

Echoes of the Spanish Expulsion in Eighteenth Century Germany: The Baer Thesis Revisited

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YITZHAK BAER'S *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* is a magisterial presentation of the dramatic story of one of medieval Europe's most significant and colorful Jewries. Utilizing a vast array of Hebrew, Spanish and Latin primary sources, and in control of an extensive secondary literature, Baer traces the history of Spanish Jewry from the days of the early reconquest of parts of the Iberian peninsula from the Moslems in the eleventh century until the expulsion of the Jews in 1492.¹ But it is also much more than a history of a particular Jewry. In the process, it presents a definite philosophy of Jewish history, one which is stimulating, comprehensive and controversial.

In its broad outlines, Baer's thesis can be described as follows:

1) The essence of Judaism for all time is defined "by the sages of the Mishnah," who taught "a mythic, monotheistic folk religion . . . Even the dialectic method of [its] study bore a mytho-theological character." These sages "set up guiding principles for a pietist way of life," and were endowed with an "intuitive religious sense which did not need the aid of Greek science." It was they who, after the Exile, formulated

. . . the duty of martyrdom . . . in the words, "One must submit to death in preference to apostasy" . . . Their attitude was conceived in an atmosphere of mythological thinking where care was taken not to couch religious ideals in rational terms.²

For Baer, Mishnaic Judaism is authentic Judaism. Since he considered it to be mythical and non-philosophical, any mode of thinking which does not fit this mold is foreign to Judaism.

2) As a result, philosophical rationalism is considered an alien importation which never lost its alien character. Even after it became accept-

1. The book first appeared in two volumes in Hebrew as *Toledot ha-Yehudim bi-Sefarad ha-Nozrut* (Tel Aviv, 1945). A second, revised edition appeared in 1959 in one large volume. An English translation, with the title, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, was published by the Jewish Publication Society of America in two volumes: Vol. I, "From the Age of Reconquest to the Fourteenth Century" (Philadelphia, 1961) and Vol. II, "From the Fourteenth Century to the Expulsion" (Philadelphia, 1966). In his preface to the second volume of the English translation, Professor Baer noted that it "really should be considered a third edition of the book "because of the new material included in it. All following references will be to the reprint of the two-volume English translation (Philadelphia, 1971).

2. Y. Baer, *A History*, I, pp. 7, 9, 10, 11-12, 14.

ed by a significant number of Jews, a fact which Baer readily acknowledges, it never became part of the authentic Jewish experience. This should be contrasted with Kabbalah, which, due to its basically non-philosophical mythical character, was much more in keeping with pure, pristine and unsullied (mishnaic) Judaism. Although it, too, came into the Jewish community from the outside, it more closely approximated the mythical, symbolic character of authentic Judaism, and can thus be considered as an acceptable extension of it.

3) The broad masses of Spanish Jews remained true to their religion, while the aristocracy was less secure in its faith. It was specifically the exposure of "the courtier class" to philosophic rationalism, or "Averroism," which had a deleterious effect on their religious observance and eroded their level of commitment to Torah and *mizvot*. By relativizing religious faith, philosophy caused upper-class Jews to lose their sense of the uniqueness of Judaism, thereby undermining their traditional faith and observance, and leading them to estrangement from their ancestral religion. The spiritual corruption of the aristocracy, caused almost solely by philosophical speculation, stands in stark contrast to the total, whole-hearted, simple faith of the masses uncontaminated by exposure to philosophy.³

4) By dangerously eroding Judaism from within, philosophy made its aristocratic adherents vulnerable to conversion to Christianity when historical conditions lent themselves to this possibility. It was the alien and corrosive philosophy which paved the way for conversion, because it created an entire group of (aristocratic) Jews who, while formally adhering to Judaism, lost its inner spirit and meaning and who, therefore, were susceptible to the seduction of the Christian faith when confronted by the onslaught of a militant Christianity. Contrast this to the less sophisticated masses of Jews, "the artisans," who remained true to their heritage even under very trying conditions. Baer wrote:

In the fifteenth century, as in previous ages, religious Averroism existed as a historical force undermining the foundations of Jewish national and religious unity.

The Averroistic outlook, in fact, exercised a marked influence in several areas of the social and religious life of the Jews in Spain, and proved decisive in the fateful hours of their history. The descendants of these highly cultured aristocrats were to betray both their faith and their people during the period of great trial which lasted from 1391 through 1415.

The artisans had always been the most faithful element in Spanish Jewry. During the mass conversions of 1391-1415, many devout artisans remained steadfast while educated Jews betrayed their religion and their people.⁴

5) While the Spanish aristocracy was tainted by its philosophical

3. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 3, 97 and *in passim*, throughout the book.

4. *Ibid.*, II, p. 258; I, p. 240; II, p. 354. See also I, p. 100.

orientation, Franco-German Jewry was much closer to the pristine essence of mishnaic Judaism because it was free of the corrosive influence of philosophy. It was the

... old lore, developed into a well-integrated system [which] infused into the people its life's breath and led it on to the stage of history. The sages of the Mishnah gave it authoritative formulation. In Germany and France, Jewish scholars made wholehearted adherence to it the guiding principle of Jewish life, [unlike the rationalist contemporaries] of Judah Halevi and other Spanish aristocrats.⁵

As a result, upper-class Spanish Jews exposed to philosophy converted en masse to Christianity at their time of crisis while, in their similar hour of destiny during the First Crusade, the classic German Jewish response was martyrdom as mandated by Jewish (i.e. mishnaic) tradition.⁶

While a full treatment of all the multi-faceted components of this broadly conceived thesis is beyond the scope of this paper, such an investigation would yield some of the following conclusions: the mishnaic tradition is broader than Baer would have us believe, and includes an aristocratic/rational component in addition to the *völkish*, pietistic/mystical one which he stressed; both philosophy and Kabbalah represented attempts on the part of halakhically observant Jews, who were unsatisfied with traditional Talmudism, to combine it with other, meta-halakhic, elements that would provide the greater degree of meaning and spirituality for which their souls yearned; philosophy did not cause the problem of assimilation for Spanish Jewry but was, rather, a symptom of it and, it can be argued, "saved" at least as many people as it misled; certain strands of medieval Kabbalah could be just as "dangerous" as philosophy and, therefore, both had the equal capacity of preserving Judaism or leading one away from it; neither the controversy over philosophy nor the conversion vs. martyrdom dichotomy (to the extent to which it existed) can be neatly divided along class lines; the sharp contrast between a closed, pious, martyrdom-prone German Jewry and an open, skeptical, conversion-prone Spanish Jewry is oversimplified and misleading.⁷

5. *Ibid.*, I, p. 75.

6. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 37, 65, 97; II, pp. 130-31.

7. Some of these issues were raised by I. Sonne, "On Baer and His Philosophy of Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies*, IX (1947), pp. 61-80. See also Y.H. Yerushalmi, "Baer's History, Translated and Revisited," *Conservative Judaism* XXI (1966): 73-82 and the passing comment in I. Twersky, "Aspects of the Social and Cultural History of Provencal Jewry," *Jewish Society Through the Ages*, ed. by H.H. Ben-Sasson and S. Ettinger (New York, 1971), p. 189, n. 15: "On the whole, Professor Baer's thesis needs modification." I owe much of my thinking about this matter to Professor Yerushalmi, and to Professor Twersky, in whose Harvard University classrooms I was first exposed to it in the mid-1970s.

See also H.H. Ben-Sasson, "*Dor Golei Sefarad 'al 'Azmo*," *Zion* XXVI:1 (1961): 59-64; Moses A. Shulvass, "Crusades, Martyrdom, and the Marranos of Ashkenaz," *Between the Rhine and the Bosphorus* (Chicago, 1964), pp. 1-14; Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (New York, 1969), p. 85. For apostasy in medieval Ashkenaz, see Jacob Katz, *Ibid.*, pp. 67-76; Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 99-105;

One of the reasons that at least part of Baer's thesis sounds plausible and convincing is that he is echoing, in a refined and reformulated way, what many Spanish Jews themselves were saying in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. There were a significant number of moralists in Spain at that time who railed against the deleterious effects of philosophy among aristocrats, who blamed the religious laxity of the members of the courtier class, and ascribed their subsequent conversion to Christianity in large numbers to the corrosive effects of that alien and dangerous discipline, and who, in general, attributed the material and spiritual ills of Spanish Jewry to its influence. This is a major motif in such works as R. Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov's *Sefer ha-Emunot*, R. Shlomo Alami's *Iggeret Musar*, R. Hayyim ibn Musa's *Magen va-Romah*, R. Isaac Arama's *'Akedat Yizhak* and *Hazut Kashah*, R. Meir ibn Gabbai's *'Avodat ha-Kodesh*, R. Yosef Hayon's *Mili de-Avot*, R. Yosef Yavez's *Or ha-Hayyim*, and in several works by R. Yizhak Abarbanel, all of whom, together with others, opposed philosophy not only on purely conceptual grounds (it taught false ideas) but on practical grounds as well (it led to a breakdown of Jewish religious praxis).⁸

for martyrdom in southern Morocco during the Almohade invasions in the middle of the twelfth century in a community under Sephardi influence, see Ya'akov Moshe Toledano, "Te'udot mi-Kitvei Yad," *HUCA* IV (1927), pp. 453, 456; H.Z. Hirschberg, "'al Gezerot ha-Mayhadim ve-Sahar Hodu," *Sefer ha-Yovel le-Yizhak Baer* (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 138-39, 147; *Idem.*, *A History of the Jews in North Africa I* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 127-28.

For an earlier critique of the courtier class for *not* engaging in philosophy, see Bezalel Safran, "Bahya ibn Paquda's Attitude toward the Courtier Class," *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. by I. Twersky (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp. 155-62.

For an example of a philosopher who does express reservations about martyrdom, see Bernard Septimus, "Narboni and Shem Tov on Martyrdom," *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* II, ed. by I. Twersky (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 447-45.

For others who support Baer's thesis, implicitly or explicitly, see Gerson D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim," *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. by Max Kreutzberger (New York, 1967), pp. 147-56; H.J. Zimmels, *The Echo of the Nazi Holocaust in Rabbinic Literature* (Ktav, 1977), pp. 85-86; B. Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain* (New York, 1972); Frank Talmage, "Trauma at Tortosa: The Testimony of Abraham Rimoch," *Medieval Studies* XLVII (1985): 379-415. My thanks to Dr. Benjamin R. Gampel for bringing this last reference to my attention. See also Azriel Shohat, *Milhemet Kodesh u-Martiologiyah* (Jerusalem, 1968), pp. 132-33; Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, 1984), p. 84. One of the reasons Haym Soloveitchik gives for the propensity of Ashkenazic Jews for martyrdom is their lack of a philosophic orientation. See H. Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example," *AJS Review* XII:2 (1987): 213-14.

One thing should be clear. We are dealing here with issues that lay at the heart of medieval Jewish intellectual history.

8. For information about the battle against philosophy in Spain during this time featuring these individuals as well as others, see Y. Baer, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 241; II, pp. 234-43, 253-59, 443; Sarah Heller-Wilensky, *R. Yizhak Ar'amah u-Mishnato* (Jerusalem, 1956); Yosef Hacker, "Mekomo shel R. Avraham Bibago bi-Mahlaket 'al Limud ha-Filosofiya u-Ma'amadah bi-Sefarad bi-Me'ah ha-Tet Vav," *Divrei ha-Kongres ha-'Olami ha-Hamishi le-Mada'ei ha-Yahadut* III (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 151-58; Gedalyah Nig'al, "De'otav shel R.Y. Yavez 'al Filosofiya

After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, this trauma was added to the list of tragedies which befell Spanish Jewry due to its excessive involvement with philosophy. Those who experienced this unexpected, shocking and cataclysmic event struggled to find some meaning or explanation for it, and instinctively opted to subsume it under the paradigm of previous Jewish responses to catastrophe. In keeping with the classical propensity of Jews to blame themselves for their own misfortunes (“*u-mipnei hata’enu galinu me-arzenu*”), contemporary moralists also perceived the expulsion as a punishment for their sins. And, among the litany of sins which they committed, the sin of studying philosophy occupies a leading role. This argument is pointedly made in R. Yosef Yavež’s *Or ha-Hayyim*, but it can be found elsewhere in the literature of the period as well.⁹ Furthermore, having been introduced into the literature of those opposed to philosophy at that time, this linkage between the expulsion of 1492 and the excessive devotion of Spanish Jews to philosophy became a staple of the subsequent anti-philosophy polemic. It was destined to reappear in settings far removed from its original context, geographically as well as chronologically.

One of the places where this linkage reappears is in the writing of Rabbi Jacob Emden, who lived in eighteenth century Germany. R. Emden is primarily known in historical circles as the virulent opponent of the Sabbatian movement, whose explosive controversy with R. Yonatan Eybeschütz indicated the lengths to which he was prepared to go to extirpate what he considered to be this blatant heresy from the Jewish community. But he was much more than a one-dimensional hunter of heresy. He was, in addition, a first-rate talmudist and halakhist, an accomplished grammarian, and a highly prolific author, whose literary oeuvre contains commentaries encompassing all the genres of rabbinic creativity (the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, liturgy, and codes) as well as a major ethical tract, a kabbalistic dictionary, an autobiography, several sermons and eulogies, and hundreds of responsa. As a result of his large multifaceted oeuvre, R. Emden can justly be considered one of the foremost Jewish intellectual figures of the eighteenth century.¹⁰

u-Mitpalsifim, Torah u-Mizvot,” Eshel Be’er-Sheva I (1976), pp. 258-85; Isaac E. Barzilay, Between Reason and Faith (The Hague, 1967), pp. 133-49. Dr. Isadore Twersky’s “Talmudists, Philosophers, Kabbalists: The Quest for Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century,” Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century, ed. by Bernard D. Cooperman (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 431-59 contains much important material on our subject.

For another example of the linkage between exposure to philosophy and apostasy, see Ephraim Kupfer, “*Hezyonotav shel R. Asher bi-R. Meir ha-Mekhunah Lemlein Reutlingen,*” *Kovez ‘al Yad XVIII (1975), p. 406.*

9. For R. Yavež, see his *Or ha-Hayyim* (Lublin, 1912), p. 26; G. Nig’al, *Op. cit.*, pp. 260, 264. See also Y.H. Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Shebet Yehudah* (Cincinnati, 1976), p. 51, n. 127.

10. For a full-length treatment of this fascinating figure, see my *Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Harvard University, 1988).

Throughout his writings, R. Emden displayed a negative attitude toward philosophy. In brief, his argument can be described as follows: Philosophers lack any heteronomic awareness of the basis of law, they deny God's role in the governance of the universe, and consider the world to be "hefker," attributing every occurrence therein to chance. As a result, they feel bound to follow only that which their logic accepts as reasonable, a position which allows them to justify a life of hedonism and a concomitant rejection of Torah law. In fact, argues R. Emden, it is adherence to philosophy which was responsible for the destruction of both Temples, as well as other major Jewish tragedies throughout our history, including, he suggests, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain.¹¹

One of the clearest formulations by R. Emden of his negative attitude to philosophy and the tragic historical consequences of its study can be found in his *Iggeret Purim*. Responding to his critics during the controversy with Chief Rabbi Eybeschütz, who accused him of disrespect for Maimonides, R. Emden wrote:

Regarding that which they further sought to ascribe to me an iniquity which is a sin¹² in my pen, in that I criticized even the early masters ("kadmonim") like Maimonides and Radak to provoke arguments, *new as well as old* (*Song of Songs* 7:14), to move the lips of those that are asleep,¹³ this too I will not deny that I spoke against the book *Guide of the Perplexed* which, in my opinion, was never authored by the same Maimonides who created the book *Yad ha-Hazakah* in which we glory.¹⁴ Unless we say that as rich as he surely was in wisdom, at that time [when he wrote the *Guide*] he was poor.¹⁵ (Or, perhaps, there were two Rambams. Even though in *Sefer Mada* there are also found some of the mistaken notions of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, perhaps it [i.e., the *Guide*, was written by] someone who wanted to choke, and hung himself on a big tree.) I cannot imagine that such a great stumbling block could come forth from the hand of a man great among the Jews¹⁶ in Torah and good deeds as R. Moses, famous for his good name, *flawless in beauty* (*Ezekiel* 28:12). For that book, the *Guide*, is full of blemish. In truth, it contradicts Torah and faith, more than could be believed, were it to be told . . .¹⁷

Verily it is true¹⁸ that I did not invent the slander about this book. For immediately after its birth it acquired a bad name that it was born with a blemish. All the true scholars of that generation hated it, despised it, considered it abominable, erased it and some burned it. No one selected it except for the heretics, deserted and forsaken like the wilderness,¹⁹ who choose a profligate life.²⁰ They will take from it withered proofs and rea-

11. For an analysis of R. Emden's attitude toward philosophy, see *Ibid.*, pp. 548-86.

12. Cf. *Hosea* 12:9.

13. Cf. *Song of Songs* 7:10.

14. For R. Emden's position on the Maimonidean authorship of the *Guide*, see my *Rabbi Jacob Emden*, pp. 580-81; 655, n. 329.

15. The parenthesis appears in the original text.

16. Cf. *Esther* 10:3.

17. Cf. *Habakuk* 1:6.

18. Cf. *Genesis* 8:13.

19. Cf. *Isaiah* 27:10.

20. This charge of hedonism against the "heretics" is also emphasized elsewhere in R.

sons and fragile conjectures to ridicule Torah, prophecy, deeds, reward and reverence²¹

In any case we have not found in the records of the wise men of the generations anyone who permitted becoming involved in it. Rather, Nahmanides, Rashba and the French scholars, men of greatness, all immediately repudiated it and revealed its nakedness in the presence of all her lovers²²

After presenting his opposition to philosophy in general and to the *Guide for the Perplexed* in particular, R. Emden turned his attention to the deleterious effects of its study, and cited, in particular, the works of R. Yosef Yavez:

Experience proved that this book was a stone of striking and a rock of stumbling²³ to the House of Israel and a cause of damages. It caused the destruction of the Jewish communities in Spain That land was formerly like the Garden of Eden, its dwelling almost as important as the land of Israel. It grew mightily in wealth, generosity, wisdom and significance. And from the day they became involved in philosophy, *they became grievously corrupt* (Hosea 9:9). They cast the teachings of their mother behind their backs.²⁴ *They continually decreased* (Genesis 8:5) until they were exiled from that land; nothing was left behind.²⁵ The involvement [with] this book was the cause of their troubles.²⁶ Without any doubt in the world, it is the direct cause, as the pious ones of the generation rebuked them for their shame. (Study in detail the works of the great admonishing preacher among the exiles from Spain, our Master R. Yosef Yavez.)²⁷

R. Emden's attribution of a number of Jewish tragedies, including the Spanish Expulsion, to the diabolical influence of philosophy first appeared in his earliest full-scale attack on that discipline, printed in the first volume of his *Siddur* in 1747. He wrote:

They were the sinful stumbling block for the house of Israel at the beginning of its flowering. They pursued idolatry only to permit themselves (involvement in) public immorality, *to the utter ruin of moist and dry alike* (Deuteronomy 29:18). All the evil of the days of the First Commonwealth emerged from this *stock sprouting poison weed and wormwood* (Ibid., 29:17), the source of the filth

It is this that was the peg upon which was fixed²⁸ the evil throughout

Emden's works. See his *Siddur 'Amudei Shamayim* I (Altona, 1747), pp. 248b-249a; *Siddur Sha'arei Shamayim* II (Altona, 1747), pp. 75b-77a; *Sefer Birat Migdal 'Oz* (Jerusalem, 1969), p. 47a; "*Hali Ketem*," *Derush Tefillat Yesharim* (Cracow, 1911), pp. 26a-b.

21. Cf. Zachariah 3:8.

22. Cf. Hosea 2:12.

23. Cf. Isaiah 8:14.

24. Cf. Nehemiah 9:26.

25. Cf. Exodus 10:26; lit., "not a hoof remained behind."

26. Cf. Judges 11:35.

27. *Iggeret Purim*, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Ms. Mich. 618, p. 33a. This selection is printed in my "Rabbi Jacob Emden's *Iggeret Purim*," *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* II, ed. by I. Twersky (Cambridge, 1984), p. 445.

This passage should be added to the list of sources cited by Gedalyah Nig'al, "*Hushpa'ato ha-Safrutit shel R. Yosef Yavez*," *Kiryat Sefer* LI:1-2 (1976), pp. 289-99.

28. Cf. Isaiah 22:25.

the entire period of the Second Commonwealth, whose turbulence (“*mehumah*”) did not rest from beginning to end. From it sprouted all the opposing sects, who rivalled one another and were the cause of the war [against Rome]. Indeed, it was the accursed Greek wisdom (“*hokhmah yevanit*”) which was the cause of our trouble,²⁹ that destroyed the Temple and despoiled the Land of Israel. It was this that caused *the dispersion of Jerusalem that was in Sefarad* (Obadiah 1:20)³⁰ to be expelled and uprooted from the country of Spain where they had been on a very high level of wealth and wisdom until their hearts became arrogant to exchange the honor of their distinguished, rich and pleasant Torah, which gave birth to them, for the harlot, naked maidservant which is philosophy.³¹

R. Emden continued pressing the point in the second volume of his *Siddur*, completed also in 1747, eight months after the first. After presenting the laws and customs of the Ninth of Av, he bemoaned the fact that Jews neglect their obligation to mourn for the destruction of the Temple, a mode of behavior which, he claimed, is responsible for their prolonged stay in Exile. He blamed this neglect on the Jews' desire “to learn the ways of the Gentiles and, in particular, he castigated his contemporaries for their desire to copy Gentile dress and fashion and to study philosophy, “the accursed Greek wisdom.”³² He referred to this discipline as “abhorrent unto God . . . malignant leprosy is in her right hand, *a sword for great carnage that presses* (Ezekiel 21:19). In her left hand are stored death and destruction.”³³ Once again, he blamed philosophy for a succession of Jewish tragedies, including the Spanish Expulsion. He wrote:

And that seducer still dances among us. It is he that also caused the feet of our people in Spain to stumble,³⁴ to exterminate them from there because they delved deeply³⁵ to teach them to be lighthearted with prohibitions [of Jewish law], as mentioned above. They distorted (“*hafkhu panim*”) Torah, contrary to *Halakhah*. They violated the covenant; they nullified the law.³⁷ However, their wisdom is of nought; most of their words increase the vanity (“*hevel*”) of sin. They have no foundation nor root whatsoever; from the pit of philosophy were they dug.³⁸

29. Cf. Judges 11:35.

30. This verse was adduced by Sephardim throughout the Middle Ages as proof of their exalted lineage. For example, see already the beginning of Hasdai ibn Shaprut's letter to Joseph, King of the Khazars, printed in P.K. Kokovtsov, *Evreisko-Khazar'skaya Perepiska v X veke* (Leningrad, 1932), p. 10. See, too, Gerson D. Cohen, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah: The Book of Tradition by Abraham ibn Daud* (Philadelphia, 1967), Hebrew section, p. 71; English section, pp. 97-98; Moses Maimonides, *Iggeret Teman*, ed. by J. Kapah (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 48; Nahmanides, “*Terem E'eneh . . .*,” *Kitvei Rabbenu Moshe b. Nahman*, ed. by C. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1963), I, p. 339; R. Moses of Coucy, *Sefer Mizvot Gadol, Mizvat 'Aseh #74*. See, too, H.H. Ben-Sasson, ● *p. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 23-25.

31. *Siddur 'Amudei Shamayim*, 249a.

32. *Siddur Sha'arei Shamayim*, 75b-77a.

33. Cf. Job 28:22.

34. Cf. Job 12:5.

35. Cf. Hosea 9:9.

36. Cf. Judges 11:35.

37. Cf. Isaiah 24:5.

38. *Siddur Sha'arei Shamayim*, pp. 77a-b. R. Emden went on also to blame “the destruction

This linkage also appeared in two works printed by R. Emden towards the end of his life. In the course of attacking the *Guide for the Perplexed* in his *Mitpahat Sefarim*, first printed in 1768, he noted: "Who knows how many hundreds and thousands left the faith because of this. It is the direct cause for the destruction of many great and mighty Jewish communities and their total eradication from the lands of Spain and France."³⁹ In a work printed one year before he died, he returned to this point for one final time. At the end of a long attack on philosophy he wrote: "Woe, woe. This is what destroyed the first and second Temples and led us into captivity now close to two thousand years. This was also the cause of the expulsion of Israel from Spain"⁴⁰

of the Jews in the land of the Ukraine," presumably a reference to the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648-1649, on "the scab of philosophy." In a later addendum to his commentary on the *Siddur*, he added that the expulsions of the Jews from France and Provence in the fourteenth century were also a punishment for philosophical inquiry. See the end of the second volume of Rabbi Moshe Bick's reprint of the *Siddur* (Tel Aviv, 1966), p. 103. The complete text of these addenda are being incorporated into a new edition of R. Emden's *Siddur* presently being printed in Jerusalem by Eshkol Press. For another statement blaming the expulsion on Jewish assimilation into Spanish society, see, *Ibid.*, p. 100. See also *Sefer Birat Migdal 'Oz*, (n. 20), p. 158a, where R. Emden blamed the study of Greek philosophy among Jews in ancient times for the destruction of the Temple. 39. *Mitpahat Sefarim* (Lvov, 1870), p. 62. See too *Ibid.*, p. 84: "This (i.e. the study of 'external wisdom') is what caused the uprooting of the Jewish communities, large in wisdom and in number, from the entire lands of Spain and France."

40. "*Hali Ketem*," (n. 20), p. 26b.

See also *'Ez Avot* (Maramarossziget, 1912), p. 59a (on *Avot* V:22) for a general statement: "For whatever and whenever they pursued it (i.e. 'Greek wisdom') it became their troubler and uprooted them from the places they had rested with universal honor."

It is interesting that in *Siddur 'Amudei Shamayim*, p. 31a, R. Emden offered another explanation for the Spanish Expulsion, i.e., Spanish Jewry became too comfortable where they were, and forgot about the centrality of the Land of Israel in their lives. They acted there as if "we already found another Land of Israel and Jerusalem just like it." He also alluded to this in his addenda to the *Siddur*, (n. 38), p. 100.

More research is necessary to determine if references to the Spanish Expulsion are found in the works of R. Emden's contemporaries as well. Perhaps R. Emden was especially conscious of the significance of this event due to the large numbers of Sephardic Jews living in his native Hamburg.

The entire issue of Ashkenazi attitudes towards philosophy is a very interesting one and also requires further analysis. Suffice it to say that there seems to have been a much greater knowledge of, and even appreciation for, philosophy among Ashkenazi Jewry in medieval and early modern times than hitherto believed. See, for example, Ephraim Kupfer, "*li-Demutah ha-Tarbutit shel Yahadut Ashkenaz ve-Hakhamehah bi-Me'ot ha-14 — ha-15*," *Tarbiz* XLII:1-2 (1972-1973): 113-47; *Idem.*, "*Sefer ha-Berit u-Ketavim Aherim le-R. Yom Tov Lipman Mulhausen*," *Sinai* LVI:6 (1965): 330-43; *Idem.* and B. Mark, "*Der Renesans in Italya un in Poylin un zayn Virkung oyf di Yidn*," *Bleter far Geshichte* VI:4 (1953): 4-99; H.H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 707-11; *Idem.*, "Jewish-Christian Disputation in the Setting of Humanism and Reformation in the German Empire," *Harvard Theological Review* LIX (1966): 369-72; R. Bonfil, "*Sefer 'Alilot Devarim': Perek bi-Toledot ha-Hagut ha-Yehudit bi-Me'ah ha-Arba 'Esrer*," *Eshel Be'er Sheva* II (1980): 237; Vladimir Sadek, "Yom Tov Lipman Mulhausen and His Rationalistic Way of Thinking," *Judaica Bohemiae* XXIV:2 (1988): 98-113; Lawrence Kaplan, *Rationalism*

Clearly all of this is more indicative of R. Emden's attitude towards philosophy than of the historic reality of Spanish Jewry. Nevertheless, its significance for the history of the Jews in Spain is clear. Even some two and a half centuries after the expulsion occurred, Spain was still being referred to as a land "like the Garden of Eden" whose Jewish inhabitants were distinguished by their "wealth, generosity, wisdom and significance." The aura of the aristocracy and sophistication of Iberian Jewry, as well as their boasting of a close tie to the elite Jews of Palestine, continued to be felt and articulated long after the last professing Jew left Spanish soil. And certainly it is quite significant that an eighteenth-century attempt to prove the deleterious effects of philosophical speculation found it useful to link such study with the calamity of 1492. For surely philosophy must be the epitome of evil if it could be responsible for so great a tragedy, one whose implications continue to affect the Jewish community one half millenium after it occurred.

and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe: Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's Levush Pinat Yikrat (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Harvard University, 1975); *Idem.*, "Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe and the Evolution of the Jewish Culture in Poland in the Sixteenth Century," *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Bernard D. Cooperman (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 266-82. Note, however, the cautionary remark of Haym Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example," *AJS Review* XII:2 (1987): 213-14, n. 12.

This issue was most recently discussed in detail in Joseph M. Davis, *R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, Joseph b. Isaac ha-Levi, and Rationalism in Ashkenazic Jewish Culture, 1550-1650* (unpublished doctoral dissertation: Harvard University, 1990).