

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
New York School

REPORT ON THE THESIS OF HAROLD T. MILLER

TITLE: Joseph Perl (1773-1839) -- Maskil, Satirist and Glician  
Public Figure 153pp., including notes

Mr. Miller's thesis is an analysis of the literary career of Joseph Perl, a leader in the first generation of the Galician Haskalah. It contains a lengthy biographical sketch, a detailed summary of Perl's two Hebrew books -- MEGALLEH TEMIRIN and BOCHEN ZADDIK, and concludes with two chapters comparing these works and analysing Perl's opinions.

Mr. Miller has read all of the important biographical literature in Hebrew and English and presents a good synopsis of Perl's career. Much of his material is drawn from Klausner's treatment of Perl.

The two chapters summarizing Perl's major books read well. They are repertorial and not analytical.

In the final chapters Perl's techniques are described. The two works are compared. Mr. Miller decides the BOCHEN ZADDIK is the "more sober work...it presents Perl's personal reflections...in addition it paints a much more all-embracing picture of Jewish society as Perl saw it." On the other hand, MEGALLEH TEMIRIN is more "artistic" when dealing with the portrayal of character.

He is very careful to evaluate Perl's career within the contemporary social context, and does not approach it with the dubious tools of historical hindsight. Nevertheless, it is my feeling that a greater stress could have been put on the place of social and economic factors in Perl's career. From the literary point of view, a study of the influence of the style of hasidic literature upon Perl ought to have likewise been included.

Mr. Miller shows marked ability in his handling of his theme. The thesis is quite acceptable.

Dr. Ezra Spicehandler

June, 1954

Joseph Perl

Maskil, Satirist, and Galician Public Figure

by

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requirements for the degree of Rabbi  
and Master of Hebrew Letters.

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To my father, who supported me morally  
and financially, through many years of formal  
education, this thesis is gratefully and  
lovingly dedicated.

H. T. M.

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Part I - Perl's Life

Chapter One

His World: His Development in Light  
of  
His Social Environment

With the Partition of Poland in 1772 the territory of Galicia fell to the Austrian Empire. This served in effect to sever Galicia from Eastern Europe and to place it with the West. Galician Jews, who having lived a rather secluded and thoroughly original life since the Middle Ages, suddenly became the objects of Joseph II's reformatory experiments. In his edict of emancipation, Joseph II conferred upon the Jews numerous rights, as well as numerous restrictions. By all accounts the edict had a deep and lasting effect upon Galician Jewry, especially those of the large cities. This effect was felt most in the field of secular education. State schools which were opened to Jewish youth served to introduce German language and literature to Galician Jewry.<sup>2</sup> For the next century, the general social character of the territory appeared to be an odd and often violent combination of East and West.

Due to its central advantageous geographical position, early eighteenth century Galicia became a cultural and economic bridge which connected Germany and Austria on the West to Russia and Poland on the East. Raw materials and food-stuffs were shipped

through Galicia from eastern Europe to Germany, and the West shipped back manufactured products in exchange. The economy of the territory profited and expanded as a result of all this commercial activity. East Galician mercantile cities of Lemberg, Tarnopol, and Brody thrived.

The Jewish merchants of the territory shared considerably in the prosperous merchantile trade. In all probability they dominated the field completely. But these Jewish merchants dealt in other commodities besides produce and manufactured goods, for in the course of their far reaching travels through various cultural-merchantile centers they served to spread the pollen grains of radically new ideas which had already created a stir in Germany and which were now taking shape ~~in~~ independently in Poland<sup>3</sup>, ideas which some forty years hence would blossom into the Galician Haskalah movement.

While a stream of Jewish scholars had long flowed from Poland into Germany to occupy positions as teachers, *831p 187* Rabbis, and Shochtim, it was not long

before a reverse process started to take place. The Governments of Austria and also Russia had embarked upon programs of state Jewish schools. German Jewish teachers and administrators were imported to provide Polish Jewish children with more rounded educations than they had heretofore been receiving in their Hadarim.

The most notable among the imported German educators were the extremely radical, Herz Hamberg, who conducted all the Jewish State schools in Galicia, and Aaron Friedenthal who established a seminary for teachers of these schools. These German Maskilim not far removed from Mendelsohn and Friedlander, and tinted with the Romantic lore of Rousseau and Voltaire, placed their faith in the new Liberalism, as exemplified by the rule of the enlightened despots. They believed fervently that when the Jews would qualify for full citizenship by means of adopting western habits, western clothes, good manners, and a knowledge of the language of the land, they would then prove themselves worthy of the attention of their gracious monarchs who would at that time be pleased to bestow upon them the unlimited civil equality they sought. These men constantly



strove for better secular education as a means to bringing about their desired aim.

This period of the partitioning of Poland was also accompanied by strong internal schisms within Polish Jewry itself. Politically the Jews of Poland were now divided between the empires of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Spiritually they were split between the Hassidim and the Minnagdim. In Galicia, a short time after the partitions, Hassidism emerged the triumphant element.

Thus, we see that at the time of Joseph Perl's birth in 1773, scarcely a year after Poland's first partition, there were three primary elements which pervaded Galician Jewish life. They were, business and trade, Hassidism and its ever dwindling opposition, and now the new and exciting early eastern Haskalah movement which was just beginning to take form. These three elements were also primary in the life of Joseph Perl.

Perl was born on November 10, 1773, the only child of Todros and Miriam Perl. Todros was a prosperous Galician wine merchant who conducted an extensive import

export trade encompassing most of eastern and central Europe.

In manner and temperament, Perl's parents were direct opposites<sup>6</sup>. Todros was the hard, practical, strong willed businessman who <sup>TYPICAL OF</sup> ~~may be found in~~ all new and booming economies. He was a strict perfectionist, exacting the very best both from himself and from others. Perl's mother, on the other hand, was soft spoken, tender-hearted, and known for her charming and clever wit. Joseph's temperament was a combination of the two. Like his father he was stubborn, intensely loyal and strong-willed. He despised falsehood and chicanery in any form in which it was to be found. He himself was scrupulously honest, and demanded high standards of scrupulous honesty from everyone around him. From his mother, Perl inherited his sharp sensitivity, and also the tender heart which was hidden under his hard and dignified exterior. Perl was accutely sensitive to the life conditions of the Jews of Eastern Europe of every strata. He knew how they lived, how they though<sup>+</sup> and how they supported themselves. The merchants, and the artisans, the Rabbis and the Hassidim, the Maskilim and

the idlers, Perl knew them all and was attune to their feelings. He was able to record these feelings and to act upon them, for actually there was a little of each of these types in Perl himself.

Perl was comely and impressive in appearance. Horowitz, his chief biographer, says he was handsome and tall, broad of shoulders and well spoken. He had "a high and noble brow, deep set eyes and generally charming features." His portrait in the Russian Jewish encyclopedia discloses a rather round faced hard-bitten early nineteenth century gentleman wearing two medals.

R. Todros Perl's import and export trade brought him to every major city in Eastern and Central Europe. Through his extensive travels in Germany, he became familiar with a number of the Maskilim who were then beginning to make their influence felt in the Jewish world. With the elder Perl's interest in the periodical literature of the German Haskalah and his general interest and cognizance of the social trends of his day, it is not surprising that his house came to be regarded as a center of culture in Tarnopol.

Notwithstanding his interest in western culture and Haskalah, Todros Perl remained a scrupulously orthodox Jew. However, he vigorously opposed the extraordinary limits to which religious piety was being carried in certain Jewish circles. And he vigorously opposed Hasidism. To him <sup>ITS ADHERENTS</sup> they represented all the filth, the ignorance and superstition, all that was dark, and sick in Judaism.

But there is no indication that Todros made any direct attempt whatever to influence his son's opinions. Young Perl's education began in one of Tarnopol's hadarim. He was an excellent student. His erudition in Talmud being such that at his bar-mitzvah he publicly discussed a few *תורת* with the town's learned Rabbis. It was generally understood that Perl was to become a Rabbi.

Perl was married at the age of fourteen. In accordance with the custom of that day (when the parents could afford it) the couple and their offspring were supported by Joseph's father, in his home. For almost twelve years after his marriage, young Perl



continued his studies in Talmud, free from all practical and mundane cares.

Joseph's Talmudic studies led to Kabbala, and Kabbala led to his entry into Hassidism. Hassidism was reaching its peak of vitality and power in Galicia when Joseph joined the sect in 1795. (He remained a Hassid till 1800)

By 1803, Hassidism in Galicia had already begun its process of degeneration into Zaddikism, albeit it still was certainly the strongest social element in the Galician Jewish community. The lofty mysticism upon which it was founded gave way to a blind absolute adoration of the Zaddikim.

Galicia had long been a fertile field for mystic sects. Unlike the Jews of northern Poland and Lithuania, to whom Talmudic learning remained inseparable from piety, Galician Jewry was much farther removed from sources of Rabbinic learning.

When the Sabbatian movement swept through Poland in 1666, it found itself able to gain one of its strongest

footholds in Galicia.

In 1695 Hayim Malakah, Kabbalist and propagandist of Sabbatianism, preached that Sabbatai was the messiah and would return to redeem the Jews in 1706, forty years after his conversion to Islam. Malakah gained his greatest success in Galicia and Podolia. Later joined by another Kabbalist, Judah Ha~~xi~~sid of Shualovitz, they consolidated their followers into a special sect called Hasidim, (probably taking the name of their leader Judah Hasid). This sect of Ha~~xi~~sidim organized pilgrimages to the Holy Land where some of them joined the Turkish Sabbatians. A few of the pilgrims returned to renew again the propaganda in Podolia and Galicia.

Secret followers of Sabbatianism gained such numbers in Galicia that in 1722 a conference of Rabbis assembled in Lemb<sup>e</sup>urg to proclaim a herem against any and all Sabbatians who failed to renounce their heresy within a given time. In 1725 the Rabbis were forced to pronounce a second herem against them, this time calling upon every orthodox Jew to reveal the identities of secret Sabbatians known to him.

The Sabbatians remained relatively dormant in Galicia until 1755 when Jacob Frank, returning from Turkey, began to spread his new doctrines. Frank also found <sup>his richest</sup> ~~his optimum~~ fields of operations in Galicia and Podolia.

In 1756 the conference of Rabbis meeting in Satanov again proclaimed a strict herem upon the sectarians, pleading with them to repent their heresies. Indeed many of the heretics did come forward to confess and repent, recounting a great many acts subversive to Jewish religion and to principles of morality and chastity. On the basis of this evidence a council of Rabbis later met in Brody, and pronounced a new herem against the heretics which forbade all contact with them.

With the ultimate and ignominious downfall of the Frankists, Messiahism died, never again to be resurrected. But with its death, a void was left in the minds of Galician Jewry which was ultimately filled by the new Hassidism, as professed by the followers of the Besht.

Hassidism totally abandoned the doctrine of Messianism whose appeal at best could prove only temporary.

It rather adopted and promoted the dogma of salvation through the medium of a mystical, wonder-working Zaddik. This element in Hasidism soon came to overshadow all other Hasidic dogmas.

In 1786 Elimelech of Lizno preached that the first duty of the Hasid was reverence for the Zaddik, that the Zaddik is a middleman between Israel and God.

In 1780 Jacob Joseph Cohen<sup>7</sup>, an apostle of the Besht, bitterly assailed the Talmudists as "Pseudo-Scholars", at the same time highly extolling the Zaddikim who were "anxious about the salvation of the common people." Hasidism took a firm grip in Galicia and held it. Its power and influence far exceed that of any of its predecessors. Changes were made, in liturgy, in the times of reciting prayers, in customs of slaughter, in dress, and behavior. The Zaddikim sold pidyonim, (indulgences) they cured the sick, made the barren wives fruitful, gave advice on business ventures, and family problems. The number of Zaddikim in Galicia grew, and the Zaddikim themselves grew rich and powerful both from the donations of their followers and through their business ventures.



The Hassidism Perl knew was Hassidism at its peak, Galician Hassidism in its Golden Age. By 1803, he had abandoned the movement forever, his infatuation with the sect turning to a life long loathing repugnance. Perl also abandoned the extreme fanatic piety practiced by most Galician Jews. However, he never became the complete Apicoros of the Hertz Homberg type. He continued to wear a silk caftan, peyot, and a "Shtreimel".

Perl's encounter with Hassidism grounded him with an intimate knowledge of Hassidic life and literature enabling him later to satirize them so bitterly and so incisively.

Todros Perl, long an opponent of Hassidism chafed at the idea of his only son's being one of the sect. He became especially distraught when he saw Joseph giving up his Rabbinic studies and unknowingly being drawn into some of their crooked conivances.

In order to remove his son from the Hassidic environment, Todros in 1800, put his son to work in his wine business, thereby entering him into a world completely new and strange to him, as it was to most Jews of

Galicia, a world of action and deeds. Almost from the beginning, Joseph was sent on buying-trips to the wine markets of Europe, to Hungary and to Germany and Vienna. Joseph's extensive travelling effected the desired result as far as R. Todros was concerned. His son's intellectual horizons were broadened and he was drawn away from the visionary vague world of the Hasidim.

Prior to the year 1800 when he first left Tarnopol the scope of Perl's education did not extend much farther beyond Mishnah, Gemara, Kabbala and Hasidic writings. He knew little or nothing of Grammar, <sup>BIBLE</sup> ~~Tanach~~, (except Humash of course), and medieval Hebrew literature. But during this period, he began to extend his reading to such medieval works as, Duties of the Heart, מסילת יוסף and the Guide to the Perplexed. <sup>BIBLE</sup> These led him into the study of Tanach and Hebrew Grammar. Reading served to broaden Perl's Jewish outlook, just as his travels served to broaden his social outlook.

A transformation took place within the Haskalah movement as it was transplanted from Germany to Galicia.

This was due, to no small extent, to the very social character of Galicia itself. Galicia's Jewish population was dense and compact. The Jews of Galicia lived a complete Jewish life, and were not substantially affected by the underlying spirit of internal unrest and assimilation which had overtaken German Jewry. Jewish scholarship and learning was much more widespread in Galicia than in Germany. Most Galician Jews were acquainted with Humash, with the Hebrew language, and with some Talmud. A great many also were familiar with <sup>Shulchan</sup> ~~Tanach~~, and Rabbinic literature such as codes and responsa. The Hassidim published hundreds of Hebrew books and thus popularized mysticism and Kabbala even among the masses. Hebrew was the universal language of literature and every literate Jew knew it. There was no need to find special means of preserving it.

A second factor in the peculiarity of Galician Haskalah was the active, often patronizing support it received at the hands of the Government. From the time of Joseph II's edict of toleration, the Government's Jewish policy always remained to a greater or lesser

extent one of 'civilizing the Jew', even if it meant forcing civilization down his throat. To this end many laws were passed. Many of these laws were never put into effect. But the government's aim was clearly the breakdown of the national character and the completeness of Jewish life.<sup>10</sup>

When some of the early Maskilim advised the government to use strong measures in forcing enlightenment upon the Jews, they incurred the wrath of the Pious who had great influence with the large masses of Jews. An intense cleavage developed in Galicia between the Maskilim and the orthodox (including the Hasidim) which left its stamp upon the entire overall character of the Galician Haskalah movement. It also may have been one of the most crucial causes for Haskalah's ultimate failure in Galicia.

Unlike their German counterparts, the Galician Maskilim lived and worked in an almost totally Jewish environment. They were interested not only in the Hebrew language and in 'Wissenschaft des Judentums', but they were interested also in Talmud, in Jewish



philosophy and in history. Like the German Maskilim, their aim also was to enlighten Jews and to awaken them to a knowledge of the world. Unlike the Germans their aim was not to prove the worth of Judaism to the Gentiles. They strove to reconcile Judaism to modern conditions, to extend and modernize Jewish education. It was their aim to introduce western values into Jewish life and to partially improve the social and economic condition of the Jew by making him aware of his own condition. They wrote primarily in Hebrew, for Jewish consumption. The Hebrew language held its own in Galicia where in Germany it <sup>all but</sup> passed away with the last issue of Ha-Measeph. The German Jews found the native language more useful for purposes of commerce and assimilation. But in Galicia there was no strong national feeling with a language to go with it. Galicia was a polylingual place where Hebrew could hold its own nicely among a people who made up nearly half the population of the large cities.

The violent interaction in Galicia between Haskalah and other streams of Jewish thought such as Has~~id~~idism and the remnants of Rabbinic orthodoxy served to spice

Galician Haskalah literature with its own distinctive polemic and militant characteristics. The burlesque, the satire and sharp wit found in the works of Perl and Erter were direct outgrowths of this condition.

But, by and large the Haskalah movement as it manifested itself in Galicia was positive and constructive in character, and therefore its affect upon general European Jewish culture was a positive and lasting one.

In 1801, Perl first visited Brody. The city of Brody, at this time, was the most important community in Galicia both economically and culturally. The city was situated on the border dividing Russia and Austria, at the south west corner of the triangle formed by the three major Galician cities of the day; Brody, Tarnopol, and <sup>e</sup>Lemburg. Before partition it had been one of Poland's most important centers of Talmudic learning, the only such center in Galicia. Brody was the first, and leading center of Galician Haskalah; it was the home of most of its leaders. Jews of Brody had always heard the spoken German, and had admired it.

They had felt the first influences of Haskalah from the days of Schiller, Lessing, and Mendelssohn. Haskalah actually spread to Russia by way of Brody; indeed, the term <sup>מַסְכִּיל</sup> was synonymous in Poland with Berliner, ( <sup>מַסְכִּיל</sup> ) meaning Maskil.<sup>12</sup>

In Brody, Perl met Dov Ginzberg the poet and Maskil, who was to serve him as a lasting friend and advisor for many years to come. Ginzberg was one of the first Maskilim of Galicia. Having lived for a time in Germany, he had published a good deal of poetry in Ha-measeph. He was actually the first poet of the Galician Haskalah. Ginzberg's poetry was patterned after Goethe's in its style.<sup>13</sup> Like most of the poetry published in Measeph, Ginzberg's, although written in Hebrew, was not very Jewish in flavor. The poet himself, however, was of very conservative Jewish habits. His familiarity with Western European science and general culture was extensive, and his effect on Perl was immediate. Perl sent to his father requesting permission to bring Ginzberg home to Tarnopol and engage him as a private teacher. R. Todros agreed to the idea and carried it out. And so, for a period of

two full years, Ginzberg lived in the Perl household, teaching Joseph the German language and literature. He also introduced his pupil to modern Hebrew literature, as found in Ha-measeph.

This basic grounding in literature given him by Ginzberg served as a foundation upon which, throughout his life, Perl continued his studies in German and in Hebrew.

Perl was similar to Ginzberg in his personal conservatism. Although he certainly favored Western enlightenment, he was unalterably opposed to allowing it to interfere with what he considered Jewish religion. He preached and practiced the performance of all the mitzvot maasiot, and in this he never wavered.

Because of this strong conservative bent, Perl never actually became an active figure in the mainstream of the Galician Haskalah of his day which was for throwing off the yokes! Perl considered most of his contemporary Maskilim empty headed dilletantes and fops. He attacked them as bitterly as he did the Hasidim<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, the orthodox, even those remaining few who joined him



in opposing Hasidism, considered him a Maskil. Perl on the other hand considered most of the orthodox rabbis, cowards and opportunists.<sup>15</sup> This very fact, the fact of Perl's personal incompatibility with any of the established schools of thought of his time, be it Hasidism, Rabbinism, or Haskalah, is a constantly recurrent theme in his life and in his writings.

Perl promulgated ideas, he sold them, he used them, he fought for and against them, but he was simply not equipped to create or alter ideas. Perl's plans were tangible plans of fact. He thought in tangible terms. Haskalah for him was a vehicle, with which he carried out many of his plans and works. Foremost among these was the cause to which he devoted the major part of his adult life; the establishment of his school.

Part I

Chapter Two

Perl's Legacy to Haskala

His School

According to Natan Horowitz, Perl was supposed to have come upon the idea of establishing his school after having read

פ'נ'נ' of R. Sheftia

Horowitz which told of a school in Amsterdam called

תורה in which students learned תורה

in an organized and graduated manner.

Klausner's belief is that inspiration for Perl's school came from the Freischule in Berlin!

Other stimuli for the school may have come from the Austrian schools of Hertz Homberg.

At any rate, Perl waited for the most opportune moment in which to establish his school. It seemed that the moment had arrived with the conquest of Tarnopol and its surroundings by Alexander the first of Russia in 1809.

The six year Russian occupation of a sizable part of Galicia worked to tighten the bonds between Galician and Russian Jewry. These bonds remained strong, long after the return of the area to Austria, and were one of the prime factors in the transmission of Haskalah from Galicia into Russia.

Russian occupation created an economic boom among Galician Jewish merchants and Perl's already favorable financial situation was improved even more.

It was in this period of prosperity that Perl began the early preparations for his school. His intention was to combine both sacred and secular studies in one curriculum. The curriculum stressed the sacred studies, especially Talmud. Perl was particularly opposed to the aims and directives of Hertz Homberg's schools. As he wrote in a letter to Landau in 1827, it was his intention "to educate good Jews through teachers who are faithful friends of the people, and not of the new type of *פיקר' יעני* who poison the youth and trample every good thing beneath their feet."

In 1812, he began to discuss his plans for opening his school with various people in the community. The school opened its doors in 1813 in Perl's private residence. Sixteen pupils learned Bible, Mishnah, Gemarra, and Hebrew grammar. The secular subjects were Polish, French, arithmetic, geography and history.



The language of instruction was German, the course of study was patterned after the Freischule in Berlin,<sup>2</sup> which like Perl's school was also called גיית התנוק.

From its very inception, Perl's school was openly attacked by the orthodox who violently objected to its aims, its methods, its program of education, its teachers and its founder. Perl was forced to depend upon the Russian occupational authorities for the protection of his school and his own person. The Russians in return came to depend on Perl. This mutual arrangement between Perl and the Government served to incense the orthodox against Perl and his associates all the more. They hated him now because he supported the foreign rulers, (as did most Maskilim) whom they believed posed a threat to their way of life.

With the Government's protection and Perl's money and enthusiasm, and some really fine teachers, Perl's school thrived and grew in its first few years.

In 1815, the school was able to move from Perl's private home to a fine building of its own in the center of the town. The school could now accommodate over a

hundred students. It stood four stories high, and contained a fine synagogue. Perl financed the building partially out of his own funds, partly through contributions by Christians and partly by selling seats for its synagogue.

On Shevuoth morning in the year 1815, the new school building was formally dedicated with great pomp and aplomb.

In the autumn of 1815, Tarnopol was returned to the suzerainty of Austria. The Russians had thought so well of Perl that the Czar presented him with a gold medal for extraordinary service to the Imperial Crown. Perl served the Austrian rulers just as faithfully, and so they likewise protected him and his school from those who would destroy it. The Austrians so appreciated Perl, that in 1821 they, too, presented him with a gold medal. In his portraits, Perl wears both medals.

The school grew and expanded in program and in scope, and Perl himself was the energetic personality behind its growth. So closely associated was the school

to the name of its founder that for many years it was known simply as the Perl-School.

In 1813, Perl established a printing house in the school. It was run by Nachman Pinels<sup>e</sup>. In it were published text books, as well as calendars and almanacs written by Perl.<sup>3</sup>

The school instituted vocational classes both for boys and girls. Certain students showing special aptitudes were sent to Christian master locksmiths who would properly teach them the trade.

A library was established in the school which was made available to the general public. This library continued to grow in size and importance having acquired a number of very rare and important books and manuscripts. The library continued till World War II, when it was destroyed along with most of its precious contents.

In 1820, the *תלמוד תורה* was formally accredited by the Austrian Government as a Public School. From then on it was called the Deuche Israelitiche Hochschule. Its graduates were accepted in Austrian

schools of Higher learning. Many of its graduates went on to become doctors and lawyers. But there were also many others who went on to become blacksmiths, carpenters, and builders.

The school's program broadened to that of an Austrian Normal School. Students were offered French or Polish as electives, while German was a required course. Other subjects were Talmud and Poskim, Shulchan Aruch, a 'catechism' of ethical behavior, selected passages from Medieval Jewish Philosophy and manual trades.<sup>5</sup>

With the school's official confirmation as a public institution, the state appointed Perl director of the institution for life at a salary of 600 guilders per year, (which he hardly ever accepted). Perl was given power to appoint all teachers and to name his own successor.

Perl presented the school building as a gift to the Jewish community of Tarnopol on the condition that the community repay a sixth of the twenty thousand guilders which he had expended for its building. With



this money, Perl established a fund toward the training of Jewish tradesmen in Tarnopol.

Perl's many active projects and the glory that was conferred upon him by the government, along with the medals and decorations, deeply impressed contemporary Maskalim contemporaries. They were also greatly awed by his business success. They deferred to him, calling him 'The Great Prince,' 'The man who has the power to stand in the Palaces of Kings.'

But not all of Perl's ventures met with equal success. There were any number of attempted business and social ventures that ended in failure. He tried building a Tallis factory. He tried promoting agriculture among Galician Jewry. When his schemes failed, it was generally due to lack of financial support. But to the very end of his days, Perl never thought of giving up. There were always new schemes.

The influences of Perl's school extended far beyond the borders of Galicia. Its greatest influences were felt in Russia, where most of the modern educators had been students and teachers in Perl's

ביהמ"ד,

and built their institutions according to his pattern.

The synagogue which was conducted within the school also exerted strong influence.

In its day, this synagogue was known to be 'reform'.  
The 'reform' consisted mostly of the quiet which usually prevailed during the prayer service and the Torah reading. Moreover, in his later years Perl delivered sermons there in German. However, the order and content of the service was full and complete. There was neither an organ, nor was there a choir.

The orthodox found Perl's synagogue as distasteful as they found his school. Jacob Ornstein, Rabbi of Lemberg, ordered a boycott of the school and the synagogue.

In 1821, Perl tried his best to interest Ornstein in the founding of a school in Lemberg. Perl was willing to base this school on a completely conservative foundation. He offered Ornstein every concession for his support, but Ornstein would have nothing to do with Perl and an agreement was never reached.

The Maskilim also, were not altogether pleased with the new school and synagogue, believing that changes and innovations which were made were unimportant or minor. The Maskilim disliked Perl's personal conservatism. Most of the admiration they had for him was awe of his high standing in government circles.

### Chapter III

#### His Public Life

Part I

Chapter III

His Public Life



The Austrian Government considered Perl an educated and enlightened Jew upon whom they could rely completely. He was often given Hebrew writings by the government to evaluate and to translate into German.

The Austrian Government believed Perl to be a man of enlightened ideas and practical knowledge and insight as well. They considered him capable of grasping and analyzing the various social phenomena which occurred in the Jewish community.

In 1820, when the governor of Galicia saw fit to enact new legislation concerning the Jews, he appointed an advisory committee of the "best Jews," to counsel the government concerning the enactments. Perl was appointed to this committee. This appointment entailed a prolonged stay in the city of Lemberg for well over

a year.

Perl was not averse to utilizing his high standing with the government to his own advantage in defending his school against the supposed plots of the Hassidim.

On one occasion in January of the year 1827, he submitted a claim to the Governor of Tarnopol stating that, "an organization had been formed whose aim was the destruction of the Hebrew High School." He further stated that Hirsch Eichenstein (The Rebbe of Zidithsuv) had been invited to the town of Zaberaz for the Sabbath. This, he stated, would be very harmful for the following reasons:

First: Eichenstein would leave Zaberaz with not less than four hundred guilders in donations.

Secondly: Hassidic Jews from Tarnopol and surrounding districts would travel to Zaberaz, and there they would certainly plot against the *התורה*.

"In view of these facts," wrote Perl, "since there

is already a government order in effect, prohibiting Hassidic Rebbis from traveling from place to place, and, since Eichenstein had already been caught smuggling illegal Hassidic books into the country from Russia, and, in as much as his 'evil scheme', had been revealed to me through a letter to thr Rebbe of Rofschitz" which had been intercepted, Perl therefore requested that the government inform the heads of the community of Zaberaz that Eichenstein's projected visit was unlawful.

The government complied with Perl's request and forthwith notified the Rebbe that should he set foot within the borders of Zaberaz, he would be requested by state officials to present a passport or a special travel permit. If he should fail to present one of these two documents, he would be returned forcibly from whence he came. Furthermore, even if he should present one of the aforesaid documents he would still be sent back if he could not give sufficient reason for his presence in the town of Zaberaz.

Methods such as these were common <sup>to</sup> this era

and were practiced both by Hassidim and Maskilim whenever the opportunities arose.

In 1837 the Austrian Government approached Perl for his aid and advice concerning one of the most bizarre episodes of that era.

A son of a German Protestant minister named Karl Seyfert had been issuing proclamations stating that he represented the legitimate heir to the kingdom of David.<sup>2</sup> The proclamations began to appear in cities of Eastern and Central Europe in 1830. They called upon the Jews of the world to join in the reestablishment of the Kingdom of Israel. They were written in Biblical styled Hebrew, "For Behold! The master redeems his people. The tribe of Judah will awaken and be reinvigorated." "Awaken! Awaken! Oh my people, Gather and come unto the Throne of David, unto the Throne of God." Jews were called upon to "gather and return 'home', to the blessed chosen land." The first proclamation was dated September 24, 1830, and was signed Sigfried Justus the first. Others were signed 'Envoy sent from Zion', referring to Seyfert himself.



Seyfert traveled about to the various Jewish centers in an effort to illicit a response to his plan from the Jews. In 1832, he made the center of his operations the city of Krakow which was at that time an independent republic.

Having settled himself in Krakow, Seyfert set about persuading the Senate, and the governments of adjoining states, that his master, Sigfried Justus, was the "king of Israel and the High Priest of Jerusalem." He petitioned their help in the establishment of the new state.

In order to acquire the good will of the Jews of Krakow, Seyfert announced that it was his intention to set up a fund for the support of fifty poor Jewish widows and orphans, and that the king (Justus) stood ready to grant 200 guilders to the poor of Krakow.

In order to gain the favor of the Poles, he announced that he would give aid to the officers and leaders of the Polish national army which had been disbanded after the uprising of 1830. Seyfert also stated that he had secured an agreement from the kingdom

of Greece concerning the matter of rebuilding the Polish Army.

Meizels, who was Rabbi in Karkow, was approached for his approval of the scheme. Letters were sent even to Ornstein of Lemberg.

So great was the interest aroused in this case, that the government of Austria sought to learn to what extent Seyfert made an impression upon the Jews. And so in January 1837, government officials of Tarnopol approached Perl requesting his opinion in the matter. The same request was made of leaders in Jewish communities of Berlin, Dresden, and Prague.

Perl was asked to secure information about Seyfert, and on his movement, which, it was implied had been instituted with the help of foreign associates. Perl responded to the state's request with a special memorandum to Sedlinitzky, the regional governor. The memorandum was dated October 27, 1837.

In the introduction to his memorandum, Perl stated that through careful investigation he had tried to

determine the response to Seyfert and his schemes within the Jewish community. He then assured the governor that Seyfert's proclamations had made little or no impression. Seyfert's proclamations, he continued, had stimulated the formation of no organizations among the Jews, nor did they stimulate the collections of funds. For that matter the name of Sigfried and his movement <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ unknown to most Jews.

It was his opinion, Perl stated that Seyfert belonged to the men of 'new Germany' who "attached themselves to any strange and fantastic idea, no matter how ridiculous or how silly, <sup>and</sup> who would give credence to any occurrence, no matter how un-natural, so long as it served to demolish the existing order, ~~as long~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~as it agitated~~ against authority and promulgated revolutionary ideas."

If Seyfert truly and honestly had sought to win support among the Jews of Poland, the memorandum continued, he would not have failed to acquaint himself with patterns of their thinking and their spiritual dispositions. The concept of the coming of the Messiah

held by Polish Jews is unlike that of their brethren in Germany and the West.

Perl then proceeds to present a remarkable if perhaps biased analysis of Polish Jewry: He divides the Jewish population into four groups<sup>3</sup>. The first group he mentions are the "Simple illiterate masses." The second group he classifies as the orthodox. The third group are the Hasidim, and the fourth type, the enlightened Jews, whose number he admits is very small.

The masses of Jews making up the first group are not inclined to think for themselves. They do not make their own decisions or act upon them. They vacillate between the Hassidim and the orthodox.

The Hasidim and the orthodox generally concur in their convictions with regard to the Messiah. To them he is a supernatural being, "who by the sound of his shofar will cause the earth to tremble.... With his sense of smell, he will discern the righteous from the wicked.... With the breath of his nostrils, he will cause the wicked to perish... and his voice will be



heard from one end of the world to the other." "By these signs will they (the orthodox) recognize the Messiah." According to the belief of the orthodox, the period preceeding his coming will be one of great miracles, vast devastation, and distortions of nature. First the darkness of Egypt will cover the whole world. There will be wars of destruction. Every conceivable type of demolition and destruction will be seen in the world before the coming of the Messiah.

'None of these signs do we see', said Perl, and none of the things expected of the Messiah are within the power of Sigfried. 'Let him not deceive himself into hoping to persuade the orthodox that he is their redeemer.'

It was his opinion, stated Perl, a man like Seyfert might conceivably draw support from the Hasidim, if they could be convinced that he could, in any way, strengthen their sect or their Zaddikim. "For the Hasidim are ready to negate, to nullify the teachings of the Rabbis if it should in any way benefit their sect." But it was his personal feeling,

(Seyfert's)

he continued, that the advancement of Sigfried's cause would diminish the collection of funds that the Hassidim allegedly sent to Israel for the fund of R. Israel Baal Nes. "There is no doubt", said Perl, "that the Hassidim would sacrifice everything, all honor, everything they owned, if they thought it would benefit their leaders.... but they have no knowledge of Seyfert or his schemes....."

"As for the small group of the enlightened Jews, they recognize the Messiah only as the symbol of their ultimate redemption. In no way do they consider him actually physical or human. He is a symbol of universal peace, or a time when Israel, freed from the chains of its oppression would be a bona fide member of the council of nations and would rejoice in its freedom together with all peoples....."

"This opinion, which the orthodox still virulently oppose, and regard as heresy and skepticism, has strong basis in the Talmud and Rabbinic writings. The Messianic age is an age of love, of prosperity and peace, as described vividly by the prophet Isaish....."

" From this it should be clear that the ideas of  
 (SEYFERT)  
 Sigfried would not be inclined to exert any influence  
 whatever upon the enlightened Jews who base their hopes  
 for redemption upon the providence of God and the  
 wisdom of the Government, and also upon the humaneness  
 of mankind which grows and advances day by day. These  
 Jews believe that their redemption is now at hand."

Perl felt sure that the schemes of Sigfried would  
 (SEYFERT)  
 find no response among any of the Jewish people. He  
 argued, "The opposition of the Jews to the Messianic  
 ideas of Sabbatai, and Frank proved that their ears  
 were deaf to such ideas. How much more so would they  
 oppose Sigfried whose lack of understanding of the  
 Jews is so blatantly discernable."

Another argument went, "The title of High Priest  
 which he takes upon himself makes him ridiculous, for  
 according to Jewish law there can be no High Priest  
 without a Temple. Furthermore, his claiming the two  
 titles, that of High Priest and King, reveals his utter  
 lack of grounding in Jewish law."

Perl concluded his memorandum repeating his

conviction that Seyfert's proclamations would cause not the slightest stir among Galician Jewry, and, therefore, he had found it unnecessary to collect information about him. However, if the government requested it, he would secure specific information, with the government's approval, from friends in Leipsig. He also offered to send for a copy of Seyfert's book published in Mainz in 1832 entitled "Man As An Aid in the Kingdom of God."

The government agreed to this suggestion, and on the fifteenth of February, Perl sent another memorandum stating that according to information he had received from Leipsig, <sup>SEYFERT</sup> Sigfried was nothing but an agent of a missionary group or else, a worker for a foreign political organization. His efforts with the Jews were only a blind for his other activities. Perl informed the government that the book he had requested had been sent but had been intercepted by the Austrian censor. He asked that a special order be sent to the censor, that the book be transmitted to him in order that he not be suspected of having illegal foreign correspondence which was a dangerous matter in the time



of Metternich.

The government ordered the censor to send Perl the book in question, adding that Perl was an expert in Jewish matters and that with the book he would be able to give further valuable service to the government. The order went on to say that Perl was an enlightened man who had devoted his life to the advancement of the state and to the enlightenment of his brethren. Therefore, there was no need to fear that Sigfried's <sup>E</sup>SEYFERT book might be misused.

The facts in this strange episode serve to acquaint us with many important considerations in Perl's life, such as his relationship with the government and his connections outside Tarnopol. They also tell us a great deal about Perl's feelings concerning the masses of Galician Jewry at large, Hasidism, orthodox, Haskalah, revolutionists, law and order, and the Messianic ideal. At least we may be sure that this is how he wished the government to believe he felt.

We shall later compare these opinions of Perl's with those as he presents them in his books.

But the fact that a personality such as Seyfert could arouse such interest on the part of several governments should indicate to us that this age was not as enlightened as we often may be led to believe. 1830-1836 was an age of fear and distrust, and not one of harmony and mutual understanding among nations.

Perl's memorandum tells us how the Maskilim felt about the Messiah. They illustrate sharply that the faith of the Maskilim in the liberal movement was every bit as blind as the faith of the orthodox Jews in the Messiah who rooted out evil doers by his sense of smell.

Perl exhibited a remarkable sort of patriotism. He stood for law and order. No matter who ruled Tarnopol, Perl was loyal. Perl didn't<sup>not</sup> glory in his Polishness, or his Russianness, or his Austrianness, as the German Maskilim gloried in their Germanness. Perl was a cosmopolitan. He traveled so much and so widely that he had no conception of a nationalistic allegiance toward Austria. Who governed did not matter. They were all good, all enlightened and all

benevolent as far as Perl was concerned. He accepted all their medals and honors with equal humility and dignified appreciation.

First and foremost, Perl was a Jew and he never forgot it. He never wanted to. When Jews anywhere in the world moved in a direction that he considered progressive, Perl gloried with them. When Jews anywhere acted in a way he considered distasteful, Perl felt ashamed.

One of Perl's most bitter and extended encounters with the Hassidim and the orthodox came about over the appointment of Solomon Judah Rappaport as Rabbi of Tarnopol.

Since his early introduction to Haskalah, Perl looked upon <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir as his teacher and master. He honored and respected him to the end of his days.

<sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir came to Tarnopol in 1837 as a direct outcome of Perl's manipulations. It was Perl's wish to improve the status of his people and his town, not only in the realm of education and literature but also in the realm

of religion and culture. In various periodicals he had read that in Germany and in Italy there were now rabbis who were both learned and enlightened. Perl found this fact ~~a~~ very exciting ~~one~~. The incumbent rabbi of Tarnopol at the time was Joshua Heschel Bavad, a learned and respected man of eighty-two, who had gained considerable reputation for himself by writing several volumes of responsa concerning the Shulchan Aruch. Bavad had long reached senility and could now barely see.

The technique Perl used in achieving his desired end was to advise the governor of Tarnopol that a new rabbi was needed in the city to fill the post of the venerable Bavad. He further advised that this new rabbi should be of the type described in the reports as of the ( 'שד"ק מלי ) German type.

The man most fit for the position in Perl's view, of course, was Rappaport. Since 1816, Rappaport had been under the ban of excommunication laid upon him by Ornstein in Lemberg. From 1833 to 1837, he lived in Lemberg, earning his living by working in the



accounting office of a meat packing firm. Nevertheless, he still managed to find time (at night) for his literary and scholarly pursuits.

In bringing Rappaport to Tarnopol, Perl sought to accomplish two great things. First, to place in the rabbinate of his town a man world famous for his knowledge of Torah, and also well informed in the worldly sciences. Secondly, he saw in the plan a fine opportunity to place Shir in a position of security, where he could devote all his efforts to scholarship without the need to support himself by keeping the books of a meat concern.

When the announcement was published that the position of Rabbi of Tarnopol was open, only two men applied for the position, Shir, and a rabbi named Leibush Podhorzer.

Perl knew full well that there would be strong <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> opposition in Tarnopol against Shir's appointment. A known group of orthodox had been accustomed to receiving a certain "gratuity" whenever a new rabbi was appointed. This custom was known as *ניסן* '18.

(Matchmaking - fee), and was a common practice in many communities. When approached for this "gratuity," Perl stated that, "even if all the rogues and rascals in the city banded together with knives and swords and demanded, at the point of bloodshed, they would not receive a single penny from him." <sup>4</sup>

Forged documents maligning Perl and <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir were sent to Tarnopol from Brody and from Lemberg. <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir was sent threatening letters, warning him not to dare to assume the position. But <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir placed his trust in Perl's judgement, and Perl trusted his wealth and his influence with the government.

The election of the new rabbi was carried out by a committee of thirty-six electors chosen indirectly by the government (which was always open to suggestions by Perl). The final vote was thirty-three to three in favor of <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir. A letter of congratulations at his appointment was sent to <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir by the committee in the name of the community of Tarnopol.

<sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Perl brought <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> Shir to Tarnopol amid great pomp and splendor. A committee of the town's notables greeted

the new rabbi at the city's outskirts in a splendid carriage, and brought him into the city with great honor.

Notwithstanding the means by which it had been brought about, a truly remarkable thing had taken place in Tarnopol. A known Maskil had been placed in a rabbinical post in Galicia, something unheard of at the time. Letters of congratulations and encouragement came in from the noted Maskilim of the day; from Shadal, from Sholom Hakohen, from Joseph Almanzi, and many others.

Krochmal sent <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> ~~Shir~~ his best wishes, but added his sincere hope that the orthodox would eventually come to amicable terms with the new rabbi. Previously, Krochmal had expressed his disapproval over ~~Shir's~~ <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> accepting the position. He based this view on his conviction that Galicia was not yet ready for a rabbi of <sup>his</sup> ~~Shir's~~ type. Krochmal was well aware of the fanaticism in Galicia and was convinced that the Hasidim would never endure a rabbi who read foreign languages and openly indulged in free thinking.

Further events proved Krochmal's thinking <sup>to be</sup> quite sound.

<sup>RAPPAPORT</sup>  
Sheer found himself attacked from the very moment he arrived in Tarnopol. Complaints about him were constantly being written to the government and to Perl. Fantastic stories and exaggerations of fact were circulated to malign him.

It was said that on a certain fast day, (17 of Tamuz or 10 of Teves) his table was prepared with all manner of delicacies. Some people of his household were accused of having gone to the theatre in Lemberg (a grievous offence in itself) and afterwards feasting upon <sup>אידן</sup> <sup>הם</sup> with gentile butter in a Jesuit <sup>park</sup> Park. Furthermore, many considered his sermons rife with blasphemies.

<sup>RAPPAPORT</sup>  
The less violent among the orthodox believed ~~Sheer~~ worthy of holding a rabbinical post only in a German state. To be acceptable to a community such as Tarnopol he would have to completely revise his innermost convictions, and dress from head to foot in the garb of the faithful.



The situation ~~of Sheer's rabbinate~~ became well nigh impossible. The antics resorted to by the Hassidim to antagonize and to undermine him often surpass Perl's own satirical narratives for sheer insane hilarity. The Hasidim stopped at nothing; slanderous and obscene placards were left in doorways of houses and plastered to the walls of synagogues. They instituted a boycott of the city's large synagogue as well as Perl's own synagogue. <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> ~~Sheer's~~ name was abused and maligned in prose, in song, in pornography and by word of mouth.

In partial retaliation, a group of <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> ~~Sheer's~~ supporters, without his knowledge, petitioned the government to close the small synagogues where the opposition was meeting. When <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> ~~Sheer~~ was informed of this, he was very perturbed, however, he did nothing to bring about the immediate reopening of the synagogues.

A year after <sup>his</sup> ~~Sheer's~~ appointment, R. Bavad passed away at the venerable age of eighty-three. In spite of his age and his extremely weak condition in his last years of life, the orthodox vehemently insisted that

his death was caused by aggravation and shame, and that  
 RAPPAPORT  
 Sheer was guilty of the saintly man's death.

R. Bavad's death in 1838 left his place vacant in  
 the large old synagogue of Tarnopol.

RAPPAPORT  
 Sheer as the new rabbi naturally now sought to  
 occupy Bavad's place. Previously he had presided at  
 -Perl's synagogue. As long as this had been his practice  
 the opposition to him had been simply one of principle,  
 for though nominally the rabbi of the community, he  
 was considered by the orthodox as rabbi of the Maskilim  
 only. But here he was now, presuming to occupy the  
 very chair of the man whose 'untimely' death he had  
 brought about. <sup>HE</sup> Sheer was now presuming leadership over  
 the orthodox also.

RAPPAPORT  
 Opposition against Sheer and Perl was intensified  
 and redoubled. A full scale campaign was now instituted  
 against them which never once let up until Perl's death  
 and <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> Sheer's resignation.

RAPPAPORT  
 When Sheer began to pray in the large synagogue,  
 he found its walls inscribed with the words 193 pen 6 pes.

On one occasion a Hassidic fishmonger staged an incident in Sheer's kitchen which made it appear to a great many people as if Shir ate 'ritually unclean' fish. The following Sabbath on rising to read in the Torah, the rabbi found that the <sup>Tzitzis</sup> Tzitzes had been removed from his Tallis. Hastening to find another Tallis, he forgot in his confusion that according to law because of <sup>לכבוד</sup> it was not necessary to change. One of the Hassidim in the congregation then called out, "Rabbi! You don't have to change your Tallis, change your fish." The congregation broke into peals of laughter, at Shir's expense.

On another occasion, <sup>RAPPAPORT'S</sup> Shir had to pray standing up for two full hours. His chair had been smeared with hot tar.

While these merry pranks amused the Hassidim no end, they of course enraged Shir's supporters among the Maskilim, whose favorite means of retaliation against the orthodox was generally the government law-courts.

Perl also received his share of abuse. Any Jew

who patronized his son's pharmacy, was threatened with excommunication. What is more, the Mohelim refused to circumcise the sons of anyone associated with Sheer or his protector, Perl.

#### RAPPAPORT

On Sheer's monument in Tarnopol was inscribed,  
 "How great were the sorrows here. Children would mock him and youths danced at the sight of him and of his clothes. On the eve of Yom Kippur, he offered his hand to them and asked their forgiveness, and they threw a rock at him."

"And why all of this? Because he would speak of the Talmud Bavli with derision, because he would speak with apostasy in the congregation concerning the books of the Zohar. And what would the multitude say of a man who did not wait six hours between eating meat and cheese?"

On Shavuoth, after remaining awake throughout the night to recite the Tikun Leyl Shavuoth, Sheer asked to have the Hazan sing some songs to him in order that he might fall asleep. The Hazan did so. A passing Hasid heard the singing and ran through the streets shouting,



"In the house of the rabbi they are singing the songs of priests." A large excited crowd of Hassidim assembled outside his house and began to throw rocks at the building. Ignoring the fact that they were profaning the festival, they sought to break into the house and attack the rabbi. ~~Sheer~~ <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> was saved by a company of dragoons who were sent in to quell the riot. <sup>5</sup>

It was clear that Rappaport would have to resign his post. Moreover, there is reason to believe that prior to <sup>his</sup> ~~Perl's~~ <sup>Perl</sup> death ~~he~~ <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> had advised ~~Sheer~~ that it was best to leave Tarnopol and accept the post in Prague. <sup>6</sup>

The summer of 1838 was for Perl a period of great physical suffering. By September of that year, all hope had been given up for his recovery. Eight days before his death, Perl sent his regards to the Austrian Archduke, Franz Karl, who was then visiting in Tarnopol. He died in great agony on Simchat Torah, October first, 1838.

The Hassidim rejoiced in Perl's death. Since it was not permitted to write the "good news," on that day, they sent a gentile around to the various

In 1836, Joseph Perl became stricken with an intestinal condition which was to afflict the last three years of his life with intense physical pain. His disputes with the orthodox over <sup>RAPPAPORT'S POST</sup> ~~the rabbinical~~ ~~post of Sheer~~ served to aggravate his disorder intensely.

From the fall of 1838 until the spring of 1839, he sojourned in the city of Lemberg under the care of the noted physician of the day, Dr. Jacob Rappaport. He returned to Tarnopol in April of 1839 as sick as ever. It was evident by this time that Perl was suffering from cancer.

The summer of 1839 was for Perl a period of great physical suffering. By September of that year, all hope had been given up for his recovery. Eight days before his death, Perl sent his regards to the Austrian Archduke, Franz Karl, who was then visiting in Tarnopol. He died in great agony on Simchat Torah, October first, 1839.

The Hassidim rejoiced in Perl's death. Since it was not permitted to write the "good news," on that day, they sent a gentile around to the various

communities with a Humash, having folded over the page containing the words .

Perl left a widow, a son Michael, and two daughters. He bequeathed his fortune to his children after ample provision had been made for the support of their mother. He left a small bequest to Sheer, and the sum of 6000 guilders to Jewish artisans. His library of 8000 books was left to the Jewish community of Tarnopol. He named his son Michael as his successor to fill the post of director of the school.

Perl was buried in Tarnopol where he had lived and worked. His funeral procession included most of the Galician Maskilim as well as a great many gentile notables.

A great many eulogies were pronounced at Perl's funeral including one by R. Manheimer of Vienna. But the most beautiful and <sup>Yar</sup>most sincere was the eulogy delivered by <sup>RAPPAPORT</sup> ~~Shir~~, who announced that he had lost his shield and defender, which indeed he had, and without Perl's protection he would surely have been forced to give up his rabbinical post even if he had not resigned

to take another in Prague.

Perl had differed from many Maskilim of his day in his reasons for Haskalah. Perl's life work had been the justification of western ideas in a Jewish environment. Toward this aim every project he undertook was directed. His methods were all on a very practical level, but never once did he waver from his one prime objective.

#### Chapter Four

#### A Summary of Mendelian Genetics



Part II - Perl's Satirical Writings

Chapter Four

A Summary of Megalleh Temirin

Megalleh Temirin was written sometime between 1812 and 1815. This was a period of Russian political control of Tarnopol. Perl was in the prime of his life physically and financially. He had recently taken the first steps toward the establishment of his school. Megalleh Temirin met with immediate and long lasting success and popularity. It went through four printings extending from 1819 to 1881.

The book is essentially the account of the downfall of a company of Hasidim and the events which led up to it. The plot of the story revolves about the secretary to the Zaliner Rebbe, R. Zelig Litichever, who, up until his untimely death was the central figure in the Zalin organization.

The story opens with a letter by R. Zelig to R. Zeinvel Verkievker, who acts as a sort of foreign agent for the Zaliner Hassidim in the neighboring community of Krippen. R. Zelig is very much concerned over a recently published book which attacks the Hasidim and their Rebbes. The book has already made

a great impression throughout the territory, especially among the ruling gentry. R. Zelig fears it is likely to cause great damage to the sect. Zelig exhorts his Krippen correspondent to procure the book at any cost, so that its contents may be made known and so that its author may be recognized and dully punished. The idea is perfectly shocking to the secretary that in times such as those, a book of this sort could be written and published. He writes:

".....And as your letter states, it (the book) is full of 'rishus' and slander and mockery toward the Hasidim and toward their true Rebbes. I would never have believed that in times such as these, when our generation is so close to the coming of the messiah, and when all the world sees clearly the signs and the wonders that the Zaddikim are performing every moment..... All the people, great and small, old and young, servant and maid servant, all believe and know well the power of the Zaddikim....and they all declare in fearful reverence that there is none in the land but the people of our company. The Zaddikim are able to do what they will, and they are able to force the Lord, his name be praised, to do their will. They perform wonders of wonders through their holy words alone... Certainly this author must know that if our Rebbe wished, he could do with him as he desired." v

Zelig and Zeinvel firmly believed that their Rebbe could easily dispatch the author of this calumnious

book, but after due consideration they decided not to tell him about it. (Although undoubtedly he already knew) It would be so much more desirable to deal with this matter themselves. They could then enjoy taking their revenge upon the author.

R. Zeinvel elicited the aid of Frieda R. Isaacs whom he describes as a *חברה נאמנה*. Frieda was a lady Hasid of easy virtue who maintained a friendly relationship with the Count of the territory of Krippen who had been sent a copy of the book. During one of her frequent visits to the Count, Frieda stole the volume and gave it to Zeinvel.

The book was known to have been written in German which few of the Hasidim could read. But Zeinvel's son-in-law (to Zeinvel's shame) had once studied German, and although he had forgotten most of it, he could still recognize some of the letters. Seeing that the book was not printed in Gothic type, he convinced his father-in-law that Frieda had stolen the wrong book, and so Zeinvel had her return it at her earliest opportunity. The Count had noted the loss and after this kept



the book constantly under lock and key. The Hasidim never recover this particular copy although they certainly try. In the course of their attempts at recovering it they commit every conceivable offense short of murder.

Their first course of action was to have their forgery expert, Joseph Fradels write a letter from the district Vice Governor, asking the prince for the loan of the book. This plot is soon exposed. However, no one is caught and the forged letter is eventually recovered through a combination of bribery and mail robbery. This action eventually leads to even more serious trouble. The story continues from crisis to crisis. Through a brilliant combination of cleverness and stupidity the Hasidim manage to avert each catastrophe in its turn. The quest for the book becomes so involved that throughout the remainder of the plot of Megalleh Temirin, the book itself is almost forgotten, while the Hassidim overcome the dangers of the moment.

Interspersed among the letters referring to the

book are another series of letters describing the attempted conversion of one Moshe Fishels. Moshe Fishels, although honest, simple and naive, is a highly respected scholar, and his adherence to the sect would be most advantageous. Moshe is lured slowly and cleverly. He is led to believe that the Rebbe can cause his barren wife to bear him children. R. Gedalia writes him enthusiastically saying:

"I am sure that in your case our Rebbe will do all for me, and especially in the matter of children. This is a small matter for him, and he had already done this thousands and thousands of times, and he is famous for this more than all the other Rebbes of our generation." ✓

Moshe comes very close to falling into the trap laid for him, but he averts the snare by virtue of his own honest simplicity.

The hero of Megalleh Temirin is introduced to us in one of the earlier letters. He is Mordechai Gold, the educated gentleman and Maskil. He is kind, considerate, fearless, loyally Jewish and loyal to the state; in a word, Perl's "Dream Jew".

But to the Hasidim, Mordechai Gold was a villain and a menace. Even before they come to grips, R. Zelig warns his correspondent of Mordechai describing him as follows:

"His name is Mordechai Gold, and he is an out and out mifnaged, opposing our Rebbe and all the Zaddikim. Hence he is certainly a great adulterer. (Here Perl appends a reference from זו"ר נח"ל to the affect that adulterers generally oppose the Zaddikim) He is worse than his father-in-law, for his father-in-law does not oppose us so publicly. But he, he is a heretic and an appicourus; he studies forbidden books, and he speaks blasphemy against God and his Messiah, namely our Rebbe, the light of Israel..... perhaps he will come to your community; therefore, know how to deal with him. And in order that you may know him, I will write the signs by which he may be recognized. He is handsome to behold and his hair is neatly arranged and combed. He wears fine clothes with a cravat about his neck..... He speaks slowly and he is clever at figures. He is familiar with books, but he never reads the holy books of the Zaddikim of our generation. He is a little 'meshuga' for he cannot suffer any stains upon his clothes, and when he sees a poor gentile, he gives him charity. He drinks no strong liquor, nor does he smoke a pipe. And since, by the grace of God, there is not another like him in our Gubernia, by these signs you will be sure to recognize him." 3

Mordechai, of course, is the direct opposite of a Hassid, and implicit in Perl's description of him, we find a description of Perl's Hasid..

Mordechai's father-in-law, Wolf Dubner, a wine merchant, was also inclined to be a ~~Mithnaged~~, but for years he had not dared to oppose the powerful Hasidic sect. When later, however, he does make a show of resistance, the wine he markets is poisoned by the Hassidim. This involves him in a serious legal dispute with an infuriated nobleman who had bought the poisoned wine and barely escaped drinking it. The dispute is finally settled out of court by the Rebbe, with Dubner paying damages to the nobleman. In gratitude, Dubner gives the Rebbe many precious gifts of wine and money.

In addition to his other virtues, Mordechai also possessed a rather ribald sense of humor. Very early one Sabbath morning, he chanced to come upon R. Zeinvel walking in a forest. Hiding himself in a tree, Mordechai informed Zeinvel that he was a spirit who had been placed in the tree by the Besht, and that a wonderful future was in store for Zeinvel. The Hassid became highly elated at this thought, and concluded that he was destined to become a great Zaddik. When the truth of the prank was made known to Zeinvel, his hatred and anger toward the



Maskil was redoubled. Zeinvel's bitterness never slackens even when Gold later provides him with a good livelihood by giving him whisky to sell on credit.

For a short time following the affair in the forest, it seemed that Zeinvel was about to become the laughing-stock of the countryside. Even the Rebbe laughed, and nodding his head said, "Zeinvel Verkievker dreams of becoming a Rebbe." But Zelig, the shrewd secretary acted swiftly to change the near disaster into a possible triumph. In his special delivery letter to Zeinvel, he instructs him as follows:

"Immediately upon receiving this letter, you will write a letter to me in which you will state that while you were spending Shabbos in the Village of Bilka, you walked to the forest in the morning for self purification, and that there you saw the scoundrel, Mordechai Gold, with a certain gentile adulteress **אִשָּׁה זָרָה**, committing adultery, **אִשָּׁה זָרָה**, and that you walked with two men who had been with you in the village, and that you took hold of him and the lady ( **אִשָּׁה זָרָה** ) but he ran immediately to the castle and hid himself there, and that you lost the lady also. You might also write that he spent Shabbos with the noble in the castle, and while there, ate trefes..... And see to it that you speak of this matter with the people who were with you on that Shabbos. They must say that they knew of this thing, and that two of them walked with you in the forest." 4

Zeinvel was quick to heed the secretary's advice.

In his letter to Zelig he replies:

"Herin I attach the letter which you requested that I send to you, and two men have placed their signatures that the thing is true as I have written it. They are prepared to swear to this upon the Sefer Torah..... Actually, I remember that while I was talking to Mordechai in the tree, I did see a woman walking in the forest. The two men who signed their names to the letter also were in the forest at the time, and they were able to describe the woman from every side. The Arender (steward) recognized her from the men's description and said that she is a *חנה צדקה* prostitute, a young widow. I instructed the innkeeper to watch carefully to see whether the girl becomes pregnant, and if so, to inform us immediately. The Arender assured me, (he is one of our holy Rebbe's people) and I am certain that he will carry out my instructions, and everything will turn out all right. And the world, with God's helping us, will learn the truth, especially since the two men who signed the letter are very respectable and proper. One of them is the field director in Filstein for the *מנהל קופת המנוחות* collections. The other collects for the candel fund for R. Meir Baal Nase. He is also an important dealer in Matzos, and the grandson of R. Jonah Kaminker." 5

Upon receipt of Zeinvel's specially prepared letter, signed by the two witnesses, the Hassidim acted at once. Copies of the letter were shown everywhere. Mordechai Gold was slandered and mocked in every public place. He was accused of committing every sin in the Torah.

Placards ( *פֿלַטֶס* ) describing the alleged episodes were pasted to walls, homes, synagogues, and bath-houses.

To add additional fuel to the fire, a servant girl of Wolf Dubner, Mordechai's father-in-law, was found to have become pregnant. This too, of course was blamed on Mordechai. The two Gabbaim, who swore they saw Mordechai in the woods with the girl, joined with the doctor of Bilka (A loyal Zahliner Hasid) in offering testimony that Dubner sent for some drugs *רופא*, to bring about an abortion. ( *האָט ער אים געגעבן* )

Just when there seems to be an air-tight case against Gold, a remarkable set of circumstances occur which serve to exonerate him completely. First we learn that for many, many years, he has been totally incapable of fathering children and has been pronounced sterile by several great doctors.

The lady of the forest is found to be pregnant, and the father of her unborn child is proven to have been one of the Gabbaim, either one.

In order to protect these respectable gentlemen, the Hassidim have an abortion performed on the girl, and then spirit her and her father across the border in the Rebbe's 'Chariot' ( *אגרת* ). The girl, incidentally, flees disguised as a Jewess.

The Rebbe's lack of a carriage for several days, led to a particularly interesting episode. It was Lag Ba Omer, and the Zaddik needed his chariot so that he could go out into the fields and shoot arrows at the devil. The Hassidim approached a certain Mendel Adeles for the loan of his carriage. Mendel dared to refuse them, saying that his horses were leased to the army for hauling flour. The Rebbe's needs, of course, were met elsewhere but Mendel was soundly punished for his arrogance. First his horses were stolen, and when he complained of this, his house was burned to the ground. Mendel looked upon the charred ruins of his house and immediately hurried to make his peace with the Rebbe.

As the story progresses, Perl introduces us to yet a second group of Hassidim, those of the Dishpahler



Rebbe. The Dishpahler Hasidim are even more powerful than the Zahliner, though not quite so merry. The Dishpahler Rebbe also has his trusted secretary, one R. Yakel Polner. The interests of the two groups clash when both wish to place their chosen man in the position of the Rav of Koven. In another series of letters, Perl pictures the Rabbi of Kalneh, a candidate for the Koven post, appealing for further support from the Dayyan Michael Kahanna who represents for Perl the last vestiges of a respectable orthodoxy. The rabbi writes:

"I beg of you, do not be angry at my requesting aid from the Rebbe of Zahlin... for certainly you must know that in these days the Sect has grown very strong, and all men of Torah are considered as straw among them. If a man in my position has no support from one of their Rebbes, he simply cannot make both ends meet and literally starves to death. This has actually happened... to many famous scholars, God fearing men of truth who would not adopt their ways. And therefore, what could I do? You know my condition. My family depends on me. I was forced to do all I could to attach myself to the above mentioned Rebbe, and to his secretary..... Therefore, I beg of you to judge me in the scale of merit." 6

The Rabbi of Kalneh finally secures the post through the combined support of the Dayyon Michael Kahanna, his friend the wealthy ~~Mithnaged~~ Kalman Bisinger of Koven, and the Zahliner Hasidim. The Hasidim, however, live to regret the support they rendered when the Rabbi fails to accede to their demands.

An episode similar to Perl's own early life is repeated when the Dishpahler Hassidim recruit the young son of the rich merchant, Kalman Bisinger ( *פרידמאן* ). The young man becomes a fanatic adherent of the sect. He begs for holy relics of the Rebbes and is encouraged to pay for them with money and family treasures which he steals from his own household. One of the relics sent to young Bisinger was a pipestem ( *פייפסטעם* ) alleged to have belonged to the Besht. Actually, it was excavated while digging a cistern behind the Rebbe's house. R. Yakel Polner rationalizes:

"I am sending you the pipestem. Give it to the son of the Podratchik and tell him it belonged to the Besht, and that our holy Rebbe sends it to him. He will believe you, for the pipestem is very old, and indeed it was found on the property of our Rebbe, may he live. Certainly this is special divine providence that we found it at the time we needed it most." 7

In a letter attached to the one above, which was shown to the boy, R. Yakel wrote the following:

"Our Rebbe took the pipe from which he (the Besht) had smoked, and said to me, 'take this pipe which I inherited from my grandfather the Besht, and send it to Eliahu ben Hayim. But he must not smoke from it. And it will remain a help and a support to him.' ;

Upon learning that the Hasidim are leading his only son astray, Kalman Bisinger is enraged and joins the ranks of the Sect's bitter opponents.

The web now begins to tighten. The bitterness and hatred between the two groups of Hasidim approaches in intensity their bitterness toward the mithragedim. Both Zaddikim try to marry off their sons to the daughter of a rich merchant, R. Berach. In the course of the competition, both prospective bridegrooms are exposed as scoundrels, and R. Berach aligns himself with neither Rebbe.

Yakel writes to a fellow Dishpahler Hassid:

"I have heard that the Zahliner has betrothed his wicked son to the daughter of Berach of Galutz.

He set the date of the wedding for the middle of Elul, and frankly, I suspect that he did this intentionally in order that all the relatives of the Berach (who up until now have been loyal to our Rebbe) will remain with him for Rosh Ha Shonah and will not be with us..... Therefore, see to it that you do all in your power to persuade Berach to call off the match especially since you know, of course, that the Zahliner Rebbe's son is a complete scoundrel..... Son of a false Rebbe." 9

The Zahliner Hasidim lament:

"How could they not be scoundrels. They constantly plot to harm our holy Rebbe. And what did our Rebbe ever do to them? Their false Rebbe has a hundred times more members than our holy Rebbe and what is it to those evil doers that our Rebbe has arranged a marriage with the merchant of Galutz or that he was appointed Chief of the Palestine Hasidim. It is only that they are absolute evil doers. They cannot bear to see a true Zaddik extending his scope, for how can the profane bear to see the growth and extension of the sacred?" 10

When the Dishpahler Rebbe obtains a monopoly over the collections for the Holy Land, the opposing group simply abrogate the custom of collecting those funds. They establish a new custom of collecting monies for the grave of the Besht. Here we have an example of the 'reform' practices in Hasidism to which Perl was so violently opposed. The Hasidim Dishpahler reasoned:



"Therefore we decided to ordain that from this day hence, we will no longer contribute to the fund of R. Meyer Baal Nase, but rather to the fund for the resting place of the Besht. Certainly the custom of supporting the fund of R. Meyer was ordained by our own people not too long ago and certainly this custom was never prevalent among the children of Israel. No book mentions it. What is more, we can still remember when this custom was begun in various communities by our own people about twenty years ago.....Thus will we now establish the ordinance to support the grave of the Besht and the world will contribute to it....  
... Now that the holy book has been published, anyone can see that there is... no comparison between the miracles performed by R. Meyer and those of the Besht..... And we shall see afterwards what the false Rebbe will do with his letter of appointment." ||

Under extreme pressure, the two groups finally attempt a truce. But it is an armed truce and there is no mutual trust involved.

As the forces against the Hasidim mount in intensity, their adherents desert in droves. After a long and costly operation, the Zahliner Rebbe finally does secure the elusive book. Its title is seen to be "Of the Activities of the Sect of Hasidim". But by this time the book is of little use and actually causes the death of R. Zelig.

The Rebbe resolves to take revenge against the authors of the book, whom he believes to be pictured on the book's front-piece. The Rebbe kept the book beneath his pillow and from time to time peered at the picture long and hard. Actually, the illustration pictured a Zaddik's secretary welcoming a guest on Rosh Ha Shonah.

When the Rebbe learned this, he shouted:

"Zelig, Zelig, and he was quiet..... and afterward he called to our R. Natan and said to him ..... , 'Take the book and throw it into the fire'. And when R. Natan later told us of this... we understood clearly what had taken place, why our sainted Rebbe had carefully kept the book under his pillow and looked long at the picture from time to time. It was because he believed that the picture showed the authors of the book, and our Rebbe sought to punish the authors with death by means of his 'look' .... But since the picture actually represented a secretary of a Zaddik, R. Zelig passed out of this world..... and no doubt somewhere a guest died who had visited the Rebbe on Rosh Ha-Shonah."

12

A few days later the Rebbe himself died. With their leadership gone, the organization of Zahliner Hasidim disintegrated rapidly. Evidence of their many crimes was brought to bear and the few remaining remnants were forced to flee to the Holy Land. The

territory was then left free of the yoke of Hasidic tyranny and honest men such as Mordechai Gold and Kalman Bisinger and the Count were left free to pursue virtuous and progressive and enlightened lives.

## Part II

### Chapter Five

#### A Summary of Bochen Zaddik



Bochen Zaddic was published in Prague in 1838, a little over a year before the author's death. It went through only one edition, and never approached the popularity of the Magalleh Temirin.

Perl introduces Bochen Zaddik with an Appologia.

הנהגותיו In it we have one example of Perl addressing his reader as the author of a book and not as a fictional character. The Appologia to Bochen Zaddik presents an interesting description and analysis of the literary world of Perl's day. Perl intimately describes the techniques and procedures whereby authors wrote their works, and had them printed and sold. In general, these procedures required a certain amount of conniving and trickery.

In Perl's time, certain forms and protocols had been adopted or had developed among Jewish writers.

For Example:

1. The introductions (הקדמות); Perl thought that the custom of writing introductions to books had been shamefully abused. When the custom of writing

introductions began, he explained, they would contain the gist of the composition itself, along with any preliminary material which the author thought necessary for its reading. "But today", he complains, "most of the authors include their autobiographies and genealogies, along with the names of their wives, sons and daughters, the names of their fathers and mothers, and anyone kind enough to help them financially toward the publishing of the book. They do this that their names may not be forgotten by the succeeding generations."

2. Another practice which irritated Perl, was the writing of letters of commendation or approval הוֹמָתוֹת

, written by important members of the community and reprinted in the book itself. The dubious practices of publishing a list of the book's subscribers ( אנשי אשכנז באו ע"ה חתומים )

and of dedicating the book to some well known figure ( אברהם בן אביש חסד ) was also rampant.

"Originally the authors received the commendations from people who had actually read their book and had found it commendable. Those who had read the book and did not approve of it would simply not write letters to be printed.

But today, authors receive commendations from people who never read the book. In fact, it is often stated explicitly in the letter that they have looked at the body of the composition but have given their approval on the basis of the good reputation of the author. Generally, the writers of commendations are such as are totally incapable of understanding the contents of the book, and are only sought out because they are important men in the eyes of the public." 1.

Another reason for the letters of approval was that those who wrote them condemned potential plagiarists. (There were no copywrite laws at this time) Perl scoffed at this reasoning stating:

"There is really no need for this at all, for there is not one of these authors who will sell all the copies of his book within the prescribed time, and more often than not, unsold books will remain long after the writer had died." 1.

As to the lists of those who subscribe to purchase the book, Perl declares:

"Originally, the authors would print only names

of those who personally signed that they would accept a copy of the book as soon as it was published, but today, the authors allow themselves to include in their lists men who have no intention of buying any books at anytime." 2

The pattern of then and now, illustrated above, which Perl adopts to show the abuses of the publishing business of his day, is repeated time and again in the body of Bochen Zaddik, to illustrate the depths to which he believed society had fallen. This of course, connotes the presupposition on the author's part that there was once a time, several generations back, when conditions were not as they are now. The parallel is neatly drawn with regard to prayer services:

"Who is not aware that in former days, as well as the last generation, morning prayer before sunrise ( **תפילה קצו נל החמה** ) was considered to be the proper procedure, and was called 'The prayer of the devoted' ( **תפילה וסיקין** ) and breakfasting prior to morning prayer, was considered as definitely forbidden. Similarly, they thought that the recitation of the afternoon (Mincha) prayer at its regular time was a meritorious act. Deliberate delaying of the recitation of either morning or afternoon prayers was accounted as a serious transgression. But today, prayer before sunrise is deemed improper and delaying the recitation of prayer as the act of the devoted. And how much more so breakfasting before prayer." 3



Having defined the mood of Bochen Zaddic in his Appologia, Perl continues with the body of the story. As he did in Megalleh Temirin, Perl again begins with an investigation into the affects of a particular book upon Jewish society. In this case the book in question is none other than Magalleh Temirim.

At the suggestion of his friend R. Moshe Umaner, R. Ovadia sets out to see whether his book, Megalleh Temirin, has effected the results that he had intended it would, namely, "to strengthen the faith of the wise, and to proclaim the greatness of the Zaddikim".<sup>4</sup> For these investigations it became necessary for Ovadia to extend his investigations into all branches of Jewish society, and thus, to determine what people were actually saying about his book. Toward this end, a new contrivance is adopted. In addition to his magic paper, which rendered him invisible and transported him from place to place, Ovadia obtains a writing tablet which he termed a "Schreibtaffel". The Schreibtaffel had the property of automatically recording whatever conversation he overheard.

But it had one limitation. The writing upon the tablets could be removed only by having an upright man , blow upon the pages with the breath of his mouth.

The "book" device is soon forgotten as it was in Megalleh Temirin. The bulk of the plot revolves about Ovadia's search for an honest man. After a long, heart-breaking and disillusioning search, he finally finds his honest man in a most unexpected place; in an agricultural settlement in Crimea.

Unlike Megalleh Temirin, Bochen Zaddic is a very precisely organized work. The body of the book, following the concise and detailed appologia, is divided into three distinct units.

The first unit concerns Ovadia's obtaining of the schreibtaffel, and the notes it records on the effects of Megalleh Temirin.

The second section deals with his quest for an upright man. In the course of this search, the author

presents a thorough evaluation of every conceivable phase of Jewish life. One by one, all of Ovadia's opinions and ideals are shattered. He becomes completely disillusioned and sinks into a fit of deep dispondency.

The third section sees the disillusioned and discouraged Ovadia wandering about the countryside of Russia. Near the shores of the Caspian Sea, he happens upon a group of Jews who have returned to the land and he perceives to his delight that they have rediscovered in agriculture their self-respect, and their dignity. Among these people he succeeds in finding the upright men he seeks.

The notes of the schreibtaffel reflected the reception which Perl's first book received within various branches of Jewry. The book was either praised, cursed, or ignored. The notes reveal the readiness

of many Jews to form steadfast opinions concerning the book without ever having read it. Some readers believed the book to have been written by a Hasid; some thought it full of heresy and satire against the Zaddikim and their books. But Perl repeatedly defies his readers to find anything derogatory in Megalleh Temirin which is not thoroughly supported and documented by references from well known Hasidic works which he neatly lists according to date and place of publication. The notes also point up the objectivity with which Perl approached his first work. One critic of Megalleh Temirin explains:

"I for one, certainly hate the Hasidim. But for whom did he write the book? Hasidim won't read it, and the Mithnagedim don't need it. Certainly he wrote it for the gentiles, and they will translate it. Is this a good thing for the Jews?" 5

To this query, Perl has another character answer:



"As I see it he wrote his book for all our people. People who are not yet Hasidim will see the evil of the "sect" and will not follow it. And as for men who today oppose the sect, if one should ask them the basis for their opposition, they could not arrange their arguments. The learned have not read the writings of the sect and argue against it on the basis of some of the practices they have noticed among its members. These arguments can be easily refuted, for all of these practices do not necessarily represent the actions of the whole sect.

But by means of this book...the people and their leaders will see how only because of the 'sect' they have degenerated and that the strength of our religion has fallen ten gradations downward, and that the only aim of the 'sect' from its very beginning until now, is to degrade the Rabbis and the learned in the eyes of the people." 6

If a book such as Megalleh Temirin were to be translated, the question arises as to whether this would promote hatred toward the Jews in the eyes of the gentiles. The answer to this question is placed into the mouth of R. Yechiel Leibush, one of Perl's most foppish characters, but the argument is one that is still used in our own day. R. Yechiel Leibush answers:

"This does not hurt at all; anyone who hates Israel, hates us without this book. Anyone who likes us is not going to start hating us on account of this book." 7

Perl utilized the dialogues of the schreibtaffel to counterattack against a good deal of the opposition to his first book. He derided those who tried to buy up copies in order to burn them. One Hasid blatantly states:

"Do you think I want to buy the books to sell for profit? God forbid! I want to turn them into 'Schweblach'." ;

Perl also reiterates that he did not write the book to provide entertainment for Jewish readers. Indeed, he apologizes for his humor saying:

"My heart aches when I see people laughing while they read the book. They laugh and I am downcast. For this is clear testimony of how our people have fallen ten gradations downward. The writer was forced to write his opinions in an amusing manner, for he knew that direct writing would make no impression among the people. For just as the doctor must sweeten the medicine for a child, so did the author sweeten his true words with laughter and folly to impress them upon the hearts of his readers. In this way, they would see the purpose in his words... But they pay no attention to this and rather think that the author merely meant to be amusing. They do not understand his motive and do not perceive from his work that the wicked of this generation are leading us by their evil counsel into dark and crooked paths, that more and more they are leading us astray from the paths of truth upon which our sainted fathers once walked." 9

When the pages of the schreibtaffel have all been written upon, the task of searching out an honest man to render them reusable begins and with this quest we reach the second part of the book.

Still a loyal Hasid, R. Ovadia naturally assumes that the most likely man would be a Zaddik, since all Zaddikim are by nature supposed to be righteous men. He starts by visiting a rather unimportant Rebbe, but upon telling the Rebbe the purpose of his visit, the holy man firmly refused to blow upon the tablet. Ovadia ascribed this refusal to great modesty and decided to tell the next Zaddik he visited that the erasure of the writing upon the tablet was a delayed action and would only occur after the lapse of some time. But the breath of the second Zaddik was also in vain.

Ovadia visited a great many Zaddikim, paying them a fortune in pidionim (indulgences) but all to no avail. He assumed that such men must be judged by heaven with great strictness. Perhaps, he thought, they had committed

some minor sins in their youth such as allowing their Yarmulkas to fall partially off their heads in their sleep.

At last Ovadia decided to visit the greatest of all the Zaddikim, the "אדמו"ר". He thought to visit the great man in his invisible state and to place the pages before his mouth while he slept. While visiting the great Rebbe, he noted the vast quantities of fine liquor which he constantly swilled and his generally slovenly manner. As he napped, the Rebbe talked in his sleep. Ovadia trembled while the Rebbe shouted:

"Kill that scoundrel until he is dead... Strike him... murder him... split open his head... he is a complete misnagad. He bought oxen from the Duke... and I commanded that R. Ahron of our company should buy them. Go down to his cellar at night... break his bottles of wine... turn over his barrels... bung-holes downwards."

When even the breath of the "אדמו"ר" did not serve to erase the letters upon the schreibtaffel, Ovadia turned to his friend R. Moshe Omer for advice as to what to do next. R. Moshe suggests that he turn to the Rabbis and those learned in Torah. Ovadia visited



the Rabbis and the scholars and was appalled at the ignorance in many and the hypocrisy in all of them.

In the course of his travels, Ovadia notices that non-Hasidic Jewry is divided into three segments of religious opinion.

One segment follows the customs of the time without regard to the value and influence of those customs for good or for evil. This group comprises most of the simple people whose time is completely occupied with earning a livelihood. The second segment is comprised of those whose prime concern is that Jewry should not appear a mockery before the gentiles. They endeavor to learn the wisdom of the world but still generally strive to maintain their ties with Jewish tradition. The third group is devoted to finding faults and fighting with the second group.

Visiting the learned and respected laymen, Ovadia

finds that often as not, the only impetus to their piety is personal gain and honor in the community. He finds pious ~~mishnagedim~~ whose wives lend money out at exorbitant rates of interest and who themselves write anonymous, slanderous pamphlets against the innocent.

Ovadia's quest eventually takes him to the metropolis of Abdary (Brody), the cultural and economic capital of Galicia. Here can be found every type of person imaginable. There are Rebbis named for every city in Poland. There are Epicoursim, Misnagadim, and two or three Zaddikim. The Zaddikim of Brody are particularly bad.

In response to a plea of barrenness, one Rebbe prescribed that the woman spend a half hour in the men's Mikvah, wearing her husband's streimul and Kaftan as a disguise. When certain bathers saw her standing there, they approached and were shocked to discover that she was a woman. The men ran out into the streets panic stricken and naked, as the poor woman fainted away with shame.

In Brody, Ovadia discovers a breed of Jew which he terms the **גריז**; these men best described as dilettantes or fops make a fetish of adopting fancy western clothes, attitudes and speech. They learn to palaver in French and Italian. They attempt to show wide familiarity with politics, finance, and polysyllabic medical terms. Ovadia sees through them immediately. He observes that they generally appear ludicrous to anyone but fools like themselves. They try to pass themselves off as Germans and are hopelessly unsuccessful at it. Perl had great admiration for Germans.<sup>12</sup> He remarks:

"In Berlin, even if they are not of our company ( ), nevertheless, they understand us very well." <sup>13</sup>

Later, again describing the **גריז**, he adds:

"Who is their equal for describing the great merchants of Germany, or who knows the customs of Germany as they do? Even in their houses, you will see everything neatly arranged as it is with Germans, albeit their thoughts are disarranged and differ completely from those of Germans."<sup>14</sup>

A violent revulsion overtakes Ovadia at the sight of the Epicursim of Brody. Here, to be sure, many people are stamped with the name Epicurus including many good people. But for Perl, the term applied to the libertine Jews, those who have thrown off the yokes and attachments of Judaism and smugly flaunt its sacred traditions before the eyes of their brethren. Perl savagely describes this group saying that these men call themselves enlightened and speak the words of the sages, but only to scorn and laugh at them. Their only pleasures are gambling, drinking and carousing. They have the cheap affrontery to mock at the Hasidim when they themselves are just as bad. They bitterly deride any enlightened person who adheres to Jewish tradition or even admits to some measure of communal responsibility, saying that he merely does so to gain honor among the people. (Perl himself was just such an enlightened Jew and received such barbs of criticism from these people throughout his life) Perl was sickened at the thought that their numbers were steadily growing and that they attracted a great



number of the upper class youth into their fold.

The overwhelming majority of the Jews of Brody, Ovadia found, were neither Hassidim, nor Mitnagedim, nor Rabbis, nor גו'נים . Most didn't know what they were. Their lives and personalities were completely enmeshed in the merchantile life of the city. Everyday business life in Brody pivoted around large markets or fairs held in the various cities of Europe. Several of these were held throughout the year. Perl's panoramic treatment of the business life of everyday Jews is unforgettable reading. It is Perl at his best. Here satire is mixed with excitement and pathos and here is revealed more than anywhere else in his writings the deep down sympathy, the honest and unselfish love which Perl felt for the thousands of hurrying, struggling, bickering little Jews of his society.

In his descriptions of the preparations for the great fairs, Perl tells us how the Jews of Brody earned their livelihoods. There were merchants, great and small who dealt in every known commodity. There were

money changers, freightmen, porters, bankers and short term money lenders. Everyone, even the Rabbis, the Melamdim and the household servants were concerned with these markets. In desperation, Ovadia searched for his honest man even among these men, but they, too, were corrupted to the point of disgust, and what was more disheartening, all life was geared so that they could not exist otherwise.

Ovadia went to the artisans and found them to be petty thieves who took little or no pride in their work. He investigated the bankers and found them to be whole scale swindlers, brokers cheated, store keepers misrepresented their merchandise, brewers adulterated their liquor, sometimes with dangerous powders, innkeepers kept houses of prostitution, dealt in stolen goods and served spoiled food, and servant girls committed adultery with their masters. Even the shochtim were dishonest, and the Mellamdim, lord preserve us, extorted bribes from children who feared their beatings.

Indeed Ovadia paints such a dismal picture of Jewish life that Perl finds himself forced to state

in a note:

"Let the thought not arise in the heart of the reader that all of our people in Poland, in truth are wicked, and that there are no upright ones among them at all, God forbid such a thought. And the fact that R. Ovadia saw only the corrupt among them was only because he was destined to continue his search and to discover the basis and source of the trouble which brought about the differences in the customs and practices of our people from those of our holy fathers. This the reader will see in the following letters." <sup>15</sup>

His ideals shattered one after another, his long quest totally unsuccessful, Ovadia attempted another dream sequence but the answer he received seemed to him to be absolutely useless. It was the passage,

כִּי יֵשׁוּב יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ  
וְתִמְנִי' יוֹתֵם בָּהּ

"For the upright will dwell in the land and the innocent will increase in it." In his horror and despair at the moral depths to which Polish Jewry had fallen, Ovadia determined to leave the land of his birth and wander about the wilderness as a hermit wailing over the fate of his people. With this decision the second section of Bochen Zaddik ends.

For several weeks, R. Ovadia drifts aimlessly about Eastern Europe, ultimately finding himself in the remote peninsula of the Crimea. Seeking shelter from a raging snow storm, he happens upon the dwelling of R. David, a Jewish farmer who immediately impresses him with his qualities of wisdom and hospitality.

When Ovadia at last gains the confidence of the farmer, he is informed that a number of Jewish families have been settled on the land and are now prospering greatly. Ovadia is amazed and delighted to discover that Jews are successfully living this rustic life. Indeed they outdo their neighbors in industry and diligence ~~at their work~~; their cattle are healthier, their homes are cleaner and their butter and cheese bring higher prices than those of the gentile farmers. Still, the Jewish farmers manage to retain their Jewish tradition. They build a synagogue by the toil of their own hands. They study Torah during the winter months, and while their external lives are those of simple tillers of the soil, their minds are constantly occupied with science and literature.



The government, profoundly impressed with their accomplishments, has seen fit to grant these Jews a certain measure of self rule in their little province.

- They appoint their own magistrate, who actually has the power to imprison wrong-doers if the occasion demands. And with the proper permissive certificates, stamped by the Jewish magistrate, Jewish craftsmen and housemaids are even granted the right to spend part of their time in the neighboring capital province. Such conditions seem to R. Ovadia, the very pinnacle of liberty and independence.

Ovadia is further intrigued by the idea that in the days of the Kuzars, this entire area was once a Jewish domain, which waged wars against its enemies and maintained equitable diplomatic relations with the great kingdoms of Persia and Greece.

He is also careful to note that Jewish Kuzar kings were absolute monarchs, with power of life and death over their subjects. None the less, they were liberal rulers and allowed equal freedom of worship and opportunity

to Moslems , Christians, Pagans and Jews.

In a final short series of letters with the faithful sofer, R. Meyer Kahanna, some proof of the prime factors for the present sad state of Jewish moral conditions are uncovered and examined:

For example: In former days, it was found that Jews did occupy themselves in agriculture and in craftsmanship. But medieval kings began to prohibit them from these fields and limited their pursuits only to business and money-lending. After a long period of time, honest labor came to be considered a shameful thing in Jewish circles, and only the very poor were trained in trades. Even then their training was slipshod for parents reasoned that by keeping their sons in the Yeshivot, away from work, they might possibly become espoused to the daughter of some rich merchant and the whole family would benefit. <sup>16</sup>

At long last, Ovadia sees that he has found his honest men, and he found many of them. Almost every

Jew in the area who blew upon the tablets elicited the desired results. Although for some it took several blows, for others such as R. David, the reaction was instantaneous.

Now, completely convinced of the wickedness of the Hasidim and their Rebbes, Ovadia succeeds in convincing his Polish correspondents of the fact that salvation for the Jew depends upon the return to the ways and precepts of the Torah, as laid down for us by our holy fathers, and the exposure and overthrowal of those who would corrupt those precepts and ideals. Ovadia and his friends decide to make their findings known to the world. R. Meyer Kahanna is given the task of collecting all the letters and the transcriptions of the schreibtaffel into a single book. Moshe Umaner volunteers to have the book printed.

We are left with the hope that through this volume, Eastern European Jewry will one day recognize their own lamentable plight, and will see the path leading to their own redemption.

Part II

Chapter Six

A Comparative Analysis



Perl's two satirical works were written some twenty years apart. Megalleh Temirin was composed when the author was young, prosperous and politically powerful. Bochen Zaddik, on the other hand, was written when he was old, and suffering simultaneously the attacks of his enemies, and the final death pains of cancer. In this latter setting, we find the author far more disturbed at the sight of the wretched conditions which confronted him.

The two books guide us through Perl's search for truth from the inner confines of Hasidic mysticism, through the belligerent attitude of the Mithnaged, and the smug worldly attitude of the epicurus. The search leads finally to a romantic dream of purity and simple honest living, in a setting of enlightened rustic piety. Had Perl lived longer, this last dream too may have brought him disappointment.

The technique of narrative is essentially the same through the two books.

Perl uses the same contrivance in both Megalleh Temirin and Bochen Zaddik as a vehicle through which he discharges his salvos of satire. The contrivance is that of an invisible observer who carefully records the day to day conversation and correspondence of his contemporaries. It is only toward this end that the author introduces the element of fantasy into his works. All other phenomena in Perl's writings, aside from that directly relating to the actual gathering of information, can be explained naturally and realistically.

R. Ovadia b. Petachia who claims to be the writer of both works tells us in the introduction to Megalleh Temirin that he is a close friend and confident of most of the great Zaddikim of the world. One night Ovadia underwent a miraculous experience, through which he was able "to reveal and strengthen the faith of the wise, and to proclaim and exalt the ways and the foundations of the sect of R. Israel Baal Shem Tov, that is to say, of the Zaddikim of our generation." ).

While traveling from Mezbuja to Zomitz, he lost his

way in the darkness and by chance wandered into a peculiarly desolate valley. There, completely exhausted, he lay down to sleep, reclining his head upon a suitable looking stone.

He was soon awakened by a little old man who claimed to be the Guard or Shomer whom the Baal Shem had set there to watch over the papers of R. Adam. These were very special and miraculous writings which had according to **מגילת אביר** been for a time in the possession of both Abraham our father and Joshua ben Nun of blessed memory. The Besht had encased the papers in the very rock upon which R. Ovadia was now sleeping.

The Besht had given strict orders to the Shomer to stand close watch until someone should become lost in the dark and fall asleep upon that rock. And so, following his orders, the guard pronounced an oath which caused a small slit to appear in the side of the rock, and out of the slit slipped one sheet of paper, **הנה הוא**, whereupon the slit disappeared.

Ovadiah was carefully instructed by the Shomerim in the proper use of this piece of paper. Carried in the left breast pocket it would do nothing, but carried in the right breast pocket, it would render the bearer invisible; carried in the corner of the tallis katan, it provided a cloud which would rapidly transport the bearer anywhere he wanted to go.

After some preparations, Ovadia was off on his quest to gather information about the Zaddikim so that he could proclaim their deeds to the world. It was his intention to stress the things that the Zaddikim did in secret for as he put it:

"When I was with them before, I noticed that there were people of the company who would publish their holy acts. But I also noticed that there were a great many things which were not published, and that many things, which the Zaddikim do in secret, are not known. I decided, therefore, that there was no greater task imaginable than to reveal to the world all of the deeds of the Zaddikim and their servants, even those things which they do in secret, and certainly the things which they do in secret are most important to us, for in them we recognize the more, their greatness and wonder."

3

After its introduction, Megalleh Temirin is comprised



solely of letters which Ovadia copies and anotates. Our only remaining contacts with R. Ovadia in Magalleh Temirin are obtained from some personal reflections in some of the notes. (Occasionally also in the course of the story, a document or letter is seen to be missing, and Ovadia explains to us that he has it) †

The letters in Magalleh Temirin at first appear to be included in a haphazard manner. They seem to follow no logical pattern or order. One story is repeatedly breaking into another. Long forgotten characters are reintroduced after pages of oblivion. But there is an order to the letters; it is not an order of plot or chronology, but rather an order of mood, and in the end, all of the elements in the letters neatly tie together into an exciting narrative. In spite of the fact that these letters often ramble, or simply disgorge great quantities of Perl's spleen, ultimately they fuse together to tell one story. Most of the details of the story are filled in by the reader himself. The reader of Magalleh Temirin often finds himself reading

an account of an event as told by a Hassid, and recreating the true account of the story in his own imagination.

In Bochen Zaddik, the technique is somewhat changed. Here again we have Ovadia moving about the country by means of the same slip of paper. But in Bochen Zaddik, R. Ovadia himself is the central story figure, and the letters are his own personal correspondence. The letters in Bochen Zaddik follow one another in a neat chronological order. R. Meyer Kahanna, who supposedly edited the letters, systematically grouped them into well organized patterns to render the accounts of Ovadia's latter journies in the clearest possible manner.<sup>5</sup>

Bochen Zaddik is certainly a more sober work than is the Magalleh Temirin. Not only does it present Perl's personal reflections and positive suggestions for better living, but in addition it paints a much more all embracing picture of Jewish society as Perl saw it.

The methods of satire in Bochen Zaddik are much

more direct than in Megalleh Temirin, although the wit is generally just as sharp. Bochen Zaddik lacks much of the barbarous language of Megalleh Temirin. It lacks the mad hilarity of the Hasidim, fantastically plotting and counter plotting.

Megalleh Temirin tells its story well. It is entertaining reading and its one message is simple. The treatment in Bochen Zaddik is more involved, more complex, and more polemic in character. But for all its subtlety, directness and systematic organization, it is far less original.

Perl's most fascinating and amusing characters are his Hasidim. For all their weakness, viciousness, and utter lack of principle, they are warm, and richly emotional human beings. Their opponents are cold dull puritans by comparison.

For examples of Perl's artistic skill in character portrayal, we must turn to Megalleh Temirin. Bochen Zaddik sacrifices human character portrayals for stereotypes. An Epicurus acts in a particular manner,

a Rabbi in another, etc. The only real personality to be found in Bochen Zaddik is Ovadia, and Ovadia of course, is Perl himself.

Ovadia's chief characteristics are his strict adherence to ideals of simple honesty and his passionate concern for the welfare of Jewry. As long as he still believes their salvation and welfare to lie within the realm of Hasidism, he supports the 'Sect' and its leaders with the devotion of the Hasid. Even then, however, he approaches the movement with much more objectivity than is proper for a Hasid. He lacks the necessary blind adoration for a particular Zaddik. However, when faced with proof of the true nature of Hasidism and its damaging affect upon the moral fiber of his people, he repels it vigorously.

The moral degradation in Hasidism which Perl so violently despised, is sublimated in the personality of R. Zeinvel Verkievker. R. Zeinvel is bereft of any trace of integrity. He is weak and fauning. His character is shown to be selfish, vicious, ignorant, lazy, ungrateful, and malicious, but his loyalty to



the 'Sect' is absolute and unflinching. R. Zelig, the Rebbe's secretary, knows and understands Zeinvel very well, and keeps him under close and careful check.

Zelig himself is a slightly more agreeable character. He performs the administrative functions of the organization with a missionary zeal. He sincerely believes in all of the mystical rites which the Rebbe performs. His adoration of the Rebbe approaches divine worship. He basks in his master's glory, and accounts himself the most fortunate of men to be in such close contact with him. One cannot judge him harshly since he is so wholeheartedly convinced of the divine nature of his 'sect' and his own position within it.

The Zahliner Rebbe himself is shrouded in a veil of mystery. Only toward the very end of the Megalleh Temirin does Perl give us some insight into the nature of his personality. That personality is a magnificent one, and one can understand how simple people could be so fanatically attracted to him. In the letter describing

the death of the Zaddik, Perl fashions a wonderful picture of the Rebbe, and the relationship of his followers toward him.

R. Natan Baklinik, successor to the late R. Zelig as secretary, describes the Zaddik's last night on earth, with deep emotion and with a heavy heart. The scene picturing the last few remnants of the most loyal Hassidim losing their adored leader is one of pathos, and yet there is still a certain element of humor involved. The tenor of R. Natan's letter is charged with deep gloom as he writes:

"Woe unto us, for a sad shadow rests upon our heads. Our Rebbe, the light of our eyes, died last night. I will write you the account of his passing:

Upon our return from Kalneh, our holy Rebbe was greatly exulted and in wonderfully high spirits. We sat beside him following the sanctification of the moon, ( קני' יאנה ), and he was in such high spirits as we had never seen him in all our days. His wife ( בלוקניג גינת וטל ) went down to the celler herself and brought us wine to drink to our heart's content. And we drank, and we sang with a great fervor over our success at having driven the Dishpahler Hassidim from our territory. (Actually the truce represented no victory whatever. It was merely that the fortunes

of both groups had sunk to ebb low.)

When we saw that the Rebbe was in such wonderfully high spirits, we decided to reveal to him the entire affair of the girl, ( *אנדא* ) for the previous day we received the news that she had arrived as I wrote to you. (This news spelled the final death sentence for the group, since the Count of Krippen needed to banish them all from the territory.) When we told him just how matters stood, he spoke to us and said: 'Children! ( *פֿילדער* ) Do you think you are telling me something new? But do not be sad.' With this he took the cup that stood near him on the table and filled it to the brim with wine, and he said, 'I drink to the Prince of Krippen, and drink to him all of you.' And we drank, and afterward we danced in a circle, and we lost our sadness completely. After the dance, he drank a second cup to the scoundrel Mordechai Gold, and we drank also, and again we danced till our heads spun with gladness. And thus we drank four times with dancing in between and there was light-headedness upon all of us.

After this, he commanded tea to be brewed, and we drank tea. Then he took up his pipe and tobacco and walked out into the night toward the outhouse while we continued to sing and dance in the house.

But after a time, it suddenly dawned upon me that our Holy Rebbe had not yet returned from the outhouse and it seemed that he had been gone entirely too long, and so I went out to see why this should be.

As I approached, I noticed a small light gently burning on one side, and in the middle of the outhouse I saw a large soft glowing light, like a coal burning blue. In my horror, I wrenched open the door by force and wildly shouted... 'Gevald', and

all of our company came streaming out of the house. We lifted him gently out of the outhouse and we saw that he was dead.

And in addition to all this, another sorrow has overtaken me. For during the time we were bearing his body to the house, someone stole his pipe which he had carried with him to the outhouse. What more can I say? We walk about in sadness and emptiness, for we remain as orphans." 6

Perl's heroes in Megalleh Temirin present the following picture:

Mordechai Gold, the honest, kindhearted, loyally Jewish, friend of the government and benefactor to his people. Mordechai steps out of character but once during the course of the story, that being in the episode with Zeinvel in the forest. It seems that he bears a close character resemblance toward the author at the time he wrote the story.

Kalman Bisinger, the dignified merchant and father who must battle with the Hasidim for the integrity of his business and the well-being of his very household. Bisinger bears a close resemblance to our descriptions of Perl's own father.



The Dayyan, Michael Kahannah and the Rabbi of Koven who constantly strive, often unsuccessfully, for the maintenance of the dignity and integrity of Jewish religious life.

And finally, there is the simple and naive scholar, Moshe Fischels, who represents the pure unblemished soul of Jewry for which all the various forces of good and evil are struggling. 1

The two books differ also in their geographical setting and in the author's standpoint. In Bochen Zaddik, Perl is already largely removed from Hasidic life. Here he sees them as many individual groups, each believing the others to be spreading false gospel. He seems to be outside Hasidism, looking in. When he deals with business and urban social life, however, he finds his element, and soundly chastizes cheating businessmen and foppish city characters with the same acid style previously applied to the Hasidim.

Megalleh Temirin might be described by a contemporary

as a libelous pamphlet, while Bochen Zaddik must be recognized as a social critique. Megalleh Temirin draws its weapons from gossip and specially selected passages out of Hasidic books, while Bochen Zaddik draws its weapons from social observations. Throughout Megalleh Temirin, the author presumably maintains his naive objectivity toward the actions of characters, while in Bochen Zaddik, he presumes to pass judgement upon them.

Megalleh Temirin had by far the greater popularity and influence, for reasons which Perl himself recognized. From beginning to end in Megalleh Temirin, the reader is kept in a continuous state of crisis and tension. Almost every letter contains three basic elements:

1. A catastrophe has just been averted,
2. One or more swindles is currently in the offing,
3. There is an urgent call for some immediate action.

Throughout the entire Bochen Zaddik, there is neither one crisis situation, nor one catastrophe. The

action as presented in the letters follows along naturally and sometimes ploddingly. Actually the narrative of Bochen Zaddik in its entirety is nothing more than a sounding board for the presentations of Perl's social doctrines, such as they are.

Where Megalleh Temirin ends with a tone of triumph at the banishment of the Hasidim, Bochen Zaddik rather leaves us with a mood of hope that the future may offer alleviation of Jewry's current discouraging problems. 8.

The comparison of the two books points up the development of Perl as a Jew who has run the gamut of all the social ideas of his day, in a life long search for an honest synthesis of the best that was in all of them. As we know, Perl never did make his adjustment. He died in the midst of his search.





Joseph Perl's attempt to reconcile all the complex elements in his life led him into a futile lifelong quest for the key to the salvation of his people and the satisfaction of his own conscience. It was just this passionate search which motivated him to write his satires, to fight Hasidism, to strive for the elevation of his own community and to build his school.

In his Appologia to Bochen Zaddik, Perl attempts to explain his conception of nature, of his quest, and his compulsive urge to persue it. He writes:

"It is incumbent upon every man to acquaint himself with the norms and practices of his generation, and to search out their qualities, good and bad, in order that he may either practice them or abandon them. However, it is not within the power of every man to undertake such a search.

Therefore, the responsibility rests with all those who have it within their power to search and investigate in the matter, and to inform the rest of their conclusions. This procedure also applies to methods of learning, to laws (of permission and prohibition <sup>הוראה ונאיה</sup>) laws of business <sup>חוקי המסחר</sup> etc., about which it is generally said <sup>אין אדם יכול</sup>.

As a result of this process, in every generation new laws and statutes appeared which the great men of the generation found either to accept or reject accordingly as their clear minds directed them

to careful consideration of the needs for the laws and their roots and foundations in our Holy Torah tradition.

.....New books will be written in every generation as long as their content is both original and worthy of their generation. Certainly anyone who reads my book will grant me that the work is original and worthy to be transmitted to our generation.... And though there may be some whose opinions agree with our own, and whose hearts rejoice that our words have come to light, there is not one else in our time who would dare to bring such things to print." 1.

Our examination of the life and writings of Joseph Perl has revealed to us a practical and successful man of business, a highly controversial figure whose talents and abilities were greatly respected in government circles. What is more, we see a personality who is vitally concerned with the social, cultural and religious problems of the Jewish people, and who attempted to apply rational methods to solutions of those problems.

In so doing, Perl seems to ask himself the following three questions:

1. What is the ideal Israel?
2. What is wrong with Israel as it currently exists?
3. What remedies will affect the desired cure?

The prized key to Jewish salvation which Perl sought so long and so devotedly could be sublimated in an answer to these three questions.

Perl envisions the answer to the first question of the ideal Israel as he describes the Crimean agricultural communities in Bochen Zaddik. Perl's ideal Israel was primarily scrupulously honest. Its characteristic traits were: hard productive labor, modern enlightenment, wholehearted cooperation with state authority, and old time religion. ~'

Perl seems to have believed that this ideal Israel of his had been the norm in Jewish life until a very recent period. He assumed that recent undesirable elements within Jewry, especially Hasidism, had perverted the old time honored righteous ways which our ancient sages had so carefully outlined for us.

The Gospel he preached, and to a certain extent practiced, was repent, and return to the good life. Expose the malfactors and seducers for the evil men they

are, and recognize the state rulers as willing and helpful aids toward Jewish recovery.

Time has shown Perl to have been mistaken in a number of his assumptions, and preachments, not the least of which was his blind faith in temporal rule. If we were to judge the attitudes of the early nineteenth century 'enlightened monarchs' toward the Jew on the basis of the avowed and implied opinions of Perl, we would gain the impression that the kings of Europe desired only the uplifting of their Jewish subjects to the status of useful and productive citizens; that in order to accomplish this, they set up special bureaus to find solutions to Jewish problems; that in fact they established and aided institutions which taught the Jews western manners and useful trades so as to prepare them for their future roles as happy, integrated, well adjusted Europeans.

Historical facts indicate, however, that these so-called benevolent despots had embarked upon an ambitious program to convert Jews to Christianity and to tap their financial resources to the very limit. Perl



never saw this.

Perl knew that in 1802 when Alexander I of Russia ordered the creation of a "Committee for the Amelioration of the Jews", the committee's report published in September 1803, stated as follows;

"Since reforms effected by the authority of the state are generally lacking in stability, particularly when traditions of centuries have to be overcome, it is more desirable and safer to lead them (the Jews) to self improvement by opening to them the roads that will lead them to happiness... a minimum of restrictions, a maximum of liberties, these are the ingredients of a good social order."

3.

Perl knew that the work of this committee resulted in the statute of 1804, concerning the organization of the Jews. This statute was hailed by Maskilim such as Perl as a great milestone in the progress of the Jews toward emancipation. It caused them to look to Russia as a future source of Jewish emancipation. It was joyfully regarded as another proof of the wonderful new liberal state policy.

Perl could not know that the Statute of 1804 would later serve officially to confirm existing limitations

already placed upon the Jews, that it would actually become the basis for the future establishment of the Russian Pale of Jewish settlement.

Perl welcomed any opportunity to be of service to the government, and urged his brethren to do the same. If only they would take up the opportunities for agriculture and handicrafts so graciously bestowed upon them by their gentile rulers, if only they would shake off their shackles of ignorance and superstition and resort to the true ways of Judaism as they are explicitly outlined in our holy Torah, which of late had been so corrupted by those in our midsts who sought to degrade Judaism, the kindly monarchs would then hasten to grant them the equality they craved, the gentiles would welcome them as brothers, and all would lead happier and fuller lives.

A second blind spot in Perl's quest for salvation, lay in his naive belief that destroying the Hassidim would improve Jewish morality. According to Perl, Hassidism was the real cancer which was blighting the

Jewish Community and threatening its destruction. If Perl saw his world in blacks and whites, Hasidism was all black. It was the root of all contemporary evil, the prime corrupter of Jewish ethical standards. Hasidism ruined the youth, corrupted the women, debauched and degraded the merchants, the artisans, and the religious leaders who compromised with it. Hasidim threatened to wreck the standards of Jewish learning, and to lead the Jewish community into the dark pits of superstition. It was the prime reason that enlightened Christians still hated Jews. Enlightened Christians could not, and would not hate anyone for nothing.

Perl specifically blamed the Hasidim for the following crimes:

1. Hasidim perverted the Laws of Israel.

In his introduction to Bochen Zaddik, he points out, 'They (Hasidim) make changes in religious practices and persecute honest Jews for following the old correct ways. They elevated certain obscure minhagim to places of supreme importance in the religious scheme of things.

They perverted sacred law, and exploited their own particular cult superstitions to exercise their evil ends in influencing gullible adherents to perform acts of violence and perfidy.

2. The Hasidim usurped for themselves a new revelation.

No longer was God's word as set forth in the Torah and meforshim the last word in morality. Now it was the word of the Zaddik, who, by means of self assumed magical powers claimed to possess the light of all knowledge and truth. What is more, the rapid spread of this doctrine was undermining the faith of the Jewish masses in the authority of their Rabbis and their holy literature.

3. Hasidim were to blame for the economic and social plight of Israel.

Instead of training themselves for trades and agriculture, and instead of occupying their minds with study of Torah, they wiled away their time in foolish mystical speculations, and earned their living by devious



means, avoiding the honest callings open to them.

4. The Hasidim were immoral to the core.

For the sake of their cause, they were willing to commit theft, forgery, murder, abortion, prostitution, purgery, etc. In Megalleh Temirin, Perl gives examples of each. They had no respect for any authority whatever, except that of the Rebbe. Any sin, however heinous, was a noble deed, only if it served to enhance the position of the sect and the Rebbe.

5. They plotted to undermine recognized authority.

They worked in collusion with the Rabbis and other leaders of the community, many of whom they succeeded in winning over to the sect. They were also capable of dealing with the gentile authorities, bribing, flattering, and blackmailing them when the need arose. Perl lashed out also at the leaders of the Jewish community who lacked the courage to resist the poison of the Hasidim even when they were capable of doing so.

( It must be said for Perl that he did realize that all

adherents of the sect were not rogues. Some he conceded remained out of ignorance of the sect's true nature, while others remained out of fear.) ♪

Perl's immediate objectives in his writing do not seem to be primarily the voicing of his views on the return to honest living. His aim was rather the deflation of Hassidism and every other degrading influence current in Jewish life.

In this respect, Perl was a satirist in the classical sense. His methods were ridicule, irony, hyperbole, slapstick, exhortation, and the countless tricks of circumlocution and insinuation used by satirists in every age and clime.

The writing in Megalleh Temirin and Bochen Zaddik is polemic and critical. While the Hassidim bear the brunt of Perl's attack, he also manages to make biting rapier thrusts into many other facets of Jewish life.

It is particularly note-worthy that throughout Perl's writing, gentiles in general and gentile officialdom in

particular are spared any barbs of his wit. Perl's gentiles, (aside from simple household servants) are never guilty of any wrong-doing. Perl rather tended to glorify the high-born European intellectual and is furious that in their liberal enlightened state, they often fail to recognize the evil nature of the Hassidim. This peculiar trait of Perl's is illustrated in his description of a minor nobleman's visit to the Rebbe of Zallin.

Zellig writes:

"The nobleman came to our Rebbe, may he live, and stood before him with respect, and would not be seated until our Rebbe signaled him to do so. And he told our Rebbe that his relative, the Count of Krippen owned a certain book which contained slander and mockery aimed at the Zaddikim and at our whole sect in general, and that his relative, that is the Sar of Krippen, slanders and laughs at the sect and its Zaddikim, but that he does not agree with this, for he respects anyone who holds to his own faith, be it Christian, ( 'נצ' ), Moslem ( 'مسلم' ), Jewish ( 'יהודי' ), or Pagan ( 'פגן' ).

"And our holy Rebbe answered him in this matter with sweetness, saying, 'My lord's kinsman is still tender in years. The time will come when he will see who to defend and who to mock.' Then the nobleman gave our Rebbe a pidyon and said that it

had been his pleasure to have been privileged to have seen him and spoken to him.... and he left in happy spirits." 5

Consideration of Perl's personal position and overall social attitude would indicate that his treatment of gentiles was due as much to the author himself as to the state censor.

But the mark of good satire is not merely that it be critical, elusive, and clever, there must be a skillful stripping away of all imposing facade. There must be sudden noisy explosions of over inflated pretenses. Satirical criticism must systematically overcome or undermine the obstacle of orthodox public opinion if it is to be at all effective. In the case of Megalleh Temirin, Perl's satire was so cleverly obscured, that while most of his readers discerned his meaning immediately, many Hasidim at first accepted the book at its face value and bought it and read it eagerly, not recognizing that the book had made their sect a target of ridicule and rebuke. Later, the Hasidim burnt all the copies they could obtain and persecuted anyone they found reading it.



The skillful satirist must circumvent convention, orthodoxy, and custom. He must be a bit subversive, and yet his works must derive their significance in truth.

Perl's works meet all these standards. His satire is both direct and indirect. He begins by masquerading as a loyal and innocent friend and defender of his victim and then proceeds to destroy his own faith in himself. Thus Ovadia ben Petachia, the hero of both books, begins as a strong adherent of the sect. In his detached role as the invisible observer, he is capable for some time of maintaining both his integrity and his loyalty to Hasidism. As such, he makes countless excuses and rationalizations for their acts. The reader, however, is not so blind and quickly discerns the true nature of the characters presented long before Ovadia does.

One of Perl's favorite techniques of satire is that of putting dispicable words into the mouths of his victims. For example, R. Zeinvel writes:

"You can imagine how great was my joy at reading that everyone in your community is speaking of the affair of the scoundrel Mordechai, may his name and memory be erased.... who eats traifes, and commits adultery, and blasphemes, and commits certainly all the sins that are in the Torah.

I am sure than when he comes to our community, he will have no reputation at all, for everyone will slaughter him with their tongues.... But I do not understand why you are quiet concerning him. If he were in our city, he would be finished by this time. Certainly it is a small thing in our eyes, with God's help, to make a finish and an end to a scoundrel such as this. How I wish he could be in our city. I assure you that in half a year we would put an end to him or he would bow to the will of our holy Rebbe." 6

Most often, however, Perl resorts to the direct approach of furious attack with the heavy cudgel. When Frieda asks the Count<sup>\*</sup> of Krippen, (who Perl paints as an honorable man) for his approval to her marriage with the son of the Zalliner Rebbe, he presents his gentile opinion of the Hassidim, replying as follows: (his words are reconstructed by R. Zeinvel)

"Frieda! Have you gone crazy? In short, I say to you Frieda, that if you persist in speaking of this marriage, I will take back the house which I gave to you and I will banish you from the city. For I say to you that this 'sect' and this Rebbe of

\* District commissioner.

theirs are not fit to live.' Here again he began to slander us and our Rebbe like a real dog, and finally he said, 'You will see that in the end I will pull them out of this gubernie by their roots. If I believed you to be familiar with them, and nevertheless wished to marry among them, I would chase you from the city immediately, but I judge you ( *אני לא* ) that you do not know them. Therefore, I warn you, Beware! Beware of them, and I beg you not to speak to me of those people again. You think they really want you, I know them well. They want you because they think that you can make me a friend of theirs, for certainly they know that presently I am engaged in a piece of business which will send them all to jail. They most certainly know this for before them there are no secrets. If someone does anything in his most private chamber, they know about it, for they have spies in every house and place.....'" 7

Perl's satire is bitterly earnest and does not stop short with genial mockery. It resorts to exaggeration. It overlooks parts of the truth and magnifies other parts to startling proportions. But if at times Perl deceives, he does not mean to do so. Perl's exaggeration is never reckless and haphazard. He takes great pains to document his statements, citing the words of famous books, carefully noting titles, authors, and dates of publication. However, in doing this, he picks and chooses the most ludicrous statements which most often are taken from

Hasidic theory and not practice.

A major part of Perl's satire rests with his skill of caricature. His personalities are painted in vivid, sometimes shocking colors. Some of their actions seem almost psychopathologically criminal, but in spite of their utter villainy, it is virtually impossible to remain angry with even the worst of them. They pull their shady swindles with such fumbling grace and frank deprecation that the reader is forced to smile in spite of the author's apparent horror and indignation. Perl's rogues are by far his most charming and fascinating characters. The very language they speak is in itself a caricature and a travesty. 8

Although Perl violently attacks certain Jewish institutions of his day, we must emphasize that his writings show deep and earnest sympathy toward his fellow Jews. His whole life further attests to the very positive feeling he had toward his people. Perl could sympathize because he understood, and felt strong bonds of kinship with his fellow Jews whether Hasidim, Maskilim



or others.

Writers of our day are often prone to decry Perl's blindness toward the beauty and wholesomeness that was contained in the teachings of Hassidism. They may remind us that Hassidism was the "great call to life sounded in Jewry long before that call assumed rational meaning in Hebrew literature." <sup>9</sup> But in the first decades of the nineteenth century, Perl could not possibly have seen this. He, too, had read the great Hassidic writings. For more than five years of his life, he had believed in them. As far as he was now concerned, these teachings were as dangerous and destructive to the well-being of Jewry as the pronouncements of Frank and Sabbtai had been. Perl had no idea of the social ferment his generation was undergoing.

A hundred years after Perl's death, Shalom Spiegel could write, "It (Hassidism) continued to affect millions in successive generations because its fundamental insistence was on the dignity of the human personality, and the privilege of being alive." <sup>10</sup>

As far as Perl was concerned, there was absolutely nothing dignified or personable about the Hasidim of his day. They were dishonest, dangerously powerful, culturally ignorant and morally worthless. They wore filthy linen and were infested with body lice. These are things which our contemporary writers are not forced to come into close contact with.

Perl's life displays a certain characteristic, missionary zeal, which constantly prods him on in continuation of his endless quest. This sense of mission is repeated again and again in life and in his writing. Thus, we first find Ovadia feeling the need of proclaiming the glories of the Hasidim to the world. Later he feels equally compelled to expose their abuses. He finally concludes with his mission to glorify his romantic ideal of honest productive labor.

If Perl's violent opposition to Hasidism was blind, his absolute faith in vested authority proved equally blind. Men who came after him were doomed to disappointment in their attempt to implement the 'back to nature

program' which he so staunchly supported in his final years. Probably his most successful and most positive influence was wrought through the practical project which was so dear to him, his school.

Though we might classify Perl as a reformer, under no circumstances would Perl consider himself an advocate of Reform. He claimed for his very own the ancient, time-honored, orthodox, Jewish tradition. Evil men had polluted that tradition with false doctrine and wicked practice. They had sought to abrogate the authority of its words. Joseph Perl devoted his life to the defense of Jewish tradition as he saw it, fighting its enemies with every weapon at his command.

Perl's failure to discover the universal solution to all his problems does not detract from the value of his many works, or from the innate worth of his own personality. Greater men than he have met with failure in the same vain search.

Notes on the History of the  
Shoshone People

Shoshone

1. On January of 1780, the famous 'Edict of Toleration' was issued by the king of the Shoshone, ordering that his subjects should no longer be allowed to persecute their children for practicing their own religion. The edict also permitted the king to remove his subjects from their lands or to change their religion at will, without any restrictions.

Notes and Bibliography

But in 1780, the king of the Shoshone, who was a very powerful man, issued an edict which was very different from most of the others. It explained that the king of the Shoshone was the only one who had the right to give land to his subjects, and that he was the only one who could change their religion. This edict was very important, and it was the first time that the king of the Shoshone had ever issued such a law.

The early Shoshone people were very different from the other tribes. They were very brave and very strong. They were also very smart. They knew how to use their bows and arrows, and they were very good at hunting. They were also very good at making things. They made many different kinds of things, and they were very good at making them. They were also very good at making their own laws. They were very different from the other tribes, and they were very proud of their own people.

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Taxes were levied on the Shoshone people, and they were very different from the other tribes. They were very different from the other tribes, and they were very proud of their own people.



## Notes to Part I

## Chapter One

1. In January of 1782, Joseph II of Austria issued his famous 'Edict of Toleration', allowing Jews to send their children to secondary and higher schools in order to 'make them more useful to the state'. The edict also permitted Jews to engage in certain hitherto forbidden handicrafts, subject to state restrictions.

But this much lauded code also served to confirm most of Austrian Jewry's former disabilities. It explicitly stated that it was not the intention of the king to increase the number of Jews in his lands or to change the conditions which regulated their toleration there.

The early Maskilim who so influenced Perl extolled the virtues of the enlightened despots. They extolled patriotism and loyalty toward their kings. They stressed the importance of gentile approval. They constantly harped on the need for secular education as eminently necessary to bring about their goal of emancipation and civil equality.

In spite of its superficially friendly attitude toward the Jews, the Austrian government adopted a program of paternalism, and interfered in their internal life to a degree unknown under Polish rule.

For Example: The Government established rules applying to the licensing of the Hazanim and Shochtim. Itinerant preachers and Hazanim were considered, according to government order, as vagabonds.

Taxes were levied on Kosher Meat, and on

candles burned for Shabbos and Yomtovim, there were taxes levied on the importation of Ethrogim. And what is more, in order to assure itself of the revenue accruing from these religious rites, the government enforced their practice among the Jews.

Severe penalties were indeed legislated against persons who baptized Jewish children against the consent of their parents. However, these penalties were never executed and the baptized children were taken from the parents and placed in Christian institutions.

A considerable number of trade and work restrictions against Jews continued with Austrian suzerainty. Jewish Artisans were classified by law with vagabonds, quacks and 'disturbers'. Special taxes were levied on the Jews on a per-capita basis for the right of residence, right of trade, and also an income tax.

With Joseph II's Patent of 1785, the Jews no longer continued to occupy a position as a separate political body. Rabbinic civil law was abolished.

By 1788, Galician Jews were permitted to attend state schools, (with the exception of professional schools), Jewish physicians in Galicia were permitted to practice their profession among Christians, Jewish mechanics were permitted to practice their profession alongside Christians (if they could get jobs), Jewish artisans, factory workers and farmers were given certain tax exemptions.

2. Scharfstein, יתולצות חמיון  
בירוא קצירות, N.Y., 1945, Vol I, pgs.  
באחרונות.

3. Lone Maskilim has appeared in Poland and Galicia as early as 1727, when Tuvia HaKohen, the son of the Rabbi of Kremnitz wrote and short philosophical works. Tuvia was a physician, educated in Padua and in Germany.

In 1768, Judah Loeb Margolios, a Rabbi in Shebershin, published a book entitled , on natural sciences. Margolios also published other works in the fields of philosophy and ethics.

In 1797, a general encyclopedia appeared in Hebrew written by Pinchas Elihu, the son of Rabbi Meyer of Vilna. The encyclopedia was written in the city of Buchach in Galicia.

Mendelson's teacher Zamustz spent the last years of his life in Brody and was buried there.

But these few lone Hassidim, remarkable though they were had little or no influence upon the shaping of the Galician Haskalla movement. Credit for this remains with the German immigrant Maskilim.

See Also: Lachover,

Tel Aviv, 1936, Vol. II, page 3

תולדות פסינות העברת החושב

4. Although the Edict of Emancipation provided that Jews of Austria might establish 'Normal Schools', the Jews of the Galician provance did not see fit to take advantage of the opportunity. Under the terms of the Edict, Jewish children were also permitted to attend public schools. The response to this offer was likewise negligible.

The direction of the state Jewish schools in Galicia, was then placed in the hands of the young and ambitious, Herz Homberg. In 1789, he was appointed State supervisor of German Jewish schools in Galicia.

Homberg built his first school in Lemburg. His schools were the first in Galicia where Jewish children were divided according to graduated classes. Subjects were taught in German.

From the very beginning, the orthodox suspected Homberg, and his further actions proved many of their suspicions to be well founded.

Within four years, Homberg had founded 107 schools throughout Galicia. His schools were staffed with 120 teachers who were assisted by a number of helpers האולרים. Since it was impossible to staff all these institutions with local people, teachers were imported from Germany and Moravia. To furnish additional teacher, a teachers' college was established in the Lemburg Normal School, under the direction of Aaron Friedenthall.

Probably the main complaints against Homberg's



schools were directed against his teachers. These men, all rather recently converted Maskilim, took to their task of enlightening their Galician brethren with the zeal of evangelists. These teachers all dressed in western cloths, taught with heads uncovered, and were often lax in their observance of Sabbath and dietary laws, much to the consternation of the Jewish populace.

The number of schools (107) established by Homburg derived more actual reality on paper than in fact. In 1795, the enrollment at the Lemburg schools had reached 389 students. There were 85 instructors and 183 assistant instructors who taught a total of 1574 students. The students were from the poorest Jewish families in Galicia. (Families of standing, such as Perl's, found ways of keeping their children out of these schools. These children remained with their traditional melamdim.) Without a certificate from a state school, a child was not permitted to attend classes in Talmud at the old Hadarim (wealthy students managed to obtain these certificates).

When Leopold succeeded to Joseph II's throne in 1790, he allowed Homburg to continue his schools until the latter was caught taking part in a farm lease swindle. In the midst of the ensuing investigation, Homburg fled to Vienna. In 1806, his schools were closed. Galician Jewry thereupon permitted a number of their children to attend the general public schools, with the provision that they occupy separate benches.

See also: Scharfstein, op. cit., pages 125-128

5. Klausner, *המאבק על הספרות העברית* Jerusalem, 1952,  
Vol. 2, page 285.

5a Klausner, op. cit., p. 286, see note 3.

6. הנהגות Vol. 1, page 65  
Russian Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, page 442  
Scharfstein, op. cit., Vol. 1, page 115
7. History of Jews in Russia and Poland. Philadelphia, 1946, Vol. I, page 232
8. Klausner, op. cit., Vol. II, page 288
9. Bochen Zaddik, Intro. page 3, Prague, 1838 Ed.
10. It must be said for the enlightened monarchs of Austria such as Joseph II, that the repressive measures they meted out to the Jews were enacted with such finesse that they could not be distinguished from the liberating enactments they were porported to be.

But with the closing years of the 18th century, the liberal ideals of the seventies and the eighties suffered a decline and rulers no longer attempted to camouflage their oppressive Jewish policies.

The attempts to educate and enlighten the Jew, to colonize him in agricultural settlements, were dropped.

The fiscal burdens upon the Jews were increased. The levy on ritually slaughtered meat which was first enacted in 1784, (presumably for the purpose of partially paying for the education of Jewish children at state schools) was gradually increased until by 1816, the tax amounted to double the price

of the meat.

The candle tax, originated in 1797, mounted to two and a half times the price of a candle by 1816. There were also other imposts such as the marriage tax, the residence tax, and the yearly tax on the synagogues.

Parallel to this came the government's increasing efforts to Germanize the Jew. In 1806 any elected official of the Jewish community was required to understand German. In 1810, knowledge of German was made a requirement for voting in Jewish communal elections. Documents and agreements written in Hebrew and Yiddish were declared invalid.

A decree went out that every Jewish couple prior to their marriage be examined in German on Herz Homburg's B'ne Zion. (No marriage certificates were given to couples who could not meet this requirement, and many Jewish couples were forced to cohabit without civil sanction.)

The Austrian government attempted to justify these exceptional laws on the grounds that, "The Jews through their religious prejudice, their closed union, and their desire for rapid gain are harmful rather than helpful members of society". It was, therefore, necessary for the Jew to 'improve' themselves in order to merit equal footing with other citizens. Improvement meant assimilation into German culture, eradication of Jewish peculiarities and renunciation of the occupations in which Jews were overwhelmingly engaged. (It might be noted that individual improvement could also be brought about quite rapidly and painlessly through the simple process of religious conversion.)

11. Scharfstein, op. cit., Vol. I, pages 123-124.

Oppressive governmental interference with the internal life of the Jews of Galicia was met with a great degree of resistance on the part of the populace. The leaders in this resistance were the Hassidim.

Hassidism in the eighties and the nineties was a militant resistance movement against the exploitation and oppression of Austrian absolutism.

Acting contrary to governmental law, Hassidim smuggled religious books into Austria from Poland. They collected money to be sent to Palestine. They evaded tax requirements, military service and civil marriage ceremony. They made and sold untaxed candles. They evaded payment of the synagogue tax by meeting secretly in "Schtublach".

For weeks the whole populace might refuse to buy meat, thus causing existing supplies to spoil much to the expense of favored Jewish cattle dealers and government tax revenues. Jewish tax farmers were placed under bans of excommunication. Hassidim established secret printing presses, printing books with false dates and places of publication. On occasion they also counterfited various governmental certificates. Jews who cooperated with the government might find their chickens stolen and their windows broken.

This resistance organized by the Hassidim blossomed forth into a general attitude that laws of morality do not apply to matters involved in cheating the government. It was this widespread attitude that Maskilim such as Perl so abhorred.

The solidarity, the organization, and influence of Galician Hassidim grew until most of the opposing Rabbis were forced to come to terms with them.



However, as the movement increased in power, it attracted many of the wealthy Jewish bourgeoisie. Many Zaddikim themselves amassed fabulous fortunes, becoming merchants, investors, and manufacturers in their own right. As this process continued, the militant policy of the Hassidim against the Government and wealthy Jews gently subsided.

12. Klausner, op. cit., page 152
13. Lachover, op. cit., Vol II, page 3
14. Bochen Zaddik, Prague, 1838, Ed., page
15. Bochen Zaddik, Prague, 1838 Ed., page

Notes to Part I

Chapter Two

1. Klausner, op.cit., page 288
2. Scharfstein, op.cit., page 153
3. Klausner, op.cit., page 290
4. Ibid
5. Scharfstein, op. cit., pages 290-291
6. Klausner, op. cit., page 295. Many of Perl's schemes were not so successful. He had planned the establishment of a Rabbinical Seminary in Tarnopol, wanting Sheer to run it. He also tried unsuccessfully to organize a Jewish labor union, and a store in Tarnopol. All failed for lack of funds.
7. Klausner, op. cit., page 294. Perl's name and reputation spread among Maskilim in Austria and in Germany. In 1822, he was appointed to membership

in the "Gesellschaft fur Cultur und Wissenschaft",  
a select accademic society founded by Zunz, Ganz,  
and Ludwig Markus. Perl was the only Polish Jew  
ever to be so honored.

8. Klausner, op. cit., page 292

Notes to Part I

Chapter Three

1. R. Mahler, The Austrian Government and the Hassidim during the Period of Reaction, Jewish Social Studies, Vol. I, 1939: *P 212*
2. N. M. Gelber, *אגרות* of, Keren Kayemet ,  
*אגרות* *המחלקה '303* , pages 52-58
3. *Compare with classification in Borchon Zaddik - P. 46-47*
4. Kerem Hemed IV, page 242
5. Von Suchter, the governor of Tarnopol at that time, described the Fracas as the biggest riot to date in the history of Tarnopol.
6. Sheer's Eulogy of Perl, Kerem Hemed, Vol.V,  
pgs. 163-169



Notes to Part II

Chapter Four

(M.T. will refer to Megalleh Temirin, Ed. Lemburg 1864)

1. M.T. Letter 1
2. M.T. Letter 13
3. M.T. Letter 8
4. M.T. Letter 21
5. M.T. Letter 22
6. M.T. Letter 68
7. M.T. Letter 70
8. M.T. Letter 71
9. M.T. Letter 127
10. M.T. Letter 133
11. M.T. Letter 128
12. M.T. Letter 111

12. Perl liked the "Notes to Part II"

His attitude on new [unclear] joined in his letter  
concerning the [unclear] [unclear]. [unclear] [unclear]

Chapter Five

(B.Z. will refer to Bochen Zaddik, Ed. Prague, 1838)

1. B.Z. page 6
2. B.Z. pages 6-7
3. B.Z. page 4
4. B.Z. page 13
5. B.Z. page 27
6. B.Z. pages 27-28
7. B.Z. page 29
8. B.Z. page 33
9. B.Z. page 33
10. B.Z. page 44
11. B.Z. page 59

12. Perl liked the "Old Germans" of Mendelssohn's day.

His attitude on new Germany was voiced in his letter concerning the Seyfert Affair. Compare page Chapter three.

13. B.Z. page 60

14. B.Z. page 61

15. B.Z. page 81

16. B.Z. pages 108-109

Notes to Part II

Chapter Six

1. M.T. Intro. page 3A
2. ~~That~~ R. Adam was the Besht's teacher.
3. M.T. Intro. page 3B
4. M.T. Letter 110
5. B.Z., page 118, letter 39
6. M.T., Letter 147
7. A good treatment of some of Perl's other characters is given by J. Davidson in his Parody in Hebrew Literature, New York, 1907.
8. B.Z., page 120 - Perl's last words in Bochen Zaddik are anything but triumphant. He concludes with a sigh:  

"And so it was with me. I watched the crafty enemies of our people increase and prosper. Everyday they attract new souls, and mislead the people from the bright paths of righteousness, to the dark paths of distress . And I could not constrain myself from proclaiming their treachery to the world.



If they (the Jews) refuse to rise to my call,  
and will not awaken from that sleep which is so sweet  
to them, I can not be blamed. I have done that which  
I could and the good Lord has done what was right in  
his eyes."

1. E.E., Letter, page 3

2. Ford Allen, letter, page 10

Indulge in your own way of thinking.

This is the way of the world.

father before, and now, when the world is

of blood.

3. Dymov, page 11

4. G.E., Letter 7, page 10

5. H.T., Letter 10

6. H.T., Letter 11

7. H.T., Letter 12

8. Klammer, page 10

9. Charles, page 10

10. Wild, page 10

Notes to Part II

Chapter Seven

1. B.Z., Intro. page 5
2. Perl also appears to be against drink. His villains indulge in spirits, whereas his heroes do not. This seems rather strange in that Perl and his father before him made their living in the sale of liquor.
3. Dubnow, op. cit., Vol. I, page 340
4. B.Z., Letter 40, page 118-119
5. M.T., Letter 40
6. M.T. Letter 24
7. M.T., Letter 106
8. Klausner, op. cit., pages 310-311
9. Shalom Spiegel, Hebrew Reborn, New York, 1930, pg. 29
10. Ibid, page 32

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Appendix

In treating Perl's public life, I have omitted postulations of personal motives for the course in life which he chose to pursue. An attempt to ascribe economic, political or psychological motives to Perl's activities is beyond the scope of this work. I would chose rather to believe or assume that Perl's works were born out of honest convictions; that he pursued the right where he envisioned it, in the light of his environment as he saw it.

No treatment of Perl's worldly activities would be ample without consideration of the investigations of Raphael Mahler which deal with the Galician Haskala-Hasidism conflict under Austrian rule. In his article, "The Austrian Government and the Hasidim during the Period of Reaction" (1814-1848) op. cit., Mahler sketches the relationship between Maskilim and Hasidim as a general conflict pattern which revolved solely about economic and political foundations. In so doing, he identifies the Hasidim as the struggling and oppressed proletariat, as opposed to the Maskilim,

whom he pictures as the rich Jewish Capitalists, anxious to curry favor with the Government at the expense of the masses of their suffering brethren.

Joseph Perl is singled out by Mahler as the classic prototype of this sort of Maskil. To support this argument he goes to great lengths to list the various occasions in which Perl played the informer against the Hasidim.

Mahler describes the behavior of the Austrian Government as generally reactionary, oppressive and vascillating. He outlines the Austrian state objectives with regard to the Jewish populations in their midsts as follows:

1. To convert the Jews. (An expedient concession to the Church)
2. To extort as much money as they could from the Jews, and to exploit their talents in international trade.
3. To utilize the Jews by encouraging them to deceminate German culture among the newly acquired Polish subjects.

4. To Westernize the Jewish population, and yet do so without educating them to the extent they might become troublesome.

According to Mahler's thesis the state's constant allies in this program were the Maskilim. The state could depend on their support merely by selling them the line that their aim was the gradual 'uplifting' and social assimilation of the Jewish people. They also flattered them with medals and state audiences, and various other degrees of social recognition. These measures combined with the protection the Government afforded against the attacks of the Hasidim served to insure the lasting loyalty of the Maskilim.

Regardless of what they made the Maskilim believe, the Government had little desire to promote Jewish betterment, and more often than not did what they could to promote discord among them. In so doing, they followed the natural course of supporting the weaker side in the dispute, namely the Maskilim.



Quoting Mahler:

"The struggle between Haskala and Hasidism which arose at the outset of the period of reaction, corresponded to the economic conflict between fudalism and the slow but victorious progressive capitalist economy and culture. It was mirrored in antagonism between the rising Jewish upper classes and the persecuted, exploited Jewish Petti Bourgeoise. Similarly it was the struggle between the mass of the population which tried to escape the 'Draconian' measures of the Government and who hated the allien German culture, and the small group of the wealthy with their intellectual appendage. The latter looked upon the government as an aid for their social elevation and found in the German language and culture, a point of contact with the Christian Bourgeoise of the Monarchy and of Europe."

While such an evaluation of the Haskala-Hasidism struggle as Mahler presents, may be tenable, I believe it would be unfair to assign to the person of Perl all of the sins of the Austrian Government and their allies among the Maskilim, and to assume that this lifetime of social contribution was basicly motivated in the

aforementioned economic and political conflict. I base that statement on the following arguments.

1. Though there were many rich and powerful Jews in Galicia at this time, Perl was unique in the manner and extent to which he directed his talents.
2. Perl did not stand to gain materially through his activities, but in fact gave the bulk of his fortune to aid the Jewish community.
3. Perl did not enjoy the favor of the majority of Maskilim and enlightened Jews, whom in fact he berates in his satires as bitterly as he does the Hasidim.
4. It is not the way of a satirist to attack the small, oppressed and the downtrodden, but rather the great, the socially accepted and the over inflated. When Perl attacks Hasidism, he is attacking the accepted norm.
5. All Hasidim were not poor and oppressed. (Their leaders generally enjoyed great luxury) Neither were all Maskilim rich merchants.

6. Hasidim as well as Maskilim took every available opportunity to inform to Governmental authorities against their opponents.
7. A parallel drawn between the Haskala Hasidism conflicts and the Marxian class struggle is an unfair comparison. The Hasidim simply did not represent a down trodden proletariat. They were a strongly unified, disciplined, power wielding element, embracing every social stratum of Jewry. There was no such thing as a Jewish proletariat in Galicia at this time.

Contrary to Mahler's statements, Joseph Perl does not constantly glorify the men of business. Mordechai Gold is not Perl's only hero. If anyone approaches a semblance of glory in his writing it is probably the naive pure-hearted Jewish scholar and the hard working, business shunning, farmers whom he finds in the crimea.