

THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
New York School

YEHUDA LEIB PUCHOWITZER

by Julius Rosenthal

Although the subject of this thesis is a minor figure in the register of spiritual heroes in Eastern Europe, his works published in 17th century yield a wealth of material for the understanding of East European Jewish life and thought. The thesis provides us, with a definitive life of the author based on sound critical research, which corrects many of the mistaken notions of those who have dealt with him at all. *the*

The candidate evidences vast, if not exhaustive, reading in the literature and sources of that era. His discussions of such phenomena as the roll of the preacher, the rabbi, and of various institutions are illuminating. Here and there carried away by his enthusiasm, the candidate is prone to some extravagances with some harm to strict scholarship, but with a great deal of benefit to the candidate's continued interest in the subject and this era of Jewish history. The extravagance can be easily trimmed; his interest will surely remain.

The bibliographical data touching the works of Yehuda Leib Puchowitzer are sound. The notes are scholarly and the bibliography adequate.

The reviewer has no hesitation in saying that the thesis makes a real contribution to the study of his subject and the history of East European Jewry. Parts of it are worthy of publication.

The candidate should be especially commended for his distinctive English style which makes his thesis of lively interest to the reader. Altogether a work nobly done and is enthusiastically recommended for acceptance.

DR. JOHN J. TEPPER

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JEHUDA LOEB PUCHOWITZER AS A SOURCE FOR THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF
THE JEWS IN POLAND DURING THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY

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PREFACE

Writing this modest study in Eastern European Jewish history provided me with a great deal of pleasure, for reasons mainly romantic. Throughout the work I enjoyed a sense of personal involvement. Now, romanticism is admittedly a cardinal sin for those who pretend to the historian's craft, but I trust that by confining sentiment to this preface and avoiding it in the body of discourse, I may inherit a higher station in the historian's hell.

When I was very young I would tag along with my father to the synagogue on the Sabbath. There, in the magical dusk between Minchah and Maariv I listened to my father and his cronies trade tales of the "old home." Their memories tinged with regret described an Eastern Europe which never existed; the place of lost dreams, youth, strength, yet awful misery. It was strange and far away but always and basically home, home.

Occasionally one of these Jews -- a clothing contractor or real estate operator -- managed to accrue sufficient funds for a trip to Europe. When the traveler returned, the others would huddle around him, full of questions, and he would bask in the glow of their attention. But underneath his gratification lurked a certain sense of disappointment and "you can't go home again." Time had tampered with the pastoral idyll of memory. There were telephones in Kremenyets and trade unions in Keidan!

The point of the matter was, of course, that these pilgrims had, many of them, ceased to think of their native regions as real societies in which real and powerful social forces were brewing. In that sense, the pilgrimage to the "old home" represented in this study is a considerably more sophisticated journey than that, of the clothing manufacturer. I was not distracted by the scenery and its furnishings, but have rather had an opportunity to begin understanding some part of the social history of the Jew in Eastern Europe.

So much for "Commentary" magazineish nostalgia. Another incidental aspect of my reading for this paper concerns the besetting preoccupation of our day and place -- the mode of individual existence in a Marxist state. Much of the material

which I considered was authored by scholars living in the Soviet, and I was sensitive to their virtues and vices. What we read and hear now about life in the Soviet Union is so hopelessly warped by prejudice, pro or con, that we are constrained to search out any clues, hints, and inferences which the literature of that country may unselfconsciously provide.

The Soviet scholars whom I consulted, notably L. Sossis and T. Heilikmann, were acoutered with an impressive knowledge of the sources. This knowledge was, however, employed in a restricted manner. They were committed to the Marxist interpretation of history, which does illuminate and intelligently organize much of the process and relationship of events and institutions. It is an approach which is often more adequate in explaining phenomena than the high-flown approach of idealistic historians. Despite these virtues, the Soviet historians were basically cramped by their Marxist viewpoint. A monistic rationalist system in which every phenomenon must be explained by given premises, is a closed system and inevitably descends into orthodox stupidity. Life is larger than any system, and the culmination of Marxist speculation resembles nothing so much as that dark and fetid Talmudic casuistry which Sossis and Heilikmann have occasion to castigate in the course of their remarks.

I do not refer to external limitations whereby an historian of Sossis' calibre must submit to an anonymous forward which points in anticipation to the "errors" in his work. Such personally humiliating throttlings of independent thought are but an external manifestation of the inherent limitations of a closed system whereby a very wise approach to history degenerates into sterility.

CHAPTER ONE

"Obscure heroes are sometimes greater
than the illustrious heroes."

-- Victor Hugo

Whether or no the obscure heroes are sometimes greater than the illustrious ones, a study of the lesser figures of history is certainly valuable for the understanding of a given period. Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer was a minor preacher in seventeenth century Poland.¹ The exhibitionist nature of preachers and preaching would ordinarily allow for much more free self-expression than halachic scholarship, yet only rarely does a unique personal quality glitter through the impersonal articulateness of Puchowitzer's sermons. His was neither the gift nor the condition to transcend what Zunz describes² as the stilted art-form of the Mussar³ sermon of his period. By heritage, position, and outlook he was overtly dedicated to reclaiming the past in an age when the old order began disintegrating. The figure of the new order was not yet manifest in his lifetime, and had it been, he would scarcely have been the man to grasp history by its forearm and send it reeling off in a new direction. Yet a study of Puchowitzer can be rewarding.

A study of Puchowitzer can supplement some of the worthwhile analyses of the literary sources for the social history of Jews in Poland during the seventeenth century. Studies by Sossis⁴ and Rassin⁵ have already provided greater understanding of that era.

The events of the preacher's own life mirror the tempestuousness of the times. His sermons⁶ reflect social churnings, altered relationships and conditions which

1 - Numbers in the text refer to notes on pp. I-XIV

produced new movements less than a century after his death. In his words throbs the pulse of that social dynamic later expressed in Hassidism and Haskallah.⁷

That the champion of the return to the past, the protagonist of a return to traditional religious standards, should foreshadow radical changes in the religion and in society generally, is only superficially paradoxical. Until a submerged class gathers sufficient strength to alter the order of things, until conditions are ripe for radical changes, discontent is expressed through socially sanctioned channels. Religion provides precisely such an outlet, because religious values as distinguished from forms, represent a constant reproach to the contradictions of a society. In a declining society, where the contradictions are markedly sharp, religion may address particularly pointed criticism toward social problems, but this criticism will not be couched in terms of conscious revolutionary propaganda. Rather it appears in the guise of an arch-conservative appeal for a return to the "pure" form of the faith. Gunnar Myrdal once shrewdly observed a powerful factor militating against suppression of the Negro in the American South to be "the moral dilemma of the American, the conflict between his moral valuation on various levels of consciousness, and reality."⁸ In the same manner, Puchowitzer, living in a world ostensibly controlled by traditional Jewish valuations, could appeal to the gap between those valuations and the reality of seventeenth century Polish Jewish life, thereby condemning that reality and its ruling forces.

A declining society is not a happy place. Even those who reside at high levels and are the beneficiaries of the status quo may bespeak the moral gap, for even they cannot totally escape its consequences. This is especially true of the Jewish elite of that period which was ultimately, as part (be it the top part) of the dependent minority Jewish group, subject to the distresses of the group. However, social criticism in religious accents may ordinarily be expected more frequently from the lower clergy, themselves poor and dispossessed. Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer may be ~~spontaneously~~ spoken of as occupying a middle rank between the lowest clergy -- the wandering mendicant preachers -- and the clerical elite -- the rabbis of

large communities and provinces who participated in the deliberations of the autonomous Jewish governing bodies. He addressed the sinking middle class and spoke the protest of that class. Like his listeners, he was directly and disastrously effected by the collapse of the system. But like his listeners also, he was still involved legally and psychically with the Jewish value system of that age, and had no doubts as to its validity, stressing only the correction of abuses. Since the later social changes to which we have alluded were engineered by the pressure of this class, we can understand them better if we understand Puchowitzer.

Puchowitzer the man is a shallow figure. Puchowitzer as the representative of a social class is worthy of investigation as a literary source for the social history of the Jews in Poland in the seventeenth century.

We begin by locating our subject in space, geographically and socially, and in time, historically. He was born in Pinsk⁹ in approximately 1612,¹⁰ the product of a learned but undistinguished family.

The growth in population, economic burgeoning, and cultural flowering of Pinsk in the first half of the seventeenth century typifies a widespread flourishing of the Jewish community in Poland during those years. Dubnow has justifiably characterized the age as "the zenith of the autonomous center."¹¹ Throughout Crown Poland, and particularly in the fertile Lithuanian Ukraine, Jewish settlements multiplied prolifically, there was a tremendous stream of immigration from the West, religious institutions were consolidated, political forms crystalized, and new avenues of profitable enterprise opened. Only in retrospect is it apparent that as far as the Jews were concerned, the entire imposing structure rested on a treacherous base.

By 1612 Pinsk had developed from a modest colony of Bras¹² to a large metropolis which focused in itself impressive commercial activity and served as a center for the projection of colonies into the Lithuanian Ukraine. The Polesian city was favorably situated, standing at the confluence of the Strumen and Pina Rivers.

(See frontpiece map) It was connected by the latter stream to the fertile basin of the Dniester. To the south and east were great swamps cut through by rivers rich in fish. To the southwest of Pinsk, between the Pins and Jaslada Rivers, lay a prosperous stretch of farming country. Water communication with the fruitful District of Volhynia was maintained by a series of rivers flowing from the south to Polesie. The prime factor of the Pinsk economy was the fact that it united the waterways of two great seas, the Black Sea and the Baltic.

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Smolik¹¹ enumerates an imposing list of Jewish entrepreneurs in Pinsk, who purchased concessions from the Lithuanian nobles for large sums of money, and engaged in extensive colonial operations. He cites Jewish investment in banking, and in the development of mills, fishing fleets, and lumbering. The number of Jewish tradesmen increased, and the scope of the Jewish craftsmen was enlarged. Smolik's material demonstrates statistically the expanding nature of the Jewish community on the base of a flourishing economy.

Nevertheless, we have characterized this prosperity as treacherous, because it depended on a precarious and unhealthy relationship between Jewish finance aristocracy and the other classes in Polish society. The dominant class in general Polish society of the time was the nobility, or Szlachta, which had emerged victorious from a struggle for dictatorial power with the central monarchial force. Although this class appeared as the patron and protector of Jewish enterprise interests, the Szlachta actually used the Jews as tools to accomplish certain ends, and thereby placed the Jews in a terribly dangerous position. To the wrath of the oppressed peasantry the Jews were exposed. As for the third class, the Polish middle class, the Jews were direct and despised competitors.

We cannot impose Western categories of economic organization upon our consideration of the Polish economy and polity of this period, tempted as we might be to term it feudalism. It is true that the Polish economy did display many aspects of feudalism. Small private holdings were swallowed up by the large estates, peasants

were chained to the land by decree, property was withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the king and placed entirely under the control of the landholding nobles, the monarch himself was elected by convocations of nobility, and there was a conscious effort to cripple the manufacturing and external trade activities of burgherdom to the extent that the tariff on manufactured exports was higher than the tax on identical imports. Unlike the feudalism of Western Europe, however, the period witnessed a ~~marked increase~~ the rationalization on a nation-wide scale of a vastly increased export of agricultural products and raw materials.

The organization and exploitation of growing Szlachta holdings required a type of energy and capital of which the nobles were not possessed in any conspicuous measure. They were occupied with involved political maneuverings at their assemblies, with combatting the threat of formidable national enemies, with lavishly luxurious personal lives, and with maintaining social prestige which looked askance at participation in commerce and finance.

A device whereby monopolies over the estates were leased, the arendau arrangement, was a widespread and most important result of this situation. By extracting stipulated sums for the lease of privileges, the nobles were assured of ready cash without being personally occupied with the exploitation of the land and its people. The terms of the leases were often very broad.

An illustration of the inclusiveness of the arendau terms may be cited in the following early agreement: "In 1601 Count ~~Sigismund~~ Gregory Sanguscho Kasirer and his spouse Sophie entered into the municipal records of Lutzk an arendau agreement for their landholdings in the Lutzk estate, with the Jews Avram Slomowitz Tureiski and Goetz Perzowich Tatchinski. For a period of three years, upon the payment of forty thousand rubels, the arendars were to have complete control over all the Count's subjects, whether they were tenants or serfs, including all obligations, in money or kind, all debts, taxes, etc. The arendars were granted the same absolute privileges of imposing punishments, including the death penalty, as the noble exercised." 15

It is painfully obvious that the position of the arendar as the direct exploiter of the peasantry exposed him to the pent-up resentment of that class. Shatzky has pointed out that the Jews were by no means the sole holders of these monopolies, but he does state that "a very heavy proportion of them (arendars) were Jewish and this economy did play a significant role in the distribution of power within the Jewish community."¹⁶ Now the question may be very legitimately posed, why did the Jews enjoy a preference in the distribution of the estate leases?

The answer to this question involves several factors, among which the less subtle are the fact that the Jews immigrated from Western Europe laden with more investment capital and appropriate experience than other elements in the population possessed. Another factor, one upon which ^{hinges} our characterization of the relationship between the Salachta and Jewish arendars as treacherous, has been pointed out by Sossis. "The Jewish population of Poland," says Sossis, "did not fit into any of the existing classes of the Polish feudal realm."¹⁷ To this formulation his anonymous censor sees fit to take the following exception: "The author compares each stratum of the Jewish population with its counterpart in the Polish society, and arrives at the conclusion that the Jewish class is always comparatively lower....In this manner he buttresses the conception of Jewish martyrology; i.e., that the Jew -- no matter what his position -- is always oppressed. Thereby a comparison of, let us say, the Jewish arendar with the Polish peasant is completely ignored. The role of the Jewish exploiter is obscured."¹⁸ This criticism totally misses the point of Sossis' statement, a point which is crucial to the understanding of the proper relationship between the arendar and the Salachta.

The fact that the social disabilities of the Jew prevented him from fitting "into any of the existing classes of the Polish feudal realm" explains why the Jew was so attractive to the nobleman as an agent. There was a German and even which a small native Polish middle class, trained and capable businessmen, ~~who~~ might have been entrusted with the function. Why were the Jews preferred to those Christians? Simply because as Jews they were forbidden to secure ownership of

land by foreclosure, thereby assuring the nobles that no amount of indebtedness would ever cause them to lose the basic source of their wealth -- the land.

An examination of the privileges extended to the credit operations of Jews by the convocations of nobility ¹⁹ reveals that every advantage and ~~security~~ ^{security} was accorded the lender with the significant provision that "Jews are forbidden to accept real property in mortgage because it would be a degradation for the land to fall into the hands of unbelievers." ²⁰ This bar could not so easily have been imposed against Christians. Circumstances thus dictated an anomalous policy of the nobles toward Jewish enterprise. To the extent that such enterprise enriched the Polish aristocracy, it was fostered and on several occasion large groups of pani threatened to leave the Sejm if restrictions were placed on Jewish moneylenders. At the same time these very same gentry countenanced the most violent religious abuse of Jewish usury in their Jesuit schools, because such polemic helped preserve useful Jewish disabilities.

Heilikmann, describing the transition to arendau economy, ironically remarks that within "the space of fifty years the attitude of the Szlachta was transformed, with God's grace, from antagonism toward the Jewish competitor to protection of the Jewish agent." ²¹ Lest there be any misunderstanding, we hasten to assure that Heilikmann is referring to the god of class interest and not to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The antipathy between Jewish exploiters and their servile victims, the peasants, grew apace with the increasing cruelty and ruthlessness of arendau exploitation, as cited by Shatzky and others. ²² In part the agents were driven to these methods by the mounting levies imposed upon them by the Polish landlords. The increase in immigration and colonization produced a keener competition for monopolies and drove the price higher and higher. Nor can we disregard the fact that the arendar had no long range interest in preserving the productive capacity of the estate, and was often even more callous in exploiting the workers than the landlord himself.

The peasants were so depressed, according to an account taken from the Archives of Southwestern Russia, that "they displayed no active resistance and their reaction was limited to very minor outbreaks and primarily in flight."²³ Yet, in the muttered breath of folksongs and popular adages lay warnings of the holocaust which peasant fury broke over the Jews eighteen years after Puchowitzer's birth.

The Polish middle class was, as we have indicated, composed of two elements. There were German merchants who had preceded the heavy Jewish immigration of the fifteenth century by several years. There was also a native Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian element composed of the lesser nobility dispossessed by the consolidation of the large estates. "These dispossessed 'stepbrothers of the nobility,'" says Shatzky, "invaded the fields of endeavour which the Jews occupied."²⁴ Events thus brought the Jews into direct competition with them.

The very fact that the Jews enjoyed the patronage of the nobles at the same time that the Christian middle class was severely limited by the aristocrats, led these ^{competitors} ~~latter~~ to snipe at the Jews with legal restrictions in the cities which they controlled and through a stream of vitriolic anti-Semitic literature.

It will be seen then, that the relationship between the Jews and three other classes in Polish society: the nobles, middle class, and peasants, was an unhealthy one, laying the basis for tensions which could bring disaster under certain circumstances.

In describing this inter-class relationship, we have confined our attention to the relatively wealthy Jewish leasees of large monopolies, or ^{financiers,} ~~financiers,~~ or tax-farmers, because their activities determined the ultimate disposition of the entire Jewish group. However, like all societies, Polish Jewry was formed in the shape of an inverted pyramid, with the wealthy monopolists at the apex, and ~~tax~~ broadening out through middle class to proletarian masses. There were petty traders in the cities and towns upon whom the burden of burgher competition fell most heavily. Also in the urban centers was a growing class of craftsmen who were

ferociously battled by the guilds. The Jewish middle and lower classes spilled over onto the estates. ^{There} ~~These~~ they were obviously in no position to contend for the large arendaus, but they did manage to secure some of the smaller leases. The nobles were not loath to accept these small arendars whose frantic bids for privileges drove the terms ever higher.

The play of forces among the various elements of the Jewish community took place within the framework of a well-organized autonomous government. The self-governing councils which the Jews had carried into Poland were incubated in that land into powerful and effective organs which took into their competence practically the total fiscal, economic, and personal life of their constituents. The autonomous Jewish agency assumed the burden of tax collection for the administratively weak Polish government. So important was the fiscal aspect that in 1623 the Lithuanian and White Russian Jews seceded from the Polish Council because their territory was considered a separate tax unit. In most matters, however, the two councils continued to operate in unision. When Puchowitzer published his works at the end of the seventeenth century, he found it expedient to secure
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the endorsements of both groups.

With the deterioration of the Jewish position in Poland at the end of the seventeenth century and the subsequent clash of classes, came the type of protest which we shall find in Puchowitzer's writings against the oligarchic and interest-ridden nature of the national and local councils. But the relative prosperity at the time Puchowitzer was born enabled the Vaad to render paternalistic charitable, cultural, and defense services. In a later age of crisis Puchowitzer looked back with longing upon the days "when the leaders cleaved to
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the word of God and led the people in His path."

Recollections of the past can be enhanced by regret, and in an age of decline there is a tendency to look back upon the past as a "Paradise Lost." We must also beware of homiletical exaggerations in the works of the preachers. None-

themselves, he is so firm in his praise of conditions during this earlier period, and his descriptions found such wholehearted corroboration in Nathan Henover and other contemporaries, ²⁷ that it must have represented the popular impressions.

Study, Puchowitzer tells us, was widespread among all classes. "Each man studied earnestly according to his gifts; one analyzing the Talmud to determine the true meaning of its ordinances, another absorbing the sacred word of the Torah, a third giving heed to discourses which explained the Biblical portions, the matter of each Sabbath as well as appropriate subjects for the weekdays being considered in their proper time." ²⁸ The rabbis accepted their educational duties with sincerity. "The great men of previous generations raised the youth in study, regularly devoting a part of their time to instruction and paying heed that the teachers should be shielded about and engirdled with the shield and buckler of Torah." ²⁹ "Certainly the rabbis of the past fulfilled their obligations, as we saw with our own eyes and as our fathers have told us, they were entirely dedicated to spreading Torah, and to establishing great yeshivot where rich and poor alike studied. They went to great lengths to assure the students freedom from interruptions and distractions." ³⁰

The activities of the communal organizations extended also over the lower ruralities, arendars who were geographically removed from Jewish centers. "And admittedly, it was the practice of the earlier ones, even the greatest rabbis, to travel every year, alone or in pairs, to the provinces under their jurisdiction to instruct the Jews and arendars in the laws and customs of our holy faith." ³¹ It will be observed from a listing which Puchowitzer makes ³² further in the same source, of those subjects in which instruction for arendars was deemed necessary, that the pressure of economic circumstances had already caused some of the more depressed Jewish lessees to disregard the religious ordinances which hampered their mode of earning a livelihood. "The rabbis who traveled to the provinces explained the laws of Sabbath observance with regard to the sale of spirits and the transfer of property from a private to the public domain. They expounded the restrictions on the sale of

leaven during Passover." ³²

In order to assess Puchowitzer's writings we must also attend briefly to the role of religion in his society. Rabbinism was the ideological expression of the dominant social order in seventeenth century Polish Jewish life. Polish rabbinism was not only a theological faculty, but also an aspect of the plutocratic secular power. In addition to being a "spiritual leader," the rabbi was a legislator and judge in matters of law. The responsa of the rabbis, based on the Talmudic legal system, casuistically adapted that system to the needs of the aristocrats. In the Councils, the rabbis harmonized fiscal and juridical decisions with the tenets of Jewish law. They also administered penalties for the transgression of these decisions. In this manner the rabbis focused the oligarchic strivings of the ruling class through the prism of traditional Jewish religious culture.

However, the rabbis who participated in the deliberations of the Councils were the ideological representatives of the oligarchy. The tone of the society being dominantly religious, the other classes, the petty tradesmen, rustics, manual laborers, and even the Jewish paupers found religious exponents of their position. As early as 1623 the Lithuanian Vaad was moved ~~to~~ to condemn the "unworthy persons who take the liberty of preaching Mussar and delivering ritual decisions without the permission of higher authority." ³³ The repetition of this condemnation in 1667 was necessary because these mendicant teachers and preachers satisfied a social need and could not be abolished by verbal attacks. Between the unauthorized mendicant and the highest rabbinical stratum lodged the official and semi-official lesser clergy -- lower judges, preachers, and teachers -- who spoke for the middle class. In this intermediate layer Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer found his place.

Puchowitzer's ~~Puchowitzer's~~ immediate family background was middle class in character. Although his maternal ancestors were actually members of Poland's highest rabbinical grouping, his father's family was relatively obscure.

On his mother's side he traced his descent from Isaac b. Bezalel of Wladimir and

Isaac's son-in-law, Abram Pollack. He signed himself "of the branch of the gaon, preeminent in his generation, Rabbi Isaac b. Bezalel, and his son-in-law, the great gaon, Rabbi Abram Pollack." ³⁴

Isaac was one of the pioneers of talmudism in Poland in the fifteenth century, a contemporary of the great Sholom Shakhna of Lublin. Isaac was an outstanding legal authority and many difficulties were referred to him. Dambitser cites a number of well-known responsa in which Isaac's opinions are quoted. ³⁵

From a reference in "Shnei Lukhot Habrit" it is apparent that ~~Isaac~~ composed a talmudic commentary which was unfortunately lost.

Abram Pollack was a rabbi in Luboml from 1577 to 1599. He was one of the ten Issacher "foremost and eternally great scholars" who was invited to endorse ~~Isaac~~ b. Naphtali's classic commentary on the Midrash, "Matnot Kehuna." ³⁶ Joel Sirkis (the BACH) mentions an ordinance promulgated by Pollack.

On his father's side Puchowitzer's family, although learned and possibly officials, were not prominent. Both his fathers, Joseph Parzower, and the grandfather for who he was named, Jehuda Loeb Parzower, possessed the rabbinical title. ³⁷ Puchowitzer refers to this grandfather as a "famous gaon, one of the luminaries of the generation." ³⁸

The scanty records of early Lithuanian rabbis makes ~~it~~ it impossible to determine his grandfather's exact status, but it is clear that the description here is composed more of filial devotion than of accuracy. Puchowitzer's own father left no mark in the learned literature as did his contemporary Isaac b. Bezalel. On the other hand, the repetition of these praises by Puchowitzer's contemporaries, ³⁹ Moses b. Menahem of Prague ⁴⁰ and Moses Hagiz as well as in the endorsements of Puchowitzer's books might indicate that Parzower, father of our subject, was remembered as a religious teacher.

Both ~~of~~ his father and grandfather are, as we have remarked, accorded the ⁴¹ rabbinical title, but this honor refers to an individual's attainment in knowledge of the Torah rather than to his calling. ⁴² However, he does specifically mention that his grandfather was a "great rabbi," in this instance speaking of his profession. Although family names were assigned in a rather haphazard manner

in that age, there is a possibility that Jehuda Loeb Parzower spent some time in the city of Parchiew (pronounced "Parsow" in Yiddish).⁴³ Parchiew is located in western Lithuania, on the Polish border, in the Lublin District. Residence privileges for Jews in Parchiew are first found mentioned in 1565. These rights were reaffirmed by King Sigismund III in 1623, in order to settle a dispute between the city magistrates and the elders of the Jews. Ten years later King Wadislaw IV repeated the grant of residence privileges, since each new monarch on the Polish throne did not automatically recognize the privileges ^{granted} ~~conferred~~ by his predecessor.⁴⁴

The trend of events in Parchiew exemplifies the constant struggle between the Christian middle class, represented by its magistrates, and the Jews. This was part of the pressure which caused the Jews to wander eastward, and the son of Jehuda Loeb Parzower may have been swept into Pinsk with this stream of immigration.

Whatever reason exists for assuming that Jehuda Loeb Parzower was a practicing rabbi, it is not at all likely that Puchowitzer's father, ~~Joseph~~ Joseph, occupied such a post. He did bear the rabbinical title, but he is described only as a "torani"⁴⁵ (skilled student of the law), a vague appellation which might apply to any learned person.

Puchowitzer's grandfather was obviously dead by the time the family resided in Pinsk, for Jewish custom forbids naming children after living forebears. Why our subject bears the surname "Puchowitzer" is not known. He speaks of having "officiated in many Lithuanian communities" which he leaves unnamed, and it is possible that one of these villages was the Lithuanian community of Puchowitz, in the Minsk District.

In the flourishing city of Pinsk Joseph Parzower raised a family in the traditional ways of the Tzohah. The only gleam of information concerning the family comes through the mention of by Puchowitzer of "Rabbi David ... son of my brother, the great Rabbi Benjamin Zeeb, a dayan in Zolkiew."⁴⁶ Once again we must discount

the laudatory presentation, for Puchowitzer's brother did not leave any lasting impression on the history of Zolkiew. In his comprehensive series of sketches of rabbinical worthies of that region, Buber repeats Puchowitzer's words but has⁴⁷ nothing new to add.

From the fact that both brothers earned the rabbinical title it is evident that they were educated in the Talmud and Codes. Asaf extracts from various responses the following requirements for the degree. "The requirements were high. It was demanded of the candidate for ordination that he should be thoroughly versed in all laws, commentaries, and possess a basic knowledge of the Talmud and Codes. The candidate for the privilege of being called 'Morenu'⁴⁸ had to be well-versed in the Four 'Turim'⁴⁹ and to have mastered the technique of talmudic study. Certainly no one was ordained unless he had learned the Tur 'Yoreh Deah'⁵⁰ and 'Hoshen Mishpat'⁵¹ even if he had mastered Talmud and the later codifiers."⁵²

In his writings Puchowitzer displays a broad knowledge of Talmud and Codes. For a religious official as well as for a layman in that period, study was a life-time process. Nevertheless it is reasonable to assume that the bulk of his education was acquired in his earlier years. In addition to his talmudic knowledge he shows a thorough mastery of the Pentateuch, as we would expect from one whose task was to expound "the matter of each day in its time and of the Sabbath in its assigned order, novel interpretations of the Biblical portions of the week."⁵³ He demonstrates only a polite nodding acquaintance with the Post-Pentateuchal sections of the Bible. Both types of Biblical material are generally cited in connection with midrashic and homiletical sources. With Midrash and homiletics, the "tools of his trade," so to speak, he is understandably very much at home. His references to the ~~philosophical~~ works of Maimonides are restricted to the legal volumes. Puchowitzer lays great emphasis in his writings on Kabbala, a consideration with which we deal in the next chapter.

From the bare designation of his brother as a dayan, it is impossible to determine exactly what status Benjamin Zeeb occupied in Zolkiew. From a protocol of

the Cracow Jewish community we have a detailed description of the three orders of judges, ranging from the highest court presided over by the rabbi of the region, to the low and rather insignificant courts.⁵⁴ The dayan would in general, occupy that stratum of officialdom which we have designated as the middle clergy.

Puchowitzer provides precious little information on his youth and education. He refers to his teacher very vaguely in the following statement: "I also observed my teacher, may he rest in peace, not speaking in the synagogue ~~from~~ for a long period after the prayers, even words of Mussar and piety."⁵⁵ But who this teacher was, he does not tell us. We might have expected to find some mention of his teacher in the endorsements to his books, had the man been prominent, but no such item is to be found. As the product of a scholarly family, he probably received much of his training directly from his father. It is true that by the beginning of the seventeenth century there was a well-supervised system of elementary and higher education in Poland. The Yeshiva as an organized academic institution had been established as early as 1567.⁵⁶ However, it was not considered necessary for an individual to fulfill residence requirements at a recognized institution of higher learning in order to attain rabbinical status. In many cases the yeshiva itself consisted of a loosely organized group of men before whom the local rabbi delivered a series of regular or occasional lectures. In 1661 the Lithuanian Council decreed that "every community and settlement having a rabbi of its own shall maintain an academy for advanced and younger pupils."⁵⁷ Certainly a man of Joseph Parzower's scholarly attainments, himself ordained, would have been considered competent to teach his sons.

Puchowitzer also mentions having heard lectures by rabbis in various communities. "And in the days of my youth I wandered among the houses of study absorbing the wisdom of the great ones."⁵⁸ The method of talmudic study in Poland was sufficiently standardized at that time for a young man to acquire part of his education in this manner. Baron states of this period that "imitation of Christian prototypes and of the wandering journeymen, combined with the growing practice

of rabbis to take disciples along with them when changing posts, made the traveling ⁵⁹
bahur a frequent phenomenon."

Having touched upon the social background of the period and the available details of Puchowitzer's family standing and education, we proceed to examine the first incident in his career which can be definitely placed, his escape from a massacre in the city of Bychow in 1659.

By this time he was married and the father of at least two children, of whom the younger was ten. His wife was also the product of a rabbinical family. These and other facts may be gleaned from the reports rendered by Puchowitzer in the Introductions to two of his works, "Kene Hokmah," and "Kebod Hakamin."

This is his account in "Kene Hokmah." "I remember the great miracle performed in my behalf when the city of Buchow' in the Territory of Reisen was suddenly captured on Sunday evening the 29th of Adar, 5420 (December 17, 1659). Close to three hundred of our Jewish brethren were killed, among them many who were great in learning and faith, may our Lord remember them with favor along with all the other eternally righteous and bind up their souls in the bond of life and exact their revenge speedily and in our own day. When the Lord destroyed that city and all that was in it, God remembered me, my wife, and my two daughters. We were saved with the help of God, may His Name be praised, whole in our bodies, clean and pure without the slightest iniquity of sin or cloud of transgression... About an hour before the catastrophe I was drowsing, half-asleep and half-awake, when two holy souls appeared before me, namely: the soul of the late Rabbi Uri Shragai Weivish (Phoebus) of blessed memory, of the holy community of Shklow', and the soul of his son-in-law, the late Rabbi Pinchas son of Rabbi Menahem of blessed memory, the father of my mother-in-law, of blessed memory. They revealed to me that they had come to save me with the help of God, may His Name be praised, and they told me how to escape the terrible slaughter, at what point I might escape from the city. Their words were fulfilled. We were not able to rescue along with us from the evil of the decree, my martyred daughter Sarah: The years of her life were ten: I'll had she been from her youth 'till then: May the Lord keep her with favor in his ken: To

witness her revenge I yen. And I pondered upon the virtue whereby I, the most undeserving of all men, merited such a marvelous rescue. I realized that the virtue which I had practiced was that during the twenty-nine weeks that I was there while the city was being besieged, it was my practice to lecture every day on subjects of moral admonition and ethics based on 'Reshit Hokmah' and other books of piety. In this connection Zohar, 'Shofetim' and 'Balak,' par. 373 states, 'Even at the time that retribution hangs suspended overhead and permission has been granted the destroyer to destroy, the Holy One Blessed Be He commands the destroyer and says to him, 'Do not lay waste this tree, this sage, for he is the gate through which healing shall flow to this place and in his teachings I prepare for my people a place wherein to prepare for redemption.' Also in 'Hibure Leket' ⁶⁰ it is stated in the Introduction that a great miracle was performed on behalf of the author, in a supernatural manner, and it was revealed to him by heaven that he merited it because it would come about that a certain worthy deed would be performed by him in the future. Therefore, I said, perhaps I too have been rescued for the sake of my later achievements, whereby I might benefit the public. From that time I resolved to strengthen myself in the study of Mussar nor to neglect it, for it was truly my life. The Lord was with me and I was enabled to officiate for some years in the great houses of learning. The first to accept me were those who have always been foremost in all matters of holiness and faith, the holy congregation of Slutsk. There I was appointed Master of the House of Learning (Baal Beth HalMidrash). ⁶¹ After that I was accepted by the holy community of Pinsk, the place of my birth."

The reminiscence in "Kebod Kakanim" amplified the details somewhat. "Now forty years have passed since I was rescued with the help of God, through Divine Providence, from the evil decree and great massacre which occurred in the Territory of Reisen in a town which was besieged twenty-nine weeks by the Muscovite ⁶² army."

After substantially the same account of his escape from the city, he continued. "And he (one of the spirits who appeared in the vision) brought me to a city where Jews lived under the rule of the enemy, and he instructed me to remain there in the house of his son, may he rest in peace, until the situation had become calmer."

He also told me that the other spirit would lead my wife, may she rest in peace, out of the city, and so it was. The night after the vision I left the city at the place in the wall which he had indicated. I passed through the fire, through ~~the~~ ~~explosion of the~~ the dead bodies, and through many watches of the guard. The guards paid heed to my words. I arrived safely at the enemy camp and the Lord made me find favor in the eyes of one of their officers. After I had related my vision to him, he rendered me great homage during the day or two ~~times~~ I was with him, and sent me with honor, escorted by his servants, to the aforementioned place where Jews lived. And the rescue of my wife, may she rest in peace, and of my daughter, may she live, was even more extraordinary and providential."

63

Since he was married and the father of two children, Puchowitzer must have been pursuing some means of livelihood in Bychow. What was he doing there? Dem-
himself
bitzer contents himself with the neutral assertion that the city was "the dwelling
place of his glory in the days of his youth." 64 Kassover flatly asserts that
65
"he was rabbi in Buchow, Reizen." No source is provided for this statement
which, along with the general innaccuracy and lack of documentation marking this
last source prevents us from taking it seriously.

Our own viewpoint is that Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer was certainly not a Mussar ~~preacher~~ preacher before this experience and there is no clear evidence that he served in any religious capacity before that. From the fact that his family was with him in Bychow it may be inferred that he was located there on a somewhat permanent basis. The tenor of his statements indicates that he had not been delivering sermons before the siege and only undertook them because the circumstances interrupted his routine. If he had been preaching previously there would have been little point to the "Hibbure Lelet" quotation which stresses future accomplishments. Of course, if he were already occupied as a preacher he might have cited this experience as an example of his devotion to duty and he might have been thinking only of his turn toward the particular subject of Mussar when speaking of future accomplishments. Whether or not he had been an

official before the incident, he was obviously prepared to fill such a position because he was subsequently appointed in Slutsk.

There is no doubt that the "Bychow" mentioned here is Old Bychow on the Dnieper, although some unnecessary confusion has been introduced into its proper identification. Bychow is in White Russia, still farther to the east than Pinsk. Once again we observe Puchowitzer following the restless trend of Jewish migration toward the Ukrainian estates and settlements.

Wischnitzer provides the background for the event which Puchowitzer described. "In 1568 King Zygmunt August gave Jan Heronymus Chodkowitch the title Baron of Bychow. Chodkowitch's son, Jan Karl, developed it into a strong fortress. In 1610 it passed over to the control of the Saphieas, and was further strengthened as a military establishment. It was stormed by the Cossacks under Khmelnitzki, but they did not succeed in taking the fortress which was defended by Sosnicki. In appreciation of his feat the Sejm awarded Sosnicki freedom from all taxes for twenty years, and the defending force of three hundred Germans was awarded a bonus. In 1663 (should be 1659 - J.R.) Tzar Alexei Mikailovitch conquered the city, but it was reconquered a year later by Jan Casimir. In consideration of the havoc 66 wreaked in this war the Sejm in 1666 freed the entire city of taxes for ten years."

Confusion in the identification of Bychow came about because of the similarity in the Yiddish spelling of this name and that of Buchawa, a town in the Lublin District of Lithuania. In the Russian and Polish languages "Bychow" and "Buchawa" are quite distinguishable. Not so for their Yiddish versions. Bychow is named "Buchowi" by Dembitzer⁶⁷ and "Buchow" by Kassover⁶⁸ and Lewin.⁶⁹ At the same 70 time Hanover applies "Bychow" to his account of events which transpired in "Buchawa." In 1649 Buchawa had been conquered by Khmelnitzki, while Bychow, as we have read, was ^{not} taken by him.

Shatzky fell prey to the confusion by listing the 1659 conquest of Bychow by the Tzar in connection with Hanover's description of the atrocities in Buchawa at the time of the Khmelnitzki uprising. 71 Despite Hanover's inaccurate spelling

it is clear that he is speaking of Buchawa because he mentions the event under the general heading of Zamotah, a large city in the Lublin District to which Buchawa was attached.⁷² In the "Martyrology of the Community of Worms" the name is more correctly rendered "Bychawa."⁷³

The first to correctly link Puchowitzer's description with Tzar Alexei Mikailovitch was Bruell,⁷⁴ whose lead was followed by Lewin,⁷⁵ Kogan,⁷⁶ Dubnow,⁷⁷ and Jaari.⁷⁸

Kogan seized upon the source for historical illumination. "It is generally assumed that the sufferings of the Jews in the Cossack-Swedish War (Swedish-Polish Wars) ended in 1658, after an upheaval of ten years which shook the Polish monarchy. But in rabbinic literature we find eye-witness reports which prove that after 1658 occasional destructions took place. These massacres were not directed specifically against the Jews but were part of a general military holocaust in the Ukraine."⁷⁹

Unfortunately, Kogan consulted only "Kebod Hakamin" which omits the name of the city. Accordingly, he declared himself mystified as to the exact locale of the incident. Dubnow immediately appended an editorial note which set the matter aright.⁸⁰ At the same time Dubnow ~~takes~~^{took} occasion to correct the dating of the event in 1663 by Balinski and Lipinski,⁸¹ thereby performing the same service for Wischnitzer, who based himself on their book. The corrected date, 1659, corresponds with Puchowitzer's account.

Dubnow, concurring in Kogan's opinion that the massacres during the Swedish-Polish Wars were not directed specifically against the Jews, quotes Balinski and Lipinski that in the destruction of Bychow "all were equal in the face of the sword."⁸² These assertions are indubitably more balanced historically than Puchowitzer's exclusive preoccupation with Jewish suffering. Of course, the preacher operated on altogether different premises than the historian. The virtues of historicity would have robbed the preacher like saltpeter, of the passion necessary for his function. The very qualities of ego- and group-centricity of which the historian strives to divest himself in his gorgeous ascent from the human to the scholarly, rendered Puchowitzer's sermons meaningful to his audiences. However,

even from an historical point of view, we must severely qualify Kogan's statement. It is true that the Muscovites did not single out the Jews for destruction, but in the Byehow incident as throughout the Polish-Swedish Wars, the Jews were killed as Jews, because as Jews they played a distinct role in the upheavals of the period.

The arendau economy with all the dangerous results we have previously ascribed to it, was most widespread in the Ukraine. It was precisely this region which was most inflammable. There ~~was~~ was to be found the more energetic segment of the peasantry which had fled the ~~exploiting~~ exploiting oppression of the nobles in Poland and Western Lithuania and was now once again cast under the yoke of that exploitation. There, too, the dispossessed middle class of Cossack nobility was organized into an effective military force toward which the Polish realm bore an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand the piratical attacks of the Cossacks on Turkish trade was combatted by military force from time to time, and at the same time the Cossacks were maintained as an organized unit for use against Turkish onslaughts. It has been amply demonstrated by Shatzky and others that the Khmelnitzki Revolt was never intended to disturb the basic relationship between landlord and peasant, but was an effort to secure a share in the profits of exploitation for the Cossack aristocracy. 83

The elimination of Jewish arendars was necessary to accomplish that end.

Despite a certain martyrological emotionalism concerning the upheaval, such Jewish historians as Graetz, 84 Misl, 85 and much better, Dubnow 86 have correctly described the general contours of the social alignment which exposed large segments of the Jewish population to destruction in Khmelnitzki's Revolt and the subsequent wars. Even in Hanover's unsophisticated early chronicle there are hints at the role which Jewish exploitation played in the massacres.

The Muscovites and Swedes had experienced little contact with Jews when they became involved in the Ukraine, but they carried out the anti-Jewish demands of the local populace (the Swedes much less brutally than the Russians) as part of a policy of conciliating the anti-Polish Ukrainians. 87 In this sense, the massacre of the Jews of Byehow was directed specifically against them, and Kogan's

statement is not completely justified.

At the same time there are too many factors in this complex historical situation for us to sum up the entire matter in the simple formula: anti-Jewishness based on Jewish economic alignment with the Polish landlords. In accordance with a consistent thesis which maintains that Khmelnitzki never intended disturbing the basic structure of power, to liberate the peasantry, but that he rather intended wresting a greater share in the profits for the dispossessed Polish aristocracy at the expense of the Jewish exploiters, Shatzky points to instances where Jews of the lower classes who did not represent economic competition, were spared. ⁸⁸ Balaban ~~and~~ ⁸⁹ and Mahler ⁹⁰

are agreed that the Russians were not as vehemently concerned with eradicating Jewish influence as were the Cossacks. This is even more true of the Swedes. ⁹¹

The tenuous relationship between Polish nobles and Jews permitted powerful Polish elements to betray their Jewish "allies" on occasion. ⁹² As Sossis understands the relationship between the Jews and the Poles, "the (Polish and Lithuanian) petit-nobility, dispossessed of its previous station, deeply resented the Jews," while the "large landholders protected the Jews for economic reasons, yet hated and resented them." ⁹³

If we attempt to strike a more subtle understanding of the position of the Jews in the Revolt and wars, we will find that it was not a one-sided picture. Overall, the pincers of class hatreds within which they had found a seemingly lucrative position had snapped shut with the resounding crunch of bloodshed and misery. But ⁹⁴ there were many gaps and loopholes through which groups and individuals might maneuver for survival.

Puchowitzer exemplified the situation in an intimate and personal manner. His account of the miraculous dream would not seem incredible to his listeners. The dream is a familiar device for communicating with the supernatural in ancient and medieval literature, including the works of Puchowitzer's rabbinic contemporaries. ⁹⁴ We must take into account his comprehensive religious rationale for all worldly events. We might note in passing that such an all-embracing rationale would pre-

bably avert the type of guilt feelings which competent psychiatrists have detected in the survivors of Jewish holocausts in our own more rationalist age. ⁹⁵ Nonetheless, we are constrained to assay a more naturalistic analysis of the events.

Firstly, it is significant that Puchowitzer speaks of Jewish communities which lived at peace under the rule of the Muscovites. This immediately shatters the conception that the Muscovites were always and everywhere anti-Jewish. Secondly, Puchowitzer's version of his escape from the doomed city and his dealings with a Muscovite officer lead us to believe that in addition to delivering Musar sermons, he was also busy working out a detailed plan to save himself and his family. He may have been guided by his spirit friend and the Russian soldiers may have been impressed by his tales of the supernatural, but it seems more likely that a chain of circumstances whereby a man finds exactly that point of escape which enables him to evade the guard, a safe haven is provided for him, and his wife and daughter are rescued separately, was a well-conceived operation.

It should be understood that there was no disloyalty to the city involved in such an escape, because the primary loyalty of the Jews and the Poles in that confusion was certainly not to the land which they had colonized. "Jeven Matsulah" and other contemporary chronicles recount numerous instances in which the entire population of the city fled if its situation seemed hopeless. The incident does, however, cast light upon Puchowitzer as an energetic and capable individual who kept his wits about him in a time of crisis. His general outlook was, as we shall note, equally practical and down-to-earth.

Uri Shragai Weivish and Piehas b. Menahem are not mentioned in any of the biographical sources on the rabbis of the period. Shklow, evidently the place of Puchowitzer's wife's origin, is also on the Dnieper only a short distance from Old Mychow. The fact that these forebears of his wife bear the rabbinical title and are mentioned in connection with a specific community suggests that Puchowitzer married a woman of a learned family probably of an equivalent social station to

his own. Finn explains that "marriage was considered a social instrument and was, in general, arranged according to social classes."⁹⁶ Finn also explains that it was the practice in the case of the learned, that "the father-in-law either supported his son-in-law outright, or was responsible to provide a means for the son-in-law's livelihood."⁹⁷ If Puchowitzer followed this pattern, it would explain his removal from Pinsk to the Shklow area. That his imagination should have chosen these two individuals to appear before him in his vision, indicates that he was anxious to establish his membership in the socially esteemed learned class.

CHAPTER TWO

For some Jewish communities the disturbances of the mid-century meant complete extinction.¹ In others, communal activities were paralyzed. Bychow seems to have suffered such a fate according to the annals of the "Holy (Burial) Society of Bychow" found in the Archives of S.M. Dubnow.² This book records all instances of legal difficulties in connection with burials, listing them in chronological order. There are consecutive entries from 1620 to 1659, following which there is a gap until the year 1665. From 1665 to 1705 the items are once again itemized in order. It may be assumed that this gap represents a period when this communal agency did not operate, although the fact that the record book was preserved indicates that some continuity was preserved during this troubled time. Unfortunately, the names of the local rabbis are not mentioned in connection with these cases, the only names to be found in the Annals being those of celebrated outside authorities from whom responsa on the legal problems were received. The record sheds no light on the gap in the listings, resuming without comment.

Although the larger Lithuanian cities were also severely mauled during the upheavals, most of them managed to survive. "Of the people in the cities of Slutsk, Pinsk, and ~~Brest~~ Brest," we read in the "Jevan Matzulah," "some escaped to Crown Poland and others by waterway to Danzig on the River Vistula. The poor folk³ who remained in Brest and Pinsk were martyred by the hundreds." Hanover gives a picture of the richer group fleeing a long distance to safety, while those who had not the means for sustained flight wandered deplorably amidst the ravage and death from one Lithuanian city to the next. Puchowitzer was one of those who remained in Lithuania, but Bychow having been destroyed, he removed to Slutsk and there embarked upon his career as a religious official.

In 1659 Slutsk was in the process of reconstruction. The city had escaped K
 Khmelnitzki's 1648 invasion comparatively unscathed, and with its Jewish population
 intact. Hanover described the circumstances. "The people of Slutsk were avenged.
 The inhabitants of the city notified the scoundrels to hasten to come, assuring
 the Ukrainians that they would hand over many Jews and nobles to them. But there
 were no Jews in Slutsk; they had already fled. They did not trust the local
 people to fight the foe. When the scoundrels approached the city they were met
 with cannon fire from the walls and from the gate. They suffered heavy losses.
 As they fled, the local people pursued them, and they smote them to utter destruc-
 tion." ⁵ It would also seem, from Lewin's compilation of the sources on the
 Second Swedish-Polish War, that Slutsk was bypassed in the action which devastated
 Bychow. ⁶

Slutsk is a prominent commercial center in the Nowogrod District. The Jewish
 settlement there is quite old, residence privileges for Jews first having been
 mentioned in 1583. ⁷ In 1623, when the Vaad Medinat Lita was first formed, Slutsk
 was subordinated to the authority of Brest, but by 1691 it was assigned independent
 status and its own representative sat in the sessions of the Council. ⁸ Wischnitzer
 attributes the rise of the city to "the growth of population and the number of
 prominent scholars residing there." ⁹

In Slutsk Puchowitzer was styled "Baal Beth HaMidrash." The term is puzzling.
 Among the titles accorded Polish and Lithuanian religious officials, ¹⁰ this title
 is not to be found. A clue to the meaning of the term may be found in the fact
 that there was a class of clergy not appointed by the community as a whole, but
 by an individual society. They presided over various study groups which met in
 the beth hamidrash. ¹¹ These instructors were sometimes called "maggidim." The
 "Baal Beth HaMidrash" may have been a generic term applied to all such function-
 aries. An analogy may be found in the popular usage of "Klaus-Rabbiner" to des-
 ignate the person who supervised the beth hamidrash and often resided there, al-

though the title is not an official one. ¹²

Levitats provides a description of the educational activities of the societies which met in the beth hamidrash, which fits very neatly Puchowitzer's own account of his function in Slutsk. "There was hardly a society without an educational and religious program for its members. All branches of Jewish studies were represented on these programs: Bible, Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, and so on. The more learned studied the Talmud, the less learned studied the Bible and the Midrash, while those whose mind was not on study simply read out of the Psalter even though for the most part not understanding its contents." ¹³ Levitats also mentions that "the less learned and those with a predilection for Aggadah and Mussar (Lore and Exhortation), generally formed their own associations with a view to the study of those subjects. Thus, there were associations which concentrated upon specific books of ethics." ¹⁴

Let us compare this information with Puchowitzer's own account of his activities. "It was my practice to deliver a lesson (l'higid sheur) to those who were lesser than myself in matters of moral admonition and ethics, the matter of each day in its time and of each Sabbath in its time, novel interpretations appropriate to the weekly Biblical portion. Especially did I attend to the Alshikh's ¹⁵ commentary on the Bible, Prophets, and Sacred Writings, for his words present an understanding ¹⁶ of Scripture acceptable to every wise heart. In the 'Gilgulim' of the ARI ¹⁷ it is stated that the soul of R. Samuel bar Nachmani passed into R. Moses Alshikh and in this manner the latter became an inspiring preacher who composed wonderful ¹⁸ works. I also used the works of R. Kalfiraz whose soul found its roots in the roots of the divine soul. I made reference to the punishments visited upon our age and to God's graciousness toward my own person. In addition I referred to the ethical material in the Zohar and in other works of mussar, especially the 'Alshikh,' because the mussar in his books, composed with great logic and illumined by Biblical verses, penetrates to the depths of the heart. It was also my practice to expound the laws mentioned incidentally in those works, following the precept

of R. Meir, "When holding public lectures, spend a third of the time on legal subjects, one-third on homiletical preaching, and one-third on parables (illustrating Biblical verses)."¹⁹

Zunz ^{understands} Puchowitzer's treating "of the matter of each day in its time"²⁰ to mean that the sermons were delivered daily. However, those didactic expositions in the beth hamidrash are hardly to be accounted sermons, even by the standards of the period.

The mention of the fact that the audience consisted of people of "lesser stature" conforms with the notion that he addressed the lower classes. The beth hamidrash itself was a popular center of study and prayer, a much more frequented place than the beth haknesseth, which Levitats characterized as "obviously a luxury maintained by the rich"²¹ and used only for prayers. Even Asaf who presents, on the whole, an idealized portrait of Polish Jewish life in this century, marks the social differentiation between the two synagogal forms. "The relationships between the batei midrash of the societies and the beth haknesseth frequented by the leaders of the kahal, were often strained. Occasionally matters came to a sharp conflict and even revolt against the hegemony of the kahal. With the complete degradation of the kahal in the eighteenth century we read of open battles of the masses against the leaders of the community, the disputes centering around the unfair distribution of the tax burden. In the books of homiletics and ethics of that period there are strong and bitter words of exhortation with regard to these injustices."²²

In addition to having been the "Baal Beth HalMidrash" in Slutzk and Pinsk, Puchowitzer also occupied official positions in other Lithuanian communities. "When I was Moreh Zedek in many communities I followed this procedure, speaking of the matter of each day in its time and of the Sabbath in its time."²³ He is also accorded the following official titles in the endorsements to his books: "Av Beth Din and Rosh Masiyta" (by the Council of Four Lands);²⁴ "Moreh Zedek" (by the Council of Four Lands and the Lithuanian Council);²⁵ "Rav" (by the above and by

Isaac b. Abraham, Chief Rabbi of Posen);²⁶ and "Darshan" (by all).²⁷ In all instances, however, when his work is described functionally he is alluded to as a teacher ("established and strengthened houses of learning")²⁸ and more particularly as a preacher ("was an accomplished darshan and roused the masses to repentance in many communities.")²⁹

Klausner has explained these titles on the basis of the records of the Wilno Jewish community.³⁰ The chief rabbi of a community was the "Rav" which is not to be confused with "Rav Mufleh" (accomplished scholar) which was applied to every ordained individual, whether or not he was a practicing rabbi. "Av Beth Din" (Head of the Court) and "Rosh Mesivta" (Head of the Academy) are much more precise titles, for they were granted only practicing rabbis. The chief rabbi of a community was automatically head of the court, personally sitting on weighty cases or where his presence had been requested by one of the parties to the suit. The money settlement of every case passed through his hands. He supervised the work of the minor judges, and if they were evenly divided on a verdict he was often called upon to cast the deciding vote. In all communal matters his opinion bore great weight and his opinion often decided issues. The Head of the Academy was also often another office of the chief rabbi, or the two offices might be separated. ~~For~~ In addition to delivering his lectures, the Head of the Academy also ordained qualified scholars. The chief rabbi of a large community maintained authority over the smaller settlements attached to the authority of the metropolis, and if he occupied the office in one of the five principal Lithuanian cities he participated in the deliberations of the national Council.

The "Moreh Zedek" (he who shows righteousness) passed on ritual matters, passing on issur v'heter (that which was forbidden and that which was permitted).

As for the community preacher, several titles for this functionary have been noted. The most commonly used title was "Maggid Meisharin" (teller of straight things).³¹ Asaf also cites a number of instances in which the regularly appointed

preacher "whose duty was to preach every Sabbath" was called "Darshan." ³² The agreements between communities and preachers cited by Asaf on this point contravene the notion of Zunz that by this time the title "Darshan" was restricted to those who expound legal topics, and that the popular preachers were always called either "Maggid" or "Mokhiakh." ³³ It is true, however, that a popular preacher was more commonly called "Maggid." The title "Mokhiakh" (exhorter) is found in the annals of both the Polish and Lithuanian Councils to refer only to the preachers not attached to any one city, but wandering from place to place. ³⁴

There were variations in the treatment accorded wandering preachers. One of the earliest ordinances of the Lithuanian Council required that "no person is permitted to preach in public in any of the four principal communities unless the Rav and parnassim (lay heads of the community) ³⁵ have met in joint session and approved him, and in the other communities no person is to preach without the permission of the District Rabbi." ³⁶ We have previously noted their violent denunciation of those who violated this ordinance. However, certain "Mokhiakhim" were given a carte blanche to hold forth wherever they chose to preach. Puchowitzer mentions having "received a general permission to preach in all the communities of the land in order to 'mend the fences' and to correct the transgressions of the generation." ³⁷

The communal offices described above refer to a large community where each dignitary carried on his activities in their pure form, so to speak, because the kahal could afford to maintain separate individuals in each post. In the smaller communities, however, one man might be called upon to discharge a number of duties. "If a community was too small to maintain a full-time preacher," says Levitats, "it managed to engage a rabbi who would preach more than the two customary annual sermons. In such small communities, the rabbi was also expected to conduct Bible and Talmud classes for adult groups." ³⁸

It would seem from the above that Puchowitzer did occupy the rabbinical position

in various smaller communities. Unfortunately, the endorsers of his books and the author himself did not specify the time and place of his service in these capacities, beyond the vague assertion that he held the positions in "many communities of Lithuania." ³⁹

As the chief rabbi of a community, no matter how small, he undoubtedly would have followed the general practice of establishing an academy. But ever and always his prime interest was in preaching mussar. Even when he was a "Moreh Zedek," he has told us, he preached. In the course of his remarks he mentions ⁴⁰ having spoken in such large communities as Zolkiew, ⁴¹ Mezeritch, ⁴² and Posnan. There being no mention of his having occupied any permanent posts in those cities, it is safe to assume that he spent a great deal of his time traveling from city to city on preaching tours, exercising the privilege granted him by the Council.

Despite Puchowitzer's privileged status as a preacher, he was not immune from the antagonism of the learned and wealthy toward those wandering functionaries. "An incident occurred to me once when I was admonishing a nest of rats, a resting place of idlers who chattered empty and vain matters while the Torah was being read. One of them answered me impudently as it is written, 'The rich man shall answer with effrontery,' and embarrassed me to the utmost with his words. From that time forward, even if I observed them and their hangers-on in that village conversing in the midst of prayer I pretended not to see them and I was like a man who bears no chastisements. Certainly if the wise men of that community or one who was of higher station than that impudent fellow chastised him, he would ⁴³ not have dared to answer in that manner."

In order to understand wherein lay the basis for antagonism between the preacher of ethics and the privileged class, we proceed directly into a report of the socially significant material in Puchowitzer's sermons. The elements of social protest we shall discern here are accepted as indicative of the mood of the middle class.

Puchowitzer made only a few references to the tragedies of his times, and these

are steeped in gloom. "The cruel events which took place in our country in the year 1648 and for some years following, of which the like has not been witnessed since the days that the Holy Temple was destroyed..."⁴⁴ "My heart is broken and shattered, weeping and melancholy, because God's people is cast down to the earth, given over to shame and degradation, harried and oppressed."⁴⁵ "My spirit is broken when I consider the waste and destruction which took place in our own day; the sword and famine and capture and pestilence have raged. Blood was spilled like water until there were too many for burial. The bitter exile has become more oppressive and we are subject to the scorn of every passer-by."⁴⁶

As a natural reaction to these disasters a certain amount of religious skepticism was to be found. "Many are those who complain of the long agony of the exile and utter dark words against the justice of God and his ordinances."⁴⁷ Puchowitzer takes pains to point out, however, that the number of Jews who succumbed to conversion was small. "It has been said and I have heard that some of our brethren have, God forbid, fallen away for weakness and bowed before other gods. Let this lie perish from the earth for I have known only one instance where a man of Israel caused himself to be led out of the bonds of eternal life."⁴⁸

The problem of conversion and even of skepticism did not represent any large-scale reaction to the Jewish troubles of the times. Where Jews were converted it was generally by force and they returned to the fold as soon as it was possible.⁴⁹

In the seventeenth century the social and ideological power of the communal organizations continued to provide the essential mental climate for the Jew, which made it impossible for most individuals to consider solving their problems outside the boundaries of their Jewishness. "Even the rustic," says Dubnow, "was not strongly disassociated from the Jewish environment. He was bound to the Jewish community with thousands of ties. He looked to the kahal of the nearest city for his juridical and religious existence. To that organization he paid his taxes, and without its permission he was not allowed to move. Economically he was totally

dependent on the kahal, that organization protecting his right to the lease on his tavern or mill. The kahal prevented, to a certain extent, competition by other Jews, and represented him before the noble. In short, no matter where the Jew lived and what he did he was always juridicially and culturally attached to and dependent upon the Jewish community." ⁵⁰

The complete emotional involvement of the Jew in his Jewishness led him to accept the religious rationale which led inward, toward the intensification of tradition and practice. Puchowitzer quoted with approval the opinion of a contemporary ⁵¹ that the period of death and destruction but recently passed had represented a divine opportunity for redemption, and the harsh decrees were handed down in order to arouse to repentance. "We have forfeited a time of redemption, and because we did not repent our evil ways we were not saved." ⁵² This represents, of course, the time-honored theme of much of Jewish religious literature, and could not be disputed in his society. The ~~idea~~ ^{idea} theme is repeatedly stressed in practically all of Puchowitzer's sermons.

In terms of this premise, the preacher proposed a practical program. "Now that the aforementioned terrors have passed and some measure of peace has descended upon the earth, it must be understood that the fate of the people hinges upon repentance." ⁵³ The greatest bar to true repentance he saw in ignorance. "In our generation many strictly forbidden violations are considered permitted because we have neglected to strengthen the fences surrounding the Law and to explain the true meaning of the Torah." ⁵⁴

Moralistic preaching was, therefore, in no sense a luxury in Puchowitzer's view, but an immediate and urgent necessity. He was concerned with this subject more than with any other, and provided many interesting details of the philosophical outlook and practical technique of the Mekhiakh.

In general, moral admonition was established as one of the basic religious commandments and was incumbent upon every Jew. He quoted the Tractate Erubin that "one who observes a despicable habit in another is obligated to admonish him, as

it is said, 'Thou shalt admonish thy companion.' If one has admonished a friend who pays no heed, whence is it derived that he must continue to chastise him, even a hundred times? From the repetition of the word 'admonish.'⁵⁵ Haimonides also ordained that "one who observes his comrade slinking or following a path which is not good, fulfills a commandment if he urges him to return to the proper way and informs him that he is committing a sin, as it is written, etc."⁵⁶ Alekhith commented on the biblical verse and interpreted it. "All Israel is as one body, and if one organ of the body is ill it affects the entire system."⁵⁷

Puchowtzer went on to explain that "even though the commandment of admonition is one of the 613 commandments, it does not apply equally to every Jew. That is to say, everyone is responsible to scold his companion if he detects him in the act of committing a sin, but if he does not detect him in the act, even if he is certain that the sin is being committed, he bears no such obligation."⁵⁸ The preacher's emphasis on this point is significant for it enabled him to criticize the leaders of the communities for neglecting their special admonitory duties, as well as to establish the need for a class of professional moralistic preachers.

Verbal chastisement was not incumbent upon the ordinary Jew, it was the special responsibility of the communal leaders. "And upon the elders and teachers, the shepherds of Israel, it is obligatory to heal the (morally) diseased."⁵⁹ "Although the ordinary person need not scold a sinner whom he does not detect in the act, it is mandatory upon the sages and great ones of the generation to chastise the people even when they do not observe them in the act of committing sins. They should admonish the masses both for past and potential sins and show them the proper path and way of repentance."⁶⁰ "The great ones of Israel are also required to travel among the settlements attached to their jurisdiction and to teach proper behavior and ethics."⁶¹ Repeatedly the preacher stressed the responsibility of the leadership.

He lamented the fact that this responsibility and duty was fearfully neglected.

"Behold, my heart is depressed and I am amazed every day at the sages, providers, and leaders of the generation who hold this matter in such little esteem and do not take care to improve the generation."⁶³ He was exercised over the fact that the elite not only neglected this type of preaching, but actively opposed and ridiculed it. "Many of the great, not enough that they do not do their duty which proves that their so-called virtues are as transient as the grass and all that they accomplish is done for the sake of themselves and their own glory, but they also occasionally ridicule one who has the piety and fervor to fight the battle of the Lord, God of Hosts, to arouse the masses from their slumber and to admonish the people. They do not support such a man. They even weaken him, declaring 'Who has appointed you a spokesman?' Whereupon this well-intentioned man lowers his head like a sheep and retreats abashed, saying, 'Why should I enter into this trouble?'⁶⁴ Thus, between one midwife and another the child, Israel, is lost and every man follows his own desires and the wickedness of his heart, for a man is forever righteous in his own eyes."⁶⁵ Again Puchowitzer complained of the opposition of the leaders to exhortation in these words. "Against the truth of my ^{words} ~~servants~~ and the necessity for chastisement no man can raise his voice, for all that I say is not my own invention but is taken from the fountain of living waters...yet secretly the rich and the learned ~~little~~ my work and utter falsehoods concerning it."⁶⁶

What, according to the preacher, were the reasons for the opposition of the leadership to this obviously important enterprise? He ridiculed the notion that they were unaware of the need for exhortation. "Occasionally the laxity of the leaders of Israel in providing moral admonition is attempted to be justified on the grounds that they are not aware of the transgressions of the people. Is it then conceivable that they should not know? Surely they are aware of what is transpiring, and since they do know it necessarily follows that they are consciously neglectful."⁶⁷

He found the reason for their attitude in their neglect of moral values in

favor of economic gain and prestige. "In our days, when the rabbis travel to the provinces they are concerned with filling their vessels with grain and food and their purses with silver and do not teach the people anything. It is surely not seemly for the honor of the Torah that learned men should act like beggars." 68

"In the Introduction to the book 'Eitz Haim' the author declares that one of the reasons for the length of our exile lies in the fact that Torah is not studied for its own sake, with no ulterior motive. 'Especially in our generation has the Torah become a spade whereby to dig, and many of the learned men who excell in their studies are only interested in the reward. They are interested with the emoluments which the rabbinical office brings them and are not concerned with improving the populace.'" 69

In connection with the desire of the learned ones for prestige, Fuchowitzer reserved some of his sharpest criticisms for those who neglected moralistic teaching in favor of casuistry. "The desire of the learned men for honor leads them into a false type of exposition. These are the insincere preachers who have increased in our midst and have chosen a crooked path. They play tricks with their knowledge and waste time by seeking to establish a chain of talmudic and midrashic quotations which shall link together the most disparate subjects. To any right-thinking person it is obvious that there is not the slightest connection between the various topics, but these liars go on blithely weaving puffs of air until they have woven a garment of wind and have suspended mountains of exposition by a hair. They stand the vessel on its head and befuddle human reason with these perversions until we lose all sense of reality. And this type of study is called 'vandin' (Yiddish for turning), in which contradictory subjects are united by means of subtle twists and turns." 70

"It is stated in the 'Zerah Berekh Hadash,' 'Go out and observe how our predecessors may they rest in peace have warned us and complained bitterly against the mode of hilluk (casuistry) in the study of Torah. Earlier generations used

it merely as a divertissement to amuse the students in order to encourage them to pursue the true study more diligently, for they realized that the hearts of the students did not measure up to the logic of their forebears. Nevertheless, when the scholars of that generation noticed that the younger scholars were beginning to consider the chaff as wheat, and that they had ceased to seek the true meaning but sought only after vain speculations, they enacted ordinances and condemned that type of study until it was reduced in popular esteem and diminished. From this it may be deduced that those who are zealous for the Lord and His Torah are required to abolish this absolutely false type of study. With our own eyes we have seen that from the time that this confusing study has penetrated into our land great bedlam had arisen and a terrible darkness has descended upon us; troubles ^{compounded} ~~compounded~~ and tragedies uncounted, blood flowing like water until there was no one to bury the dead, and many thousands of people murdered, so that of many only a few have remained. Will it not be universally admitted that these troubles were brought about in large part because this type of study has given strength to insincere men thereby providing slanderers with unlimited opportunities to kill such a large amount of the population? This is his statement in brief." ⁷¹

Although he quoted the above statement with approval and relish, Puchowitz^r himself took a somewhat more balanced view. "In truth, this mode of study has been advanced in our generation by many eternally great scholars, who were and still are engaged in penetrating to the depths of the law with their broad logic and subtle understanding fortified by encyclopedic knowledge and keenness of intellect. By this method they are able to interpret many verses and midrashim in the manner of the Talmud. Certainly these interpretations are true. However, it has come about that men of lesser stature have embarked upon this method in order to demonstrate that they are as important in their own eyes as these great men and comparable to them. These epigones say things which they know are not true." ⁷²

The distinction which Puchowitzer drew here is a valid one. Lauter-

bach has commented in another connection that "despite the many far-fetched and pointless interpretations provided by casuistry, there are instances in which this method seizes upon an accurate interpretation out of a large number of possibilities."⁷³

Puchowitzer himself abhorred far-fetched casuistry. "Most of the learned authors in our generation have set themselves to demonstrate in their works the keenness of their intellects and the extent of their knowledge. They wish to show the nation and its leaders the greatness of their glory and their accomplishments in casuistry and speculation. Rare are those who compose books and homiletical volumes which are relevant to the needs of the generation, to show the masses the path of life so necessary for them. In this way the Torah is forgotten in Israel and there is no leader, no one to support and strengthen us. In the course of time matters are becoming worse, and every day we become poorer and more degraded. Every person is hungry for bread and thirsty for water and has no desire to hear the words of the Torah. They forsake life eternal for the life of the moment. Even the commandments which they do perform are those which involve no effort and they are very weak in their studies of the Torah. They excuse their laxity by citing the popular adage, 'You can find time to study the Torah but you cannot find food and clothing.'⁷⁴"

Having placed the responsibility for verbal chastisement on the rabbis and leaders of the communities and chided them for their neglect of duty, Puchowitzer did exempt a rabbi from delivering exhortations personally if that dignitary were honestly convinced that he was an ineffective speaker. "If the rabbi says that chastisement will not be accepted from him, and especially one who has not been uncompromisingly rigid in his admonitions from the beginning of his career, he should not attempt to preach ethics himself. It has been proven that one who has started to speak in a certain style cannot suddenly change, for the people will not be disposed to hearken to his words."⁷⁵ For this problem there was,

in his opinion, a very simple solution. "Let him appoint another in his place. It is written in Maimonides' Code, 'It is necessary to appoint in every community a great and pious wise man and sage who shall chastise the populace and return it to repentance.'"

76

This brought Puchowitzer to a subject very close to his interest, the necessity for a professional class of moralistic preachers. He advised smaller communities to consider the oratorical qualities of a rabbi before retaining him (because he would have to fulfill that function) and suggested that larger settlements appoint specially qualified men for the task. "It is advisable for those who fear God's word that they specifically stipulate when hiring a rabbi that he should watch over the morals of the city. Let him preach words of chastisement and ethics, daily or at least on the Sabbath because on the Sabbath the people are free from labor. However, if the rabbi is unable to guard morals and chastise the people let him be certain to appoint another in his place.... Especially should a separate preacher be appointed in a place where there is no lack of funds and the pious citizens are able to afford the expense."

77

Puchowitzer considered the sermon a very important part of the service. "And behold, we have been reminded of this fact also by Moses our Teacher may he rest in peace, as it is said in the Midrash, 'And Moses gathered.' Our teachers, the masters of interpretation, commented, 'The Holy One Blessed be He said to Moses, 'Establish great congregations and preach before them the laws of the Sabbath, in order that future generations may learn to gather congregations every Sabbath and to flock into houses of learning to study. Show Israel from the Torah the laws of that which is ritually forbidden and that which is permitted in order that My great name be not degraded among my children. From that time forward Moses ordered that the Jews should listen to sermons at the appropriate time -- the laws of Passover at Passover time, the laws of Shemini Azeret at that season, and the laws of Sukkot at Sukkot time. Moses said to Israel, 'If you will follow this regimen it

will be accounted as if you have enthroned God in the world. 72

"This," continued Puchowitzer, "is the basis for the custom in many communities to secure preachers for every Sabbath to hold forth in the synagogues and houses of learning. Often the greatest of our rabbis, the sages of the generation, personally deliver sermons at appropriate occasions throughout the year. 78

In the same vein, Puchowitzer spoke of the contents of sermons. "The preacher must be careful to follow the verse of Moses, 'To instruct and to improve,' and not to confine himself to Bible interpretations and novella. The commentators understand the maxim ~~inaction is most important~~ 'Not study is most important but action is most important,' in the sense that a person should not make his interpretations the feature of his sermons in order to demonstrate his own greatness, but that he should preach on matters which lead to action, his sermon should bid the people return from their evil ways and improve their behavior. 79

He addressed this caution particularly to the young scholars who would appear from the following statement to have occupied the pulpits for sermonizing. "These, our words, are an open admonition to all preachers, particularly to those who have not yet been ordained. The fledglings whose eyes have not yet been opened often set themselves to preach in public, their rear facing the Ark of God, and their entire intention is only to win a name for themselves. Every sermon which contains no moral teaching and explanation of the Law and only a ~~minimum~~ minimum of interpretations, has no validity. This thought is expressed in the 'Mikdashim.' 80

'One whose voice is heard only in Torah and Talmud and not in morals kindles God's anger.' 81

He felt that these younger men were led astray by the example of the learned ones. "It is clear that the learned ones must be careful to heed this warning so that mistakes should not arise through their actions. It is said in the Mishna, 'Mistakes in study raise transgression' and the Midrash Samuel interprets this maxim to mean that what the learned one does accidentally is punishable as if it were done intentionally because others who have seen him commit the act will believe that he did it intentionally and out of esteem for him, will feel

free to commit the act."

In view of all the dangers and difficulties of preaching, Puchowitzer advised, as we have said, that experts be retained for this purpose. "We have been advised by Maimonides that a suitable person be retained in Jewish communities to chastise the people. In our age, when the sword had raged and few are left of the many, it is important that men who have excelled in this study be appointed to admonish the people."

83

The basic prerequisite for a preacher was, of course, that his own character be unsoiled and unimpeachable. He quotes the SHIAH to that effect. "And it is written in the SHIAH that the preacher who holds forth in public should be certain to preach for the sake of heaven...and every ethical preacher who attempts to improve others should be certain to observe the precept, 'Improve yourself first and then you can improve others.'" ⁸⁴ "It is incumbent upon the elders and ~~preachers~~ teachers, the sheperds of Israel, to appoint in every community a great wise man and sage who has been pious from his youthful days and is beloved of the leaders. This sage shall admonish the populace and teach repentance. In our generation most of the learned authors have striven to emphasize in their books the keenness of their minds and the extent of their knowledge, to display before the leaders and the people their mental adornments and their abilities in casuistry and speculation. Very rare is the sort of writer who pens a tract which appeals to the person who has taken piety into his heart and wishes to know the path of life. ⁸⁵ Such works are very necessary in our generation."

Puchowitzer was concerned with the form and style of the sermon. "R. Meir used to divide his lectures into three parts, one part was legal discussions, the next was homily, and the third was parables. This is explained to mean that one part of the sermon should make the laws clear, one part should interpret biblical verses, and the third part should deal with moral behavior. Two points require elucidation. Firstly, why should a sermon be arranged in this order --

first legal discussion, then homily and parables? Secondly, ~~while~~ it was certainly the obligation of R. Meir to instruct them in the law and ethics as we have explained in our sermon on 'Responsibilities,' p. 8b basing ourselves on the Talmud and Midrash, but why did he also include homilies as part of the sermon? These questions may be answered by reference to the maxim, 'Not study is most important, but action is most important.'" Puchowitz then cited the interpretation of this maxim which we have previously stated. He then ~~came~~^{went} on to say, "It is apparent from the Mishna that, although inspiring people to right action is most important, novel interpretations of the sermon should also be included in the sermon. Now we can see that R. Meir understood the Mishna in the same sense as the later commentators, and therefore when he preached of laws and morals he also included interpretations. Nevertheless, it might be asked, if that which appertains to practice is most important, why should not the entire sermon concern itself with that which is most important? Furthermore, the commentaries have interpreted the admonition of not having self-aggrandizement as one of the purposes of the sermon simply to mean that one should preach sincerely. That is not sufficiently strong. We know that even a touch of corruption ruins the sermon. Those who are insincere are as the rabble which followed the Jews out of Egypt. In our time they are often considered heroes and illustrious men. In answer to ~~all~~ all these questions we must understand that one who wishes to chastise the people must also include a certain amount of interpretations in his sermon in order that he may be considered with respect. If he coins interpretations only for this purpose and not to demonstrate his greatness, then his intentions are pure and valid. However, these interpretations should always be considered chaff as compared with the grain of moral instruction. R. Meir followed this procedure. First he preached on laws because the simplest meaning of 'action' is the fulfillment of the commandments, as the SHIAH has said, 'The preacher must inform those who are not well acquainted with the Torah the laws which they are required to know.' Because this is the simplest meaning of the all-important element in the sermon-- action --

he spoke of laws first and did not precede them with parables. Then, before he preached of ethics which is also obligatory according to the Mishna, he spoke in interpretations in order to show that he was a man to be respected. Now this is a warning to most of our contemporary preachers who do not mention any moral or ethical instruction in their sermons, or if they occasionally touch upon these subjects they do so casually and the morals and ethics appear as nothing compared with the interpretations. According to what we have said, morals and ethics are the main point of a sermon and interpretations should be used sparingly only in order to establish respect." ⁸⁶ Puchowitzer referred many times to this dictum of R. Meir.

Attending mussar sermons was, of course, also highly recommended and carried demonstrable rewards. "One of the foundations of perfection in observing the Torah and commandments and doing repentance is to hearken to the words of chastisement and ethics by the preachers." ⁸⁷ "The rewards for listeners are four in number

First, they will avoid the necessity for harsh chastisements and severe penances. Second, they will be able with constant application to be numbered among the righteous ones. Third, they will be blessed by God. Fourth, they will not lack material gains." ⁸⁸ "Good blessings will be bestowed upon those who hear chastisements.

Despite the benefits which listening to ethical preachments brings to the masses, very few of the wise men of Israel and the great men of the generation seem to be concerned with benefitting the masses, to show the people the right path and proper behavior, ^{even though} ~~despite the fact that~~ this duty is particularly incumbent upon the leaders." ⁸⁹

In his discussions of preachers and preaching Puchowitzer obviously bore himself and his own activities in mind. He struck a pose of modesty although, as we shall see, he took pride in his sermonical craftsmanship and qualifications. "I realize that many of the great ones have asked and continue to ask, 'Who and what is this man who dares to raise his head to teach the sages, the understanding ones, the wise and prominent ones, how they should conduct themselves?' Therefore I freely

admit my own inadequacy, as its is said, 'Acknowledge your faults before others do..' I anticipate these objections and say that I am aware that I have not garnered sufficient wisdom and understanding to give light to the blind: certainly in comparasion with the learned I lag behind: there is no doubt that their learning and good deeds are performed with a sincere mind: none of my words need of them remind: And if in their youth they have committed sins of any kind: with them I dare not fault to find: in true repentance their souls they bind: before God for whom they pined. It is not these whom I have ventured to criticize. I direct my words toward those who are of lesser stature than I. They are truly small and yet in their own eyes they are understanding and wise and all their actions are just. They blunder about all their days and do not realize that they are foolish and require the mercy of He who Dwells on High. We have been told that these miscreants should be scolded, even a hundred times. The bit of chastisement which I have directed to the sages of the generation was included not because I am adequate to find fault with them, but I permitted myself this liberty because they have it within their power to improve the generation. I find support in the words of the Zohar, 'By your life I swear that if the heads of one city repent, thereby bringing their own community to repentance, the exile will be ended.' 90

In the same vein he says, "It is actually more appropriate that those who are greater than myself should deliver mussar, and upon them lies the duty of consummating this work. They should be the ones to return the populace from sin and to point out the correct path which should be traveled in life. However, the zeal of the Lord burns my innards like fire when I bethink the complaints which have been lodged against our leaders. Therefore I have determined that where there is desecration of the Divine Name one does not apportion honor to age or wisdom and wait until a greater person has received a heavenly decree to proceed to his appointed task." 91

These disclaimers may be considered to have been merely formulaic protestations

of modesty, for it is evident that Puchowitzer considered his own sermons exemplars of proper style and content. In describing his sermonic method he informs us that he followed the model of R. Meir, whom he had proposed as an example for all preachers. "Because the preacher should present novel interpretations in order to gain the respect of the congregation, I open all my sermons with pleasing interpretations, although I trust that teachings of morality and ethics proceed even from those interpretations. This I follow with expositions of law and ethics. When I speak of my treatment of law I have in mind those regulations which are generally neglected. Some of these laws are obligatory upon every person and are specifically mentioned in the Codes. Nevertheless they are now generally overlooked, partly because they have been so frequently violated that they are now considered permitted despite the fact that people are well aware of the stringent written regulations concerning them, as it is said, 'One man transgresses and the next man considers the matter permitted.' Some of these laws are also neglected because there is a deficiency in the knowledge of some commandments and stringent ethical prohibitions. For the most part these latter type of laws are mentioned in the Talmud or the Zohar or the works of the ARI and later ethical treatises. These laws are obligatory upon all those who are able to perform them. I

"I always try to present my material in a brief form, but have occasionally gone into greater detail where that was indicated. My greatest service to the listener was in assembling expositions of laws and ethics which are explained in various scattered and dispersed sources which not every person is able to understand, nor are these volumes accessible everywhere. When I speak of ^{my} treatment of ethics I have in mind my practice to append to each subject a list of warnings and punishments visited upon violators of the law. These punishments apply both in this world and in the hereafter."

92

He apologetically grants that he has himself yielded in some measure to the circe call of casuistry, but he rationalized those lapses. "If in some of my sermons

on repentance and other sermons I have occasionally deviated from my goal and not provided thoughts which arouse a person to Torah and commandments, I have included them for the reason noted in 'Sefer Hassidim' par. 170, 'Anyone who fails to transmit the wisdom revealed to him by the Holy One Blessed be He when it is possible for him to do so, is guilty of theft.'⁹³

With regard to the style of presenting mussar, Puchowitzer penned a very interesting critique of certain books of this genre. "And behold, books of chastisement are a great need of the generation. See what has been written by the ARI on this subject. 'Let one take care to do at least one reading every day in 'Reshit Hokmah.'"⁹⁴ And the Maggid⁹⁵ said to R. Joseph Karo that he should read a part of 'Hobat HaLibabot'⁹⁶ daily because in his time the 'Reshit Hokmah' had not yet been written. But now that we have been privileged with a volume which is all-encompassing, namely, 'Reshit Hokmah' we should cleave to it. And if R. Joseph Karo who had already at that time composed his commentary 'Kesef Mishnah' on Maimonides and 'Beth Yosef' on the 'Turim' and had been privileged to be taught the hidden Torah (mysticism) by the Maggid, was advised by the Maggid not to rely on himself but to read a book of piety every day, how much the more necessary is it for us to follow this practice. X

"However, the 'Reshit Hokmah' itself is not adequate in our time for many reasons. Firstly, it often dwells on a subject at such great length that it is difficult even for scholars in Talmud and Codes to follow the thought to its conclusion. Certainly for business men who are occupied with making a living this is impossible. Secondly, in the aforementioned volume, the apparent (rational) and hidden (mystical) are intermingled, so that when one who is poor in understanding happens across the mystical portions of the book he is frightened and retreats, not looking any further and abandoning the entire work. Even if the reader is learned, but has not conducted himself properly, he will not be privileged to enter into the inner holiness, the science of Kabbala, which is the most heavily guarded of all precious things, unless he has thoroughly prepared himself before entering the gate. Thus it will come

about that the sins of such a learned man will prevent him ever studying the 'Reshit Hokmah' and it will lie in an obscure corner. Thirdly, the author of that work does not mention many obligatory regulations which are now being neglected because of the corruption and sin which has become widespread in our generation and in our land.

"After 'Reshit Hokmah' we were privileged with the book, 'Shnei Lukhot HaBrit.' ^{97a}
It is imbued and impregnated with the love of God and zeal for his holy Torah. Surely the man who immerses himself in this work will be blessed with length of days and a true understanding of the will of the Holy One Blessed be He. The author of this book saw fit to direct the Sons of Israel upon the proper path of life which they should follow. However, he dwelt at great length upon difficult interpretations of rational and mystical Torah so that the prescriptions for right conduct in the service of God, Blessed be His Name, and in Torah, are lost in the welter of homilies. Also with regard to ethical teaching he was often too voluminous in some cases, and in other instances he shortened his treatment of topics when he should have expanded them. Some of the topics presented in this shortened form represent breaches in the wall which were not as glaring in his day as in ours. It is stated in that book, 'As our bitter exile becomes longer ~~and~~ the thrashing of the snake (of evil) become stronger in each generation.' ^{97b}"

Although Puchowitzer did not venture to criticize the "Shulkhan Arukh" forthrightly, declaring that "it is desirable for every person to make the study of ⁹⁸ the 'Shulkhan Arukh' the source and foremost phase of all his studies," he indicated that his work provided many necessary supplements to that code. "Most people are so occupied from Sunday to Sabbath seeking a livelihood that they cannot spare the time to read an extended version of the law. In addition, there are many laws ⁹⁹ which have been promulgated since the days of the 'Shulkhan Arukh.'"

credited
He ~~credits~~ those of his predecessors who ~~have~~ attempted to keep the masses abreast of new legal developments, but found fault with their works. "And many authors in

our days have felt impelled to correct this matter by recording the later laws. Among them are the following: 'Ateret Zvi,'¹⁰⁰ 'Nahalat Zvi,'¹⁰¹ 'Maginei Aretz,'¹⁰² and others which have reported the new laws promulgated in responsa and books. However, these books have not achieved their purpose with the masses because of two handicaps. Firstly, they included many laws from the Talmud which are no longer applicable in our generation and in our land. Secondly, they stated the law without giving the reasons. Thirdly, they are understandable only to those who are advanced in their studies because these authors cite evidences and casuistic reasoning too voluminously. Finally, they do not cite the new laws which are to be found in the Zohar, the writings of the ARI, and the SHLAH to any appreciable extent."¹⁰³

He praised the efforts of Mordecai Jaffe to explain the laws, but also found flaws in his work. "The 'Shulkhan Arukh' presented the laws without giving the reasons for them. The author of the 'Lebush' complained about this practice in the Introduction to his work. 'And behold the 'Shulkhan Arukh' in its knowledge and understanding of the entire province of the Talmud and Codes realized clearly the reason for each and every law by rote, and did not find it necessary to give more than topic headings and brief synopses of the law. For many who are not at the proper level this means studying the law without knowing the reason, which is like eating food without salt.' In our dire and dark days, however, even his work which set about rectifying the fault is too lengthy and discursive."¹⁰⁴

The preacher also ~~mentioned~~^{mentioned} with approval ethical works in the Yiddish language. "In our generation the translation of religious books in the Ashkenazik tongue has gained in popularity. The masses who are not skillful at study because they did not receive a thorough training in their youth, many of them never ~~having~~ having been educated in anything higher than the Bible, are able to use these books and fulfill with them their obligation to study."¹⁰⁵

With regard to sermons in Yiddish he made the following comment: "The ARI has written that it is forbidden to speak of mundane matters on the Sabbath even ~~in~~ in

the Holy Tongue except for absolutely necessary purposes, and that should be done in Hebrew. Nevertheless, when he spoke to his comrades he spoke in a secular language in order that they might the ~~better~~ ^{letter} understand him. On this condition it is permissible to speak a secular language even on the Sabbath." 106

Puchowitzer evidently saw a necessity to defend the mussar approach not only against the criticisms of the elite, but also against a religious criticism. "There are some who claim that an individual may achieve salvation only by observing the laws of the Talmud and Codes, and need not concern himself with the books of piety and ethics. In truth it is obligatory to observe these injunctions as well, and salvation can be lost, God Forbid, if they are neglected. The only reason that the authors of the Codes did not place the obligation expressly upon every man in Israel to observe the fine points of the law which are given in the books of ethics and piety lies in the fact that most of the public cannot observe them. But one who is able to observe them and does not desire to do so, let him know that the chain is around his neck to do and to observe and he is not free to cast the chain off his neck." 107

Having selected extracts from Puchowitzer's writings to illustrate his viewpoint on ethical preaching, we may now proceed to place this viewpoint in its social context. We begin by considering his antipathy to pilpul.

Lauterbach has defined pilpul in these words. "The word is derived from the verb pilpel (lit., to spice, to season, and in a metaphorical sense, to dispute violently). The pilpulistic method of study was pursued especially under two forms after the sixteenth century. In the one, two apparently widely divergent halachic themes were placed in juxtaposition and a logical connection between them was sought by means of ingenious interpretations and explanations, but in such a way that the connective thread between them appeared only at the end of the treatise. This was the SDerasha.' In the other form an apparently homogeneous form was dissected into several parts, which were then again combined into an artistic whole. 108 This was the so-called 'Hilluk' (analysis, dissection)."

Polish talmudic discipline operated through this method, and it was one of the instruments for accomplishing the social function of rabbinism. Baron is favorably impressed by pilpul as a means of developing the law. "Equilibrium between continuity and change could the more readily be maintained because of the nature of Jewish law and its administration. It was clearly a law based on cases and precedents created by the innumerable courts of the Dispersion, rather than on logical principles. What it lacked in logical consistency, as compared with the magnificent structure of Roman law, it more than made up by adaptability and workability.... Jewish students of extensive precedents, usually unfamiliar with historical background and often consciously careless of it, had to find their way amidst conflicting and often contradictory decisions. They had at their disposal, however, a vast array of arguments appropriate to each case and could use their judgement and training in dialectical thinking to reach a decision suitable to the age and environment. Thus equipped with a law which combined millennial continuity in fundamental with great elasticity in details, the Jewish people was prepared to face constant changes in the outside world without losing its identity." ¹⁶⁹ "In historic retrospect, one must admit that this method was intrinsically germane to talmudic categories of thinking, that its vagaries are excesses such as may affect any advanced juristic or philosophical speculation, and that its main shortcomings consisted in the effort to train an entire people, rather than a small elite of jurists and philosophers, in such a complex way of thinking." ¹⁷⁰ Such charming generalizations, sweeping over vast tracts of space and time, are neither historically false nor useful.

A more illuminating evaluation of pilpul and its function in Polish Jewish society is given by I. Sossis. ¹⁷¹ We summarize this viewpoint.

Casuistic development of the talmudic legal code was the device whereby rabbinism was able to serve its social function. This system was directly only slightly influenced by the surrounding culture, unlike Jewish learning in Spain and Italy. The general culture of Poland in the sixteenth century was largely

derivative, crude, and not widespread. Into this situation talmudism entered as an already well-developed system (Baron's milenial continuity!) operating within an autonomous political structure. We observe only minor traces of secular learning in Polish Jewish thought, despite the fact that some of the rich young men were sent abroad to study medicine. From the warnings concerning the "influence of Aristotle in the yeshivot" ¹¹⁸ it is evident that there was contact with secular philosophy, but it was a slight contact indeed. As a matter of fact, non-talmudic knowledge was consciously and rigidly excluded from Jewish Instruction.

Even the Bible, the basic written source of the religion, was accorded piecemeal and cursory attention. The statement that many renowned scholars learned their Bible from the Talmud may contain more truth than humor. Sossis believes that the Bible was neglected because it is, in great part, an expression of protest against the dislocations of a society which was changing from agrarianism to commercialism. As such, it is suitable for a discontented peasantry. Biblical quotations have been inscribed on the banners of their revolutions. For the dominant commercial and exploiter class of Jews in sixteenth and seventeenth century Poland, however, the material was not appropriate. It must need have been rendered as inconspicuous as possible through neglect and reinterpretation.

The task of reinterpretation, initiated by the Talmud itself for historic reasons, was carried further by pilpul. By twisting and distorting the words of the Bible the dominant class rationalized its control of the communal organizations, shifted an inordinate tax burden upon the poor, and added to its wealth by charging exorbitant interest and foreclosing mortgages.

Mastery of such a valuable social instrument was rewarded with prestige and power. In Eastern European Jewish society, erudition meant only talmudic erudition; study meant study of the Talmud, Commentaries, and Codes. In order to be respected, one had to be expert in pilpul. Not infrequently decisions based on these mental acrobatics were reversed by the same process.

Pilpul also reflected the cruelly competitive nature of Polish Jewish society. There was constant strife between individuals as well as between communities, as the annals of the Councils show, for trade and finance advantages. The apportionment of taxes was a special point of contention. When Jews entered the synagogue this competitiveness did not cease. It was carried on intellectually in querulous casuistic wrangling, and endless debates waxed over the division of synagogue honors. The position of one's seat in the house of worship, the particular portion of the Torah upon which one was called to pronounce the blessing, the order in which the privilege of carrying the Torah at Simhat Torah services--these, and a host of other synagogue procedures were the objects of the same type of shrewd maneuvering which was carried on in the business world.

Such an evaluation of pilpul enables us to understand many of the allusions in Puchowitzer to the fact that scholars embraced that discipline for the sake of the prestige it would bring them. As practitioners and exponents of that instrument whereby the ideological tone of the community was harmonized with the interests of the dominant class, these scholars could expect to gain honor, fame, and glory, to be considered eligible for marriage into the upper class or for appointment to a lucrative rabbinical post.

Puchowitzer struck at the crux of the situation when he decried the lack of interest of the scholars in the welfare of the masses. In an oligarchic society, public acclaim conveys no great advantage. It is the small ruling circle which must be impressed, and that group would be favorably disposed toward the individual who displayed sufficient learning and subtlety to give promise of being useful to its interests. For learning and subtlety was required in order to interpret, reinterpret, and misinterpret the law convincingly as the situation required.

Although Puchowitzer ^{made} ~~made~~ his own distaste for pilpul quite clear, his formulation is much closer to an objective evaluation of the method than that, of the "Zerah Berakh Hadash" which he quoted. In this respect he displayed, once again, the middle position which he maintained between the oligarchy and the masses. He ^{was} ~~is~~ very gingerly in his treatment of the highest level of the rabbis, repeat-

edly emphasizing that they ^{were} ~~are~~ not guilty of the excesses and extremes which he castigated.

Does this mean that Puchowitzer rejected pilpul on idealistic grounds and had no class interest in the matter? Whatever his personal qualities of moderation may have been, his preference for musar over pilpul was also a product of his social alignment.

First it must be noted that he did not condemn the method outright. To the contrary, he discerned virtue in it if it were not carried to extremes. He confessed using it himself, excusing it on the grounds that his motive was pure and altruistic. Those whom he condemned might reply in his language, that if they withheld their divinely revealed wisdom they would also be guilty of theft.

In this respect Puchowitzer spoke the thoughts of people who were by no means completely cut off from rabbinic culture. He mentioned those who had not progressed in their education beyond the study of the Bible slightly, implying that most of his listeners were above that level. At the same time his listeners were not so advanced in the law that they could read involved legal texts easily. More important, the sinking middle class which struggled to eke out an existence from "Sunday to the Sabbath," had neither time, patience, nor social ^{utility} ~~utility~~ for the complexities of pilpul. For this group, a simplified version of the legal codes, a more interesting mode of presentation, material relevant to ~~their~~ everyday concerns, and the underlying optimistic comfort that salvation was at hand and waiting -- all these elements in Puchowitzer's approach made his preaching attractive and useful.

The preacher rationalized his attacks on the leaders of the community for neglecting these elements by pleading that they were responsible for the entire group. To a certain extent, we can understand that he found it wise to soften the blow of his criticism of that group which had the power to disenfranchise his professional activities. At the same time, we must also remember his ambivalent attitude toward the elite. He was himself connected with the learned class, if in a subservient role, and did not desire to forfeit his standing. Like the members of

the middle class whom he addressed and represented, he tacitly accepted the value system of his society and would not have denied himself the prestige which his erudition conferred upon him.

Yet he was unable to restrain a basic antagonism toward the elite. In the little vignette of a rich man reviling him in public we catch a glimpse of shock and resentment which goes deep to the roots of the relationship between the haves and the have-nots. In his repeated and almost obsessive stress on the responsibility of the leaders, we detect a hatred which refuses to be turned aside by polite rationalizations.

Within the limits of his background and upbringing, Puchowitzer seems to us to represent that class which stirred with discontent against the order of things, against a sense of alienation from its nurturing culture and ideology. The oppressed middle class found vicarious satisfaction in his condemnation of the chiefest weapon and adornment of the upper class -- casuistry -- in favor of the simpler form of devotion -- mussar.

This underlying antipathy was naturally returned by the upper class. They intuitively felt the dangers of this protest, and discouraged it. Where it was possible to rail against a maggid because he had not mastered casuistry, they used the deprecatory language of the Council ordinances of 1623 and 1695. But Puchowitzer could not be so easily disposed. He was able to fend for himself in the realm of casuistry, and was sufficiently involved in the dominant ideology to touch its most sensitive points. Their most effective weapon against him was silence. Again and again Puchowitzer pleaded for them to foster a special class of competent mekhikim in the communities, only to plaintively remark in the Introduction to his last work, "The leaders and shepherds before whom I have spoken of this problem all agree with me, yet nothing is done to rectify the wrong." 192a

Speaking of a later development in ethical preaching Rassin ^{said} ~~says~~, "The earlier type of mussar concerned itself mainly with establishing a more human approach to the Torah and mystical literature and was still somewhat removed from the lower

masses, but it was the foundation of the later expression of protest and even re-
vult against the authority of the autocrats." ¹⁸⁸⁶

Sossis points out another aspect of ethical preaching. "As conditions deteriorated, the lower layers of the Jewish community moved farther away from the talmudic aristocracy. The talmudists ordinarily conducted their studies individually. They joined together primarily for disputation. This form of spiritual activity is a reflection of individualism and economic competition which prevailed in the class which produced the scholars. Individualistic rationalism, cold-bloodedness, dry egotism, which prevailed in social relationships, were carried over into the spiritual area. Among the masses of common folk, on the other hand, there was always a feeling of the need for mutual assistance, collective help, and common sympathy. These characteristics were also true for its spiritual search. The masses banded together in societies to help each other in study." ¹⁸⁹² If this strikes us as a trifle romanticized, we cannot completely discount it as a dimension of reality. Puchowitzer taught such a group, persons of "lesser stature," and was welcomed by them, in contrast to the supercilious treatment he received at the hands of the upper classes.

From Puchowitzer's comments on preaching we also derive a picture of the intense interest he displayed in that form and the great importance he attached to it. His attitude was not unmingled with personal pride in his own talents. His snide remarks on the efforts of the younger men, "fledglings," smacks of the contempt of the expert for the unskilled craftsman. We may surmise that his emphasis on preaching, aside from its social basis and religious rationalization, proceeded also from the fact that he personally excelled in it.

Returning to the preacher's works, we find that he discerned other expressions of pride and selfishness among the wealthy. "There are great ones who are called heroes and have splendid reputations but they are insincere. Among them I number that group which says, 'Come, let us build for us a city and enlarge our name thereby.' They build synagogues and houses of study wherein they place scrolls of the Torah and holy jewelry, but it is all done insincerely." ¹⁸⁹⁴ At a later

period in Eastern European Jewish history, Levitats informs us that "usually the rich either had private chapels in their own yards or jointly maintained one for their exclusive use." ^{112c} As for the seventeenth century, this same practice would seem to have been in vogue judging by Honik's listing of seven separate "shtiblach" ^{112f} (chapels) in the name of individuals in Pinsk of 1692. One of these individuals, ^{Jew in} Lazar Kalmonovitch, was the wealthiest and most influential ~~man~~ in the city. It is an interesting commentary on the oligarchic nature of the communal organizations that no regulations governing the private chapels of the rich can be found similar to the enactments later made concerning the various worker's syangogues.

Another disreputable practice of the rich which Puchowitzer singled out for condemnation was the conduct of the burial societies. "It is a practice in many communities that the officers of the holy (burial) societies arbitrarily set the fees which must be paid for the burial of the dead. There is no proper proportion between the fees set for the poor and for the rich. I have personally witnessed them favoring one and dealing unjustly with another. They favor their relatives and friends, as well as those who have power in the community. This is a very, very degraded practice. According to the notes of the RAMA on the 'Shulkhan Arukh,' they are thieves who are not eligible to be trustworthy witnesses. If ~~they~~ they negotiate with one who has voting privileges they generally come to an agreement because that person may possibly succeed them. But the voters should not conduct themselves in this manner because ~~all~~ all the members of the community are equal partners and the officers are not the Lord's prophets. Despite the many ordinances which have been issued regulating the handling of funds for a cemetery, the evil practices flourish and one who protests is not able to obtain protection either ^{112g} through these ordinances or through the courts."

There are two significant complaints in the above source. The first concerns the exploitation of the monopoly which the societies held over the mortuary industry, employing it as a private enterprise rather than as a public utility. There is also here a complaint against the oligarchic constitution of the kahal

which limited voting privileges to certain members of the community and gave the others practically no voice in its affairs at all. Dubnow notes of this period, "The elections (of the kahal) were indirect, taking place through a limited number of electors, and only persons of fairly high financial standing, such as property owners or large ^{taxpayers} ~~businessmen~~, were allowed to be candidates. As a matter of fact, intellectual qualifications were no less valued than financial standing, scholars occupying an honorable place in the communal council. The kahal administration was thus oligarchic in its character. The lower and poorer classes had no representation in it and as a result their interests frequently suffered." ¹¹³

It is obvious from the foregoing excerpt from Puchowitzer that the oligarchy was not quite a government of philosopher kings working with wisdom for the common weal. From his complaint on the cemetery issue we realize very practically and realistically that the control of the communal organizations by the ruling class not only expedited the exploiting role of that class in general Polish society, but also was an instrument of internal exploitation.

The prime abuse of kahal authority was the inequitable distribution of the tax burden. Puchowitzer noted the problem. "It is fitting that the sages of the generation should open their eyes concerning the vows taken every year by the heads of communities and judges and officers and other elected officials that all their actions would be undertaken for the sake of Heaven. Properly qualified members of the communities should be designated for these posts. Our eyes have seen that by and large they choose their friends and relatives when there are better qualified people living in the communities. Also, notice should be taken of the fact that they swear to allocate taxes properly, not laying a heavy burden on one and lightening the burden on another, but we see that they sometimes favor their friends and those who have power." ¹¹⁴

Since the tax-collecting competence of the kahal was its primary function with regard to the Polish government, its organization of that function was supremely

important in its relationships with its constituents. The abuse of that power was the keynote of its decline and eventual collapse. Sessis describes the problem.

"According to Jewish tradition the communal organization was supposed to express the will of the entire Jewish population. In general, however, the economic weight of the upper class brought it total hegemony over elections. A family which was wealthy and aristocratic was found to hold the reins of leadership over many generations. Although the officers of the kahal were elected, the circle of voters was restricted to the larger taxpayers. The poorer elements and the workers were often ignored in the voting, and when they did have a franchise they would ordinarily follow the lead of the aristocrats, who overawed them with economic power, erudition, and by the fact that they were often closely related to the greatest rabbis.

"As long as the economic life of the Jews developed peacefully, patriarchal tendencies were still evident in the kahal administration. In the seventeenth century, especially in the latter half, the economic crisis was sharpened. The struggle for existence and competition in trade, arrendan, etc. waxed stronger. Together with the crisis went wars and anti-Jewish pogroms. All this led to the increase of regular and special taxes. Kahal obligations and debts grew with the vastly increased expenditures for bribes and ransoms. The yoke fell increasingly heavier on the broad masses of the people. On this ground there arose a strong
115
opposition to the kahal leadership."

If Puchowitzer saw his age as one of opportunity for repentance, he saw a need for repentance. He ventured the gloomy prediction that "if we do not erect fences and limits to the evil-doings of our generation, I fear that our faith may collapse entirely, God forbid, for our eyes see that the breach is widened in each succeeding
116
generation." Therefore it was his stated intention to investigate the

"emptiness, the foolishness, and the evil which are so rampant in our generation
117
and which have brought down divine wrath." His task was to "point out sins

and to direct sinners on the proper path." Of sins he found no dearth. His discussion of these sins is significant, because he dealt with transgressions which were directly brought about by social circumstances.

One of the sins which agitated him greatly was the desecration of the Sabbath. "The evil practice of selling liquor to the gentiles on the Sabbath has increased in many communities. There is a popular misconception that if a Jew does not actually touch the money he is permitted to transact such business. This mistake has come about for two reasons. Firstly, owners of an arendau are permitted to sell spirits on the Sabbath through their gentile servants, according to the Orakh Hayyim, 124:6/ Secondly, it is permitted to give a Jew spirits on the Sabbath as he says, 'Fill this vessel for me and we shall make our reckoning after the Sabbath.' On this basis many liberties have been taken, so that at present we find instances in which money is dispatched at the hand of gentile servants, which is doing business pure and simple. Also, some arendars sell their liquor to gentiles personally, in which case they violate the Sabbath ordinances against working and doing business, and they mistakenly believe that if they are but careful not to touch the money it is permitted. In truth it is a sin to do these things, and to sell other wares. Despite the fact that these practices are widespread, the prohibitions on them remain in force."

The preacher was well aware of the economic pressures which caused these violations, which he lamented many times. The manner in which he took cognizance of these pressures is misleading. "And for those who dare to say that they are forced to violate the Sabbath because their livelihood depends upon it, such as those who lease arendas in towns and villages from lords and kings, let them know that this is wrong. Perish the thought that a person is permitted to violate the Sabbath because of livelihood! How can one think of desecrating the Sabbath publicly because of a livelihood, when the 'Zerah Berakh Hadash' has told us that the massacres and destruction which took place in our days in the Kingdom of Poland were caused by

many sins and one of them was the violation of the Sabbath? These are his words.

'And let the evil word disappear from the mouths of the arendars when they claim that the law of the land (in which a Jew lives) is binding. Shall we transgress the faith of our Torah because of the law of the land? Even if one is reduced, God forbid, to beggary he should not desecrate the Sabbath. I must also inform those who are concerned with their money and are willing to violate Sabbath laws because of it, that the profit will not remain in their hands any length of time.'"
120

From these statements it might appear that Puchowitzer discounted these pressures and insisted upon a rigid observance of the Sabbath no matter what the sacrifice. Actually he was considerably more temperate. "In truth it would be best if we observed the Sabbath strictly according to its laws, but in order to provide a livelihood to the Sons of the Covenant I shall restate the techniques recommended by the codes for such a situation."
121 There follows a lengthy presentation of the manner in which a Jew may temporarily relinquish ownership of his business in order that it may be open on the Sabbath.

Puchowitzer once again turned his attention to the leaders. "Most of the Sabbath violations committed by the masses come about through a deficiency of knowledge concerning the laws of the Sabbath. Therefore the sages of the generation are responsible to inform the masses of the correct procedures."
122

Now, his treatment of this problem is very interesting and important. In the presentation we are made aware of the growing number of petty arendars who scraped a livelihood from leased taverns off the estates of the nobility. These small merchants were a far cry from the great financiers and exploiters of the Jewish ~~arrendau~~ arrendau aristocracy. Caught between the excessive demands of the landlords and their own poverty, they could not afford to forego a day's receipts. Initially Puchowitzer would seem to have lacked sympathy for their predicament. Ultimately, however, he

~~proposed to meet~~

proposed methods whereby they could obey the letter of the law and continue to do business on the Sabbath.

This is an interesting example of using hair-splitting legal interpretations to benefit the middle class. Even in this instance, however, Puchowitzer managed to place some of the responsibility on the upper class, depicting the violators as innocently ignorant.

In a later century the rustic merchants, continuing to drift away from Jewish religious and cultural sources, lost most of their contact with law and observances. They did not have the opportunities of the city dwellers for education. Puchowitzer has reported that even in the seventeenth century the weakened kahal ceased to extend its educational services to the rural areas, and looked upon the small arendar only as a source of contributions. Eventually the terms "yishuvnik" (rustic) and "arendar" became synonyms with ignorance and failure to observe the law. When they had reached that stage, even the mild legalism of Puchowitzer would have been beyond them. Then they were ready for Hassidism.

Another transgression which offended Puchowitzer was usury. "Usury is now sanctioned
125 far and wide."

He mentioned various illegal devices which were employed in order to exact interest. "I see fit to mention the practice of some who believe that they may collect interest by having the borrower write a contract for a much larger sum
124 than the loan. This is a violation of the biblical prohibition." "The practice of having the borrower deposit the security of a gentile which he happens to have,
125 and having this security serve as the interest on the new loan, is strictly forbidden."

As in the case of Sabbath desecration, Puchowitzer did not feel that the problem was to forbid the practice altogether, but to assure that it was performed in a manner which would satisfy the letter of the law. Toward this end he reproduced the very important statute of 1607 framed at the instance of the Vaad by Joshua Falk Cohen, Rabbi of Lublin. The lengthy ordinance enumerates examples of illegal methods of collecting interest. It was then suggested that the legal manner of extracting interest was the so-called "heter iska" (permission to collect interest on business loans).

It was permitted to take interest on a loan made for business purposes. In such a case the lender was considered a partner in the business of the borrower. The partnership was consummated by the lender giving the borrower a small coin and wishing himself and his partner good luck in their "common enterprise." However, the authorities warned that "one should not set his hand to the consummation of such an arrangement without consulting a sage and teacher."¹²⁶ Heilprin has utilized the Puchowitzer source to include this very important act in his compilation of the ordinances of the Polish Council.¹²⁷

The highly commercialized role of the Jews in their society necessitated credit operation. It is obvious from Puchowitzer that such operations were widespread not only between Jews and gentiles, as we have previously described, but also among Jews. The commercial civilization of talmudic times had required reinterpretations of some of the economic laws of the Bible. The need was even greater in Puchowitzer's age. To have forbidden such operations would have been Canute-like, and would actually have worked a hardship on the middle class which required loans in order to maintain its privileges. That is the reason that although Puchowitzer did not relish the practice, for it undoubtedly was misused and worked hardships on straitened borrowers, he finally realized the necessity for it and concerned himself only with the proper form.

^{in the synagogue}
Lack of decorum was another concern of the preacher. "The world has accepted as permitted that which is not permitted. They speak of private matters in the synagogue during the time of prayers."¹²⁸ "In 'Amudei Shesh' the author complained about the announcements which are made in the synagogue. 'If these announcements were all for the public welfare I might grant that they should be permitted, but announcements concerning the sale of wine and other matters of food and drink are undoubtedly a sin and desecrate the sanctity of the synagogue.'¹²⁹ "We find even learned ones speaking of business affairs in the synagogue."¹³⁰ "And at least during prayers, when a person is forced to leave his work, let him separate his thoughts from affairs of the world so that the half hour or hour he spends there should be holy. He should

not speak at all during the prayers." 131

Cleaving to his general approach that most of the sins were due to lack of knowledge, Puchowitzer found that this transgression grew out of ignorance. "Speaking of matters of public welfare is permitted in the synagogue, but not during the prayers. From this it has come about that they speak of private matters, and even during the prayers." 132

"A corrupt practice has been brought about by the practice of paying one's respect to the rabbi in the synagogue. Now we find groups which take the liberty of approaching the rabbi on secular matters when they greet him." 133 He detected an element of insincerity in this procedure. "For the main part this is done for the sake of flattery, and it is well-known that flatterers will not see the face of God. Any rabbi who is able to abolish this evil practice, may his strength increase and may he derive a blessing." 134

We find other complaints against synagogue procedure. "Behold in many communities the practice has become widespread to delay the prayers until long after sunrise and because of this many people fall into the sin of engaging in business and labor ~~and~~ before they pray. Many who are pious and do not wish to ~~engage~~ engage in work before they pray are forced to pray privately, in their homes, which is a great loss of holiness. This problem is not acute in the larger communities. There groups called 'Watchers for the Dawn' repair to the synagogue very early and study a lesson together, while the learned ones pursue their studies at home until the time of prayer. Business men and laborers have their own synagogues where they pray together at the crack of dawn and are not led into sin. But in the small communities such facilities are not provided and often they delay in coming to the synagogue until late in the day, so that the house of worship is locked while Jews are working and doing business. It is incumbent upon every dave and sincere man to abolish this practice in his town, and to order that worshippers be summoned to the synagogue before sunrise both summer and winter. In that way there will be people in the synagogue at the proper time of prayer, and no one can complain saying, 'Why should I come early when no one is

to be found there at the proper time?"

An incidental item of synagogue practice which may be of current interest concerned instrumental music preceding the Sabbath eve service. "In many communities the Sabbath is welcomed with great joy. They play musical instruments, trumpets, and violins."

From Puchowitzer's casual reference to business conversations in the synagogue, Sossis' contention that the place of worship was an extension of the commercial arena would seem to be justified. He also indicates that the rabbis were drawn into the business affairs because of the integral relationship between Jewish life and the Jewish law which they administered.

Puchowitzer's complaints against the educational practices of his time were closely bound up with his exhortation of pilpul. "With our eyes we have seen that in all the lands where false pilpul is not studied, such as in Palestine and other lands, they are educated in secular knowledge and in the law, because they have more time to devote to these studies and do not waste time as we do in our country. Especially among the youth do we observe the ruin brought about by this mental trickery. Anyone who does not acquire a reputation in this vanity is considered worthless and they are therefore forced to cease fruitful studies. If attention were focused as it should be, on the Bible, Mishna, Talmud, and Codes, many sincere young men would be improved. I know from my own experience that there are many splendid young men in our generation whose heart is like the lion's in Torah, and they ardently desire to study, but they are ignored because they are not experts in casuistry. For this reason they cease their studies entirely after marriage out of profound discouragement. The only remedy for this evil is that he who bears the fear of the Lord in his heart should pay no attention to the praise or calumny of human beings. At least such a young man should choose the pilpul which is closer to the truth because there is some benefit in pursuing that type of study, but let him not concern himself with it overmuch, for each scholar

claims that the truth lies with him alone. The shepherds of Israel should correct this evil for the hour is ^{dark} ~~great~~ and we must earn great and supernatural divine mercy." 157

The corruption extended to elementary education. "There are terrible defects in the education of young lads as it is practiced in our country. The 'Guraryeh' has remarked, 'Behold our predecessors followed a straight way to lead their pupils in paths of truth until they helped them achieve a proper goal. Now, in this reduced generation which is burthened with one misery after another, the teachers depart from the proper path as soon as the pupils are placed in their hands. The fools in our country follow the illogical method of ~~summing~~ teaching a lad a bit of the biblical portion of each week. At the end of the year the pupil has forgotten far more than he has learned, and this is repeated three or four years. When the youth has supposedly mastered the Bible we find that he actually knows nothing. Then they lead him directly into Talmud. The student chirps words without the vaguest notion of their meaning and does not understand a single word that he repeats. The students do not devour their studies like a jackal eating cabbage, but they accomplish little like a fly licking honey." 158

was

The economic aspects of the decline in education is very clearly lined. "There are some heads of academies who refuse to accept a student unless he presents them with a considerable gift, or pays regular tuition fees. What will these scholars answer to their Maker? This evil custom should be abolished, because many sons of the poor who cannot afford to pay are forced to enter business and cease from their studies, as I have not infrequently observed. Once I saw an orphan who was an outstanding lad and had an understanding heart, working at menial labor, and he told me that he was not accepted in any yeshiva because he had not the wherewithal to pay. All the rabbis had put him off, and he had resolved to work one year in order to save sufficient money to study for several years. Who knows how many such never return to their studies? One wrong begets another, for the students do not fear their teacher, knowing that he will not expel them from the yeshiva and thereby give up the fees." 159

"Our fathers and the generations before us strove to appoint rabbis who would spread the Torah even though the rabbis may have been poor. The citizens would accept the young students like one of their own family, and were concerned that the students should not be distracted. This strengthened the rabbi and his students. However, in our days there are leaders who will not accept a ^{rabbi} ~~student~~ unless he is wealthy and there are rabbis who, in the main, will only accept the sons of the rich as pupils. Such rabbis are not fulfilling their duty by satisfying only the rich and teaching only rich pupils. They transgress that which is written, 'Do not place a stumbling block before the blind.' The members of a community which maintains a wealthy rabbi and his rich students believe that they are fulfilling their obligations, and that is not true."

140

"In our generation the verse 'And Israel has been reduced,' has been fulfilled. For the most part, studies are conducted in the yeshivot only part of the year, and many smaller communities have no yeshivot at all. Where there is no academy in a community the rabbi is not morally entitled to his wages, because he is permitted to accept compensation only if he studies and teaches and delivers discourses to the congregation, the matter of each day in its time and of the Sabbath in its time."

141

Suggested remedies for the parlous state of education in his time were made by Puchowitzer. He quoted extensively the proposals of the MAHARAL of Prague and of Ephraim Luntschitz for a more logical and sensible curriculum. He himself proposed that "it would be well to order upon threat of excommunication that no teacher shall begin teaching a lad Talmud until the student is thoroughly acquainted with the Bible and its translation."

142

He also suggested a system for adult study. "Now we shall explain in brief the proper order of study. Firstly, a person is obligated to labor and strive to raise his standards. Thus, if he is acquainted with the Bible he should endeavour to learn Mishna to the extent of his capacities and mental attainments. And if he finds that he is not able to grasp a great deal of the study of Mishna he will do his duty by studying the Bible and as much of the

Mishna as he can absorb." The same procedure was recommended for the successive levels of Talmud, Commentaries, Codes, and through to Kabbala, which represented the pinnacle. He continued with another suggestion. "A person must review his studies. The learned ones should remember this because most of them do not review their studies in Bible, Mishna, and Gemara, and their knowledge evaporates. They are also careless in their knowledge of the Bible, failing to observe that which is said, 'Just as a bride should be adorned with jewelry so should a learned man be expert in the Holy Writings.'"
143

The economic aspect of the decline in education led Puchowitzer to consider the general question of the support of scholars. After pointing out the necessity and importance of each man studying for himself, he went on to point out the virtues of supporting the study of others. "One who cannot study himself either through lack of ~~support~~ preparation or because he is taken up with work, let him enable others to study and it will be accounted as if he had studied himself."
144

"The most effective way for one to discharge this duty is to support a scholar at one's own table, if it is within one's means, or to board a scholar in his home. If it is impossible for one individual to support a scholar, let more than one band together for this purpose. Conversely, if one man can afford to support more than one scholar, let him support as many as he can. It is preferable to organize houses of learning in each community and to subvent scholars to reside there permanently. They can be mediocre scholars as well as brilliant ones, as long as they study with sincerity. These scholars can then benefit the public by delivering discourses to the best of their abilities before those who are occupied with earning a livelihood."
145

However, the question still remained, whether one was permitted to accept money for studying Torah. "It may be asked, 'How is the scholar permitted to derive benefit from his learning, for is it not written that one who derives profit from his study of Torah thereby condemns himself?' The SHLAH has written at length on this question and the essence of his words are that one who accepts help and benefit

from others in order that he should not have to spend time seeking his food is certainly permitted to do so.... Nevertheless, if a scholar can support himself and still engage in study, that is certainly a measure of righteousness. However, it is impossible for every person to accomplish this, and if we relied upon every man to study Torah while supporting himself all scholars would soon disappear. The MAHRSHAL has even gone so far as to declare that even if a scholar has a craft or business which would enable him to support his family without help, it is a sin for him to refuse help and work at a time when others need his Torah. In like manner, if he already has sufficient funds for his needs from lending money on interest to gentiles or some similar source which does not cause him to give up time for study, it is sinful for him to accept public support. Instead, let him eat of his own and use the public funds only for the expenses of study, and if he uses his own funds even for that expense, God will repay him. The community might well strive to invest the funds of such a scholar in a profitable enterprise." ¹⁴⁶

The deterioration of education in Puchowitzer's time came about as the obligations of the communities grew and they were unable any longer to expend money on paternalistic welfare works for the poor. The restriction of learning to the sons of the rich worked in a vicious circle. Products of the upper class, themselves sometimes engaging in usury or investment business, the sages and scholars served the interests of their own class.

One of the sharpest expressions in the ideological sphere of economic deterioration was the corruption of the rabbinical office. Puchowitzer pointed out some of the abuses of his time. In several places he spoke of wealth as a criterion for choosing rabbis. "It is despicable in the eyes of God and men that rabbis should give presents to powerful individuals and loans to the community in order to capture the rabbinical office." ¹⁴⁷

False standards were also exercised in the election of cantors. "Few indeed are the communities which select a cantor who shall be adorned with virtues and good

attainments, nor are they even interested in learning whether he understands the words well and prays sincerely. Instead they seek after a cantor whose voice is pleasant and strong. Certainly this is also a virtue, but it is of very minor importance compared with uprightness of character and piety." ¹⁴⁸ "I have seen instances in which a cantor was an ignoramus and a knave and was retained because of his voice." This, Puchowitzer shrewdly observed, is not so much the fault of the cantor as of the community in not demanding higher standards. ¹⁴⁹

Some of the practices of the judges were also protested. "The author of 'Weh Amudim' complains against the judges who accept a fee for each decision they render. This is ugly in the eyes of God and man and causes wagging of tongues and words of suspicion. Many seek to justify the procedure by pleading necessity, but their justifications are wrong. One who accepts money to render a decision nullifies his decision. Since the decision is void, it is robbery to force people to accept ~~them~~." ¹⁵⁰

The preacher suggested a practical measure for combatting the evil. "Therefore let it be established that the judges should be paid by the kahal, receiving a stipulated annual sum and the court fees should be paid into the public treasury. How disastrous that the judges should have degenerated in our time into businessmen or laborers who seek to make a profit!" ¹⁵¹

An interesting sidelight was cast by the preacher on lay courts which were sometimes dictated by circumstances. "There are some villages which do not number any learned men among their number, and in order that cases should not come before gentile judges it has been sanctioned to convene Jewish courts in which the judges have never been ordained in the law. Knowledge of the law in these places grows weaker in each generation until they are completely unaware of how to render a decision according to the Torah. It also sometimes happens that even where there are ordained individuals the leaders appoint others because of considerations of honor. These judges render decisions based on their own particular opinion and on momentary considerations. One wrong begets another and we find that this practice causes many ~~troubles in Israel~~

disputes in Israel for everyone desires to lord over his comrade and not to have his comrade lord over him. These lay courts (piskei baale batim) are often worse than the gentiles. At least the gentiles have an ordered legal system, but the Jews have no order in their lay courts. With regard to one law they will sometimes declare one man guilty and free another. And even learned men who have been ordained in the law present no difficulty to the judges when those learned men sit at home and not on the judge's bench. With my own eyes I have seen, and not infrequently, a lay court lay down a decision based on ignorance, and when he who has lost the case cries out that the Torah has been contravened, no one pays the slightest bit of attention." 152

Despite these abuses, Puchowitzer granted the necessity for lay courts. "However, because conditions sometimes cause it to be impossible to have judges who are all ordained in the law, it is permitted also in such a case to convene the heads of the communities to judge a case on the basis of common sense." 153

Puchowitzer lays strong emphasis in his writings on kabbalistic concepts and sources. He repeatedly stressed his reliance upon it. "Redemption, may it come speedily and in our own days, will come only through the study of Kabbala." 154 "He who is not privileged with the study of Kabbala is surely not righteous in his behavior or does not study Torah sincerely." 155

We are in the elevated company of Solomon Schechter when we "lay no claim to being initiated in the science of the invisible." 156 Nevertheless, we venture a few words on the social background of Kabbala in seventeenth century Poland. Generally a distinction is drawn between the writings of the school of Isaac Luria which became popular in this period, and earlier Kabbala. Scholem has, however, demonstrated the essential intellectual continuity of the Kabbala. 157 Puchowitzer may be numbered among that group of moralists who are credited by Scholem with having propagated Lurianic doctrines. 158

Horodetsky traced the growth of Kabbalist thought in Poland. "A large scale mystical movement arose among the Jews of Poland. People began to immerse themselves

in the Spanish-Palestinian Kabbala.... The extent to which the Spanish Kabbala was spread among the people of Poland and the extent to which the great rabbis battled against it, is attested by original sources of the period. Rabbi Moses Isserlis wrote, 'Among the common people many dare to study the subject of Kabbala.' Solomon Luria is quoted to the same effect. After explaining the fear of the rabbis that the study of Kabbala would weaken their authority, Horodetsky makes the following significant remark. "But their words found no attentive ears. The people found in Kabbala that which they sought; they found there the spirit and the soul of Judaism. Volumes of Kabbala continued to be printed and spread among the people as much as the books of the Bible and Talmud. Even the rabbis themselves, withal their opposition to study of the Kabbala by the common people, beheld the Kabbala with delight and devoted their free time to it."

159

The study of the Kabbala was, as Horodetsky has indicated, a reaction to the sense of enstrangement which the masses felt from the sources of their culture. At the same time, it appealed even to the rabbis as an ~~other-worldly~~ other-worldly escape from the persecutions and massacres of the times. The upper intellectual group was attracted and yet repelled, for interest in the supernatural order represented a fundamental disregard for the order which rabbinism represented.

P. LaFarge, son-in-law of Karl Marx, has suggested that the Kabbala was adaptable to the needs of the large merchant class, especially in the pre-Lurianic period. "The Kabbala and its followers in the pre-Lurianic period were a philosophical reflection of the main requirements of the capitalistic bourgeoisie. This class strove to destroy the independence of the colonies, to abolish corporate privileges, to establish standard units of weight and measure. Jews especially, as a merchant people, reflected this striving in the language of mysticism.

"Such kabbalistic doctrines as pantheism and transmigration of souls are merely a metaphysical expression of mercantile values. Just as the Godhead is present in all created things, so too, there is a value in everything which is bought and sold. Just as every animate and inanimate object participates to some extent in the qualities

of the Godhead, so too does every object of trade have a definite weight and measure Marx has demonstrated that each capitalistic society begins with money and ends with money, but every such society makes the trip on its own road. The Jews accomplished it by metaphysics. The theosophy of the Kabbala passes out of the simple unity of the first sphere in order to arrive at the tenth sphere, whose unity is complex, because that sphere concentrates the qualities of the nine previous ones." 160

In itself the statement is rather ridiculously formulated. As a matter of fact, it might be construed as being vicious. The use of such a sweeping phrase as "a merchant people" ranks with some of the stupidities of Marx himself on the Jewish question. 161 Despite its poor formulation, however, there may be a grain of truth in the notion that a difference between pre-Lurianic and Lurianic Kabbala lies in the fact that the former was used in the interest of the ruling class and the latter developed into an instrument of protest and reaction against it.

The messianic expectation trembled in some of the kabbalistic notions preached by Puchowitzer. All actions were judged by whether they "prolonged the exile" or "hastened redemption." The coming of the Messiah could be helped by the ascetic practices of fasting, flagellations, and vows of silence. 162 The world was filled with dark and evil spirits against which a human being was forced to contend. 163 Evil was considered an all-encompassing power, a "shell" which could be broken only by a conscious regimen of asceticism. 164

Puchowitzer recommended the ascetic practices of the gentiles as a model for the Jews. "We should learn a lesson from the priests and clergy of the gentiles who do penance every midnight and follow other commendable practices of asceticism. If they, who live in quietness and peace, do these things, how much the more should we, the holy people which finds itself in the bitter exile? We are terribly degraded, our mouths chew dirt and we lie prone upon the ground. It would be fitting for our eyes to weep tears all the day and night when we observe the good fortune of the worshippers of stars and planets while the worshippers of God, may His name be praised, are trod under heel." 165

financial arrangements and sought to be included in the control of communal funds.

He proceeds further to suggest a practice which Dinabourg considers an important This middle class often united with the workers to 166 combat the elite. As a result source for the history of pre-Beshtian Hassidism. "If it be claimed that the

of this conflict a limited reorganization was introduced in many communities, but majority of the populace is not prepared to follow such practices, there is an an- they were not of long duration and were soon supplanted by renewed oligarchic heg- swer which is also taken from the example of the gentiles. They support their emony. It was impossible for any fundamental change to be made in the system as priests in order to permit them to do penance.... It would therefore be fitting long as it operated within the larger context of a feudal society. The entire po- for the Jews to choose and appoint in each sizeable community righteous people, litical structure of the country was based on the autocratic control of the magnates. men of action, pious and perfect, and to provide for all their needs so that they The Christian urban magistrates as well as the Jewish oligarchy retained their com- might be relieved of mundane concerns. The smaller communities and settlements trol until the partition of Poland. Whatever formal institutions may have been set should assist in this project. Then anyone who is unable to observe the strin- up as a result of the stubborn struggle to win political rights for the common peo- gencies of midnight penances and other ascetic practices would be able to fulfill ple remained powerless against patrician rule."

his obligation vicariously, through this elevated group...; Let these people be

Within the space of nineteen years Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer published four coll- banded together into groups or reside in the house of learning all week. Let them ections of his sermons. The first to be published was "Kama Hekmah" in Frankfurt- observe midnight penances and lamentations every night, literally weeping and on-the-Oder in 1681. If we are correct in assuming that he started his preaching wailing because of the destruction of the Holy Temple and the exile of the Holy career in 1659, this work came after twenty-two years 167 practical experience in Spirit, and follow many other sacred requirements."

the field. He described the volume as containing "seventeen sermons which are de-

Although Puchowitzer was certainly impregnated with mystical thought, he very signed to arouse forgetful ones to Torah, repentance, observance of the commandments, rarely descended into the magical. Therein lies a distinguishing characteristic proper celebration of the Three Pilgrimage Holidays and the High Holidays, and some of the musar trend. "It is an error to believe that penances and study which solations for the destruction of Jerusalem." 168 The arrangement was explained. are not accompanied by genuine regret, are effective."

"I began with expositions on the importance and holiness of the Sabbath, the Torah,

In the foregoing ~~prose~~ selections from Puchowitzer we have endeavoured to point and the commandments, and concluded with descriptions of the punishments for to a few examples of the protests of the middle class against the abuses of auto- 171 violating the ordinances and making light of them, as well as calls to repentance," cratic power. Of this struggle and its results Mahler writes the following: "The

The titlepage referred to the printing of the book. "Printed in Frankfurt-on-the- revolt of the common people against the autocratic leaders of the community flared Qder, under the regime of our lord, the very aristocratic, famed, and princely into open battles in the seventeenth century. In this battle all the elements in Duke Fredrick Wilhelm Kurfurst Brandenburg, may the Lord raise him up and protect the community which suffered the abuse of the leaders united, to a certain extent. his kingdom, amen. Printed in the house of the lord Johann Christoph Beckmann, Doctor. The workingmen and petty tradesmen strove to reorganize the communal organizations and professor in the great and renowned city Frankfurt-on-the-Oder."

on democratic foundations, to provide a voice to every social class in the affairs In the Introduction Puchowitzer made reference to the fact that the work was of the group. The middle class of merchants, who also suffered the irksome in- done by gentiles. "Since the printing was done by people not of our faith, many equities of the dominant force in the community, were primarily interested in the

financial arrangements and sought to be included in the control of communal funds. This middle class often united with the workers to combat the elite. As a result of this conflict a limited reorganization was introduced in many communities, but they were not of long duration and were soon supplanted by renewed oligarchic hegemony. It was impossible for any fundamental change to be made in the system as long as it operated within the larger context of a feudal society. The entire political structure of the country was based on the autocratic control of the magnates. The Christian urban magistrates as well as the Jewish oligarchy retained their control until the partition of Poland. Whatever formal institutions may have been set up as a result of the stubborn struggle to win political rights for the common people remained powerless against patrician rule." 169

Within the space of nineteen years Jehuda Loeb Puchowitzer published four collections of his sermons. The first to be published was "Kene Hokmah" in Frankfort-on-the-Oder in 1681. If we are correct in assuming that he started his preaching career in 1659, this work came after twenty-two years of practical experience in the field. He described the volume as containing "seventeen sermons which are designed to arouse forgetful ones to Torah, repentance, observance of the commandments, proper celebration of the three Pilgrimage Holidays and the High Holidays, and consolations for the destruction of Jerusalem." 170 The arrangement was explained.

"I began with expositions on the importance and holiness of the Sabbath, the Torah, and the commandments, and concluded with descriptions of the punishments for violating the ordinances and making light of them, as well as calls to repentance." 171

The titlepage referred to the printing of the book. "Printed in Frankfort-on-the-Oder, under the regime of our lord, the very aristocratic, famed, and princely Duke Fredrich Wilhelm Korforscht Brandenburg, may the Lord raise him up and protect his kingdom, amen. Printed in the house of the lord Johann Christoph Beckman, Doctor and professor in the great and renowned city Frankfort-on-the-Oder." 172

In the Introduction Puchowitzer made reference to the fact that the work was done by gentiles. "Since the printing was done by people not of our faith, many

mistakes were committed."

Puchowitzer traveled to Frankfort for the purpose of printing his book. "I did not permit my books to be printed until I could bring them to the city where they might be properly done."¹⁷⁴

The parlous condition of Jewish printing in Poland itself is to be observed from several enactments of the Polish Vaad at that period. In 1680 the Vaad, meeting at Jaroslav, complained of the poor quality of Polish printing. It was decided to improve the situation, "to seal the breach, remove stumbling blocks from the road, strengthen the Tree of Life," by ordering the printers to publish legible, correct, and attractive texts.¹⁷⁵

Again in 1697 the same body declared, "We have observed the terrible chaos caused by the decline of the art of printing in our land. Because of these printers the Torah has been practically forgotten among the Jews. The letters of the print in their editions have blinded the eyes of the dear children who pore over the books."¹⁷⁶

Two years later a similar complaint was voiced.¹⁷⁷ In view of this condition there is little wonder that a book by a Lithuanian preacher intended for distribution in his country, should have been printed in Germany.

Balaban attributes the inferiority of Polish printing in this period to the destruction of several presses during the Cossack Revolts and subsequent wars, as well as to the generally low state of printing in Poland. "No progressive Jewish printing industry could develop unless it had the stimulation of a technically superior local craft. The sizeable demand of the Jewish market could be satisfied by the importation of the artistic products of the printing industry in other countries."¹⁷⁸

Even by modern standards, the typography of Puchowitzer's works is quite good. It is also interesting that this Jewish religious work was printed by a non-Jew.

The book carried the approbation of the highest Jewish authorities, rabbis of the Council of the Four Lands, of the Lithuanian Council, as well as the Chief Rabbi of Posen.

The patrons of the volume are mentioned. "The renowned leader and a Parnas

Medina, Rabbi Nathan Phoebe son of Rabbi Eliezer Lipman of Meuritam, Crown Poland, and the renowned leader Rabbi Joseph son of Sabbatai of Botyn, Slonim District, who have loaned me a certain sum of their own funds for the expenses of printing." ¹⁷⁹
 Let it be noted that the money was loaned on a business basis, rather than contributed. This could have been due to the scruples of the author. The praise heaped upon them in this note of gratitude would seem to indicate a cordial relationship.

The fact that the book was approved by the highest rabbinic authorities and supported by wealthy communal officials provides a better-rounded conception of Puchowitzer's place in his society. In the preceding section we have singled out elements of social protest because we consider them significant straws in the wind of historical development. It would be unfortunate if this gave a picture of a crusading revolutionary. The protest was imbedded in a fabric of traditional religious teaching which no faction in Jewish life could deny, and concerned itself with aspects of decay which many ~~members~~ members of the upper class also disapproved. The dominant group was no more free to correct these evils than any other faction in society, because the overall conditions dictated them. Psychologically, the "strafrede" of a Puchowitzer may have provided a release for some of the guilt feelings of the upper class. Pathetically, he laments that "it has been ten years since my books have been distributed throughout all the settlements of Israel, and many times have the great sages and leaders agreed with me, but ¹⁸⁰ most of the world follows its old customs." The world follows its appointed historical path, and to all the outcries of the preacher the leaders could but nod in sad and perplexed agreement. They did not, as Puchowitzer supposed, "have ¹⁸¹ it within their power to correct the errors and improve the generation."

The book also bore the approbation of the rabbi of Frankfort, Ber son of Elchanan, author of "Arba Harashim." This worthy refers rather apologetically to the fact that he did not consider himself specially qualified to endorse the book, but was ¹⁸² required to do so by a communal regulation for pre-censorship. Baron speaks of the "decisions of the Synod of Frankfort, which established a rigid pre-censorship

of Jewish books to meet the challenge of dangerous inquisitorial suppression."

"Kene Hokmah" was projected from the beginning as part of a larger work. "The second part of my work will deal with an individual's conduct in the observance of the commandments and study of the Torah and paths of repentance." ¹⁸⁴ This second part was published two years later, in 1683. The details of printing are practically identical with the earlier book, except that the typographic-minded Puchowitzer specified in the title page that it was done "with new type." Its thirty-two lengthy chapters did not exhaust the preacher's prolific store of material. "It was my original intention to publish this second section of my larger work in two parts, that is, to follow the chapters with detailed explanations of all the things a person should know in order to lead a good life, but it was ¹⁸⁵ impossible for me to have all of it published."

He spoke of some of the conditions under which the manuscript was prepared. "The sermons in the first part of this work are those which I taught with the help of God when I was a rabbi in many communities, at peace and quiet in my own house which was filled with many books. I conceived the plan of penning the book in two parts.... This plan proved impossible for me to execute because there are no seekers after sermons which turn people toward our Father in Heaven. Therefore I selected seventeen of those completed sermons, which I printed in 'Kene Hokmah' along with many notes and selections from the books of piety. I edited them partly while traveling and mainly here in Frankfort. Since there were interruptions between the completion of the first part and the beginning of publication of the second section, and since I did not compose this section in the quietude of my own ¹⁸⁶ home but rather while wandering, I gave it a separate name, 'Derekh Hokmah.'"

During the two years that he was forced to spend in Frankfort he lived in the home of a famed talmudic scholar. "Had it not been for the genuine help of the great, brilliant, and erudite Rabbi Baruch son of Pinehas and for the blessings which he and his son-in-law, the great scholar Menahem son of Eliezer conveyed upon me, I could not have carried on. They are refugees from Vilna who live here now. During this trying period they took me into their home which is well-stocked

with books, and showed me great hospitality. They also strengthened my hand with considerable loans, according to their ability and generosity. Had it not been for them I could not have remained here such a length of time and carried out my plan to print the second part, even in the present shortened form." ¹⁸⁷

in 1692 his third book, "Dibre Hakamin," was published in Hamburg. This was also divided into two parts. The first part entitled "Daat Hokmah" contained four chapters entitled "Sabbath, Repentance, Works, Knowledge of God." It was a discussion of selected laws "applicable and necessary" to his time.

While in Hamburg he spent time in the house of study of the celebrated Haham Zevi. Since I was forced to wait a long time here until publication began, and printing required a great deal of time and cast trouble and aggravation upon me, I thank God that he has brought me to this day in health and life. I found quiet and also some help in the great 'kloiz' (chapel) in Altona which is near the city of Hamburg. The presiding ~~rabbin~~ rabbi is Zevi Wirsch son of Jacob, a son-in-law of the great luminary, Rabbi Meshulam Zalman." ¹⁸⁸

The last of his four books was "Kebod Hakamin," published in Venice in 1700. Herein were contained extracts from his other works and ten additional homilies. The work was not edited by Puchowitzer himself, but by Meschulem Sholom son of Abraham Pinkerle of Goerz. Pinkerle had no sustained contact with Puchowitzer, having spoken only several times to him, but was assigned the task by the publisher. ¹⁸⁹

Puchowitzer left Venice for Palestine before the book was completed. We have no records of his activities there, although he probably joined the circle of mystics there,

"And he," says Dembitzer, "left behind a son who was like him, the brilliant and ~~erudite~~ erudite scholar Rabbi Elijah, the light of whose Torah also shone in Pinsk, the place of his father's birth. The father mentioned Elijah with praise in Daat Hokmah. ¹⁹⁰ The sage Rabbi Elijah also had a son and daughter. His son was the renowned scholar Rabbi Moses, who was rabbi in Zhitomer and in other communities, and was chief rabbi of the Ostrog District. His daughter was the

wife of the scholar Aaron Pines, the father of the great sage Elijah Pines who
was a preacher in Shklow.... And let this suffice." 191

NOTES

Key to Abbreviations

KH -	Puchowitzer, Jehuda Loeb, "Kene Hokmah," Frankfort-on-the-Oder, 1681.
DkH-	"Derek Hokmah," Frankfort-on-the-Oder, 1683
DbH-	"Dibre Hakamim," Hamburg, 1692
DAH-	"Daat Hokmah"
MH -	"Mekor Hokmah"
SB -	"Solet Belulah"
KH -	"Kebod Hakamim" Venice, 1700

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE, PAGES 1-22

1. During the seventeenth century Poland extended over the basins of the Warta, Vistula, Dwina, Dnieper, and Upper Dniester and had under its dominion besides the Poles proper and the Baltic Slavs, also the Lithuanians, White Russians, and Little Russians or Ruthenians.
2. Zunz, Leopold, "Die gottesdienstlichen Vortraege der Juden, historisch entwickelt," Berlin, 1832. p. 493.
3. Mussar means moral discipline. The name derives from the Hebrew root MSR, meaning to hand over or to state. It denotes piety, religious-moral life.
4. Sossis, I., "Dos Yiddishe Soziale Leben un der Mussar in 16-18 Yahrhundert," Zeischrift fun Institut far Veisrusslandische Kultur, Minsk, 1926.
5. Rassin, Arje, "The Situation of the Polish Jews in the 17th and 18th Centuries and their Religio-Ethical Literature," Miesiecznik Zydowski, Grodz, 1932. (Polish)
6. We translate "Derush" as sermon, although it is most probable that the written form of the preacher's work was considerably more elaborate than his spoken exposition.
7. Cf. Dinabourg, A., "Reshita shel HaHassidism," Zion, Palestine, 1937.
8. Myrdal, Gunnar, "An American Dilemma," New York, 1944. Intro., p. xlvii.
9. KH, Intro., p. 4a
10. In 1659, the first date in his career which can be definitely placed, he was married and the father of two children, of whom the younger was ten. (see p. 14) Assuming that his older child was at least eleven and that he had fulfilled the Mishnaic injunction to marry at eighteen, we arrived at this approximate date.
11. Dubnow, Simon M., "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland," Philadelphia, 1916. (trans. I. Friedlander) Chap. V.
12. Frank, Herman, "Dos Virtschaftliche Pinsk," Toisent Yahr Pinsk, New York, 1941
13. Honik, S., "Pinsk un ihr Vergangenheit," *ibid.*
14. *ibid*
15. Quoted in Heilikmann, T., "Geschichte fun der Gesellschaftlicher Bewegung fun die Yidden in Polen un Russland," Moscow, 1926. pp. 171-172.

16. Shatzky, Jacob, "Historisch-Kritisch Ereinfier in 'Jeven Metzulah' fun R. Nasan Nata Hanover," Gezerot TACH, p. 28.
17. Sossis, "Die Geschichte fun die Yiddishe Gezelschaftliche Shtremungen in Russland in XIX Yahrhundert," Minsk, 1929. p. 13.
18. *ibid*
19. In Heilikmann, "Bewegung," p. 88 ff.
20. *ibid*
21. *ibid*
22. Shatzky, "Jeven," p. 66.
23. In Heilikmann, "Bewegung," p. 174.
24. Shatzky, "Jeven," p. 59.
25. Cf. endorsements to his works,
26. DkH, p. 45b.
27. Hanover, Nathan, "Abyss of Despair," New York, 1950. (trans. A.J. Mesch). Chap. XVI.
28. DtH, p. 29b.
29. *ibid*, p. 30a.
30. *ibid*.
31. *ibid*, p. 46b.
32. *ibid*.
33. Dubnow, "Pinkat Hamedinah," Berlin, 1925. No. 88.
34. DbH, p. 2b.
35. Dembitzer, Chaim Nathan, "Klilath Jofi," Cracow, 1888. p. 49a ff.
36. *ibid*.
37. "Kebod Morenu HoRab Rab." In the middle of the fourteenth century the title had been reinstituted in Germany by R. Meir HaLevi.
38. DtH, p. 2b.
39. Praeger, Moses b. Menahem, "Vayakhel Moshe," Lemberg, 1860. p. 96.
40. Hagiz, Moses, "Mishnat Hakamim," Gzrenowitz, 1864. p. 9b.
41. *supra*.
42. Asaf, speaking of this period, says, "Even those who did not intend entering

- the entering the active rabbinate sought the degree; it conferred certain privileges in the life of the community." (Asaf, Simha, "LeKorot HaRabbanut," BiChele ~~Asaf~~ Yaakov," Jerusalem, 1943.)
43. Cf. the map accompanying Heilprin, Israel, "Pinkat Vaad Arba Aratzot," Jerusalem, 1942.
 44. Cf. "Evereiska Entsiklopedia," Moscow, 1911. Vol. X, p. 314.
 45. DbH, p. 3a.
 46. EkH, p. 34a.
 47. Buber, M., "Sefer Mazkeret LiGedole Ostroh," Berditschiev, 1907. pp. 99-100.
 48. "Our Teacher," referring to the the previously mentioned title.
 49. Title of an early code of laws by Jacob b. Asher (d. 1340).
 50. The section containing laws dealing with the ritually forbidden.
 51. The section containing laws dealing with everyday life.
 52. Asaf, "LeKorot," p. 30.
 53. KH, p. 2b.
 54. Wettstein, Feivel Hirsch, "Modaot MiPinkasim Jeshanim," Ozar HaSifrut, (1892) pp. 577-642.
 55. DkH, 34a.
 56. Dubnow, History," p. 115.
 57. Dubnow, "Pinkat," No. 484.
 58. KH, p. 33a.
 59. Baron, Salo, "The Jewish Community," Philadelphia, 1948. p. 187.
 60. A commentary on the Bible by Abraham b. Jehuda Hazan.
 61. KH, 4a.
 62. .
 63. KbH, p. 3a.
 64. Dembitzer, "Kilath," p. 50a.
 65. Kassover, Mordecai, "Pinsker Rabbonim," Toisent Yahs, p. 252.
 66. "Entsiklopedia," Vol. III, p. 58.
 67. Supra

68. *supra*
69. Lewin, Louis, "Die Judenverfolgungen im Zweiten Schwedisch-Polnischen Kriege," Posen, 1901. P.22.
70. Hanover, "Abyas," p. 90.
71. Shatzky, "Jeven," p. 131.
72. Hanover, *supra*.
73. Bruell, M., "Sefer Hazkarat Neshamot shel Kehil Vormeiza," Kobetz al Wad, III, p. 84.
74. *ibid*
75. *supra*
76. Kogan, David, "A Report on the Muscovite Destruction in 1659," Evereiska Starin, Vol. III, p. 114. (Polish)
77. *ibid*, ed. note.
78. Jaari, Abraham, "BiChela Sefer," Jerusalem, 1939. p. 93.
79. Kogan, *supra*
80. *ibid*
81. Balinski M., and Lipinski, T., "History of the Moravia," Warsaw, 1894. p. 211.
82. *ibid*
83. Shatzky, "Jeven," p. 72.
84. Graetz, Heinrich, "History of the Jews," Philadelphia, 1891-98. (trans. H. Szold) Vol. V, chap. I.
85. Meisl, Joseph, "Geschichte der Juden in Polen und Russland," Berlin, 1921. Vol. II, Chap. I.
86. Dubnow, "History," Vol. I, Chap. V.
87. Balaban, Majer, "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Polen," Vienna, 1915. p. 26.
88. Shatzky, "Jeven," p. 72.
89. Balaban, *supra*.
90. Mahler, Raphael, "Toledot Hajehudim BePolen," Palestine, 1946. p. 219.
91. Dubnow, "History," Vol I, p. 155.
92. *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 155 ff.
93. Sossis, "Shtremungen," p. 9.
94. Cf. Dubnow, "History," Vol. II, p. 93.

95. Cf. Betelheim, Hugo, "Studies in the Dynamics of Prejudice," New York, 1950
96. Finn, S.I., "Kiriah Neemanah," Vilna, 1915. p. 20.
97. *ibid*

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO, PAGES 25-79

1. Primarily in those White Russian regions which remained under Muscovite rule.
2. Archives of S.M. Dubnow, Yiddish Scientific Institute, New York.
3. The phrase in the original text is . Mesch translates this as "hapless ones," thereby relieving its social sting.
4. Hanover, "Abyss," p. 78.
5. *ibid*, p. 79
6. Lewin, *supra*
7. "Entsiklopedia," Vol. XIV, p. 97.
8. Dubnow, "Pinkat," pp. XIV and XV.
9. "Entsiklopedia," *supra*.
10. Finn, "Kirjah" Chap. VII.
11. Levitats, Isaac, "The Jewish Community in Russia, 1772-1844." New York, 1943. P. 182.
12. *ibid*, p. 180.
13. *ibid*, p. 190
14. *ibid*
15. "Meah Shearim" by Moses Alshikh, a disciple of Joseph Karo.
16. "Sefer HaGilgulim" by Haim Vital Calabrese (1543-1620), attributed by the author to his famed teacher, Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (ARI).
17. A homeliticist who lived in the last quarter of the 13th century. In "Bereshith Raba" (77c) he is mentioned as the last of the rabbis who were in the great line of succession from R. Akiba.
18. This may be a misreading. We find no mention of such an author.
19. Snh., p. 38b.
20. Zunz, "Vortraege," p. 459.
21. Levitats, "Community," p. 183.
22. Asaf, Simha, "The Inner Life of Polish Jews," BiChole Jaakob, p. 74. (Hebrew)

23. DdH, p. 2b.
24. Approbations to KH, reprinted in all his works.
25. ibid
26. ibid
27. ibid
28. ibid
29. ibid
30. Klausner, Israel, "Toledot HaKehilla HaIvrit BeVilna," Vilna, 1938. Chap. VII
31. ibid
32. Asaf, "Inner" p. 73.
33. Zunz, supra.
34. Dubnow, "Pinkas."
35. Significantly, the word itself, of talmudic origin, means "supporters."
36. Dubnow, "Pinkas," No. 8.
37. KbH, p. 2a.
38. Levitats, "Community," p. 158.
39. Approbations.
40. DdH, p. 20b.
41. ibid, p. 49b.
43. MH, p. 12b.
44. KH, p. 3a.
45. DbH, p. 2b.
46. DtH, p. 3b.
47. DdH, p. 2a.
48. KH, p. 101a.
49. Dubnow, "History," Vol I, p. 157.
50. ibid, p. 89.
51. "Zerah Berakh Hadash."
52. KH, p. 22a.
53. MH, p. 91a.

54. KH, p. 4a.
55. DtH, p. 46a.
56. *ibid.*
57. *ibid.*
58. *ibid.*
- 59.. KbH, p. 47b.
60. DtH, p. 46a.
61. DtH, p. 47a.
62. omitted
63. DtH, p. 48a.
64. Between the scorn of the elders and the timidity of the preachers. Targ. γ , II Ex.
65. KbH, p. 9b.
66. DbH, p. 46a.
67. MH, p. 56a.
68. DbH, p. 26b.
69. KbH, p. 35a.
70. *ibid*, p. 19a.
71. *ibid*
72. *ibid*
73. "Jewish Encyclopedia," Philadelphia, 1911. Vol X, p. 39.
74. KH, p. 3a.
75. DtH, p. 48a.
76. *ibid*
77. *ibid*, p. 49a.
78. *ibid.*
79. *ibid*, p. 48a.
80. *ibid*
81. *id*
82. *ibid*
83. *ibid*

84. DtH, p. 48b.
85. MH, p. 72a.
86. KH, p. 10b.
87. MH, p. 14b.
88. KbH, 33a.
89. DtH, p. 8a.
90. KH, p. 4b.
91. KbH, p. 2a.
92. DtH, p. 2a.
93. KH, p. 3a.
94. By Elijah de Vida, (d. 1518)
95. Joseph Karo, author of the greatest legal code, was under the delusion that a voice from heaven instructed him in matters of law and mystic lore. This voice he named the "Maggid" and thought it was the spirit of the Mishna.
96. A major ethical work by Bahya Ibn Pakuda, written in the 12th century.
- 97a. A kind of encyclopedia on the teachings of Judaism by Isaiah Hurwitz, (1570-1630).
- 97b. DtH, p. 3a.
98. KbH, p. 1b.
99. MH, p. 79a.
100. Commentary on Karo's code by Zvi Hirsch b. Joseph Tuchpirer.
101. Second part of same work.
102. Code by Moses b. Samuel of Verona.
103. DtH, p. 3b.
104. ibid
105. DtH, p. 12a.
106. KbH, p. 23b.
107. KH, p. 65b.
108. Lauterbach, "Encyclopedia," supra.
109. Baron, "Community," Vol. II, p. 195.
110. ibid, p. 206
111. Süssis, "Soziale Leben"

112. Solomon Luria to Moses Isserlis, quoted in Dubnow, "History," Vol. I, p. 126.
112a. KbH, p. 25a.
112b. Rassim, "Situation"
112c. Sossis, "Shtremungen," p. 23.
112d. DtH, p. 3a.
112e. Levitats, "Community," p. 180.
112f. Honik, "Vergangenheit," p. 33.
112g. DtH, p. 26b.
113. Dubnow, "History," Vol. I, p. 192.
114. DtH, p. 35a.
115. Sossis, "Shtremungen," p. 18.
116. MH, p. 107b.
117. KH, p. 2a.
118. DkH, p. 4b.
119. ibid, p. 52b.
120. ibid
121. DtH, p. 48a.
122. ibid, p. 3a.
123. KbH, p. 54a.
124. ibid
125. MH, p. 101b.
126. DkH, p. 55a.
127. Heilprin, "Pinkat," p. 721.
128. DtH, p. 3a.
129. KbH, p. 17b.
130. KH, p. 49a.
131. KbH, p. 11b.
132. DkH, p. 2b.
133. DkH, p. 27a.

134. *ibid*
135. KbH, p. 36b.
136. *ibid*, p. 6b.
137. KbH, p. 77b.
138. DtH, p. 3a.
139. *ibid*, p. 10a.
140. *ibid*, p. 32a.
141. *ibid*, p. 49a.
142. DtH, p. 43b.
143. KH, p. 23b.
144. DtH, p. 41b.
145. *ibid*, p. 42a.
146. *ibid*
147. DkH, p. 89a.
148. MH, p. 81a.
149. *ibid*
150. DtH, p. 11b.
151. *ibid*
152. DkH, p. 80a.
153. *ibid*
154. KH, p. 6a.
155. DtH, p. 39b.
156. Schechter, Solomon, "Safed" Studies in Judaism, Philadelphia, 1908.
157. Scholem, Gershon, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism," New York, 1938. p. 197
158. *ibid*, p. 201.
159. Horodetsky, Samuel A., "HaHassidut ViHaHassidim," Berlin, 1923. p. 4.
160. Quoted in Heilikmann, "Geschichte," p. 193.
161. Cf. Marx, Karl, "De Joden-Questie," Amsterdam, 1908.
162. DkH, p. 46.
163. DtH, p. 37a.

164. DtH, p. 50a.
165. KH, p. 19a.
166. Dinabourg, "Reshita," p. 256.
167. DtH, p. 50a.
168. ibid.
169. Mahler, "Toledot," p. 395.
170. KH, p. 2b.
171. ibid
172. ibid, Titlepage
173. ibid, p. 4a.
174. ibid
175. Dubnow, "Pinkat," No. 701.
176. ibid, No. 896.
177. ibid, No. 1027.
178. Balaban, Majer, "Tidden in Polen," Vilna, 1930. P. 220.
179. KH, p. 5a.
180. ~~ibid~~
181. ibid
182. ibid, p. 5b.
183. Baron, "Community," Vol. II, p. 202.
184. KH, p. 3a.
185. DkH, p. 2a.
186. ~~ibid~~
187. ibid
188. DtH, 3b.
189. KbH, Editor's Introduction, p. 5a.
190. P. 48a.
191. Dembitzer, "Klilath," p. 50b.

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