

A STUDY IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH-JEWISH

POLEMICS AS REFLECTED IN THE

WRITINGS OF THE

DURAN FAMILY

Thesis

Submitted by

Abraham Shusterman
Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati Ohio
1930

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INTRODUCTION

The Church Fathers after Jerome knew less and less about the faith of Israel and had to rely on the arguments advanced by earlier controversial writers. It is undoubtedly this fact that accounts for the similarity of polemical material in the writings of a controversial nature produced by Israel's sages. Christianity showed the way and Israel followed suit by answering Christianity is a "Christian" way. Arguments advanced by Israel are advanced years later by the Duran. Unfortunately we are in possession of only a few systematic polemics before the fifteenth century, in spite of the wealth of "----music when soft voices die, Vibrates in the memory." With the frequency of the clergy's attacks Israel's answers were rewarded with increasing rapidity. Bitterness had its opportunity to enter the scene of combat when baptized Jews openly attacked their former coreligionists. Among these were the notorious Paul of Burgos and "Agadaf" who figure so prominently in the writings of Rofel and Rashbach.

This thesis will treat the problem of Spanish-Jewish polemics of the fifteenth century as reflected in the writings of the Duran family. This polemical period is especially interesting because it precedes the expulsion by but a generation. The Durans are masters of polemical style. Having lived through the persecution of 1492 they are able to bring to

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1. See Ozar p. 7-9

bring to our minds a vivid picture, though painted in colors of logic, of the "Wikuhim" between Israel and his adversaries in the pre-expulsion period.

This thesis will present the arguments used by the Durans in their polemics and apologetics, their influence upon each other's thinking, their manner of approach and their use of the polemical tools at their disposal. It is unfortunate that more is not known about their lives. What a treasure the autobiography of Efodi would be! In the following biographical sketches the writer has used everything available. Giants deserve more complete biographies.

In the analysis of their writings three sources have been used: the printed but unpublished edition of Kelimat HaGoyim, taken from a manuscript in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and edited by Isaac Broyde; the polemic Keshet UMagen, Leghorn 1790; and Milchemet Mizwah which is included in the same volume as Keshet UMagen. The selections in Eisenstein's Ozar Wikuhim have been used but, as we would expect in an anthology, the number of omissions make it impossible for the student to work scientifically with the material in the Ozar. It must be said in justice to Eisenstein that he did not pretend that he was giving the world accurate material. He lays down the fundamental principle by which he works: "I am following one general rule in these polemics: to be deliberate in my judgment and to make use of the changes made by the scribes in whatever place the parties of the controversy go beyond

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the bounds of courtesy and politeness.² It is hard to determine just what Eisenstein considers politeness and courtesy; He omits important passages that are less vicious than the ones he includes. Indeed it is necessary to work with the earlier and more exact editions alongside the Ozar in order to approach exactness.

The writer of this thesis is profoundly grateful for the assistance given him by two of his teachers: Dr. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, whose ever-eager desire to render assistance facilitated the work of the writer in preparing his material; and Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, whose lectures on the Spanish-Jewish period of history first aroused the interest of the writer in this field and under whom this thesis has been written:

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and has recently been published in the Journal of Jewish Studies by the British Academy. The Journal of Jewish Studies is a quarterly publication of the British Academy and is one of the most important journals in the field of Jewish studies. The Journal of Jewish Studies is published by the British Academy and is one of the most important journals in the field of Jewish studies. The Journal of Jewish Studies is published by the British Academy and is one of the most important journals in the field of Jewish studies.

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CHAPTER I

PROFIAT DURAN

Intellectually a vigorous people

Israel has made no attempt to create a name as the exponent of non-resistance in the face of polemics. Indeed, Eisenstein's remark that "we have no desire to be counted among the persecuted righteous and not among the persecutors" need not be qualified in the case of the Durans, Efodi, Simeon ben Zemach, and Solomon ben Simon. The first Duran, whose polemical essay Kelimat HaGoyim is a model of clarity and order, is Efodi. In Jewish history this Duran is known as Profiat or Maestre Profiat Duran, while his pen name of Efodi is taken from the initial letters of his signature Ani Profiat Duran. The Hebrew name of the author of Kelimat HaGoyim is ¹Isaac ben Moses Halevi, which name is disclosed in a poem in the twenty-third chapter of his book Heshev HaEfod. His birthplace is uncertain although it is the belief of Harkavi that he was born in Catalonia since the persecution

¹. Heb Gr vol 6 p. 404

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of 1391, during which Efdi became a convert, did not extend into Aragón. ² Duran himself accounts for this phenomenon in the twice-expressed belief that the piety of the Aragonese saved them from destruction. In spite of these few references much of his youth is veiled in obscurity. ³ His student days in Germany were marked by a lack of concentration on Talmudic studies and an interest in philosophy and science, in spite of the interdiction of his teachers. Being an excellent student of philosophy, grammar and history Profiat Duran became a tutor in the home of Chasday Crescas at whose request he wrote and to whom he dedicated his famous work Kalimat HaGoyim.

During the persecution of 1391 Duran outwardly accepted Christianity and lived as a Marano. Don Juan, king of Castile, had died and under Henry III, the boy ruler, the fanatic Ferdinand Martinez could no longer be held in check. His passionate preaching aroused the populace to the extent that thousands of Jews lost their lives and thousands were forced into the ranks of the Maranos. In Seville alone 4,000 out of a possible 30,000 were killed while most of the survivors became crypto-Jews. To save his life Profiat Duran accepted the Christian faith, although

2. Heb. Gr. vol. 4 p. 404
3. JE vol. 5 p. 16

unwillingly, and his friend David Buan-Giorno was converted with him. Thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Judaism the scholarly Duran was not content to remain a Marano. He and his friend agreed to meet at a port in the south of France so that they might set sail for Palestine where they hoped to live as Jews. Awaiting Buan-Giorno Duran received a letter from his friend announcing his resolution to remain a Christian at the insistence and persuasion of the notorious Paul of Burgos. The epistle angered Duran and instead of openly upbraiding Buan-Giorno for his change of heart and for his attempt to reveal Duran to Christianity he wrote the famous letter Al Tehi K'Abotac in which his consummate skill as a controversial writer and orator is revealed most strikingly. Eisenstein's intimation that this essay is to be counted among those that were written with a surface air of acquiescence because the Jewish writers were afraid to openly oppose Christianity can hardly be taken seriously in view of the open and fearless Kalimat HaGoyim.⁴ In the epistle itself there is no mention of the time of its composition, but in referring to Solomon-Paul of Burgos the letter affords us a working basis of judgment.⁵ From the tenor of Duran's remarks

4. Ozer Wikkunim p. 14
5. Heb. Gr. vol. 5 p. 405

CHAPTER I

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J. Heb Gr vol 6 p. 404

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4. Ozar Wikuhim p.145. Heb Gr vol.6 p.405

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3. Heb Gr vol. 6 p. 405
3. Heb Gr vol. 6 p. 15

it seems that the apostate Paul had already been elevated to a high position in the Church and had become an important figure in the court of Pope Benedict XIII of Avignon. Paul was converted to the ruling faith in the year 1391; after his conversion he studied at the University of Paris and became conversant with the Catholic religion. Afterward he was elevated to the priesthood and later became a bishop. These facts lead to the conviction that the epistle was written some years after 1391.

It is of extreme interest to consider this essay in connection with Profiat Duran's later polemic. Efofi pretends to assent to everything advanced by Buon-Giorno and to confirm him in his resolve to live as a member of the Christian Church. Being ambiguous it was interpreted by the Christians as an epistle favorable to the church. As soon as this essay which they called *Alteca Boteca* was understood in its true light it was burned.

In his letter Duran satirically replies, "Thou hast awakened and speakest in the spirit of the Messiah who has given thee an ear to hear but no heart to understand; who taught thee that reason has ever been the enemy of faith and occasioned great harm to truth-----who follows reason will go to hell, but whosoever follows faith, namely the faith which thou and

6. Heb Gr vol. 6 p. 82 note 2

7. Heb Gr vol. 6 p. 405

8. HUC M vol. 1 no. 6 p. 15

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8. HUC M vol. I no. 8 p. 10
 7. HUC M vol. I no. 8 p. 10
 6. HUC M vol. I no. 8 p. 10

thy new teacher expound will surely go to heaven."

From this starting point Efodi proceeds to mockingly assent to the Christian dogmas and Christian thought. He adjured his friend to adhere to the belief in the trinity "three united in one; a unit which no mouth could express nor an eye perceive." The virgin birth becomes the object of his ironic praise, while he warns his friend not to be like his fathers who "erected imposing palaces and edifices of logic" "Thou shalt not be like them. Keep far from thee even the first syllogistic principles, inasmuch as such an admission will destroy your whole faith. For if you say that God is the "father" and that the "son" is God, consequently the "son" is the "Father." What then? The "son" is the "Father" and has begotten the "son." Away with such an absurd premise." Turning to the sacrament of transubstantiation Efodi uses it as a target, saying, "be sure not to believe the whole is larger than one of its parts, for the body of the Messiah is contained in the whole cake and in each separate particle of it, so that each particle must accordingly be equal to the whole."

Duran concludes his letter with a warning to his former friend not to be misled by sense data. Before he closes he insinuates that only the unscrupulous become converts for pleasure and honor. "As to myself---I put my trust in God alone and not in the Messiah, who pretends to take His Holy Name. One thing I will ask thee before I close

my letter; do not use the name of thy father in thy signature.---If he were among the living he would prefer to remain childless than to have such a son."

In addition to Al Tehi K'Abotoca and Kelimat HaGoyim Profiat Duran was the author of a number of other important works:

a. Heshev HoEfo, an almanac of twenty-five sections, dedicated to Moses Zarzal, the physician to Henry III of Castile. This almanac was compiled in 1395.

b. A synoptic commentary on Mora Nebuchim which reveals his familiarity with the philosophy of Aristotle as interpreted by the Arabian philosophers. It is uncertain when this commentary was written.⁹

c. Ma'aseh Efo is his chief work. Published in 1403 it treats the subject of Hebrew grammar from the philological and critical aspect. It contains thirty-three chapters and an introduction. Its purpose is to instruct his contemporaries who know nothing about grammar or who have erroneous notions about it. It was written especially to reject the mistakes of later grammarians. In this work he frequently quotes the otherwise unknown grammarian Samuel Benveniste.

d. Zikeron HaShemadot is one of his unknown works. It deals with the history of Jewish martyrdom since

⁹. Heb Ur vol. 6 p. 404

thy new teacher expound will surely go to heaven." From this starting point Efo proceeds to mockingly assent to the Christian dogmas and Christian thought. He advised his friend to adhere to the belief in the Trinity "three united in one; a unit which no mouth could express nor an eye perceive." "The virgin birth becomes the object of his ironic praise, while he warns his friend not to be like his fathers who "erected imposing palaces and edifices of logic." "Thou shalt not be like them. Keep far from them even the first allegorical principles, inasmuch as such an admission will destroy your whole faith. For if you say that God is the 'father' and that the 'son' is God, consequently the 'son' is the 'father.' What then? The 'son' is the 'father' and has begotten the 'son.' Away with such absurd premises." Turning to the sacrament of transubstantiation Efo uses it as a target, saying, "be sure not to believe the whole is larger than one of its parts, for the body of the Messiah is contained in the whole cake and in each separate particle of it, so that each particle must accordingly be equal to the whole." Duran concludes his letter with a warning to his former friend not to be misled by sense data. "Before he closes he insinuates that only the unscrupulous become converts for pleasure and honor. "As to myself---I put my trust in God alone and not in the Messiah, who pretends to take His Holy Name. One thing I will ask thee before I close

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d. Zikaron Hashemadot is one of his unknown works. It deals with the history of Jewish martyrdom since

U. Heb. Gr. vol. 8. p. 104

the year 70. It has been shown that the writer of Shebet Jehudah and Rabbi Samuel Usque used the Zikoron of Hefodi.

e. Miscellany---in 1397 he wrote a dirge on Abraham ben Isaac Halevi of Gerona, who was probably a relative; three letters containing responsa to his pupil Meir Crescas; two exegetical treatises on several chapters of II Samuel (edited as appendix to Ma'aseh Hefod); at the request of the Benveniste family he wrote an explanation of the religious festival poem by Ibn Ezra as well as a solution to Ibn Ezra's well-known riddle of quiescent letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Finally he composed explanations relative to Ibn Ezra's commentary to the Pentateuch.

After his return to Judaism it was an easy matter for him to make people forget his baptism. He settled in Spain or Perpignan where he continued to add to the treasury of Jewish literature.

KELIMAT HAGOYIM

The versatility of Duran as a polemical artist is evident when Al Tehi K'Abotaca and Kelimat HaGovim are placed in juxtaposition and compared. Equally forceful, they follow different paths to arrive at their goals. Kelimat HaGovim is couched in grave language of historical investigation and drives its

contentions to their logical conclusions by force of reason and by an appeal to logic. Great power is given to the arguments of Profiat Duran because of his authoritative use of Christian sources in disclosing the inconsistency of the Church philosophy. The book was written at the request of Chasdai Crescas to whom it was dedicated.¹⁰ His kinsman Simeon ben Zemach Duran made much use of the material of Efodi in his attack on Christianity and especially in his defense of the Torah.¹¹ In a Roman manuscript we learn that Rashbaz translated two-thirds of Kelimat HaGoyim for use in his Keshet UMagen without mentioning the source.¹² Similarly Albo utilized much of Duran's material in Chapter 25 of his Ikkarim, while Eisenstein adds the names of two who borrowed from Efodi: Rabbi Shem Tob ben Isaac Ibn Shaprut, the author of Eben Bohen; and David Nasi, the author of Hodaat Baal Din. In Asham Tolui Rabbi Joshua Sagrin mentions that he bought a copy of Duran's polemic. Eisenstein also hints that Crescas drew from Kelimat HaGoyim for his Bitule Ikkorai HaNozrim.¹³

It is hard to understand what lies beneath the arguments of those who attempt to show that Profiat Duran wrote Kelimat HaGoyim. It is possible that authorship may have been ascribed to others and defense was necessary. In his commentary

10. Eng Gr vol. 4 p. 190

11. JE vol. 10 p. 106

12. Ozar p. 260

13. ibid p. 260

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After his return to Luchan it was an easy matter for him to make people forget his past. He settled in Spain or Portugal where he continued to add to the treasury of Jewish literature.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

The versatility of "Duran" as a polemicist is evident when Al Tani K'Abdullah and Kelimat HaGoyim are placed in juxtaposition and compared. Equally forcefully, they follow different paths to arrive at their goals. Kelimat HaGoyim is couched in grave language of historical investigation and drives its

to Al Tahi K'Aboteca, Rabbi Joseph ben Shem Tob said, "In Kelimat HaGoyim he (Duran) wrote what he here intimates." ¹⁴ There is additional proof in the use of the phrase כפי מאמר האומר "according to the word of the speaker" in both polemics. This phrase means we need but turn to the words of Jesus to disprove Christian claims; used frequently in both polemics, these words permit us to assume a common authorship. Although the date of its composition is uncertain, internal evidence proves that it must have been written after his apostasy, that is, after the persecution of 1391. Speaking of Chasdai Duran said, "Thou, O glorious one of the generation, hast seen the evil days and the poured-out wrath upon the exiles of Jerusalem in Spain."¹⁵ In the introduction the translator refers to the year ה'קצ"ז and in his note Rabinowitz adds the word קלדס which fixes the date of its composition at 1397, one year after his return to Judaism.

The book Kelimat HaGoyim is divided into twelve chapters, each of which deals with a salient point in Jewish polemics or apologetics. Duran however does not limit himself to old Christianity and the claims of the New Testament but attacks institutions within the developed church, institutions which exist to this day. His polemic is particularly effective because it reveals the inner

14. Ibid.

15. Heb Gr vol. 6 p.404

contentions to their logical conclusions by force of reason and by an appeal to logic. Great power is given to the arguments of Kelimat Duran because of his authoritative use of Christian sources in disclosing the inconsistency of the "church philosophy". The book was written at the request of Chasdai Gresser to whom it was dedicated.¹⁰ His kinsman Simon ben Zemann Duran made much use of the material of Kelimat in his attack on Christianity and especially in his defense of the Torah.¹¹ In a Roman manuscript we learn that Rabbah translated two-thirds of Kelimat HaGoyim for use in his Kashaf Ushenay without mentioning the source.¹² Similarly Albo utilized much of Duran's material in Chapter 28 of his Ikkarim, while Eisenstein adds the names of two who borrowed from Kelimat: Rabbi Shem Tob ben Isaac Ibn Shaput, the author of Shen Boheg; and "avid Neel", the author of Hodas Basal Din. In Asham Tofim Rabbi Joshua Gresser mentions that he bought a copy of Duran's polemic. Eisenstein also hints that Gresser drew from Kelimat HaGoyim for his Shulchan Ikkarim HaGoyim.¹³ It is hard to understand what lies beneath the arguments of those who attempt to show that Kelimat Duran wrote Kelimat HaGoyim. It is possible that authorship may have been ascribed to others and defense was necessary. In his commentary

10. Heb Gr vol. 4 p.190
11. Ibid. vol. 10 p.106
12. Ibid. p.286
13. Ibid. p.280

contradictions of Christian doctrine and dogma and the degeneration of Christianity. The Chapters of Kelimat HaGoyim deal with the following subjects:

- A. Proof from the words of Jesus and his disciples that he did not consider himself a God;
- B. Interpretation of the Trinity;
- C. Interpretation of "incarnation" and "original sin."
- D. Proof that Jesus did not want to nullify the Torah but considered it divine;
- E. Explanation of the reason why the followers of Jesus wanted to nullify the Torah;
- F. Interpretation of the Mass and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation;
- G. Explanation of the sacrament of baptism;
- H. The Papacy and their scriptural proof;
- I. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the Christian sacraments;
- J. Their faulty use of scriptural verses;
- K. Their errors concerning the "era del Nacimiento;"
- L. Jerome's errors in translation.

Throughout the essay two technical terms are used, עוֹשֵׂי טָעוּת "erring ones" and מְבַלְעֵי טָעוּת "those who lead into error." The first term refers to Jesus and his disciples who erred but did not lead others into error. The second term is used with reference to the later leaders of Christianity

The book Kelimat HaGoyim is divided into twelve chapters, each of which deals with a salient point in Jewish polemics or apologetics. Duran however does not limit himself to old Christianity and the claims of the New Testament but attacks institutions within the developed church, institutions which exist to this day. His polemic is particularly effective because it reveals the inner translator refers to the year 1397, one year after and in his note Rabinowitz adds the word שנת which exiles of Jerusalem in Spain. "In the introduction the Duran said, "Thou O Goyim one of the generations, hast after the persecution of 1397. Speaking of Chasidai that it must have been written after his apostasy, that is of its composition is uncertain, internal evidence permit us to assume a common authorship. Although the date we need but turn to the words of Jesus to disprove Christian claims, used frequently in both polemics, these words word of the speaker" in both polemics. This phrase means the phrase אֵלֶּיךָ יָשָׁב "according to the intimates." It there is additional proof in the use of said, "In Kelimat HaGoyim he (Duran) wrote what he here to Al Tehi K'Abodot, Rabbi Joseph ben Shem Top

who united Jesus' teaching with paganism and produced what Duran calls "a mixture of honey and wormwood."

Efodi disposes of each subject systematically. Turning to the individual subjects under discussion let us analyze them chapter by chapter.

A. Jesus did not speak of himself as a god nor did his disciples use such a term in speaking of him. They called him "master" and "rabbi" but never "our God, Jesus." In their opinion he was in the category of a chosen son but was not literally the "Son of God." By referring to him as the chosen son they meant to distinguish between Moses, the servant, and Jesus, the more beloved.¹⁶

Further proof of this contention is seen in the intercourse between Jesus and Satan in which Jesus' own words prove his humanity.¹⁷ Similarly, Jesus himself denies that he is empowered to speak of the good, for "only one there is who is good."¹⁸ Neither would his disciples have been surprised at the incident of the fig tree if they looked upon him as divine.¹⁹ Mary, his mother, who is the most reliable authority, speaks of Joseph as Jesus' father.²⁰ From these and other verses it becomes clear that the Talm did not look upon Jesus as divine.

The Mat'im erred in their interpretation of scriptural verses. The ambiguous sayings, e.g. John X:30 and XIV:9, can be explained in terms of the poetic nature

16. Hebrews III:5-6 (Numbers XII: 7)

17. Math IV:3-4

18. Ibid XIX:16-17

19. Ibid X:17-18

20. Lk II:42-48

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16. Hebrews III:8-9
 17. Math IV:3-4
 18. Ibid XIX:18-19
 19. Ibid X:17-18
 20. Mk II:23-24

of Jesus, the master of parables. Other verses clearly
 indicate that he was human, for example "My God, my God
 why hast Thou forsaken me?"²¹ Yet the Mat'im unite the
 figure of Jesus with the person of God. In their writings
 he is called "our only master and lord, Jesus Christ."²²
 To strengthen their claims they misinterpreted Biblical
 verses. In Jeremiah the Messiah is called "Adonoi Zidkanu."²³
 However, the combination of names here has no more significance
 than the name of the altar "Adonoi-nisi"²⁴ which also contains
 God's name. The well-known verse "An almah shall conceive
 and bear a son and call his name Immanuel"²⁵ is a subject
 of contention. But, in reality, the word Almah does not have
 the same meaning as Betulah as is evident from its use in
 connection with a young woman who could not have been a
 virgin, namely, "The way of a man with an Almah."²⁶ The
 claim of the Gospel writer becomes absurd in the light of
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 of the present, while Christian writer projects his imagination
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 that his mother "shall call his name Immanuel" and in the
 Gospel it is Gabriel who named Jesus. Likewise the verse
 "His name shall be called Pele-joez-el-gibbor-abi-ad-sar-
 shalom"²⁷ is interpreted by the Christians to mean the Messiah
 but this claim is unjustified in the light of the preceding
 section²⁸ which clearly indicates that the names of honor
 are bestowed upon Hezekiah.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 21. Math XXVII:34 | 25. Is. VII:14 |
| 22. Jude I:4 | 26. Prov XXX:19 |
| 23. Jere XXIII:6 | 27. Is. IX:5 |
| 24. Ex XVII:16 | 28. Is. VIII:7 |

When the wise men of the Church became aware of the discrepancy between their claims and their proof, they taught that Jesus was a combination of two aspects or natures, one, human and one, divine. Therefore, whenever the Scripture speaks about the Messiah's humanity it refers to his human aspect and when it speaks of his divinity it refers to his divine aspect. The unity of divinity and humanity is more complete and binding than the unity of body and soul. This combination of two foreign natures within one and the same substance is called hypostasis. When the two were completely united the Messiah was executed. If this is true, then God was put to death, even though it was the human aspect of the Messiah that was executed. It is like the execution of a murderer who happened to be a merchant. He is executed as a murderer, but is not the merchant put to death? In the hour of death Jesus called out "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" 29 Was it proper for a God to call upon a God? It is evident that Jesus did not consider himself divine and that the Talm acknowledged his humanity. His divinity is an invention of the "at'im.

B. The error of the trinity assumption is based on the Cabala in which "fathers and sons" are sefiroth, which are given such names as "The Face of God" 30 and "The Image of God." 31 Assuming a first light, a clear light, and a shining light within the sefiroth, they claimed that

29. Math XXVII:46

30. Jn I:1 See also Par. Rim. perek 1

31. II Corinth. IV:4

of Jesus, the master of parables. Other verses clearly indicate that he was human, for example "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" 21 Yet the Mat'ins write the figure of Jesus with the person of God. In their writings he is called "our only master and lord, Jesus Christ." 22 To strengthen their claims they misinterpreted Biblical verses. In Jeremiah the Messiah is called "Adonai Nidkamu." 23 However, the combination of names here has no more significance than the name of the altar "Adonai-Nidai" which also contains God's name. The well-known verse "An Almah shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel" 24 is a subject of contention. But, in reality, the word Almah does not have the same meaning as Betulah as is evident from its use in connection with a young woman who could not have been a virgin, namely, "The way of a man with an Almah." 25 The claim of the Gospel writer becomes absurd in the light of the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy. The text spoke of the present, while Christian writer projects his imagination 500 years into the future. Furthermore, the verse says that his mother "shall call his name Immanuel" and in the Gospel it is Gabriel who named Jesus. Likewise the verse "His name shall be called false-joseph-el-gibbor-shi-ad-shalom" 26 is interpreted by the Christians to mean the Messiah but this claim is unjustified in the light of the preceding section 27 which clearly indicates that the names of honor are bestowed upon Heskiah.

21. Jn I:1
22. Jn I:1
23. Jn I:1
24. Jn I:1
25. Jn I:1

26. Jn I:1
27. Jn I:1
28. Jn I:1
29. Jn I:1
30. Jn I:1

these are one. In the New Testament they upheld the trinity on the basis of the statement of John, "There are three who bear witness, the spirit and the water and the blood; and the three agree in one."³² In his commentary Nicholas de Lyra said, "There are three who give testimony in the heaven, the Father, son and holy ghost." The water, blood and spirit which bear witness of Jesus are his spirit, which descended to Limbo to free the souls of the fathers; his blood which was shed; and the water which came forth from his body when the soldier stabbed him. But these three substances really cannot be one. Realizing this discrepancy the Mat'im tried to remove this proof but they were unsuccessful because it is mentioned by Nicholas de Lyra.

Furthermore, how can John's opening sentence about the identity of God and the logos refer to the trinity when it really indicates a duality? No mention is made of the holy ghost. The Mat'im tried to prove their assertion by interpreting it philosophically, by calling the three members of the trinity the three attributes necessary for the renewal of creation: wisdom, corresponding to the son; potentiality, corresponding to the Father; and will, corresponding to the holy ghost. The statement is philosophically true but has no logical connection with a divine trinity.

From the scriptural use of phrases, such as the plural forms of Elohim and Adonai, Holy, Holy, Holy,

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and the Shema, the Mat'ins try to deduce the trinity, but their effort is in vain. If they followed their own method of deduction to its logical conclusion they would be forced to assume a quintet and not a trium. It is evident that they are in error in their trinitarian assumption.

C. The Mat'ins assumed that the divine spirit was embodied in the person of Jesus in order to save humanity. They say that Adam's sin brought death into the world. Therefore punishment is exacted of all his descendants. This original sin is part of the inheritance of mankind. But out of love for humanity God took on human form and came down to the earth to redeem His creatures. The shedding of Jesus' blood made atonement. Although circumcision had elevated man's soul into the highest chamber of Gehenna the redemption was not consummated until Jesus died. His resurrection completed the act of grace. It is not necessary to refute their deductions since the refutation of the root principle destroys their case.

Jesus himself did not mention this aspect of his ministry. The Mat'ins deduced it from his statement that it is necessary for the "son of man" to die.³³ Paul confirms this assumption when he says, "We were reconciled to God through the death of His son,"³⁴ and "for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."³⁵ Only they who believe in Jesus shall inherit this eternal life.³⁶ The keys of Paradise are placed in Jesus hands.

33. Math. XVI:21

34. Rom. V:8

35. I Corinth. XV:21

36. Jn. 3:36

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From the scriptural use of phrases, such as the plural forms of Michah and Adonai, Holy, Holy, Holy.

32. I Jn. V:8

But Jesus did not say that his ministry was to humanity. "I come not to call the righteous but the sinners."³⁷ The lost sheep of the House of Israel were his flock and not the whole human race.³⁸ Other sayings of Jesus refute this contention of the Mat'im. Pointing to a young boy Jesus said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."³⁹ The statement implies that some were eligible for admission to Paradise before Jesus died to redeem the world. In answer to the question "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life" Jesus advised not faith but obedience to the commandments.⁴⁰ At another time Jesus implied that the evil deeds of the scribes and Pharisees had closed the gates of the kingdom of heaven.⁴¹ Furthermore, the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the beggar, is certain proof that some went to "Abraham's bosom" and others to Hades even before the incarnation and crucifixion.⁴² In another place Jesus denies admission only to the rice, saying "it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."⁴³ It is clear from these verses that Jesus did not have in mind the mission which the Mat'im ascribed to him. He believed that one's deeds are the criteria.

Jesus did not rise to the lofty view of the soul held by the masters of our tradition, but looked upon

37. Math. IX:13 42. Lk. XVI:19-25
39. ibid. XVIII:4 43. ibid. XVIII: 25
40. ibid. XIX:16-17
41. ibid. XXIII:13
38. Math. 15:24

37. Math. IX:13
38. Math. 15:24
39. ibid. XVIII:4
40. ibid. XVIII: 25
41. ibid. XVIII: 25
42. Lk. XVI:19-25
43. ibid. XVIII: 25

it as something corporeal, although of lesser corporeality than the body. The Mat'im actually believed that Jesus sat at the right hand of God.⁴⁴ This conception is much inferior to that of the masters of our Torah.

The Toim believed that Jesus would return to earth and live again among men. The resurrection would take place, they thought, within a short time and many who knew Jesus in life would be present as witnesses. Jesus promised that this event would come to pass before his generation had passed away. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished."⁴⁵ Paul said, "Yet a little while, he that cometh shall come."⁴⁶ When the Mat'im saw that the end of the world was delayed they reinterpreted the word "generation" and said that the periods of the world are divided into three, each of which is called a generation. The first was from Adam to Moses; the second from Moses to Jesus; and the third from Jesus to the day of judgment. This assumption cannot be proved. They also invented the figure of the anti-Christ who will try to confuse the faith of Jesus.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that experience has shown that all these inventions and misinterpretations are false; their purpose is to protect the mistaken opinions of Jesus and his followers from the accusation of falsehood.

D: According to the Gospel descriptions, Jesus was a pious fool, אֱלֹהִים who did more than

44. Math. XXVI:64

45. Ibid. XXIV:34

46. Heb. X:38

47. I Jn. I:2-3

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37. Math. IX:13
38. Ibid. XXIII:29
39. Ibid. XXIII:11-12
40. Ibid. XXIII:11-12
41. Ibid. XXIII:11-12
42. Math. IX:13

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48. Math. V:17
49. Ibid. V:18
50. Ibid. XXVI:63
51. Ibid. XV:11
52. Lk. X:3-7 ; Compare with Math. X:5-19

merely fulfill the law. It never entered his mind to preach against the Torah of Moses. Indeed, he said to his disciples, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill."⁴⁸ In Jesus' remarks about divorce, adultery, etc., he had no intention of nullifying the Torah, but merely wanted to define it. He prefaced his address with the statement "Till heaven and earth pass away one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law."⁴⁹ Jesus was executed not because he opposed the law but because he was a blasphemer.⁵⁰

Yet the Mat'im deduced from his words that he nullified the Mosaic law, permitted that which the Torah forbade and lightened the yoke of the law. However, when he said, "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man"⁵¹ he did not intend to permit forbidden foods. He merely explained that the foods are forbidden not because they are inherently unclean but only because they are not permitted by divine decree. Jesus was not anti-nomistic when he charged his disciples to go forth without purses, wallets or shoes and eat the things set before them.⁵² He had Jewish homes and Jewish food in mind. His previous command "Go not into any way of the Gentiles" clearly excludes such an inference. Contrary to the belief

48. Math. V:17
49. Ibid. V:18
50. Ibid. XXVI:63
51. Ibid. XV:11
52. Lk. X:3-7 ; Compare with Math. X:5-19

of the Mat'im his justification of Sabbath-breaking, when his disciples plucked corn, is legal because it was hunger that forced them to the violation of the Sabbath law.⁵³

In fact Jesus did not concern himself with the Gentiles but called them "dogs."⁵⁴ Instead he was exceedingly careful; to do all the Pharisees commanded. He told his disciples to pray that their flight at the time of the tribulation would not be on the Sabbath.⁵⁵ His disciples were also very scrupulous about law observance. Thrice Peter objected to the eating of forbidden food and blood even when it was the voice of God that commanded.⁵⁶ Paul and his disciples observed the law of the Nazarite by sacrificing and refraining from shaving.⁵⁷ At Rome Paul denied that he had broken the law and differed with the customs of Israel.⁵⁸ James said, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all."⁵⁹

Naturally Paul did not insist on the observance of the law on the part of Gentile converts: Faith is the sine qua non of salvation. Basing his assumption on the verse "and he believed in the Lord and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness"⁶⁰ Paul argued that faith is the prerequisite of salvation and grace and that circumcision was commanded only to prove Abraham's faith.⁶¹ But this loosening of the yoke for the Gentile was motivated by the

53. Math. XII:1-4	58. Acts XXVIII:17-18
54. Mk. VII:27	59. Jas. II:10
55. Math. XXIV:15-21	60. Gen. XV:6
56. Acts X: 11-16	61. Rom. IV:3-11
57. ibid. XXI:26 compare with Mos. VI:13-18	

merely fulfill the law. It never entered his mind to preach against the Torah of Moses. Indeed, he said to his disciples, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill."⁵⁴ In Jesus' remarks about divorce, adultery, etc., he had no intention of nullifying the Torah, but merely wanted to define it. He prefaced his address with the statement "I'll heaven and earth pass away one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law."⁵⁵ Jesus was executed not because he opposed the law but because he was a blasphemer.⁵⁶

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54. Math. V:17
55. ibid. V:18
56. ibid. XXIV:15-21
57. ibid. XXIV:15-21
58. Lk. IX:3-5; Compare with Math. X:9-10

desire to strengthen their hearts in the faith of Jesus. Israel was forever obligated to obey the law. Paul said, "I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision that he is a debtor to do the whole law."⁶² These words, intended to loosen the yoke from the Gentiles, prove the eternity of the Torah as the law of Israel, for if each man is bound by duty to circumcise his son, that son will be bound by the same law to fulfill it in regard to his son, and so on to all eternity.

E. The Mat'im realized that the words of Jesus were not anti-nomistic. Hence they were forced to nullify the Torah by recourse to other methods. They philosophized and spoke of three periods of the Torah: the period corresponding to the whole normal man, from Moses to Jesus' crucifixion, when absolute observance of the Torah is mandatory; the second period corresponding to the weak sickly man, from the crucifixion of Jesus to the dissemination of the gospel, during which they was only partial observance; and the period following the dissemination when only the limb of morality remained alive. But this claim cannot be proved inasmuch as Jesus insisted that the law be observed even after the Gospel had become known.⁶³ But the Mat'im agreed that since Jesus gave the pope the keys of heaven, he could do all he desired. Hence innovations and non-observance of the law find justification.

Turning to Biblical literature the Mat'im

⁶² Gal. V:3

⁶³ Math. XXIV:20

of the Mat'im in his justification of Sabbath-breaking, when his disciples picked corn, is legal because it was hunger that forced them to the violation of the Sabbath law.⁵⁹ In fact Jesus did not concern himself with the Gentiles but called them "dogs."⁶⁰ Instead he was exceedingly careful to do all the Pharisees commanded. He told his disciples to pray that their flight at the time of the tribulation would not be on the Sabbath.⁶¹ His disciples were also very scrupulous about law observance. Twice Peter objected to the eating of forbidden food and blood even when it was the voice of God that commanded.⁶² Paul and his disciples observed the law of the Pharisees by abstaining and refraining from shaving.⁶³ At Rome Paul denied that he had broken the law and differed with the customs of Israel.⁶⁴ James said, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all."⁶⁵ Naturally Paul did not insist on the observance of the law on the part of Gentile converts. While in the time of non-observance, being his assumption on the verse "and he believed in the word and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness."⁶⁶ Paul argued that faith in the propitiation of salvation and grace and that of justification was commanded only to prove Abraham's faith.⁶⁷ But this loosening of the yoke for the Gentile was motivated by the

⁵⁹ Math. XXIII:23
⁶⁰ Mark VIII:23
⁶¹ Mark XXIV:20
⁶² Acts IV:31
⁶³ Acts X:11-12
⁶⁴ Acts X:11-12
⁶⁵ James I:12
⁶⁶ Gal. III:12
⁶⁷ Gal. III:12

use scriptural verses to prove that the old Torah has been replaced. Among these are "Teach me Thy way, O Lord"⁶⁴ which Jerome translates "Give me a Torah, O Lord." Another is the verse "Behold the days come saith the Lord when I shall make a new covenant"⁶⁵ which Jerome misinterprets as "a new Torah" when only a more faithful observance of the old Torah is meant.

In this spirit they glorified themselves when they proclaimed themselves as the new Israel. They used the prophetic predictions of Israel's destruction as their proof that the old Israel is destroyed. But did not God promise redemption? "If you shall be scattered to the ends of the earth, from there God shall gather you to the land your fathers inherited and which you shall inherit and He shall do well with you and multiply you more than your fathers."⁶⁶ Nicholas de Lyra thought that the verse in Jeremiah "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart"⁶⁷ was proof that in the time of Jesus all the nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem and idolatry will cease under the influence of the new faith. This is untrue historically, for Constantine, who forced Christianity upon Europe, lived more than 300 years after Jesus. The scripture speaks about the

64. Psa. XXVII:11

65. JereXXXI:30,32

66. Deut. XXX:4-8

67. Jere. III:13

desire to strengthen their hearts in the faith of Jesus. Israel was forever obligated to obey the law. Paul said, "I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision that he is a debtor to do the whole law."⁶⁸ These words intended to loosen the yoke from the Gentiles, prove the eternity of the Torah as the law of Israel, for if each man is bound by duty to circumcise his son, that son will be bound by the same law to fulfill it in regard to his son, and so on to all eternity.

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Turning to Biblical literature the Nat'im

68. Gal. V:3
69. Matt. XXIII:23

future redemption of Israel and not about Jesus' influence. When Jeremiah says, "they shall say no more the ark of the covenant of the Lord" he means that all the word will be filled with prophecy. He does not mean that the old Torah is nullified, as Nicholas de Lyra claimed.

Failing in their early attempts, the Mat'im began to use other means to prove that the old Torah is deficient. They said that it lacks completions, while the new law of Jesus is complete and perfect. In three ways they insisted the Mosaic law is imperfect: first, in its basic assumptions; second, in its commandments; and third, in its purpose or end. It is defective in its basic assumptions because it does not explicitly mention the trinity but speaks of it only in hidden phrases. The veil of Moses⁶⁸ is symbolic of the veil that has been placed over the Biblical references to the trinity. The advent of the Messiah will signify that the veil has been removed. Yet the veil over the eyes of Israel will not be removed until they accept Jesus; "Whosoever Moses is read a veil lieth upon their heart."⁶⁹

They said the Mosaic law is defective in its commandments. These ordinances can be divided into three groups:

- a. Ethical commands, called morals;
- b. Political commands, called judiciale;
- c. Ritual commands, called ceremonial.

Regarding morals they claimed that the Torah is concerned

⁶⁸ Ex. XXXIV:33-35
⁶⁹ II Corinth. III:15

use scriptural verses to prove that the old Torah has been replaced. Among these are "Teach me Thy way, O Lord" which Jerome translates "Give me a Torah, O Lord." Another is the verse "Should the days come wherein the word which shall make a new covenant" which Jerome misinterprets as "a new Torah" when only a more faithful observance of the old Torah is meant.

In this spirit they glorified themselves when they proclaimed themselves as the new Israel. They used the prophetic predictions of Israel's destruction as their proof that the old Israel is destroyed, but did not God promise redemption? "If you shall be scattered to the ends of the earth, from there God shall gather you to the land your fathers inherited and which you shall inherit and He shall do well with you and multiply you more than your fathers." Nicholas de Lyra thought that the verse in Jeremiah "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart" was proof that in the time of Jesus all the nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem and idolatry will cease under the influence of the new faith. This is untrue historically, for Constantine, who forced Christianity upon Europe, lived more than 300 years after Jesus. The scripture speaks about the

84. Lev. XXIV:11
 85. Jer. XXXI:33
 86. Deut. XXX:4-8
 87. Jer. III:13

with deeds and not with the purification of the heart. For example, the commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife"⁷⁰ forbids the outward manifestations of covetousness, like kissing, embracing, etc., but does not forbid inner covetousness. Regarding political commands, they direct their arrows against the laws of the blood avenger and the cities of refuge,⁷¹ saying that if the murderer-in-error must remain in exile until the high priest's death one man may be punished for a day and another for seventy years, even though their crimes are equal. Furthermore, they insist that the malicious blood-avenger is more deserving of punishment than the innocent murderer-in-error. Regarding ritual laws, they maintain that the sin offerings stipulated in the Torah are not sufficient for atonement, which requires Jesus. This, they claim, is what Ezekiel meant when he said, "I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances wherein they should not live."⁷² Being deficient in its atonement power the Torah is also deficient in its purpose for it does not achieve its end.

We need but turn to our Psalms to see how perfect the Torah is. Duran rejects their fancies even though he claims he can refute them. He quotes the Psalmist instead: "The Law of the Lord is perfect---the Commandments of the Lord are pure---"⁷³ The Torah proclaims its own perfection, when it asks, "Who is the great nation that

70. Ex. XX:7
71. Deut. XXXV:38
72. Ezek. XX:25
73. Psa. XIX

future redemption of Israel and not about Jesus' influence. When Jeremiah says, "they shall say no more the ark of the covenant of the Lord" he means that all the word will be filled with prophecy. He does not mean that the old Torah is nullified, as Nicholas de Lyra claimed. Waiting in their early attempts, the Latin began to use other means to prove that the old Torah is deficient. They said that it lacks completeness, while the new law of Jesus is complete and perfect. In three ways they insisted the Mosaic law is imperfect: first, in its basic assumptions; second, in its commandments; and third, in its purpose or end. It is defective in its basic assumptions because it does not explicitly mention the Trinity but speaks of it only in hidden phrases. The veil of Moses⁸⁸ is symbolic of the veil that has been placed over the Biblical references to the Trinity. The advent of the Messiah will signify that the veil has been removed. Yet the veil over the eyes of Israel will not be removed until they accept Jesus. "Wherefore Moses is read a veil flesh upon their heart."⁸⁹ They said the Mosaic law is defective in its commandments. These ordinances can be divided into three groups:

- a. Ethical commands, called moralis;
- b. Political commands, called iudicialis;
- c. Ritual commands, called ceremonialis.

Regarding moralis they claimed that the Torah is concerned

88. Ex. XXXIV:35-36
89. II Cor. III:15

hath such righteous laws and ordinances as this Torah?"⁷⁴

F. One of their principles of faith is that Jesus in the form in which he was crucified enters into a wafer upon the altar, while simultaneous with his entrance into all the wafers he sits on his throne in heaven. The wafer may be divided into many parts but each part contains the whole body of Jesus. Similarly the wine on the altar represents the blood of their Messiah. With the eating of the wafer and the drinking of the wine, the body of the one who partakes is united with the body of Jesus. By power given to him the pope may empower any priest to transform the wafer into the body of Jesus. At a word Jesus enters wafers by making a journey that would normally take 8,000 years. Through the eating of the wafer, the principle of which is known as eucharist, life eternal is attained.

The Mat'im insist that Jesus made the eucharist a principle of faith, when he said, "Take, eat, this is my body."⁷⁵ Concerning the wine he said, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out unto many for remission of sins." But Jesus spoke in parables. He meant that these objects were to be symbols of him, which were to serve as objects of remembrance. At the declaration "This is my body" the bread did not dispense with its old form. By way of analogy we can see that when he pointed to his disciples and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren"⁷⁶

74. Deut. IV:8

75. Math. XXVI:26-27

77. *ibid.* XII:46-49

with deeds and not with the purification of the heart. For example, the commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" forbids the outward manifestations of covetousness, like kissing, embracing, etc., but does not forbid inner covetousness. Regarding political commands they direct their arrows against the laws of the blood avenger and the cities of refuge, saying that if the murderer-in-error must remain in exile until the high priest's death one man may be punished for a day and another for seventy years, even though their crimes are equal. Furthermore, they insist that the malicious blood-avenger is more deserving of punishment than the innocent murderer-in-error. Regarding ritual laws, they maintain that the sin offerings stipulated in the Torah are not sufficient for atonement, which requires Jesus. This, they claim, is what Ezekiel meant when he said, "I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances wherein they should not live."⁷⁸ Being deficient in its atonement power the Torah is also deficient in its purpose for it does not achieve its end.

We need but turn to our Psalm to see how perfect the Torah is. David rejects their fancies even though he claims he can refute them. He quotes the Psalmist instead, "The law of the Lord is perfect---the Commandments of the Lord are pure---!"⁷⁹ The Torah proclaims its own perfection, when it asks, "Who is the great nation that

78. Deut. XXIV:17
79. Ps. LXXIII:6

he did not mean that they were literally his mother and brethren. At the hour of crucifixion when he pointed to his disciple and said to his mother "Woman, behold thy son"⁷⁸ he did not immediately relinquish his form and enter into the body of his disciple. His sole intention regarding the wafer was that they should remember him by it. His use of words can be understood in the light of the rabbinic use of the term "flesh" to signify instruction. "In place of picking bones (receiving scanty instruction) in the house of Abaya, go and eat flesh in the house of Raba."⁷⁹

When they try to interpret the saying of Jesus spiritually the Mat'is quote the book Sententiae, chapter four. They say that the body of Jesus can be understood in two ways: one, literally, and two, as the congregation of believers. They use Paul's statement as proof "seeing that we who are many are one bread."⁸⁰ But their attempts to interpret the verse "This is my body" are in vain; it is like building a great city on a foundation of wind. When Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came out of heaven" "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him."⁸¹ Turning to the Torah the Mat'is cite Melchizedek as an example of a true priest who concerns himself with the mass. The Torah says, "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine and he was priest of God most high."⁸² They claimed that the service of bread and wine is made unique for the Most High God by a real priest. But they did not realize that verse 20

78. Jn. XIX:26
79. B.B. 22a
80. I Corinth. X:17

81. Jn. VI:51,66
82. Gen. XIV:18-19

74. Dent. IV:8
75. Math. XXVI:26-27
76. 1st Cor. X:16-17

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reads "And he gave him (Abraham) a tenth of all." If Melchizedek had been a priest, he would have taken his tithe first.

G. John the Baptist baptized those who came to him. This was the baptism of repentance but not the one which the Mat'im made a principle of faith. The latter was used for Gentile converts who entered the faith of Jesus since it was the custom in Israel to immerse proselytes. But Jewish converts to early Christianity were not required to be baptized, as we see in the command of Jesus "Go ye therefore making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, son and holy ghost."⁸³ Israel was considered a holy people, needing no initiatory rite. In fact Paul wrote, "For I would not, brethren, have ye ignorant that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea."⁸⁴ None of the disciples were required to be baptized except Paul whose baptism was one of repentance because he, as the disciple of Gamaliel, the elder, and the messenger of the Bet Din, had formerly persecuted the followers of Jesus.⁸⁵

The Mat'im made baptism a sacrament. They taught that the divine grace lost by Adam and his seed will be restored to those who undergo this ceremony. Then they began to look for scriptural support and declared that the Red Sea episode and the manna of the wilderness are veiled

83. Math. XXVIII:19
84. I Corinth. X:1
85. Acts IX:1-18

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86. I Corinth. X:17
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89. Gen. XIV:18-19

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86. 1 Cor. XV:20
87. Ezek. XXXVI:25
88. 1 Cor. XV:1-4
89. Math. XIX:17

references to the baptism and mass. Furthermore, they argued, the immersions mentioned in the Torah are only intimations of the baptism since the source of uncleanness requiring immersion is contact with the dead and Jesus is the reviver of the dead.⁸⁶ This, they maintained, is what Ezekiel meant when he said, "I shall sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean."⁸⁷ Such contentions are without proof.

The last of the earliest group of Mat'im claimed that the baptism is referred to in the verse "Ho, all ye that thirst come for water"⁸⁸ and that "come, buy wine and milk without money" refers to the wine of the mass. "Hearken diligently unto me and eat that which is good" was interpreted as the eating of the wafer which is God, for "there is no good except God."⁸⁹ "Let your souls rejoice in fatness is a promise of prosperity to all who participate in the mass. However the Mat'im did not take into consideration the promises made to Israel at the beginning of this section. Certainly these promises did not materialize with the advent of Jesus. On the contrary, the lot of Israel became more grievous.

H. The Mat'im set up a head of the church who was considered the heir to the keys of heaven. A sinner must remain in a certain terrace of Gehenna, known as purgatory, until his sins have been purged. It is in the power of the pope to shorten the time and lessen the degree of punishment.

86. 1 Cor. XV:20
87. Ezek. XXXVI:25
88. 1 Cor. XV:1-4
89. Math. XIX:17

He can also nullify any law except one made by Jesus. His authority is based on the belief that the power given to Peter by Jesus is transmitted to all who follow, to all who occupy the chair of Peter.

Their scriptural support for the institution of the papacy is the statement of Jesus "Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."⁹⁰ It is clear that the institution is based on a falsehood for we see nowhere that Peter transmitted his power to a successor. The statement of Jesus makes no allowance for a heir. However the Mat'im began to say that since Jesus had such great pity for humanity that he gave himself over to death he certainly would not leave his church without a head.

I: One of the Christian principles of faith is that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was impregnated by the holy ghost and remained a virgin.⁹¹ Biblical proof is invented in the misinterpretation of "Almah" in the sentence "An almah shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."⁹² Very little mention is made of Mary

90. Math. XVI:13-20
91. Ibid. I:20-23
92. Is. VII:14

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88. I. Cor. X:16-17
89. Ezek. XXXVI:25-27
90. I. Cor. X:16-17
91. Mat. IX:13

in the rest of the gospels. At the crucifixion,⁹³ at the wedding feast in Galilee,⁹⁴ and at prayer with others,⁹⁵ we alone make contact with Mary in the days after Jesus' childhood. Besides these few references there are none.

Nevertheless the Mat'im glorified Mary and claimed that she remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus. In heaven she stands at the right hand of Jesus making intercession for transgressors. The first gospel tells us that "Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth a son."⁹⁶ The word "till" implies that he did know her after the birth of Jesus but the Mat'im interpret the word "know" as "recognize" and claim that since Mary's face glowed during her pregnancy Joseph did not recognize her. Others insist that "till" admits of no time limitation. They tried to bring scriptural proof for their claims.

But in the Gospels we read that Jesus had brothers and sisters. Yet, when it says, "Behold thy brother and thy mother are calling thee"⁹⁷ the Mat'im claim it means "relatives." At the synagogue in Nazareth the auditors marvelled at his teaching and mentioned the names of his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judah.⁹⁸ All this is proof that the claim of the Christians regarding Mary's virginity is false.

There are seven sacraments which are like covenant principles between them and their God. They are:

93. Jn: XIX: 25-27	96. Math. I: 25
94. Ibid. III: 1-4	97. Math. X: 47
95. Acts I: 14	98. Ibid. XIII: 54-57

He can also nullify any law except one made by Jesus. His authority is based on the belief that the power given to Peter by Jesus is transmitted to all who follow, so all who occupy the chair of Peter.

Their scriptural support for the institution of the papacy is the statement of Jesus: "Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."⁹⁹ It is clear that the institution is based on a falsehood for we see nowhere that Peter transmitted his power to a successor. The statement of Jesus makes no allowance for a heir. However, the Mat'im began to say that since Jesus had such great pity for humanity that he gave himself over to death he certainly would not leave his church without a head.

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99. Math. XVI: 18-20
100. Ibid. I: 25-26
101. Ibid. VIII: 12

a. baptism

b. eucharist

c. matrimony

d. congregation

e. ordination

f. penitence

g. supreme unction

Celibacy was not one of Jesus' requirements for the priesthood but was officially adopted in 1215. It was sanctioned by the Mat'is 700 years after the ministry of Jesus. They deduce the principle of supreme unction from the words of James "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church." 99 The entire fourth part of the book

Sententia is given over to the erection of a weak structure around the seven sacraments.

Seven deadly sins bring man to spiritual death which is the true death:

a. pride

b. greed

c. gluttony

d. envy

e. idleness

f. anger

g. lewdness

The seven acts of mercy are the cure for the deadly sins:

a. hospitality to travelers

b. feeding the hungry

c. giving drink to the thirsty

in the rest of the Gospels. At the exordium, 92 at the wedding feast in Galilee, 94 and at prayer with others, 95 we alone make contact with Mary in the days after Jesus' childhood. Besides these few references there are none.

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In heaven she stands at the right hand of Jesus making intercession for transgressors. The first Gospel tells us that "Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth a son." 96 The word "till" implies that he did know her after the birth of Jesus but the Mat'is interpret the word "know" as "recognize" and claim that since Mary's face glowed during her pregnancy Joseph did not recognize her. 97 There is no "till" admits of no time limitation. They tried to bring scriptural proof for their claims.

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98. Jas. V:13-16
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- d. congregation
- e. ordination
- f. penitence
- g. supreme anction

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- b. feeding the hungry
- c. giving drink to the thirsty

99. 1st. 12-13

- d. clothing the naked
- e. freeing the prisoners
- f. visiting the sick
- g. burying the dead

In this spirit they said, "Give to travelers and thy pride
will be forgiven; give thy bread to the hungry and thy greed
will be forgiven; give thy water to the thirsty and thy
lewdness will be forgiven; give thy clothes to the naked
and thine anger will be forgiven; give prisoners freedom
and thy gluttony will be forgiven; visit the sick and thine
envy will be forgiven; bury the dead and thine idleness will
be forgiven."¹⁰⁰

J. Jesus and his disciples were ignoramuses.
Their lowly occupations indicate their lack of knowledge. In
their interpretation of scriptural verses and their quotations
from the Bible we can discern their ignorance. Therefore the
Jews called the early Christians "Maranos" because they
altered the accepted meaning of scripture. To this day any
Jew who believes in Jesus is called a Marano. It is probable
that the early Christians did not quote directly from the
Bible but quoted the popular speakers who expounded the law
on the Sabbath in public.¹⁰¹ Lacking intelligence they
would quote as the foolish do, even to this day. For
example, וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל וְיִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל וְיִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.¹⁰² Among the verses they
misinterpreted is the "Almah" passage in Isaiah: Another

¹⁰⁰. See Mel. Hagoy. Chapter 9 Ozar p.281

¹⁰¹. Hagig. 3

¹⁰². Compare with Ex. XV:7

100. See Ref. Harvey. Chapter 2. Over p. 281
101. Hattie 3
102. Compare with Ex. XV:7

103. Math. XIX:3-5 106. Ab. Zar. 8
104. ~~Math.~~ XII:28-30 107. Math. II:1
105. Yoma 39

example of their many misquotations in the section from
 "And there came unto him Pharisees saying him and
 saying, "It is lawful for a man to put away his wife for
 every cause." And he answered and said, "Have ye not read
 that he who made them from the beginning made them male
 and female and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave his
 father and mother and cleave to his wife.'"¹⁰⁸ His quotation
 is a misquotation. The New Testament is replete with such
 misquotations and misinterpretations. Jesus, the ignorant,
 even misquotes the Gospels.¹⁰⁹

K. The Mat'im try to connect the destruction
 of the Temple with the death of Jesus. They contend that
 forty years before the destruction Jesus was executed and
 because of Israel's sin the Temple and city were destroyed
 and Israel exiled. They insist that immediately after his
 crucifixion signs of the destruction became visible. The
 Talmud contains the basis of their calculation. The rabbis
 said, "Forty years before the Temple was destroyed no for
 fell to the right; no scarlet thread became white; no western
 light was dimmed."¹⁰⁸ They also said, "Forty years before
 the Temple was destroyed the Sanhedrin was exiled."¹⁰⁹ The
 Mat'im made a mistake of ten years in their calculation
 in order to teach that Jesus was crucified forty years before
 the destruction.

According to their own calculation this
 assertion is wrong for they said that Jesus was born in
 the days of Herod.¹⁰⁷ Herod became ruler of Judea in the

107. Matt. XIII:35-36
 108. Mark. XIII:18-20
 109. Matt. II:1
 100. Luke 23

tenth year of the reign of Augustus. Jesus was crucified
 three years before Herod's death and Herod ruled for
 thirty-three years. Now Augustus ruled for fifty-three
 years and was succeeded by Tiberius whose reign lasted
 for twenty-three years. After him Caligula ruled four years,
 Claudius thirteen years, Nero fourteen years, Vespasian ten
 years. Titus, who destroyed the Temple, reigned for two
 years. Since Jesus was thirty years of age when he began
 to teach¹⁰⁸ and about thirty-two and one-half years of age
 when he was executed it follows that his crucifixion took
 place about fifty years before the destruction, in the
 fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. Thus Vincento
 wrote in sections seven, eight, and nine of his well-known
 book on the history of Rome. Furthermore, Paul came to
 Rome about twenty-five years after the death of Jesus, in the
 second year of Nero's reign. It is therefore evident that
 they are in error.

L. In his translation of the Bible, Jerome
 made mistakes, too many to enumerate. Yet the Mat'im insist
 that Jerome's translation is the only one from which scriptural
 proof may be brought. At times his errors are due to ignorance
 and at times they are intentional. Perhaps he was helped by
 a Jewish ignoramus. For example, he added the phrase
 "in my God, Jesus" to the prophetic verse "I will rejoice
 in God and exult in the God of my salvation."¹⁰⁹ In another
 place he translated the verse "shall the anointed one be

108. Lk. III:23
 109. Hab. III:18

teenth year of the reign of Augustus. Jesus was crucified three years before Herod's death and Herod ruled for thirty-three years. Now Augustus ruled for fifty-three years and was succeeded by Tiberius whose reign lasted for twenty-three years. After him Caligula ruled four years, Claudius thirteen years, Nero fourteen years, Vespasian ten years, Titus, who destroyed the Temple, reigned for two years. Since Jesus was thirty years of age when he began to teach¹⁰⁸ and about thirty-two and one-half years of age when he was executed it follows that his crucifixion took place about fifty years before the destruction, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. Thus Vincent wrote in sections seven, eight, and nine of his well-known book on the history of Rome. Furthermore, Paul came to Rome about twenty-five years after the death of Jesus, in the second year of Nero's reign. It is therefore evident that they are in error.

I. In his translation of the Bible, Jerome made mistakes, too many to enumerate. Yet the Mas' in insinuates that Jerome's translation is the only one from which subsequent proof may be brought. At times his errors are due to ignorance and at times they are intentional. Perhaps he was helped by a Jewish informant. For example, he added the phrase "in my God, Jesus" to the prophetic verses "I will rejoice in God and exult in the God of my salvation."¹⁰⁹ In another place he translated the verse "shall the murdered one be

108. Lk. XXII:2
109. Heb. XIII:12

out off and be no more"¹¹⁰ in this wise "the anointed one shall be cut off and his people shall live no more to have atonement through him."

Unlike Jerome's translation our Holy Torah contains the truth. It has remained unchanged even in the far-distant islands where no report of Jesus has been heard. In his Iggeret Teman Rambam testifies to this truth.¹¹¹ Rabbi Benjamin bar Jonah, who traveled to the four corners of the earth, testified that nowhere did he see a variant reading, even in a single letter, in the text of the Bible and Mishnah. The early Soferim built a fence around the Torah in order to preserve it.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that Profiat Duran worked with an authoritative knowledge of Jewish and Christian literature. His facility in quoting the New Testament enabled him to drive his points home and because of this knowledge his refutation of the Christian dogmas takes on added strength. Of course, his use of polemical material is not original with him since much that he used is found in earlier polemics, for example Kimhi's Sefer HaBrit. We have already discussed a telling argument of the polemical writer when he asks how Jesus, as a god, could have called upon God at the moment of crucifixion. The same argument is found in Sefer HaBrit in which the believer questions the sectarian. Kelimat HaGoyim contains innumerable arguments that are common to all polemics. But

110. Dan. IX:6
111. Letters of Rambam III:72

Duran's strength lies in his brilliant method of attack. Quoting from the literature of the Church and the synagogue, Efodi interprets Christian dogmatic principles and then demolishes the structure he described. He shows, first of all, that the dogma was not even in the mind of Jesus and then shows that its support is based on a misinterpretation of Jewish and Christian sources. His acquaintance with the literature of the Church is so perfect that one might be led to believe that his period of apostasy added to his knowledge of the inner life of Christianity. Throughout Kelimat HaGoyim his technique is discernible. In every case he uses the same approach: description, quotation of the source, invalidation of the source, and revealing of inner contradictions and misinterpretations.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that Prof. Duran worked with an authoritative knowledge of Jewish and Christian literature. His facility in quoting the New Testament enabled him to drive his points home and because of this knowledge his refutation of the Christian dogmas takes on added strength. Of course, his use of polemical material is not original with him since much that he used is found in earlier polemics, for example Kishin's Be'er Hachayim. We have already discussed a telling argument of the polemical writer when he asks how Jesus, as a God, could have called upon God at the moment of crucifixion. The same argument is found in Be'er Hachayim in which the polemicist questions the assertion. Kelimat HaGoyim contains innumerable arguments that are common to all polemics. But

III. Letters of Ramban III:32
 II. Be'er Hachayim
 I. Letters of Ramban III:32

CHAPTER II

SIMEON BEN ZEMACH DURAN

The rabbinic authority Rabbi Simeon ben Zemach Duran (Rashbaz) was born not in Barcelona, as Zunz suggested, but on the island of Majorca in the month of Adar 1361. According to the genealogical table he is a descendent of Ralbag and Ramban and the son of Rabbi Efraim Duran. He is called "the offspring of Ralbag and Ramban and the pupil of Rabbi Efraim Vidal."¹ The latter, his teacher, was the pupil of Nisim bar Reuben. However, it is not certain whether he was the direct descendent or only a relative of Levi ben Gershon. Another teacher of Rashbaz was Jonah de Maestre, rabbi of Saragossa, whose daughter Bongoda he married.

His residence in Majorca was brief, for he was soon forced to flee. The persecution of 1391 drove Rashbaz, his father and sister to Algiers where he lived for fifty-three years.² During his earlier days in Algiers he practiced medicine and pursued Jewish studies. In 1391 he drafted statistics for the Jewish community in conjunction with the rabbi, Isaac ben Sheshet.

Upon the death of Ribash, Duran was offered the rabbinical position, provided that he would not seek to have his appointment confirmed by the regent. The probable

1. Heb Gr vol.6 p.435, 182

2. Heb Gr vol.6 p.105

reason why the Algiers congregation objected to royal ratification was that it had given too much power to Ribash;³ wishing to curb the power of his successor they insisted that no royal confirmation be sought. ⁴ Having lost his property in the Palma massacre; having been forced to bribe informers and having found the medical profession unprofitable among the Berbers who held physicians in no great esteem, Rashbaz was forced to accept a salary from the congregation of Algiers, not having other means of subsistence. But this must have hurt his pride for he tried to justify himself by tradition. ⁴ The claim has been made that he was the first Spanish rabbi to accept a salary. Rabinowitz however cites cases of rabbis who lived before Duran and who accepted rabbinical salaries.⁵ He remained in Algiers to the end of his life. ⁶ From the מכתביו של רבי ראובן דוראן we learn the date of his death. There it says, "From the time he came to this land (1591) his life was extended for fifty-three years in this kingdom."⁶ The year of his death, therefore, is 1444. From the same source we learn that he never returned to Spain. In Algiers this fugitive from Palma was highly respected in court circles.

Duran was a prolific author. From his pen came forth commentaries on the Mishnah, Talmud, and Bible. He is also worthy of consideration as a poet and certainly as a controversial writer. The following is the list of his

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3. Eng Gr vol. 4 p.199
 4. Heb Gr vol. 6 p.106
 5. ibid. note 3
 6. ibid p.105 note 3

CHAPTER II

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The rabbinic authority Rabbi Ben Rashbaz (Rashbaz) was born not in Barcelona, as some suggested, but on the island of Majorca in the month of Adar 1361. According to the genealogical table he is a descendant of Rabad and Rabad and the son of Rabbi Eliezer Duran. He is called "the offspring of Rabad and Rabad" and the pupil of Rabbi Eliezer Vidal.¹ The latter, his teacher, was the pupil of Meir bar Rabad. However, it is not certain whether he was the direct descendant or only a relative of Levi ben Gerson. Another teacher of Rashbaz was Joseph de Narbonne, rabbi of Narbonne, whose daughter Bonfada he married.

His residence in Majorca was brief, for he was soon forced to flee. The persecution of 1391 drove Rashbaz, his father and sister to Algiers where he lived for fifty-three years.² During his earlier days in Algiers he practiced medicine and pursued Jewish studies. In 1391 he drafted statistics for the Jewish community in conjunction with the rabbi, Isaac ben Sheshet.

Upon the death of Ribash, Duran was offered the rabbinical position, provided that he would not seek to have his appointment confirmed by the regent. The prohibi-

1. Heb Gr vol. 6 p.435, 182
 2. Heb Gr vol. 6 p.106

reason why the Algiers congregation objected to royal ratification was that it had given too much power to Rishonim; wishing to curb the power of his successors they insisted that no royal confirmation be sought. "Saying lost his property in the Palma massacre; having been forced to bribe informers and having found the medical profession unprofitable among the Berbers who held physicians in no great esteem, Rashbam was forced to accept a salary from the congregation of Algiers, not having other means of subsistence. But this must have hurt his pride for he tried to justify himself by tradition. The claim has been made that he was the first Spanish rabbi to accept a salary. Rabinowitz however cites cases of rabbis who lived before Duran and who accepted rabbinical salaries. He remained in Algiers to the end of his life. From the time we learn the date of his death. There it says, "From the time he came to this land (1501) his life was extended for fifty-three years in this kingdom." The year of his death, therefore, is 1544. From the same source we learn that he never returned to Spain. In Algiers this fugitive from Palma was highly respected in court circles.

Duran was a prolific author. From his pen came forth commentaries on the Mishnah, Talmud, and Bible. He is also worthy of consideration as a poet and certainly as a controversial writer. The following is the list of his

3. Hag. 67 vol. 4 p. 100
4. Hag. 67 vol. 6 p. 100
5. Hag. 67 vol. 6 p. 100
6. Hag. 67 vol. 6 p. 100

writings taken from a catalogue which he himself arranged:

- a. Oheb Mishpat, commentary on Job;
- b. Or HaHayim, controversial treatise against Crescas' Or Adonoi;
- c. Zohar HaRokia, commentary on Gabirol's Azharot;
- d. Hiddushe HaRashbaz, novellae on and elucidation of Hidah, Rosh HaShanah, etc.;
- e. Yabin Shemuah, precepts for bedikah, shechita, etc.;
- f. Liwyat Hen, commentary on Pentateuch in which Duran enters into controversy with Ralbag on Job;
- g. Magen Abot;
- h. Minhagim, treatment of religious dogmas and rites;
- i. Seder HaMishnah Leha Rambam, didactic poem;
- j. Perush HaKetubah w'haGet;
- k. Perush Hilkot Berakot le Harif, commentary on Eduyot;
- l. Perush Masseket Eduyot;
- m. Perush al HaHoshanot;
- n. Perush Kezat Piyyutin, religious and secular poems;
- o. Kuntras Tehinot u'Pizmanim;
- p. Remaze Piske Nidah;
- q. Tikku HaHazzanim (of which only the title is known)
- r. Taknoit Ha Rashbaz;
- s. Tashbaz----302 responsa.

Writings taken from a catalogue which he himself arranged:

- a. Orhot Mishpat, commentary on Job;
- b. Or Hachayim, controversial treatise against Abraham, Or Abraham;
- c. Sefer Hachayim, commentary on Gabriel;
- d. Midbush Hachayim, novella on and Abraham;
- e. Yabla Shemah, precepts for bedikat, Shema, etc.;
- f. Leiyat Hen, commentary on Pentateuch in which Duran enters into controversy with Rabba on Job;
- g. Magen Abot;
- h. Minhagim, treatment of religious dogmas and rites;
- i. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba, didactic poem;
- j. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- k. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba, commentary on Abraham;
- l. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- m. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- n. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba, religious and secular poems;
- o. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- p. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- q. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- r. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;
- s. Sefer Hachayim Levi Rabba;

(known)

Keshet UMagen, his polemical work, is part of a larger work known as Magen Abot which he wrote in the year 1423.⁷ Rabinowitz upholds the view that Rashbaz and not his son wrote the book. In the larger work Magen Abot Duran appears as a clever controversialist and especially in the Keshet UMagen his ability as a defender of Judaism is revealed. In the main, he attempts to uphold the inviolability of the Torah. At once both polemical and apologetic, Keshet UMagen proves the contentions of older writers and more recently of Profiat Duran that Jesus' intention was not to abolish the Torah.⁸ Though less skillful, his method is similar to that of his illustrious kinsman. Throughout he shows his familiarity with Christian writings and practices and uses his knowledge as a tool to combat Christianity with its own weapons.

KESHET UMAGEN

Unlike Kelimat HaGoyim, Keshet UMagen is not divided into chapters with separate thought divisions. For the sake of convenience the book can be divided into two sections: apologetic arguments and polemical. The apologetics of the Keshet UMagen center around the defense of the Torah and like Efodi Rashbaz maintains that:

a. Jesus did not preach against the eternity of the Torah;

b. Jesus and his disciples merely loosened the

7. Heb Gr vol. 6 p.167 note 3
8. Eng Gr vol 4 p.238

Rashbat Uman, his polemical work, is part of a larger work known as Rashbat Uman which he wrote in the year 1883. Rabinowitz upholds the view that Rashbat and not his son wrote the book. In the larger work Rashbat Uman appears as a clever controversialist and especially in the Rashbat Uman his ability as a defender of Judaism is revealed. In the main, he attempts to uphold the inviolability of the Torah. At once both polemical and apologetic, Rashbat Uman proves the contentions of older writers and more recently of Profiat Duran that Jesus' intention was not to abolish the Torah.⁹ Though less skillful, his method is similar to that of his illustrious kinsman. Throughout he shows his familiarity with Christian writings and practices and uses his knowledge as a tool to combat Christianity with its own weapons.

KEHAT UMAN

Unlike Keilat Hagovim, Keilat Uman is not divided into chapters with separate thought divisions. For the sake of convenience the book can be divided into two sections: apologetic arguments and polemical. The apologetic of the Keilat Uman center around the defense of the Torah and like Elodi Rashbat maintains that:

a. Jesus did not preach against the eternality of the Torah;

b. Jesus and his disciples merely loosened the

9. See above, p. 22
10. Deut. VI:5
11. Lev. XIX:18

yoke of the Torah from the Gentiles in order to attract them to the new faith;

c. The Torah is not defective as the Christians claim.

Like Elodi Rashbat discusses the perfection of the Torah on the side of its commandments. The same formula is used, namely, defense of the Mosaic ordinances regarding:

- a. moral commands;
- b. political commands;
- c. ceremonial commands.⁹

While Profiat Duran dismisses the accusations of the Christians with a word and turns to the Psalms to uphold the perfection of the Torah, Rashbat actually defends the Torah against the claims of the Christians. He cites a number of verses from the Bible to prove that the morality of the Torah is not merely of deeds but also of motives. For example, "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might;"¹⁰ "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart;"¹¹ "Lust not after her beauty in thy heart."¹²

Regarding the political commands Rashbat quotes "Who is the great nation that hath righteous ordinances and commandments like this Torah."¹³ In addition he defends the principle of the Torah regarding the taking of interest from a non-Jew and the exile of the murderer-in-

9. See above, p. 22
10. Deut. VI:5
11. Lev. XIX:18
12. Prov. VI:25
13. Deut. IV:8

error. It is reasonable to expect an Israelite to accept interest from a non-Jew since the non-Jew takes interest from the Jew. It is an act of lovingkindness on the part of the Torah to prohibit interest from a fellow-Jew.¹⁴

The legislation about the murderer-in-error is based on the assumption that even one who transgresses in error is a transgressor. The Biblical legislation is a warning to men to be extremely careful not to sin. The time set for the end of his exile is wisely chosen because the blood-avenger will be appeased when the great religious head of Israel is dead. Being a sinner, an atonement offering is necessary and the death of the high priest effects the atonement, it being a principle of religion that atonement comes through the death of the righteous.

Furthermore the criticism laid against the Torah because of the Talmudic rule that if the ox of a non-Jew kills the ox belonging to a Jew the non-Jew must pay full damages, but if the ox belonging to the Jew kills that of the non-Jew, the Jew is exempt,¹⁵ is unjustified. The criticism is unjust because the law is Talmudic and not Biblical.

Supplementing his apologetics Rashbaz openly attacks the belief of the Christians. He finds justification for his attack on Christianity in the Talmudic saying "All sneering is forbidden except the ridicule of idolatry."¹⁶ His

14. Lev. XXV:36

15. B.K. 38

16. Sanh: 63b

voice of the Torah from the Gentiles in order to attract them to the new faith; c. The Torah is not defective as the Christians claim.

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Regarding the political commands Rashbaz quotes "Who is the great nation that hath righteous ordinances and commandments like this Torah,"²⁰ In addition he defends the principle of the Torah regarding the taking of interest from a non-Jew and the exile of the murderer-in-

17. Lev. VI:12
18. Deut. IV:18

19. See above, p. 32
20. Deut. IV:18
21. Lev. XIX:18

polemical material can be divided into these classes:

A. Christianity is opposed to reason and consistency;

B. Their claims about Jesus are false:

1. Regarding his parentage;
2. Regarding his divinity;
3. Regarding his mission to the world;

4. Regarding their diverse claims;

C. Their heresy is evident in their misinterpretation of verses;

D. Their ignorance is evident:

1. In their misinterpretation of Scripture;

2. In their allegorical interpretations;

3. In their connecting the destruction with the crucifixion;

4. In their interpretation of the time of the Messiah.

A. Christianity is opposed to reason and consistency:

The best exposition of the lack of reason evidenced in Christianity is found in the polemic against the faith in the Cuzari. The Christian said, "I believe in the renewal of creation, and in the pre-existence of God who created the world in six days; that all people are descended from

error. It is reasonable to expect an Israelite to accept interest from a non-Jew since the non-Jew takes interest from the Jew. It is an act of Jewish kindness on the part of the Torah to prohibit interest from a fellow-Jew. The legislation about the murderer-in-error is based on the assumption that even one who transgresses in error is a transgressor. The Biblical legislation is a warning to men to be extremely careful not to sin. The time set for the end of his exile is wisely chosen because the blood-avenger will be appeased when the great religious head of Israel is dead. Being a sinner, an atonement offering is necessary and the death of the high priest effects the atonement, it being a principle of religion that atonement comes through the death of the righteous. Furthermore the criticism laid against the Torah because of the Talmudic rule that if the ox of a non-Jew kills the ox belonging to a Jew the non-Jew must pay full damages, but if the ox belonging to the Jew kills that of the non-Jew, the Jew is exempt. It is unjustified. The criticism is unjust because the law is Talmudic and not Biblical.

Supplementing his apologetic Rabinowicz openly attacks the belief of the Christians. He finds justification for his attack on Christianity in the Talmudic saying "All meeting is forbidden except the ridicule of idolatry." It is

16. Rev. 10:10
17. R. K. 38
18. Rev. 10:10

Adam and after the flood from Noah. I believe in Providence and in revelation to prophets and saints. But in the end of days the godhead became embodied and entered the womb of an Israelitish virgin who bore Him in appearance human but in reality divine. This is the Messiah called God's son who is the Father, son and holy ghost. Yet we all acknowledge him as one, even though in language they may seem to be a plurality. All people are called to his faith and are commanded to cleave to it, to exalt the Messiah, Jesus, and to extol the tree on which he was crucified. Our judgments and ordinances are from Simon Peter.¹⁷ When the king heard these words he answered that obviously there is no place for reason in Christianity and that sense experience is opposed to their dogmatic principles.

Starting with their own assumptions they do not follow the course of experience. In the Roman Church the wafer is made of unleavened bread, while the Greek Catholics use leavened bread in their service. The Romans immerse only the heads of those who are baptized; the Greeks insist on total immersion. Christian literature proves that the Romans are wrong for their practices are not consistent with what they teach about Jesus. The meal at which Jesus was supposed to have proclaimed the principle of the host was on Erev Pesach when the unleavened bread is not yet used. Similarly his baptism at the hand of John the Baptist

17. Cuzari Chapter one

Adam and after the Flood from Noah. I believe in Providence and in revelation to prophets and saints. But in the end of days the Godhead became embodied and entered the womb of an Israelitish virgin who bore Him in appearance human but in reality divine. This is the Messiah called God's son who is the Father, son and Holy Ghost. Yet we all acknowledge Him as one, even though in language they may seem to be a plurality. All people are called to His faith and are commanded to cleave to it, to exalt His Messiah, Jesus, and to extend the tree on which He was crucified. Our judgments and ordinances are from Simon Peter.¹⁷ When the king heard these words he answered that obviously there is no place for reason in Christianity and that sense experience is opposed to their dogmatic principles.

Starting with their own assumptions they do not follow the course of experience. In the Roman Church the water is made of unleavened bread, while the Greek Catholicism uses leavened bread in their service. The Romans immerse only the heads of those who are baptized; the Greeks insist on total immersion. Christian literature proves that the Romans are wrong for their practices are not consistent with what they teach about Jesus. The meal at which Jesus was supposed to have proclaimed the principle of the host was on Erev Pesach when the unleavened bread is not yet used. Similarly his baptism at the hand of John the Baptist

was of the entire body and not merely of the head.¹⁸ They are also inconsistent when they fast for forty-nine days for according to their own doctrine the period should be only forty. When they discount holidays on which they do not fast, they are in opposition to their precedent because the forty day fast of Jesus was continuous.

B. Their claims about Jesus are false:

1. Regarding his parentage:

There is difficulty in establishing the genealogy of Joseph, the husband of Mary. The Luke and Mathew accounts record different names of his father. Similarly there is some confusion about the mother of Jesus because of the two Marys mentioned in the Gospels. The Talmud tells us that Mary was impregnated by Pandera and for this reason they called her "Satdah" that is, one deserted by her husband.¹⁹ This view is consistent with the statement of Rambam that Mary could not be considered a virgin because there was a law in Judea that a betrothed couple should be left alone in a room.²⁰ Joseph and Mary were alone each night after he came from the meeting place and knowing this Pandera came in unto her and she became pregnant. Pandera was a carpenter and according to the Gospels Jesus was a carpenter, the son of a carpenter. In the Talmud Yerushalmi story of Jacob who healed in Jesus' name, he is called Jesus ben Pandera.²¹ Being consistent with Jesus' assurance to his disciples that they can heal in his name, this story indicates that his parentage is to

18. Math III:16

19. Sanh. 67a

20. Ket. 12a

21. Yer. Sab. 14d

be accounted through Pandera. Another proof that Jesus' mother became pregnant in prostitution is that in the genealogical table only women who were prone to lewdness are mentioned, ²²e.g. Bath-Sheba, Rahab, and Tamar. Hence we conclude that his mother Mary is to be ranked among these women.

2. Regarding his divinity:

They were misled to ascribe divinity to Jesus because of his sorcery, which he performed through the power of Beelzebub. He is spoken of as the one who brought magical power from Egypt in the cuttings on his flesh. But even these deeds do not prove his greatness since the prophets raised the dead and healed lepers: Israel tested Jesus' power but he was unable to save himself from death.

Furthermore, if Jesus had been placed in the womb of Mary by the holy ghost and if he was the son of God, how could they write that at his baptism "the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming unto him?"²³ From their own words we infer his humanity. It is evident that they did not consider him divine, for at the hour of death he cried out, "My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me?"²⁴ Like Daniel and Ezekiel he spoke of himself as "Ben Adam" and not "Ben Elohim." Jesus rationalized his connection with the Deity by proclaiming all Israel Children of the Most High.²⁵ In reality it never

²² Math. I

²³ Ibid III:16

²⁴ Ibid. XXVII:46

²⁵ See Deut. XIV:11

was of the entire body and not merely of the head. They are also inconsistent when they fast for forty-days days for according to their own doctrine the period should be only forty. When they discount holidays on which they do not fast, they are in opposition to their precedent because the forty day fast of Jesus was continuous.

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¹⁰ Math III:16
¹¹ Ibid. 16
¹² Ibid. 16
¹³ Ibid. 16
¹⁴ Ibid. 16

occurred to Jesus to ascribe divinity to himself. His relation with Joseph is frequently mentioned and he does not deny his human origin. As Profiat Duran pointed out Jesus considered himself the Messiah and, in this spirit, approved the words of Simon Peter who called him "The Christ, the son of the living God."²⁶ He admitted that of himself he could not judge but "I am He who sent me." His own words prove that "there is no good but God."

3. Regarding his mission

to the world:

Feeling that he was the Messiah Jesus believed that his mission was to Israel and not to the world at large. Profiat Duran used the same quotations to show Jesus' exclusiveness. A Canaanitish woman asked him to drive out the demon that had taken possession of her daughter. Jesus answered twice and both answers bespeak his exclusive mission. He said to her, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel" and "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."²⁷ Furthermore, when he charged his disciples he said, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."²⁸

4. Regarding their divers

claims:

Jesus claimed that his disciples would witness the resurrection before they died. The great events which he foretold

²⁶ Math. XVI:13-16
²⁷ Ibid. XIII:21-28
²⁸ Ibid. XI:5

be accounted through legends. Another proof that Jesus' mother became pregnant in prostitution is that in the genealogical table only women who were prone to lewdness are mentioned, e.g. Bath-Sheba, Rahab, and Tamar. Hence we conclude that his mother Mary is to be ranked among these women.

2. Regarding his divinity:

They were misled to ascribe divinity to Jesus because of his secrecy, which he performed through the power of Esotericism. He is spoken of as the one who brought magical power from Egypt in the writings on his flesh. But even these deeds do not prove his greatness since the prophets raised the dead and healed lepers. Israel tested Jesus' power but he was unable to save himself from death. Furthermore, if Jesus had been placed in the womb of Mary by the Holy Ghost and if he was the son of God, how could they write that at his baptism "the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming unto him?"²⁹ From their own words we infer his humanity. It is evident that they did not consider him divine, for at the hour of death he cried out, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?"³⁰ Like Daniel and Ezekiel he spoke of himself as "Ben Adam" and not "Ben Elohim." Jesus rationalized his connection with the "elf" by proclaiming all Israel children of the Most High.³¹ In reality it never

²⁹ Math. I:
³⁰ Ibid. III:16
³¹ Ibid. XIII:46
³² See Matt. XIV:11

were supposed to take place in his generation. Like Ebedi Rashbaz considered the interpretation of the later Christians invalid that "by this generation" he meant "the end of the world." He assured them that "not a hair of their head would fall to the ground" and the "people of Israel shall not be destroyed until the son of man shall come." No words could be more explicit than those of Paul's quotation:

"For yet a ~~very~~ little while,²⁹
He that cometh shall come."

"We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep."³⁰ What actually happened proves the untruth of these claims.

Within a short time his disciples were put to death:

To strengthen their faith they claimed that the Father is one with the son and holy ghost. The words of Nester, the priest, who became a proselyte, refutes this dogma: "Behold you say that the Creator is one and that this your Messiah is his son and that he is the son who came down from heaven without separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit. This son, you say, is the connection between the two spheres and that he entered the womb of Mary. Tell me was he still joined to the Father and the holy ghost or did he adhere only to himself? If you say that only the son and the holy ghost adhered to each other, your words are not applicable when you say that they are in one sphere or being, the divine and the human, for you exclude the Father."

^{29.} Hebrews X:37
^{30.} I Thess. IV:15

occurred to Jesus to ascribe divinity to himself. His relation with Joseph is frequently mentioned and he does not deny his human origin. As Ebedi Rashbaz pointed out Jesus considered himself the Messiah and, in this spirit, approved the words of Simon Peter who called him "The Christ, the son of the living God."²⁸ He admitted that of himself he could not judge but "I am He who sent me." His own words prove that "there is no God but God."

3. Regarding his mission

to the world:
Feeling that he was the Messiah Jesus believed that his mission was to Israel and not to the world at large. Ebedi Rashbaz used the same quotations to show Jesus' exclusiveness. A Samaritan woman asked him to drive out the demon that had taken possession of her daughter. Jesus answered twice and both answers bespeak his exclusive mission. He said to her, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel" and "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."²⁹ Furthermore, when he charged his disciples he said, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."³⁰

4. Regarding their diverse

claims:

Jesus claimed that his disciples would witness the resurrection before they died. The great events which he foretold

^{28.} Matt. XVI:13-16
^{29.} Ibid. XIII:27-30
^{30.} Ibid. X:6

If you say he was from the combined province of the Father, son and holy ghost---part of each adhering to him---your words are not applicable when you say that no part can be separated from the whole."³¹

C. Their heresy is evident in their mis-interpretation of verses:

Efodi revealed the heresy of the leaders of the Church in misinterpreting Biblical verses to prove the divinity of Jesus. Rashbaz follows much the same method. The "Almah" passage is discussed and the Christian claim that the word means "Betulah" is disproved. In a like manner Rashbaz shows that the prophet does not refer to a far-distant day but to the present and that the name "Immanuel" has no more divine implications than the name of the altar. The term "Almah", Rashbaz insists, is a general term used with reference to a married or a single woman. We find it used with reference to a maiden in the verse "The maiden that cometh forth to draw water,"³² and with reference to a woman who has already known a man in the verse from Proverbs "The way of a man with an "Almah."³³

D. Their ignorance is evident:

1. In their misinterpretation of Scripture:

The above-mentioned misinterpretations may have been intentional but the ignorance of the Christian group is revealed in their

31. Sefer Nestor HaKomer Ozar p.130

32. Gen. XXIV:43

33. Prov. XXX:9

were supposed to take place in his generation. Like Efodi Rashbaz considered the interpretation of the later Christians invalid that "by this generation" he meant "the end of the world." He assured them that "not a hair of their head would fall to the ground" and the "people of Israel shall not be destroyed until the son of man shall come." No words could be more explicit than those of Paul's quotation:

"For yet a little while, He that cometh shall come. We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep."³⁰

What actually happened proves the untruth of these claims. Within a short time his disciples were put to death. To strengthen their faith they claimed that the Father is one with the son and holy ghost. The words of Nestor, the priest, who became a proselyte, refute this dogma: "Behold you say that the Father is one and that this your Messiah is his son and that he is the son who came down from heaven without separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit. This son, you say, is the connection between the two spheres and that he entered the womb of Mary. Tell me was he still joined to the Father and the holy ghost or did he separate only to himself? If you say that only the son and the holy ghost adhered to each other, your words are not applicable when you say that they are in one sphere or being, the divine and the human, for you exclude the Father."

30. 1 Thess. IV:15
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misunderstanding of the verses, misunderstanding that led to misinterpretation. Efedi considered these matters and showed that their state of ignorance was consistent with their lowly occupations. One of the most inexcusable types is their lack of knowledge of the sources of quotation, as for example, the verse "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet."³⁴ The verse quoted does not occur in Jeremiah but in Zechariah. Another outstanding example of their ignorance is the statement "Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months."³⁵ Had they been acquainted with the Bible they would have recalled the verse "the word of the Lord came unto Elijah, in the third year saying, 'Go show yourself unto Ahab and I will send rain upon the earth.'"³⁶ How then can they say that the drought lasted for three years and six months:

2: In their allegorical interpretations:

To strengthen their claims they said that the Bible is to be explained as a "Mashal" and not literally. Paul's words proclaim this principle, when he said that he began to interpret verses which the sages of Israel could not understand. He interpreted the verse of Leviticus allegorically. "These are the living things which ye may eat among all the

34. Math. XXVII:9

35. Jas. V:17

36. I K XVIII:1

If you say he was from the compiled province of the Father, son and holy ghost---part of each adhering to him---your words are not applicable when you say that no part can be separated from the whole.³¹

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37. Math. XXIII:35
38. Jer. I:17
39. Gen. I:31

beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof and cheweth the cud."³⁷ This verse, he said, refers to leaders and shepherds of flocks. "Split hoofs" means the knowledge of what is right and wrong. "Chewing the cud" means the altruism of the leader who works for communal good. The clean animal is the righteous leader; the unclean the perverse leader.

Jerome also interpreted the Bible allegorically. He claimed that the verse "He is unclean unto you"³⁸ is made null by the general verse "And God saw all He had made and behold it was very good."³⁹ Jerome harmonizes these conflicting verses by saying that the former refers to the beast's habits and the latter permits it to be eaten. The swine is unclean because it wallows in the mud but its flesh is delicious, for if all that God made is good, we can eat what is good. Jesus' permission to the disciples to eat whatever is placed before them is the proof he uses.

Rashbaz answers this charge by saying that the Torah speaks openly and not allegorically.⁴⁰ The verse "God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good" does not refer to the edibility of things but to their nature. There are many objects in nature-----e.g. poisons-----which are part of the "good" created by God and yet they are not "good to eat." The prophets condemn those who eat swine: "Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse shall come to an end together."⁴¹ Jesus did not

37. Lev. XII:4 40. Nos. XII:8
38. ibid XI:4 41. Is. LXV:17
39. Gen. I:31

mean that one may eat forbidden food, for he forbade them to go into the cities of the Gentiles. Furthermore, he did not condemn the custom of abstaining from certain foods but proclaimed that they are not inherently unclean but are made unclean by God's commandment. He therefore concurred in the opinion of the rabbis that "the commandments were given for the purpose of disciplining man."⁴²

3. In their connecting the destruction with the crucifixion:

Aware of the extent of our exile and believing that the destruction of the Temple was due to the sin of Israel against Jesus, the Christians claimed that Jesus lived at a time near the destruction. Their own calculation and the reliable tradition in our possession disprove their theory. Our tradition teaches that Jesus lived in the days of Joshua ben Perachya.⁴³ Joshua ben Perachya was a friend of Simeon ben Shatach, the brother-in-law of Janai, the king. Tradition teaches that Jesus was born in the fourth year of the reign of Janai which was the year 263 after the rebuilding of the Temple. In the year 299 after the rebuilding of the sanctuary Jesus was crucified at the age of 36. Since the Temple stood for 420 years it follows that his crucifixion took place 121 years before the destruction. How then can they claim it was destroyed because of his crucifixion.

42. Gen.R. s.44

43. Sotah 47a

beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof and cheweth the cud." ³⁷ This verse, he said, refers to leaders and shepherds of flocks. "Split hoofs" means the knowledge of what is right and wrong. "Chewing the cud" means the altruism of the leader who works for communal good. The clean animal is the righteous leader; the unclean the perverse leader.

Torah also interpreted the Bible allegorically.

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37. Lev. XII:8
38. Ibid XII:10
39. Gen. I:31
40. Mon. XII:18
41. Ibid XII:19

mean that one may eat forbidden food, for he forbade them to go into the cities of the Gentiles. Furthermore, he did not condemn the custom of abstaining from certain foods but proclaimed that they are not inherently unclean but are made unclean by God's commandment. He therefore concurred in the opinion of the rabbis that "the commandments were given for the purpose of disciplining men."⁴³ In their connecting

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⁴³ Gen. R. 9:44
⁴⁴ Eretz R. 17a

Even according to their own calculation such a theory is absurd. They claim he was born in the days of Herod, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Augustus, and was crucified during the regime of Archelaus, the son of Herod, at the age of thirty-three. Since the Temple stood for 420 years it follows that he was born sixty-eight years before the destruction and was crucified thirty-five years before the Temple and city were destroyed.

4. In their interpretation

of the time of the Messiah:

Their interpretation of the time of the Messiah's advent is wrong. They err in interpreting the section of Midrash Lamentations which teaches that on the day the Temple was destroyed the Messiah was born. Jesus was born and died before the crucifixion. The Christians quote the Talmudic sentence as proof "The world will exist for 6,000 years: 2,000 of chaos, 2,000 of Torah and 2,000 of the time of the Messiah."⁴⁴ The refutation of the claim of the Christians occurs in the same passage: "Their sins increased and the coming of the Messiah was delayed." Furthermore, Jesus was born before the completion of the 2,000 years of Torah.

Refuting the claim that the coming of the Messiah in the form of Jesus is mentioned in prophecy, Rav Saadiah Gaon brings forward fifteen prophecies which contradict this belief.⁴⁵ These are of three kinds:

⁴⁴ Sanh. 97a

⁴⁵ Emun. W'Daot.

- a. Five prophecies the subject matter of which show that he has not come; e.g. Ezekiel XXXIX:29;
- b. Five prophecies that are interpreted by tradition to prove that he has not come; e.g. Ezekiel XXXIX:10;
- c. Five prophecies which are self-evident; e.g. Isaiah LXII:9.

CONCLUSIONS

Keshet UMagen is obviously more unsystematic than Kelimat HaGoyim and less inclusive. The latter enters more into current church practice and shows that these institutions are not consistent with the teachings of original Christianity. The only conclusion we can draw from the similarity of material is that Rashbaz used the Kelimat HaGoyim as a source book and tried to establish the claims of his kinsman, as Graetz maintains,⁴⁶ or else they used common sources. If we accept the source mentioned by Eisenstein as authoritative our only conclusion is that Rashbaz plagiarized.⁴⁷

But it is obvious that Rashbaz employed more Jewish material than Efodi, using rabbinic literature in addition to Church literature to disprove the claims of Christianity. It appears that this difference of approach grows out of their different environmental surroundings. Efodi, a former Marano, would endeavor to reveal the inner

46. Eng Gr vol. 4 p. 238

47. See above page 8 note 12

Even according to their own calculation such a theory is absurd. They claim he was born in the day of Herod, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Augustus, and was crucified during the regime of Archelaus, the son of Herod, at the age of thirty-three. Since the Temple stood for 430 years it follows that he was born sixty-eight years before the destruction and was crucified thirty-five years before the Temple and city were destroyed.

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Refuting the claim that the coming of the Messiah in the form of Jesus is mentioned in prophecy, Rav Rashbaz goes on to bring forward fifteen prophecies which contradict this belief. These are of three kinds:

44. Sanh. 97a
45. Tanna. W. Deot.

contradiction of Christianity by using Christian tools to a greater extent. The rabbinic authority would naturally use his own tools.⁴⁸ One other difference is evident. Rashbaz used more popular material than Efdi, for example the folk legends about Jesus. Efdi is more philosophic. The account of Jesus' parentage in the Keshet UMagen seems to include that which would appeal to the mind of the ordinary Jew, that is, the kind of material found in Toldot Yeshu HaNozri. Unfortunately we do not know the specific situations that called forth these polemics, as we do in the case of Milchemet Mizwah. If we did know we would be able to understand more fully their manner of approach and use of polemical weapons.

48: e.g. Guzari, Emun, WDaot,
Midrashic and Talmudic
sources.

a. Five prophecies the subject matter of which show that he has not come; e.g. Isaiah XLIX:26; b. Five prophecies that are interpreted by tradition to prove that he has not come; e.g. Isaiah XLIX:10; c. Five prophecies which are self-evident; e.g. Isaiah XLIX:9.

CONCLUSIONS

Keshet UMagen is obviously more unapologetic than Keifet Hagoviv and less imaginative. The latter enters more into current church practice and shows that these institutions are not consistent with the teachings of original Christianity. The only conclusion we can draw from the similarity of material is that Rashbaz used the Keifet Hagoviv as a source book and tried to establish the claims of his kinsman, as Guzari maintains,⁴⁹ or else they used common sources. If we accept the source mentioned by Eisenstein as authoritative our only conclusion is that Rashbaz plagiarized.⁴⁷

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CHAPTER III

SOLOMON BEN SIMEON DURAN

The son and successor of Rashbaz, Rabbi Solomon ben Simeon Duran (Rashbash) was born in Algiers about the year 1400 and died in 1467. Graetz says that Rashbash was "as of noble disposition as his father".¹ Familiar with Talmudic literature and the field of rabbinic thought, the younger Duran protested against Cabalistic speculations. His spirit of opposition to the Cabala was not a characteristic inherited from his illustrious father and his ancestor Ramban. In his approach he combined the finest scientific style with his great Talmudic learning. From his pen came many responsa, while his letter Keren Memed which was written in Constantinople has been separately reprinted. Though frequently ascribed to his father the treatise Tikkun Soferim is from the pen of Rashbash and is printed as an appendix to Rashbaz' Yabin Shemuah. In addition to his great apologetic there is another work, a dirge, extant.

His great apologetic essay Milchemet Mizwah is found at the end of the polemic of his father, Keshet UMagen. It also appears under the title of Setirat Emunat HaNozrim. Geronimo de Sante Fe (Joshua Allorqui), the notorious convert, attacked the Talmud,

1. Eng Gr vol.4 p.390

calling it a teacher of lewdness and casting reproach on the laws of Israel. At the request of his father Rashbash wrote his defense of the Talmud Milchemet Mizwah in which he upholds the laws of Judaism, insisting that instead of lewdness the Talmud inculcates continence and that Jews are able to live finer lives if they follow the precepts of the rabbis. The writer showed great ability in the use of rabbinic tools,² although Graetz claims that in trying to reconcile contradictory Agadachs he was forced to employ pilpul.³

MILCHEMET MIZWAH

Rashbash began his defense by laying down the fundamental principle that the interpretation of the Bible requires tradition, both in the explanation of the words of Scripture and the ideas.⁴ This truth is strikingly illustrated in the Talmud by the case of the non-Jew who came to Hillel to be converted on the condition that the sage would teach him Torah Sh'biksey and not Torah Sh'bal-peh.⁵ Even the teaching of the alphabet required an authoritative teacher. How could the student understand what is meant by the prohibition of labor on the Sabbath were it not for tradition which explains the meaning of the word "work?" Tradition is so essential that the translator Jerome told his disciples that if they are in doubt about the meaning of a word they

2. Ozar p. 134

3. Heb Gr vol. 6 p. 168

4. See the charge against tradition in The Controversy between the sages of Tortosa and Alorqui---Ozar p. 105

5. Sab. 31

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should go to the Jews who have the tradition. But Megadaf
57 T > > insists that tradition is not needed. The
 Torah itself has decreed that there should be interpreters
 of the law.⁶ With only a simple interpretation the Torah
 cannot be understood; hence the institution of the Sanhedrin.⁷

The proper understanding of the Torah is an
 important matter. Daniel prayed thrice daily even though
 there is no specific command in Scripture except the verse
 "to serve Him with all your hearts and souls."⁸ What is the
 "service of the heart?" Prayer. Therefore Daniel risked his
 life in order to pray.

The Karaites have produced no great men, scholars
 or thinkers. The rabbinites who adhere to tradition have
 given the world great poets, philosophers, scientists, Talmud-
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 his disciples to do all the Pharisees commanded. Again when
 he used David's eating of the shewbread to justify the
 plucking of ears of corn on the Sabbath he was standing on
 traditional ground. When he admonished his disciples that
 unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and
 Pharisees they would not enter the kingdom of heaven he used
 authorities on tradition as his example of righteousness.
 Tradition enables us to explain in terms of reason what seems
 to be opposed to reason. These answers sufficiently justify

6. Deut. XVII:8-10
 7. Sanh. 86
 8. Deut. XI:13

calling it a teacher of law and causing reproach on
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3. Deut. p. 134
 4. Heb. Gr. vol. 6 p. 138
 5. See the charge against tradition in
 The Controversy between the Rabbis of Tiberias
 and Abolitionists--Over p. 106

tradition against the attack of Megadaf.

Three facts need explanation before a defense of rabbinic lore is possible:

a. The words of the rabbis are divided into two groups: Midrash Halaka and Midrash Agadah. The first group includes laws and ordinances. The second deals with hidden things. They are intended to enliven the minds of weary students, to give wisdom to the simple who cannot grasp the intricate laws. Of course they who are not proficient in Jewish lore will be unable to grasp their meaning. Regarding the Agadah it should be understood that the one who does not believe them has committed no sin, but he who reaches the heart of their teaching is rewarded for his effort.

b. Whenever the expression לפיכא is used in the Talmud it does not mean that permission is given to one to perform a certain act. It simply means that the one who performs the deed is free from human punishment but subject to divine punishment. The expression לפיכא means not subject to punishment at the hands of men.

c. Permission was given to every Bet Din to punish, imprison, and execute even those who are not subject to punishment according to the Torah. In Hilchot Rozaach Rambam explained this matter.

Starting with these premises one is able to defend the Talmud against Megadaf. In accordance with the

should go to the Jews who have the tradition. But Megadaf insists that tradition is not needed. The Torah itself has decreed that there should be interpreters of the law. With only a single interpretation the Torah cannot be understood hence the institution of the Sanhedrin. The proper understanding of the Torah is an important matter. Daniel prayed three times daily even though there is no specific command in Scripture except the verse "to serve him with all your hearts and souls." What is the "service of the heart?" Prayer. Therefore Daniel risked his life in order to pray.

The rabbis have produced no great men, scholars or thinkers. The rabbis who adhere to tradition have given the world great poets, philosophers, scientists, Talmudists and commentators, in every land in which Israel has sojourned. Jesus insisted on tradition when he commanded his disciples to do all the Pharisees commanded. Again when he used David's eating of the shewbread to justify the plucking of ears of corn on the Sabbath he was standing on traditional ground. When he admonished his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees they would not enter the kingdom of heaven he used authorities on tradition as his example of righteousness. Tradition enables us to explain in terms of reason what seems to be opposed to reason. These answers sufficiently justify

S. Deut. XI:13
T. Sanh. 86
S. Deut. XVII:8-10

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Starting with these premises one is able to

defend the Talmud against Megadaf. In accordance with the

first premise defense must be along two lines:

A. Defense of Midrash Halaka

B. Defense of Midrash Agadah

Being different in subject matter and interpretation the

Halaka and the Agadah require different defensive arguments.

A. Defense of Midrash Halaka:

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that he who worships

idols out of love or fear is 7105.⁹ Rashi says that

"out of love" means to serve as one serves a great man so that

he will have pity and "out of fear" is as when one is command-

ed by a ruler to worship idols. Rambam says that serving out

of love means embracing an idol because of its beauty and

serving out of fear means that one is afraid that the idol

will work good or evil.¹⁰ But Megadaf claims that this

principle contradicts the Scriptural prohibition of idolatry.

Megadaf failed to quote the entire passage which reads "It

has been taught above regarding the one who serves idols out

of love or fear: Abaya said he is guilty; Rava said he is

7105 if he did not accept it as a god. If he did

accept it he is guilty." Even Rava decreed exemption only

if he did not accept it as a god. Acceptance of an idol as

a deity implies the declaration "Thou art my god."¹¹ How-

ever 7105 means only free from human punishment, as

9. Sab. 72; Sanh. 61; Ket. 3

10. Hil. Ab. Zar. 3

11. Sanh. 60

has been shown above. These are the words of Rambam: "He who worships idols out of love, for example, he who embraces an image because of its beauty or out of fear lest it should harm him is 7105. But if he accepts it as a god, he is guilty and is liable to death by stoning. If he serves it with a rite peculiar to itself he is 7105. Unless he serves the idol according to the service of God or declares it to be a god, he is 7105." The words of the rabbis stand true and the attack of Megadaf is invalid.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if a man gives his entire family to Moloch he is 7105.¹² Again it is necessary to explain that 7105 means only free from human punishment. Only in two cases is idolatry punishable at the hands of men: first, if he serves it according to its peculiar rites which imply its divinity; and second, if he worships it in one of the four ways used in the service of God: sacrifice, incense, libation, or prostration.¹³ Therefore one who gives his entire family to Moloch is not worshipping the idol because the Moloch ceremony implies only the passing of one's children through the fire. Furthermore Moloch worship requires one's children 1773 and not one's entire family.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic law "he who smites his father and mother and leaves no wound is 7105."¹⁴

12. Sanh. 64
13. Hilchot Ab. Zar. perek 6
14. Sanh. 85

first premises defense must be along two lines:

A. Defense of Mithras Halaqa

B. Defense of Mithras Halaqa

Being different in subject matter and interpretation the Halaqa and the Agadah require different defensive arguments.

A. Defense of Mithras Halaqa:

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that he who worships idols out of love or fear is 7105.¹² Rashi says that

"out of love" means to serve as one serves a great man so that he will have pity and "out of fear" is as when one is commanded by a ruler to worship idols. Rambam says that serving out

of love means embracing an idol because of its beauty and

serving out of fear means that one is afraid that the idol

will work good or evil.¹⁰ But Megadaf claims that this

principle contradicts the biblical prohibition of idolatry.

Megadaf failed to quote the entire passage which reads: "It

has been taught above regarding the one who serves idols out

of love or fear: Acha said he is guilty; Rava said he is

guilty if he did not accept it as a god. If he did

accept it he is guilty." Even Rava decreed exemption only

if he did not accept it as a god. Acceptance of an idol as

a deity implies the declaration "Thou art my god." If now

ever 7105 means only free from human punishment, as

10. Sanh. 64
11. Sanh. 64
12. Sanh. 64
13. Hilchot Ab. Zar. 2
14. Sanh. 85

The slanderer declares that the Talmud permits a man to smite his parents. He insists that one who is guilty of this offense is punishable by the law of the rebellious son. God forbid that such an offense should be condoned in Israel. The law upholds the view that one who smites another and draws blood is to be put to death. In the case of parents the law is more strict. But one who smites and leaves no wound is not deserving of death but is in the category of those who curse their parents. One who lightly esteems his parents is punished by flogging. Lashing is the penalty. The justification of such a law is seen in the additional rule that he who smites his parents after they have died is 7105 but he who curses them after their death is punished by death. Smiting after death has no effect on them but curses cling to their souls. But in accordance with the third premise the Bet Din of Castile used to strangle men for less grievous sins than these. Answering Megadaf the defender of Israel can say that the law of "ben sorer u'moreh" applies to the son who hearkens not to his parent's voice and not to the one who smites and curses.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if one kills a person who is afflicted with a fatal organic disease he is 7105 and if ten men smite him with rods they are 7105^{15A} explained above, punishment is in the hand of heaven. Afflicted with a fatal organic disease means that the victim must have some visible signs of

has been shown above. These are the words of Rabbah: "He who worships idols out of love, for example, he who embraces an image because of its beauty or out of fear, it is as a God, he is guilty and is liable to death by stoning. If he serves it with a kiss peculiar to itself he is 7105 Unless he serves the idol according to the service of God or declares it to be a God, he is 7105." The words of the rabbis stand firm and the attack of Megadaf is invalid.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if a man gives his entire family to Moloch he is 7105. Again it is necessary to explain that 7105 means only free from human punishment. Only in two cases is idolatry punishable at the hands of men: first, if he serves it according to its peculiar rites which imply its divinity; and second, if he worships it in one of the four ways used in the service of God: sacrifice, incense, libation, or prostitution. Therefore one who gives his entire family to Moloch is not worshipping the idol because the Moloch ceremony implies only the passing of one's children through the fire. Furthermore Moloch worship requires one's children and not one's entire family.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic law that one who smites his father and mother and leaves no wound is 7105.

his affliction, for example, an amputated leg. It is not as Megadaf suggests that men search his lungs to see if there is a pungent spot in order to justify murder. Therefore Rambam said, "He who kills a man who is afflicted with a fatal organic disease even though the victim was able to eat, drink, and walk in the street, is free from human punishment. But all men are considered healthy and their murderers are put to death unless it is known definitely that the murdered man was unquestionably afflicted with the fatal disease and the physicians have said, 'There is no healing for him in this affliction. He would have died of it had he not been killed by another.'"¹⁶ Therefore the murderer cannot be executed because the victim stood on the fence of death. The Bet Din can punish him if it so desires and the blood-avenger who kills the murderer cannot be punished.

Regarding the second law: if ten men smite a man with rods they are רוב, justification can be found. The law implies that the actual murderer cannot be determined. If each one says, "I smote him but did not kill him" they are all punished for smiting their neighbor since he did not die because of any particular blow. Of course the decision is different when the actual murderer is known. The Bet Din is permitted to execute all ten and if the blood-avenger kills them he is not put to death. Anyone can see that this law is

16. Hil. Rozaach perek 2

The standard declares that the Talmud permits a man to smite his parents. He insists that one who is guilty of this offense is punishable by the law of the rebellious son. God forbid that such an offense should be condoned in Israel. The law upholds the view that one who smites another and draws blood is to be put to death. In the case of parents the law is more strict. But one who smites and leaves no wound is not deserving of death but is in the category of those who curse their parents. One who lightly accuses his parents is punished by flogging. Lashing is the penalty. The justification of such a law is seen in the additional rule that he who smites his parents after they have died is רוב but he who curses them after their death is punished by death. Smiting after death has no effect on them but cursing owing to their souls. But in accordance with the third premise the Bet Din of Gassila used to arrange men for issue previous signs than these. Answering Megadaf the defender of Israel can say that the law of "ben sorer u'moreh" applies to the son who hearkens not to his parent's voice and not to the one who smites and curses.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if one kills a person who is afflicted with a fatal organic disease he is רוב and if ten men smite him with rods they are רוב.¹⁶ Explained above, punishment is in the hand of Heaven. Afflicted with a fatal organic disease means that the victim must have some visible signs of

his affliction, for example, an afflicted Jew. It is not as Megadaf suggests that man search his lungs to see if there is a malignant spot in order to justify murder. Therefore Rabbah said, "He who kills a man who is afflicted with a fatal organic disease even though the victim was able to eat, drink, and walk in the street, is free from human punishment. But all men are considered healthy and their murderers are put to death unless it is known definitely that the murdered man was unquestionably afflicted with the fatal disease and the physicians have said, 'There is no healing for him in this affliction.' He would have died of it had he not been killed by another." Therefore the murderer cannot be executed because the victim stood on the fence of death. The Bet Din can punish him if it so desires and the blood-avenger who kills the murderer cannot be punished.

Regarding the second law: If a man manumits a man with rods they are 1105, justification can be found. The law implies that the actual murderer cannot be determined. If each one says, "I smote him but did not kill him" they are all punished for smiting their neighbor since he did not die because of any particular blow. Of course the decision is different when the actual murderer is known. The Bet Din is permitted to execute all ten and if the blood-avenger kills them he is not put to death. Anyone can see that this law is

more just than the law of the Gentile which empowers a king to pardon a criminal after the court has convicted him.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if the Sanhedrin convenes with the unanimous intention of convicting a man he is 1105.¹⁷ This slanderer claims that if a man is convicted by a unanimous vote of the Sanhedrin he is free since there must be votes in his favor before he can be punished. But Megadaf does not understand the law. It does not read "If the Bet Din agrees unanimously for conviction he is acquitted." If we execute a man at a majority vote how much the more by unanimous agreement. This law means that if no one testifies in behalf of the defendant and they do not allow him to testify in his own defense, but as soon as he arises all begin to say "you are guilty" then he is 1105. But if the Bet Din discusses his merits and says, "Do not fear; if you are innocent you shall not be punished" then he is liable to punishment if he is found guilty. Our rabbis were extremely careful in judgment even to the extent of the scrupulous examination of witnesses. When two testimonies were found to agree they searched even more diligently.¹⁸

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle concerning collusive witnesses: if the innocent party has been executed the collusive witnesses are not put to death; but

17: Sanh. 17a

18: Yer. Sanh. 4:22a

if the innocent party has not been executed they are put to death.¹⁹ This law applies only in capital cases. In civil cases the collusive witnesses must pay if money is taken from one party and given to others on the strength of their testimony. The reason for this law in capital cases is that "God standeth in the congregation of God; in the midst of the people He judgeth."²⁰ When the congregation seeks justice the spirit of God is upon them. Since God stands in their midst no one is executed unless he is guilty. God is the judge who places words of truth in the mouth of the human judges. When witnesses testify that a man is guilty and their testimony is found to be collusive his punishment proves his guilt and therefore the witnesses are not punished. Therefore it is written, "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked."²¹ But when the innocent party is not executed the collusive witnesses are put to death for they conspired to have an innocent man punished.

How can this slanderer argue against our righteous laws? What would he do if two testified against Reuben that he killed Joseph and two others came and said, "Reuben did not kill Joseph but Judah did.?" Would he accept the testimony of the latter witnesses and execute Judah and the first witnesses or would he execute Reuben on the strength

19. Mak. 5
20. Psa. LXXXI:2
21. Ex. XXIII:7

19. Mak. 5
20. Psa. LXXXI:2
21. Ex. XXIII:7

of the former witnesses' testimony? How would this slanderer decide? Indeed he would not be able to judge unless he turned to the true tradition. The former witnesses are not declared guilty until the latter destroy the evidence of the former. This does not mean that the second pair came to testify that Judah and not Reuben killed Joseph. It means that they must come to testify against the former witnesses themselves. They must say, "How can you bear testimony that Reuben killed Joseph on this day at such a place when you were with us on that day at another place so distant from the scene of the murder that it would have been impossible for you to have seen it." By such a testimony the former witnesses are declared collusive. One cannot decide which pair of witnesses is fallusive without the help of tradition.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if a man has sexual relations with a male child of less than nine years of age he is רשע.²² The man is exempt only from human punishment according to this law. Yet they do not let him go free. The Bet Din would smite a man who had such irregular intercourse a Makot Mardut מכות מרדוט.²³ The Makot Mardut implies the punishment of amiting until death. They freed the guilty man only from "death of disfiguration" גילגול. Rambam said, "It is proper to smite the older man a Makot Mardut since he lay with the

²² נדה 54.

²³ Makot Mardut: punishment for disobedience left to the court's discretion, as distinct from מיתת בית דין Biblical punishment.

if the innocent party has not been executed they are put to death.¹⁹ This law applies only in capital cases. In civil cases the collusive witnesses must pay if money is taken from one party and given to others on the strength of their testimony. The reason for this law in capital cases is that "God stands in the congregation of God; in the midst of the people He judgeth."²⁰ When the congregation seeks justice the spirit of God is upon them. Since God stands in their midst no one is executed unless he is guilty. God is the Judge who places words of truth in the mouth of the human judges. When witnesses testify that a man is guilty and their testimony is found to be collusive his punishment proves his guilt and therefore the witnesses are not punished. Therefore it is written, "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous they shall not; for I will not justify the wicked."²¹ But when the innocent party is not executed the collusive witnesses are put to death for they conspired to have an innocent man punished.

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¹⁹ לקח 5.
²⁰ פסוק 13.
²¹ שם 13.

younger."²⁴ It is unjust to accuse our rabbis of condoning such a sin. They were the most modest of men; so careful were they in their conduct that they "uncovered one hand-breadth and covered two."²⁵ Rabbi never placed his hand under his girdle. They ordained an immersion for scholars after being with their wives, so that they should not become over-indulgent.²⁶ The rabbis said that a man should not think impure thoughts during the day so that he would not have pollution at night.²⁷ They also said, "be behind a lion but not a woman."²⁸ Similarly the Yerushalmi forbids one to look at copulating animals and a man is warned to keep away from anything that is vulgar.²⁹ For this reason the rabbis are called Pharisees. No nation is as free from prostitutes as Israel. Among the Gentiles brothels are erected to house prostitutes but Israel lives by the law of the Torah: "There shall be no harlot among the daughters of Israel."³⁰

B. Defense of Midrash Agadah:

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic interpretation of "to the sons of the concubines of Abraham he gave gifts and sent them away from before Isaac, his son."³¹ The rabbis say that he gave them "tu'mah"; that is, knowledge of sorcery and the work of demons.³² Megadaf said that it is improper to accuse Abraham of working with sorcery. But the scripture

24. Sabl 18

25. Ber. 13

26. ibid. 22

27. ibid. 61

28. Hil. Is. Bi. perek one

29. Yer. Hul: 44b

30. Deut. XXIII:18

31. Gen. XXV:6

32. Sanh. 91

of the former witnesses' testimony? Now would this slanderer decide? Indeed he would not be able to judge. Indeed he turned to the true tradition. The former witnesses are not declared guilty until the latter destroy the evidence of the former. This does not mean that the second pair came to testify that Judah and not Hatan killed Joseph. It means that they must come to testify against the former witnesses themselves. They must say, "How can you bear testimony that Hatan killed Joseph on this day at such a place when you were with us on that day at another place no distant from the scene of the murder that it would have been impossible for you to have seen it." By such a testimony the former witnesses are declared collusive. One cannot decide which pair of witnesses is collusive without the help of tradition.

Megadaf attacks the Talmudic principle that if a man has sexual relations with a male child or less than nine years of age he is murdered.³³ The man is exempt only from hanging punishment according to this law. Yet they do not let him go free. The Bet Din would execute a man who had such intercourse a Makot Mardut (117a). The Makot Mardut implies the punishment of striking until death. They freed the guilty man only from death of execution.³⁴ Raman said, "It is proper to execute the older man a Makot Mardut since he lay with the

33. Sanh. 76a

34. Makot Mardut: punishment for disobedience left

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forces the rabbis to interpret the verse this way since it already said, "And Abraham gave Isaac all that he had." Since he gave Isaac all his property and could not have given them wisdom for there is no wise one among them, the only thing he could have imparted to them was the knowledge of sorcery. Hence it says, "they are replenished from the east with soothsayers like the Philistines."³³ How did Abraham happen to teach them this knowledge? Knowledge of sorcery is not forbidden in Israel, only the performance of deeds by the power of magic, as it says, "Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations."³⁴ Therefore, if Abraham taught this to his sons there is no sin involved.

The slanderer Medagaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God said, "Woe (to Me) that I destroyed My House."³⁵ This verse means that God did not desire the destruction of the Temple but was forced to destroy it because of Israel's sinfulness. The slanderer added the words "to Me" in order to cast reproach on the words of our rabbis. The proof we bring forward is that the latter part of the Agadah reads, "Woe to the son who has been exiled from the table of his father," Concerning the father, that is, God, it reads "What is it to Him?" But even if the verse read "Woe to Me" it means grief. Why should this present more difficulty than the Biblical verse "And it repented the Lord that He made man on earth and it grieved Him at His heart."³⁶

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33. Is. II:6
34. Deut. XVIII:9-10
35. Ber. 3
36. Gen. VI:6

youngest." ³² It is unjust to accuse our rabbis of conducting such a sin. They were the most modest of men; so careful were they in their conduct that they "uncovered one hand- breadth and covered two."³³ Rabbi never placed his hand under his girdle. They obtained an immersion for scholars after being with their wives, so that they should not become over-indulged. ³⁴ The rabbis said that a man should not think in pure thoughts during the day so that he would not have pollution at night. ³⁵ They also said, "be behind a lion but not a woman." ³⁶ Similarly, the Yerushalmi forbids one to look at beautiful animals and a man is warned to keep away from anything that is vulgar. ³⁷ For this reason the rabbis are called Pharisees. No nation is as free from prostitutes as Israel. Among the Gentiles prophets are erected to house prostitutes but Israel lives by the law of the Torah. "There shall be no harlot among the daughters of Israel."³⁸

D. Defense of Midrash Agadah:

The slanderer Medagaf attacks the rabbinic interpretation of "to the sons of the concubines of Abraham he gave gifts and sent them away from before Isaac, his son."³⁹ The rabbis say that he gave them "in man's that is, knowledge of sorcery and the work of demons." ⁴⁰ Medagaf said that it is improper to accuse Abraham of working with sorcery. But the scripture

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38. Yer. Nul. 44b
39. Gen. XXIII:18
40. Gen. XXIV:16
41. Gen. XXIV:16
42. Gen. XXIV:16
43. Gen. XXIV:16
44. Gen. XXIV:16
45. Gen. XXIV:16

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "God prayed."³⁷ God forbid that He should pray to another. The verse means that the Midat HaDin was directed against the people and God replaced it with the Midat Ha-Rachamim. Thus we explain the verse "Behold the Lord cometh forth out of His place."³⁸ From the interpretation of the verse it becomes clear that "favor" is meant. Further interpretation is gleaned from the verse "If a man sin against another God will judge him" (לֹא יִשְׁפֹּט); but if a man sin against the Lord who shall entreat for him? (וְיִשְׁפָּט).³⁹ The words תַּפִּלָּה "prayer" and שְׁפָט "judgment" are one word. The rabbis therefore meant to say that God passed judgment.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that from the day the Temple was destroyed God had nothing in this world except the four ells of Halaka.⁴⁰ This does not mean that God was fenced in by the four ells. Even the Temple could not contain Him nor the heaven of heavens.⁴¹ The rabbis meant that even after the destruction God's Providence cleaved to Israel. "Wherever I shall cause My name to be mentioned there shall I come and bless thee."⁴² The Temple is gone but in its place are Talmud Torah and prayer, as it says, "All who occupy themselves with Torah and prayer, the Shekina dwells among them." How can the slanderer who objects to the literal interpretation of this Agadah believe that God entered the womb of a woman, a foul place smaller than four

37. Ber. 7	40. Ber. perek 1
38. Is. XXVI:21	41. I K. VIII:27
39. I. Sam. II:25	42. Ex. XX:24

forces the rabbis to interpret the verse this way since it already said, "And Abraham gave Isaac all that he had." Since he gave Isaac all his property and could not have given them wisdom for there is no wise one among them, the only thing he could have imparted to them was the knowledge of sorcery. Hence it says, "they are replenished from the east with soothsayers like the Philistines."³⁷ How did Abraham happen to teach them this knowledge? Knowledge of sorcery is not forbidden in Israel, only the performance of deeds by the power of magic, as it says, "Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations."³⁸ Therefore, if Abraham taught this to his sons there is no sin involved. The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God said, "Woe to Me" that I destroyed My House.³⁹ This verse means that God did not desire the destruction of the Temple but was forced to destroy it because of Israel's sinfulness. The slanderer added the words "to Me" in order to cast reproach on the words of our rabbis. The proof we bring forward is that the latter part of the Agadah reads, "Woe to the son who has been exiled from the table of his father." Concerning the father, that is, God, it reads "What is it to Him?" But even if the verse read "Woe to Me" it means grief. Why should this present more difficulty than the biblical verse "And it repented the Lord that He made man on earth and it grieved Him at His heart."⁴⁰

33. Is. XLVI:1
34. Gen. XXVIII:10
35. Gen. XLVI:1
36. Gen. XLVI:1

ells? How can he believe that God daily enters a wafer upon the altar?

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God laughed and said "My Children have conquered Me."⁴³ Why is he surprised at this verse and not at the Biblical verses "Awake! Why sleepest Thou, O Lord"⁴⁴ and "then the Lord awaked as one asleep."⁴⁵ Both the Biblical and the Talmudic verses signify the same general thought. Being vanquished and being asleep are both signs of weakness. But the Rabbis meant that when Rabbi Joshua arose and said, "It is not in heaven, etc.," he gave a forceful answer and God acknowledged his words. It is comparable to a king whose servant gave him an answer which the king acknowledged as valid. It is not a victory by force and power but just the acknowledgment of a valid argument. Although God is incorporeal the Torah speaks the language of men.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "Great is peace for the Lord modified Sarah's words for its sake."⁴⁶ The slanderer claims that God lied. The text reads וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה "modify." There is a difference between falsehood and modification. The latter is used in cases where no falsehood is spoken, but only when a thing has a good and an evil aspect and the speaker keeps silent about the evil and reports only the good. This is permissible for the sake of peace.

43. B.M. 9

44. Psa. XLIV:24

45. ibid. LXXVIII:65

46. Yeb. 65 with reference to Gen. XVIII:12-13

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "God prayed." "God would that He should pray to another. The verse means that the Mideh Nafsha was directed against the people and God replaced it with the Mideh Nafsha. Thus we explain the verse "Behold the Lord cometh forth out of His place."⁴³ From the interpretation of the verse it becomes clear that "favor" is meant. Further interpretation is gleaned from the verse "If a man sin against another God will judge him"; but if a man sin against the Lord who shall enter for him? "prayer" and "judgment" are one word. The rabbis therefore meant to say that God passed judgment.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that from the day the Temple was destroyed God had nothing in this world except the four siles of Hallel.⁴⁴ This does not mean that God was fenced in by the four siles. Even the Temple could not contain Him nor the heaven or heaven.⁴⁵ The rabbis meant that even after the destruction God's Providence cleaved to Israel. "Wherever I shall cause My name to be mentioned there shall I come and bless thee."⁴⁶ The Temple is gone but in its place are Talmud Torah and prayer, as it says, "All who occupy themselves with Torah and prayer, the Shekhina dwells among them." How can the slanderer who objects to the literal interpretation of this Agadah believe that God entered the womb of a woman, a four place smaller than four

43. B.M. 9
44. Psa. XLIV:24
45. ibid. LXXVIII:65
46. Yeb. 65 with reference to Gen. XVIII:12-13

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "Bring an expiatory offering for I have diminished the moon."⁴⁷ Megadaf translates the word לְשֵׁן as לְשֵׁן "for my sake." In reality there should be a "Zere" under the "Lamed" showing that it is joined to the others. It simply means that they should offer up a goat as a sin offering because the glory of the moon has been diminished. It is not an expiatory offering for God. The offering symbolizes their hope for the House of David which is likened to the moon.⁴⁸ The expiatory offering is the sign of Israel's repentance. Through it we hope that the house of Israel, like the moon, will again shine forth. Therefore at the Rosh Hodesh service David is mentioned in our prayers.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God is a priest, that He buried Moses and bathed in the fire-river.⁴⁹ This is allegorical. When they said that God is a priest they meant that He, like Aaron, receives the first portion. He is the cause of all causes and the first cause. But it cannot be said that He is aloof from the world. Even though He is exalted and transcendent yet He cares for man, as is seen in the case of the burial of Moses. His Providence cleaves to all men. This fact is called the defect in our philosophy but it really is our superiority. The reference to God's bathing in the fire-river is symbolic of cleanness, purity, perfection. Even though He is in contact

47. Shab. 9a
48. Psa. LXXXIX:28
49. Sanh. 39

the slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God laughed and said "My Children have conquered Me." Why is he surprised at this verse and not at the Biblical verses "Awake! Why sleepest Thou, O Lord?" and "then the Lord awoke as one asleep." Both the Biblical and the Talmudic verses signify the same general thought. Being vanquished and being asleep are both signs of weakness. But the Rabbis meant that when Rabbi Joshua arose and said, "It is not in Heaven, etc.", he gave a forceful answer and God acknowledged his words. It is comparable to a king whose servant gave him an answer which the king acknowledged as valid. It is not a victory by force and power but just the acknowledgment of a valid argument. Although God is incorporeal the Torah speaks the language of men. The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "Great is peace for the Lord modified 'Great' words for its sake." The slanderer claims that God lied. The text reads "modifying." There is a difference between falsehood and modification. The latter is used in cases where no falsehood is spoken, but only when a thing has a good and an evil aspect and the speaker keeps silent about the evil and reports only the good. This is permissible for the sake of peace.

47. B.M. 9
48. Psa. XLIV:24
49. Psa. LXXXIX:28
46. Yeb. 68 with reference to "en XIV:12-13"

with lowly humanity He is above reproach and without a defect.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that five were created with a slight resemblance to God and all were smitten because of their resemblances.⁵⁰ Samson by his strength; Saul by his neck; Absalom by his hair; Zedekiah by his eyes; and Asa by his feet. The slanderer claims that God was jealous of them and smote them. How impossible! Yet even if it were so does not the Bible call God a "jealous God."⁵¹ The verse means that these five, who resembles Adam, the perfect man, were destroyed because of their pride and their vanity. Whomsoever is proud God bringeth low.

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbis for three more statements which need little explanation. He claims that the reference to Eliezer ben Pedath in Seder Taanivot contradicts the rabbinic statement "the life of my son and my sustenance depend not on merit but on the constellations."⁵² Anyone who can understand will know that these are not contradictory. Megadaf wants to falsify the words of the rabbis. The second attack is against the rabbinic statement that we shall not receive proselytes in the time of the Messiah.⁵³ He claims that this is contradictory to the prophetic ideal of drawing the nations to God.⁵⁴ The rabbis deduced their conception from the verse "Behold they may gather together,

50. Sotah 10a 53. Yeb. 24
51. Ex. XX:5; Nah. I:254. Is. XIV:1
52. M.K. 28

The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement "Bring an expiatory offering for I have diminished the moon."⁵⁵ Megadaf translates the word "for my sake." In reality there should be a "there" under the "damed" showing that it is joined to the others. It simply means that they should offer up a goat as a sin offering because the glory of the moon has been diminished. It is not an expiatory offering for God. The offering symbolizes their hope for the House of David which is likened to the moon. The expiatory offering is the sign of Israel's repentance. Through it we hope that the house of Israel, like the moon, will again shine forth. Therefore at the Rosh Hodesh service David is mentioned in our prayers. The slanderer Megadaf attacks the rabbinic statement that God is a priest, that He purified houses and bathed in the fire-river.⁵⁶ This is allegorical. When they said that God is a priest they meant that He, like Aaron, receives the first portion. He is the cause of all causes and the first cause. But it cannot be said that He is aloof from the world. Even though He is exalted and transcendent yet He cares for man, as is seen in the case of the burial of Moses. His Providence cleaves to all men. This fact is called the defect in our philosophy but it really is our superiority. The reference to God's bathing in the fire-river is symbolic of cleanness, purity, perfection. Even though He is in contact

55. Shab. 7a
56. Tan. LXIII:28
57. Tan. 29

but not by Me."⁵⁵ We have two kinds of proselytes, the Ger Shaah גֵּר שֶׂאֵה who accepts the seven commandments of Noah and not the whole Torah; and the Ger Zedek גֵּר זֶדֶק who is circumcised, immersed and receives the whole Torah. At the time of the Messiah we will certainly accept proselytes of the first type but not of the second. They did not embrace our Torah when Israel was lowly and despised and the rabbis do not accept proselytes who join our group "for the sake of the royal table."⁵⁶ The third attack is against the rabbinic statement that God teaches children, plays with Leviathan and rides on a cherub.⁵⁷ As the teacher of children God imparts understanding to them. Regarding His sporting with Leviathan,⁵⁸ and his riding upon the cherub,⁵⁹ similar statements occur in the Bible and the Biblical verses are to be interpreted just as the Talmudic passages are interpreted. Megadaf's attack therefore is not only against the Talmudic statements but against the Bible as well.

CONCLUSIONS

Unlike the essays of his illustrious kinsmen Rashbash limits his writing to the field of apologetics. His only polemical note enters when he shows the superiority of Jewish teaching and the high level of Morality attained by Israel through obedience to the Torah and the rabbis. His great knowledge of rabbinics enabled him to use his Talmudic

55. Is. LIV:15
56. Yeb. 24b
57. Ab. Zar. 20

58. Psa. CIV:26; Job XL:29
59. II Sam. XXII:11

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60. Sefer Yos.
61. Ex. XX:17; Num. X:17; XIV:1
62. M.M. 28

weapons with great skill. One cannot imagine a more systematic and scientific apologetic than Milchemet Mizwah. Laying down premises and suppositions which are self-evident, Rashbash proceeds to discuss specific cases and interpret them. On the whole his arguments are very convincing.

The apologetic Milchemet Mizwah is especially interesting because it answers a specific attack. The polemics of his father and Profiat Duran, except Al Ehi K'Aboteka, have no specific situation to face. Undoubtedly Rashbash had the polemic of Megadaf before him and answered him charge upon charge. Though on the defensive, one reads Milchemet Mizwah with the conviction that the head of this Duran is held high. There is nothing of the servile, humble, ghetto psychology about Rashbash in his defense of Jewish tradition. Undoubtedly the most refreshing trait of Rashbash--and for that matter Efodi and Rashbaz--is that he is no flatterer and does not approach his task with an apology.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the three conclusions mentioned above everything said about the Durans forms a harmonious whole. They are not defenders of Jewish lore who rush into the fray with passion and bitterness, but they embody the scientific spirit. They are seekers of facts and draw their data from Jewish and Christian literature. Well-acquainted with ancient and medieval lore of both the

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CONCLUSIONS

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38.1.1. CIV:24:10p XI:28
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weapons with great skill. One cannot imagine a more systematic and scientific apologetic than Michael Misha. Laying down premises and suppositions which are self-evident, Rashbash proceeds to discuss specific cases and interpret them. On the whole his arguments are very convincing. The apologetic Michael Misha is especially interesting because it answers a specific attack. The polemic of his father and brother Duran, except Al Tobi K'Apotea, have no specific relation to face. Undoubtedly Rashbash had the polemic of Megadaf before him and answered his charge upon charge. Though on the defensive, one reads Michael Misha with the conviction that the head of this Duran is held high. There is nothing of the servile, humble, ghetto psychology about Rashbash in his defense of Jewish tradition. Undoubtedly the most refreshing trait of Rashbash--and for that matter Efodi and Rashbah--is that he is no flatterer and does not approach his task with an apology.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the three conclusions mentioned above everything said about the Durans forms a harmonious whole. They are not defenders of Jewish lore who rush into the fray with passion and bitterness, but they embody the scientific spirit. They are seekers of facts and draw their data from Jewish and Christian literature. Well-acquainted with ancient and medieval lore of both the

Church and the synagogue, the Durans use their tools with science and skill. They are thoroughly acquainted with the former polemical writers and writings and although Rashbah and Efodi incorporate much of this material into their own polemics, they impart to their own productions a touch of originality. Undoubtedly the most original of the Durans, from the standpoint of material, is Rashbah who answers the specific attack of Megadaf.

Presenting a proud demeanor the Duran family makes no attempt to compromise and to spare the feelings of the Christian world. Though with science and skill and with the thrusts of a master, the Durans drive their weapons into the hearts of their opponents. The best trait of the "Fifteenth Century Spanish-Jewish Polemics as reflected in the writings of the Duran Family" is that they are not too vicious in their polemics nor too apologetic in their apologetics.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ab. Zar.	Abodah Zara
B. B.	Baba Batra
Ber.	Berakot
B. K.	Baba Kama
B. M.	Baba Meziar
Corinth.	Corinthians
Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Emun. W'Daot.	Emunet W'Daot
Eng. Gr.	History of the Jews by H. Graetz
Ex.	Exodus
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Gal.	Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Gen. R.	Midrash Genesis Raba
Hab.	Habakkuk
Hagig.	Hagigah
Hil. Ab. Zar.	Hilchot Abodah Zara (Rambam)
Hil. Rozaach.	Hilchot Rozaach (Rambam)
HUC M.	HUC Monthly vol. 1 no. 6 p. 15
	Ab u-ben "Be Not Like Thy Fathers"
Heb.	Hebrews
Heb. Gr.	Dibre Y'Mai Yisroel (Graetz)
Hull.	Hullin
Is.	Isaiah
Is. Bi.	Hilchot Issuray Biah (Rambam)
Jas.	James
JE.	Jewish Encyclopedia
Jere.	Jeremiah
Jn.	John
Kel. HaGoy.	Kelimat HaGoyim
Ker.	Keritot
Ket.	Ketubot
K.	Kings
Lev.	Leviticus
Lk.	Luke
Mak.	Makot
Mk.	Mark
Math.	Mathew
M. K.	Moed Koton
Nah.	Nahum
Nos.	Numbers
Ozar.	Ozar Wikuhim (Eisenstein)
Prov.	Proverbs
Psa.	Psalms
Rom.	Romans
Sab.	Talmud Sabbath
Sam.	Samuel
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Shab.	Shabuoeth
Thess.	Thessalonians
Yeb.	Yebamot
Yer. Sab.	Yerushalmi tractate Sabbath
Yer. Sanh.	" " " Sanhedrin

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<u>Keshet UMagen</u>	Leghorn Edition 1790	author Rashbaz
<u>Milchemet Mizwah</u>	" " "	Rashbash
<u>Kelimat HaGovim</u>	From manuscript in JTS library, NYC: Printed but not published Editor Isaac Broyde	Efodi
<u>Ozar Wikuhim</u>	1928	Eisenstein
<u>Dibre Y'Mai Yisroel</u>	Warsaw 1908 Notes by Rabinowitz and Harkavi vol.6,7	Graetz
<u>Jewish Encyclopedia</u>	Articles on "Duran"; "Polemics"	
<u>History of the Jews</u>	vol.4	Graetz
"Be Not Like Thy Fathers"	HUC Monthly vol.1,no.6 p.15	Ab u-ben
<u>History of the Jewish People</u>		Margolis and Marx
<u>History of the Jews in Spain and Portugal</u>	1848	Lindo
<u>A Harmony of the Gospels</u>	1908	Stevens and Burton