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**RESPONDING TO THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE: AN ANNOTATED
TRANSLATION OF *HOKHMAT YEHUDAH* BY DAVID KAHANA OF ODESSA**

By
Lon Alan Moskowitz

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination.

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institution of Religion
1988

Referee, Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski

Dedicated with love
to my wife, Jacqueline Michelle.

"Many women have excelled,
But you outshine them all."

Proverbs 31:29

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DIGEST

David Kahana wrote *Hokhmat Yehudah* in the late nineteenth century, as a Jewish religious polemic. In this thesis my goal was to translate and annotate Kahana's work from the perspective of Jewish/Christian polemical literature, while, at the same time, putting the text into its historical, social, cultural and religious context.

To this end, I translated *Hokhmat Yehudah* into the vernacular using English words and phrases which capture the subtle meaning of the Hebrew metaphors, puns and rhymes. I also included in-footnotes, citations of textual references and explanatory remarks.

Further, I have attempted to put *Hokhmat Yehudah* itself into a complete perspective. This was accomplished by historically delineating Jewish-Odessa, Russia, and nineteenth century Jewish-New York, and by sketching the biographies of David Kahana, author of *Hokhmat Yehudah*, and Ephraim Deinard, its publisher.

This thesis was an exercise in putting a text into context.

INTRODUCTION

David Kahana (1838-1915) was a prominent Russian rabbi and Jewish intellectual. He wrote numerous works in the field of Biblical studies, Jewish history, and Hebrew grammar. Among his many works is *Hokhmat Yehudah*, a book of Jewish/Christian religious polemics. *Hokhmat Yehudah* was written in Odessa (circa 1880), and in 1889 it was published in Newark by Ephraim Deinard.

In *Hokhmat Yehudah* David Kahana compiles one hundred challenges which Christians have used against Jews and Judaism since the Middle Ages. Kahana stated in the prologue of this work that he wrote *Hokhmat Yehudah* specifically for the "modern Jewish community" so that Jews could re-educate themselves with "logical and intelligent" responses to Christian missions. *Hokhmat Yehudah* consists of:

A Prologue

100 Challenges and Responses

Prooftexts and Footnotes

A Poem by Ibn Ezra

Epilogues

I set out to translate and annotate Kahana's text from the perspective of Jewish/Christian polemical literature. I did so with a mind to keep the English simple and clear, and as close to the literal meaning of the Hebrew as possible.

Sequence of Translated Text

Ephraim Deinard apparently did not have the complete text by David Kahana when *Hokhmat Yehudah* went to print. At that time he had only ninety-eight challenges and responses. After having already set the Hebrew typeface Deinard received two additional

questions from David Kahana (ninety-nine and one hundred). Deinard had them placed at the end of the text, after the epilogues, with a brief explanation.

My concern in this thesis is to show David Kahana's text, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, in as complete a form as possible. Therefore, I arranged the translation of the main body of the text as one unit. All one hundred questions are together.

I have footnoted the appropriate places in the translation where the English layout is different than Deinard's Hebrew edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah*.

Footnoting

David Kahana used footnotes liberally throughout the text. He quotes Scripture, cites general reference texts, paraphrases the ideas of others, and includes personal extrapolations. This he did for scholarly purposes so his readers could probe more deeply into any particular subject. His footnotes also help simplify and clarify seemingly difficult or complicated concepts. And further, they give the text a posture of authority and authenticity.

In this Hebrew edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah* the typesetter placed the first twelve of fifty-three footnotes on the bottom of the same page where they appear in the text. Beginning on page seventeen of the Hebrew text, with question forty-two, the footnotes begin over again. They begin with letter *aleph* (1) and continue on through to *mem-aleph* (41). The footnotes appear together as one complete section following the main body of the text (after question ninety-eight and Abraham ibn Ezra's poem). This collection of footnotes can be found in the Hebrew text on pages forty-one through forty-six.

I chose to format the English translation of *Hokhmat Yehudah* so that the footnotes appear at the end of the text. Please note that I do not begin numbering the footnotes over again when I reach question forty-two. I chose to keep the footnote format consistent in its numbering.

In order to distinguish between David Kahana's footnotes and mine, I placed an asterisk (*) after the reference number to all of the footnotes I included. This system is only operative in chapter five, the translation of *Hokhmat Yehudah*. Throughout the rest of this thesis I did not have to place an asterisk (*) after the footnotes since all the notes are mine.

Use of Colon Versus Comma

Colon: A mark of punctuation (:) used before a long quotation, explanation, example, series, etc.

Comma: A mark of punctuation (,) used to indicate a slight separation of sentence elements.¹

There is some discussion as to whether a quote signifying spoken language should be preceded by a colon or a comma. In this thesis, I use a colon to indicate when a major change takes place between the Jewish argument and the Christian argument, or when there is a different or new respondent in the dialogue, and to help distinguish between questions and answers.

It could be argued that either a colon or a comma could be used. I, however, in order to make this text read as simple, clear, consistent, and intelligible, as possible, chose to use a colon to distinguish between major breaks in sentence elements and ideas.

Translation Procedure

David Kahana wrote *Hokhmat Yehudah* for the common Jew. He used Hebrew, the age-old language of the Jew, so that regardless where one was living s/he could read the text. Also, much of the text is in dialogue form so that the ideas and arguments could be effortlessly understood by the common Jew.

Translating from one language to another is tricky business. The question is raised as to how one meets the challenge of keeping respectably close to the literal meaning of

the words while capturing the spirit of the text, the metaphors, puns and rhymes? The answer is simple. Translate, translate, translate!

With the unconditional tutelage of Dr. Jakob J. Peruchowski, a gentleman and a scholar, I accomplished the task of translating *Hokhmat Yehudah* successfully. I feel that I succeeded in my effort to stay accurately close to the literal meaning of the Hebrew, while using words in the vernacular which are common and clear, as well as capturing the subtle meaning of the Hebrew metaphors, puns and rhymes.

Source and Reference Texts

The texts I used while researching, translating, and writing this thesis, and the editions of all of the sources from which I quoted, are found in the bibliography.

Goal of Thesis

The goal of this thesis was twofold. First, there was my own personal agenda, and second, that of putting the text *Hokhmat Yehudah* into a context, while at the same time making it intelligible to the non-Hebrew reader.

My personal agenda was to acquire the skills necessary for serious scholarship, namely: gaining an in depth understanding of a particular subject, development of Hebrew skills, familiarity with Bible, Rabbinic literary sources, secondary sources, self-discipline, organization and pacing-scheduling skills. Also included in this list was computer competency.

Secondly, I strove to make *Hokhmat Yehudah* meaningful and intelligible to the non-Hebrew reader. This was accomplished by rendering the text into the vernacular. The footnotes help make the contents of *Hokhmat Yehudah* intelligible. And the historical delineation of Jewish Odessa and nineteenth century Jewish New York, along with the biographies of David Kahana and Ephraim Deinard, put *Hokhmat Yehudah* into a historical, social, cultural, and religious context.

Hokhmat Yehudah was compiled by David Kahana as a sort of Jewish polemical cookbook. Something which would be helpful to Jews who were plagued by Christian missions. Although Kahana wrote this work in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many of the arguments have their origin in the medieval Jewish/Christian polemical tracts. Even today, much of *Hokhmat Yehudah's* contents are relevant for the modern Jew.

1 Webster's New World Dictionary, edited by David B. Guralnik, New York: World Publishing Company, 1975. Pages 122 & 124.

HISTORICAL DELINEATION OF ODESSA RUSSIA

David Kahana (1838-1915) lived most of his life in Odessa, Russia. During his life he saw his home town transformed from a small Russian hamlet into a teeming port city of international importance. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Odessa was decidedly different from all other cities in Russia. Because of Odessa's commercial character, and its preoccupation with international concerns, rather than purely insular ones, Odessa became well-known for its cosmopolitan lifestyle and tolerance towards foreigners. It was in this context that David Kahana wrote his book *Hokhmat Yehudah*, a Jewish/Christian polemical "cookbook".

Conquest of New Russia

During the reign of Catharine II (1762-1796), the process of Russian territorial conquest and control over the Turks began with the Seven Year's war in 1756. By 1762 a substantial number of territories were under Russian hegemony. And by the year 1792 Russia had conquered all the remaining territories considered to be hers. The conquest of New Russia was completed.

In 1774, Russia signed the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji. As one of the conditions, she annexed a small section of the Black Sea coastline. In 1789 she had annexed the Crimea, and had taken possession of the Turkish fortress of Khadzhi-Bei - later, in 1794, it was named Odessa. Even at that time there was a Jewish presence in the territory. It is suspected that Jews were living in that territory as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. But no definite information on this point is found earlier than 1793, the date of the founding of the old Jewish cemetery according to the inscription on its oldest tombstone.¹ Russia secured the remaining Black Sea coastline and completed her conquest of Turkish territories following the Second Turkish War,² and the signing of the Treaty of Jassy.³

Catharine II (1762-1796)

Catharine II acquired vast new territories which were previously under Turkish rule. The opportunity to generate large amounts of revenue were envisioned by the farsighted and rational Catharine II. She needed only to get these new territories settled and worked so that taxes could be collected from its inhabitants. Catharine II, was far more tolerant and understanding of the needs of minorities than her predecessors. She encouraged land settlement and instituted new laws which gave large segments of the population additional freedoms. The Jews of New Russia, like all her citizens, benefited greatly from the reforms of Catharine II.

The lure of freedom helped to draw additional inhabitants to the newly acquired territories. Runaway serfs were granted immunity and freedom if only they would settle these territories in the interior of Russia. Further, sizable land grants were offered to certain segments of the population: loyal government officials; servicemen; Greeks who served Russia against Turkey; and Russian merchants. The populating of newly acquires territories, the granting of immunity and freedom to serfs, and the land grants, all resulted in the emergence of a more commercially minded nobility, especially in the Southern provinces.

Among these newly acquired territories stood a city on the Northwestern shore of the Black Sea, Odessa. Odessa's climate was mild when compared to the majority of Russia's other cities. It had a deep and natural harbor which was accessible nearly year-round. This gave Odessa tremendous commercial possibilities. And because of Odessa's import/export potential, it naturally attracted large numbers of foreign entrepreneurs. Jews were among the many. By the time the city was renamed Odessa (1794), the Jewish population was 240 persons.

Soon thereafter, Odessa became the home of large commercial companies which exported grain, meat, cotton, hides, butter, and wax. Because of the large number of

foreigners living in the city, the indigenous tradition of prejudice against non-White Russians, which existed elsewhere in the empire, did not exist. Odessa was fertile ground for the development of enlightened thinking.

In order to understand the nature of Odessa's Jewish community, one must understand it against this background of diversity and change. The Jews who settled in Odessa found a Jewish community lacking the Jewish cultural institutions of their home countries. Traditional Jewish life in Odessa was weak, but the promises of freedom and the attractions from outside the Jewish realm were very powerful. Not at all dissimilar from American Judaism today.

All of this gave way to the development of a Jewish community less likely to hold fast to traditional Jewish teaching, and more likely to accept the newest cultural institutes and trends. Odessa was fertile ground for the introduction of *Haskalah*⁴ ideals and institutions. Odessa became known less as a center of Jewish intellectual activity and more as the center of the most successful progressive Jewish institutions in the Pale.⁵

Paul I (1796-1801)

During the last few years of Catharine the II's reign, and throughout the short reign of Paul I, new settlers in New Russia were granted heretofore unknown privileges. They were freed from all taxes and state services for up to ten years. Also, new immigrants were exempt from military duty, and eligible for government loans to build houses and churches. Freedom of religion was one of the lures used by Catharine II and Paul I to attract more people to the fertile lands and the growing cities of New Russia.

During this period the Jews of Odessa began to establish the foundation of a viable Jewish community. There was an overwhelming influx of Galician Jewish immigrants who brought with them much wealth, and the European culture of the Mendelssohnian era. This, along with the relative freedom given individuals living in Odessa, enabled the Jewish community to translate enlightenment ideals into reality. The *Pinkes*,⁶ which

contained the by-laws of the Society of True Philanthropy, was adopted. It includes in it the framework for institutionalizing caring for the sick and burial of the dead. Also, the Talmud Torah of Odessa was established, the *Kahal* was formed,⁷ and a six bed Jewish hospital was erected.⁸

Alexander I (1801-1825)

Alexander I was a romanticist with mystic leanings. He saw that the progressive initiatives of Catharine II and Paul I would benefit his monarchy. By continuing their policies he could hope to increase the influx of new immigrants into Russia, and thereby increase the worth of his treasury. But in contrast to Catharine II and Paul I, he wanted to convert the cultural and religious beliefs of New Russia to his understanding of true liberalization, and into an ethnically homogeneous society.

Alexander I's attempt to acculturate Russia's minorities led to discriminatory legislation and anti-Jewish harassment. During his reign blood accusations occurred twice,⁹ and in the year 1823, Jews were expelled from rural districts:

"All Jews were to be evacuated before January 1, 1824 from villages in the provinces of Moghilev and Vitebsk. In the following nine months some 20,000 Jews were removed into the overcrowded neighboring cities without any provision having been made for their housing or employment. The resulting misery was so great, however, that in 1825 the government had to suspend further deportations and allow many displaced families to return to their prior habitats."¹⁰

Even though the Jews of Russia were experiencing hardships and persecution under Alexander I, they remained loyal to his government. In Odessa, in particular, the Jewish communal structure, which served the Tsar's interest as much as it did the Jewish community itself, remained intact.

The economic policies of the Tsar worked well. For as early as 1815 Russia had emerged as Europe's chief grain producer, with Odessa being Russia's major port for grain exportation. Further, during this period, Odessa became the major port of entry for

all Asian goods bound for European markets, and the foremost warehouse of goods being transported from East to West.

In 1817 Alexander I declared Odessa to be of "free port" status. This meant that duty-free luxury goods went untaxed and therefore flooded the local market place of Odessa. These luxury items were only subject to taxes if they were transported outside of the city limits. Thus, the Jews of Odessa became accustomed to good wines and liquors, perfumes and spices, foreign visitors, foreign languages, different cultures and religions. The seasonal laborers who flocked to Odessa during the busy trade season brought with them their foreign ways. Odessa became a city rich in culture and material comforts, and a city possessing a continental flavor. Odessa became known as the "Russian Florence", "St. Petersburg in miniature", and the "New Eldorado".

All of this had a tremendous impact on the residents of Odessa. The Jews were no less affected by the influx of European and Asian immigrants, and the de-traditionalizing of Russia's culture than Odessa's general non-Jewish citizenry. August von Haxthausen wrote during one of his visits to Odessa that: "In Odessa I found the most motley mixture of nationalities I have ever seen."¹¹

The natural result of this was the relative absence of traditional Jewish restraints. This was noted by David Kahana in the following incident:

"One evening, in 1817, the city's rabbi, Berish ben Yisrael Usher of Nemirov, was beaten on the street by several Jews because they were unhappy with the rabbi's stringent approach to the observance of ritual law."¹²

Regardless of the fact that there were some minor reversals to minority and individual rights during the reign of Alexander I, his monarchy was dominated by relative freedom for all of Russia's inhabitants. But especially, during this period, the Jews of Odessa prospered financially. Odessa's Jews spoke French, German and Russian. They were relatively unhampered by traditional Jewish institutions and

restraints. They felt welcome in the liberal and ethnically heterogeneous society. It was in this environment that the idea of *Haskalah* was transformed in Odessa from an abstraction into a widely pursued practical necessity.

Nicholas I (1825-1855)

When Alexander I died, his eldest brother Constantine, then military commander of Poland, was next in line to ascend the throne of Russia. Constantine, however, had previously abdicated the crown and insisted on declining. Nicholas I, the military commander of Russia, then became Tsar of Russia.

Sergie M. Saloviev characterizes Nicholas I as:

"...a despot by nature with an instinctive aversion for every moment and expression of individual freedom and independence. Nicholas I loved only the soulless mass movement of soldiers under command."¹³

Nicholas I did not believe in western enlightenment values as promoted by the *Haskalah* movement. But Nicholas I, being a shrewd, supported the efforts of the *Maskilim*¹⁴ if for no other reason than he saw them as a method of breaking down the separatism of the Jewish community. Nicholas I's hope was that once the Jew was enlightened into the greater Russian culture, he would become an acculturated Slavic Greek-Orthodox.

It was because of his belief that enlightenment would lead to the breakdown of Jewish separatism that Nicholas I supported the establishment of modern Jewish schools in Odessa. In 1826 the first Jewish school for secular education opened. Its curriculum included the traditional rabbinic disciplines as well as German, Russian, mathematics calligraphy and other secular subjects. The textbooks were even in German. Nicholas I thought that this new educational approach of the *Haskalah* movement would gradually outweigh the traditional rabbinic curriculum of Hebrew, Yiddish and Jewish texts. According to Nicholas I, the Jew, was a strong person, characterized by merchants,

artists, mill-owners and ferry-owners. But, the Jew was nothing more than a transient foreigner, an injurious element which had no place in a Slavonic Greek-Orthodox monarchy.¹⁵

Nicholas I's remedy to the ever troublesome Jewish question was to enact a *Ukase*,¹⁶ requiring the Russian Jew to serve a twenty-five year term of military service. This according to Nicholas I, would serve:

"...as a punitive measure to reduce the size of the Jewish population (while) the chief benefit to be derived from the drafting of the Jews is certainly that it will move them most effectively to change their religion"¹⁷

This *Ukase* which demanded that the Jews of Russia serve in the army was issued on August 26, 1827. It stated that the term of military service would last twenty-five years. The Jewish community had to present ten reservists for every one thousand Jews in Russia, every conscription term. The non-Jewish community was required to present only seven reservists for every one thousand non-Jewish Russians, and only every other term. For each day of relief from conscription the Jew had to pay five hundred rubles, whereas the non-Jew had to pay only three hundred and sixty rubles. This *Ukase* was unfair and it served Nicholas I's military and religious zeal well.

The Jewish community was of course opposed to this new *Ukase*, and they resisted meeting this quota voluntarily. Thus Nicholas I empowered Kahals¹⁸ with the duty of filling the necessary quota of recruits.

It became necessary for the *Kahal* to hire recruiting agents to hunt down fugitive young Jewish men, capturing them for the purpose of making up the shortage. These trustees of the *Kahal* were nicknamed the hunters, grabbers, or captors.¹⁹

In spite of Nicholas I's attempt to forcefully convert and acculturate the Jewish minority of Russia by:

De-Judaization through the means of Russian military service,
 The recruiting *Ukase* of 1827,
 Juvenile conscription,
 Expulsion policies,
 Russian censorship and conversionist endeavors,
 Compulsory enlightenment, assimilation and oppression,

The Jews of Odessa retained a strong and positive Jewish identity. The soil of Odessa was still favorable for the cultivation of the seeds of enlightenment. Odessa's momentum towards modernity and westernization gave rise to new economic possibilities and enhanced the social and economic standing of the Jew. Despite Nicholas I's attempts to acculturate the Jews of Russia, in Odessa there was a better overall climate with broad perimeters of acceptable religious behaviors. Odessa outran other Jewish centers in the process of modernization.

Alexander II (1855-1881)

The death of Nicholas I, and the accession to the throne of Alexander II marked the beginning of a new life and era in Russia. Alexander II's (semi-) liberal policies slowly began to erase the nightmares of the past through an extension of rights to the Jews.

Alexander II worked to positively transform the *Ukase* and other laws adopted by the military despot Nicholas I. The great reforms of Alexander II, although slowly adopted, set out to grant equal citizenship for the Jews of Russia.

The reversal of the horror of Nicholas I began immediately upon the coronation of Alexander II. On August 26, 1856, he abolished juvenile conscription and substituted it with a policy of "fusion". This policy was established to:

"...reverse all existing regulations affecting the Jew so as to bring them into harmony with the general policy of fusing this people with the original inhabitants, as far as the moral status of the Jews may render it possible."²⁰

Further, the rights of certain sections of the "useful" Jewish population were extended to be equal with the original inhabitants of New Russia.

These were:

1. Merchants of the First Guild.
2. Graduates of Russian Universities.
3. Incorporated Citizens/Skilled Artisans.

Jews who qualified for these categories were extended rights beyond the Pale.²¹

During Alexander II's reign Russia was moving inexorably towards modernity. A publicistic explosion accompanied this move and the press of Odessa became one of the liveliest organs of liberal-type reforms in Russia.

Odessa became the center of Hebrew book and newspaper publishing in Russia. Hundreds of books were published yearly, as well as weekly and monthly magazines. During the twenty-five year reign of Alexander II there was propitious growth of Russo-Jewish literature. The momentum was so great that even during the rule of Alexander III (1881-1894), a reactionary and tyrannical Tsar, the growth of Russo-Jewish literature could not be stemmed or exterminated.

But despite the new reforms, the slow introduction of laws enabling the Jews to become equal citizens of Russia, the boom in Jewish publications, and freedom of the press, many Jewish intellectuals remained distrusting and skeptical of this new philosemitism. Russo-Jewish history was too dubious for them to believe in these changes with perfect faith. David Kahana was one of those who skeptically viewed the state of Jewish emancipation in Russia.

A devastating pogrom hit the Odessa Jewish community in 1871. In its aftermath the city's Jewish modernists began to doubt some of the "certainties" which had guided them for decades. After the pogroms, the dreams of equality and liberal reforms were replaced by disbelief, bewilderment and skepticism. The pogrom of 1871 challenged the Russian Jewish modernist's dream of the viability of Russian reform.

Although Odessa's Jewish intellectuals were confident, at least publicly, that Russia would inevitably move in the direction of enlightenment, in actuality, 1871 was the turning point for the local intelligentsia from general optimism about the prospect for Jewish acculturation to a reassessment of the possibilities.

In March 1881, the reign of Alexander II came to an abrupt halt with his assassination. With the accession of Alexander III to the throne, government hostility towards the Jews came to the fore. It was during this volatile climate that David Kahana wrote the book *Hokhmat Yehudah*, a Jewish/Christian polemical text.

Alexander III (1881-1894)

When Alexander III ascended the throne of Russia all pretenses of liberalism and reform were dropped. All the past unfriendly acts against the Jews of Russia were seemingly generous when compared to the anti-Jewish acts of Alexander III and Nicholas II (1894-1917).

Alexander II's assassination was used as a pretense for passing new anti-Jewish legislation. A rumor circulated that a Jew was responsible for the Tsar's death, and therefore, revenge was patriotic. This vicious rumor further fueled the fire which led to the pogroms of 1881 and 1886.

Other anti-Jewish legislation passed by Alexander III included the Temporary Rules of May 1882. They forbade Jews to settle new towns and hamlets, or to conduct any business on Sundays and Christian holidays.

Nicholas II (1894-1917)

Nicholas II, the last tsar of Russia, offered no changes in the anti-Jewish policies of Alexander III.

Internally, within the Jewish community, a change took place in the content of Russian Jewish literature. Whereas previously, Russo-Jewish literature had a somewhat

assimilationist tendency, after the 1871 pogrom in Odessa it began to be more nationalistic in character. This growth and development continued up until World War II.

Regardless, the general tenor of life of Odessa's Jewish community was distinctly more liberal than in other East European cities. Jews' residency, individual rights and freedoms were relatively unrestricted when compared to other cities in Russia, the Ukrain and Poland.

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- 1 Pollak, Miksa, "Odessa," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, volume 9, page 377a.
 - 2 The Second Turkish War with Russia took place between 1787-1792.
 - 3 The Treaty of Jassy was signed in 1792.
 - 4 *Haskalah* is Hebrew for "enlightenment." The movement originated in central Europe in the eighteenth century, and it encouraged Jews steeped in exclusively religious studies to broaden their knowledge of the world through secular studies. The *Haskalah* movement opposed the exclusive dependence of Jews on the Talmud and Bible as suitable subjects for study, and encouraged the study of secular disciplines, and the adoption of the ideals of the new European emancipation for the Jewish masses.
 - 5 Zipperstein, Steve Jeffrey, *The Jewish Community of Odessa from 1794-1871: Social Characteristics and Cultural Development*, Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA, 1980, page 75.
 - 6 The *Pinkes* was the register of the Odessian Jewish community in which the proceedings of, and events relating to, the community were recorded.
Although the *Pinkes* was accepted by the Odessian Jewish community in the last year of the reign of Catharine II, 1895, it did not go into effect until the reign of Paul I.
 - 7 The *Kahal* of Odessa was first formed in 1798.
Kahal, is derived from the Hebrew term for "community". It connotes the all-embracing communal organization of the Jewish community. It was granted the power to regulate internal Jewish affairs as well as some governmental tasks, like collecting taxes and fulfilling the quota of new army recruits.
 - 8 Established in the year 1800.
 - 9 Blood accusations occurred in 1816 and 1823.
 - 10 Baron, Salo W., *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. New York: The Macmillian Company, 1964, page 25.
 - 11 Zipperstein, Steve Jeffrey, *The Jewish Community of Odessa from 1794-1871: Social Characteristics and Cultural Development*, Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA, 1980, page 35, as he quoted from: August von Haxthausen, *Studien Ueber die inneren Zustände, etc*, II (Hannover, 1847), page 59.
 - 12 Kahana, David — "Zikaron be Sefer Mishpaha," *Kenesset Israel*, I (1886), pages 784-794 (page 789).

- 13 Baron, Salo W., *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. New York: The Macmillian Company, 1964, page 31.
- 14 Hebrew for a Jew who accepted the enlightenment ideals of the *Haskalah* movement.
- 15 Dubnow, S.M., *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*. 3 volumes. New York: Katav Publishing House, 1975, volume I, page 14.
- 16 Laws passed by the Russian tsars.
- 17 Baron, Salo W. — *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. The Macmillian Company, New York. 1964, page 35.
- 18 Kahal is Hebrew for "community." The *Kahal* was designated the organization within the Jewish community which was responsible for internal affairs.
- 19 Ephraim Deinard refers to them as "grabbers" in the epilogue to *Hokhmat Yehudah*. See page 48ff.
- 20 Dubnow, S.M., *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*. 3 volumes. New York: Katav Publishing House, 1975, volume 2, page 156.
- 21 Baron, Salo W. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. New York: The Macmillian Company, 1964, page 48.

DAVID KAHANA OF ODESSA

David Kahana (1838-1915) was a product of nineteenth century Odessa, Russia. He was exposed to progressive Jewish ideas, and a Judaism which was very tolerant. Further, the secular environment of Odessa, which influenced him greatly, was the most open, liberal, and tolerant of all the settlements of the Pale.

David Kahana was known as a modest and honest man who was deeply committed to his Judaism, the Jewish people, and liberal thought. His predominant concern was to promote the greatness of Judaism.¹

Odessian Lineage

David Kahana came from a long line of prominent Russian rabbis. He was one of the few native born Russians to publish in Hebrew.

Kahana's great grandfather, Rav David Kahana-the Elder, was the son-in-law of the first Rabbi of Odessa, Rav Isaac Rabinovich.² Rav Kahana-the Elder was a successful business man who made his money as a goods trader in the port city of Odessa. He also held the post of *Dayan*³ in the community. Because of his personal financial success, he was able to do this for no salary. The position did however offer him much honor and prestige in the community. In 1821, during the first of three pogroms in Odessa,⁴ Rav Kahana-the Elder was brutally beaten. He never fully recovered from his wounds, and he died fourteen years later from complications of this beating.

Three years after the death of Rav David Kahana-the Elder, his son, Rav Isaac Kahana became a father. Rav Isaac Kahana named his son David, after his revered and beloved father.

Childhood and Education

David Kahana was born on the Holy Day of Shavuot in 1838,⁵ into a family of prominent, traditionally literate rabbis. The Kahana family placed a high premium on learning and education. David Kahana attended the famed house of study, *Heder Hamelandim*, where he excelled in all of his studies. At a relatively young age Kahana mastered the elementary lessons of the Bible and Talmud. Thereafter, he became an exemplary student of *Gamara* and *Toseftah*, where he used his natural ability to make simple the difficult.⁶

By the age of fourteen Kahana was studying in the advanced courses in Torah, *Midrash*, *Aggadah*, and grammar. Concurrently, and on his own, he began to study French, German, modern European history, and science. His family encouraged him to pursue a well rounded education, especially since he was so quick to absorb his Jewish lessons. The fact that Kahana loved books and learning made his father extremely happy, and he encouraged him to purchase books on any subject he chose. His father felt that it was important for him to be well read and multilingual. This was essential for his rabbinate, and it would also be helpful when he took over the family business.

David Kahana received a broad based education in both secular and Jewish studies. He used his acquired knowledge to succeed in the family business and to establish himself as a respected Hebrew scholar. Kahana loved learning and he loved books, and during his lifetime he wrote approximately eighty publications on subjects ranging from Bible to science.⁷

Family Life

At eighteen years of age Kahana married. Immediately after his wedding he moved to Ezemal, the hometown of his bride. Together they resided there for two years, and upon hearing of his father's death he and his wife returned to Odessa to live there. Kahana settled in Odessa for the rest of his life.⁸

Upon returning to Odessa, Kahana took over the family business. He bought a home on one of the city's main streets, and became an official resident of Odessa. Together he and his wife shared forty years of happy marriage. On the first night of Hanukah in 1896 she died.⁹

David Kahana married twice more in his life. His second wife died after only two years of marriage. His third wife outlived him.¹⁰

Community Involvement

Kahana was active in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community until his retirement in 1900. Upon taking over the family trade business he became one of Odessa's most successful businessmen. In 1883 he was chosen as the wisest and richest man in Odessa by the organization "The Spreaders of Enlightenment".¹¹

Headmaster of Odessa's Talmud Torah and Orphanage

As a rabbi, Kahana earned much respect from Odessa's Jewish population. In 1888 he was chosen by the leaders of the Jewish community to be headmaster of the famed Talmud Torah and Orphanage. He held this post for twelve years and during that time he was able to pursue his love for Judaism through teaching and studying, and his concern for others by helping Jewish orphans. David Kahana found those years as headmaster of the Talmud Torah and Orphanage to be exceptionally rich and fulfilling.

Retirement from Community Life

In 1900 David Kahana retired as headmaster. He handed over his responsibilities to Shalom Abramowitsch.¹² Upon withdrawing from community life he submersed himself into the world of books, where he read, studied, and wrote prolifically. In the summer of 1915 his health deteriorated, and for the first time in his life he was bedridden. On Elul 14, 5675¹³ he died from protracted intestinal disease.

David Kahana lived to the mature age of seventy-seven. His life was meaningful and productive. He was known to be quiet and modest, and a true champion of Israel. David Kahana is best remembered as a rabbi, a teacher, and a mentor. It is no small feat that he wrote over eighty publications in his lifetime.

Publications

Kahana's profound love for Judaism was expressed in every article and book he wrote, for every publication of his was originally written in Hebrew. Some, however, because of their popularity were published in the vernacular as a second printing. Kahana wrote on Judaism, Jewish history, and Jewish thought throughout all of his works.

David Kahana's publications were extensive and sweeping. He wrote articles on subjects ranging from religion, Bible, and grammar, to history, biography, and science. His writing style is marked by his desire to simplify and clarify difficult and complicated material. Very often he used simple dialogue to achieve this goal.¹⁴ Additionally, he sets out to prove that inherent in Judaism are the answers to many of life's questions. Namely, that what Jewish tradition in the past offered humanity was good, right, and eternal. And still today, it is relevant in modern times. Kahana felt that long ago our foreparents had discovered the eternal truths of our world, and he saw it as his task to authenticate this through his writing.

Kahana saw himself as a modernist who updated, simplified, and modified, the great truths of our foreparents. This, however, led him to be less than scholarly, for occasionally he altered and even changed data to meet the needs of his research.¹⁵ In his zeal to justify Judaism to modern man, Kahana even wrote about subjects he knew nothing about. A case in point is his analysis of modern European history.¹⁶

Although Kahana was well educated and multi-disciplined, he was truly a man of one profession. He was a rabbi and a Jewish scholar who wanted to promote Judaism to the Jew and non-Jew alike. Kahana was a champion of Jewish causes. He was set on

proving the eternal truths of Judaism by showing that it indeed addressed modern concerns. Without exception, every publication of his, regardless how scientific, or historic, it claimed to be, promoted the relevance of Judaism. His was a noble goal, but an unrealistic one.

Regardless, David Kahana's writing tends to be accurate and objective. He uses his broad base of knowledge well, and except for a few exceptions, he can be trusted in his scholarship.

Hokhmat Yehudah

David Kahana wrote *Hokhmat Yehudah* after Odessa's Pogrom of 1871. Up until that time, it appeared likely that a true and lasting Enlightenment atmosphere might indeed be realized, and that the Jewish community in the Pale would be accepted as equals among White Russians. This however, as the Pogrom so amply proved, was not the case. And after 1871, Kahana lost much of his youthful naivete and idealism, and he realized that this recent outbreak of lethal Judeophobia had its roots in the New Testament, and in ancient and medieval Christian religious polemics against Jews and Judaism. *Hokhmat Yehudah* is the collective result of the Judeophobia experienced by David Kahana in his home, Odessa, Russia.

It appears that *Hokhmat Yehudah* found its way to the United States along with the thousands of other books and manuscripts of Judaica and Hebraica as a part of Ephraim Deinard's library. Both Kahana and Deinard were citizens of Russia and resided in Odessa. They were Russian born writers of Hebraica who were passionate about their Judaism.

Conclusion

David Kahana, because of his modesty, was careful not to use his knowledge or his writing skills to show off or to upstage anyone else. He was content to be behind the scene in the arena of scholarly writers. This may be one of the reasons he has not received much recognition in today's scholarly circles of Hebraica. Others however, have used his publications as a basis from which to write extensive and detailed works to color themselves bright.¹⁷ Although David Kahana is relatively unknown he was someone to be admired.

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- 1 Klausner, Joseph, *Yotzrim Uh-Vonim*, Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1925, page 55.
 - 2 Dinur, Ben Zion, "Isaac Rabinovich (of Bendery)," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, volume 12, Column 1319.
Rav Isaac Rabinovich first held the post of Rabbi of Odessa in 1809.
 - 3 Religious Arbitrator.
 - 4 For more information on the pogroms of Odessa (1821, 1859, and 1871), see: Zipperstein, Steve J., *The Jewish Community of Odessa from 1794-1871: Social Characteristics and Cultural Development*, Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA, 1980, pages 253ff.
 - 5 Sivan 6, 5598, corresponds to May 30, 1838.
 - 6 *Hokhmat Yehudah* is an excellent example of David Kahana's ability to simplify the difficult. Kahana successfully simplifies religious, philosophical, historical, theological, and grammatical arguments which occur throughout the history of Jewish/Christian polemics. He does so clearly, concisely, and at times, even humorously, through dialogues which take place between a Jew and a Christian.
 - 7 For a complete list of David Kahana's publications see: Kressel, G., *Lexikon Shel Sofrei Yisrael*, Tel Aviv: Paar, 1980, pages 199-200. Also see: Klausner, Joseph, *Yotzrim Uh-Vonim*, Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1925, pages 48-54.
 - 8 David Kahana resided in Odessa most of his life. He left Odessa for the first two years of his married life. And during 1878-1879 he again left his home in Odessa because of the troublesome time of the Russian-Turkish war. See: Kressel, G., *Lexicon Ha Sifrot Ha Evrit B'Dorot Ha Achoron*, Bet Yam: Ganu, 1965, page, 134.
 - 9 Kislev 25, 5657 corresponds to November 30, 1896.
 - 10 I was not able to discover the names of his three wives.
 - 11 Klausner, Joseph, *Yotzrim Uh-Vonim*, Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1925, page 47.
 - 12 For more information on Solomon (Shalom) Jacob Abramowitsch, see: *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, volume 1, pages 125-126. New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905.
 - 13 Elul 14, 5675 corresponds to August 24, 1915.

- 14 The whole basis of David Kahana's *Hokhmat Yehudah*, is to make sophisticated and complicated ideas accessible to the common person. He successfully does this through his dialogue-type style of writing.
- 15 A good example of David Kahana's readiness to change data to fit his needs can be seen in the Poem attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra, *Asherim ve-ha Hamonim*. See: Kahana, David, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Newark: E. Deinard, 1889, page 39, footnote *lamed tet*.
- 16 Klausner, Joseph, *Yotzrim Uh-Vonim*, Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1925, pages 51ff.
- 17 *Ibid*, page 55.

THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS TO THE JEWS THROUGH THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Early Jewish Presence in America

It can possibly be said that American Jewish history began even before the Mayflower landed at Plymouth rock, for Jews played a vital role in the planning and financing of the discovery of America. Reliable resources have made a myth out of the story of Queen Isabel selling her royal jewels to finance Columbus' expedition. But rather, three Morrano Jews, Louis de Santangel, Gabriel Sanchez and Juan Cabrera, were involved in the financial backing of Columbus' journey. This epochal piece of financing inspired the epigram of the late Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins University:

"Not Jewels, but Jews, were the real financial basis of the first expedition of Columbus."¹

On August 3, 1492, when Columbus sailed from Palos there were at least six Jews who accompanied him. These Jews shared the perils and hazards of the adventure. And they were present when Columbus disembarked and stepped onto the New Land, America.²

Judeophobia in Early America

Anti-Semitism has been a part of Jewish life since the beginnings of recorded history. Before 1893, anti-Jewish sentiments or actions were known as Judeophobia.³ To be sure, Judeophobia has been an intricate part of the American Jewish experience. It was not uncommon for the first white Americans to use anti-Jewish slurs and to discriminate against the Jews, or to perform acts of violence against the Jewish people

and their institutions. But, for the most part anti-Jewish incidents in America have been isolated. And the severity of most of these cases was successfully mitigated, and the Jews emerged unscathed.

Colonial Period

During the colonial period Jews faced outright rejection, prejudice, and even on occasion violence. In the colonies the word "Jew" was used in a pejorative manner, and the Jews had to fight for their freedom and equal rights.

In September 1652, the first Jewish settlers arrived in the New World. Twenty-three Jews disembarked from the ship "Saint Charles" at the port of New Amsterdam. These Jewish voyagers did not have enough money to pay the full fare for their passage, so, upon landing, the ship's captain hauled them before the Dutch governor and court. He insisted on the incarceration of the Jews until their co-religionist in the Indies paid for their journey. The matter was quickly resolved, and the Jews settled in to live.

The Dutch West Indies Company had recently established the colony of New Amsterdam, and it had chosen Peter Stuyvesant to be the company representative. Stuyvesant's responsibilities included overseeing the colonial charter which enabled the Dutch West Indies Company to exploit the resources of the land.

Peter Stuyvesant, a businessman, and an implacable foe of the Jews, worked to keep the Jews out of New Amsterdam, by stating that since they had no money they would be a burden on everyone. Stuyvesant proceeded to persecute the Jews, he denied them their rights, and he did everything in his power to banish them from his community. The Jews, however, fought back. They appealed directly to the superior overseer of the Dutch West Indies Company in Holland, and through their hard work and perseverance, they earned the right to remain in the Colony. It was only a matter of time before they were granted equal rights, and they were able to:

1. Purchase land and engage equally in commerce⁴
2. Hold their own religious services⁵
3. Own their own cemetery⁶
4. Serve as soldiers
5. Become citizens⁷
6. And hold public office.

Early Jewish settlers emerged from their struggles against American Judeophobia strong and triumphant.

Early Christian Conversionist Efforts

Conversionist efforts to missionize the Jews in America date back to 1699 when Mather Cotton wrote a conversionist tract which he dedicated to the Jews. In it he wrote that he:

"...fervently prayed, for the conversion of the Jewish Nation, and for my own having the happiness, at some time or other, to baptize a Jew, that should be my ministry, be brought home unto the Lord."⁸

Mather Cotton's conversionist tract was not an affront to the Jewish community at large because he truly did not expect or even attempt to convert the Jew. This tract expressed his personal wish that the Jews would themselves, see the light, accept the truth of Christianity, choose to be baptized, and convert to Christianity..

Cotton adopted a more cynical view of the Jews later in his life when he wrote that:

"...the Jews were circumcised infidels (and they) are not better than so many dogs."⁹

Therefore, it was useless for a Jew to convert, even to be baptized, since Jews were eternally damned and beyond salvation.

Early Judeophobic Incidents in America

Other Judeophobic incidents in early American history include the recalling of consul Mordecai Noah from Tunis. Mordecai Noah was appointed consul of Tunis by President Madison in 1813. Soon thereafter, Noah was recalled home on account of his being Jewish.¹⁰ And in 1862, General Grant issued "Order #11" which ousted Jews from his war zone.¹¹

Although there are abundant Judeophobic incidents from which one could choose to illustrate anti-Jewish prejudice throughout all of American History,¹² there was no collective organized effort to rid the majority culture of Jews and Judaism.

Organized American Christian Missions

As the Jewish population in early America continued to grow, so did the tendency for American Christians to organize missions to proselytize the Jews. Christian missionary efforts had first existed beyond the borders of North America. But with the coming of the nineteenth century, came the expansion of Christian missionary efforts to America. It was Keith Scott Latourette, who characterized the nineteenth century as the "Great Century" of Christian expansion.¹³

In America, Christian missionary efforts began following the War of 1812. At that time there was a general outpouring of religious benevolence from American Christians who saw the Jewish community in need of physical and spiritual help. Christian benevolence, which became Christian love, manifested itself in organized missions to convert the Jew.

There are three factors which led up to the growth of Christian missions in America:

1. Post Edwardsian Theology.¹⁴
2. The Second Great Awakening.¹⁵
3. The growth of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among Jews.

These three factors, along with a unique missionizing attitude, namely, "love Jews to apostasy"¹⁶ gave way to the development of the American Christian mission movement.

The first Christian missions were established in 1816. They were: "The Vicinity for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews", and "The American Society for Evangelizing the Jews". Also in 1816, Joseph Samuel Christian Fredrich Fry (1771-1859), the founder of the "London Conversionist Society", arrived in New York. Soon thereafter, such missions became a part of the America's cultural and religious establishment.

It was the arrival of Fredrich Fry, which brought about the first organized American Jewish response to Christian missionary activities. Fry was born in Franconia and converted from Judaism to Christianity in 1798. In 1801 he immigrated to London where he immediately went to work missionizing his "brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh (Jews)."¹⁷ Fry was one of the founders of the "London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews". It was one of the best known, and most tenacious Christian missionary movements of the century.

Immediately upon landing in New York Fry became involved in the American branch of the "London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews". Four years later, in 1820, the state of New York gave this organization its charter on the condition that it change its name to the "American Society for Meliorating the Conditions of the Jews".¹⁸

The goal of the "American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews" was to convert the Jews to Christianity. The reasons for this were succinctly stated by Reverend Philip Milledolen (who later became the president of Rutgers University). He concluded that it was absolutely necessary to actively mission to the Jews since they:

1. Close their eyes to the truth of Christianity.
2. Misread the Bible.
3. Act religiously and morally decedent.
4. Remain in need of salvation.¹⁹

To the Jews of America, these accusations were nothing new at all. In fact it is these very same arguments which have been employed for centuries by Christian missionaries who wanted to convert the Jews by duress and coercion.

What is markedly different about the organized American Christian missions is that they no longer cultivate overt enmity toward the Jew and Judaism. Rather, the traditional blatant hatred of the Jew is replaced by a profound "Christian love". Missionizers used a more "Christian approach" in converting the Jew; they loved them into apostasy.

This uniquely new approach used by nineteenth century Christian missions, namely, to love Jews into becoming Christians, echoes Martin Luther's (1483-1546) earlier call to resolve the Jewish problem. In his theological tractate, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*,²⁰ he states:

"If we really want to help them (the Jews), we must be guided by Christian love, not by popish legalism."²¹

Luther makes no attempt at all to hide his conversionist aims. He only changes the means to the end. The question is no longer whether or not to convert the Jew, but, how does one most efficiently missionize a Jew?

American Jewish Response to Christian Missions

In reaction to this type of Christian missionizing in America, the Jews produced a plethora of polemical responses. American Jews in the nineteenth century leaned heavily on the polemical works which were written in the past. Many times these tracts were simply reproduced in full, but more often they were rewritten or paraphrased.²²

By the 1880's and 1890's the New York Jewish community was subjected to a vicious campaign of proselytizing by Christian missions. These missionaries set up headquarters and held rallies on the East Side of town. The Jewish immigrants reacted with rage and even violence toward them.

Two of the first soapbox missionaries who stirred up the East Side Jewish community of New York were apostate Jews. The first was Reverend Jacob Freshman, known as the *meshumed*,²³ and the second was Herman Warszawrak who was the son of a Polish rabbi.²⁴

Although these missionaries were a bother, they really posed no serious threat to the Jews of New York. What they did do was to underscore the struggle of the Jews, as a minority group in America, to maintain their religious and cultural identity.

The efforts made by the Christian missions to convert the Jews during the nineteenth century were dismally unsuccessful. A report by the "American Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among Jews" stated that, at best, only one sixth of a Jew per annum was being converted to Christianity.²⁵

It was into this environment that Ephraim Deinard introduced David Kahana's *Hokhmat Yehudah*. A Jewish religious polemical tract which took one hundred Christian religious arguments and rebutted them.

1 Collins, William, "A Christian Views New York Jewry," New York: Burland Printing Co., 1937, page 6.

2 Those who accompanied Columbus on his journey to discover America were:

1. Louis de Torres, interpreter and translator.
2. Marco, a surgeon.
3. Maestre Bernal, a physician.
4. Alfonso la Calle, a sailor.
5. Rodrigo Sanchez, Cousin of the financial backer, Gabriel Sanchez.
6. Rodrigo de Triana, he who first sighted land.

Further, there were others who were also instrumental in the preparation of the voyage:

1. Abraham ibn Ezra. He devised the astronomical instruments.
2. Jehuda Cresques (called the "map Jew" or "compass Jew"). He drew the maps which guided the course.
3. Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto. Spanish astronomer, mathematician and historian, who rendered assistance in all of the preparations.

3 The term "anti-Semitism" was coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr, an anti-Semitic spokesman in Germany. He used the term to describe the then growing political movement against German Jews.

4 In 1661 Asser Levy (Van Swellan) became the first Jewish landowner in the Colony.

5 Jewish religious services were held as early as 1682; some fix the date as early as 1675.

6 The first Jewish cemetery in the Colony was bought and established in 1656.

- 7 Asser Levy was the first Jew to gain citizenship.
- 8 Sarna, Jonathan D., "The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions," in *The Journal of American History*, volume 68, number 1, (June 1981), page 36.
- 9 Sarna, Jonathan D., "American Christian Opposition to Missions to the Jews-1816-1900," in *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 23:2, (Spring 1986).
- 10 Sarna, Jonathan D., "Anti-Semitism and American History," in *Commentary*, volume 71:3, (March 1981), page 42.
- 11 Sarna, Jonathan D., "American Anti-Semitism," in Berger, David, *History of Hate*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, (1986), pages 115-128. See page 116.
- 12 For more examples of Judeophobic incidents during the Civil War period, see: *Ibid*, pages 121-122 and footnotes.
- 13 Latourette, Kenneth Scott, "The Great Century: A.D. 1800- A.D. 1914," in *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 volumes, New York: 1937-1945, volume IV.
- 14 Herberg, Will, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. New York: Anchor Books, 1960. See: chapter 7, "Protestantism in America", particularly pages 101-103.
- 15 *Ibid*.
- 16 Luther suggests this in his theological tractate: *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*. Luther suggested that dispensing "Christian love" to the Jews will ultimately lead to their conversion. See: footnote 20 below.
- 17 Sarna, Jonathan D., "The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions," in *The Journal of American History*, volume 68, number 1, (June 1981), page 37.
- 18 *Ibid*, page 38.
- 19 Sarna, Jonathan D., "Jewish-Christian Hostility in the United States: Perceptions from a Jewish Point of View," in Greenspahn, F.E. (ed.), *Uncivil Religion*, Crossroad Press, (1987), pages 10-11.
- 20 Luther's publication, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, first appeared in 1543. It was so well read that it was republished seven times in the same year. The occasion for Luther's writing the pamphlet was the accusation hurled against him, evidently by his Catholic opponents, that he had denied the supernatural birth of Jesus.
- 21 Sarna, Jonathan D., "Jewish-Christian Hostility in the United States: Perceptions from a Jewish Point of View," in Greenspahn, F.E. (ed.), *Uncivil Religion*, Crossroad Press, (1987), page 6.
- 22 For an extensive list of Jewish polemical publications see: Sarna, Jonathan D., "The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions," in *The Journal of American History*, volume 68, number 1, (June 1981); And, Sarna, Jonathan D., "American Christian Opposition to Missions to the Jews-1816-1900," in *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 23:2, (Spring 1986).
- 23 Hebrew for one who converts from Judaism. An apostate.
- 24 Howe, Irving, *The Immigrant Jews of New York: 1881 to Present*, London and Bantam: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, pages 73 & 74.
- 25 Schappes, Morris U., *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875*, New York: Citadel Press, 1950, pages 552-553.

EPHRAIM DEINARD: LOVER OF ZION, LOVER OF BOOKS

Ephraim Deinard (1846-1930), Hebrew author, bibliophile, collector of Judaica, and Orthodox Jewish polemicist, can be best characterized as a "transitional figure".¹ Deinard was born in Russia and lived through the transformation of Tzarist Imperial Russia into a revolutionary society. At the age of thirty-two, he emigrated to the "Golden Country", America, where he resided until his death in 1930.

As a child and through early adolescence, Deinard witnessed the counter-revolutionary period of the despotic Tsar, Nicholas I (1825-1855). As a young man, he enjoyed the brief liberalization of Russia under Alexander II (1855-1881). And during the repressive years of Alexander III (1881-1894), he strove to establish a business and a family. And in 1888, he emigrated to New York where he became a proud and patriotic citizen of America. There he lived the rest of his life.

Childhood

Ephraim Deinard was born in Sasmakken (Courtland), Latvia, on May 11, 1849.² His parents, Yekutiel Gerson Deinard and Leah Cohn, were literate Jews who surrounded the young child, Ephraim, with an atmosphere of traditional Jewish observance, Hebrew learning and literature. Deinard excelled in his studies and later used his acquired knowledge and talents to become a successful bookdealer, writer, editor, and publisher.

Deinard, A Wanderer

Deinard loved traveling. During his youth he traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, The Orient, and North Africa. He considered Russia his home until 1888 when he emigrated to the United States. Twice during his life he visited Palestine. His first visit to Palestine came after the Pogrom of 1871, and, in 1913, he made *Aliyah*, only

to be expelled by the Turks three years later. Ephraim Deinard returned to America in 1916, where he died fourteen years later in 1930.

Bibliophile, Scholar and Writer

Deinard's travels were seldom solely for pleasure. Even from the beginning, his first journeys were undertaken for the purpose of gathering data on Jewish history and literature.

Deinard did not purchase books and manuscripts abroad with a mind to resell them for a profit. But rather, he acquired his extensive library for himself, for the purpose of altruistic scholarship. Deinard felt that he needed a good quality Judaica and Hebraica library so that he could research and write and thereby:

"...shed some light on the history of the Jewish communities, and development of Judaism in its various forms."³

Ephraim Deinard became obsessed with the quest to uncover and save rare and valuable books and manuscripts. To be sure, many of the books and manuscripts which he brought back with him from Europe, Asia and North Africa, would have otherwise been lost to the world forever. Deinard's passion for books and libraries led Alexander Marx, the late librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary to write:

"Deinard was a curious personality. A great lover of books, he traveled all over the world, particularly in the Near East, in the quest of rarities. How he managed to obtain some of these unique volumes I do not know, but undoubtedly a considerable number would have perished in the disorders of the last decades if Deinard had not found them a safe resting-place in great Jewish and general libraries, both here and abroad."⁴

First Publication

In 1864, at the age of eighteen, Deinard had collected a voluminous library, and subsequently he had written his first publishable Hebrew composition. His article was

printed in one of the leading Hebrew periodicals in Russia, and thereafter he was accepted among Odessa's Jewish intelligentsia as a talented Hebrew writer. During his lifetime, Ephraim Deinard published over fifty compositions in Hebrew.⁵

Family

Although Deinard was a descendant of a long line of Hebrew scholars, he was not content with mere booklearning. Two years after he published his first article, he married Margolia Joffe of Shklov.⁶ Together, Ephraim and his wife settled in Odessa, Russia, until 1888, when anti-Semitic incidents forced them to emigrate to America.

Book Dealing Business

After his marriage, Ephraim Deinard turned his passion for books into a successful business. Between 1866 and World War I, Deinard traveled extensively in search of rare literary treasures. Europe, The Orient, Asia and Palestine where he found his stock. Deinard's energy and resourcefulness as a businessman, and his indefatigability as a worker, earned him an impressive list of business contacts which lasted him all his life.

Zionist Tendencies

The pogroms of Odessa (1871 & 1881) changed Deinard's life. He came to know persecution, and he learned to realize the importance of individual rights, and the urgent need for the Jewish people to be free, to possess their own land. After the Pogrom of 1871, Deinard became very active and interested in Jewish public and spiritual life, and in particular, he became active in the Zionist movement. Deinard was instrumental in its growth and success from the movement's very inception, and he played an active role in organizing the first emigration of Odessian Jews to Palestine in 1881.³² Soon thereafter, however, Deinard and his wife chose to return from Israel to Odessa.

Return to Odessa

Upon his return to Odessa, Deinard reestablished himself as a bookdealer. His home became a meeting place for the leading Jewish scholars, and a clearing house for rare and valuable books and manuscripts. Deinard used his writing ability to increase his business contacts. He was an excellent correspondent and he wrote to whomever he had to in order to make a business deal. His pen was quick, and as is evident by his writing, his pen was frequently intemperate.

America

By 1888 the repressive atmosphere in Russia became too much for Ephraim Deinard, so he emigrated to America. Upon arrival in the United States, he found the Jewish community functionally illiterate in Hebraica. According to Deinard, there were very few readers of Hebrew books, even fewer scholars devoted to Hebrew letters. Therefore, Deinard set himself the task of planting the seeds of Hebrew learning and literature in America.

Establishment of Deinard's Printing Press

Upon arrival in New York, on October 9, 1888,⁷ Deinard immediately established a publishing house so that he could begin his self appointed task of disseminating Hebraica and Judaica to American Jews. One of the first text he printed was David Kahana's *Hokhmat Yehudah*,⁸ a Jewish religious polemic against Christianity. Deinard felt that *Hokhmat Yehudah* was sorely needed in New York where Christian Missions were targeting East Side Jews for conversion to Christianity:

"Behold...at this time, a time of trouble for Israel, it is incumbent...to stand in the breach against the missionaries from London, and the enticers the world over..."⁹

Establishing Citizenship

Deinard remained in the United States from 1888 through 1893. He did not leave the country in search of books or other rare Jewish paraphernalia because he wanted to establish residency in order to become an American citizen. Deinard was also disgusted at the state of Jewish literacy and scholarship in America. He chose to use that time to make his American business contacts, and to begin establishing quality Judaica and Hebraica sections in the nation's great libraries.

Deinard, a passionate man, and an impassioned Zionist, had a desire to work the land. This desire lead him to organize an unsuccessful agricultural settlement of Jews in Nevada (United States), in 1897.¹⁰ After this attempt failed, he returned to the East coast, and the business of books and writing.

Traveling for Stock

From 1899 until World War I Deinard traveled extensively in search of Jewish oddity. Included with his purchases of rare books and manuscripts, Deinard bought and sold Jewish ceremonial articles, musical items, pictures of distinguished Jews, other objects,¹¹ and real estate. He once even served as a marriage broker.¹² But it was in 1909 that Deinard made his greatest discovery. While traveling the Middle East, Deinard uncovered the hidden *Genizah* in Damascus, procuring a wealth of Judaica and Hebraica.¹³

Deinard's passion to possess rare books and manuscripts, lead to the accusation by some of his critics that many of his valuable books were acquired by pressure, thievery, and borrowing and not returning the items.¹⁴ Perhaps this is why Deinard rails against Michael L. Rodkinson, and Nehemiah S. Libowitz in his epilogues in *Hokhmat Yehudah*,¹⁵ because they were publicly critical of the way Deinard acquired his "treasures" in the Jewish press.

Deinard's Combative Spirit

Deinard had a very combative spirit. He often used language that was vitriolic and abusive. One of Deinard's biographers characterized him as:

"...a man who knows no consideration for an opponent. When it came to controversies he showed no respect even for men of high standing in life and literature."¹⁶

Deinard's ambitious personality evoked much antagonism, both in his private life, and in the press.

Deinard as Polemicist

Deinard wrote all of his publications in Hebrew. His writing style is trenchant and florid, and the Hebrew he uses is biblical and pure. However, much of what Deinard attempts to say is lost in the ferocity of his polemics, and the intemperancy of his pen.

Deinard, as polemicist, violently attacks Reform Judaism, Hasidism, Christianity, Karaism, and any of their proponents. He is quick to slash out with his pen against anyone who stands in his way. At times this results in Deinard's scholarship being unreliable. The accuracy of his data, and the consistency of his reasoning are, at best difficult to assess. Quite often his presentation of "facts" appears warped and derivative.¹⁷

Noteworthy Publications

Two of Deinard's most noteworthy bibliographical works are:

1. *Or Mayer*: A catalogue of the old Hebrew manuscripts and printed books of the library of the Honorary Judge Mayer Sulzberger of Philadelphia.¹⁸
2. *Koheleth America*: A listing of all the Hebrew books printed in America from 1735 to 1925.¹⁹

Deinard also was the editor and publisher of *HaLeumi*, an American Hebrew weekly which advocated the return of the Jews to agricultural life.²⁰

He also wrote extensively on a variety of other subjects: history, bibliography, belles-lettres, literary criticism and Jewish problems and polemics.

Deinard, Lover of Books

Books and literature were more than just a successful business to Ephraim Deinard. He indeed loved books, and he wanted to share his love of Hebraica and Judaica with the world. Thus, his mission was to establish libraries, regardless of size, throughout America. Deinard lived by the motto: "philanthropists give money, but I give books."²¹

Deinard encouraged the growth of both private and public libraries. Numerous incidences are recorded where Deinard himself paid for books if there was even the slightest call for them.²² But probably the most important contribution Deinard made in his life was the establishment of a Judaica library in the nation's capital.

Deinard's Involvement in Establishing Libraries

Deinard approached Jacob H. Schiff²³ with the idea of establishing the greatest library of Judaica to be found in America at the Library of Congress. Deinard had two collections of rare Hebraica and Judaica which he suggested Schiff buy and donate to the Library of Congress. Schiff agreed on one condition, that a "real" Hebrew scholar be hired by the library to oversee the collection.²⁴ The first two collections of Deinard's, which totaled about 15,000 books, were procured by Jacob H. Schiff and donated to the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., in 1912 and 1914. And in 1917 and 1921, the library itself purchased two more collections from Deinard, adding another 6000 volumes to the Judaica section.

Other libraries of renown in which Deinard's services were secured in gathering books were: The University of California at Berkeley, The Jewish Theological Seminary

of America, The New York Public Library, and the Hebrew Union College Library in Cincinnati.

Shortly after Ephraim Deinard's death on June 24, 1930, Harvard University came into possession of his personal Hebrew collection of about 1200 books through the munificence of Lucius Nathan Littauer.²⁵

Conclusion

Ephraim Deinard, Hebrew author, bibliophile, collector of Judaica and Orthodox Jewish polemics, was a true lover of Zion, and a lover of books. Deinard was known as a bibliophile par excellence. His contributions to the world of scholarship are great. He should be remembered for his great love of literature, and his willingness to share his love of books and his passion for Judaism with anyone who would read.

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- 1 Berkowitz, S., *Ephraim Deinard: A Transitional Figure*, Thesis, Columbia University, 1964.
 - 2 Kressel, Gezelim, "Ephraim Deinard," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, volume 5, column 1462.
Deinard placed the date of his birth as Iyar 15, 5606. See: *American Jewish Year Book*, volume 6, (1904):81.
 - 3 Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), page 150.
 - 4 Marx, Alexander, "Jewish Libraries in America," in *The Menorah Journal*, 31 (Winter 1943), volume I, page 80.
 - 5 For a complete list of Ephraim Deinard's publications see: Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), pages 154ff.
 - 6 Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), page 149.
 - 7 Berkowitz, Simcha, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, volume IX:4 (Spring 1971), page 137.
 - 8 *Hokhmah Yehudah* was the first book printed by Ephraim Deinard in America. Deinard printed David Kahana's book of Jewish religious polemics in New York, 1889.
Deinard's very first publication in America was the Hebrew weekly, *Haleumi*. He printed only twenty-three issues of this (December 14, 1888-June 14, 1889).
 - 9 Kahana, David, *Hokhmah Yehudah*, Newark, E. Deinard, 1889, page 47.
 - 10 Bloch, Joshua, "Ephraim Deinard," in *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, volume 3, columns 515-516.
 - 11 Berkowitz, Simcha, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, volume IX:4 (Spring 1971), page 142.

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid, page 137, footnote 8.
- 14 Ibid, page 138, footnote 12 & 13.
- 15 Kahana, David, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Newark, E. Deinard, 1889, pages 47-54.
- 16 Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), page 152.
- 17 Kahana, David, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Newark, E. Deinard, 1889, pages 47-54.
- 18 Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), page 157.
- 19 Ibid, page 159-160.
- 20 Ibid, page 156.
- 21 Berkowitz, Simcha, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, volume IX:4 (Spring 1971),-page 142.
- 22 Ibid, page 142, footnotes 61-67.
- 23 Jacob H. Schiff (1847-1920) was a benefactor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a noted philanthropist.
For more information see; Rosenstock, Morton, "Jacob Henry Schiff," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, volume 14, columns 960-962.
- 24 Berkowitz, Simcha, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume IX:4 (Spring 1971),-page 145, footnote 80.
- 25 Schapiro, Israel, "Ephraim Deinard," in *American Jewish Historical Society*, volume 34 (1937), page 154.

PROLOGUE

The author speaks: Indeed, I have seen that today many Christians intend to write an infinite number of books to disgrace and taunt the Jews and Judaism, and most Jews do not know how to respond to their challenges, since long ago, they forgot all the arguments they used against the Christians during the Middle Ages. And also, it did not occur to the Jews that this trouble would occur a second time. Behold, I come today with my present book to remind my brethren and people of things forgotten. Since I have seen that this time calls for it, I have collected all the questions on matters of faith which the Christians have asked the Jews, throughout the ages unto today, and the most sensible Jewish responses to them; not by way of scholasticism, but rather by way of intelligence and logic.

By doing this, I thought that I would be of use to both Jews and Christians. The Jews would know how to respond to Christian challenges in concise words spoken in wisdom and knowledge, and the Christians, when they see that the arguments of their opponents are strong, will no longer fight against the Jews. But instead of this, Christians will seek the welfare of their brothers (the Jews) as Jesus, their Messiah, desired; and love and brotherhood will be obtained between them, and Israel will dwell safely in all of their dwelling places.

Ashdod by the Black Sea.^{1*}

Tuesday, the Ninth of *Kislev*, 1889.^{2*}

ONE

A Christian asked a Jew: "How can you say to God in your prayer, 'You have chosen us from among all the nations...' Did God choose only you? Are there not many more people in the world?"

The Jew replied: "That is what indeed happened, and here is the proof: When after thousands of years God desired to have His way with a young woman, from which nation

did He choose that young woman? She was not an Edomite³* or an Ishmelite⁴*. She was a Jew."

TWO

A Christian denounced the God of the Jews saying: "He is jealous, vengeful and vindictive. But", he went on to say that his own God, "Jesus, is merciful and kind."

The Jew answered him sarcastically: "What you say is correct, and here is the reason for it. The God of Israel had no mother or father. He was not born nor was he ever educated by upright parents. Therefore, it is understandable that the God of Israel is a jealous and vengeful God. However, your God, Jesus, who was born of a father and a mother, and had a childhood, and was educated by decent Jews, therefore could become an upright man."

THREE

A Christian priest deprecated the whole of the Jewish religion in the presence of a Jew. The Jew could no longer hold himself back, and he asked the priest: "How did the Christian custom of tricking and deceiving one another on the first of April come about?"

The priest gave him different explanations, whereupon the Jew replied: "These are thin and unimpressive reasons, and they don't correspond to the truth. Let me tell you the simple but true reason for this custom. It serves to remind you that on April the first the Angel deceived Mary and said to her, 'Behold, you will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit.'^{5&6}* According to you, Jesus was born in the month of January. So, figure it out for yourself. From April first to January there are exactly nine months."⁷*

FOUR

It once happened that Jews and Christians sat at the same table and, as is their custom, the Christians immediately began to deprecate Judaism, and to glorify and exalt

their own religion to the skies. A Jew among them stood up and said: "Truly, I am covetous of you Christians. Every year you observe at least one day where your God is dead. Therefore, you have at least one day to do whatever your heart desires. But our God, the God of Israel, lives everlasting and has never died."

FIVE

A priest tried hard to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him the mystery of the Trinity: "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, every single one of them has his own permanent and active existence. Nevertheless, the three of them are one."⁸

The Jew responded: "Apart from the fact that it is impossible for my reason to accept the concept of the Trinity, what you have said is even more difficult for me. How do both the Father and the Holy Spirit prove that the Son was placed into the womb of a woman? From this it would appear that the power of the Son is lesser than that of the Father and the Holy Spirit."

The priest saw that the Jew was asking difficult questions and he had no answer for him. He decided to send this Jew to another Jew who had already converted and was a learned person. Thereby, the apostate Jew could explain the difficult matter to the Jew.

The Jew went to the apostate and told him what he wanted explained. The apostate listened and began to laugh saying: "You have forgotten, my brother, what our Sages of blessed memory said: 'One should not try to find any logic in a legend.'"^{9*}

SIX

A Christian priest asked a Jew: "Do you have many books in the field of Theology?"

The Jew responded: "We only have a few."

The priest laughed and said: "Oh what a blinded people you are! A stupid people! We have countless books on Theology. The books we have are almost as numerous as the stars in the heavens."

The Jew answered: "It is not necessary for us to have an abundance of books on Theology. For our faith is that of Monotheism which is very reasonable, but your faith in the Trinity is far from reasonable. Therefore you really need many theological books to strengthen your faith."

SEVEN

One priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him the belief in the Trinity. The Jew asked him: "Can you explain what the Trinity is? Is it three bodies or three souls, and what is the difference between them?"

The priest answered: "The belief in the Trinity is a great secret and a concealed mystery. It is impossible to explain."

The Jew answered: "If this is so, I shall hold fast to my faith because I have always hated secrets, since all secrets are full of wind, like an (empty) wine skin."

EIGHT

A Christian was boasting to a Jew because he was a Christian from birth. The Jew asked him: "Were all your ancestors Christian?"

The Christian proudly replied: "Yes, indeed! That is the way it was."

The Jew said to him: "If that is the case, then there is nothing to brag about since you are only continuing what your ancestors did. If your father had been a Brahman pagan who worshiped cows, then you would also be a pagan like him. You, too, would be holding fast to the tail of the holy cow with all your might."

NINE

It once happened that Jews and Christians sat around and conversed among themselves like brothers about many different matters. Suddenly, one of the Christians began to deprecate the religion of Israel and greatly glorify and exalt Christianity: "It is only because of Christianity that the world knows such precious academic disciplines and new knowledge which was previously unheard of before."

A Jew stood up and said jokingly: "My brother! You also forgot to mention that from Christianity one more wonderful thing is known to the world; that the Old God, the Ancient of Days, occasionally needs to have a woman like the rest of us men."

TEN

A Christian asked a Jew: "Why do the Jews cleave to the inferior religion, Judaism, and not choose the dominant religion, Christianity?"

The Jew answered: "You yourself admit that the Jews are a wise and cleaver people. At first the Jews indeed had the choice between these two religions. And because they chose for themselves Judaism and gave Christianity to you, this indicates that Judaism has great advantage over Christianity, since it is the nature of everybody to choose for himself the best portion. If this were not so, they would have chosen for themselves Christianity, and they would have given you Judaism."

ELEVEN

A Christian asked a Jew: "Why is Israel a stiff-necked people refusing to accept the religion of Christianity?"

The Jew replied: "There are still countless people in the world who are idol worshippers, and it is necessary for us to give them a God, the way we gave one to you."

TWELVE

A Christian said to a Jew: "Those cursed Jews never did anything good for the world."

The Jew responded: "You have forgotten that they gave you a God."

THIRTEEN

A Christian asked a Jew: "Tell me what is missing in Judaism, since so many reasonable Jews no longer observe any of the laws of Moses. They eat and drink with Christians, nevertheless, they do not want to convert to Christianity?"

The Jew answered: "Sir, you are mistaken! This is not a shortcoming of Judaism, it is a deficiency on the part of Christianity. For it is Christianity which stops them from forsaking Judaism. This is because Christianity has dogmas which are irrational and antithetical to the natural order of things. For example: Three are one."

FOURTEEN

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him his faith. The Jew said to him: "The concept of the Trinity is difficult for my reason to accept."

The priest responded saying: "There are many Christians who are more intellectually capable than you, and yet, they believe in the Trinity."

The Jew answered him: "They are only holding fast to the deeds of their ancestors, and once a mistake has been made, it is there to stay."

FIFTEEN

A Christian priest who loved to convert others to his religion tried hard to convince a wise Jew to accept the belief in the Trinity. But the Jew sat silently saying absolutely nothing. The priest thought that his words were convincing, and he asked him: "What

are you thinking about at this very moment? On what day would you be prepared to convert to Christianity?"

The Jew answered him sarcastically: "Sir, you are greatly misreading me! At this moment I am thinking that if I were, for example, to believe in the Trinity then I would prefer to believe in the religions of the Indians, since they too believe in the Trinity like you do. But they have a great advantage over you, since Buddha¹⁰ lived six hundred years before Jesus, your Messiah."

SIXTEEN

A Christian priest publicly deprecated the religion of Israel and greatly exalted the belief in the Trinity. There was a wise Jew in the crowd who could no longer hold himself back, and he asked the priest to explain to him why Christians believe in the Trinity, and what evidence is there to support this belief?

The priest gave him different explanations, whereupon the Jew replied: "Your remarks are incorrect. You should inquire of earlier generations and you will see that the first Christians were either Jews or pagans. For many years they disagreed on their notion of God until finally they reached a compromise to make their god according to both views.

"Therefore, the Christian God is:

One, according to the view of the intelligent Jews.
And three, according to the view of the early pagan."

SEVENTEEN

A Christian priest was boasting that he has argued with many Jews about religious matters and won. Once there came a wise and intelligent Jew with whom the priest began to argue about religious issues, and to prove to him that God has three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and they have always been three separate powers, and nevertheless they are one.

The Jew said to him: "This concept is very difficult for my reason to accept since God, not being physical cannot be divided. Rather, God is One in every aspect. Unity cannot be attenuated or changed.

"I have yet another difficulty with your words. How can you say: 'The Father and the Son?' With this, you make possible the error that the Father came before the Son. Why don't you call them twins?"

The priest saw that he had no answer so he became angry and he vehemently cursed the Jew. He vowed not to speak with Jews anymore.

EIGHTEEN

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in Jesus as his Messiah.

The Jew answered: "I will consent to your request if you will let me believe in only half of that which you have told me about Jesus, and not all of it. For example, I will believe that Jesus was born from a woman, but I cannot believe that he was born from the Holy Spirit. Also, I will believe that he was crucified and died, but I cannot believe that he rose from the dead. Further, I will believe that he gave five loaves of bread to five thousand people and they ate them, but I cannot believe that they were satiated."

NINETEEN

A Christian said to a Jew: "You have many customs which are no good. In particular, you insist on marrying off your daughters at a very young age."

The Jew responded: "Indeed, we have seen what happened to us because one young woman was not married quickly. She gave birth to a son, and said that she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Look at all the humiliation, trouble, and disgrace we have suffered over the years because of that."

TWENTY

A Christian priest was arguing with a Jew about religious matters. After this, the priest brought many prooftexts from the Hebrew Bible to show that they, according to his view, were prophecies concerning Jesus, his Messiah.

The Jew said to him: "Yesterday I was angry at the rooster in my house because he always crows so loudly. I hit him with a stick, and I chased him into a dark room. Then, I beat him all day until his skin was torn open and his bones were broken. Afterwards, I placed him in a cool place and covered him up as is fitting. After he died, a miracle occurred. His spirit returned to him and he began to crow and run around as usual. Now I have been convinced that all of this was already prophesied by Jeremiah, who said: 'I am the man that has seen affliction, by the rod of His wrath. He has led me and caused me to walk in darkness and not in light.'¹¹ And in the language of the Talmud, *Gever* means 'rooster'."

The priest laughed at all of this and said: "How can you imagine that Jeremiah prophesied about this rooster? It does not fit into the context and sequence of the verses which come before and after."

The Jew responded: "How do you imagine that the Hebrew Bible prophesied about Jesus the Nazarene? There is also a context and sequence to the Hebrew Bible, and it does not support this."¹²

TWENTY-ONE

A Christian said to a Jew: "You killed our Messiah, the Son of God. Your sins are too great to bear."

The Jew responded: "What you say is wrong. Firstly, the Jews did not kill the Nazarene,^{13*} but the Romans did. And secondly, in our opinion, he is not the 'Son of God'. Here is the proof. When Abraham our forefather went to slaughter his son, God, the Holy One, Blessed be He, could not bear to face Abraham's pain. He immediately

commanded Abraham: 'Do not send forth your hand against the lad.'^{14*} Truly, if The Nazarene had been the 'Son of God', would the Holy One, Blessed be He, have left him to hang, and not turned the world back into chaos?"¹⁵

TWENTY-TWO

A Christian priest asked a learned rabbi: "How could the Jews commit a sin as great as crucifying our God?"

The rabbi answered: "It states in the Torah: 'He who curses his father and mother shall surely be put to death.'^{16*} It is asked why then does the Torah not also state that: 'He who smites his father and mother shall surely be put to death.'? Because we learn this from a *Kol Vahomer*.^{17*} For if cursing one's father or mother is forbidden, all the more so, isn't it forbidden to hit them? Except that there is a proper general rule which states that the death penalty cannot be derived from the principle of *Kol Vahomer*. It is essential that this matter be specifically stated in the written text. For behold, it is written in the Torah that: 'It is forbidden to curse God.'^{18*} Why does it not also state in the Torah that: 'It is forbidden to smite God?'"

The priest answered: "Surely one cannot say that God can be 'smitten'."

The rabbi answered: "If this is so, then the Jews did not sin by crucifying Jesus, your God. For if they had crucified him, this would be a proper proof that he was not God."

TWENTY-THREE

A Christian asked a Jew: "Why did the you kill Jesus the Messiah?"

The Jew answered: "We did not kill him. The proof is, as is stated: 'After he rose from the dead.'¹⁹ If only we would have really killed him, then he never would have risen from the dead."

TWENTY-FOUR

A Christian said to a Jew: "You killed our God, and your sins are too great to bear."

The Jew responded: "Sir, listen with your ears to what you are saying. Is it possible for a human being to kill God?"

TWENTY-FIVE

A pagan asked Rabbi Joshua ben Karhha: "In your Torah it is written: 'You shall side with the majority.'^{20*} We are more numerous than you. Why then, do you not worship idols, as we do?"

Rabbi Joshua ben Karhha said to him: "Do you have children?"

The pagan said to him: "Woe is me! You have reminded me of my troubles."

The rabbi asked: "How so?"

The pagan said to him: "I have many children, and, when they sit around my table, one recites a blessing to such and such a god, and the other recites a blessing to so and so a god — the result being that they come to blows."

Rabbi Joshua asked him: "And do you bring about agreement among your children and help them come to one general opinion?"

To this he said: "I have already tried this, and I was unsuccessful."

Rabbi Joshua answered: "If this is the case, how do you expect to mediate between the Jews and get them to come to one general opinion, and to believe in Jesus, your God?"²¹

TWENTY-SIX

Again a Christian asked a Jew: "We are more numerous than you, and it is written in your Torah, 'You shall side with the majority.'"

The Jew answered: "This is referring to a matter which is still in doubt. But since my belief in Monotheism is the truth, I have no doubt at all."

TWENTY-SEVEN

Again a Christian asked a Jew: "Is it not written: 'You shall side with the majority.' Are we not more numerous than you?"

The Jew replied: "Are there not many more pagans than you? And if this is so, you are compelled to become pagans."

TWENTY-EIGHT

Again a Christian²²* asked a Jew: "Is it not written: 'You shall side with the majority.' And we are more numerous than you?"

The Jew responded: "Is it not written in the beginning of this verse: 'Do not side with the majority to transgress'?"

TWENTY-NINE

A Christian said to a Jew: "We are the most valuable and precious thing in the world, since we are greater in numbers and you are lesser."

The Jew responded: "You have this backwards. Lesser is far more precious and valuable. The proof is in comparing gold and pearls to iron and rocks."

THIRTY

Again a Christian said to a Jew: "We are greater in numbers and you are lesser."

The Jew replied: "We may be a minority, but we are greater than you among the nations. Just like good spice is placed in food so that its aroma should waft, so are the Jews among the non-Jewish nations. For if there had been no Jews there would be neither Christians or Muslims in the world. The world has already given up idolatry."²³

THIRTY-ONE

A Christian said to a Jew: "You are the corrupters of morals, and therefore Christians are persecuting you in many countries."

The Jew responded saying: "You have this backwards. These persecutions are due to the fact that many Christians are cruel and are betrayers of morality. And further, this is also because they have accepted only the belief in the Trinity, and not the teachings of ethics and love of fellow man that Jesus had taught as the fundamental principle of his religion."²⁴

THIRTY-TWO

A Christian said to a Jew: "The Jews will give up anything they have for fortune and fame."

The Jew responded: "That is a lie! Here is the proof: how much money and honor would they have if only they had deceived their souls and believed in the Trinity? They gave up their lives, their fortunes, and their honor only for the sake of this one idea: That there is One God. Is there a more precious nation in the world than this people?"

THIRTY-THREE

A Christian asked a Jew: "Why do the Christians hate you so much?"

The Jew answered: "It is because we believe in One God, the God of Truth; and the Truth is hated by all, and those who seek it are few."

THIRTY-FOUR

A Christian sarcastically asked a Jew: "Today, is it obligatory for Christians to convert to Judaism?"²⁵

The Jew answered: "Indeed no!"

The Christian asked him why this was not so, and the Jew answered, saying: "There are many who call themselves Christians merely because they believe in the Trinity. But they cast behind their backs all the teachings of ethics and love of fellow men that Jesus had taught. Once the Christians become complete Christians, they will be able to value their own origins. It is Judaism."

THIRTY-FIVE

A Christian said to a Jew: "How many evil things do you Jews recount in your Talmud and other books about the Christians?!"

The Jew responded, saying: "Regarding the complete Christian who wholeheartedly follow the teachings of Jesus, we have never said even one objectionable word.²⁶ The Sages and Talmud Scholars refer only to those barbarians who masqueraded as Christians, and cast away all of the moral instructions which Jesus taught them."

THIRTY-SIX

A Christian said to a Jew: "How many strange things are there in your Talmud?!"

The Jew responded: "Please look at the books of your Church Fathers, and you will find that all of the strange things in the Talmud are as nothing compared to them."^{27&28*}

THIRTY-SEVEN

Again a Christian said to a Jew: "How many strange things are there in your Talmud?!"

The Jew responded laughingly: "Why is this so troubling to you, and why is it not troublesome to us that you have many more strange things in your Holy Books?"

THIRTY-EIGHT

A Christian asked a Jew: "Why aren't you living in Muslim lands which are monotheistic?"

The Jew answered: "Because God saw that it would be easy for the children of Israel to assimilate into them over the years. Therefore, God dispersed the Jews among the Christians who believe in the Trinity. The Jews could never assimilate into them."

THIRTY-NINE

A Jew and a Christian priest were arguing together over religious matters, and after this the priest brought many prooftexts from the Hebrew Bible to prove his belief that Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. The Jew asked him, saying: "If this is so, why didn't God, in the beginning of Creation, create woman first. Then, she could have given birth to man of the Holy Spirit."

The Priest answered: "A Christian is not permitted to raise questions about the Works of the Lord. But rather, the believer simply believes."

The Jew responded, "But I have found a good reason for this. Since otherwise, all adulterous women could claim that they became impregnated by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, God created man first, and afterwards He created woman; to teach the people of the world that a woman does not give birth without (having intercourse with) a man."

FORTY

Many Christians, and among them prominent priests, argued many days with Jews about religious matters. After much debate and discussion between them neither one could gain the upper hand over the other.

It happened that a Jewish butcher heard about this and he said: "My brethren! Here I am to debate with the Christians, and I can win the debate with them quickly."

The Jews said to him: "Are you not a simple and ignorant man, so how will you fight against these learned Christians?"

The butcher said to them: "My brethren! Don't worry. Step aside and watch how quickly I can triumph over them."

So they said to him: "Go in peace."

The butcher went and stood before the Christians and said: "I have come to debate with you about religious matters, but on the condition that we do not drag this out too long, since I am a butcher and I sell meat, and in the next three days I must slaughter, skin, and cut-up, seven cows a day."

The Christians asked him: "Who will buy all of this meat from you?"

The butcher replied: "God Himself, because in three days He will make a great wedding feast for His daughter."

The Christians were visibly amused by what he had said and, they responded saying: "Oh, what a fool! Does God have a daughter?"

The butcher replied laughingly: "Do you not claim that He has a son, then why couldn't He also have a daughter?" — The Christians retreated humiliated, with nothing to say. The discussion ended quickly.

FORTY-ONE

A Christian said to a Jew: "Why did the Jews torture Jesus, our God, with such great afflictions?"

The Jew responded earnestly: "All right, you may do the same to our God."

FORTY-TWO

A Christian said to a Jew: "Why don't you want to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, who will come again to this world to judge the living and the dead?"²⁹

The Jew responded: "When he comes then I will believe in him."

FORTY-THREE

A Christian said to a Jew: "Truly, you are lowly and downtrodden unto the dust, since your God said to Abraham, your forefather: 'I will make your seed as the dust of the earth'".³⁰

The Jew responded: "That is not the way it is. Dirt rises. But when one sprinkles a little water on it, it becomes muddy and mire."

FORTY-FOUR

A Christian said to a Jew: "Today, the Jews possess everything because they are cunning and shrewd."

The Jew responded: "Indeed, what you say is correct. Today, we are all wise, since the fools and simpletons that were among us have already converted to Christianity."

FORTY-FIVE

A Christian priest tried very hard to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and began to explain to him Christian dogmas, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, the Ancient of Days, came in His glory, and by Himself, unto the young woman Mary, and she became impregnated by His Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to a son. And what happened to her was a miracle within a miracle since she remained a virgin even after she gave birth.

The Jew laughed aloud and said: "Dear sir! How do you know these things which are conducted only in privacy? You couldn't know this unless you were standing by her bed."

FORTY-SIX

Once a Jew fell into a rushing river, and there were many Christian who saw this. The Jew cried out and implored them to save him from death. But they said to him that they would only save his life if he would agree to believe in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Jew answered:

"My brethren!
Get me out of here as fast as you can,
And gladly I'll believe in that whole clan."

FORTY-SEVEN

Once a Jew converted from Judaism to Catholicism, and afterwards joined the Protestants. When some of his friends asked him why he had done this, the apostate replied that when he was a Jew, God saw him but he could not see God. So he went and converted to Catholicism, then he saw God, but God could not see him. What did he do? He became a Protestant who does not see God, and whom God does not see."³¹

FORTY-EIGHT

The Christian clergyman Teller asked the sage Rabbi Moses of Dessau^{32*} saying:

"If in God-Father you place your trust,
Trust in his beloved son you also must.
Don't you always trust a son,
When from earth his sire is gone?"³³

Respectfully and with knowledge the sage Rabbi Moses of Dessau answered him:

"How can we on a babe rely,
When his father will never die?"^{34*}

FORTY-NINE

A Christian priest, who was an expert on Jewish literature, asked a wise and learned Jew: "Why don't the Jews want to believe in the Trinity as we do, in the Father, the Son

and the Holy Spirit? Is this not indeed really the same as their Metatron, the Angel of the Presence, the Shekhinah, the Sephiroth, the Original Adam, Father and Mother and Son?"^{35*}

The Jew responded, saying: "How long will you go on trying to deceive yourself by closing your eyes so as not to see that there is no relationship or likeness between these and the Trinity. All of these names used by the Jews, like: Metatron, The First Man, The Sephiroth, etc., that are mostly mentioned in the Kabbalistic books, only describe the different attributes and powers and many works which emanated from the Infinite God. All of them are His servants and do His Will. None were born of a father or mother, and they were never souls or bodies. All of this is only to help make it intelligible. They are not Jewish dogmas.

"However, according to Christianity, God, the Father, indeed became incarnate, and the son was born of a father and mother, and he ate and drank, etc.

"As the ancient poet said:

‘They were confused,
Straying from the way of truths,
Worshiping a dead idol,
Relying on a broken reed,
Who ate, drank and went outside.’³⁶

"Then suddenly Jesus was made a partner with the Holy One, blessed be He, and he came to rule by God's side, and sit by God's right hand. And further, he is an integral part of God's essence, and the Holy Spirit is in them both, and God contains three persons which are never divided.³⁷

"All of these very strange and far-fetched matters are Christian dogmas. Does not the wisest of all men say, regarding them: 'There are three things at which the earth trembles... a slave become king...'"^{38&39*}

FIFTY

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him Christian dogmas, that God is one, and in this unity there are three persons.⁴⁰

The Jew said to him: "Why are you wasting your words? Jews do not have the same ability as Christians; to proclaim with their mouth what they cannot understand with reason."

FIFTY-ONE

A Christian priest tried to convince a wise Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him the mystery of the belief in the Trinity.

The Jew said to him: "Why should I believe in three? Surely, if it were possible for my mind to believe in less than one, I would believe in this."⁴¹

FIFTY-TWO

A Jew had converted many times in different cities. Each time he took a lot of money from the missionaries since they did not know him.

When the missionaries discovered this they became furious, because he had deceived them. They brought him before a court, but the apostate wasn't afraid of them. He justified himself before the judge for what he had done by saying: "Indeed, this is the tenth time I have accepted Christianity and honestly, I will tell you, sir, that never once did I convert with true conviction, since it is impossible for a Jew, who is accustom from his youth to monotheism, to backslide and believe in the Trinity. But I became exceedingly needy and poor, and I saw how these inciters deceived people, and yet, they lived comfortably by means of Christianity. I said to myself: 'I too will live my life like

them to save my life.' But, I have an advantage over them, because they use all the tricks in the world to lead people into captivity, but I have not caused anyone else any harm."

When the judge heard the Jew's statement he said to him: "Go in peace."

FIFTY-THREE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and the Jew said to him: "If you are truly an upright and straight person, how can you say such things to me, dealing deceitfully with the two religions at one and the same time? Have you not heard this well-known saying:

'Three kinds of water go to waste:
Water that runs into the sea,
Water that falls into wine,
And water that is used on a Jew at the time of conversion.'"⁴²

FIFTY-FOUR

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he pointed out to him that many Jews greater and better than he have converted to Christianity.

The Jew responded: "Do not say another word about this to me, because it is impossible for a Jew who believes in One God from his youth to suddenly believe in the Trinity. Any Jew who converted only appears to be a Christian. His heart is as far from Christian belief as the earth is from Heaven.

"Do you not know, or have you not heard what happened to the chief priest of Meyence? He was formerly a Jew and became a Christian. When he died, he left as his inheritance a mouse and a cat of gold. Concerning these "heirlooms" the phrase was coined:

'When a mouse will eat the cat,
Only then converting to Christianity will a Jew do That.'"⁴³

FIFTY-FIVE

During the disputation in Tortosa, Spain, in 1413, before Pope Benedict the thirteenth,⁴⁴ the Pope said to the representatives of the Jewish community: "You are saying alarming words, because what reasonable man would say, 'The Messiah was born, and he lived in the Garden of Eden for several years?'"

The representative Rabbi Astruc responded from his heart to the Pope, saying: "Our lord, the Pope! Just as you believe in a few remote things about your Messiah, permit us to believe this one remote thing about our Messiah."

FIFTY-SIX

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him Christian dogmas, that God is One and inclusive of three aspects: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Son is like the power of the Father.

The Jew responded: "How can their powers be equal? Did not the Father beget a son, but the son remained barren?"

FIFTY-SEVEN

A Christian priest publicly deprecated the Jews and Judaism, and he went on to praise Christians and Christianity greatly. He said that only the religion of Jesus is full of kindness and mercy, and that only Christians are kindhearted people, always doing goodness, even to their enemies.

When a Jew heard his words, he said to him: "Sir, why are you glorying in lies? Are you not speaking obscurities? Whom are you insulting and abusing? Israel! From whom Jesus, your Messiah, came forth.

Will you requite evil for good? If you and your Christian brethren were truly compassionate and truthful, then you would know to esteem this people, the rock you

were hewn from, the quarry from which you were cut. And you would not diverge from the well-known saying:

'Cast not a stone into the well
wence you drink.'

FIFTY-EIGHT

A Christian priest said to a Jew: "Please look into the New Testament and you will find many good and new things in it!"

The Jew responded: "What have I to do with the New Testament? The new things which are in it are not useful, and whatever is useful isn't new. I am referring to the Hebrew Bible, the "Old Testament", and I have not found anything in it to be lacking. I always find that as long as my old clothes are good for me, I have no need at all for new clothes."

FIFTY-NINE

A Christian priest tried to convince a wise and learned Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

The Jew said to him: "Sir! Why don't you first try and convince me to believe in Satan and a spirit? Because according to Judaism, I am not obligated to believe in them. However, according to Christian dogma:

'He who does not believe in Satan and a spirit,
Cannot believe in Jesus the Messiah.'^{45&46}

SIXTY

A Christian said to a Jew: "Our God is merciful, gracious and good hearted, but your God is full of jealousy and hatred."

The Jew responded: "Yes, indeed! From the fact that He delivered His only son to be slain, and had no pity on him, we can see His mercy."

SIXTY-ONE

A Christian said to a Jew: "The Jews, the believers in monotheism, are corrupters of morals. They have among them cunning people, thieves and murders."

The Jew responded: "It is true that all Christians, who believe in the Trinity, are ethical. And it is for no reason at all that they have daily public hangings of thieves and murderers."

SIXTY-TWO

A Christian priest asked a Jew: "Why do the Jews call the Son of God *Yesh'uh* and not *Yeshu'*?"

The Jew answered: "We intentionally leave out the letter " 'uh " (*Ein*), since Jesus was unable to save himself, and he was hanged. How then, could he save others?"

SIXTY-THREE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him Christian dogmas. How the Holy One, Blessed be He, came in His Glory, and by Himself, into the young woman Mary (and impregnated her).

The Jew asked him jokingly: "What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, the Ancient of Days, do if He needed a woman before Mary was born?"

The priest did not know how to answer this.

SIXTY-FOUR

A Christian priest asked a Jew: "Why do the rabbis of the Talmud denounce Christians?"

The Jew answered: "That is a lie! Our Sages of blessed memory said nothing at all about Christians. They only denounced the idol worshiping nations among whom they lived. These nations were great corrupters of morals. And all that the Sages of blessed

memory said about the idolaters cannot be compared to what Jesus, your Messiah, said. He called them 'dogs.'"47

SIXTY-FIVE

A learned Christian said to a wise Jew: "Certainly, there are precious lessons in the New Testament of a kind which is not found in the Hebrew Bible, Talmud, or Midrash."

The Jew responded: "You are wrong, sir! If you had a comprehensive understanding of Jewish literature, then you would see that all lessons in the New Testament, all of them, are derived from a Jewish source. And these are the books of the Hebrew Bible and the sayings of our Sages of blessed memory. Jesus himself did not innovate anything at all. Regarding him an ancient poet said:

'One fashioned out of clay,
What can be of use to him?
Even what he has is not his own.'"

SIXTY-SIX

A learned Christian said to a wise and clever Jew: "Many important things were revealed to us by the French author, Earnest Renan in his book, *The Genealogy of Jesus*. Through him we know Jesus' softy spiritual characteristics and wondrous deeds."

The Jew responded: "Sir, if you read Renan's book objectively and critically you will see that it is nothing other than a book of fiction, or a novel, nothing else. For sure, it is not a history of Jesus, since these books are missing and the sources were concealed. Also, the words of his disciples, Matthew, Mark and Luke, etc., contradict one another, and their words have no basis.

All the writers about the history of Jesus, like Renan and Schenkel, etc., are really similar in my mind to a man who has an only son. Because he loves his son dearly, everything he says about him is very praiseworthy. And everything that his one-year old son does seems very wise to him. He will tell his many friends in detail about the son's deeds, even to the extent that the child very wisely is able to answer nature's call."

SIXTY-SEVEN

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to tell him all the legends of Jesus the Messiah, and the matter of Jesus' death at length.

The Jew said: "I see, that Jesus, your Messiah, did much more through his dying than through his living."

SIXTY-EIGHT

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to tell him about Christian dogmas, namely that God came unto a young maiden, and she gave birth to a son from God's Holy Spirit.

The Jew said to him: "Please tell me out of whose womb was this miraculous story created, and who sired it?"

The priest did not have an answer.

The Jew said to him: "Know that the main founders of Christianity were Jews and Greek pagans. It is known what the Greeks said about the history of Alexander the Great, that his mother was impregnated by the holy spirit of the god, Amon.^{44&49*} The Greeks no doubt found it good that Jesus, too, was born like this, from the Holy Spirit of God. And because of this nonsense of the Greeks, comes this nonsense of the Christians."

SIXTY-NINE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in the Trinity. The Jew said to him: "Please see that Judaism has an advantage over Christianity like the advantage light has over darkness."

Judaism says: 'Question and believe',
Whereas Christianity says: 'Believe and do not question'.

Belief without inquiry is true foolishness."

SEVENTY

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he told him that Jesus was born from the Spirit of God by the virgin Mary.

The Jew said: "This never entered the mind of Jesus himself. He called himself the 'son of God' as is intended to be understood by the Jews. But you understood this like a pagan, that is to say: A real son of God."

SEVENTY-ONE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he told him about the Christian dogmas, that God is one and He is three undivided; and that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit from the virgin Mary."

The Jew said to him: "How can Christians be so confused as to believe in such vain and incredible things which contradict the natural order? Did not the early Roman Philosopher Celsus, and also the Sages of the Talmud agree that the mother of Jesus became pregnant by the man Pandera, and that he was born like the rest of mankind.^{50&51*} Likewise, it states in your New Testament, that the Jews reminded Jesus of this. They said to him, saying: 'We are not children of prostitution, we have a father.'^{52&53*}

"And, if, according to your words, God had desired to perform miracles and wonders at that time, and change the order of creation, why did He send His Holy Spirit to a woman, into an impure organ? Was it impossible for Him to create him without a father and a mother, just as He originally created the first man?

And if you were to say that Jesus' mother was a beautiful girl, and the Lord, too, loves pretty women as we do, if He had done so (performed miracles and wonders), the

miracle would have been that much greater! Why did God act treacherously against her afterwards, to the point where she left Him and married another man? Is it possible that profane ones should use a vessel previously used by the Holy One? Amazing!"

SEVENTY-TWO

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to tell him about Christian dogmas, how Jesus was crucified and died, and how afterwards, by miracle he rose from the dead.

The Jew said to him: "It is not enough for you that, according to your words, Jesus' conception and birth are against the natural order of things. You keep adding stranger and more bizarre things to this. You say that miracles also happened to him after his death, and this is the most important thing in your religion. Did not only a few of his disciples testify that they saw Jesus alive after his death? Furthermore, these testimonies have many contradictions amongst them, to the point where not even one word of truth uttered by them could be saved.⁵⁴

"Even if all of his disciples saw him at the same time, was it necessary on the basis of their testimony to change the order of Creation? Without a doubt, either their senses deceived them, they were drunk, or they chose to lie on purpose. Regarding this it states:

'See the mighty miracle of Jesus:
He was hanged and died in public.
When he arose, and lived after his death,
Nobody knew or saw him,
Except that two or three of his disciples told
That they saw him alive.
But the lie here is blatantly obvious.'^{55&56*}

"Truly, why is it that you have to seek strange things. Is it not like bringing an elephant into a needle-case? Further, it is not any easier to explain this miraculous happening with the natural order of things, as it is also written in the New Testament, that Jesus' disciples stole his at night, and in the morning they said to the people: 'Behold, he rose and is living from among the dead.'⁵⁷

SEVENTY-THREE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to present to him Christian dogmas, that God is one and He is three without division, and so on...⁵⁸

The Jew answered him, saying: "After I listened to Christian dogmas I give praise and thanks to God for creating me a Jew. Judaism does not compel me to believe in strange and impossible dogmas like these which are against the natural order of things.

"Regarding Christianity, I shall say to you in a few short words:

"The fire burns off both ends;
The middle is charred..."⁵⁹

SEVENTY-FOUR

A Christian priest tried hard to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him the dogmas concerning the belief in the Trinity: The Father, Son and the Spirit, and the Spirit issues forth from the Father and the Son, and the Spirit also has its own permanent and active existence.⁶⁰

The Jew said to him: "There is another major disagreement between Christians on the matter of the Spirit. Many Christians believe that the Spirit issues forth from the Father only and not from the Son.⁶¹ Behold, until you Christians find out for yourselves who is correct, I will remain a Jew. Why should I believe in something which is still in doubt?"

SEVENTY-FIVE

A Christian said to a Jew: "There is almost nobody today among all the many people of the world who does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. But will only you, a small and weak people, still remain stiff necked?"

The Jew responded to him: "The multitudes are like sheep, and from these fools one cannot bring proof. Like the well-known saying;

"The majority of the people lack
Knowledge and counsel."⁶²

"However, enlightened Christians pay no attention to the belief in Jesus or the Trinity, and they believe secretly in their hearts in One God.⁶³ There is no difference today between enlightened Christians and proper Jews, except that Jews are circumcised and Christians are not."

SEVENTY-SIX

A Christian deprecated the Jewish religion in the presence of a Jew, and praised the faith of Jesus unto the heavens. Furthermore, he told a great and wonderful story about the symbol of the Cross on which his Messiah was crucified.

The Jew could no longer hold himself back and listen to his insult, so he asked him, jokingly:

"If the wood on which Jesus died is holy,
Why not the ass on which he rode?"

SEVENTY-SEVEN

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to believe in the Trinity, and he told him about Jesus, that he was a great and learned scholar in his generation.

The Jew said to him: "According to the words in your New Testament, this appears to be correct, because Jesus and his disciples were fishermen. They were very simple people.⁶⁴ Also, Jesus, your God, didn't even know how to recite the Shema correctly.⁶⁵"

SEVENTY-EIGHT

A Christian said to a Jew: "It is not for nothing that Christians are full of anger and hatred for the Jews. Truly, there is a reason for this."

The Jew responded: "The reason is very simple. The truth is that the Jews who were among the Christians did not behave towards them correctly, because they took for themselves the religion closest to man's reason, and they gave to them the religion most distant from man's reason."

SEVENTY-NINE

A Christian priest was succeeding in his great efforts to induce a Jew to convert to Christianity. When the priest began to teach him the mystery of the Trinity; that God is one, and He is at the same time three without division, the Jew could no longer listen to his words or comprehend them. The Jew asked the priest many questions which were difficult to answer. So the priest sent him to a Jew who had already converted in order to clarify this difficult matter.

When the Jew arrived, he asked the apostate to explain to him how three are one. The apostate said to him: "My brother! Here, I shall do your will so that you will quickly understand this. So I ask you, how many meals does one indeed eat on Shabbat?" The Jew answered: "Three". The apostate said to him: "Aren't your three Shabbat meals squeezed into one in your bowels? Now go and convert to Christianity, and find much pleasure in it. And don't ask any more what is above and what is below!"

EIGHTY

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him Christian dogmas, and how, in order to atone for the sin of Adam, God became incarnate.

The Jew said to him: "How true are these words:

'He who chooses to lie,
Keeps his testimony far away.'¹⁰⁶⁶

EIGHTY-ONE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him Christian dogmas, that God became incarnate, and Jesus was born from God's Spirit, and he is the essence of God's substance.

The Jew said to him: "Let your ears hear what comes out of your mouth. If God has the body and form of a man, then He is finite and measurable. And if God is finite and measurable, He is not God."

EIGHTY-TWO

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in the Trinity.

The Jew said to him: "Why should I give up what is certain and accept what is not only doubtful, but also impossible?!"

EIGHTY-THREE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him Christian dogmas, and how, in order to atone for the sin of Adam, God became incarnate.

The Jew said to him: "By this, bringing God, the Ancient of Days, down from His greatness so that He loses His essence, Christians are doing foolishness. Instead of having previously been purely spiritual, suddenly, in the days of Jesus, He finds Himself to be body and flesh.

"Woe! If, like mocking man, you also are mocking God, you have multiplied your sins beyond bearing."

EIGHTY-FOUR

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to believe in the Trinity. The Jew explained to him, saying: "It is not for us, the Children of Israel, to believe in this. Behold, you who once worshiped many gods, have, at any rate, made some nice progress by believing in the Trinity. But why should we, the Children of Israel, who have always believed in monotheism, now backslide and believe in the Trinity?"

EIGHTY-FIVE

It once happened that Jews and Christians were together and, as is their custom, the Christians immediately began to deprecate Judaism. They also "poured out their wrath" against the Talmud because there are many strange tales in it.

A Jew among them stood up and said: "My brothers! It is in vain that you curse and taunt Judaism. Truly, in every religion there are innumerable strange tales. Please look into the New Testament. How many strange tales will you find in it? But the main thing is the foundation of the religion; and Judaism is founded on the belief in One God. If there are strange tales found in the Talmud, they are not Jewish dogmas.

"Judaism can be likened unto a precious stone that is wrapped up in new and old clothes. When these clothes are removed then the stone can be seen shining in all its splendor. But Christianity, whose foundation is the Trinity, has within it many strange tales that are dogmas.⁶⁷ Christianity can be likened unto a piece of wood wrapped in gold and silver garments. When these garments are removed then one discovers a rotted piece of wood that is good for nothing.

"Regarding you, it is stated in a wise saying:

'When the weakling is in his own house
He prates of his might to his wife;
But when he draws near for the tourney
Then his ignominy and shame are revealed.'⁶⁸

EIGHTY-SIX

A Christian tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in Jesus as the son of God. The Jew said to him: "If you were to believe that Jesus was a prophet of God like Moses and Mohammed, your belief would at least not be distant from man's reason. But you have made him into a part of God on high, an essential part of His essence. All of your prayers are mainly to Jesus, and you no longer remember the name of God.

"Regarding this it states:

'Woe! How foolish are the Christians?
How can a worm fly into the heights of the skies?!'"

EIGHTY-SEVEN

It once happened that a wise and learned Jew was in the company of Christians. Whenever the Jew spoke all the Christians were amazed by his wisdom. They said to him: "Why haven't you converted from Judaism to Christianity?"

The Jew responded: "This I will never do, because Judaism as monotheism is very precious to me. Also, Judaism does not have as many denominations as Christianity, who curse and excommunicate one another. For instance, Catholics who excommunicate the Protestants, and the Protestants who excommunicate the Greek Orthodox, and so on. And either way, a curse has come upon them. Why should I butt into their business?

"First make peace among yourselves.
Until then, I shall remain your brother, the Jew."

EIGHTY-EIGHT

A learned Christian was boasting to a wise Jew saying that whenever he discussed religious matters with Jews, he always wins the argument.

The Jew said to him: "Know this, sir! That a wise and learned Jew has never come before you, and all the arguments you have had were only with simpleminded people who didn't know their right hand from their left.

"Far be it for Christians to argue, for they have to believe blindly. In any argument they will be at a disadvantage, because Jewish dogmas are based on the strong foundation of monotheism. Whereas the dogmas of Christianity are built on a shattered and feeble foundation, and they are full of immeasurable injuries and wounds. For example: Three is one; God became incarnate; Mary was impregnated and gave birth by the Holy Spirit, and yet she still remained a virgin; etc. All of these examples are very distant from man's reason.

"Concerning this it is said:

'A weak man,
Full of injuries,
Without soundness,
How can he go forth to fight
With a healthy and strong man?'"

EIGHTY-NINE

A Christian priest tried hard to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and to believe in the Trinity. The Jew said to him: "Why do you say this to me, Sir? Today, are there not many Christian scholars whose eyes are opened, and they do not want to believe in the Trinity? First, go and try to convince these lost sheep."

NINETY

A Christian said to a Jew: "Why are the Jews such a stiff necked people, refusing to believe in Jesus as the Messiah? Look at his beautiful form, and you will understand the Spirit of God is in him."

The Jew said to him: "Indeed, the artist was a wonderful craftsman, but the form of Jesus, and the place he was buried is unknown to anyone. According to the words of the

philosopher Celsus, Jesus was short and not good looking, and by this he proves that Jesus was not the son of God. His words are well-founded, since the early church fathers did not venture to disprove him.⁶⁹ On the contrary, Origen saw in this an advantage in the case of Jesus, for thus Isaiah prophesied about him, saying:

‘Without beauty, without majesty, (we saw him),
no looks to attract our eyes.’”⁷⁰

NINETY-ONE

A Christian priest tried to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he began to explain to him the Christian faith. The Jew said to him: “Enough! Speak to me no more of this!”⁷¹* Don’t add anything more to this, because indeed I see that the whole history of Jesus was founded on strange matters, and one lie leads to many lies:

His conception like his birth,
his birth like his resurrection,
his resurrection like his entombment,
his entombment like his miraculousness,
his miraculousness like his divinity,
his divinity like his form,
his form like his saving power.
So there is no end to the lies about him.”

NINETY-TWO

A Christian priest said to a Jew: “Why did the sages of the Talmud speak ill of Jesus? They said:

Onkelos bar Kalonikos, sister’s son of Titus, desired to become a proselyte...

He called up Jesus by necromancy. He said to him, ‘Who is honoured in this world?’ He replied, ‘Israel.’ ‘What about joining them?’ He replied, ‘Seek their good, seek not their harm. Every one who injures them, [it is] as if he injured the apple of his eye.’ He said, ‘What is the punishment of this man?’ He replied, ‘Punishment by boiling excrement.’

Come and see the difference between the sinners of Israel and the prophets of the peoples of the world who serve a false religion.”⁷²*

The Jew said to him: "Behold Onkelos bar Kalonikos, the idolater, is the one who told the sages, of blessed memory, that: 'He called up Jesus by necromancy.' So, it is to the contrary, the rabbis remembered his name for good."⁷³

And furthermore, it is said that the intent of the idolater, Onkelos, was the wafer into which enters the divinity of Jesus, which the Christians eat on the eve of Passover. Afterwards, it becomes dung."⁷⁴

NINETY-THREE

A Christian jokingly asked a Jew: "Why do the Jews pray in their synagogue with such loud voices? And what is the meaning of that noise?"

The Jew said to him: "Your God is young and vigorous. He still has his youthful powers. However, our God, who is in heaven, is hard of hearing because He is the Ancient of Days."

NINETY-FOUR

A Christian spoke to a Jew about how great and wonderful the ethical teachings of the New Testament are, saying: "They are far superior than the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible."

The Jew said to him: "The ethical teachings of the New Testament were made with great exaggerations. There is nobody among you who can take them to heart and live by them. Furthermore, as a result of these teachings there are numerous sects among the Christians, and many evil teachings in the world. For example, because of this well-known saying: 'If your right eye should cause you sin, tear it out and throw it away',⁷⁵ comes a Christian sect of eunuchs in Russia called the Scaphsars."⁷⁶

NINETY-FIVE

A learned Christian asked a wise Jew to tell him who created the abominable lie that Jews needed the blood of Christians for their Passover celebration?"

The Jew answered him saying: "Know this, sir! The ancient pagans said this about the first Christians.⁷⁵ But, when the Christians conquered them, and the idolaters were swept away, then some anti-Semitic Christians saw fit to transfer this abhorrent shame onto the Jews.

Like this well-known saying:

"Whoever is impure, calls others impure;
And whoever finds a fault in others,
Only finds his own fault."

NINETY-SIX

A Christian said to a Jew: "Many holy days and festivals which Moses commanded you to observe are no longer relevant, today, in our time."

The Jew said to him: "Sir, you are mistaken! Our holy days and festivals are few in number. Every one of them is only about that which happened to the Jewish people. But you have a great many holy days and festivals. Many of your festivals are for saints who have already died.

"There is a story told of a wealthy Christian who built himself a glorious castle. He wanted the builders to finish the job quickly, but every day the workers came to him and told him, 'Today is a holy day to honor So-and-So, or today is a holy day honoring So-and-So.' The wealthy Christian became angry at the workers, and cursed the saints up and down. He said, 'It is because of them that there are poor and needy among the people, since there are so many days during the year that they refrain from their work. Also, indolence leads to drunkenness.'

"One day the workers came, as was their custom, and said to the owner of the castle that that day was a holy day for them, and the name of the holy day was 'The Forty

Martyrs".^{76*} The wealthy Christian's face lit up with joy, and he gave them money and gifts. They were amazed at this, and one of the workers dared to ask him, saying: 'Honored Sir! Every time we told you, "Today is a holy day for us", you became furious. Today you are happy?'

"The master of the castle said to him, 'This holy day is surely acceptable to me since there were forty saints who were upright men. It is the right thing to gather them together and have one day of celebration. For if, heaven forbid, they had not done this, then it would have been incumbent to celebrate forty individual holy days.'"

NINETY-SEVEN

A Christian said to a Jew: "There are many precious lessons of ethics and love of fellow-man that Jesus, our Messiah, taught to us. He even commanded us to love our enemies."⁷⁷

The Jew responded, saying: "But all of these lessons remain only in the New Testament. There is nobody among you who practices Jesus' good ethical standards:

'If anyone hits you on the right cheek,
Offer him the other as well',⁷⁸

"But rather, the whole thing is to pull the wool over peoples' eyes.

"There is a group among you for the prevention of cruelty to animals.^{79*} It states about them, as the prophet said about Ephraim:

'They that sacrifice men, kiss calves.'"⁸⁰

NINETY-EIGHT

A Christian priest tried hard to convince a Jew to become a Christian, and he explained to him at length Christian dogmas. The Jew said to him: "Your dogmas are lengthy and strange, but our dogmas are truthful and short. You can almost stand comfortably on one foot and listen to them. "Here they are:

Jew, Christians and Muslim should have the understanding:

That no picture was seen of God;
The One God is a faithful God,
He has no body and no flesh,
And was not delivered into the hands of man.
That is the faith of the Twelve Tribes (of Israel)."^{81a82*}

NINETY-NINE^{83*}

An important Christian prince tried to convince a wise and learned Jew to convert from Judaism to Christianity. After which the prince would elevate him to an honored office. And also, he would give him a lot of money.

The Jew answered him, saying: "Honored sir! First speak to an ignorant Jew and see what he says."

Just then a poor Jew passed before them, and the prince called him over and asked what he did for a living. The Jew answered: "I am a coachman."

The prince said to him: "Jew! If you convert from Judaism to Christianity you will be a rich man, for I will give you a large sum of money."

The coachman answered him saying: "Honored prince! I could never convert from Judaism to another religion and, in addition, receive some small change." The prince asked him: "Why not?" And the coachman answered, saying: "I have a tradition from my father, may he rest in peace, who was a famous coachman in his time. Just before he died, he said to me, 'My son! If you exchange one horse for another, never buy the other horse if, together with it, you also receive some small change. Because, without doubt, this horse will never amount to anything, and therefore he gives you some additional small change.'"

ONE-HUNDRED

It happened once that some Americans held a big banquet and the head Catholic priest and a rabbi from the Jewish community were in attendance. Out of respect for the rabbi a Kosher meal was served.

During the meal the head Catholic priest said to the rabbi: "Truly, hasn't the time come for you to abandon many of these worthless customs and eat together with us."

The rabbi answered: "Soon, God willing. On your wedding day we will eat together."

Poem of Closure:

Praise to God, the Creator of Mountains!

All the chapters are now ended and complete.

Praise to God, great in knowledge.

Their number is indicated by Proverbs 17:10:

"To smite the fool with a hundred stripes."

A Splendid Poem of Abraham Ibn Ezra

David Kahana said, "This splendid poem which is attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra, was found in a manuscript at Oxford. It is registered as number 2172, in the catalogue of the scholar Neubauer, and this includes: *Sefer Nitzaḥon*; and also: *Toledoth Yeshu*; and afterwards comes this precious poem: *Asherim ve-ha Ḥamonim*. This is what is written about the poem: 'A poem written by Abraham ibn Ezra. Also his name, Abraham, is spelled out by the opening letter of each stanza.'^{84*}

"Because of this we may say that the reason for it is that Ibn Ezra, may his memory be a blessing, was so very angry at the Christians, because he had heard how they murdered the Jews during the slaughter of 1146 c.e. This was the First Crusade, where Jewish blood was spilled like water. And it is because of this, that Ibn Ezra's heart burned within him, and he came to take out his revenge (on the Christians). And because the Jew's power is only in his mouth, Ibn Ezra went out and composed this poem against the Christians."

Here it is:

Asherim and the sun-images,^{85*}
 The nations of fierce countenance,^{86*}
 May they be blotted out as the clouds,^{87*}
 They who make cakes.^{88&89*}
 (Call him *Yimach Shemo*)⁹⁰

They shall burn with fire,^{91*}
 They shall surely be stoned,^{92*}
 The people kneel down, they give praise,^{93*}
 To him whom the Jews hanged.
 (Call him *Yimach Shemo*)

Many rise against the dove,^{94*}
 Faultless and pure in every season,
 And God turned his face to see her,
 But he is a son of a prostitute.⁹⁵
 (Call him *Yimach Shemo*)

His sin is breaking-out,^{96*}
 In every generation like a scab,^{97*}
 And he was sentenced to Hell,
 In fire with boiling excrements.^{98*}
 (Call him *Yimach Shemo*)

He spoiled the dish,^{99*}
He incited rebellion among the many,
Therefore may his memory be quickly wiped out,
Because he is Ben Pandera.^{100*}
(Call him *Yimach Shemo*)

Corrections

Page 46, footnote *Lamed "Het* (Q #98, F.N. #84). This poem was written long ago by Rabbi Avigdor Kara. His name was signed in the beginning of the stanzas. See about him in the book: *Halikhoth Qedem*, (*The Ancient Laws*), page 49; and: *Hammebhasser*, (*The Good Tidings*). Vol. I, page 207. This poem was printed in the book: *Shirim Uzemiroth*, (*Songs and Hymns*), paragraph 2; and in the book: *Penine Shadal*, (*The Pearls of Samuel David Luzzatto*).

Publisher's Remark

The honored author omitted or mistakenly left out two articles of wisdom, and indeed, there are only ninety-eight instead of one hundred. We are able to forgive the Jewish scholar for the little that is missing but we cannot forgive Christian scholars if their religion is lacking more than ninety-eight articles of wisdom.

Ephraim Deinard.

Epilogue (Ephraim Deinard)

The honored author said in one of his letters to me that, according to his opinion, "A book like this is very essential at this time, because many of our brethren have exchanged the glory of the God of Israel, as a result of the terrible persecutions and hardships which came upon them in the lands of darkness and the shadow of death." How right he is!

The chronicles of our unfortunate people should teach us that not out of their own free will, nor out of a desire for victory, were books against the Christian religion written.

But only when our people were persecuted and victimized in one of the lands. Only under such conditions would an author be aroused to write against those murderers who have "Paeans to God in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands",^{101*} in order to beat the upright for their righteousness. There is proof of this since the Jews have never written a word reviling the religion of Mohammed, because the believers of his religion have never written anything unfavorable about the Torah of Israel. And throughout the countries of the Ottoman Empire, Jews were not persecuted by the Turks. Therefore, the authors from among our people have not found any reason to write against them.

Behold, the author is right in his assessment. For at this time, a time of trouble for Israel, it is incumbent on our writers to stand in the breach, and furthermore, to use the Hebrew language, since all of the missionaries from London, and the enticers the world over, are mostly Jewish refugees who have sold themselves for forbidden things and abomination for the sake of gaining money, or for the sake of flattering the local nation. And how much more so (is this true) in this new land^{102*} which has absorbed all the refugees the world over.

Among these refugees are murderers, robbers and violent men, doers of every perversion and lechery, apostates who exchanged their glory for money, army recruiters who snatched young men into the army during the reign of Nicholas the First (recruit grabbers).^{103*} These refugees from the sword of the law, for the sin of their greed, these savage beast walking on two legs, have spread like locust over the wide expanses of the land. They are the ones who established the settlement of Jews — born in the Slavic countries — on the land of Columbus. They are the heads of synagogues, they are the community leaders, they are the managers of the houses of charity, they deal with religion, they are the peddlers of man's soul. They are the rabbis, the ritual slaughterers, and all those who guard the sanctuary as their own acquired property. From these circles come the editors of newspapers in the vernacular,¹⁰⁴ and there is no end to all the horrible abominations done by these profaners of God, who live at the expense of the people.

It is not without cause that the name "president" (*Gabai*) become a slur and a byword among American Jews. Since most of them indeed have made their communal positions into a milking cow so that they can drain the blood of Israel. America is a land of Gentile trading so that there is nothing good in it that has not been turned into abominable commercialism. It will not be believed when it is told in Europe of all the atrocities of the wicked ones of this land.

And seeing that I am speaking of the drivers of the chariot of Judah in the new land, I wish to comment with a few words about the editors of the periodicals who came here many years ago. They are the ones whose heads are smeared with the blood of Israel because it is only they who corrupted the taste of the general public^{105*} by their tricks. I am here to demonstrate this by using one of them as an example, so that every person can judge fairly those who remain.

The freedom of publication and speech, like the affrontery of the refugees from the sword of judgment, or prisoners who have fled from Siberia, the confused language in which most of our brethren, born in Slavonic countries, speak, of whose writers one expects neither wisdom nor logic, all of these things have made the newspaper like a sword in the hand of a child, in the hands of a number of knaves who distinguish themselves in their insolence and recklessness. In their pursuit of money they did not care if the blood of innocence^{106*} sticks on their hands. The money of Jews, and all forbidden things and murderous iniquities are just like a joke to them. And thus, the scoundrel Kasriel Zvi Sarasohn^{107*} ascended to the editorial chair of *Die Yiddishe Gazetten*.

This man has a precious son who is well-known among all of the people in New York, whose nickname is "Hazkeleh the crazy", and the son-in-law who took his daughter, is (named) Mister Kamaike. This honorable family, whose right foot is standing on the hill of Nazareth,^{108*} and whose left foot is on the slope of Jewish refugees. When they realized that it would be in vain for them to expect to earn a living

by working or from a skill which they had never studied, they searched and found that Israel's blood is ownerless (subject) to all this wickedness and evil. Therefore, why should they not quench the thirst of their impure soul with Jewish blood? And further, the money of these missionaries, the anarchists, and the stupid socialists should not be thrown away in the streets. So, they founded for themselves a rotting sheet which is called, "*The Yiddish Gazetten*".

This crazy sheet speaks for the Orthodox, the Hasidim, the Christians and the Socialists, for all forbidden things and deceits, and, in general, for all who feed it. From this den of robbers comes forth the teaching of darkness and the shadow of death to the numerous poor and ignorant people in the United States. And these knaves have arranged an end to all the laws of humanity, and the Torah of Israel. They corrupted the taste of the multitude, so that there is no cure, and it is not for nothing that the Jews of Europe look with disgust on every person leaving for America. It is truly very difficult to picture or describe to what extent the heart of the public, which daily reads these rotting sheets, has been corrupted, until they (pages) become deadly poison in their mouths.

How vain it is for those in Europe to believe that as a result of American freedom, hatred of the Jewish people will cease. This will not be. And only half of the American Jews will believe this since he draws near to the Christians in eating and drinking, and by marring their daughters. Because by this, he believes that the Christian would become his brother.

These Christians, American citizens, they, too, are refugees from all over the world. But if so why should it be believed when it is told that these refugees from Europe are the best from all the lands? Why? Because most of them are escapees from prison? Or because they shed innocent blood?

This being the case, it is not superfluous, that also, the Jews of America read such books. But it would have been better if these books had been written in the vernacular and not in Hebrew, especially for the sake of those readers who read those impure sheets.

And in addition, there are more than two or three sheets which the knavish anarchists, and the foolish socialists publish. They all strengthen one another in their hope to bring total destruction to Judaism. There is no doubt that they plan to carry out their scheme if we do not stand in the breach, in the face of those destroyers.

For, behold, the people of God are already used to this, since every cursed insolent person sends forth the viper's tongue against it. The plower's plow is on his back,^{109*} and he does not know it. A festering wound infects this living nation. Regarding this ailing nation, if the doctors know a cure, they ought to remove the festering wound, replace it with clean tissue, close it up, and blow the new living spirit into the nostrils of the light-headed masses.

Therefore, I pray, wake-up you righteous authors! Those who know that they have not yet sold their souls and pens to Satan, call aloud with your voice to the flock:^{110*} "Israel, you scattered sheep!^{111*} Turn away from the tents of the wicked and the impure souls!^{112*} You must not bring an abomination into your houses!^{113*} You shall put these impure sheets far away, like one unclean.^{114*} They darken the light of your Torah and your understanding! For these are the enemies, and Israel should not be shocked by them. The wicked are estranged from the womb!^{115*} Turn away, do not touch the black Jesuit society dwelling in dark places, and in caves of violence (185 A Broadway), because they walk in darkness, and in every place where one does not sow they bloom. For the man who approaches the den of vipers endangers himself, because with his step he will sink to the underworld.

And it will come to be when God returns the outcasts of Israel to their people and their land, they will remember the cave and the tyrants who brought disaster to their people, which will not soon be avenged. This house will become a curse, a slander, a disgrace and a shame for ever — all the days that the heavens are above the earth.

Ephraim Deinard

Epilogue (Nehemia Samuel Libowitz)

To the honorable and wise rabbi, a true lover of Zion, a pleasant Hebrew stylist, our teacher, Ephraim Deinard — may his light shine.

It has been almost three years since my master has gone to help the Lord among the mighty.^{116*} Like a pillar of fire he has led us with his editorials in the publication "*Ha-Leumi*", where he rained down upon the evil ones, coals and stormy wind. And he knocked down to the ground "*Ha Eduth Le-Yisrael*", which was published^{117*} by their messengers of malice, during the periodical's lifetime. He himself brought about its destruction until it ceased to be published. And, at the time when its soul left, "It cried out with a bitter cry to the mighty Ephraim!"^{118*} Because my master caused its death, when he pierced the uncircumcised heart with his sword (Ephraim Deinard's golden pen is like a "two-edged sword"^{119*}).

My master fought with strength against: "*Tekhunath Tu-ah Ha-Yisrael*", (The Jewish Spiritual Characteristic), of M.L. Rodkinson.^{120*} He cast disgrace and shame upon Rodkinson, and, as of today, all who see him will cry out, Impure! Impure!^{121*}

I recall my sin, that I did not heed the voice of my master, not to be in contact with, or even within reach of M. Rodkinson, and before I knew who he was I extended my hand to "The Defender". My face turned red from embarrassment when I noticed that "The Defender" was commenting on my article: "*Sheloshah Hemah Naphle-u Mimenni*", (There Are Three things Too Wonderful For Me).^{122*} Because, were not all our Sages of blessed memory (in the generation of R. Eliezer), one after the other, arrested for apostatizing to Christianity?

And furthermore, Rodkinson arrogantly advised me to pay very close attention to (the quote), "And they shall look (unto Me) because they have thrust him through!!!"^{123*} And to the man that such opinions belong I gave my hand. I wish this sin of mine could be atoned for. This shall be my comfort, that I am not the first one to confess the sin of assisting this criminal. But I hope that I will be the last.

My master, please accept my gratitude for the wonderful book: *Hokhmat Yehudah*. A book like this is a precious phenomenon visible in our literature. Books of this kind are only found among us infrequently, and even then, those few books were printed in days gone by. And today, you cannot obtain them. Further, one additional advantage of this present book over those of the past is that it was written purely in the holy language.^{124*} The book itself is a rod of punishment in our hands, without equal, against the cursed mission, which pours out insults and derides our exalted faith. *Hokhmat Yehudah* is clear and pure like the very essence of celestial purity.

This time the missionaries will conceal their faces, and they will hide in the rock and be buried in the dust, because of this majestic superior new publication, *Hokhmat Yehudah*. There is hope that they will be silenced and hushed for ever.

For the sake of this great endeavor, the upright will thank him for this, his good endeavor, that he published the present volume at his own expense.

May his reward be complete from the Lord of Zion and Jerusalem.^{125*}

Your friend, who appreciates and honors your high value,

Nehemia Samuel Libowitz

Publisher's Note

Forgive me, my friend, if I praise you to your face. How true are your words! Indeed, it is as you say in these words, you are absolutely right. But what use is it to immerse oneself while hanging on to the creeping thing in one's hand?

Even before I printed your letter, I told you a second time directly, in confrontation, and I warned you against descending into the den of robbers in the home of "Bene' Tseruyah",^{126*} since I know you to be a man with a woman's mind. Nevertheless, you again did not listen to me, because you thought that you would increase for yourself the honor of being a writer by trying to write yet another little article in *Ha 'Ivri*, which is published in that robber's den.

Who knows better that you that they are just like Rodkinson? Even after all of Rodkinson's many abominations he is still a thousand times better than they are. And if you did this, are you not, too, superior to them if you sold your mind for an imaginary honor, one which you will never attain by going to the bramble and saying to it: "Come thou and reign over me?"^{127*}

Further, you thought ill of me because I went forth against those enemies of Israel. How could you not "bind your face in the hidden place"¹²⁸ after writing this letter of yours? Instead, you went out and helped those "*B'nai Tseriyah*". You should have known that a righteous man would not defile himself and step on the threshold of a vipers den, where these offenders of God live, "The Sons of Trouble", Sarasohn, whom, you and I, and all the inhabitants of New York know.

And who knows when you too will regret these deeds of yours. Perhaps you are already regretful, because, as far as I know you, it is true that you are as full of remorse as a pomegranate is of seeds. God forbid, that a man who does not have an upright spirit, and whose mind is wavering like a drunkard, should become an author in Israel!

If you listen to my advice this one time, you will have to study at the feet of the righteous sages for many years. And during all of this time you will still have to teach yourself. And afterwards, you shall preach your good teaching to those who are willing to listen to you, and then, perhaps, you will become a writer in Israel. For indeed, most of those writers in *Ha 'Ivri*, were not, and will not ever be writers, because most of them are youngsters without knowledge, or they are those who sold their souls to Satan for pennies, which they took from the hands of the villains.

And so, because of your light mindedness, you will not even get money since you are not counted among their great writers. And further, (you will not even get) the honor of writers which you are pursuing, the honor you wish to share with these horrible villains in the chronicles of the Jewish people in this country, even by giving your hand to the criminals.

But instead, only if you make it heard publicly that you repented and regret befriending these evil-doers and wicked ones from birth, like the Sarasohns - may their name be blotted out, only by this will you prove to me that you really and truly speak against Rodkinson.

Behold, I have warned you my friend "not to return to your vomit."^{129*}

I know that I saved my own soul.

Interlude

After this work was printed, I received a letter from the author together with the two missing articles, necessary to make up one hundred. It was not the author's fault, but mine, because I was the one who forgot to copy them from *HaLeumi*, where they had already been printed.

The Publisher

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- 1* "Ashdod by the Sea" refers to the port city of Odessa, on the western coast of Russia.
 - 2* *Kislev* 9, 5660, corresponds to November 11, 1899.
 - 3* Edomite refers to a Christian.
 - 4* Ishmelite refers to a Muslim.
 - 5 "You shall bear and conceive from the Holy Spirit." (Luke 1:30).
 - 6* David Kahana paraphrased Luke 1:30. See footnote number 5 (above) for exact text.
 - 7* Up until the forth century the Church uniformly celebrated the birth of Jesus on January sixth. The custom today is different. The Eastern Church celebrates the birth of Jesus on January sixth, whereas the Western Church celebrates Jesus' birth on December twenty-fifth.
 - 8 See: *Elements of Faith*, the seventh principle, page 36. Printed in London, 1830.
 - 9* Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim*.
 - 10* Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, was born near Kapilavastu, circa 566-486 B.C.E. Gautama was of the *Shakya Muni* clan (upper cast) where he was known as *Shakya Sastri* ("teacher"), and *bhagavan*, ("lord"). The term buddha was adopted by the followers of Gautama's philosophy, and became the primary designated title of Gautama Siddhartha himself.
 - 11 Lamentations 3:1.
 - 12 See: *The Rod of Judah*, page 61. The Hannover edition. And this argument can be made by analogy that according to the Christian belief Jesus rose from the dead after he was killed, obviously just like this rooster did.

And this was agreed upon by today's great Christian scholars, that there is no proof or hint in the Hebrew Bible referring to Jesus as the Messiah.

See: Professor Shankel, Daniel, *Bible Lexicon*, chapter 4, page 291. "Anyone today who brings forth proof-texts from the Hebrew Bible, referring to Jesus the Christian, is a complete ignoramus."

- 13* The *Mem-sofit* is a printing error. It should not appear in the text. The word should read, *Notstri* ("Nazarene"), and not *Notstrig*, ("Christians").
The text in its context is referring to Jesus the Nazarene.
- 14* Genesis 22:12.
- 15 Midrash Aggadat Bereshit. The end of chapter seven.
- 16* Exodus 21:17.
- 17* A *Kol Vahomer* is an inference made from a minor point to a major point.
- 18* This is a paraphrase of Exodus 22:27, which reads: "You shall not revile God nor curse a ruler of your people."
- 19 See Mark 16:14: "Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at the table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen."
Further see, John 20:9: "Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead."
There are those who say Jesus pretended to be dead. Therefore, he could obviously rise afterwards.
- 20* Exodus 23:2 reads: "You must not take the side of the greater number in the cause of wrongdoing nor side with the majority..."
Questions twenty-five through twenty-eight misquote this verse and take it out of context.
- 21 See: *Leviticus Rabbah*, Chapter 4:6 (page 56). Rabbi Joshua, with his great wisdom, also answered the question on: "'We are more numerous...' But, if there are disagreements between idol worshippers on the matter of their gods, 'this one blesses these gods and that one blesses those gods', if this is the case, there is no majority among them."
By way of an example, today there are up to ninety different sects among Christians, and there is no agreement between them on their religion. Let us say to them too, like the words of Joshua ben Karhha: "Before you want to make us like you, reach an agreement among yourselves!"
- 22* The typesetter inadvertently switched the words *Ah-harey* ("side with"), with *Notstri* ("Christian").
- 23 Jesus himself said: "Salvation comes from the Jews." (John 4:22).
- 24 See the First Letter of John 2:4, where Jesus himself said: "Anyone who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, refusing to admit the truth."
- 25 This is the well-known saying in the vernacular, "Must Christians become Jews?"
- 26 Specifically, the sages of blessed memory, said: "The righteous from the nations of the world have a portion in the world to come." Sanhedrin, page 105 (a). The sages of blessed memory, the Talmud scholars, knew almost nothing at all about the Christians, and all of their comments pertain to the early pagan nations in whose midst they lived. But that which the Christians wrote about the Muslims, who persecuted them with fierce cruelty, and also, what the Christians wrote about other Christians, makes what the Talmud wrote about the Christians look like skin of a garlic (nothing).
- 27 See: *Pfaffenspiegel*, by Karbun. Page 107. Third printing, 1870.

- 28* "*Pfaffenspiegel*" could be referring to a specific book titled, *Mirror of the Clergy*, or it could refer more generally to a genre of satirical folk-material.
It is unknown whether "Karbut" (footnote 27) is an author, editor, place name or a character in this folk-satire.
- 29 See: *Elements of Faith*. This is mentioned in the sixth principle, page 93.
- 30 Genesis 13:16.
- 31 To understand this it is necessary to know that in a Catholic house of worship there are icons and statues of their God. But in a Protestant house of worship no statues or icons are found.
- 32* Rabbi Moses of Dessau is Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786).
- 33 See: *The Writings of Moses Mendelssohn*, chapter 1, page 27.
- 34* This poem translated by Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski.
- 35* The terminology used here is from the Kabbalah, Jewish Mystical literature.
For more information see: Scholem, Gershom G., *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1961; Kahana, David. *Toledo ha-Mekubalim, ha-Shabbeta'im ve-ha-Hasidim*, 2 volumes, 1913.
- 36 See: *Even Bohan*, chapter 3, page 35.
- 37 How precious are the words of the sage, Abu Sahl Dunash ibn Tamim, in his commentary on, *Sefer Yetzirah*. This is what he wrote: "After I clarified in the preceding that the three words used to refer to the Creator are perfect synonyms, I also felt it necessary to explain the tripling of one word, three times in one place for the Creator, Blessed be He. For example:
1. 'And God said to Moses, "I Am who I Am. This," he added, "is what you must say to the sons of Israel: I Am has sent me to you." (Exodus 3:14).
 2. 'And they cried out one to another in this way, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. His glory fills the whole earth." (Isaiah 6:3).
 3. 'The Lord is King; the Lord was King; the Lord shall be King for ever and ever.' (Based on Psalms 10:16; 93:1; and Exodus 15:18); etc.
- "Christians have erroneously used these (proof)texts to prove their misunderstanding of three. They also liken the dead to the living, and I say to you regarding this: Know that this idea is very remote; as far as east is from west, and as remote as the living is from the dead, and as far as omnipotence is from weariness, and as far as a first existence before whom there was nothing is from something created and composite. Since, the Creator, Blessed be He, is eternal and has never died, and Jesus has died, and the Creator, Blessed be He, never wearies, and the Creator is the first existence before whom there was nothing, and Jesus was created, and he was born from the womb of his mother, and composed of limbs and other natural substances like the rest of mankind..." See: Dukes, I., *The Songs of Solomon*, chapter 1, page 8, in the end of the book.
- 38 Proverbs 7:21. "With her persistent coaxing she entices him, draws him on with her seductive platter."
- 39 The full text of Proverbs 30:22 reads: "There are three things at which the earth trembles and four which it cannot endure: a slave become king, a churlish man full fed, a jilted girl wed at last, a maid supplanting a mistress."
The reference to Proverbs 7:21 in the above footnote (number 38) can be understood in the light of Rabbinic commentary. The Rabbis understood the adulteress woman of the Proverbs and Psalms as a metaphor for heresy (*Manut*). The seductress woman in Proverbs 7:21 personifies the heresy inherent in Christianity.
- 40 See: *Elements of Faith*. Mentioned above. Page 4.
- 41 See: *Duties of the Heart*, The Unity of God. Page 58, printed in Leipzig, published by Jellinek.
- 42 See: *The Rod of Judah*. Printed in Hannover, page 17.

- 43 See: Korte, *Die Sprichwoerter* (The Proverbs), page 240, number 3986.
- 44 See: Graetz, *History of the Jews*, chapter 8, page 124.
Also, found in: *The Rod of Judah*. Published in Hannover, page 80.
- 45 See: Roskopf, *Geschichte des Teufels*, part 1, page 401. By the way, it states that there is a wonderful saying among the Jews of Poland, who say of someone for whom there is no hope: "Look, he carried him away as the wind carried away the *melammed*!"
However, there are those who say that this refers to what is stated in the New Testament, in the book of Luke 4:1, That Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit (wind) and Jesus was learned (a *melammed*). The proverb remains an example of the people. Now, understand this!
- 46* David Kahana paraphrased Luke 4:1 in the above footnote (number 45). The New Testament text reads: "Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, tempted there by the devil for forty days."
A *melammed* was a common man in the Jewish community in regards to his learning and economic status. The *melammed* was considered as "light as a feather" in regards to Judaic knowledge, and moral and economic status. Because he was so "light" he could easily be "blown" away.
The idea here is that Jesus was a *melammed*. Since Jesus, who was the leader of the Christian community during his lifetime, was a *melammed*, how much more so are his followers "light" in regards to their Judaic knowledge, and moral and economic stature?
- 47 See: The New Testament, Matthew 15:26: "He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house of dogs.'"
- 48 See: Rabats (Simeon ben tsemah Duran), *Qobhets 'al Yad*, II, page 3; And the book: *Qesher U' Magen*, chapter 4, # 7.
- 49* Amon is an ancient Egyptian god.
- 50 Celsus lived during the time of the Emperor Hadrian, in the year 138 of the Christian era. Celsus said that these words, i.e., that Jesus was born from a soldier whose name was Pandera, he had heard from a Jewish man. From this there is proof that the words of the Sages, of blessed memory, in *Tractate Shabbat* 104b, "Ben Stada is the same as Ben Pandera, etc.", are well founded. Truly, who would know the genealogy of Jesus better than the Jews from whose midst he came, and in whose midst he lived. The account of the philosopher Celsus is recounted in detail in the book: *Die Urteile heidnischer etc. Ueber Jesus*, by Richard von der Alm. Page 39.
- 51* There is some confusion in the Talmud as to who exactly the parents of Jesus the Nazarene were. We read in *b. Shabbat* 104b & *b. Sanhedrin* 67a:
"Ben Stada is Ben Pandera."
"Rab Hisda said, 'the husband was Stada, the paramour was Pandera.' "The husband was Pappos ben Yehudah, the mother was Stada. The mother was Miriam the dresser of women's hair, as we say in Pumbeditha, 'Such a one has been false to her husband.'"
There is little doubt that Mariam (Mary) was Jesus' mother. However, each verse in this section of Talmud raises the question as to who Jesus' father really was.
The first sentence says that Ben Stada and Ben Pandera are one and the same. Two names for the same person.
In the second sentence, Rab Hisda, a Babylonian teacher of the third century (c.e. 217-309), claimed that Mary was married to a man named Ben Stada, while Ben Pandera was the name of her paramour (lover).
Later, in the *Gamara of Gittin* 90a, Mary's husband was called Pappos ben Yehudah (not Ben Stada), and Stada was only her nickname. She earned this nickname from the citizenry of Pumbeditha because of her "going astray" ("*S'tath da*") from her husband. We read there that Pappos ben Yehudah had reason to be so jealous of his wife that whenever he went out he had to lock her in.

To make things even more confusing, variously, Jesus (*Yeshu*) is called Ben Stada and Ben Pandera. See: *Tosefta Hullin* ii 23: "in the name of Yeshu ben Pandera."; *b. Sanhedrin* 43a: "Thus did they to Ben Stada in Lod, they hung him on the eve of Passover. Ben stada is Ben Pandera, etc."

- 52 See: John 8:41: "We were not born of prostitution." Because of this Matthew genuinely thought that Jesus' genealogy could be traced to these four women: Tamar; Rahab; Ruth; Uriah's wife; ...and the son!
- 53* Matthew 1:3,5,6 refers to the four women mentioned in the above footnote (number 52).
- 54 A Christian scholar correctly pointed out: "If the disciples were to give their testimony today in a court, then their testimony would not be accepted on account of the many contradictions between them." See footnote, 55, below.
- 55 The above-mentioned Christian scholar did well to point out that only two of Jesus' disciples saw this miracle. The others heard it from them. See the book, *Bet 'Yud*, discovered by the scholar Lessing in the library in Wolfenbuettel, written by an anonymous author, fragment Five.
- 56* *Bet 'Yud*, referred to in the footnote above (number 55), does not convey any information or use. There is however, a *Wolfenbuettel Fragmente*, of which Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was the editor.
- 57 Matthew 27:64: "Therefore give the order to have the sepulcher kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, 'he has risen from the dead.'" Matthew 25:13: "So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour."
- 58 See: *Elements of Faith*. That which is mentioned in the first principle.
- 59 According to what is written in Ezekiel 15:4. "There it is, thrown on the fire for fuel. The fire burns off both ends; the middle is charred; is it fit for carving now?"
- 60 See: *Elements of Faith*. That which is mentioned in the seventh principle.
- 61 See: *Geschichte der Christl. Religion*, by Dr. Neander, part 1, # 43, page 691. Also, see: *Religionsgeschichte*, by Dr. Kraft, page 232.
- 62* Talmud *Shabbat* 104:b.
- 63 Thus said the Christian professor, Daniel Shankel, in this quote: "Trinity, etc... The doctrine of the Church is still bound to prove that the Unity of God remains unendangered by the assumption of a divine Trinity, or of three divine Persons. It has relied on the "mystery" enshrined in this dogma. Reason has to close its eye before it. It must let itself be captured by faith. The Church always referred to the secret in this dogma, and reason always had to close its eyes and be caught up in this belief." See his book: *Bibel Lexicon*, part 2, page 15.
- There are many other Christians who have said this, but, I do not want to go to the length of mentioning their names. In truth, they are complete Jews, as the sages of blessed memory say: "One who denies idol worship is called a Jew." (*B. Megillah* 13a).
- 64 This is clearly seen from the Hebrew Bible verses which they quote in the New Testament. They are full of errors and mistakes, there is practically no correct part in them.
- There are those among the Christians who defend this saying that they quoted the verses from the translation of the Seventy LXX (the Sanhedrin). But this defense proves their guilt, because it is clear from this that they were boorish men who did not know the Hebrew Bible in the original at all.
- 65 Thus Jesus himself said: "You shall love the Lord your God...and all your mind." (Matthew 22:37); (Mark 12:30); instead of what the Torah says: "You shall love the Lord your God...and all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5).

How correct are the words of the scholar, Kirchmann, who said, regarding Jesus: "Christ did not rise very much above his people in his time, either spiritual or morally. He was an ecstatic, as all founders of religions have to be, who lived only with his idea and died for it. Only his followers,

and the Christians of the first century, in pious zeal and in faithful convictions, gradually elevated his person to the holy and divine exaltation in the manner in which it is now presented in Christian teachings." See the book, *Einleitungen zu Spinozas Briefwechsel*, page 26. Berlin, 1872.

- 66 Rabbi Simeon ben Tsemah Duran correctly says in his book, *Qesher U' Magen*, page 8: "Because the sin of the first man clings to humankind as a whole, no single human being had the power to make atonement for that sin until God became flesh in one of His attributes, in the womb of the woman, and became both divine and human. Then His blood was shed, and atonement was made for the sin, etc." That is the root of the Christian faith.

Already Maimonides said in his discussions of this: "He who wants to lie, must keep his testimony far away. Because all the curses, with which Adam, Eve and the serpent were cursed, still remain; and the matter of Gehinnom is not mentioned in the Pentateuchal section which relates the punishment with which the first man was punished. Yet, it is there that he is supposed to have received atonement through the blood of Jesus, — something of which nobody can determine whether it is true or false."

- 67 For example: Mary was impregnated from the Holy Spirit; God became incarnate; Jesus died and rose, and he is living from among the dead; etc.
- 68 This poem is by Rabbi Judah Al-Harizi. See: *Melekheth Ha-Shir*, ed. Neubauer, page 35. Rhymed with a 2:2:1 meter.
- 69 See: *Die Urtheile heidnischer etc.*, by Richard von der Alm, mentioned above.
- 70 Isaiah 53:2.

- 71* Deuteronomy 3:26. "But because of you, Yahweh was angry with me and would take no notice of me. 'Enough!' he said, 'Speak to me no more of this...'"

- 72* See: *Giṭin* 56b & 57a. This passage shows the fate of three enemies of Israel: Titus, Balaam, and Jesus.

Jesus' name has been expurgated out of our modern versions of the Talmud, but the older editions read the third criminal by name, "Yeshu". See: Herford, R. Travers, *Christianity in Talmud and Misrash*, London: Williams & Norgate. 1903, page 69. Also, see my footnote on the fifth stanza of Ibn Ezra's poem.

- 73 Thus the Sages say in *Giṭin* 56b: "Come and see the difference between Jewish apostates and gentile prophets." They made a big difference between Jesus and Balaam. See the article in the footnote below, page 13.

- 74 See: *Bittul 'iqqere Hanotsrim*, Crescas, Hasdia, (ed.), page 35.

Thus says the Frenchman in *Soirees de Constaninople*, page 91. Paris, 1870. "Cicero said, 'There will come a time when people will do such folly as to eat the gods they worship.' His prediction came true afterwards with the Christians, who eat their god."

See: John 6:56. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him."

- 75 See: *The Annals of Tacitus*, 15,44. Also, see: *Geschichte des Teufels*, by Gustav Roszkopf. Chapter 2, page 4.

- 76* The holiday of the "Forty Martyrs" is celebrated in the Greek, as well as in the Latin Catholic Church, on March ninth.

This holiday venerates a party of forty soldiers who were condemned in the year 316 c.e., by the prefect of Licinius, for being confessed Christians. They were exposed naked upon a frozen pond near Sebaste, in Lesser Armenia, that they might freeze to death. At day break their stiffened bodies were burned, and their ashes were cast into a river.

- 77 Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

- 78 Matthew 5:39.

- 79* See Abramovich, Shalom Jacob, *Prevention of Cruelty of Animals*, or (*Die Klache*).
It is an allegorical narrative where a homeless mare, who personifies the Jewish masses, is beaten and tormented almost to death, and driven for pleasure for the sake of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" pleasure.
- 80 Hosea 13:2.
- 81 This wonderful poem has been printed in the book: *Grace After Meal*. See: Eisenmenger, in his well known book, part 1, page 709.
- 82* Eisenmenger's book, *Entdecktes Judentum*, was written in the beginning of the eighteenth-century. Eisenmenger gleaned Jewish sources (Hebrew bible, Talmud, Midrash, etc.) and took texts out of context to show faults in Judaism, and faults in the Jewish moral character. Anti-Semitic tracts written after circa 1700 use Eisenmenger as a primary source. Even today *Entdecktes Judentum* is the source of anti-Semitic books which have replaced it.
David Kahana misquoted this poem as it is found in Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judentum*.
David Kahana attributes this poem to Rabbi Avigdor Data. See David Kahana's "Corrections Section", page 55-56 of the Hebrew text.
- 83* In this edition of David Kahana's *Hokhmat Yehudah*, questions ninety-nine (99) and one hundred (100), and the "Corrections" were printed at the end of the text. They appear after the "Poem of Closure", the poem attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra, and the Epilogues.
My intention is to show David Kahana's text intact. Hence, I have rearranged the English translation to read in this order: Questions ninety-nine (99) and one hundred (100), the "Poem of Closure", attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra, and the "Corrections". This is followed by the Epilogues.
For an explanation of why Ephraim Deinard printed this edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah* in this order see: "Publisher's Remark" found on page forty-one (41) of the Hebrew text. Also, see: "Interlude" found on page fifty-four (54) of the Hebrew text.
- 84* See: Neubauer, A.D., *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts*, 2 volumes, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886, volume 1, column 751.
- 85* Isaiah 27:9.
- 86* Deuteronomy 28:50.
- 87* Isaiah 44:22.
- 88 This precious poem has many mistakes in the manuscript, and I have made an effort to correct it. Behold, in four of its stanzas every line has six beats, but in the middle stanza every line has seven beats.
- 89* Jeremiah 7:18, 44:19.
- 90 The initials "Yod" and "Shin" form the acronym for: May his name be blotted out!
- 91* Exodus 12:10, Isaiah 47:14.
- 92* Exodus 19:13, 21:28.
- 93* Psalms 78:31.
- 94* Amos 7:9.
- 95 In this stanza each line has seven beats. I added the word "*Barah*" (Pure), of my own accord, for the sake of being able to count seven beats, since the manuscript only says: "*Tamah B'Khol Avonah*" (Faultless in every season).
Also, in place of what is said in the manuscript: "*V'Lirotz*" (third person, pronominal suffix, masculine), I corrected it to "*V'Lirotz*" (third person, pronominal suffix, feminine).

Also, the intended meaning of the word "*Ha Yonah*" (dove), is the congregation of Israel (according to rabbinic interpretation of the verses in Song of Songs 1:15; 4:1). Since God turned His face toward her. And today, God abhors a child of a prostitute. And God has only chosen Israel as His treasure.

96* Leviticus 13:42, 57.

97* Lev 13:2, 14:56.

98* The *Mishna* of *Sanhedrin* X.2 begins: "Three kings and four private men have no part in the world to come; the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh...the four private men are Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel and Gehazi."

These seven condemned men are all characters in the Hebrew Bible. Each has been accused of having introduced idolatry to the people, perverting the true religion and actively promoting heresy.

From the Jewish point of view there was considerable likeness between these seven and Jesus. Jesus, too, was accused of the very same crimes. He led the people astray, tempted them into gross immorality and apostasy. "Jesus the Nazarene practiced magic, and led astray and deceived Israel." *Sanhedrin* 107b.

In *Gittin* 56b-56a, the fate of three of the chief enemies of Israel is spelled out, Titus, Balaam and Jesus. Each suffers the punishment appropriate to the nature of his offense. Regarding Jesus, it says that his punishment was to stew in "boiling excrement".

99* See: B. *Sanhedrin* 103a & B. *Berakhot* 17b. "Do not have a son or a disciple who spoils his food in public like Yeshu the Nazarene."

The phrase "spoiling the food (dish)" (as one does when he adds to much spice, like salt), when taken into consideration with the argument in B. *Berakhot* 34a, is understood to mean "bringing dishonor" or "disrepute". The one who spoils the dish is likened to one who is open to the suspicion of heresy. Spoiling a dish is like spoiling good sound teachings by adding to much self-will and conceit in one's own wisdom (spice, salt). See: Herford, T. Travers, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1903, pages 59-61.

100* Regarding Jesus the Nazarene being referred to as "Ben Pandera" in the Talmud, see my footnote to question seventy-one of the text.

101* Psalm 149:6

102* America.

103* During the reign of Nicholas I, in Russia (1825-1855), agents of the *Kahal* (the organized Jewish Community) established an institution of "Catchers" or "Grabbers". These recruit "Grabbers" were used to catch Jewish young men, and even boys, and force them to serve a twenty-five (25) year army service. In this way they provided the quota of recruits required from the Jews of Russia.

104* Yiddish.

105* Referring to the general Jewish population of America.

106* Ill gotten money.

107* For further information of Kasriel Zvi (Hersch) Sarasohn see: *Encyclopedia Judaica*, volume 14, page 872-3. Jerusalem: Macmillan & Keter, 1972. Also see: *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, volume 11, page 59. New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905.

108* This is referring to either intermarriage or conversion out of Judaism.

109* Psalm 129:3.

110* Isaiah 58:1.

111* Jeremiah 50:17.

112* Numbers 16:26.

- 113* Deuteronomy 7:26.
- 114* Isaiah 30:22.
- 115* Psalms 58:4.
- 116* Judges 5:2.
- 117* Nehemia Schmu'el Libowitz is playing on the word "*Yatsah Le-Or*", which means to publish in the Hebrew. Instead of using the word "*Or*" which means light, he uses the word "*Hoshekkh*", which means darkness.
- 118* Genesis 27:34.
- 119* Psalms 149:6. See footnote 103*. Ephraim Deinard used this same quote in his epilogue.
- 120* For more information of Michael Levi Rodkinson (formerly D. B. Frumkin) see: *Lexicon Ha Sifrot Ha Evrit*, 2 volumes, pages 838-9, volume 2, Bat Yam: Ganu, 1965; *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, volume 10, page 439a, and volume 5 pages 524b & 525a, New York & London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905.
- 121* Leviticus 13:45.
- 122* Proverbs 30:18
- 123* Zechariah 12:10. This scriptural verse is used by Christians when attempting to prove that the Crucifixion of Jesus was prophesied in the Hebrew Bible.
- 124* Hebrew
- 125* Ruth 2:12.
- 126* The reference here is to the Sarasohn family.
- 127* Judges 9:14.
- 128* Job 40:13.
- 129* Ezekiel 3:19.

CONCLUSION

It is not surprising that David Kahana chose to write the Jewish religious polemic, *Hokhmat Yehudah*. Kahana was born into an ever changing Russia, one which at times offered the Jews of his home town, Odessa, a glimpse of freedom,¹ and at other times suppressed and persecuted the Jewish community.²

David Kahana's father encouraged him to purchase and read books for the sake of learning. Kahana took advantage of his father's sentiments, and his family's wealth by establishing a voluminous library which contained books ranging from Hebraica and Judaica, to science, history, linguistics, and grammar.

Kahana's genuine interest in academia led him to buy a wide variety of literature, including books on religious polemics and the history of Judeophobia. After the Pogrom of 1871 in Odessa, Kahana came to the realization that Judeophobia and disdain for Jews and Judaism were not going to disappear, even among Odessa's "enlightened" citizenry. And that as long as Christianity, the New Testament and Christian religious polemics existed, so would anti-Jewish sentiments and actions. Therefore Kahana undertook the writing of *Hokhmat Yehudah*, a Jewish religious polemic, to equip the "illiterate" Jews with information necessary to counter Christian attacks.

In *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Kahana strives to modernize Jewish religious arguments from medieval times through his day. He does this primarily by using arguments based on logic and reason,³ and by using Hebrew which is clear and simple to understand. *Hokhmat Yehudah* was written so that it could be read and understood by the vast majority of Jews.

The extant edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah* was printed in America by Ephraim Deinard in 1889. Most likely it was acquired by Deinard while he was a resident of Odessa. In 1888, Deinard emigrated to America, and *Hokhmat Yehudah* must have been shipped to New York along with the rest of his library and belongings. In conjunction with establishing his house in New York, Deinard also set up a publishing company. It

appears that the very first book Deinard printed in America was this edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah*.⁴

Deinard, a Russian-born Jew, was aware of the needs of the Eastern European Jewish emigrant living on the East coast of America. One such need was for a Jewish religious polemic which would be effective against the proselytizing efforts of the American Christian missions. Isaac M. Wise and Isaac Lesser were composing Jewish religious polemical tractates for the German Jewish community in America, and Deinard wanted to do the same for the non-German Jewish emigrant in America.

Deinard seemed to have a keen sense of the real and practical needs of the Jewish community. He concluded upon arrival in America that Christian mission efforts toward the Jewish emigrants here were extensive, and he sensed that someone had to address the issue. Thus his immediate publication of *Hokhmat Yehudah*. It is interesting to note that Deinard's concern about the forecast of the American Jewish experience foreshadowed a major setback in the rights of Jews to emigrate to America. Only twenty years after the printing of *Hokhmat Yehudah*, the Jewish community in America witnessed the establishment of quotas. Those quotas restricted the number of Jewish emigrants allowed to enter America.

Hokhmat Yehudah as a religious polemic is not very convincing nor effective. It was written for the Jews of Russia, who, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century were experiencing intense Christian missionary activity. Kahana wrote *Hokhmat Yehudah* as a counter-measure to the numerous books of religious polemics written by Christians throughout the ages, which were used to taunt and disgrace the Jews.⁵ The types of arguments used by Kahana are based primarily on logic and reason, and not on scholarship or academic work. And very often Kahana uses wit and sarcasm to make his point.

Kahana compiled the one hundred articles in *Hokhmat Yehudah* from a variety of sources. The arguments have been recast to fit his own style of writing. They are short

and concise, they are written in clear and simple Hebrew, and they appear in dialogue form.

Although *Hokhmat Yehudah* was written by David Kahana on the premise of being "logical and reasonable", its format lacks any real semblance of reason or logic. The arguments are not arranged in any particular order. And there is no subtle progression from one article to the next, either by style, theme or type of argument. Some of the articles rely on story-telling to make their point.⁶ These stories could have been circulating among the Jews living in the Pale during the nineteenth century, and they may have contained some truth. Other articles use particular words, phrases, or poetry which were familiar to Russian Jews.⁷ And still others fall into the category of religious polemical arguments. The types of polemical argument which are found in *Hokhmat Yehudah* can be divided into 8 major categories. They are:

1. HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS: This category includes arguments made from the perspective of world history. Proof is brought that Christian prophecies are unfulfilled.⁸

2. ARGUMENTS FROM CHRISTIAN DIVISIONS: This category includes arguments made by showing the division among the different denominations of missionizing Christians who each claim that their own view is the truth.⁹

3. ARGUMENTS FROM PROSELYTIZATION: This category includes arguments made by showing that Christians themselves have, at times, converted to Judaism. By trumpeting those conversions, Jews could demonstrate that Judaism is a vibrant and living religion.¹⁰

4. THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS: This category includes arguments made by comparing the meaning of the Hebrew Bible with the Christian Bible. Critical passages of the Hebrew Bible are explained, while the authenticity and the viability of the Christian Bible is challenged on its alleged inner contradictions.¹¹

5. **ARGUMENTS FROM REASON AND PHILOSOPHY:** This category includes arguments made from the perspective of Mendelssohnian thought, namely, that nothing in Judaism is "contrary to, or above, reason,"¹² while Christianity is full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Judaism when compared to Christianity is shown to be a religion of reason and philosophy. According to this view, Judaism cannot accept anything which reason can reject, while Christianity is lowered to a religion contrary to reason.¹³

6. **ARGUMENTS RELYING ON ENLIGHTENMENT, DEISM AND FREETHOUGHT:** This category is similar to the arguments made from reason and philosophy, however, they do not underscore the advantage of Judaism over Christianity, but rather they rely primarily on non-religious arguments. These arguments show Christianity as archaic, and as a religion which has been accepted without serious examination. Christianity consists of numerous contradictory facts, incredible events, and amazing wizardry. It is unconnected, unintelligible, full of mysteries, and strange tales.¹⁴

7. **ANTI-POLEMICAL ARGUMENTS:** This category includes arguments which are made by declining to enter into religious controversy. The prototype anti-polemical argument can be seen in Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* and his letter to Lavanter.¹⁵

8. **ARGUMENTS FROM WIT, HUMOR AND SARCASM:** This category includes arguments made by quick wit, clever put-downs and insults. They were meant to leave Christians absolutely speechless.¹⁶

David Kahana did not use sophisticated or scholarly arguments in *Hokhmat Yehudah*, but rather, he chose to write short and concise answers which seem to be more entertaining than academic. In most cases he does not give the complete Jewish argument. This might be because Kahana believed that the Jewish community was Jewishly illiterate, and they would not be able to comprehend the thorough Jewish account. But just as curious is the fact that he did not give the complete account of the

Christian argument. Possibly, this was done because Kahana might have been afraid that the nineteenth-century Jew would have been convinced by their logic.

Within the arguments found in *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Kahana's fairness and scholarship are questionable. Some of his arguments, for instance, seem to describe real historical situations with real historical personages.¹⁷ However, there is reason to doubt the validity and accuracy of those accounts, and it may even be suggested that Kahana fabricated some of his information to spice up *Hokhmat Yehudah* and add a sense of authority and authenticity to it.¹⁸

It is however impressive to note the world of literature with which Kahana was acquainted, and which he used as source material for writing *Hokhmat Yehudah*. By glancing through his footnotes one can see that Kahana was familiar with the complete body of Jewish/Christian polemical literature from the time of Late Antiquity through the nineteenth century. He gleaned from this body of literature what he considered to be the most frequently used arguments used against the Jews by Christians. Kahana cites passages from the Hebrew Bible, Christian Bible, Talmud, Midrash, Mystical Jewish literature, and medieval and modern historians, philosophers and theologians to create *Hokhmat Yehudah*.

Even though *Hokhmat Yehudah* is not a very convincing, truthful, or reliable text from the academic perspective, when viewed from its religious, historical, cultural and social context, it can shed light on Christian missionizing efforts to the Jews — an ever-present Jewish problem.

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- 1 See, Chapter One: Historical Delineation of Odessa, Russia (1762-1914). There is information on Jewish liberalism, uninhibited publishing opportunities of the Odessian Jewish press, and Jews obtaining citizenship of Odessa, Russia.
 - 2 Ibid, see the information relating to the pogroms of Odessa.
 - 3 See, Kahana, David, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Newark, E. Deinard, 1889, page, 3. Or see, Chapter five of this thesis, page 60, the prelude.
 - 4 See: Berkowitz, Simcha, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, volume IX:4 (Spring 1971), page 137.

- 5 See, Kahana, David, *Hokhmat Yehudah*, Newark, E. Deinar, 1889, page, 3. Or see, Chapter five of this thesis, page 60, the prelude.
- 6 For some examples which illustrate David Kahana's use of story telling, see articles: 52, 96, 99, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 7 For some examples which illustrate the use of particular words, phrases, or poetry familiar to Russian Jews, see articles: 46, 48, 54, 57, 65, 66, 94, 95, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 8 For some examples which illustrate the use of historical arguments, see articles: 16, 21, 66, 68, 70, 90, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 9 For some examples which illustrate the use of arguments from Christian divisions, see articles: 25, 27, 47, 74, 87, 89, 94, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 10 For some examples which illustrate the use of arguments from proselytization, see articles: 30, 89, 45, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 11 For some examples which illustrate the use of theological arguments, see articles: 18, 20, 21, 22, 64, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 12 Sarna, Johathan D., "The American Jewish Response to Nineteenth-Century Christian Missions," in *The Journal of American History*, volume 68, number 1, (June 1981), page 40, footnote 20.
- 13 For some examples which illustrate the use of arguments from reason and philosophy, see articles: 5, 6, 13, 24, 39, 48, 81, 83, 88, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 14 For some examples which illustrate the use of arguments relying on enlightenment, deistic and freethought, see articles: 34, 37, 69, 72, 78, 79, 85, 86, 91, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 15 For an example illustrating the use of an anti-polemical argument, see article: 41 in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 16 For some examples which illustrate the use of arguments from wit, humor and sarcasm, see articles: 8, 9, 17, 19, 23, 46, 53, 56, 60, 63, 76, 93, 100, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 17 See articles: 40, 46, 47, 48, in *Hokhmat Yehudah*.
- 18 For an example of Kahana's sloppy and inaccurate scholarship, see: Chapter 2 of this thesis, my footnote number 15. Also, see page 39 of the Hebrew edition of *Hokhmat Yehudah*, David Kahana's footnote *lamed tet*.

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