendency, the decrees that followed in the years 1785-1788 were overtly aimed at destroying the distinctive quality of the Jews and converting them to Christianity. In 1785 the Emperor forbade the publication of any Jewish books in the vernacular, Yiddish, or Hebrew, which contained any material dealing with the exorcism of the devil. Joseph felt that he was helping the Jews prevent a "postponement of education and enlightenment" because of their medieval follies and devils.[23] This restrictive measure on freedom of the press and religious freedom was vastly different from the liberalizations of 1781. In 1787 Joseph turned the matter of language to its final extreme in the Imperial Edict Concerning Jewish Names. "Article four of this edict decreed that all birth, marriage and death records be kept in German."[24]

Joseph II felt that if the Jew was to be emancipated then he must be treated equally in all matters. "'The Jew as man and citizen should be under the same obligations as others. It will not be an insult to his religion when he is free to eat what he wishes and to do on Sabbath what necessity demands that a Christian do on Sunday'...For the first time in history Jews were compelled to serve in a Christian army."[25] As in the case of public education and the German language, so military service, too, was mandatory. This was still another means of unifying his state and of assimilating the Jews. Both Jews and Christians opposed the decree on military service. The Jewish groups protested on the basis that such service would entail violating religious laws and hence, it was assimilationist. The

The Christians opposed it because the army would be integrated and it was a disgrace to serve with Jews. However, not all were opposed. The Maskilim tenaciously defended the obligation to serve in the army as "a holy duty to be performed rather than evaded."[26] For the Maskilim the army did not assimilate; it equalized. Although the question of military service was a point of great discussion in Haskalah literature, it is accepted historically that the later decrees of Joseph, especially conscription, were aimed at the assimilation of the Jew:

> The fact that the military service at that time was only compulsory for serfs and the inhabitants of manorial towns, indisputably proved that the Emperor's sole purpose in adding the Jews to these categories was to accelerate their assimilation.[27]

Understanding that the intent of Joseph's Edicts of Toleration and his later edicts was restrictive and assimilationist is essential in properly evaluating the relationship between Joseph and Wessely. Such an evaluation, which would as a matter of course include the negative aspects of Joseph's reign, has been absent from the majority of the discussions used in this thesis dealing with Joseph and Wessely. Considering the overall result of Joseph's edicts as they affected the Jews will convey the degree to which his intentions were fulfilled.

When the edicts are taken as a unit, rather than as single decrees, Joseph's intent to Germanize his subjects becomes more obvious. The result of these edicts for the Jews was only seemingly emancipatory. That is to say, Joseph gave the Jews new liberties and removed old restrictions, but the cost of such liberalism was a degree of forced acculturation. "The

'Patent of Tolerance' and its later supplements contained a definite tendency to intrude into the spritual life of the Jewish communities, in order to indoctrinate it with the German, the 'Christian' culture."[28] The general thrust was to unify, to Germanize all the minorities through education, language, conscription, and culture. For the Jews this meant certain token equalities but without complete emancipation. The edicts on education opened the public schools, but also the secular world to Jews. Secular studies for the non-Maskil Ashkenazi Jew was an unwanted threat to his traditional life and caused many parents to protest this new freedom. "To overcome parental hostility, Joseph ordered that those who refused to send their children to the public schools pay a double education tax...."[29] The language edicts which forced German on the people as the only accepted means of universal discourse were bitterly opposed. Those who saw the vernacular as an avenue of assimilation could not understand why the Maskilim praised Joseph so highly in German poems. Although Jews could now worship freely, Joseph refused to allow the appointment of a rabbi in Vienna, because he saw rabbis as the conservative force which held all Jews in isolation. Joseph also realized that rabbis were opposed to his mandatory public schools and the use of the vernacular. The Jews who prospered economically were the wealthy few. Joseph had opened new doors of commerce and craftsmanship allowing Jewish merchants to advance. In contrast, "the broad masses of the Jewish population not only lacked elementary human rights, but were burdened with this additional duty [conscription]."[30] This obligatory army service was the harshest of all Joseph's edicts and the most bitterly

opposed by Jews as well as gentiles. Hence, the edicts taken as a whole can be seen as a planned program of royal intent to force, persuade, or educate Jews into the greater community. Understanding more fully the intent and result of the Edicts of Joseph II, we need to consider more specifically the reactions of Jews and non-Jews. It is this area that this entire discussion is really aimed, for Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve'emet is one of the Jewish reactions to the edicts.

Before turning to the Jewish reaction, and specifically to that of Wessely, it is relevant to consider the general Gentile reaction to these decrees. The Edicts of Toleration ended the Catholic hegemony in Austria; thus, Joseph's sweeping reforms, especially his acceptance of Jews, were distrusted as an assault against the Church. In fact, Catholic opposition prevented complete religious equality until 1861. "The Catholic population in the Austrian lands was violently anti-Jewish. Even Joseph hesitated for awhile to grant Jews toleration, fearing the fury of the pious."[31] In the beginning, the edicts found favor only among the upper wealthy and educated classes, because the people in these classes tended to be enlightened and open to the new mood of tolerance. An enlightened acceptance of Jews among the people was a far greater task. The masses still distrusted the Jews and the hatred, inbred over centuries, could not be quickly mitigated by Joseph. Shortly after the Edict of 1781, pamphlets and articles confronting the Jewish question became very popular:

> The titles of many of them indicate the nature of the contents. Some of these titles are: Thirty Pieces of Silver; About the Uselessness and Harmfulness of the Jews in the Kingdom of Bohemia; Rabbinism or a Collection of Talmudic Follies; The

Jewish Party-Man or An Answer to the Israelitish Apostolic Author of the Pamphlet about the Jews and Their Tolerance.[32]

There were other Christians however, who welcomed the new freedom given to Jews.

Prompted by economic freedoms and developments, the social relationships between Jews and Christians improved, primarily in the wealthy classes. After these relationships proved worthwhile economically, social acceptance of the Jew came to be reflected among the masses. More and more people grew to accept the Jew and the press began to praise help given to Jews and instances of worthy Jewish action. As a direct result of Joseph's edicts, "a minority of freedom-loving and progressive people welcomed it /tolerance toward the Jew/. Klopstock dedicated an ode to Joseph II..."[33] Gentile acceptance came slowly, but it did come.

Like those of the Gentiles, the Jews' reactions to the edicts were mixed. The majority, still under the control of orthodox rabbis, opposed the edicts. Jews were afraid "that the secular schools, would lead the young men away from the Talmud and that military service would impair their orthodoxy, making them goyim."[34] Many Jews harbored these fears and suspicions of Joseph's intent. An ironic example of negative Jewish reaction was Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn who believed in both the need for Jewish emancipation and Christian tolerance, "suspected that it /the edict/ was merely a political and financial maneuver on the part of the Emperor."[35] This reaction was based on his realization that Joseph's edicts were restrictive and mandatory and forced the Jews to acculturate. "He /Mendelssohn/ feared that behind the mask of toleration lay a different intention on the part of the Austrian

government: assimilation and eventual conversion."[36] Although this was not an atypical reaction -and Mendelssohn's apprehensions were not fanatical-- there were Jews who reacted favorably to Joseph's decrees.

Other than in the Galician area, the Jewish communities of Austria-Hungary generally accepted the edicts. Some areas even praised the free thinking reforms. Italian Jews, in particular those living in Lombardy and Trieste, were especially pleased by the edicts. In Prague, where education was relatively progressive, the Jewish community opened a secular school in 1781 at which time Rabbi Ezekiel Landau read an original Hebrew poem. So in favor of the edicts were some groups that they issued declarations praising them and in opposition to the opposing Rabbis. One such declaration came from the Jews of Trieste in which they wrote, "The monarch wants to raise Israel from the dust and make it competent for learning and agriculture... How can we, then, utter anything against the command of that benevolent man, who takes our side and our children's side so paternally?"[37] Another response which praised the liberalism of Joseph and urged the Jewish communities to accept and follow the Emperor's edicts was Naphtali Herz Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet. "Leaders of the Haskalah, Wessely among them, saw in the proposed reforms an important step toward the realization of their ideals, namely, emancipation and a better adjustment to the culture of the country of their residence."[38] Thus, Wessely was part of the Jewish community that responded positively to Joseph II. Having discussed in these last two chapters the philosophical and political stimuli affecting Wessely, one last item needs consideration before we approach Divre Shalom Ve-emet: Wessely's biography.

Chapter IV

Aspects of Naphtali Herz Wessely's Biography

The French philosopher Diderot (1713-1784) perceived the Enlightenment as a closed elitist movement in society. It was a movement which affected primarily the upper classes and educated people:

> The general mass of the species is made neither to follow, nor to know, the march of the human spirit. Enlightenment is confined to a small group, an "invisible church" capable of looking intelligently at works of art and literature, capable of reflecting, of speaking calmly....[1]

If Diderot's perception is at all correct for the general society, then it is doubly so for its Jewish segment. The Jews involved or directly affected by the Enlightenment formed a Jewish elite. A member of this elite Jewish intelligensia by birth, Naphtali Herz Wessely was representative of the Enlightenment in every sense. He was a product of the Enlightenment as mediated by his enlightened Jewish family.

Rather than discuss Wessely's life and works in detail, I will emphasize the social and economic factors that influenced him in his youth and adult life. This chapter will focus on those essential biographical aspects that directly pertain to the topic of this thesis, stressing those elements which determined his educational philosophy. In addition to the biographical background, it will be noted that Wessely's works also reflect his high social, educational, and financial position. Yet, Wessely was descended from the same Eastern European stock that so bitterly opposed his educational reforms.

Wessely's great-grandfather, Joseph Haiim Reiss, fled from Poland after the Chmielnicki pogroms of 1648. He wandered through most of Central

Europe finally settling in Amsterdam when he was twenty.[2] It was in Amsterdam that he became a wealthy merchant and a prominent member of the Jewish and general communities. In later life he moved with one of his sons, Moses, to a small town on the Rhine, Wessel in Brandenburg. It was from this town that the family took its name: Weisel or Wessely. Moses Wessely, Naphtali's grandfather, became even more prosperous than his father. He found favor at the court of Holstein; Freidrich IV, the King of Denmark, granted him the concession of producing munitions. He founded the first arms factory in Copenhagen and later became the King's agent in Hamburg.[3] Moses' son, Issachar Ber, sustained the family's position in the royal court. He married into a very important family, and maintained the Wessely family's social and economic station. Naphtali Herz Wessely, the son of Issachar Ber, was born in 1725 in Hamburg where his father had taken over the family's commercial holdings. When Wessely was very young, the family moved to Copenhagen where his father was involved in commerce and was described as "an enlightened and honored man who had free access to court circles."[4]

Wessely grew up in Copenhagen in a prominent and prosperous household. In the same rooms that he played, his father spoke and socialized with the powers and rulers of the state. He was educated in a heder according to the Jewish custom of the community. At age six he began to study Talmud and by age nine he was able to study gemara by himself. Yet he knew very little of the Prophets or Writings in the Tanach; in fact, sources recount that Tanach as a whole remained a mystery to him until his adolescent years.[5] When Wessely was ten years old, an important figure came into his life,

Solomon Zalman Hanau, a grammarian. Naphtali studied the fine points of the Hebrew language under Hanau and grew to revere the Holy Language. This adoration of a pure, grammatical Biblical Hebrew was a great influence on Wessely's works and educational philosophy.

His Jewish education was further influenced by another individual. Wessely studied under Rabbi Jonathan Eybeschutz of Hamburg, Altona, and Wandsbeck.[6] Wessely was learned in all aspects of rabbinic Judaism, and later in life when he wrote his commentaries on Leviticus and Pirke Avot, the Jewish scholars of the community praised his outstanding knowledge. Although Wessely is known for the breadth of his general learning, "the matter is clear: the foreign languages and secular wisdom did not occupy first place in the life of Wessely."[7] It is essential to be reminded that Wessely was first and foremost a respected and learned Jew. His secular or outside interests never lessened his devotion to, or demand for, Jewish learning.

In his youth his studies of grammar led him back to the Tanach. On his own, Wessely read the Prophets and the medieval commentaries on the Torah. As he began to immerse himself in Tanach, he realized that his knowledge of geography and history was inadequate. With the help of his worldly father and through his own devices, Wessely began to study secular subjects. This course led him to master foreign languages. There is some question as to the quality of Wessely's mastery of languages, but the sources tend to agree on the quantity of the European languages he knew. More than one language was used in his home; and since Wessely's family was involved in European

commerce, it is fair to assume that foreign languages were not uncommon in the commercial or social circles of the family. His early biographer, Friedrichfeld, ascribes five languages to Wessely: Hebrew, German, French, Danish, and Dutch.[8] A later scholar, Joseph Klausner, includes Spanish, Italian, and Portugese.[9] He reasons that the countries in which Wessely lived all used these languages, or in the case of the Latin-based languages, Wessely acquired this knowledge later, when he lived in Amsterdam. Returning to Wessely's education, it is fair to conclude that his secular knowledge was self-taught and motivated primarily by his home environment.

While still relatively young, Wessely left the Yeshivot and ventured into the world of commerce in which he had been raised. The great Jewish banking house of Feitel Ephraim took Wessely from Copenhagen and placed him in Amsterdam as its agent. He soon proved to be exceptionally capable and became prosperous in the community. His position in Amsterdam extended the family's economical preeminence into a fourth generation. Wessely's position with the Feitel Bank and his own business house allowed him the freedom to expand his knowledge even further. While in Amsterdam, two important things happened. In 1765-66 he published his first writing; this was a two volume work on Hebrew synonyms, Gan Naul. Although he had written a work many years before (1742), these were his first published volumes. The earlier work was the Hebrew translation of Luther's German version of the Wisdom of Solomon, a book of the apocrypha, and was published much later (1778). Wessely was very pleased by the response to his publication on synonyms and was encouraged to further his work in Hebrew and Tanach. This is the first evidence of Hanau's influence and Wessely's devotion to a pure and elegant Hebrew. A second important aspect of Wessely's life in Amsterdam is the depth of his

relationship with the Sephardi custom:

> During his stay in Amsterdam...he became very close to the Sephardic Jewish community, which possessed a cultural tradition differing widely from that of the Ashkenazi Jews. He adopted the Sephardic pronunciation of the Hebrew language and although his parents were Ashkenazi Jews, he regarded himself as belonging to those Jews who continued the tradition of Spanish Jewry and who, unlike their brethren in German speaking countries, tended to combine Judaism with secular knowledge.[10]

Hence, Amsterdam provided Wessely with an atmosphere that cultivated his love for knowledge and encouraged his writings. Here also Wessely was financially secure and respected in the powerful circles of commerce.

In 1774 Wessely moved to Berlin for another position in the Feitel banking house.[11] It was in Berlin that Wessely, the Master of Style (melitz), became an important exponent of the Haskalah. He continued writing and in 1775 published a commentary to Pirke Avot that was hailed by many. After a few years in Berlin, Wessely had a financial setback and lost most of his fortune. By this time he had met Mendelssohn and his growing circle of disciples. Wessely turned away from commerce to devote all of his efforts to writing and lecturing; this provided enough to support his family. He was participating in Mendelssohn's Biur and in 1781 his commentary to the book of Leviticus was published as part of that work. Orthodox rabbis, including the Gaon of Vilna, praised this commentary highly. It showed not only his fine Hebrew style, "but a mastery of exegesis and wide Talmudic learning."[12] Wessely now had a great deal of influence among the Maskilim who appreciated his revival of pure Biblical Hebrew. His role in the emerging Haskalah broadened when in 1782 he published the first of four letters on educational reform, Divre Shalom Ve-emet. The second through

fourth letters came in response to both opposition and acceptance of his first letter; in 1785 these were collected and all four published under the single title Divre Shalom Ve-emet. These letters will be dealt with more fully in the following chapters; yet it should be noted at this time that with Divre Shalom Ve-emet Wessely strayed from literature or commentaries. Hence, Divre Shalom Ve-emet represents another aspect of his genius. Wesseley's genius had matured because of the family life and later opportunities that he had:

> First and foremost we must take into account the fact that Wessely was the scion of a wealthy and cultured family, had lived in the large cities of Western Europe and moved freely from town to town. This brought him into contact with many people and enriched his knowledge and understanding of worldly affairs. He saw the life of Jews in various ghettos as an outsider, and felt keenly the disabilities they suffered. He learned to appreciate the value of a general education....[13]

Wessely continued to publish and teach even during the often heated controversy of the letters. In 1785 his work on ethics, Sefer Ha-Middot, which elaborated his own views on this subject, was published. Wessely's greatest literary work, his magnum opus, was Shire Tiferet (Songs of Glory), an epic poem that took nearly thirty years to complete. This immense poetic description of Moses and running commentary on parts of Exodus crowned Wessely as the "poet Laureate" of the early Haskalah. With Shire Tifret, his revival of pure Biblical style and allusion was at its best. The Maskilim that followed used this work as the paradigm of Haskalah style.

Another facet of Wessely's literary career transcended any specific work. In 1786 in Königsberg he joined with other leading Maskilim to found the periodical Ha-Measef (The Gatherer). This was a Hebrew publication that

acted as the written forum of the Haskalah. Wessely was one of the guiding spirits in its development and often authored some of the articles and poetry that filled its pages. Through the periodical Wessely was able to influence others with his style and use of Biblical Hebrew as well as his views on educational reform.

In 1804 Wessely moved from the center of the Haskalah to his birth place, Hamburg. There he lived with one of his married daughters and continued his teaching until he became desperately ill. In the spring of 1805 Naphtali Herz Wessely, the poet and the educator, died. His life had been a dynamic example of the way in which Jews could stand on equal ground with Europe's enlightened society. Having this brief sketch of the man and the biographical influences that are relevant to his educational philosophy, we can now turn to the letter he published in 1782 which outlines that philosophy: Divre Shalom Ve-emet.

Chapter V

An Analysis of Wessely's Educational Philosophy

The factors that stimulated Wessely to write Divre Shalom Ve-emet have been presented in the preceding chapters. It was the combination of historical, philosophical, economic, and educational stimuli that motivated Wessely to write his public letter. This chapter, an analysis of Wessely's educational philosophy, is concerned only with the single immediate stimulus to Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Wessely wrote this first of four letters in response to the Edicts of Toleration, those laws promulgated in October 1781. There had been a mixed Jewish response,[1] and Wessely hoped to allay some of the more vehement criticism through his letter. The title page clearly defined his intention: "Words of peace and truth to the congregation of Israel residing in the lands of the domain of the Great Emperor, who loves mankind and makes people joyous, His Majesty, Joseph II."[2] Hence, Divre Shalom Ve-emet was intended for the Jewish population to whom the Edicts of Toleration applied.

It is important to remember that the immediate result of those edicts was religious tolerance in the form of opening all schools to Jewish students. With or without Wessely's letter of conciliation and educational theory, the Realschulen or "normal" schools would have been organized under Joseph's order. Thus, Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet cannot be viewed as the sole basis for reform in Jewish education. Although Wessely's letter does contain specific theories and suggestions for changes, it is not the cause of those alterations. Rather, it is addressed to the Jewish people, urging them to accept the inevitable modifications, not as forced assimilation, but as a

beneficial gift from a benevolent ruler. It seems most likely that this first letter was published in January 1782.[3] As the first edicts were promulgated in October 1781, it is doubtful whether many of the changes in Jewish education had actually taken place when Wessely wrote Divre Shalom Ve-emet. This might further suggest that Wessely's letter was an attempt to persuade the Jews that reform in education was inevitable. Hence, Divre Shalom Ve-emet must be discussed under the basic assumption that Jewish education in Austria-Hungary was already under pressure to change but that change had not yet been instituted, for this was the assumption under which Wessely himself worked.

In dealing with education, Wessely used some terms that require special attention. These terms convey in part Wessely's educational philosophy. Thus, before considering the letter as a whole, it is essential that we discuss the following terms: Bnai Israel or Am, Torat Elohim, Torat Ha-Adam, and Derech Eretz. These concepts are used throughout the four letters of Divre Shalom Ve-emet, but are particularly important in the first letter where Wessely introduced his educational philosophy. Thus, the definitions that follow are taken from the context of the first letter.

Wessely referred to Jews as an ethnic group, separate and distinct among all other national or ethnic groups. He began one section with, "There is one people (Am) who does not properly appreciate Torat Ha-Adam."[4] (Please note that Torat Ha-Adam is here left untranslated until it can be fully discussed with its implications.) Clearly, Wessely understood Jews to be a people, different from other peoples. Assuming that in the eighteenth century language was an essential characteristic of a people, Wessely's

arguments for a pure Hebrew emphasize his use of Am in reference to Jews as a separate people. Yet, Wessely argued in his letter that Jews should master two essential languages, the Holy language, Hebrew, and the vernacular, German. He reasoned that although the Bnai Israel were a separate people (Am) with their own language, Hebrew, that this Hebrew was misused grammatically and separated them from gentile society. There was a need for this Am to learn German in order to be fully integrated into the German society:

> The Holy language is a matter unto itself, and the German language is a matter unto itself. This /Hebrew/ is for matters of holiness, faith and Law; this /German/ is for worldly matters, engagement in business and the transactions of men and the knowledge of secular subjects.[5]

In the analysis of Wessely's educational philosophy that follows, the terms Am or Bnai Israel should be read with this explication in mind.

The terms Torat Elohim, Torat Elohenu, and Torat Ha-Shem refer to the entire corpus of Jewish knowledge. Wessely specifically referred to Torah as the revealed Law of Moses. He understood the Law in its traditional written and oral components, and argued that the teachings within this tradition were uniquely binding on the Jewish people. It is this characteristic of Torat Elohim that is important in Wessely's educational philosophy. He approached the entire body of human knowledge and divided it in two; the first half is Torat Elohim the second is Torah Ha-Adam. Torat Elohim is an area of knowledge which is distinctly particular to the Jews, revealed, and authoritative for them. Wessely suggested that these laws were binding only for Jews because they were revealed directly through Moses and those who followed him.

The authoritative nature of the law is not defensible by reason. Rather it is only because it is revealed that it is binding. Wessely suggested that the wisest men would have found it impossible to discover the laws in this realm of knowledge. Wessely's Torat Elohim as knowledge per se is the basis of man's religious quest in life. Torah Elohim or the Divine Knowledge is as absolutely necessary as Torat Ha-Adam, human knowledge, if man is to reach his full potential. It is important to note that Wessely's Torat Elohim is simply assumed as the unquestioned Jewish belief. Hence, Torat Elohim is not the major point of persuasion in Divre Shalom Ve-emet; rather it is Torat Ha-Adam, human knowledge, which Wessely sought to persuade Jews to acquire.

Torat Ha-Adam, or human knowledge, is the second kind of knowledge about which Wessely writes. It is defined through the three categories of secular studies:

1. nimusiut -- social sciences and social graces: ethics, good manners, refinement, elegance of diction, history, geography, the customs of the country, and the rules of the kings.

2. tiviut -- natural sciences: zoology, botany, chemistry, and medicine.

3. lemudiut -- mathematical sciences: arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.[6]

Wessely included within the scope of Torat Ha-Adam all the subjects of the secular world previously excluded from the Jewish curriculum.[7] These new realms of science, philosophy, and literature were avenues of the Enlightenment. Torat Ha-Adam included the fundamentals of enlightened knowledge whose value was unquestioned in the Gentile world. On the other hand, in the

Jewish world the Ashkenazim in particular saw Torat Ha-Adam, secular knowledge, as a dangerous diversion from the Talmud. Hence, Wessely's primary goal was to show the Jews that man could only live in a modern enlightened society with both Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam.

There is a variant usage of Torat Ha-Adam worthy of notation. Wessely usually referred to general secular knowledge as Torat Ha-Adam, but in one section Torat Ha-Adam means natural law in contrast to Divine Law, Torat Elohim. Wessely wrote, "From Adam to Moses twenty-seven generations passed, and [during this period] they only observed the natural law [Torat Ha-Adam], these were the seven commandments [Noahide precepts] and their derivatives."[8] Torat Ha-Adam precedes Torat Elohim in time. Yet, Torat Ha-Adam, taken as natural law, runs parallel to Torat Elohim as Divine Law. Both are knowledge and law in Wessely's system. Torat Ha-Adam, unlike Torat Elohim, can be derived from nature by the wise men of every generation, rather than only by the direct authoritative revelation. Wessely was consistent in his use of these terms, phrases, and ideas and sustained his position regarding the division of knowledge.

One last term requires attention, as this term might be the bridge between Torat Ha-Adam and Torat Elohim. Wessely referred to Derech Eretz as a general category of virtue produced by the knowledge of Torat Ha-Adam. One can learn Derech Eretz from the study of nimusiut and also reach a higher plateau of refinement and happiness through it. Like Wessely's other terms, this one has a double usage. Derech Eretz serves as the vehicle by which a Jew can raise himself to the level of acceptability; simultaneously, Derech Eretz is the refinement acquired through exposure to the world of secular

subjects, especially the realm of nimusiut. Wessely wrote on Derech Eretz: "It is of benefit to society and teaches /man/ how to enjoy everything under the sun. It causes the success of the man's deeds /efforts/ and helps everyone be of assistance to his fellow men in all their actions and affairs."[9] Thus, for Wessely Derech Eretz is a means and an end; and as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, the development of Wessely's educational philosophy can be traced through earlier discussions of Derech Eretz in one of Wessely's previous works.

The four terms discussed above give some indication of Wesseley's educational goals. The breadth of his philosophy does not stem from the radical nature of his views but rather from the dualities that are implied in his terminology. For instance, when Wessely argued that the Jewish people (Am) had ignored non-religious literature (i.e. secular knowledge--Torat Ha-Adam), he implied that the Jews as a distinct people with a "mutilated and confused tongue"(Yiddish)were educationally remote from the "wisdom and virtues which comprise the natural law /secular knowledge--Torat Ha-Adam/."[10] It is the distinctions of Wessely's language that broaden his educational philosphy.

Wessely presented a historical rationale for the Jews' ignorance of secular knowledge. This is found primarily in chapter three of the first letter, although strands of this historical view run throughout the letter. In addressing himself to the absence of Torat Ha-Adam among the Jews, Wessely argued that knowledge of the sciences, non-biblical literature, and language was not foreign to the Jewish experience. He suggested that only since the Jews have lived in the Diaspora, particularly in Germany and Poland, have

they been so ignorant of human knowledge. Wessely indicted the Jews not simply for secular ignorance but also for a merely superficial understanding of their own laws and customs. He specified that the lack of grammar and diction among Jews in their use of Hebrew was disgraceful. He was also critical of their inability to speak or read in the vernacular. All of this is placed within a historical perspective, a view that led Wessely to find fault with the Gentile rulers of Europe. Jews might easily have grasped the enlightened subjects of "progressive modern countries," but before Joseph II, they were restricted. The exclusions of the past had held Jews back from the full acquisition of knowledge, but the future offered them a chance to remedy that disability. Wessely led up to Joseph II's benevolent edicts which would educate Jews and hence, integrate them into the greater secular world.

This historical reasoning is reminiscent of Dohm's argumentation. Both men saw the plight of the Jews in terms of what had transpired in the past, a past dictated by the reign of kings and rulers who wished to suppress the Jews. Wessely, like Dohm, saw education as the best means of equalization, a process of raising the Jew to the level of his fellow citizen. This kind of perspective places the burden of Jewish ignorance on history while the unprecedented opportunity of enlightened education commands the present. By setting the Jewish educational dilemma within history Wessely attempted to persuade the Jews that the responsibility for their ignorance was not theirs but that of the Gentiles who oppressed them. In his attempt to convince the Jews to gain secular knowledge, Wessely's method of argumentation lent historical credibility to the study of secular subjects within Jewish tradition. He reasoned that the Gentile world had restricted the Jew, abused and

suppressed him by preventing his acquisition of human knowledge; the Jews deserved the right to master such knowledge, and Joseph II had granted it to them. Remembering that this first letter was a letter of persuasion, the sections with a historical perspective are the passages that try to convince the Jews of the Jewish tradition of secular knowledge, e.g., within the Sephardic custom, and the benefits that will accure from it.

The educational philosophy of Naphtali Herz Wessely was concisely stated in the opening paragraphs of Divre Shalom Ve-emet. It began with Proverbs 22:6: "Educate the child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." Wessely derived two important maxims from this verse. Hanoch La-naar -- "educate the child" -- implies that the best time for education is the period of childhood when the young mind is free and uninhibited. The second lesson comes from al pi darko, which Wessely understood as: according to his (the child's) abilities and strengths. For Wessely individual consideration was essential in proper instruction. Having formulated these two basic axioms, he moved on to specify that the education of Jewish children should be systematic. The system he proposed was divided into the aforementioned two basic categories, Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam: Divine Law or Knowledge and Natural or Human Knowledge of Law. He carefully explicated the details of each area, as was previously discussed. Wessely examined the difference between the two forms of knowledge and stated that although Torat Ha-Adam preceded the religious laws in time, both were derived from the same source, G-d. Wessely wished to merge within the Jew the two components of total knowledge. His educational philosophy struck a balance between the religious world of the Jew and the enlightened world of the Gentile. The majority of the letter focused on the

need for Torat Ha-Adam in order to balance the knowledge of the Jews. Wessely's criticism of Jewish education stemmed from his desire for that balance; and within that framework he set down the following objections and proposals.

Wessely's criticisms of Jewish education are noteworthy because they point to those essentials of his educational philosophy which he found lacking in eighteenth-century Jewish instruction. A major point which he repeated in different formulations was that Jewish scholars who knew only Torat Elohim were as if without life. He wrote, "any scholar /who knows the laws of G-d and Torah/ but who has no knowledge /of etiquette, refinement, and Derech Eretz/- a carcass is better than he."[11] As will be discussed in the next chapter this interpretation of the passage from Leviticus Rabba (1:2) might have incited the wrath of several Polish Rabbis. Be that as it may, Wessely's point was clear: specifically Jewish knowledge alone was too limited and this limitation rendered such knowledge worthless. He believed that a scholar who possessed secular knowledge alone was at least accepted in the Gentile world as an educated man, yet, a man limited to the religious laws of Judaism offered no great help to either the Jew or the Gentile.

Wessely was more specific in his criticism of Jewish education than merely making the sweeping charge of its limited worth. He argued that the Jews "don't know the grammar of the Holy language, understand the beauty of its diction, /or/ the elegance of its syntax...."[12] He was very critical of language usage and stressed the need for the Hebrew to be purified, studied, and spoken properly. Wessely also found reasons to fault the teaching of Judaism's principles. "And even the sources of faith are not taught in an

order [system] so that the children might become conversant with them [the principles] and they don't hear in the schools about ethics...."[13] Wessely believed in a systematic instruction that would prepare a student for life. Education should combine both the Jewish and non-Jewish. He criticized the general disorganization of Jewish education which resulted in the students being ill prepared. The lack of systematization and limited Jewish curriculum could be changed because of the benevolence of Joseph's edicts.

These edicts would solve the immediate problem of the Jews' ignorance, reasoned Wessely; yet, he sought to have a more far-reaching affect on his co-religionists. The proposals that Wessely urged the Jews to accept fall into three major categories. One area of concern was the subject of ethics, universal morality, or simply catechized Jewish religious thought. Wessely urged that textbooks should be written that concisely arranged the vast amount of Jewish lore in a more enlightened fashion. A second aspect was learning the vernacular which included books in German, such as Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch. The third category Wessely suggested that the Jews consider, was the varied secular subjects to be included in Jewish education. This encompassed specific proposals of pedagogy and reorganization in the classroom. Although Wessely's overall intent was the acceptance of such secular knowledge, this third category specified the reasons that such subjects should be taught. Keeping in mind this overview of Wessely's intent and philosophy, the following discussion will consider these three areas of concern.

Wessely began to explicate his philosophy of education in the fifth

chapter of his letter. He defined the various aspects of secular knowledge that would be available to the Jew. In the chapter that followed he suggested the need for new textbooks that would teach religious ethics:

> And more than this /secular subjects/ our community needs to publish new books /texts/ on faith and values /knowledge/ that will be /used/ to teach our children in school.[14]

He went on to note that the Emperor had ordered such texts to be published to help the Jews. Wessely reasoned that even though our tradition was replete with many books of wisdom, the Torah and Talmud, such primary texts were not for beginners. Further he specified that these texts "need to be written in simple and pure language /Hebrew/."[15] Wessely felt the author should write the texts with a concern for the child's ability. There should a derech ahat, a uniformity in the presentation of kol prat u'frat, every detail of the religion. Wessely urged that each item be supported by a verse of Torah and then clarified in modern terms. If such a text existed, Wessely argued, the youth would acquire the truth of the Torah, "and when they grew and did not succeed in increasing their knowledge with Mishnah and Talmud, the fundamentals would not be abandoned...."[16] He concluded that such knowledge was basic "for a man to live in two /both/ worlds." This refers to the Jewish world of Torat Elohim and the secular world of Torat Ha-Adam. Wessely defined the content of the specific text needed to teach Torat Ha-Adam as "nimusiut /refinement and etiquette/ and Derech Eretz for they encompass Torat Ha-Adam."[17] Wessely emphasized the need to systematize both aspects of knowledge in texts to be used as manuals for the students.

The discussion of texts and how they should be written indicates a

great deal about Wessely's educational philosophy. Simply put, he argued for Jewish catechisms. Such a proposal in and of itself was not radical, especially among the Maskilim of Wessely's circle. Although the subject of Jewish catechisms will be dealt with later, it is important to note here that such texts reflect Wessely's desire for an educational system. His stress on the uniformity of presentation and the lucid nature of language further highlights the importance of organization and natural simplicity in Wessely's pedagogy. Note also his insistence that the language be pure and correct, reflecting his belief in the systematic grammatical study of a language, especially Hebrew. His concern for the students' capabilities was a recurring theme in the letter and suggested the influence of Basedow and Pestalozzi on his philosophy (an influence which is discussed more fully in a later chapter). Wessely, like many Maskilim, wanted Jewish education centered around the Tanach, not the study of Mishnah and Talmud. Although he did not reject the study of rabbinic sources, he stressed the value of Biblical sources in the transmission of fundamental religious beliefs.

The second major theme in Wessely's educational philosophy is the need for the vernacular. On this point it must be remembered, before considering Wessely's argumentation, that under the Edicts of Toleration the Jews were expected to learn German within a certain time period.[16] Wessely, however, approached the vernacular not from the standpoint of a legal requirement, but rather as a virtuous addition for the Jew. He wrote that in order to deal with important Gentiles and high-ranking officers of the state, Jews should learn the vernacular. In his seventh chapter he specified

how the language could be taught. He began with the warmest praise for Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch in German. Wessely saw Mendelssohn's translation as an ideal pedagogic tool:

> When the teachers teach their students the Torah by means of this German translation, which is written in a very pure language, they will accustom the children from their youth to speak the vernacular....[19]

He went on to point out that up until then, teachers could not speak German; hence, they could not properly explain things to their students. Further, these teachers were not using pure grammatical Hebrew. Mindful of both a pure spoken German and grammatical Hebrew, Wessely concluded that Mendelssohn's translation and **Biur** (commentary), would serve to correct and properly instruct Jewish youth.

He proceeded to outline the need for a systematic study of Bible through a proper use of language. Wessely wrote:

> The child should hear G-d's Torah in a pure and lucid language and the matter /of the Bible/ will enter his heart, and he will understand more; and the purer the language the more he will understand.[20]

Grammar and the exact meanings of words should be used so that students would learn the fundamentals of the language. Wessely argued that the study of Mishnah and Talmud was also based on a proper preparation in language:

> If they succeed and go in their studies to study also Mishnah and Talmud they will derive matters of truth from the language of the Torah and from the understanding of the roots /fundamentals/ of the language which will benefit them all their days.[21]

More importantly though:

> For those who do not succeed to study both Mishnah and Talmud but when they grow up and become artisans or merchants the instruction of their youth will serve them,

> that they will know how to read the Torah and understand the plain meanings of the words, and to understand the prayers that they pray and to read books on morality.[22]

For Wessely then, even the study of Jewish texts depended upon a foundation in language. The vernacular as well as a purified Hebrew should be taught. He regarded neither the vernacular nor a pure grammatical Hebrew as a radical departure from Jewish tradition.

Wessely urged the Jews to recognize that only in Germany did Jews speak the vernacular improperly. He listed the several Jewish communities in the western diaspora that spoke the language of their country. The Sephardi (Spanish and Portguese) Jews spoke Spanish; the Italian Jews spoke Italian; the British Jews spoke English; French Jews spoke French; and Middle Eastern Jews spoke Turkish and Arabic. Wessely asserted that even Polish Jews spoke the vernacular of their country more properly than German Jews.[23] Jews living in German-speaking lands stood alone with their confused and improper language. He argued that knowledge of the vernacular was totally within the cultural custom of diaspora Jewry. Therefore, the time had come for German Jews to master German.

His reasoning continued that because the Jews lacked facility in the vernacular, they were prevented from acquiring the wisdom of great German writers and poets. This situation would continue as long as students were taught "under the hand of teachers from Poland who speak German in a garbled and confused way."[24] He argued that there was historical precedent for Jews knowing more than one language. The men of the Sanhedrin were "experts in all languages." There was also the historical example of the men who knew Hebrew and Aramaic as well as those like Maimonides who knew Arabic. By

analogy then, the Jews of German-speaking lands should learn German, concluded Wessely. Jews could then converse with Gentiles on any matter, secular or religious.

Important factors of Wessely's philosophy are reflected within this second major theme. As with his concern for new texts, the knowledge of the vernacular required a systematic approach. Wessely stressed that the fundamentals of grammar and word meaning be taught to insure the purity of the spoken tongue. Teachers should be properly trained in language usuage, both Hebrew and German, so that they would be good examples for their students. It is more apparent in this discussion that the study of Bible was central for Wessely. He was extremely complimentary to Mendelssohn's translation and Biur and suggested several times that it be a main text because of its clarity and purity of language. Wessely realized that without the fundamentals of either religious morality or language, education would fail to provide a student with the preparation needed for life.

The last general aspect of educational reform that Wessely urged the Jews to accept was the study of secular disciplines. He defined what each realm of Torat Ha-Adam included and gave reasons for acquiring this kind of knowledge. First Wessely cited the social benefit of mastering such knowledge, and gave Mendelssohn as an example: "And it [study of secular knowledge] will please G-d and man, and thus has such a wise man appeared in our generation...Moses Mendelssohn."[25] Wessely went on to suggest that secular knowledge would also bring man to a higher love of G-d.

> The studies of ha-nimusiut, v'ha-tiviut, v'ha-limudiut... are needed as the basis of faith and as the fundamentals of the fear of G-d and His love and the glorification of the honor of the Lord and His deeds and Holy words in the heart of man.[26]

These were general reasons why Jews should acquire secular knowledge, but Wessely saw further reasons for introducing such subjects.

In order to fully understand the Bible, one must be aware of history and geography. Wessely cited passages from the Tanach that depended upon a knowledge of ancient history: the conquest of the land and the various people the Israelites encountered. Geography is a subject that provides the boundaries, rivers, and physical characteristics that clarify the travels so often reported in the Bible. Secular knowledge also gives the Jew a sense of his unique role in history that G-d chose the Israelites rather than another people, because they had not deserted Torat Ha-Adam:

> And thus /secular knowledge/ helps to love G-d and to fear Him, when /one/ knows the customs of these first peoples and how quickly they deserted Torat Ha-Adam and /one will/ understand why the Lord did not choose them....[27]

Thus, for Wessely secular knowledge was not only essential for the Jews of his day, but it was a prerequisite for being chosen by G-d.

Within this third area, Wessely also gave some specific suggestions for the needed reorganization and reform within the classroom. In order to properly instruct Jewish students in Torat Elohim as well as Torat Ha-Adam there had to be a more systematic approach to education. Students would be required to master the fundamentals of both components of knowledge in order to live in the general society. This proper preparation was impossible without the correct guidance and classification of the student:

> And pay careful attention to the division /selection/ and grading of the boys, so that the child who is learning the reading of Hebrew and grammar in his class does not go out /is not promoted/ to the class in which they will study with him Torah, faith and a little ethics until he is examined by the headmasters, who will judge whether or or not he has completed the studies of the previous class satisfactorily. Similarly, the boy who has been learning Torah and /ethics/ must not go out /be promoted/ to the

> class where he will be taught Mishnah and Baraitot until it is judged that he satisfactorily completed the studies in the previous class. And if it is judged that he is not capable to study the Mishnah and Talmud, it [will be] better for him that his portion not be put with theirs [i.e. better if he did not go on to more difficult material] but he should learn the handicraft of his choice and continue with the study of Torah and ethics in order that he should learn to fear the Lord...[28]

Wessely stressed that the classification and grading of students was dependent upon the students' talents and mastery of material. He suggested that such a system would as a matter of course mean that those who did succeed in Talmud, "will have already completed [their study] of nimusiut and wisdom."[29] The divergence in students is very important "because not all of us were created to be masters of Talmud and to engage in the depths of religion."[30] Wessely concluded that secular studies be integrated into the educational process of the Jews and they be blended with the Jewish material.

Wessely's discussion on secular subjects and pedagogy reflects some of the basic trends of his educational philosophy. His reasoning that secular knowledge further elucidates the study of Bible, and is therefore essential, indicates once more the central position of Bible in Jewish education. For Wessely, Jewish studies began with the foundation of Biblical knowledge. He believed that secular subjects, Torat Ha-Adam, were essential in the Jew's quest to revere his G-d. Thus, as in the discussions on texts and language, Wessely argued that his proposals were fully within the historical and religious traditions of the Jewish people. Lastly, his overriding concern for uniformity and a systematic development was clearest in his proposals for the gradation of students.

Within the three areas of texts, language, and secular subjects,

Wessely's educational philosophy is clearly reflected; yet, Divre Shalom Ve-emet was not Wessely's only work; hence, it is important to consider how his philosophy is presented in other works. The works that are noteworthy in this discussion are limited to those which pre-date 1782. After this date Wessely's writings on education cannot be taken out of the context of the opposition to his proposals; hence, his earlier works like Gan Naul (1765), Yen Levanon (1775), and his Biur to Leviticus (1781) in the Mendelssohn translation, will be considered as sources for Wessely's earlier philosophy. His grammatical work Gan Naul and his biblical commentary on Leviticus are important not for any specific statement on education, but rather for their style. These works are paradigms for the Biblical, grammatical, concise Hebrew usage that Wessely desired. They are examples of how texts should be written and language used and taught. Wessely wrote in Divre Shalom Ve-emet that his Gan Naul and commentary to Leviticus were the kind of texts needed and further, that his methodology of grammar, word meaning, and clarification was the best way to educate students.[31] When Wessely urged that education be systematic, he gave his own works as examples of such a system.

In Yen Levanon, Wessely's commentary to Pirke Avot, we do not find his systematic approach, but there are some statements on the importance of Derech Eretz. Scholars have found direct connections between Wessely's analysis of secular knowledge in Divre Shalom Ve-emet and his earlier comments on the juxtaposition of Derech Eretz and Torah in Pirke Avot.[32] As stated earlier in this chapter, Derech Eretz as used in Divre Shalom Ve-emet suggested a means and an end in education; in Yen Levanon the term was used

more generally and had not developed fully to its later usage. The four passages discussed below will give some indication of how Wessely's understanding of Derech Eretz and concern for secular knowledge developed.

In commenting on chapter two, mishnah two, "Yafe talmud Torah 'im Derech Eretz," Wessely wrote that Derech Eretz was an essential compliment to the study of the Divine Law. He defined Derech Eretz first as an occupation that [a man] should have love in his heart and he will appreciate all things under the sun.[33] Later in the same comment he more fully explicated Derech Eretz as:

> The business negotiations of man and the customs observed between people and the customs of the man with his wife and the men of his household and thus generally nimusiut [refinement and etiquette] and good citizenship.[34]

In this passage Derech Eretz is presented in only a limited scope, yet Wessely suggested that such a virtue was essential. It is necessary for man to have Derech Eretz for without it Torah is not possible. One begins to see that Wessely divided the rubric of knowledge into two categories, one of Divine quality the other of a worldly nature; yet both are needed for a man to fulfill his role in life.

In his comment on "Im 'ein Torah 'ein Derech Eretz, Im 'ein Derech Eretz 'ein Torah" (Pirke Avot 3:21), one sees the intricate relationship between the two aspects of knowledge. Wessely suggested that Derech Eretz was the universal behavior that allowed all men to live together, "l'kaiyem ha-kibutz ha-medini (to establish a society)." He defined Derech Eretz in almost the same terms as in the passage above adding, "and even though there is not in all of this [Derech Eretz] positive and negative commandments, the

world needs it."[36] Wessely elaborated on the essential nature of Derech Eretz vis-à-vis the establishment of society. He did not in any fashion state explicitly that Derech Eretz was either primary or supplemental to Divine or religious law or knowledge. He did write that Derech Eretz preceded Torah in time (this is repeated in Divre Shalom Ve-emet); however, this did not imply that Derech Eretz was primary or superior to Torah. Wessely emphasized the social necessity of Derech Eretz in his comment on the second half of the sentence. Man's conduct with other men must be proper in order to sustain society, Wessely wrote. When man does not have Derech Eretz, "there is peruda v'ketata, division and strife, between them [men]."[37] Further, this knowledge is a direct complement to the Torah, "for behold that the Torah was given to make peace in the world."[38] Thus, when men cannot live together there is no fulfillment of Torah. Wessely hinted at the double nature of Derech Eretz, since it was both a means of fulfilling Torah and a separate complementary component of Torah.

A third passage of the same work which indicates that Wessely began formulating his educational philosophy before 1782 is his comment to chapter four, mishnah one: "Who is a sage? he who learns from all men." This passage does not explicitly relate to Derech Eretz as a term but the intent of Wessely's comment is an important link in the development of his thought. He defined a sage as one who is learned in the Holy texts and follows the commandments. He also specified that an important element of being a sage was a life of action based on wisdom. "That if he does not observe wisdom [follow it in daily life] even though he has studied its [Torah's] laws he should not be called a sage."[39] This statement would discount the value of

a man learned in the sacred texts who had no Derech Eretz. Such a conclusion follows from the complementary relationship between Torah and Derech Eretz; thus, the study and wisdom of the former is of no worth without the latter. This does not imply that Derech Eretz is more essential than Torah, only that both are needed to have a whole man. Let us remember that Wessely in this text and later in Divre Shalom Ve-emet consistently regarded Derech Eretz as a means of fulfilling Torah, leading to fear and love of the Lord. Hence, it is not preferable to the Torah; rather Derech Eretz is necessary for Torah.

The last passage in Yen Levanon pertaining to Derech Eretz is chapter six, mishnah six. Wessely wrote:

> These are the matters which a man needs to learn and to know...that he needs to be an expert and know in his habitation of the world, and this is the general category: the general area of laws concerning Derech Eretz and all of ha-nimusiut and the wisdom of ha-tiviut and ha-limudiut that a student needs to know in order to be made splendid and embellished by them [the areas of secular knowledge]....[39]

Wessely had formulated the concept of Torat Ha-Adam seven years before he wrote Divre Shalom Ve-emet. The specific requirements as stated above are exactly those that Wessely urged the Jews to undertake in his public letter. The most important statement in Wessely's development follows the above cited passage: "All wisdom helps [leads] to fear of the Lord and brings an exaltation of the Blessed One in the heart of man."[41] With this statement Wessely included all secular knowledge within the tradition of Jewish knowledge. Clearly, Derech Eretz or the components of Torat Ha-Adam are the means by which man fulfills Torah; hence, the question is not if one supplements or preceds the other; rather both Derech Eretz and Torah are

needed. It is in this passage that Derech Eretz is understood in a much more general sense than in Wessely's comment to the first passage.

While there is some question as to whether or not Wessely changed his philosophy regarding the balance of secular and religious knowledge in his later work,[42] it is important to recognize that Divre Shalom Ve-emet did reflect the earlier works of Wessely. In 1775 when Wessely published Yen Levanon it is doubtful whether he realized that seven years later his comments on rabbinic literature would become proposals to be acted upon in actual school rooms. Putting aside the question of a philosophical shift and accepting the extremely close similarity in works, it is important that Wessely's Yen Levanon was readily acceptable to the Orthodox community, whereas Divre Shalom Ve-emet was not. More specifically, in the very passage quoted above Wessely wrote what he would repeat later: "Any sage who does not have Deah [secular knowledge] - a carcass is more worthwhile than he."[43] While the earlier was accepted, the later usage was publically condemned. The point is that Wessely's educational philosophy in 1775 or 1782 or even in 1785 was not in his eyes radical or a detriment to Judaism. This will be more fully considered in the following chapters.

The four passages from Yen Levanon indicate the importance of Derech Eretz in Wessely's philosophy. He understood knowledge to be a duality comprised of Divine and natural elements. This same duality is at the center of Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Wessely was concerned with total knowledge; therefore, he always emphasized the balance between Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam. His proposals for new texts on ethics, a pure grammatical approach to

language, and classification of students are all to be considered as details of his larger concern, Yirat ha-Shem--fear of the Lord. For Wessely, both Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam were necessary for a man to truly revere G-d, since "all wisdom helps to fear the Lord." Wessely considered his proposals for nimusiut, tiviut, and limudiut as prerequisites for man's aspiration to live with other men in an enlightened society and fear his G-d. The educational philosophy of Divre Shalom Ve-emet sought to underscore the interdependence of the holy and the profane, for Wessely was a man comfortable in both the Jewish and Gentile worlds of knowledge. The Jewish reaction prompted by Wessely's letter and his response to that reaction deserves consideration at this point.

Chapter VI

The Opposition to Wessely and His Later Letters

Wessely was motivated to write Divre Shalom Ve-emet by the mixed reaction toward Joseph's edicts. It was a similar mixed reaction to Divre Shalom Ve-emet that motivated him to write three later letters. Wessely's public statements on education provoked a great rabbinical-Haskalah controversy. The nature of this dispute involved bitter polemics, accusations, and counter-charges. Wessely responded to his opponents in the three letters that followed Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Before considering the material on education in these subsequent letters, the specifics and dynamics of the opposition to Wessely must be discussed.

The problems involved in such a controversy tend to blur the historical ramifications of Wessely's educational philosophy. The following statements by noted scholars will serve as examples of the controversy's complexity. Joseph Klausner suggests that except for a particular midrashic interpretation, the pamphlet was neither radical nor offensive:

> Apparently, there is nothing new in it [Divre Shalom Ve-emet] even for its own time. The pamphlet was written with ease, and it is filled with deep and sincere faith. It does not attack the customs or tradition of the people.... With regard to the Rabbis, Wessely's only sin for them was his explication of the statement, "Any sage who does not have Deah [reading Deah as Derech Eretz]-a carcass is more worthwhile than he."[1]

In contrast to this view Grunwald contends that Wessely's criticisms of Jewish education incited the trouble. "They [Polish Rabbis] especially resented the statement that Polish teachers were responsible for inefficient methods of instruction and for the misuse of the German language in the German communities."[2] A third possible viewpoint, that of Charles Ozer, relates to Wessely's general radical educational posture rather than to any

specifics:

> The letter shows throughout the author's adherence to and love of traditional Judaism. One cannot find in it anything irreverential or anti-religious. Nowhere does he question rabbinical authority. Undoubtedly, the interpretation he chose for the quotation, "A scholar who has no knowledge, even a carcass is better than he," was offensive to the rabbis and aroused their ire. But this unfortunate interpretation was not the cause of the ensuing controversy, of that storm of resentment which arose in rabbinic circles against both the epistle and its author. The rabbis found Wessely's writing revolutionary on two counts: (1) in its proposed reforms in the education of the youth; (2) in its espousal of secular studies.[3]

Ozer concludes that even considering the midrashic interpretation, nothing specific in the letter caused the quarrel. In his opinion, the root of the problem lay in Wessely's overall philosophy rather than his criticism of education. In direct contrast to this attitude, Kurzweil suggests that the controversy was precipitated by a naive view of Joseph II's edicts:

> It is a well-known fact that he /Wessely/ published his Divre Shalom Ve-emet only a few months after Joseph II had published his "Toleranzedikt," and was insufficiently versed in the problems of Jewish education. Nor must we overlook the fact that Wessely interpreted the edict with undue optimism - a feeling that was shared neither by the Rabbis nor even Mendelssohn. It is this difference that underlies the famous dispute between Wessely and the Rabbis.[4]

This assumes that Wessely failed to recognize the edicts as assimilatory. There seems to be no evidence to substantiate such a conclusion. Yet, it does add another facet to the complexity of the situation. A final overview of the controversy by Raphael Mahler, combines several of the factors cited above:

> Wessely, despite his moderation and orthodox devotion to his religion, had set out to disturb not only the traditional order of studies but also the whole system based on the study of the Gemara and built on a hierarchy of Talmudic scholars....They /Polish Rabbis/ regarded the emphasis that his book placed on the study of the Bible and ethics and its suggestion to leave the study of the Talmud to those who have a talent for it as a negation of the whole concept of religion. What particularly infuriated the rabbis, however, was the reflection on their honor contained in Wessely's interpretation of the midrashic epigram...[5]

Mahler reaches the conclusion that not one factor but a combination of elements led to the public argument. Of the five conflicting statements, the comment by Mahler presents the most probable reasoning for the opposition to Wessely. Unlike the other scholars, he recognizes the broad scope of the problem and considers it in terms of the entire historical situation rather than specific philosophical differences. If the four earlier statements are partially correct, then the Mahler statement is the most completely correct.

Another aspect of the scholarly division is typified by the extremes of Graetz and Samet. Graetz writes:

> Although the zealots /those in opposition to Wessely/ were without support from Berlin, they continued in their heretic-hunting, causing the pulpits to re-echo with imprecations against Wessely; and in Lissa his letter was publicly burned.[6]

Graetz's position recounts only the defamation of Wessely as a religious heretic. Graetz portrays Wessely as an innocent enlightened servant of his people. He sees only Wessely's point of view and is hardly objective in reaching his conclusion. Another narrow position is presented by Moshe Samet. He compares the controversies over Mendelssohn's Biur and Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet and concludes that each was vastly different. Samet notes that the argument with Wessely was "a strong and bitter polemic and included some of the most famous rabbis of the generation."[7] The two

famous rabbis he refers to are Ezekiel Landau of Prague and David Tevele of Lissa. Samet wonders if the rabbis were opposed to Wessely represented. He concludes that the opposition to Wessely was a highly emotional one in which charges were sometimes provoked by statements by peripherally involved rabbis and Maskilim.[8] This view is still one-sided as it places Wessely's initial letter in a context which is removed from his educational philosophy. Samet, no less than Graetz, views the controversy in terms which relate to personalities, previous acceptances of Wessely's works and intellectual and religious groups. This leads to a conclusion which redeems Wessely or minimizes the opposition as temporary.

With regard to this thesis, the important point is that any single conclusion drawn from secondary material like that quoted is only partially correct. The complex historical nature of the rabbinical opposition to Wessely is far too involved to be properly covered in this discussion. The essential reason for the limitation is the absence of primary text sources. The sermons denouncing Wessely, delivered by Landau and Tevele, were not available for this thesis, and since these sermons form the basis of the opposition, their absence leaves only secondary material. Keeping in mind the complexity of the situation and the limited scope of this thesis, the following discussion will briefly consider the charges against Wessely made by Ezekiel Landau and David Tevele. Although there are references to several rabbis, the sources agree that the important opposition came from Landau and Tevele, and a discussion of the other rabbis would only confuse the situation.[9]

On Shabbat Ha-Gadol, 1782, Ezekiel Landau, the chief Rabbi of Prague gave a sermon which criticized and condemned Wessely's educational philosophy.

Landau was not opposed in principle to secular knowledge as long as it was secondary to the study of Torah and Talmud. He considered Wessely's philosophy an inversion of that formula. Landau held that Divre Shalom Ve-emet stressed secular knowledge over the study of Talmud. Landau recognized the threat that the Maskilim, especially those who followed Wessely, presented; and he attacked those who sought rationalism when he wrote:

> And behold, because of our many sins, there have arisen various sects among our people; these sects, while differing from one another, have this in common--they all are injurious to a perfect faith.[10]

He considered the trend of reason in direct conflict with the proper faith. His argument against rationalism also involved his opposition to the study of German in schools:

> As soon as you become accustomed to the German language you will wish to read books which have nothing to do with improving the knowledge of the language /German/ but deal with research on the subject of religion and the Torah, and thus you may, G-d forbid, become estranged from your faith. For all who talk and write about religion from a rational point of view cause only harm.[11]

Landau was opposed to the instruction of German as a tool which might be used to weaken Jewish tradition. He recognized the necessity of such a language, but the need was not great enough to place study of the vernacular over study of Torah. It was logical that he should be opposed to Wessely's suggestion that Mendelssohn's translation be used as a text. Landau saw such a reform as a reduction of the Torah's primary role in Jewish education. He reasoned that the Bible should not become a vehicle for learning German, thereby opening the door to secular subjects:

> Seeing that the language of Mendelssohn's translation is deep and difficult for the child to understand, the teacher must in the first place teach the pupil pure German. Thus the day will pass with the teachers explaining Mendelssohn's German and the boy will miss the main points of the Torah.[12]

Ezekiel Landau, who wrote a special poem in Hebrew to honor the opening of a Realschule in Prague in 1782, came into conflict with Wessely over the question of lanaguage. It is important to note that such opposition seems misplaced, for it was not Wessely but Joseph II who decreed that Jews must learn the vernacular. Wessely did maintain in Divre Shalom Ve-emet that students should be taught in German with German texts, but Wessely also stressed the purity and elegance of all language. In order to develop the proper language facility, the students should be taught from the beginning in the spoken language. Further, Wessely did not omit the study of Hebrew texts; rather he urged a correct grammatical methodology that would purify the students' usage. Landau's opposition to the introduction of philosophy or rationalist study is a basic conflict between pre-modern and enlightened orthodoxy. Wessely never suggested that the study of language or secular subjects would lead away from G-d; rather he stressed that Torat Ha-Adam was essential if man was to acquire Yirat Ha-Shem--fear of the Lord. Thus, Landau's opposition was not a specific objection to the actual proposals Wessely presented in Divre Shalom Ve-emet but rather a projected fear that secular studies would lead to the deterioration of traditional Judaism.

Rabbi David Tevele of Lissa, a known Talmudic scholar and powerful Polish rabbi, was the second important opponent of Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Tevele, like Landau, used the occasion of Shabbat Ha-Gadol, 1782, to publicly defame Wessely. Even though seven years previous to this he had given

his approval to Yen Levanon, he questioned the personal integrity of Wessely in this sermon. He used such epithets as: "stupid, wicked, ignorant, despised one, immodest one, heretic, idiot, despiser of scholars, crude and shaven one."[13] Tevele recognized the need for the German language but only as a secondary subject. He thought that, "Jewish subjects must remain the essential and chief part of the curriculum."[14] He regarded Wessely's suggestions as placing too much emphasis on secular subjects. Tevele was also opposed to Wessely's systematic approach in the classroom. He considered the selection and grading process dangerous because it excluded students from important Jewish subjects and introduced them to vocational training:

> Do not listen to the foolish and evil one [Wessely] who writes that if the boy is not capable of studying the Talmud it is better for him to abandon these studies. Beware, ye communities of Yeshurun, of lending a willing ear to him, for we have often witnessed instances where a boy of twelve or thirteen seems to have difficulty in learning, but when he is a few years older and works hard he will excel in the study of the Torah.[15]

Tevele's pedagogic opposition to grading does not answer the problem of the ungraded heder; it merely stresses the universal obligation to study Torah. It is true that Wessely suggestd, "not all of us were created to be masters of the Talmud."[16] He was not suggesting that a student abandon his Jewish study, only that he be prepared for life in a realistic fashion.

Tevele's other main objection to Wessely was the proposal to teach ethics and morality as separate subjects. For Tevele these areas were more than adequately covered in the texts of the rabbis or in the philosophical tractates of the medieval sages. Tevele reasoned that extracting the moral teachings from Judaism and teaching them as a catechism would only prevent

the students from a proper study of Torah. Like Landau's opposition, Tevele's was based on the assumption that Wessely placed Jewish studies below secular subjects. Lastly, Tevele was very offended by Wessely's interpretation of the midrashic verse from Leviticus Rabbah. Tevele's anger and bitterness might well have been precipitated by Wessely's implication that a scholar without secular knolwdge was worthless, but Tevele's actual opposition to Wessely's proposals was substantive in only a narrow sense. He argued that the study of secular subjects should not be primary, which in fact Wessely never suggested in his philosophy. The controversy spurred by Tevele must be viewed as a reaction to the general philosophy reflected by Wessely rather than the specific proposals he explicated in Divre Shalom Ve-emet.

Because of their opposition to the first letter, Landau and Tevele gave Wessely the opportunity and motive to write three more letters. The three letters that follow Divre Shalom Ve-emet must be understood as Wessely's refutation of the rabbinic opposition. In April, 1782, just a few months after his first letter, Wessely published a letter addressed to the Jews of Trieste, Rav Tov L'Vet Israel. In accordance with the edicts of Joseph II, the Jewish community of Trieste had opened schools. These Jews were referred to Mendelssohn for some suitable texts. He sent them a list of appropriate titles and a copy of Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet. The community relished Wessely's proposals and requested a procedure for establishing such programs. Wessely's answer to the Trieste Jewish community was the second letter, Rav Tov L'Vet Israel. Wessely defended his position on the vernacular and

secular subjects. He stressed that education was the means of acquiring knowledge which in turn led primarily to Yirat Ha-Shem. He saw no conflict in the study of secular knowledge as an aid to the study of Torah:

> Wessely...leaves no doubt that the secular subjects are to be ancillary to the Jewish subjects. In fact, they are included for the sole purpose of acting as aids to the better understanding of Jewish subjects.[17]

This position was simply an elaboration of Wessely's earlier statements. In fact, these later letters contained very little new material on his educational philosophy; rather, they generally clarified previous comments.

The second letter did, however, contain some specifics not discussed earlier. These details included suggestions for a curriculum graded by age. Wessely wanted study to begin at age five with Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch. By age six the student should begin his study of a pure Hebrew with its grammar. Wessely emphasized, as he had in the first letter, the importance of grammar and word meaning. By age seven Wessely hoped that the student would be able to deal with the entire Pentateuch and parts of the Prophets. When the student reached age eight, there began a slow and careful exposure to Mishnah and Talmud. He was opposed to Talmud itself being taught before the age of thirteen; he urged that the fundamentals of Bible and language be acquired in the early years. Wessely thought that teaching in these areas should be gradual and deliberate so that the child would not become overburdened. This step-by-step approach toward Talmud was continued as the student progressed. Wessely noted that after each mishnah was understood, the gemara and its commentaries should be studied. This process should continue through the age of fifteen when the student would be prepared to study on his own the world of rabbinic wisdom.

In addition to the detailed grading by ages, Wessely suggested that the school day be limited in hours and divided into time periods:

> Four to five hours daily are allotted for the study of the Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud, while daily half-hour periods are reserved for (1) reading and writing the vernacular, (2) geography, and (3) reading travel books... Mathematical and natural sciences are reserved specifically for bright pupils. They are to be studied only during their spare hours....[18]

In this same discussion, Wessely related his concern for the child's capacity to study and learn within a regulated, systematic pedagogy. Wessely urged that the students be given time to play so that they would enjoy their studies more fully.

To support his contention that these proposals were not in conflict with the tradition or harmful to Judaism, Wessely repeated his argumentation on the vernacular and on secular knowledge. The purpose of acquiring any knowledge, religious or secular, was to create the proper attitude toward man and G-d, Yirat Ha-Shem, thereby fulfilling the true intent of the Torah. Wessely added to his previous statements his praise of earlier successful educational reform:

> There is David Friedlaender, for instance who labored for five years to establish the institute called Hinukh Ne'arim. There they study Hebrew, the Tarqum, German, and Hebrew grammar. They learn to read and write in German and French. They also study mathematics and geography. Tuition is free for the poor; but the wealthy pay.[19]

Wessely went on to note that the graduates had been successful. Some had been successful in the business world, while others had become teachers and some even scholars of Talmud. His point was very clear: educational reform such as he espoused was viable and needed. His proof extended beyond

Friedlaender's Freischule in Berlin; in the last part of the letter Wessely summarized the various political persons advocating tolerance, reform, and enlightenment. This led up to his glorification of Joseph as the most benevolent of all the rulers because of his Edicts of Toleration. In passing, he praised Frederick II of Prussia as the first example of a benevolent ruler and pointed to Dohm, by name, as the leading exponent of tolerance under Frederick.[20]

In closing the letter, Wessely attempted to apologize for his offensive remark about scholars who lacked secular knowledge. He defended himself by saying that he did not compose the midrashic statement and further, that he would have gladly withdrawn the statement to avoid the displeasure of the offended rabbis. Wessely did not try to evade the opposition to his first letter and offered his opponents an opportunity to cite publicly their grievances against him. He gave them three months after which he would assume that there was nothing wrong with either of the letters.

The second letter was a vehicle of clarification. Except for the specifications of age and time to the graded curriculum, the letter added little to what Wessely had already expounded in Divre Shalom Ve-emet. In contrast, the third letter was solely a means to present public support for his position in the controversy. Unlike Rav Tov L'Vet Israel, Ayn Mishpat, the third letter, offered no further explication of Wessely's philosophy. It was merely a collection of letters and poems in honor of Wessely. He cited the comments of rabbis from Italy who agreed with his educational philosophy. Such agreement was in line with the Sephardi tradition of Italian Jewry. Wessely's proposals for secular subjects and the vernacular did not pose the threat to the Sephardi community that they did to the

Ashkenazim. Realizing this, Wessely asked that those who appreciated his work for Trieste submit recommendations on his behalf. Seven rabbis wrote letters of support for Wessely's position:

> Rabbi Bassan; Rabbi Isaac Formigini of Trieste; Rabbi Samuel Yedidyah of Ferrara; Rabbi Simha Kalimarui; Rabbi Abraham Hayyim Karkuvia; Rabbi Abraham Pecifico of Venice; and Rabbi Hayyim Abraham Israel of Ancona.[21]

This letter, published two years later than Divre Shalom Ve-emet, contained these letters of endorsement and some personal footnotes by Wessely.

A year after Ayn Mishpat, Wessely wrote a complete summary of his philosophy and an open refutation of Tevele's sermon of 1782. Wessely wrote the fourth letter, Rehovot, in 1785 in order to elaborate more fully his views and to justify them, especially in light of Tevele's specific charges. He basically presented the same areas of concern: a systematic approach to education, division of knowledge into the religious and secular subjects, grading, and selection in the classroom. He re-emphasized the importance of the child's individuality. In the fourth letter he tended to group subjects more than in earlier letters, for instance: there were three areas of Jewish study--Mikra, Mishnah, and Talmud. He went on to explicate four specific reasons for studying secular subjects. The primary reason was that such knowledge aided the students in appreciating G-d and His wonders. Further, he argued that the secular subjects elucidated the Torah and its Laws. Another reason was the value of secular knowledge in and of itself. A man learned in worldly topics would be honored by others. Lastly, Wessely contended that the pressure of modernity demanded that Jews learn things outside the religious sphere. As in the second and third letters,

Wessely offered nothing his reader had not been exposed to previously.

Two of the three letters written subsequent to Divre Shalom Ve-emet, (the second and fourth) explicated the details of Wessely's proposals; they did not differ in any way regarding his philosophy of education. Wessely maintained that there was a duality of knowledge and that man's "fear of the Lord" could only be fulfilled with both aspects of knowledge. Wessely consistently argued for the vernacular and a systematic pedagogy which was mindful of the students' capabilities.

These later letters can only be understood in the context of the controversy over Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Their importance vis-à-vis Wessely's overall educational philosophy was minimal, "historically, it is his first letter, and not his later pronouncements, for which he will be remembered and with which his name will be associated."[22]

Having completed the task of analyzing Wessely's philosophy, it is necessary to consider once again, now more specifically, the factors that influenced Wessely in formulating that philosophy. The next area of discussion will consider these elements in order to understand the origin of Wessely's educational philosophy in Divre Shalom Ve-emet.

Chapter VII

The Influences Which Affected Wessely

Having considered specific elements in Wessely's educational philosophy, there remains a need to evaluate the factors that influenced him. These elements were discussed in broader terms in the first four chapters of this thesis. The stimuli were: the state of Jewish education; the atmosphere of enlightenment and developments in German education; the beginnings of emancipation and Joseph II's edicts; Wessely's own biography. The following discussion will consider the specific role of these influences in Wessely's educational philosophy.

The state of Jewish education which faced Wessely was critical. The heder system had been under attack since the late sixteenth century; yet few if any reforms were actually accomplished. As noted earlier, the lack of grading, the non-uniformity of curricula, the poor teaching, and the rigid structure of the heder required immediate attention;

> It is obvious that the educational system had many glaring shortcomings and was in need of improvement. Wessely was not the first to point this out. From time to time, long before his day, certain criticisms recurred. As early as the sixteenth century a number of rabbis and scholars had expressed dissatisfaction with Jewish education. But the recommendations of Wessely's predecessors had been ignored. Even his own proposals of educational reform would perhaps have met with the same fate, had not the receptivity of his age aided his task....they /those who preceded Wessely/ must have had their influence upon Wessely.[1]

The point is very clear: Wessely's proposals for reform and his philosophy must be placed within a historical continuum. The impetus to criticize the heder system was present previous to Wessely's time, and there had been no lack of solutions to meet that need. The rabbis who preceded Wessely, like Rabbis Judah Loew, Ephraim Lenchitz, and Isaiah Horowitz, had wanted a more systematic approach within Jewish education, teachers better prepared,

and an awareness of the students' abilities.[2] Some rabbis even stressed the importance of Bible, as would Wessely; a few saw fit to introduce some basic secular subjects outside the regular heder curriculum.

Wessely's innovation was neither in his perception of the need for reform in Jewish education, nor in his specific proposals for those reforms. Further, it was not in the philosophy which stressed the duality of knowledge and logically concluded that religious and secular subjects were complementary. Wessely's philosophy was distinctively Sephardi in its demand that Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam be taught equally. Within the Sephardi educational tradition secular subjects reflected the cosmopolitan nature of Sephardi Jewry. Although the concept of the duality of knowledge was foreign to the Ashkenazim, especially to the Polish, in essence it was not original to Wessely. Wessely's innovation stems from his synthesis of the Enlightenment which was so dominant at this time with the traditional elements of Jewish education. The apparent failure of earlier criticism coupled with the tenor of the times offered Wessely a unique opportunity.

If the condition of the heder provoked Wessely to desire changes, then the atmosphere of the Enlightenment with its philosophy of reason gave direction to that desire:

> It was an era when new and tumultuous forces were at work not only in Jewish life, but in the general scene as well: it was the age of the Enlightenment. The philosophy of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and John Locke meant rationalism, individualism, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism.[3]

These forces swept through Europe and left men aspiring to new goals. Tolerance and equality became causes while economic and social forces

produced democracy and benevolent despotism. Like his friend Mendelssohn, Wessely tried to capture the spirit of the age. Both men were keenly aware of the value of personal virtue expressed in the literature and philosophies of the time. For many it was virtue, not sophistication of scholarship, which was to be honored in a man; Mendelssohn was such an example:

> Those who knew Mendelssohn personally were even more impressed by his Tugend, his personal virtue, than by his philosophy or literary criticism. The ideal of virtue, so prominent a value of the Enlightenment, became the nub of Mendelssohn's religious philosophy.... He considered the moral life--not dogma--the essence of religion.[4]

Wessely shared this conviction with Mendelssohn as can be noted by his emphasis on nimusiut and Derech Eretz. Both of these concepts reflected the culture and humanity of man, and Wessely tried to persuade the Jews that fine etiquette, proper behavior, and worldly sophistication were essential aspects of knowledge. Wessely regarded Derech Eretz as the bridge between Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam. For him, virtue and the knowledge that produced virtue, nimusiut, allowed a man to be approved of by both Man and G-d. Derech Eretz was as necessary for Yirat Ha-Shem as it was for preparation in dealing with high ranking Gentile officials. Hence, Wessely translated the influence of the Enlightenment's idea of virtue into his insistence upon Derech Eretz.

Wessely's world, the world of Reason and Enlightenment, required a new approach to education. Naturalism and secularism were ideas that influenced the specifics of German pedagogy. Such developments in educational philosophy directly affected Wessely. Many specific elements which are later

reflected in Divre Shalom Ve-emet are found in the pedagogies of Basedow and Pestalozzi. Basedow and his philanthropinistic movement influenced the formulation of Wessely's philosophy. Basedow was known to both Wessely and Mendelssohn, and Jews were asked to participate in the Dessau Philanthropinum when it opened in 1774. "Wessely worked to gain supporters for it among the well-to-do Jewish families of Berlin. In fact, he sent one of his sons to the Dessau Philanthropinum."[5] Divre Shalom Ve-emet gives evidence of several similarities between the pedagogies of Basedow and Wessely.[6] Both men conceived of education as a utilitarian force in society and included vocational training with other subjects. Wessely suggested in the latter part of his first letter that those students who were not able to succeed in Talmud, should have vocational training, "a handicraft of his choice."[7]

Another direct similarity between Basedow and Wessely was their concern for the child's well-being. Basedow wanted the process of education to be less restrictive; hence, the methodologies of his school reflected this concern:

> Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the Philanthropinum were the methods. It was a basic principle that all education should be by means of pleasant and entertaining play. No child was to be forced in any way. Because play was the child's natural behavior....[8]

Basedow used this methodology in his instruction of language, arithmetic, moral values, and even social science. Such a pedagogy allowed the school to offer an array of classes so that students were involved in the natural process of maturation and mental development. Wessely wanted to vary the subjects in Jewish schools and also schedule them so that the students would enjoy their learning:

> Three to five hours of daily learning of Bible and Talmud are enough for a boy, and will not make his lessons a burdensome task to him. The child must be treated gently, he must learn gladly and hear words of love and joy from his teacher. The boys must also have a few hours of recreation and play, and the enlightened teacher should supervise this recreation period and take part in the boys' amusements, for they can learn moral values from their teachers even in ordinary conversation.[9]

Wessely stressed the importance of this open natural atmosphere in the school. This showed the direct influence of Basedow's practical application of Rousseau's naturalism; Wessely's adaptation of this influence reduced the universalism of the pedagogy without destroying the practical benefits.

Another important factor which both educators shared was the process of selection and "grading of pupils according to their standard of knowledge."[10] Wessely urged that grading and selection be an immediate reform in the Jewish school system. He argued that the child's ability was the primary factor and only after proper examination should a student be promoted. In terms of specific subjects in the curricula, it is clear that the Philanthropinum was a model for Wessely's suggestions to Trieste. Basedow's schedule and curricula for the third and fourth year included French, German, history, astronomy, handwriting, conversational French, mathematics, and morals. These subjects were arranged by the hour and there was time given for walks and play. Similarly, Wessely suggested that German, arithmetic, reading, geography, and history as well as Jewish subjects be included in the Trieste curriculum. Both Basedow and Wessely believed in the importance of languages as fundamentals in education. The similarities in the curricula and philosophies were further extended by the reality of Friedlaender's Freischule of 1781 and the later establishment of the Jewish Philanthropinum

of Frankfurt of 1803.[11] Thus Wessely's educational philosophy owed a great deal to Basedow and his philanthropinistic movement.

Another important educator who affected Wessely was Pestalozzi. His influence was not as direct as Basedow's, since there was no actual relationship between Pestalozzi and Wessely. As Simon noted, "The first letter of Divre Shalom Ve-emet appeared a year after 'Lenhart and Gertrude' by Pestalozzi (1781), but there was not any mention in it of the influence from that classic text."[12] Wessely was not involved with Pestalozzi as he was with Basedow, yet he shared some basic concepts with him. Both men conceived of education as a political or emancipatory tool. For Pestalozzi social reform and education were a single integrated process. "It has been said that his /Pestalozzi's/ statement, 'All my politics is education,' would be equally true if reversed and made to read, 'All my education is politics.'"[13] Wessely, like many Maskilim, believed that education was the most important means of equalizing Jews and Gentiles. He was convinced that Joseph's edicts were emancipatory, and was motivated to address himself to the role of education in Divre Shalom Ve-emet. "He /Wessely/ viewed education mainly as an instrument for carrying out a revolution in the social life of the Jews of his time...."[14] Hence, Wessely like Pestalozzi depended upon education to provide the knowledge necessary for citizens of an enlightened society.

Because both men agreed that the purpose of education was the betterment of mankind, each educator worked for the democratization of schools. Pestalozzi was one of the first to argue for the education of the poor and for the obligation of state education. Wessely in his second letter noted that Friedlaender's Freischule was free to poor students, even though it was

a private school. Wessely saw the potential benefits from the somewhat public nature of the Realschulen. Like Pestalozzi, Wessely was very concerned with the order of learning. This meant that both men considered as essential the need for a developmental psychology in teaching. Wessely emphasized that the fundamentals be acquired before advanced subjects be approached. The similarities between these educators underscore the contention that Wessely's philosophy was a synthesis of his contemporary world. The details which are common in Wessely, Basedow, and Pestalozzi suggest that the educational reform presented in Divre Shalom Ve-emet was not unique but a response to the educational developments of the Enlightenment.

A further influential element was the political situation of this period. Most specifically, the trends toward tolerance and religious equality were very effective forces. Wessely approached Joseph II's edicts with neither suspicion nor fear. "He considered the new laws concerning the Jews the first step in their complete emancipation...." [15] As was noted above in the comparison to Pestalozzi, Wessely believed that education had a very important role to play politically. Because he so firmly believed in the efficacy of education to equalize people, his philosophy was intended to provide Jews with the knowledge necessary to be accepted by the Gentiles. The edicts not only motivated Wessely to write, but the intent of the edicts influenced Wessely to urge for the study of secular subjects. The universal applicability of that knowledge would help Jews be acceptable. The emphasis on Derech Eretz, the aspects of virtue, reflected Wessely's concern that Jews be educated so they would be acceptable to the Gentile community. The Enlightenment did not merely legislate or decree tolerance, it believed in it. Wessely wanted tolerance toward Jews to become a reality, so he stressed

the need for an education in Torat Ha-Adam, worldly knowledge. Yet, as important as this political sphere was, Wessely never abandoned his contention that acceptance was not worth forsaking Torah. If education was the vehicle of emancipation, then Divre Shalom Ve-emet presented the specifications of that vehicle, allowing a Jew to be enlightened while remaining Jewish.

The last factor which influenced Wessely was his own life. The element which was most apparent in his philosophy was his attachment to the Sephardi custom. When Wessely lived in Amsterdam he was very impressed with the Sephardi educational system:

> He admired the order and gradation of work in the Talmud Torah in Amsterdam. He particularly approved of their curriculum because they taught Bible and gave prominence to the study of the Hebrew language and grammar. Furthermore, they maintained order and cleanliness, and had good buildings, the value of which impressed Wessely very much. His admiration of the Sephardi schools was based on one other factor. They combined secular instruction and the study of the vernacular with Jewish learning.[16]

The influence of his years in Holland was very clear in Divre Shalom Ve-emet. He contended that the duality of Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam was the basis of education. He was in fact trying to place a Sephardi custom within an Ashkenazi life-style. This point cannot be stressed enough, because Wessely's philosophy which emphasized secular learning with the vernacular was not foreign to all of Jewish tradition. Only within the Ashkenazi perspective was his philosophy either original or radical. Hence, Wessely's own life influenced his belief that a total education had to include Jewish and secular subjects.

At this juncture it is appropriate to draw some conclusions about Wessely's educational philosophy, its origin, and influence. The educational

philosophy of Wessely in Divre Shalom Ve-emet and in the three later letters was a synthesis of the influences discussed above. Wessely's overall philosophy and proposals for reform were not original. He presented a philosophical basis for a Jewish educational system with the duality of knowledge: Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam. His pedagogy reflected the philosophy of naturalism and shared a great deal with Basedow and Pestalozzi. Therefore, Divre Shalom Ve-emet must be understood within the context of Wessely's world. It was this world, with its forces of the Enlightenment, political tolerance, emancipation, and German educational reforms that Wessely absorbed into his philosophy. In conclusion Wessely translated these factors into a Jewish perspective. He was not the cause of these changes. Jewish education needed reforms, and such reforms were being formulated in the general society. Naphtali Herz Wessely was able to perceive those needs, seize upon the solutions of the Enlightenment, and articulate them in a fashion that stimulated forces --both favorable and unfavorable--within the Jewish community.

Although Wessely's work is more eclectic than a radical original declaration, there is a very important innovation to be considered. Divre Shalom Ve-emet presented an educational system in which the Jew as a Man was created. Wessely saw Derech Eretz, worldly virtue, as the bridge between the two types of knowledge. A Jew had the unique opportunity to be both Jew and Man, but this required an education that included religious and secular subjects. Wessely added a dimension by noting that Derech Eretz was the necessary element to be both Jew and Man. One could be a learned scholar and have no Derech Eretz and thus isolate himself within a closed Jewish

world. On the other hand, one might have secular knowledge and no Derech Eretz and be unable to acquire Yirat Ha-Shem. The man who had Derech Eretz could cull knowledge from both spheres and be the virtuous Jew of the enlightened society. The dimension of virtue--the prerequisite for acceptability--is the basis for any influence Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet had. In the next chapter the immediate effect of Wessely's educational philosophy will be considered.

Chapter VIII

The Influence of Wessely's Philosophy

The immediate effect of Wessely's educational philosophy was less than startling. By his own admission in the fourth letter, Rehovot, his plans were not being fulfilled. He recognized that the integration of secular and religious subjects had failed:

> But I deeply regret to say that the command of his Majesty the Emperor, has been fulfilled, but the Torah of G-d is forsaken. I sincerely intended that they should teach the beauties of the German language through study of the Torah....But look what they are doing! They spend many hours in teaching the boys reading and writing of German, and arithmetic; but the Torah of G-d they study as heretofore, in confused and corrupt language....instead of wheat, thistles grow; and noisome weeds instead of barley.[1]

Wessely's statement provides an introduction to the discussion of his influence on Jewish education. Although this admission of partial failure or disappointment must be taken into account, Wessely did effect certain immediate changes. These alterations, in light of Wessely's statement, were not always the desired reforms, but once the process of change began there was nothing to stop it.

As Wessely noted, he had wanted the vernacular studied with the translation of the Pentateuch. Wessely argued that German could be mastered through Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah. His proposal that a clear distinction be made between Hebrew and German resulted in a limitation of Hebrew as a language:

> Here is the disaster which happened to our people and to our literature during a hundred years or more: the separation of holy and profane [regarding languages], the leaving of Hebrew and Hebrew literature for limited Jewish needs only--and those broad human needs became matters for foreign languages, the "language of the state" [vernacular].[2]

Wessely's educational philosophy made the acquisition of the vernacular so central that some texts once studied in Hebrew became secondary. Wessely did not want to forsake Hebrew; he argued for a pure, grammatical "Holy" language. The intent of Wessely's pedagogy was to refine all language, because elegance, diction, and grammar were important aspects of nimusiut. One of the effects of the changed status of language in the curriculum was a need for new teachers. Wessely openly criticized the "confused language" used by the melamdim from Poland. The Realschulen with their systematic instruction required teachers to be fluent in German and Hebrew. Such teachers were rare, but Wessely urged that they be sought from Jewish communities far and near. Another effect of Wessely's philosophy was the study of Hebrew as a separate subject. Hebrew as a language also became one of the main thrusts of the Haskalah due largely to the important role it had in education and literature.

The systematic approach to German and Hebrew was reflected throughout Wessely's pedagogy. He argued that classrooms should be graded, curricula uniform, and texts rationally organized. He specifically urged that Jewish morals and ethics be systematically arranged in special "religion-texts." This resulted in the introduction of Jewish catechisms. Wessely did not originate the concept of catechisms but was one of the first to publicly argue for their use in Jewish schools:

> He [Wessely] ...urged that special books be written wherein the principles of the Jewish religion, as well as a general survey of all the laws and precepts, should be given...[3]

Wessely's proposals reflected the desire of his fellow Maskilim to formulate a system of religious fundamentals:

> The indifference of most of the Maskilim to the study of the Talmud, as well as their penchant for clarity necessitated...the introduction of a new systematic manual for the instruction of religion.[4]

The subject of "religion" was a totally new concept in Jewish education. Prior to Wessely and the Haskalah the fundamentals of faith and ethics were derived directly from the rabbinic or biblical texts studied in the heder. With the advent of the Realschulen, students studied secular subjects and there was less time for the traditional textual study; hence, there was a need for a text which provided the child with an organized synthesis of Judaism:[5]

> Between the years 1782-1884 there appeared in Western Jewry some one hundred sixty textbooks which undertook to give a systematic presentation of the Jewish religion.[6]

Wessely's philosophy of a uniform systematic education could be clearly seen in the publication and use of catechisms. In the respect that his Divre Shalom Ve-emet was one of the first educational declarations of the Haskalah, he was influential in the area of catechisms.

Wessely's influence was directly felt in specific schools and geographic areas. His second letter manifested his involvement with the schools of Trieste. The third letter reflected his broader influence among the Jews of Italy. Within his own geographical area of Germany, Wessely's influence was visible as well. He was very involved in German-Jewish schools and was one of the founders of Friedlaender's Freischule in Berlin:

> The Berlin Freischule became the laboratory for the application of Wessely's educational program....The German-Jewish schools in the Austrian crown lands were modeled after the Freischule, and bore the stamp of Wessely's educational ideals. On May 2, 1782, the Jüdisch-deutsche Schule was opened in Prague. On

> March 27, 1783, the first public examination was held there, and the pupils gave a good account of their knowledge...By 1800, Bohemia numbered twenty-one German-Jewish schools, and the educational program was considered a success there.[7]

Wessely's program for secular studies and the use of the vernacular was the primary characteristic of schools cited above. His influence through Divre Shalom Ve-emet was direct inasmuch as his letters provided a paradigm for Jewish educational reform. Wessely's synthesis of educators contemporary with him gave the Jewish community a rationale for their own educational reform and a solution to the problems of the heder system.

Wessely was influential because the time had come for changes in the educational, religious, and political life of the Jew. Within this setting of change, Divre Shalom Ve-emet was viewed as one of the original statements of the Haskalah. Wessely's educational philosophy provided a foundation for the historical, theological, philosophical, and social concerns to which the Maskilim addressed themselves:

> The entire programme of the Haskalah was contained in this manifesto by Wessely. The distinction between the "law of G-d" and "the law of Man," followed by Mendelssohn's Jerusalem was also an early formulation of J. L. Gordon's aphorism, "Be a Jew at home and a man abroad." The emphasis on knowledge of a "pure language" as the basis for general erudition; the complete opposition to Yiddish; the faith that an era was beginning when reason and human fraternity would prevail in all religious communities; the fervent expectations engendered by the enlightened "benevolent kings" and the Jewish notables who "attend upon monarchs"; the appeal for loyalty to the ruler and obedience to the laws of the land; the exhortation to become productive by learning manual trades--these were the basic slogans of the Haskalah school of thought for a long period.[8]

Just as Divre Shalom Ve-emet was a paradigm which influenced curricular revision and classroom reform in German-Jewish schools, so it was also a composite declaration of the central causes of the Haskalah.

As noted earlier, the Maskilim believed in the power of education to provide social salvation for both the individual and the group. The importance of Derech Eretz in Wessely's philosophy emphasized the role of virtue in Haskalah thought. Wessely wanted the Jew to have knowledge based upon a foundation of proper attitudes. He argued that without the proper attitudes knowledge was worthless. This position gave the Maskilim a starting point in their crusade for a new Jewish identity that was acceptable to all men. Divre Shalom Ve-emet became a primer for those who wished to see the Jew--the new secularly educated Jew--emancipated.

The fact that Wessely wrote in pure grammatical Hebrew and proposed that Hebrew be taught in such a fashion also influenced the formation of a Hebrew periodical---Ha-Measef. It was founded in 1786 in Königsberg by a group of Maskilim motivated to publicly defend Wessely against the rabbis. Ha-Measef became the literary forum of the early Haskalah. Written in Hebrew and some German, it provided a medium for expressing all of the thoughts, desires, and arguments of the Maskilim. Wessely helped edit the work and wrote many poems and articles which were included in the periodical. The Maskilim's concern for education was apparent by the frequent number of articles or letters discussing the subject. Such an article was Gidul Banim by David Caro.

Caro wrote this series on a proper pedagogy between 1810-1811. Although this was some thirty years after Divre Shalom Ve-emet, it was an example of the kind of educational statement found in Ha-Measef subsequent to Wessely. Wessely's influence can be seen in Caro's concern for an educational system that prepared the student for life. Caro in his opening

article wrote, "The inner joy of the soul is built upon seder hochma--systematic pedagogy. It is time we become enlightened on the matter and know it is certainly a proper order."[9] Here the desire for a systematic approach to education transcended educational practicalities and became a philosophical virtue. Caro also elaborated on the importance of the Jew's position in the greater society. Like Wessely, he saw education as a means of opening the Jew to the greater community. He wrote in the same article:

> And further our souls lack everything if they lack but one thing, and it is--the society, because man is societal by his nature. And thus, the society has precedence over individual man, like the precedence of a mother over her son.[10]

Caro wanted education to provide the knowledge and attitudes that would allow the Jew to live in Ha-hevra--society. Like Wessely, he argued that the Jew should and could function in the Gentile community.

A further example of Wessely's influence on Caro is the subject of teachers. Both men recognized that sweeping curricular reforms were worthless unless the teacher was able to translate the theory into actual instruction. Wessely urged in 1782 that teachers needed to be gentle, concerned with the children, and aware of the children's abilities so that education would be more natural. In 1811 Caro wrote that teachers should be concerned with the overall moral education of the child:

> /There is a/ need that the teacher be concerned to strengthen the senses and to teach them /the children/ the straight path /virtue/ in order that the child might discover with their aid /the teachers'/ every matter as it actually exists.[11]

The important similarity between Caro and Wessely was not the specific requirements of teacher competence, but rather the recognition of the teacher's influence on the child's development in non-instructional areas.

The educational reform espoused through Ha-Measef urged that teachers as well as curricula were important. Caro's article was an example of the educational philosophy which continued to develop after Wessely's initial involvement and influence.

The last area in which Wessely had some immediate influence was the educational philosophy of Israel Jacobson (1768-1825). Jacobson was the founding father of the Reform Jewish movement in Germany. It should be noted that whether or not Jacobson knew Wessely personally is unimportant. They were both known disciples of Mendelssohn and shared his philosophy that education was the most important factor in the emancipation and enlightenment of the Jews. Jacob Marcus notes how important Mendelssohn was in Jacobson's life:

> The decisive factor...in the career of Jacobson is that he was a Mendelssohnian. The efforts of Mendelssohn to bring enlightenment, his desire to assimilate contemporary secular culture, impressed itself only upon a few leaders. But these devoted disciples, men like Jacobson, carried on his work. The best instrument for this purpose, they decided, was the school. Through this institution they hoped to influence the younger generation. It is not accidental, therefore, that there arose a series of Jewish schools from the latter days of Mendelssohn on into the nineteenth century.[12]

It is logical to assume that if Jacobson was so intimately connected with Mendelssohn then Jacobson would know of Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet which Mendelssohn regarded highly. There is no evidence available which suggests that Jacobson read Wessely's work, but it would be unlikely to assume that two men so interested in education and both disciples of Mendelssohn would not know of each other's works.

In addition to the possibility of association with Wessely, Jacobson agreed with the major tenets of Wessely's educational philosophy. This

included the role of the school as emancipatory, the importance of a pure Hebrew, and the need for a systematic pedagogy like Basedow's:

> Jacobson looked to education as the key to all Jewish hopes. The school would raise the Jew mentally, morally, socially, religiously. Through children, he believed he would be able to influence even the older generation ....He wished to emphasize the Hebrew language. Education would teach the Jew to be rational and thus bring a change for the better in his religious life. Education would fit him into his surroundings and prepare him for the emancipation which was sure to come some day....Secular education ...was for Jacobson a means to effect a complete inner reformation of the individual Jew and to make him acceptable, to the world at large...Rousseau's educational ideals influenced him strongly...through the teachings of Basedow.[13]

Whether Jacobson was directly influenced by Wessely's views or whether he drew upon several philosophies, Wessely's among them, it is clear that Jacobson was in total agreement with Wessely on pedagogy. The essential difference between Jacobson and Wessely was the direction in which each saw the religious development of the Jew. Jacobson saw a need for religious innovation, while Wessely was content with the traditional religious life.

While Wessely's influence, direct or indirect, is apparent in Jacobson's position, it would be dangerously simplistic to conclude that Reform educational philosophy is directly traceable to Wessely. None of the men, schools, or pedagogies which Wessely influenced reflect the philosophy of maintaining only supplemental religious education. Wessely's effect on the instruction of language, Hebrew or the vernacular; the need for texts of catechisms; the later educational philosophy of the Maskilim in Ha-Measef; and the position of Israel Jacobson cannot be translated into a conclusion that Divre Shalom Ve-emet proposed the establishment of "Sunday Schools." Kurzweil's conclusion that, "The direct descendant of this type of school /the Realschulen which followed Wessely's program/ is the present-day Jewish Sunday School in the United States,"[14] is both superficial and in contradiction

to both the intent and detail of Wessely's philosophy as discussed in previous chapters. However, the rejection of such a conclusion does not alter the influence Wessely did have on education in the nineteenth century.

Wessely's influence, like his Divre Shalom Ve-emet, cannot be viewed in an historical vacuum. The changes in education that took place subsequent to Wessely were not produced by a single factor but by a combination of elements present at the time. Hence, Jews throughout Europe pursued the acquisition of the vernacular and secular knowledge, not simply because they were urged to do so in Divre Shalom Ve-emet but because the forces which represented modernity, Wessely among them, persuaded Jewish leaders of such a need. Wessely's influence was one of many factors which affected the transition of the Jew from the ghetto into society. Naphtali Herz Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet must be understood as one of the first wedges hammered into the ghetto walls of traditional Judaism.

Epilogue

Five generations after Wessely wrote Divre Shalom Ve-emet another German Jew confronted the problem of Jewish education. Franz Rosenzweig saw in a revitalized program of education the solution to German Jewry's dormant Jewish consciousness. The center of Jewish life had shifted from the family to the synagogue and Rosenzweig proposed a system which would bring the Jew back to experiencing his Judaism. Study would begin with the Siddur and Mahzor since prayer was the essential element of synagogue life. The Hebrew language would be taught in a pure grammatical style and the Pentateuch would be studied in Hebrew with the traditional commentaries. The values of Judaism would be culled from the rabbinic sources, since no catechism could present the depth of Jewish law and lore. Talmud and Midrash were subjects studied in the seventh through ninth years of Rosenzweig's curriculum.[1]

Rosenzweig's system as outlined in his letter, "The Time Has Come," was a twentieth-century formulation of Wessely's letter Divre Shalom Ve-emet. Both men approached Jewish education and the needs of their respective communities with the same intent but from opposite directions: the continued development of Jewish identity. Wessely wanted the Jew to acquire the vernacular and secular knowledge in a hope that such education would hasten the Jew's emancipation. Rosenzweig wanted the Jew to acquire Hebrew and knowledge of the traditional texts in the hope that such education would deepen the experience of being Jewish. Rosenzweig and Wessely confronted different historical settings and the respective forces in those settings precipitated different responses. The process that began during Wessely's period produced the assimilated Jew of Rosenzweig's time. Secular education had led to the

abandonment of Jewish tradition; now Jewish education attempted to redirect Jewry back to the sense of tradition which it left in the ghetto.

Just as Rosenzweig's time demanded a reappraisal of Jewish education, so too the contemporary American Jewish period requires such an evaluation. Today's Jewish educational philosophy is predominantly one of supplemental schooling. Secular knowledge is now the primary goal of Jews, while instruction in the traditional texts and Hebrew language is minimal. Neither Wessely's balance between Torat Elohim and Torat Ha-Adam nor Rosenzweig's insistence upon the essential elements of daily Jewish life are found in the Reform Jewish educational philosophy of today. It would be well to note that both Wessely and Rosenzweig began with the assumption of providing as complete a Jewish education as possible. This assumption among many contemporary Jewish educators receives either immediate rejection or hesitant denials. Supplemental, not total, Jewish education is the accepted norm in today's Jewish communities. Curricula which run the gamut from "value oriented" to "mini courses" to "conference-plans" provide little of the Jewish content that Wessely or Rosenzweig would have desired. Since secular knowledge is now accepted, we must reconsider the role assigned to Jewish education.

A philosophy like Wessely's which proposed a balance between Jewish and secular areas is reflected in some modern-day school programs. Although there is no way to re-establish the Jewish environment that supported Wessely's educational philosophy, Jewish education must still offer the necessary fundamentals of a Jewish identity. Supplemental religious schools may well provide the knowledge necessary for Jewish identity in a secular society. If so, such knowledge is the bare minimum required. Jewish identity, already placed outside a total Jewish environment, needs more than supplemental know-

ledge if it is to continue development.[2] Wessely's emphasis on the complementary nature of religious and secular knowledge might be the key to a new Jewish educational philosophy which will incorporate the secular and religious worlds of today's Jew.

Naphtali Herz Wessely's Divre Shalom Ve-emet and Franz Rosenzweig's "The Time Has Come" are examples of educational philosophies which synthesized the historical forces of their respective times. If Judaism is to continue to survive, then education must remain one of its primary concerns. There is a need for an educational philosophy which confronts the contemporary historical setting and combines the traditional Jewish and relevant secular knowledge. Jewish education must become once again the force that determines the quality of one's Jewish identity.

This thesis began with Kant's statement, "Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes him."[3] This influenced Wessely in his belief that reform in Jewish education would make the Jew a man. For this generation of Jewish educators Kant's statement might be rephrased: "A Jew can only remain a Jew through education. He is as Jewish as his education makes him."

Footnotes

Preface

1. Immanuel Kant, Education (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 6.

2. His works on synonyms and etymologies are still considered classics. A later chapter will deal with these works. See Joshua Barsilay, "Naphtali Herz Wessely," Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem: The MacMillian Co.,1970), Vol. 16, pp. 461-463; Meyer Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936), pp. 107-129.

3. The original was Divre Shalom Ve-emet (1782). After some controversy on the matter, Wessely responded with three later letters: Rav Tov le-Bat Israel (1782), Rehovot (1783) and finally Mishpat (1784). All were later published under the title of Divre Shalom Ve-emet (1784) in one volume.

4. Barsilay, p. 463.

5. The first work is Samuel Margoshes, "A History of the Curriculum of the Jewish Schools in Germany from the Middle of the 17th to the Middle of the 19th Century." This was a manuscript used by Emanuel Gamoran in his work, Changing Concepts in Jewish Education (New York: The MacMillian Co., 1925). The second work is the doctoral thesis of Professor Charles Ozer. It was written at Dropsie College and entitled "Naphtali Herz Wessely, Poet and Educator."

6. Segel's rabbinic thesis reflects some knowledge of Wessely but lacks any historical perspective. Furthermore, the amount of secondary material now available for this topic is so greatly increased that there has been no duplication of effort.

7. See bibliography.

Footnotes

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3. Emanuel Gamoran, Changing Concepts in Jewish Education (New York: The MacMillian Co., 1925), p. 85.

4. Ibid., emphasis mine.

5. Jacob Katz, Tradition and Crisis (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 185.

6. Safrai, p. 149.

7. Ibid., p. 151.

8. Ibid., p. 158.

9. Elyahu Ashtor, "Sephardic education in the medieval period," Encyclopedia Chinuchit (Jerusalem: Office of Education and Culture, 1964), p. 252.

10. Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World (New York: Atheneum, 1972), pp. 374-376.

11. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1895), Vol. 3, p. 235.

12. Elijah Bortniker, "Education (Jewish)," Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem: The MacMillian Co., 1970), Vol. 6, p. 418.

13. Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with People (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 32.

14. Bortniker, p. 408.

15. Isaac Tebersky, "Ashkenazi education in the medieval period," Encyclopedia Chinuchit, p. 252.

16. Zborowski, p. 32.

17. Bortniker, p. 404.

18. Ibid., p. 405.

19. Zborowski, p. 33.

20. Isidore Fishman, The History of Jewish Education in Central Europe (London: Edward Goldstein, 1944), p. 85.

21. Simon Greenberg, "Jewish Educational Institutions," in The Jews, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), Vol. II, p. 389.

22. Gamoran, pp. 76-77.

23. Ozer, p. 79.

24. Gamoran, pp. 82-83.

25. Ozer, p. 79.

26. Ibid.

27. Zborowski, p. 92.

28. Katz, p. 190.

29. Ibid., p. 189.

30. Zborowski, p. 89.

31. Ibid., p. 97.

32. Gamoran, pp. 202-203.

33. Fishman, p. 86.

34. Gamoran, p. 87.

35. Katz, p. 184.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 187.

38. Gamoran, p. 91.

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1. Peter Gay, The Enlightenment An Interpretation (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), Vol. II, p. 398.
2. Paul Hazard, European Thought in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 197.
3. Edward J. Power, Main Currents in the History of Education (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), p. 457.
4. Gay, II, p. 503.
5. Power, pp. 456-457.
6. Hazard, p. 189.
7. Gay, II, p. 507.
8. Emmanuel Kant, Education (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 15.
9. Ibid., p. 7.
10. Power, p. 477.
11. Luela Cole, A History of Education (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1950), p. 416.
12. Power, p. 493.
13. Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilai, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," PAAJR, VOL. XXV, (1956), p. 5.
14. Ibid., p. 1.
15. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1895), Vol. V, p. 298.
16. Eisenstein-Barzilai, p. 33.
17. Jacob Katz, Tradition and Crisis (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 265.
18. Eisenstein-Barzilai, p. 4.
19. Raphel Mahler, A History of Modern Jewry (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 147.
20. Selma Stern-Täubler, "The Jew in the Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation," Historia Judaica, II, (October 1940), p. 111.

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3. Selma Stern-Täubler, "The Jew in the Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation," Historia Judaica, II (October 1940), pp. 111-112.

4. Simon Dubnov, History of the Jews (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), Vol. IV, p. 346.

5. Christian Wilhem Dohm, "Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews," Readings In Modern Jewish History, Ellis Rivkin ed., (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1957), p. 19.

6. Ibid., p. 66.

7. Stern-Täubler, p. 105.

8. Max Kohler, "Educational Reforms in Europe in their Relation to Jewish Emancipation (1778-1878)," The Jewish Forum, II (February 1919 and March 1919), p. 132.

9. Saul K. Padover, The Revolutionary Emperor, Joseph II (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934), p. 181.

10. Max Grunwald, History of Jews of Vienna (Philadelphia: JPS, 1936), p. 148.

11. T.C.W. Blanning, Joseph II and Enlightened Despotism (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 19.

12. Ibid., p. 16.

13. Padover, p. 189.

14. Dubnov, IV, p. 337.

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16. Ibid., p. 256.

17. Kohler, p. 83.

18. These men include Max J. Kohler, G. F. Moore, Meyer Waxman, and Louis Segal (in his Rabbinic thesis).

19. Michael Meyer, The Origins of the Modern Jew (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 23.

20. Ibid.

21. Padover, p. 183.

22. Grunwald, pp. 153-154.

23. Ibid., p. 148.

24. Mahler, p. 255.

25. Padover, p. 184.

26. Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilai, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," PAAJR, XXV (1956), p. 24.

27. Mahler, p. 255.

28. Dubnov, p. 339.

29. Padover, p. 187.

30. Mahler, p. 255.

31. Padover, p. 182.

32. Grunwald, pp. 157-158.

33. Charles Ozer, "Jewish Education in 'The Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation,'" Historia Judaica Vol. IX (1947), p. 86.

34. Padover, p. 184.

35. Grunwald, pp. 160-161.

36. Meyer, p. 47.

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38. Ozer, p. 86.

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2. David Freidrichfeld, Zecher Zadik (Amsterdam: 1809), p. 1.
3. Joseph Klausner, Ha-historia shel Ha-sifrut Ha-'ivrit Ha-hadasha (Jerusalem: 1952), p. 90.
4. Z. E. Kurzweil, Modern Trends in Jewish Education (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), p. 13.
5. Klausner, p. 90.
6. Kurzweil, p. 13.
7. Klausner, p. 92.
8. Freidrichfeld, p. 2.
9. Klausner, p. 90.
10. Kurzweil, p. 20.
11. Freidrichfeld uses this term frequently in referring to Wessely throughout his book.
12. Meyer Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936), p. 119.
13. Kurzweil, p. 19.

Footnotes

Chapter V

1. See Supra., p. 40ff.
2. Naphtali Herz Wessely, Divre Shalom Ve-emet (Berlin: 1782), title page.
3. Charles Ozer, "Jewish Education in 'The Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation,'" Historia Judaica Vol. IX (1947), p. 87.
4. Wessely, p. 7.
5. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
6. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
7. Note that the Jewish world which excluded such subjects was predominantly Ashkenazi, but Wessely bridged both worlds.
8. Wessely, p. 3.
9. Ibid.
10. Raphael Mahler, A History of Modern Jewry (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 167.
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16. Ibid., p. 21.
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18. See Supra, p. 34.
19. Wessely, p. 23.
20. Ibid., p. 24.
21. Ibid., p. 21
22. Ibid.
23. Ozer notes that his assumption is probably wrong, p. 92.
24. Wessely, p. 25.
25. Ibid., p. 17.
26. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

27. Ibid., p. 18.

28. Ibid., p. 32.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 25.

32. Moshe Pelli, Naphtali Herz Wessely's Attitude toward the Jewish Religion as a mirror of a Generation in Transition (During the Early Period Hebrew Haskalah in Germany) (Beer Sheva: University of Negev, 1971), pp. 10-12; Mordechai Eliav, Ha-Hinukh Ha-Yehudi be-Germania be-yeme ha-Haskala veha-Imantsipatisia (Jerusalem: 1960), p. 41.

33. Naphtali Herz Wessely, Yen Levanon (Warsaw: 1884), p. 65.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., p. 147.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 148.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., p. 158.

40. Ibid., p. 362.

41. Ibid.

42. Pelli suggests a definite change in the importance of secular knowledge between Yen Levanon and Divre Shalom Ve-emet, whereas Klausner and Eliav find no change in Wessely's position. Pelli maintains that the latter work is radically different in this matter.

43. Wessely, Yen Levanon, p. 362.

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7. Moshe Samet, "M. Mendelssohn, N. H. Wessely and the Rabbis of Their Time," Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the land of Israel (Haifa: 1970), p. 254, (Hebrew).

8. Ibid., pp. 244-246.

9. There is also some question about whether the Gaon of Vilna was involved. And there is doubt as to where Wessely's pamphlet was actually burned publicly. Cf. Ozer and Samet.

10. Ozer, p. 138.

11. Klausner, p. 109.

12. Ibid., p. 55.

13. Ozer, p. 142.

14. Ibid.

15. Kurzweil, pp. 36-37.

16. Naphtali Herz Wessely, Divre Shalom Ve-emet (Berlin: 1785), p. 32.

17. Ozer, p. 146.

18. Wessely, p. 56.

19. Ibid., p. 62.

20. Wessely's specific notation of Dohm's work might suggest an even closer connection between Wessely and Dohm's similar historical analysis of the Jews' educational plight. Supra. (chapter 4)

21. Ozer, p. 147.

22. Kurzweil, p. 36.

Footnotes

Chapter VII

1. Charles Ozer, "Jewish Education in 'The Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation,'" Historia Judaica Vol. IX (1947), pp. 153-154.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 80.

4. Michael A. Meyer, The Origins of the Modern Jew (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 26.

5. Ozer, p. 149.

6. A. E. Simon, "Ha-philanthropinism Ha-pedogogi Va-hachinukh Ha-yehudi," The Jubilee Book In Honor of M. M. Kaplan (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1952), p. 172.

7. Naphtali Herz Wessely, Divre Shalom Ve-emet (Berlin: 1785), p. 32.

8. Luella Cole, A History of Education (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1950), p. 424.

9. Wessely, p. 68.

10. Z. E. Kurzweil, Modern Trends in Jewish Education (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), p. 20.

11. For a study of an actual Jewish Philanthropinum which came after Wessely see: Arthur Galliner, "The Philanthropinum in Frankfurt - Its Educational and Cultural Significance for German Jewry," Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany (London: East and West Library, 1958).

12. Simon, p. 172.

13. Harry G. Good, James D. Teller, A History of Western Education (London: MacMillian Co., 1960), p. 243.

14. Kurzweil, p. 41.

15. Meyer Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936), p. 114.

16. Ozer, p. 152.

Footnotes

Chapter VIII

1. Naphtali Herz Wessely, Divre Shalom Ve-emet (Berlin: 1785), pp. 203-205.

2. Joseph Klausner, Ha-historia Shel Ha-sifrut Ha-'ivrit Ha-hadasha (Jerusalem: 1952), p. 108.

3. Meyer Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936), p. 117.

4. Isaac Barzilai, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," PAAJR, Vol. XXV, 1956, pp. 35-36.

5. Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Manuals and Catechisms of the Jewish Religion in the Early Period of Emancipation," Studies in Nineteenth Century Jewish Intellectual History, Alexander Altmann, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 48.

6. Ibid.

7. Charles Ozer, "Jewish Education in 'The Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation,'" Historia Judaica, Vol. IX (1947), p. 155.

8. Raphel Mahler, A History of Modern Jewry (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 166.

9. David Caro, "Gidul Banim," Ha-Measef (Tamuz 1810), p. 28.

10. Ibid., p. 29.

11. Caro, (Tishri 1811), p. 27.

12. Jacob R. Marcus, Israel Jacobson: The Founder of the Reform Movement in Judaism (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1972), p. 20.

13. Ibid., pp. 21; 19.

14. Z. E. Kurzweil, Modern Trends in Jewish Education (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), p. 44.

Footnotes

Epilogue

1. Z. E. Kurzweil, Modern Trends in Jewish Education (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), pp. 211-214.

2. This does not include the identity of the Jew in Israel.

3. Immanuel Kant, Education (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 6.

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