

RABBI JACOB EMDEN, SABBATIANISM, AND FRANKISM:
ATTITUDES TOWARD CHRISTIANITY
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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On December 5, 1755, Jacob Frank arrived in Poland where he was received with great enthusiasm by members of the Sabbatian communities who had lived there in an underground fashion for several decades. These followers of Shabbetai Zevi, who revealed himself as the messiah in May of 1665, were part of a larger group of Jews who continued to believe in him long after his conversion to Islam some sixteen months later and even after his death in 1676. At the end of January 1756, Frank visited Lanckoronie (Landskron or Lanckorona) in the province of Podolia where it was reported that he and his followers conducted a Sabbatian religious sexual orgy with Christian overtones. Frank and several others were arrested but he was freed shortly thereafter. The rabbi of the city appealed to the members of the rabbinical court in the nearby town of Satanów, which had religious jurisdiction there, to investigate the matter. They conducted an inquiry into the affair and, in the process, their attention was drawn to a network of Sabbatian adherents in that area who, while outwardly living traditional Jewish lives, clearly abrogated Jewish law in private. They reported their findings at a rabbinical conference in Brody in June 1756, and these Sabbatians were placed under the ban, a ruling that was confirmed at a meeting of the Council of the Four Lands in Konstantynow the following September. In response to the harassment and persecution of the Sabbatians that followed throughout Podolia and beyond, those identified with this movement approached local Christian religious authorities, in particular Bishop Mikolaj Dembowski of Kamieniec-Podolski, and claimed that the reason they were targeted by the Jewish community was because they shared with Christians a belief in Jesus and other matters of faith. They were successful in gaining the bishop's support for a while, perhaps because he hoped that, in due time, they would fully adopt Christianity.

In response, the Polish rabbis and leaders of the Council of the Four Lands were prepared to argue that it was false to consider Sabbatianism

as having any connection to Christianity; in fact, it was to be viewed as an entirely new religion unrelated to it. Since, however, Christian authorities considered founding and following a new religion to be illegal and in violation of their own law, to the extent that someone found guilty of it would be liable to the penalty of death, they inquired of Rabbi Jacob Emden whether they were permitted to pursue such a claim because it might result in Sabbatians being killed.¹

¹ See Jacob Emden, *Sefer shimmush* (Altona [in spite of the fact that the title page reads “Amsterdam”], 1758–1762), 78b–79a, for details of what allegedly took place in “Laskronia.” See also *Sefer shimmush*, 1b–9b; Dov Ber Birkenthal, in Abraham Jacob Brawer, “Makor ‘Ivri hadash le-toledot Frank ve-si’ato,” *Ha-shiloah* 33 (1917): 334–337; repr. in idem, *Galitzyah vi-Yehudeha* (Jerusalem, 1965), 214–218; Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Va’ad ‘Arba’ Aratzot* (Jerusalem, 1945), 415–420. For secondary literature, see Alexandr Kraushar, *Frank i Frankiści Polscy, 1726–1816*, vol. 1 (Krakow, 1895), 65–76; translated into Hebrew by Nahum Sokolov, *Frank va-’adato* (Warsaw, 1895), 67–82, and into English by Stanley Bergman, revised and edited by Herbert Levy, *Jacob Frank: The End to the Sabbataian Heresy* (Lanham, MD, 2001), 81–87; M. Balaban, *Le-toledot ha-tenu’ah ha-Frankit* (Tel Aviv, 1934), 116ff.; David Kahane, *Toledot ha-mekubbalim, ha-Shabbeta’im, ve-ha-Hasidim*, vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv, 1927), 70–71; Avraham Ya’ari, “Le-toledot milhamtam shel hakhmey Polin bi-tenu’at Frank,” *Sinai* 35 (1954): 171–172; repr. in idem, *Mehkery sefer: Perakim be-toledot ha-sefer ha-‘Ivri* (Jerusalem, 1958), 451–452; N. M. Gelber, *Toledot Yehudey Brody* (Jerusalem, 1955), 107–108; Bernard D. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland* (Philadelphia, 1973), 244–245; Gershon Scholem, “Ha-tenu’ah ha-Shabbeta’it be-Polin,” in *Mehkarim u-mekorot le-toledot ha-Shabbeta’ut ve-gilguleha* (Jerusalem, 1974), 120–124; idem, *Kabbalah* (New York, 1974), 288–290; Klaus Samuel Davidowicz, *Jacob Frank, der Messias aus dem Ghetto* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 166–177; idem, *Zwischen Prophetie und Häresie: Jakob Franks Leben und Lehren* (Wien, 2004), 37–40. See also Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755–1816* (Philadelphia, 2011), 21–40. My thanks to Dr. Maciejko for making the second chapter of his work available to me prior to publication.

For the date of Frank’s arrival in Poland, see Hillel Levine, ed. and trans., *Ha-Khronikah’—Te’udah le-toledot Ya’akov Frank u-tenu’ato* (Jerusalem, 1984), 36. For the text of the Brody excommunication, entitled “Herev Pifiyot,” see Yosef Kohen-Zedek, “Herev Pifiyot,” *’Otzar hokhmah* 1 (1859): 21–28; Sokolov, *Frank ve-’adato*, 77–81. For an abridged version, see Yekutiel Kamelhar, *Dor de’ah*, vol. 2 (Pietrkov, 1935; repr. New York, 1953), 63–64. For a summary, see Jacob Emden, *Sefer shimmush*, 7b; repr. in Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Va’ad ‘Arba’ Aratzot*, 417–418. See also Avraham Hayyim Wagenaar, *Toledot Ya’avetz* (Lublin, 1880), 21–22.

An important related text is “Ma’aseh Nora be-Podolia,” a purported eyewitness account of some of these early events involving Frank and his followers in Poland, published by Emden at the end of his *Sefer ha-pedut ve-ha-purkan* (Altona, 1769), 27a–30b. It was reprinted, with notes and analysis, in Majer Balaban, “Studien und Quellen zur Frankistischen Bewegung in Polen,” in *Livre d’hommage a la mémoire du Dr. Samuel Poznański* (Warsaw, 1927), 47–68; idem, *Le-toledot ha-tenu’ah ha-Frankit*, 295–320. Emden refers to it briefly in *Sefer hit’avkut* (Altona, 1769), 19a. Balaban already noted the unreliability of parts of this account, as did Avraham Ya’ari, “Le-toledot milhamtam,” 458. Emden also described these events in his *Megillat sefer* (Warsaw, 1896), 184–186.

Rabbi Emden (1698–1776) was one of the most significant figures in eighteenth-century Jewish life. Reared in a learned home, he was a preeminent scholar who made a major contribution to the field of rabbinic learning in all its various forms. Also, toward the end of his life he witnessed the emergence of the Haskalah and, unlike some of his more traditional colleagues, was sensitive to the shifting nuances of thought represented by that movement whose positions and conclusions he both shared and opposed. Finally, by the time Frank appeared in Poland, Emden had already played a major role in the Jewish community's battle against Sabbatianism and had developed an international reputation as someone obsessed with exposing and hounding any vestige of that movement.² It was in his capacity as an inveterate Sabbatian opponent that Emden was approached by the rabbinic and lay leadership of Polish Jewry seeking his assistance in this matter, which had shaken their community.

In fact, that leadership already had direct contact with Emden and knew him well from their involvement with him only a few years earlier, in the first years of Emden's most bitter and explosive controversy with Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz, one of the greatest rabbis of the generation, whom he accused of being a follower of Shabbetai Zevi.³ The leadership of the Council of the Four Lands first became involved in that controversy when a Polish rabbinic supporter of Eibeschuetz in Lublin excommunicated Emden in the spring of 1751. In response, Emden and other German rabbis who supported him reacted with anger, and not only demanded that the excommunication be withdrawn but insisted that the Polish authorities join them and convince

It is also interesting to note that although here and there one finds specific references to Frank, the group of his followers under attack here are repeatedly referred to as Sabbatians. The term "Frankist" did not appear until the nineteenth century. See Rachel Elior, "Sefer divrey ha-'adon' le-Ya'akov Frank: 'Otomitografyah mistit, nihilizm dati va-hazon ha-herut ha-meshihi ke-ri'alizatzyah shel mitus u-metaforah," in Rachel Elior, ed., *Ha-halom ve-shivro: Ha-tenu'ah ha-Shabbeta'it u-sheluhoteha. Meshihyyut, Shabbeta'ut u-Frankizm* (= *Mehkery Yerushalayim be-mahashevet Yisra'el 17*) (Jerusalem, 2001), 482–483, n. 20; idem, "Israel ba'al Shem Tov and Jacob Frank: Hasidism and Shabateanism," in idem, *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism* (Oxford and Portland, 2006), 173, n. 1.

² For an analysis of Emden's life, see my "Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988).

³ The literature on this controversy is enormous, and growing. For material until the 1980s, see my "Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works," 395–403; Shmuel Ettinger, "Ha-pulmos Emden-Eibeschuetz le-'orah shel ha-historiyografyah ha-Yehudit," *Kabbalah* 9 (2003): 329–392.

the leadership of all the surrounding areas to take a position opposed to Eibeschuetz. Eibeschuetz, in turn, hoped that they would be supportive of him. Each camp had supporters in Poland; in addition, Emden had many family members who lived there, some occupying rabbinic positions. Placed in the very difficult situation of being forced to decide between these two formidable and influential camps, and out of a desire not to alienate either of them, the leadership of the council first decided later in 1751 not to decide. However, toward the end of 1753 the pro-Eibeschuetz forces succeeded in mustering a majority that vindicated him of all the charges against him, and they ordered that all books and broadsides published against Eibeschuetz be burned. Although this ruling was not carried out, it had a major impact on the subsequent unfolding of the controversy.⁴

With this background, and with the full expectation that their query would strike a receptive ear, the Polish authorities turned to Emden, and he did not disappoint them. Emden penned a long and sharply worded essay in which, after summarizing the events that led up to this inquiry, he clearly affirmed that it was not only permissible for

⁴ Much information about the involvement of the Polish communities in this controversy is available in some of Emden's polemical works on the subject (*Sefat 'emet u-leshon zehorit*, 'Edut be-Ya'akov, *Torat ha-kena'ot*, *Sefer hit'avkut*, *Beyt Yehonatan ha-Sofer*); in *Luhot 'edut* by R. Eibeschuetz; and in R. Joseph Prager, *Gahaley 'esh*, still in manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS MICH. 106–108; see Ad. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* [Oxford, 1886], 755, #2189). See also Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Va'ad 'Arba' 'Aratzot*, 339–379, 385–386, 390–403, 406–408. This material is discussed in M. Balaban, *Le-toledot ha-tenu'ah ha-Frankit*, 72–81; Israel Halperin, "Der Vad Arbe Arotses in zayne batsiungen mit Oysland," *Historishe shriftn* 2 (1937): 77–78; idem, "Va'ad 'Arba' 'Aratzot ve-yahasav 'im Hutz-la-'Aretz," in his *Yehudim ve-Yahadot be-Mizrah Eyropah* (Jerusalem, 1969), 75–77; Isaiah Trunk, "Le-berur 'emdato shel 'Avraham b. Yoski, parnas Va'ad 'Arba' 'Aratzot, be-mahaloket beyn Yehonatan Eibeschuetz ve-Ya'akov Emden," *Zion* 38 (1973): 174–178; Moshe Rosman, "Samhuto shel Va'ad 'Arba' 'Aratzot mi-hutz le-Polin," *Bar-Ilan* 24–25 (1989): 25–27; idem, "The Authority of the Council of Four Lands outside Poland-Lithuania," *Polin* 22 (2010): 101–103. Emden also had many close relatives in Poland (sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters), some of whom involved him in this matter and with whom he was in close contact about it. See *Torat ha-kena'ot* (Altona, 1752), 62a, 65a; 'Edut be-Ya'akov (Altona, 1755–1756), 9b; *Megillat sefer*, 188. For a list of them, see Ben-Zion Dinur, "Reshitah shel ha-Hasidut vi-yesodoteha ha-sotzi'aliyim ve-ha-meshihyyim," *Zion* 8 (1943): 109, n. 10; repr. in idem, *Be-mifneh ha-dorot* (Jerusalem, 1955), 85, n. 10. His son R. Meir served as rabbi in Konstantynow, the city where the Va'ad met for many of its deliberations on the controversy, and another son, R. Meshullam Zalman, served as rabbi in Podhaice. One of the most prominent Polish communal leaders, R. Baruch me-Eretz Yavan, became related to Emden in 1758 when Emden's daughter Nehamah married R. Baruch's son Eliezer. See, among other sources, *Sefer shimmush*, 3b, 5a; *Megillat sefer*, 186.

them to place Sabbatians in danger of losing their lives but recommended that, in fact, they do so. In the process, Emden presented a highly favorable view of Jesus and of Christianity that is worthy of careful analysis and discussion.⁵

In order to understand the originality of Emden's striking and most unusual position expressed in that essay, it is important first to analyze his many other favorable statements about Christianity scattered throughout his many writings and then to try to account for his unusually open and tolerant attitude toward it. It is only against this broad background that it will be possible more fully to appreciate the new ground he broke in this essay and to provide an additional perspective on what may be yet another context from which to examine his attitude toward that religion.

It is important to point out that Emden himself noted in the second version of this essay that this occasion was not the first time he had expressed such opinions favorable to Christianity. He referred his readers to positive statements he had already made about that religion in two works he had already published, his *'Etz 'Avot* commentary on tractate *'Avot* and his *Torat ha-kena'ot*, a volume devoted to presenting information about the Sabbatian movement from its inception, and it is to these two sources that we first turn our attention.⁶ The disparity in length and emphasis between the discussion of Christianity in these two texts is so striking that it is, in fact, odd that he cited them together as one unit; the first is a full-length treatment, carefully formulated and nuanced, and the second constitutes just a few lines

⁵ Emden published this essay twice, first as an appendix to his edition of *Seder 'olam rabbah ve-zuta' u-Megillat ta'anit* (Hamburg, 1757), 32b–36b, and then, with significant additions, as “Resen mat'eh,” an appendix to “Meteg la-hamor,” the second of the three works that comprised his *Sefer shimmush*. See pp. 15a–21a. See also Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Va'ad 'Arba' 'Aratzot*, 421–422. A scholarly version of both editions was published by Lior Gottlieb, “‘Resen mat'eh' le-Rabbi Ya'akov Emden—Mahadurah kamma' u-batra',” in Binyamin Ish-Shalom, ed., *Be-darkhey shalom: 'Iyyunim be-hagut Yehudit mugashim le-Shalom Rosenberg* (Jerusalem, 2007), 295–321. I will be referring to this latest version of this essay in this article.

For partial English translations, see Oscar Z. Fasman, “An Epistle on Tolerance by a ‘Rabbinic Zealot,’” in Leo Jung, ed., *Judaism in a Changing World* (New York, 1939), 128–136; repr. (London and New York, 1971), 98–104; and Harvey Falk, “Rabbi Jacob Emden's Views on Christianity,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19, no. 1 (1982): 107–111; repr. in idem, *Jesus the Pharisee* (New York, 1985), 13–23. For a thoughtful analysis of this essay, see Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude*, 47–62, 141.

⁶ Gottlieb, “Resen mat'eh,” 308.

penned in passing. And, in addition, it will become clear that while the first one anticipated important elements of his argument in this essay, as will be demonstrated below, in neither of these two sources did Emden go anywhere near as far as he did here in the level of his positive assessment of Jesus and Christianity.

In the second source, *Torat ha-kena'ot*, Emden made only a passing few lines' positive reference to "the founders of new religions," without even mentioning Christianity by name. He noted that these "founders" established these new religions for Gentiles alone, without it ever occurring to them to make them relevant to Jews. Indeed, he pointed out that the leaders of these "new religions" never intended to undermine the obligation for Jews to observe Judaism; on the contrary, they strongly and consistently affirmed the requirement for Jews to observe the Torah as "an everlasting covenant," never to be abrogated. And all of this, he wrote, was the case in contrast to Sabbatians, "the enemy who oppresses us" (cf. Num 10:9), who want to destroy Jewish souls by uprooting the fundamentals of the Torah.⁷ While it is true that this point is repeated in his essay to the Polish leadership, it is only a small part of that essay and is totally dwarfed by the far more powerful and striking statements he makes there in the favorable attitude he expressed vis-à-vis Christianity.

The first source, from Emden's *'Etz 'Avot*, contains a long and multifaceted positive analysis of Christianity that is much more relevant to Emden's discussion here. In his commentary to the passage, "Every gathering that meets for the sake of Heaven will have an enduring effect" (*'Avot* 4:11), Emden included in this category Christianity and Islam which "have emerged from us and built their altars on the foundation of our divine religion." Since their gathering, too, is "for the sake of Heaven," their adherents are enjoying great power and significant longevity. "Compared with the nations of the world who preceded them, who did not recognize God, who denied the fundamental principle (*kaferu ba-'ikkar*), who worshiped wood and stone,

⁷ Jacob Emden, *Torat ha-kena'ot* (Altona, 1752), 69a; repr. (Lvov, 1870), 140. See too Altona ed., 72a (Lvov ed., 146) where Emden added that it is not enough to observe the law oneself but it is important to enable others to observe the law and that, therefore, Jews who observe but are not supportive of others are "in the category of cursed (*bikhlal 'arur*)" and Gentiles who need not observe but are supportive of others (read: Jews) to observe are "in the category of blessed (*bikhlal Baruch*)." See his "Hali ketem," in *Derush tefillat yesharim* (Podgórze, 1911), 29b, where he makes the same point (see below, at n. 94) and refers the reader to this text here.

who knew not a God with absolute power in the world nor reward and punishment and recompense in the World to Come, their gathering [i.e., of these religions] is considered for the sake of Heaven.”⁸

Emden further credited both Christianity and Islam with two accomplishments—one relevant to the world at large and one specifically to Jews—that, in his eyes, earn them special respect. First, he commended them for having served—and continuing to serve—a very important function by being responsible for publicizing godliness among the nations of the world and letting them know “that there is a Master over the heaven and earth, Who rules, oversees, rewards and punishes.” He wrote, “They have accepted upon themselves the majority of the Ten Commandments,⁹ in addition to many admirable traits that they have affirmed . . . They have given honor to God, the Lord of Israel, and to His Torah and have made known His glory among the nations who knew Him not and did not hear of His renown.” He noted again how their intention in doing this was a good one, “for the sake of Heaven,” and that they helped many nations accept the beliefs and opinions necessary for the proper functioning of society and the world.

Second, Emden credited Christians and Muslims with protecting Jews from those who sought to destroy them and insuring that Jews have the ability to continue to practice their religion, and this in two ways. First, he commended them for coming to the aid of Jews who were being persecuted. “Were it not for them, the small crumbs [of Jewish life] would have already been consumed, our hope would have been lost among the nations who hate Israel out of religious jealousy.” Second, quoting from *Sefer ha-hayyim*, he went further and commended Christians even for protecting the Talmud from those who sought to burn it, and expressed gratitude to them for sponsoring the publication of all the major works of Jewish learning—from the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, and responsa literature to books on

⁸ Emden first published his ‘*Etz ’Avot* commentary on tractate ‘*Avot* in Amsterdam, 1751. See 41a–b. All references to this work in this paper will be to the edition published in Máramarossziget in 1912. See 40b–41a.

⁹ The text here is presented in accordance with Emden’s own correction printed in his *Mishneh Lehem* at the end of the second volume of *Lehem shamayim*, his Mishnah commentary. See *Lehem shamayim*, vol. 2 (Altona, 1768), 49b. The first edition of his commentary on ‘*Avot*, 41b, has “They have accepted upon themselves *the majority of the Seven [Noahide] Laws*.” This is not in keeping with Emden’s position expressed elsewhere (see below) that Christians have accepted all seven laws, and therefore Emden changed it later. All subsequent editions of ‘*Etz ’Avot*, however, retain this first erroneous formulation.

grammar, mysticism, and ethics to books on history, poetry, nature, and “other wisdoms”—thereby enabling many Jews access to them.¹⁰

It is obvious that Emden’s first comment here about the positive role Christianity and Islam played—and play—in the world as effective promoters of monotheism is strongly reminiscent of the well-known statement made by Maimonides at the very end of his *Mishneh Torah*:

All these matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelite (Mohammed) who came after him only served to clear the way for King Messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord, as it is written, “For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent” (Zeph 3:9). Thus the Messianic hope, the Torah, and the commandments have become familiar topics—topics of conversation (among the inhabitants) of the far isles and many peoples, uncircumcised of heart and flesh. They are discussing these matters and the commandments of the Torah.¹¹

Although Emden here did not draw any explicit connection to this Maimonidean passage, he did do so in his corrections and elaborations on this text in a later work,¹² and again in the second edition of his letter to the Polish leaders.¹³ But what is striking is that Emden only selectively utilized this text, because just a few lines earlier Maimonides had taken a position in direct opposition to some of the other comments Emden made in that letter. Immediately prior to the passage cited here, Maimonides wrote, “For has there ever been a greater stumbling than this? All the prophets affirmed that the Messiah would redeem Israel, save them, gather their dispersed, and confirm the commandments. But he [Jesus of Nazareth] caused Israel to be destroyed by the sword, their remnant to be dispersed and humiliated. He was instrumental in changing the Torah and causing the world to err and serve another beside God.” This statement stands in direct opposition to the position Emden takes in his *’Etz ’Avot* commentary. Indeed, in

¹⁰ Emden returned to this later in his commentary to *’Avot* 5:22 (*’Etz ’Avot*, 58b) where he further noted that “I saw in a Christian book that in past years many of them would be diligent in the analysis of Gemara” and would translate many tractates into Latin. “And behold still today there are found among them many learned ones who love our Talmud and study it.”

¹¹ This passage is found only in the uncensored editions of the *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot melakhim* 11:4. The English translation comes from Isadore Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader* (New York, 1972), 226–227.

¹² *Lehem shamayim*, vol. 2, 49b.

¹³ Gottlieb, “Resen mat’eh,” 308–309.

a number of places in his writings, Maimonides took positions about Jesus and Christianity that are in diametric opposition to Emden's attitude as articulated there and, even more so, as we will see, in his letter to the Polish leaders.¹⁴ To all of these, Emden remained oblivious.

In addition, Emden's *'Etz 'Avot* commentary is very important because it anticipates yet another crucial point that will be central to Emden's argument in his later essay. Once again, as noted above, Emden referred to Christians as acting "for the sake of Heaven" and, in the course of his remarks here about those groups who "will have an enduring effect" because their intentions are "for the sake of Heaven," Emden contrasted them with sectarian movements within Judaism. Since these latter groups (Karaites, Sadducees, and members of the House of Boethus) brazenly rejected rabbinic tradition and "lifted their hands against the holy Torah," their "gathering was not for the sake of Heaven" and therefore they have effectively disappeared. Strikingly, Emden included the "accursed sect of Shabbetai Zevi" in this

¹⁴ See, for example, his comment in *'Iggeret Teman*, trans. in Abraham Halkin and David Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides* (Philadelphia, 1985), 98: "Jesus the Nazarene, may his bones be ground to dust . . . His purpose was to interpret the Torah in a fashion that would lead to its total annulment, to the abolition of its commandments, and to the violation of all its prohibitions. The sages of blessed memory, aware of his objective before his reputation spread among our people, meted out a fitting punishment."

Maimonides also clearly and unequivocally considered Christianity to be idolatry, a position also disputed by Emden. See his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, *'Avodah zarah* 1:3, 1:4; *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot 'avodah zarah* 9:4 (Frankel ed.; read *Notzrim* instead of *'Edomim*); *Hilkhot ma'akhalot 'asurot* 11:7 (Frankel ed.).

For discussions of Maimonides' complex and, at times, seemingly contradictory statements about Christianity, see Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (Mishneh Torah) (New Haven, 1980), 452–453; David Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership*, 186–190; Howard Kreisel, "Maimonides on Christianity and Islam," in *Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, ed. Ronald A. Brauner vol. 3 (Philadelphia, 1985), 153–162; Menachem Kellner, *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism* (Oxford and Portland, 2006), 250–263; Daniel J. Lasker, "Tradition and Innovation in Maimonides' Attitude toward Other Religions," in *Maimonides after 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence*, ed. Jay M. Harris (Cambridge and London, 2007), 167–173, 178–182; idem, "Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity," in *Between Rashi and Maimonides: Themes in Medieval Jewish Thought, Literature and Exegesis*, ed. Ephraim Kanarfogel and Moshe Sokolow (New York, 2010), 14–19; Aviezer Ravitzky, "'Darkhey shalom' u-ma'amadam shel goyim lefi ha-Rambam: Halifat mikhtavim 'im ha-Rav Hayyim David ha-Levi," in *Yahadut shel Hayyim: 'Iyyunim bi-yetzirato ha-hagutit-hilkhatit shel ha-Rav Hayyim David ha-Levi*, ed. Zvi Zohar and Avi Sagi (Jerusalem, 2007), 271–274.

Azriel Shochat, "Hit'arutam shel Yehudey Germanyah bi-sevivatam, 'im peros ha-Haskalah," *Zion* 21, nos. 3–4 (1956): 233, and idem, *'Im hillufey tekufot* (Jerusalem, 1960), 70, already noted Emden's selective use of Maimonides here.

second category and claimed that they too are slowly disappearing. Parenthetically, this assessment is highly surprising in light of the herculean efforts he continued to expend on their eradication and, in fact, is not even necessary for his argument. And, indeed, Emden regularly pointed to the large numbers of Sabbatian adherents in the Jewish community; in Moravia, he claimed, they are the majority.¹⁵ And, indeed, he could just as easily have argued that although at this time Sabbatianism is still ascendant and continues to pose a significant threat to authentic Jewish life, that movement will ultimately “not have an enduring effect” at some point in the future because of its anti-nomian character. Nevertheless, his clustering of Jews and Christians (and Muslims) into one group (he actually refers to these religions as “the three of us”) that “will have an enduring effect,” in opposition to Sabbatians who belong to another group that not only will disappear, but has already begun to do so, is very significant. His insistence on a sharp divide between Sabbatianism and Christianity will also figure particularly prominently in Emden’s 1757 response to the Polish communities in the Frankist episode.

Finally, there is a noteworthy terminological element in this *’Etz ’Avot* passage that also highlights its importance as a precedent for Emden’s response to the Polish leaders. Emden here uses the word *pik’him* (smart ones) to describe wise Christians who understand and appreciate the importance of Jews keeping Jewish law and who appreciate the wisdom found in the Written and Oral Laws, as opposed to *tippeshim* (foolish ones) who do not understand and appreciate these principles. These words, which are serving almost as technical terms to describe both groups, will be repeated many times in Emden’s 1757 essay and in his later discussions of it, and provide yet another example of the relevance of this *’Avot* commentary passage to that later text.¹⁶

However, even this fuller analysis of Christianity and its contrast to Sabbatianism found in the *’Etz ’Avot* text cited by Emden in his 1757 letter as a precedent for his remarks there, while much more significant than the first *Torat ha-kena’ot* text, still falls far short of the extraordinary statements Emden was to make about Christianity in that later essay. While Emden cites precedents there from his own

¹⁵ See his *Sefer hit’avkut*, 75b–76a (Lvov 1877 ed., 42a). Elsewhere he ascribes even greater numbers to them. See *Torat ha-kena’ot*, 60b (Lvov ed., 122). See Pawel Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude*, 11, 192.

¹⁶ See below, at nn. 73, 87.

writings, they turn out not to be fully representative at all of the position he will take later.

In addition, there are many other favorable statements about contemporary Gentiles, including Christians, which appeared in Emden's works published mostly prior to 1757, that deserve our attention. But, once again, while significant, they are nowhere nearly as intensely positive toward Christianity as Emden would be in the essay he penned that year. These statements fall into a number of different categories.

First, in a number of his works Emden repeatedly noted that contemporary Gentiles have a different, and better, belief system than those who lived in earlier times. For example:

- It is only ancient Gentiles (*goyim kedumim*) and those from distant lands who denied belief in God as the creator and ruler of the universe and denied reward and punishment;¹⁷
- All major contemporary religions share a basic belief in providence and reward and punishment and in future recompense;¹⁸
- “All leading religions (*‘umot ha-rashiyot*) these days acknowledge divine providence and believe in reward and punishment and in future recompense”;¹⁹
- “These nations are committed to religion and law and believe in the Creator and director of the world, [in] one who rewards and punishes, and [in] certain proper principles”;²⁰
- “The nations these days are believers and are people of faith more than those from before, in earlier years.”²¹

None of these statements break new ground and they mirror almost standard formulations already forthcoming in earlier sources. Jacob Katz has repeatedly drawn attention to various passages written in early modern times that express this perspective. For example, already some one hundred years prior to Emden, Rabbi Moses Rivkes wrote in a passage already worn thin by repeated citation that “These nations in whose shade we, the people of Israel, are exiled and amongst whom we are dispersed do believe in *creatio ex nihilo*, in the Exodus, and

¹⁷ *Siddur ‘ammudey shamayim*, 365b. See too 94b. The book was published in Altona, 1746.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10a. See, too, 133b.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 10b.

²⁰ *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:41. The responsum is dated 1737. For other related comments, see *Siddur ‘ammudey shamayim*, 7a–b, 10a.

²¹ *Mor u-ketzi’ah*, vol. 2 (Altona, 1768), 27a, no. 329, end. It was reprinted in Jerusalem, 1996. See 367.

in the fundamental principles of religion (*'ikkerey ha-dat*), and their entire intent is to [worship] the Maker of heaven and earth."²²

Second, Emden expressed a favorable attitude toward Christianity in his disclaimers printed as postscripts to both volumes of his commentary on the *Siddur* informing his readers that references in the work to idol worship (*'avodat 'elilim*) or worshipers of stars and constellations (*'akum: 'ovedey kokhavim u-mazzalot*) do not apply to contemporary Christians. At the end of the first volume he wrote, "Let this be known that wherever idolaters and the like are mentioned, the reference is not to [members of] Christian nations who possess faith and are men of superior ethical behavior (*ba'aley 'emunah 'anshey middot me'ullot*), as it is written in many places and in *Luah 'eres*."²³ At the end of the second volume, he expressed similar sentiments and cross-referenced his words at the end of the first: "That which we have mentioned several times in our works is well known, that all those who believe in the Torah of Moses (be they from whatever nation) are not in the category of idol worshipers and the like even though they do not observe it [the Torah] fully because they are not commanded to do so. Our Rabbis have already taught, 'The pious of the nations of the world have a share in the World to Come.'²⁴

Once again, these statements do not break new ground and were commonplace in early modern Hebrew texts.²⁵ In fact, they can easily

²² See *Be'er ha-golah* on *Hoshen mishpat* 425:5. See, too, on 266:1. This text is cited by Jacob Katz, *Masoret u-mashber* (Jerusalem, 1958), 32; 54, n. 13; idem, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York, 1993), 20, 271 (n. 13); idem, *Beyn Yehudim le-goyim* (Jerusalem, 1960), 164–165; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (New York, 1961), 165; idem, "Sheloshah mishpatim apologetiyim be-gilgulehem," *Zion* 23–24, nos. 3–4 (1958–1959): 189–190. This article was reprinted in Jacob Katz, *Halakhah ve-Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1986), 270–282.

For a number of other examples in early modern Europe, see Azriel Shochat, "Hit'arutam shel Yehudey Germanyah," 230–232; repr. with changes in idem, *Im hilyufey tekufot*, 68–70.

²³ *Siddur 'ammudey shamayim*, 418b. The reference there to *Luah 'eres* is to no. 159. It was first published in Altona, 1769 (see 32a–34b), and reprinted in Toronto, 2001 (see 62–68).

²⁴ *Siddur sha'arey shamayim*, 159b. He follows this with cross-references to *Siddur 'ammudey shamayim*, 418b and 133b. For more on this notion, see below, n. 43.

In the context of this article, it is particularly striking to note that the Frankists made this precise argument, that all the pejorative statements found in rabbinic literature about idolaters apply, as well, to contemporary Christians. For their argument, and the rabbis' response echoing Emden's position here, see Balaban, *Le-toledot hatenu'ah ha-Frankit*, 141–144.

²⁵ See, for example, the passage from *Be'er ha-golah*, above, n. 22.

be dismissed as self-serving declarations designed to pacify ever-present and vigilant censors and not necessarily reflections of genuine attitudes.²⁶ But elsewhere, for example on the title page of another one of Emden's works, *Sefat 'emet*, Emden's disclaimer went beyond the standard formulation found in these two earlier texts. He began there by writing that references to Gentile (*goy*) or priest (*komer*) in the book do not refer to contemporary Christians but then went on to note that there is an absolute prohibition against stealing from or misleading a Gentile, just as there is for doing so to a Jew.²⁷ This longer and more involved disclaimer is similar to the one printed at the end of a book with which Emden was very familiar, having written an approbation for it as well as having a commentary of his on a mishnaic passage in tractate Rosh Hashanah published in it. *Sefer pi shenayim* is a commentary of the medieval rabbinic scholar R. Asher on *m. Zera'im*. The postscript to that volume, printed in Altona, 1735, described "the nations in whose midst we live" as believing in the existence of God and in *creatio ex nihilo* and noted that Jews must express gratitude to them and pray for their welfare. This passage went further and even cited a responsum of Hakham Zevi Ashkenazi, Emden's father, among other sources, stressing the value and importance of treating Gentiles properly.²⁸ This kind of formulation may—or may not—reflect a more sincere positive attitude to Christianity.²⁹

But while these comments do not necessarily break new ground, there is a third category of comments by Emden which, taken together as a unit, are more striking in their tolerance of and openness to Christianity. Among them are the following:

²⁶ For a discussion of the earliest reference to this disclaimer (sometime in the sixteenth century), see Katz, "Shloshah mishpatim," 189, n. 92. For other eighteenth-century examples, see 190, n. 96. See too Katz, *Masoret u-mashber*, 54; Azriel Shohat, "Hit'arutam," 230.

²⁷ *Sefat 'emet* (Altona, 1752), title page.

²⁸ *Sefer pi shenayim* (Altona, 1735), 108b. See *She'elot u-teshuvot Hakham Zevi* no. 26.

²⁹ For this issue in general, see A. M. Habermann, "Hazharot ha-mehabberim o hamadfisim be-sifrehem le-hakhshir 'otam be-'eney ha-nokhrim," in *Masot u-mehkarim be-safranut mugashim le-Curt David Wormann* (Jerusalem, 1976), 60–71.

It is interesting to note that this very matter figured prominently in the disputation between the Frankists and the leadership of the Polish Jewish community held in Kamienice in July, 1757. The Frankists claimed that the Talmud contains statements offensive to Christianity and the Jews responded by differentiating between the Gentiles discussed there and contemporary Christians. See, for example, Balaban, *Le-toledot ha-tenu'ah ha-Frankit*, 144.

- The rabbinic requirement to love human beings (*'ohev 'et ha-beriyot; m. 'Avot 1:12*) applies also to Gentiles (*gam ha-'akum bikhlal*);³⁰
- “The nations of the world and other living creatures” are included in the phrase “Who recalls His creatures mercifully for life (*zokher ye-tzurav le-hayyim be-rahamim*),” part of the special prayers for the Ten Days of Repentance;³¹
- It is an attribute of piety (*middat hasidut*) for a righteous person not to celebrate over the bad that will befall his enemy—even Gentiles (*me-'umot ha-'olam*) who, after all, are God’s creations (*ma'aseh yadav shel Ha-kadosh Baruch Hu' hem*);³²
- A Gentile (*goy nokhri*) who clings to God is also fortunate (*me'ushar*);³³
- Someone who even considers the possibility that “Beloved is man for he was created in the image of God (*haviv 'adam she-nivra' be-tzelem*)” (*'Avot 3:14*) does not apply to non-Jews is wrong;³⁴
- “God is the forgiver of all who live in the world...and also of the Gentile (*noekhri*) who calls out to Him”;³⁵
- It is obvious that the invitation at the beginning of the Haggadah, “All who are hungry come and eat,” applies to Gentiles (*noekhrim*);³⁶
- The prayer of “Pour out Your wrath (*Shefokh hamatekha*)” in the Haggadah refers only to the Gentiles who in the future will battle against God at the End of Days, in the “War of Gog and Magog”;³⁷
- Without making a specific reference to Christianity, Emden, in a passing comment, simply and unselfconsciously assumed that it is possible for a virgin to conceive based on a talmudic passage that intercourse is not a prerequisite for conception;³⁸
- One cannot lie to a Gentile (*goy*), overcharge him, “and it goes without saying, steal from him”;³⁹

³⁰ *'Etz 'Avot* on *'Avot 1:12*, 10b.

³¹ *Luah 'eresh* no. 145; Altona ed., 29a, Toronto ed., 57.

³² *'Etz 'Avot* on *'Avot 4:19*, 44a.

³³ *Siddur 'ammudey shamayim*, 94b.

³⁴ *'Etz 'Avot* on *'Avot 3:14*, 27b–28a.

³⁵ *Luah 'eresh* no. 413; Altona ed., 63b, Toronto ed., 127.

³⁶ *Siddur sha'arey shamayim*, 25a. For a critique—and defense—of this interpretation, see Menahem M. Kasher, *Haggadah shelemah* (Jerusalem, 1955), 108–109, n. 5; Avraham Darom, “Kol di-kefin... kol di-tzerikh,” *Sinai* 49 (1961): 37, n. 16.

³⁷ *Siddur sha'arey shamayim*, 44b.

³⁸ See *Yggeret bikkoret* (Zhitomir, 1867), 25a–b. The work was first published in 1749. There he also cited the opinion of the Amora Shmuel that a woman can still be a virgin even after intercourse. Emden made reference to this *Yggeret bikkoret* passage in a later context as well. See *She'elat Ya'avetz 2:136*.

On the issue of the doctrine of virgin conception in premodern Jewish anti-Christian polemic, see Daniel J. Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Oxford and Portland, 2007), 153–159.

³⁹ *Siddur 'ammudey shamayim*, 270a–b. See also *She'elat Ya'avetz 2:25*. For more on the concern with being honest with Gentiles in business dealings at this time, see Katz, *Masoret u-mashber*, 49–57; idem, *Tradition and Crisis*, 31–33.

- There were two individuals in ancient times by the name of Jesus, one the founder of Christianity and another one referred to pejoratively in the Talmud.⁴⁰

Furthermore, in a few places Emden absolved Christians from violating a religious prohibition by engaging in any of their ritual practices. He wrote, “Gentiles outside the Land of Israel are not worshipers of *‘avodah zarah* but, rather, follow the customs of their ancestors,”⁴¹ and made the claim that “Our Sages have already said that Gentiles (*Benei Noah*) are not commanded regarding ‘association’ (*shittuf*).”⁴² This latter ruling is important because it exempts Christians who follow the Trinitarian doctrine from violating the sin of idolatry.

Perhaps most far-reaching is Emden’s repeated assertion that Christians are to be included in the category of those Gentiles who are worthy of a share in the World to Come.⁴³ This position of Emden’s has

⁴⁰ *Haggahot ve-hiddushim* on *Sanhedrin* 107b and *‘Avodah zarah* 17a. This theory of the two Jesuses has a long history; see in particular the works of R. Jehiel of Paris in the thirteenth century and Moses ha-Kohen of Tordesillas in the fourteenth. On them, see David Berger, “On the Uses of History in Medieval Jewish Polemic Against Christianity,” *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* (Boston, 2010), 152–153, 174. On this theme in Emden’s notes on the Talmud, see Moshe Miller, “R. Jacob Emden’s Attitude Toward Christianity,” in Michael A. Shmidman, ed., *Turim: Studies in Jewish History and Literature Presented to Dr. Bernard Lander*, vol. 2 (New York, 2008), 113–116 (the author ignores much of the primary and secondary literature on this subject).

⁴¹ *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:41. This notion has a long history. See, for example, Katz, “Shloshah mishpatim,” 186–93.

⁴² See *‘Etz ‘Avot* on *‘Avot* 4:11, 40b; *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:41; 2:133 (where he wrote that he changed his mind regarding this matter when he later prepared the volume for publication; the original responsum is dated 1717); *Mor u-ketzi’ah* no. 224, beginning; “Hali ketem,” 29b (on the significance of this text as a whole to our discussion, see below). Emden also addressed this in a note to his edition of R. Jacob Sasportas’s *Tzitzat novel tzevi*. See his *Kitzur tzizat novel tzevi* (Altona, 1768), 22b; repr. (Odessa, 1867), 25b. He made reference to this note in *She’elat Ya’avetz* 2:133 and *Mor u-ketzi’ah* no. 156, beginning.

This is, in general, a complex matter and it has been discussed in Katz, “Shloshah mishpatim,” 181–186. Emden’s position on this matter is also addressed by Miller, “R. Jacob Emden’s Attitude Toward Christianity,” 118–25.

⁴³ See *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:41; *Luah ‘eres* no. 159, Altona, ed., 33b; Toronto ed., 65; no. 312, Altona ed., 57b, Toronto ed., 112; *Siddur sha’arey shamayim*, 159b (above, at n. 24); “Hali ketem,” 29b; *Iggeret Purim*, MS, 20b, cited in my “Rabbi Jacob Emden’s *Iggeret Purim*,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 444. See too *Migdal ‘oz* (Jerusalem, 1969), 55a.

For a discussion of the phrase he uses, *hasidei ‘umot ha-‘olam yesh lahem helek le-‘olam ha-ba’*, also a complex one, see Katz, “Shloshah mishpatim,” 174–181. For an important comment about Emden’s position in *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:41, see David Berger, “Jews, Gentiles, and the Modern Egalitarian Ethos: Some Tentative Thoughts,”

particular historical significance because it drew the attention of Moses Mendelssohn, who explicitly invoked it as part of his polemical argument with Johan Casper Lavater in 1769 demonstrating how Judaism has an embracing and favorable attitude toward Gentiles, clearly with Christianity in mind.⁴⁴ Central to Mendelssohn's argument with Lavater was his assertion that Judaism flatly rejects the Christian notion of *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, that "outside of the church there is no salvation." On the contrary, argued Mendelssohn in his response to Lavater, Judaism allows for eternal salvation even of those who do not share its faith. He wrote, "We believe that all other nations of the earth have been directed by God to adhere to the laws of nature and to the religion of the Patriarchs. Those who regulate their lives according to the precepts of this religion of nature and of reason are called virtuous men of other nations and are the children of eternal salvation."

To these two sentences Mendelssohn appended three footnotes. In the first, he identified "the religion of the Patriarchs" as the Seven Noahide Laws, which he enumerated. Secondly, Mendelssohn identified "virtuous men of other nations" as *hasidey 'ummot ha-'olam* and then added the following: "Maimonides adds the clause here, provided that they do not observe them only as laws of Nature but as laws especially revealed by God. However, this addition has no source (*Autorität*) in the Talmud."⁴⁵ In the third footnote, appended to the end of his statement that these *hasidey 'ummot ha-'olam* "are the children of eternal salvation," Mendelssohn cited references to this principle from various medieval Jewish works, including those of Maimonides, and concluded: "Rabbi Jacob Hirschel, one of the most learned rabbis of our times, deals with this extensively in several of his works (Rabbi Jacob Hirschel einer der gelehrtesten Rabbiner unserer Zeit, handelt hiervon ausführlich in verschiedenen von seinen Schriften)."⁴⁶ This last reference is to none other than our own Rabbi Jacob Emden, who was

in Marc D. Stern, ed., *Formulating Responses in an Egalitarian Age* (Lanham, 2005), 99, 102. For an example of this in a work by a rabbinic scholar in the generation after Emden's, see R. Eliezer Fleckele, *Teshuvah me-'ahavah* 1:8.

⁴⁴ For this episode, see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* (Alabama, 1973), 194–263.

⁴⁵ The reference is to *Mishneh Torah, Hil. Melakhim* 8:11.

⁴⁶ See Moses Mendelssohn, "Schreiben an den Herrn Diaconus Lavater zu Zurich von Moses Mendelssohn," in idem, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1930; repr. Stuttgart, 1974), 11, note d. The English translation is from M. Samuels, *Memoirs of Moses Mendelssohn* (London, 1825), 56, 149–150.

referred to as Rabbiner Jacob Hirschel (i.e., Rabbi Jacob son of Hirsch, or Zevi) in many German documents.⁴⁷ Mendelssohn obviously knew that Emden had already addressed this issue and, since he clearly held him in high regard, he felt that invoking his name would lend support to his position.⁴⁸ In his generation, Emden was the one to whose writings he turned for support for this position and, in fact, the issue of the place of Gentiles in the World to Come served as the focus of a very important exchange between Mendelssohn and Emden three years later, in 1773.⁴⁹

The upshot of all the material presented above is that Emden had an unusually tolerant, open, and accepting attitude toward Christianity. Although precedents could be found for some—if not many—of his formulations in earlier Jewish sources, taken together they represent a remarkable and striking position very different from the perspective of his predecessors—or contemporaries—on this issue. Jacob Katz noted that by exempting Christians from the charge of polytheism, Emden was “transcending by far his rabbinical predecessors,” although “Rabbi Emden believed himself to be thinking within the terms of Jewish tradition.”⁵⁰ In describing Emden’s attitude to Christianity, Katz wrote that, in fact, “he went much farther than even the most progressive

⁴⁷ This identification has been made by Simon Rawidowicz in his notes to Mendelssohn’s *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7, 456, line 42; Katz, “Shloshah Mishpatim,” 179; idem, *Beyn Yehudim le-goyim*, 173, n. 23; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 174, n. 7; Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 217.

⁴⁸ Mendelssohn’s mention of Emden’s “several works” is unclear and ambiguous and a number of attempts have been made to identify those sources in Emden’s corpus to which he may have been referring. See the note by Simon Rawidowicz cited in the previous footnote, and Katz, “Shloshah mishpatim,” 179, n. 41; Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 794, n. 39. However, all the sources they suggest as possibilities reflect Emden’s positive attitude toward Gentiles—and Christians—in general, including many of the sources already cited above, but none deal directly with the issue of *hasidey ’ummot ha-’olam* having a share in the World to Come. For three sources written or printed prior to Mendelssohn’s exchange with Lavater which do explicitly mention this issue (*She’elat Ya’avetz*, vol. 1; *Luah ’eresh*; and *Siddur sha’arey shamayim*), which Mendelssohn may have had in mind, see above, n. 43. One additional relevant text of Emden’s that Mendelssohn may also have had in mind is his letter to the Polish rabbis discussed at length below.

⁴⁹ See Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 16 (Berlin, 1929), 178–183. I dealt with Mendelssohn’s reference to Emden in his exchange with Lavater and this final and very important Mendelssohn-Emden exchange in my “Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works,” 664–665, 696–716.

⁵⁰ See Jacob Katz, “Reflecting on German-Jewish History,” in R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, UK, 1995), 2.

Rabbis of his time,⁵¹ and others also pointed to the extraordinary nature of Emden's position here.⁵² While others also took the position that the Christian Bible asserts that Jesus came not to annul the Torah but to fulfill it,⁵³ and I suspect that further research will uncover yet others who evinced a more positive attitude to Christianity, Emden's favorable position stands out for the fullness of its formulation.

What motivated Emden to take such an atypical position vis-à-vis Christianity? There is no single clear and unequivocal answer to this question. It is very hard to point to one specific factor, or even a set of factors, that could fully account for this unusual attitude on his part. In fact, it is ultimately impossible to determine it with any measure of precision because any of the aspects of Emden's thought considered below in trying to explain his position were shared by others who did not come to the same conclusion. A good example of this is the

⁵¹ Katz, *Bein Yehudim le-goyim*, 173; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 174.

⁵² See, for example, Blu Greenberg, "Rabbi Jacob Emden: The Views of An Enlightened Traditionalist on Christianity," *Judaism* 27, no. 3 (1978): 351–363; Shlomo Biderman and Asa Kasher, "Yahadut u-fundamentalizm—'Al haguto shel R. Ya'akov Emden," *Da'at* 5 (1980): 35–36; David Ellenson, "Jewish Covenant and Christian Trinitarianism: An Analysis of a Responsum on Jewish-Christian Relations in the Modern World," in Ronald A. Brauner, ed., *Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia, 1985), 88–89, 91; Thomas Willi and Ina Willi-Plein, "Das Christentum im Lichte der Tora—Jakob Emdens Sendschreiben," in Christoph Bultmann, Walter Dietrich, and Christoph Levin, eds., *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen, 2002), 257–271.

Emden's position on Christianity is also being cited with increasing regularity in the context of contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. See, for example, Abraham Joshua Heschel, *No Religion Is an Island*, ed. Harold Kasimow and Byron L. Sherwin (Maryknoll, NY, 1991), 21; Berger, "Jews, Gentiles, and the Modern Egalitarian Ethos," 99, 102; idem, "Dabru Emet: Some Reservations About a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," in *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue*, 396; Eugene Korn, "Orthodoxy, Modern Pluralism, and the Christian Other: Rabbinic Positions and Possibilities," in Yamin Levy, ed., *Mishpetei Shalom: A Jubilee Volume in Honor of Rabbi Saul (Shalom) Berman* (New York, 2010), 313, 319–320, 333, and in two other forthcoming essays by Dr. Korn. My thanks to him for making them available to me.

It is very interesting to note that, in one case, Emden's atypical view is actually presented as "the general Jewish view regarding Christianity." See Louis Finkelstein, *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia, 1949), 1347. The strangeness of this assertion was already pointed out by David Berger, "The 'Jewish Contribution' to Christianity," in *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue*, 316.

⁵³ See, for example, the hitherto unpublished *Divre binah* by Dov Ber of Bolechów, a contemporary of Emden's, discussed by Gershon David Hundert, "The Introduction to *Divre Binah* by Dov Ber of Bolechów: An Unexamined Source for the History of Jews in the Lwów Region in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *AJS Review* 33, no. 2 (2009): 232, 253.

attempt to explain the well known and oft-cited strikingly tolerant, unusual, and unique position of R. Menahem ha-Meiri, a medieval parallel to the early modern Emden, to Christianity. It has been suggested, and more recently argued, that philosophical considerations are what motivated ha-Meiri to adopt his position but, regardless of what, specifically, they may have been, other at least equally philosophically oriented thinkers did not arrive at his conclusion, with Maimonides as the clearest example.⁵⁴ Clearly, other, more personal, factors need to be considered to account for his novel view,⁵⁵ and this is true in the case of Emden as well. Outsiders are not privy to the inner thinking and feelings of individuals, and sometimes those individuals themselves find it hard to articulate the reason or rationale for positions they take that have very little precedent and are so different from those adopted by their predecessors or contemporaries. Ultimately, without explicit statements by the individual himself, we are left only with speculation and conjecture. Nevertheless, a number of aspects of Emden's thought need to be taken into consideration here. At the very least, they provide the personal and intellectual context in which his position was developed and presented.

The first is that Emden repeatedly drew attention to his insatiable curiosity about, and deep interest in, the world around him, and that included knowing about other faiths as well. His most comprehensive presentation of his highly unusual interest in this area is found in his autobiography, and I have dealt with it elsewhere at length.⁵⁶ Here I want to focus only on the part where he expresses his interest in other religions. Emden wrote that "My heart was always inclined to know [and] to examine worldly matters as well, nations *and faiths*, their characteristics and dispositions, their histories and wisdoms (*ha-'umot ve-ha-'emunot u-midotehem ve-de'otehem*

⁵⁴ See Katz, *Beyn Yehudim le-goyim*, 116–126; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 114–125; Moshe Halbertal, *Beyn Torah le-hokhmah: Rabbi Menahem ha-Me'iri u-ba'aley ha-Halakhah ha-Maymonim bi-Provence* (Jerusalem, 2000), 80–108. For a partial English translation, see "Ones Possessed of Religion": Religious Tolerance in the Teachings of the Me'iri," *The Edah Journal* 1:1 (2000): 1–24. Halbertal made references to the important earlier studies by Jacob Katz, Ephraim Urbach, and Gerald Blidstein on this subject. His work influenced David Berger. See Berger, "Jews, Gentiles, and the Modern Egalitarian Ethos," 93–94.

⁵⁵ See the article by Yaakov Elman in this volume.

⁵⁶ See my "Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works," 507–533; my "Rabbi Jacob Emden, Philosophy, and Maimonides," in Jay M. Harris, ed., *Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky* (Cambridge and London, 2005), 241–243.

ve-korotehem ve-hokhmotehem).⁵⁷ Elsewhere, Emden presented a list of areas of human endeavor that interested him and wrote how he wanted “to understand fully the ways of the world and the behavior of people; to uncover the hidden treasures of nature, the form of the structure of the world and the divisions of the lands, seas, rivers, mountains, and valleys; the divisions between states, languages, *religious faiths* and cultural patterns (*ve-ha-datot ve-ha-nimusim*), the events of history,” and more.⁵⁸ In yet another work, he wrote that although he was reluctant to become involved in the study of Divine Names (*shemot*), he did not avoid looking at books about them when he had the opportunity to do so. “Such is my practice with regard to all areas of knowledge in the world, whether religious or secular, that come to my attention. [I] feast my eyes upon them, to the good and evil; to discern truth from falsehood; to understand and analyze the nature of the [different] faiths, opinions *and religions* (*ha-'emunot ve-ha-de'ot ve-ha-datot*) and to reveal the origins and slightest bit of information in them.”⁵⁹ Such an interest in and curiosity about other religions need not necessarily bring with it an openness to and appreciation of their tenets and beliefs, but it would not be surprising if it should.

But Emden's positive attitude to Christianity can be framed not only in the context of intellectual considerations, as significant as they were, but also in social ones as well. Emden sensed that there existed a greater level of personal interaction between Christian and Jew in his day than was the case in previous generations, and he was sensitive to how the Jew would be perceived in these encounters. Indeed, his writings reflected standard justifications for studying Gentile literature, history, and culture, but I have already drawn attention to one justification he mentioned that is unknown in premodern times, the necessity “to mingle comfortably with people (*li-heyot me'urav 'im ha-beriyot*),”⁶⁰ a reference not to other Jews but to Gentiles, most likely

⁵⁷ *Megillat sefer*, 96.

⁵⁸ See the introduction to the second part of *Luah 'eres*, first printed together with Emden's commentary on *'Avot* (*'Etz 'Avot* [Amsterdam, 1751], 76b). It was reprinted in *Máramarossziget*, 1912 (see 76b) and in Toronto, 2001 (see 188).

⁵⁹ *Iggeret Purim*, MS, 3a; cited in my “Rabbi Jacob Emden's *Iggeret Purim*,” 444.

⁶⁰ *Megillat sefer*, 97; *She'elat Ya'avetz* 1:41, end; *'Etz 'Avot* on *'Avot* 6:6 (20), 65a. See my “Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works,” 505, 508, 513, 536; David Berger, “Judaism and General Culture in Medieval and Early Modern Times,” in *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale, NJ, and Jerusalem, 1997), 139.

Christians. This is a new argument that represented a departure from previously presented formulations of this issue. Once again, such a concern with developing and maintaining social relations with society at large need not necessarily bring with it an openness to and appreciation of the tenets and beliefs of their religious traditions but it would not be surprising if it should.

There is also an important political consideration. Emden appreciated the tolerance that Christians were practicing towards Jews and the opportunities they were making available to them, even if out of a desire to benefit from Jewish economic expertise, and this aroused in him, as in others, expressions of gratitude and appreciation. In a remarkable commentary on the words “now we are slaves and next year we will be free,” found at the beginning of the Passover Haggadah, Emden wrote,

One should not say: What is the point of the expression of freedom that we observe on this night [of Passover] if, after all, we are still in exile? “And of joy, what does it accomplish?” (Koh 2:2). To this he [the author of the Haggadah] responds that this is not considered a true exile, for even if we are today in a land not our own, next year we can be in the Land of Israel if we want. No one is stopping us. Even if, God forbid, the time of redemption will not yet arrive, nevertheless the Land of Israel is before us (cf. 2 Chr 14:6) to come and dwell in it at any time. This is not similar to the exile of Egypt where we were indentured slaves and like captives imprisoned for backbreaking labor, clay and bricks.... [But now] all the nations and kingdoms acknowledge us as the seed that God has blessed (Isa 61:9). They treat us as free, to be under our own jurisdiction, to move our dwelling place from country to country in accordance with the fullness of our desire. On the contrary, it is a singular act of kindness that they accept us to dwell in their lands with the compassion of God on us. Therefore this is not considered servitude. And if you will say that, on occasion, we live under the hand of a harsh kingdom that presses its yoke on us to be as slaves, therefore it [the Haggadah] points out that, with it all, there is ample room in the land for us (Gen 34:21) to [enable us] to dwell in another land as this very day (Deut 29:27).⁶¹

For these considerations, and others, see Blu Greenberg, “The Views of an Enlightened Traditionalist,” 360–363. R. Chaim Reuven Rabinowitz, *Beney binah* (Jerusalem, 1972), 273, offers a strange rationale for Emden’s favorable position vis-à-vis Christianity: his positive attitude toward the state of Exile in which the Jews found themselves.

⁶¹ *Siddur sha’arey shamayim*, 25b. For more on changes in the attitude of Christians to Jews by the eighteenth century, see Yosef Salmon, “Notzrim ve-Natzrut be-sifrut ha-pesikah mi-shilhey ha-me’ah ha-shemoneh ‘esreh ve-‘ad ha-mahatzit ha-sheniyah

Elsewhere Emden refers to the kings of the countries in which Jews live as “kings of kindness (*malkhei hesed*)” who have mercy on them and “therefore ‘we shall pray for them and seek their welfare and good all the days’ (cf. Deut 23:7) for in their security we will have peace.”⁶² Emden often invoked the obligation of Jews to pray for the welfare of the governments under whose authority Jews live⁶³ and, given the context in which he does so, one gets the impression that he meant this genuinely and sincerely.⁶⁴ Once again, such gratitude to Christian rulers certainly need not bring with it an openness to and appreciation of the tenets and beliefs of their faith; appreciation of Christians certainly need not translate into appreciation of Christianity. But, once again, it is possible that, in searching for an explanation for the latter, it is not unreasonable to assume that the former may have played a role.

What these three attempts to explain Emden’s openness to Christianity—intellectual, social, and political—have in common is their tentativeness and unsatisfying nature. Indeed, not one of these factors need necessarily have resulted in the kind of attitude towards Christianity exhibited, repeatedly, by Emden. This further highlights my previous point that attitudes such as these are very hard to clearly and definitively explain or justify. At the end of the day, we are left only with speculation and conjecture.

We are now in a position to describe and analyze Emden’s most far-reaching formulation of his positive attitude to Christianity that he expressed in his 1757 essay to the Polish Jewish authorities and, with it, to suggest one final factor, perhaps most compelling, that needs to be taken into account in providing a full understanding of Emden’s atypical position on this matter.

In his response to the question posed to him by the leaders of the Polish Council of the Four Lands, Emden made a number of important

shel ha-me’ah ha-tesha’ ‘esreh,” in *‘Al pi ha-be’er: Mehkarim be-hagut Yehudit u-be-mahshevet ha-Halakhah mugashim le-Ya’akov Blidstein*, ed. Uri Erlich, Hayyim Kresel, and Daniel J. Lasker (Beer Sheva, 2008), 638; Azriel Shochat, “Hit’arutam,” 208.

⁶² *‘Etz ‘Avot* on *‘Avot* 5:2, 46a. See, too, *Siddur ‘ammudey shamayim*, 7b. Emden included a prayer for the welfare of King Frederick V in his *Siddur ‘ammudey shamayim*, 369b–370a.

⁶³ See, for example, *Luah ‘eresh* no. 159, Altona ed., 33b–34a; Toronto ed., 66–68.

⁶⁴ See Shmuel Dotan, “Rabbi Ya’akov Emden ve-doro (1697–1776),” *HUCA* 47 (1976): 120–121. See, too, Katz, *Beyn Yehudim le-goyim*, 60; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 51; David Berger, “Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages,” in *The Pride of Jacob: Essays on Jacob Katz and His Work*, ed. Jay M. Harris (Cambridge, 2002), 55.

points. He first responded to their question and argued that Jewish law demands that Sabbatians be killed, citing several rabbinic statements in support of his position. He insisted that it would be perfectly acceptable, even appropriate, for the Polish rabbis to arrange for their death.

Emden then went on to address the Sabbatian claim that they deserve the support of the Polish Christian authorities because they share the Christian belief in Jesus. Now turning to the Polish Christian authorities, Emden attempted to convince them that this claim has no merit and that the Sabbatians who reached out to them do not deserve Christian protection and support because they violate norms that are accepted by the Christians themselves, and this on two levels.

One argument is that Sabbatian practice is antithetical to Christian behavior and ideals. Sabbatians, argued Emden, are guilty of sexual immorality, swearing falsely, robbery, and more and, as such, are much worse than Gentiles in general, worse than the members of the Generation of the Flood, worse than the beasts of the forest, and certainly worse than Christians who live their lives with a high level of morality. Christians, he wrote, are careful to distance themselves even from practices that Jews and other Gentiles consider permissible:

They [Christians] have certain precious attributes and just morals They are even careful to refrain from doing evil to those who hate their righteous ones. Blessed be they, and blessed be we if they act toward us in accordance with [the dictates of] their faith for they are commanded in their New Testament [*avangeliyon*] that one who hits you on one cheek, give him also the second . . . and let the person who took from you your outer garment have it and do not deny him also the inner one, as it is written in Luke, Chapter 6, and Matthew, Chapter 5 . . . as is the practice of their pious kings and just princes, righteous and prudent ones.

In a clever play on words Emden wrote about the Sabbatians, “How long will they be stepping between two falsehoods (*pos'him al shnei ha-ziyufim*; cf. 1 Kgs 18:21), telling the nations that they believe in the messiah of the Christians and to the Jews they say, ‘Behold we are with you [as] friends?’” Since, therefore, Sabbatianism is neither Christianity nor Judaism, it constitutes a new religion and, as such, is in violation of Christian law which prohibits such a practice and which deems those who follow it liable to the death penalty.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Gottlieb, “Resen Mat’eh,” 301–302. Emden also used the phrase *poseah ‘al shtei ziyufim* against Rabbi Ezekiel Landau in the course of his controversy with Eibes-chuetz. See *Sefer hit’avkut*, 52b (Lvov ed., 29a); below, n. 89.

In addition, Emden argued that central to classical Christian belief is the assertion that Jews must observe all of Torah law. For, in his view, Jesus and his disciples repeatedly insisted that their religion, which requires observance of the Seven Noahide Laws alone, was meant to apply only to those who would become Christians, and not to Jews who must continue to observe Jewish law. For Emden, Jesus did not come to abrogate Torah law for Jews, only to establish a religion for Gentiles based on these seven obligations. Reflecting an extraordinary familiarity with the New Testament (*ha-'avangeliyon*) and, in particular, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, Matthew, Luke, and Acts, some of which he quotes by chapter (e.g., the fifth and tenth chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and the fifteenth chapter of the book of Acts) albeit on occasion mistakenly,⁶⁶ Emden asserted that not only did Jesus and his followers themselves fully observe Torah law because they were born Jews “until, after a period of time, a few of them decided to give up the Torah among themselves completely,” but that they insisted that all Jews follow Torah law. In one passage Emden resolved a contradiction he raised between what Paul reportedly said in Acts 15 and what he is said to have professed in other passages in the New Testament, and wrote, “Know, please, and accept the truth from him who declares it, that from here it is apparently clear that the Nazarene and his apostles (*ha-Notzri u-sheluhav*) did not, God forbid, come to abrogate the Torah from Israel.”⁶⁷ Or, in a later formulation, “I have no doubt that he who acknowledges the truth will admit to these words of ours that the Nazarene and his apostles (*ha-Notzri u-sheluhav*) never intended to abolish the Torah of Moses from a Jew born into Judaism.”⁶⁸

For the notion that Christians prohibit the establishment of a new religion, see also *'Iggeret Purim*, MS, 20a, 35a (Christians would, therefore, be supportive of the Jews' uprooting Sabbatians). The charge that Sabbatianism constitutes a new religion was leveled against it already by its earliest opponents. See Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude*, chap. 2.

⁶⁶ Emden wrote elsewhere that he read Christian books. See, for example, *Beyt Yehonatan ha-Sofer* (Altona, 1763?), 14a. For more on his knowledge of matters Christian, see, for example, *Lehem shamayim*, *Menahot* 12:10 (he is aware of differences between Eastern Christians [the Copts in Egypt] and Western Christians); “Zikaron ba-sefer,” printed in Avraham Bick (Shauli), “Rabi Ya'akov Emden u-milhamto be-shulhanei Altona,” *Tarbiz* 42 (1973): 467 (he cited a tract in German written by Martin Luther).

⁶⁷ Gottlieb, “Resen mat'eh,” 303.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

In a particularly striking formulation Emden went so far as to assert that

The Nazarene wrought a double kindness in the world as it appears to be clear and obvious as is this day in that, on the one hand, he supported and observed the Torah of Moses with full strength as clearly mentioned above in a way that is impossible to deny. There is not one of our Sages who spoke more emphatically about this, the obligation of an eternal observance of the Torah. And, on the other hand, for Gentiles he brought much good...for he abolished idolatry, removed images from the nations and obligated them in the Seven [Noahide] Laws.⁶⁹

The implication of this for Sabbatianism is clear. Since Christianity requires Jews to observe Torah law, and these Sabbatians still maintain a Jewish identity, Christians would be violating their own tradition if they were to allow Sabbatians to practice their antinomian behavior. Therefore, in keeping with their own religious requirements, Emden urged the Polish Christian authorities to reject the Sabbatians' appeal for protection, even if they somehow profess belief in Jesus, and even if this rejection will result in their death.

Emden's strategy here was clear, and his words represented a practical manifestation of what he had written earlier in a theoretical context in the text from his *'Etz 'Avot* commentary, to which he referred here. He was trying to convince the Christians that instead of agreeing to enter into an alliance with the Sabbatians against the Jews, they should be seeking an alliance with the Jews against the Sabbatians. The Sabbatians had claimed that they and the Christians constitute one group with a common enemy, the Jews; Emden claimed that Jews and Christians constitute one group with a common enemy, the Sabbatians.

A few additional points related to this most striking text are in order. First, in the first edition of this essay Emden had cited no precedents for his position from classical Jewish sources; it is only in the second edition that he provided such sources, and all three are clearly

⁶⁹ Ibid., 307–308. Emden's attitude to Jesus was so favorable that Yehuda Liebes was moved to go so far as to suggest the possibility that Emden may have seen in Jesus the messiah of his, Jesus', generation, in keeping with Emden's theory that every generation includes someone with this potential. See Yehuda Liebes, "Meshihiyuto shel R. Yaakov Emden ve-Yahasו le-Shabbeta'ut," *Tarbiz* 49 (1980): 156, n. 297; repr. in idem, *Sod ha-'emunah ha-Shabbeta'it* (Jerusalem, 1995), 415, n. 297.

This passage is also cited by a later rabbinic scholar as a justification for his own interest in the New Testament. See R. Eliyahu Zvi Halevi Soloveichik, *Kol kore'* (Jerusalem, 1985), 13–14. I saw this reference in an on-line posting by Dr. Marc Shapiro.

presented as an afterthought. The first one is the passage from the end of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* cited above but, as noted, that text underscored the historical role that Jesus played, in Maimonides' view, in serving to lay the groundwork for the eventual arrival of the Jewish messiah but disagreed with much of what Emden wrote here. He introduced his second source by noting explicitly that it was brought to his attention only after his essay was published the first time. This text, *Sefer milhemet mitzvah* by R. Solomon b. Simon Duran, with its assertion that Jesus was fully committed to the Written and Oral Law was, indeed, a most appropriate precedent for Emden.⁷⁰ In fact, there are also other premodern texts that would have provided equally useful precedents for Emden's position here that Jesus never intended to abrogate Jewish law for Jews had he, Emden, been aware of them.⁷¹ The third text Emden mentioned, also noting that he saw it after the completion of his essay, is *Tzitzat novel tzevi* by R. Jacob Sasportas but, although he cites the reference by page number, I have been unable to identify it.⁷²

Second, in this text Emden made the same terminological distinction that he drew in his 'Etz 'Avot commentary between *pikkehim* (smart ones), wise Christians who understand the importance of Jews keeping Jewish law, and *tippeshim* (foolish ones) who do not appreciate this principle.⁷³

⁷⁰ Emden referred to this work elsewhere as well in the course of describing his response to the Polish rabbis. See *Sefer shimmush*, 25a; *Edut be-Ya'akov*, 25a.

On this position of Duran's and its historical context, see Berger, "On the Uses of History in Medieval Jewish Polemic Against Christianity," *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue*, 148–149.

⁷¹ See, for example, Profiat Duran's *Kelimat ha-goyim*, in Frank Talmage, ed., *Kitveu pulmos le-Profiat Duran* (Jerusalem, 1981), 24–27. He, too, cited extensively from the New Testament. For this Duran, as well as other relevant premodern sources, see Berger, "On the Uses of History," 139–157. For the position of the fourteenth-century Moses ha-Kohen of Tordesillas in Spain, see David Berger, "Christians, Gentiles and the Talmud: A Fourteenth-Century Jewish Response to the Attack on Rabbinic Judaism," *Persecution, Polemic and Dialogue*, 158–176. See, too, Daniel J. Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1996), 58–59; Talya Fishman, "Changing Early Modern Jewish Discourse About Christianity: The Efforts of Rabbi Leon Modena," in *The Lion Shall Roar: Leon Modena and His World*, ed. David Malkiel (Jerusalem, 2003), 159–194.

⁷² See Gottlieb, "Resen mat'eh," 309. In fact, R. Sasportas referred to Jesus as "wicked (*rasha*)" and repeatedly expressed the view that Jesus came to give "a new Torah." See Isaiah Tishby, ed., *Sefer tzitzat novel tzevi le-Rabbi Ya'akov Sasportas* (Jerusalem, 1954), 83, 131.

⁷³ See above, at n. 16; below at n. 87. The word is also used elsewhere, in Emden's discussion of the *ve-la-malshinim* prayer in the daily service in his *Luah 'eresh* no. 159, Altona ed., 34b, Toronto ed., 68.

Third, in a line of reasoning reminiscent of a polemical thrust in Emden's earlier *'Etz 'Avot* commentary, the second edition of this essay clusters together "Jews, Christians and Muslims, three leading faiths (*sheloshah 'umot rashiyot*)... that erected their fortresses on the foundation of the Torah of Moses, our teacher, may he rest in peace, and who have spread in the world" in opposition to "this cursed sect of Shabbetai Zevi, may the name of the wicked rot."⁷⁴ Once again, Emden was arguing that Christians have more in common with Jews than with Sabbatians.

Finally, it is interesting to note that just as Emden appealed to Christian texts to argue with Christians against the Sabbatian position, so did Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz and Rabbi Hayyim Rappoport, who were called upon to defend Judaism from the attack of the Frankists in the presence of Christians at the Lviv disputation two years later. Emden cited the New Testament; Eibeschuetz cited "the register of permitted books, as established by the Council of Trent"; Rappoport cited Origen; Epiphanius; Jerome; early church leaders; Humphrey Prideaux, a deacon in Norwich, England; and "the noted Catholic writer, Hugo Grotius."⁷⁵ In addition, Emden wrote that he published a version of this essay in German "news leaflets (*daphey hiddushim*) that are published weekly"; Eibeschuetz also prepared his remarks in German.⁷⁶

This final, and most striking, text provides us with an additional factor to consider in trying to account for Emden's strikingly open and tolerant attitude to Christianity, namely, that Emden's expressions of tolerance to Christianity in the last third of his life must be seen in the context of his attitude to Sabbatianism. While many of Emden's statements in favor of Christianity were expressed before his ferocious opposition to that movement, his later obsession with it

⁷⁴ See Gottlieb, "Resen mat'eh," 318. See Gershon David Hundert, "The Introduction to *Divre Binah* by Dov Ber of Bolechów," 232, n. 33, who suggests *'emunot* (faiths) instead of *'umot* (nations), which appears in the text. See above, after n. 15.

⁷⁵ See Sid Z. Leiman, "Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz's Attitude towards the Frankists," *Polin* 15 (2002): 145–151, esp. 149; Balaban, *Le-toledot ha-tenu'ah ha-Frankit*, 255–256; Bergman, *Jacob Frank: The End to the Sabbataian Heresy*, 7, 140.

⁷⁶ See *Sefer hit'avkut*, 18b. See too *Sefer shimmush*, 9b, *'Edut be-Ya'akov*, 25a. In *Megillat sefer*, 186, Emden wrote that a German newspaper ("gazette") in Altona published a description of this work. In another case, Emden's son, Aryeh Yehudah, wrote that his father wanted to translate his essay against the blood libel, *Tza'akat damim*, into Latin. See Avraham Hayyim Wagenaar, *Toledot Ya'avetz*, IX, appendix 7.

created a particular context in which to understand his attitude toward that religion.

The relationship between Sabbatianism and Christianity has already been noted in the scholarly literature. For example, Gershom Scholem drew attention to the christological elements in early Sabbatian thought in general and in the school of Baruchiah in Salonika in particular;⁷⁷ indeed, it is logical to assume that Sabbatians would have been very interested in the parallel between Shabbetai Zevi and Jesus and the obvious complexities that such a comparison would yield.⁷⁸ In addition, Chaim Wirshubski pointed to elements of Christian thought in the ideology of the prominent Sabbatian, Moses David of Podhajce;⁷⁹ W. D. Davies analyzed the connection between early Christianity and Sabbatianism, especially through the prism of Scholem's work,⁸⁰ and Yehuda Liebes underscored the Christian elements in the theology of the prominent Sabbatian Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon, as well as other Sabbatians, that led some of them to convert to Christianity.⁸¹ But here I want to address a different issue regarding the connection between Sabbatianism and Christianity, namely, how a posture or stance with regard to one could influence one's attitude to the other.

This issue has already been noted in one direction, namely, how one's experience with Christianity influenced one's attitude toward Sabbatianism. In an attempt to explain Abraham Miguel Cardoso's leading role in formulating a carefully constructed post-conversion Sabbatian ideology, Gershom Scholem has already pointed to the cen-

⁷⁷ See Gershom Scholem, *Shabbetai Tzevi ve-he-tenu'ah ha-Shabbata'it bi-yemey hayyav*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1957), index, s.v. *Natzrut ve-Shabbeta'ut*; idem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton, 1973), index, s.v. "Christianity, Sabbatianism and"; idem, "Baruchyah rosh ha-Shabbeta'im be-Saloniki," *Zion* 6 (1940): 119–147; 181–202.

⁷⁸ For an example of the perspective of an opponent of Sabbatianism, Rabbi Jacob Sasportas, on this issue, see Matt Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2004), 137–138.

⁷⁹ See his "Ha-mekubal ha-Shabbeta'i R. Mosheh David mi-Podhaiz," *Zion* 7 (1942): 73–93, esp. 75, 78.

⁸⁰ W. D. Davies, "From Schweitzer to Scholem: Reflections on Sabbatai Svi," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976): 529–558; repr. with additions in idem, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia, 1984), 257–278, 372–387. My thanks to Prof. Michael Fishbane for bringing this article to my attention.

⁸¹ Yehuda Liebes, "Ha-yesod ha-'idi'ologi she-be-pulmos Hayon," *Divrey ha-kongres ha-'olami ha-shemini le-madda'ey ha-Yahadut*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1982), Heb. section, 129–134; idem, "'Al kat sodit Yehudit-Notzrit she-mekorah ba-Shabbeta'ut," *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 349–384. Both articles were reprinted in Liebes, *Sod ha-'emunah ha-Shabbeta'it*, 49–53, 212–237, 300–301, 421–429. For more on this matter, see the article by Sid Z. Leiman in this volume.

tral role of Cardoso's earlier Christian experience. He suggested that Cardoso's former experience as a Christian in public and Jew in private enabled him to appreciate the possibility that one need not infer from Shabbetai Zevi's conversion to Islam that he had abandoned his Jewish identity. After all, Cardoso's own life's experience confirmed precisely that such a paradoxical reality was possible, that what an individual seemed to be in public was not necessarily the same as what he was in private. In Cardoso's striking words, "It is ordained that the king messiah [Shabbetai Zevi] don the garments of a Marrano and so go unrecognized by his fellow Jews. In a word, it is ordained that he become a Marrano like me (*'anus kamoni*)."⁸² For Scholem, Cardoso's experience with Christianity played a formative role in determining his favorable attitude toward the Sabbatian movement.⁸³

Yosef H. Yerushalmi accepted Scholem's point about the nexus between one's experience as a Christian and one's attitude to Sabbatianism but argued that it could also lead to an opposite conclusion. In his study of Abraham's brother, Isaac Cardoso, Yerushalmi suggested that it is precisely this nexus that could also produce the exact opposite results. Isaac shared his brother's experience as a Marrano but, unlike Abraham, after having rejected Christianity, he embraced a Judaism that could have no room for the kind of messianic reality represented by Shabbetai Zevi, and Isaac emerged as one of the prominent leaders opposed to the Sabbatian movement. For Yerushalmi, Isaac Cardoso's experience with Christianity played a formative role in determining his negative attitude to the Sabbatian movement.⁸⁴

⁸² See Isaiah Tishby, ed., *Sefer Tzitzat novel tzevi le-Rabbi Ya'akov Sasportas*, 291; Aharon Freimann, *Inyaney Shabbetai Tzevi* (Berlin, 1913), 88.

⁸³ See Gershom Scholem, "Mitzvah ha-ba'ah ba-'averah," *Knesset* 2 (1937): 358–359; repr. in idem, *Mehkarim u-mekorot le-toledot ha-Shabbeta'ut ve-gilguleha* (Jerusalem, 1977), 23–24; trans. as "Redemption Through Sin," in idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), 94–95.

For more on the close connection between Marranism and Sabbatianism, see idem, *Shabbetai Zevi ve-ha-tenu'ah ha-Shabbeta'it bi-yemey hayyav*, vol. 2, 398; idem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, 485–486; Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), 101–104; Yosef Kaplan, *Mi-Natzrut le-Yahadut: Hayyav u-po'alo shel ha-'anus Yitzhak Orobio de Castro* (Jerusalem, 1982), 323–325; Jacob Barnai, "Christian Messianism and the Portuguese Marranos: The Emergence of Sabbatianism in Smyrna," *Jewish History* 7, no. 2 (1993): 119–126; Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 45–49, 138–139.

⁸⁴ See his *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (New York, 1971), 313–343. See also Paweł Maciejko, "Christian Elements in Early Frankist Doctrine," *Gal-Ed* 20 (2006): 21–23.

If one's experience of Christianity could have a strong impact on one's attitude to Sabbatianism and this, albeit, in very different ways, I want to suggest that the opposite is true as well. One's attitude toward Sabbatianism can have a significant influence on one's assessment of Christianity, and Emden here is a prime example of this phenomenon. It is a matter of no small interest that it is precisely in the context of a most extreme anti-Sabbatian argument—one that went so far as to suggest that adherents of this movement should be killed—where Emden expressed himself most favorably about Christianity. Compared to the accursed, despicable and wretched Sabbatians, even Christians are to be considered paragons of virtue; Emden's zeal to destroy Sabbatians led him to express respect for Christianity. And so, Emden's virulent position regarding Sabbatianism must also be considered as a factor in trying to account for his unusually favorable attitude toward Christianity, in addition to—and maybe more significant than—the other factors suggested earlier. Yehuda Liebes argued that there was a disconnect between Emden's extreme disdain for Sabbatianism and his exceptionally favorable attitude to Christianity; he considered this to be a "paradox and contradiction."⁸⁵ In fact, however, these are fully compatible positions; attacking Sabbatians and favoring Christians are two sides of the same coin.

Emden continued to refer to the essay he wrote to the Jewish leadership in Poland in a number of works that he penned shortly after he sent it to them. *Va-yakem 'edut bi-Ya'akov*, published by Emden in 1756, contains material relevant to Emden's controversy with Eibeschuetz, including dozens of letters he sent and received, introduced with his personal perspective and interspersed with his personal comments. The work includes a long critique of a book by David Megerlin, a prominent Christian clergyman, which had just appeared in defense of Eibeschuetz. Megerlin claimed that the messianic allusions in the amulets written by Eibeschuetz that were at the heart of the Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy were not Sabbatian as Emden claimed but, rather, more closely reflected Christian beliefs and themes. He referred to Eibeschuetz as a "secret proselyte [to Christianity] and half-Christian." And, he continued, this was the real reason Emden hounded Eibeschuetz, because he was a secret Christian, but since he, Emden,

⁸⁵ Liebes, *Sod ha-'emunah ha-Shabbeta'it*, 209.

could not possibly state this explicitly out of fear of being punished by Christian authorities, he couched his opposition in anti-Sabbatian terms. Megerlin asked the king, then, to protect Eibeschuetz because he was, really, a Christian, and to pursue Emden because he was, really, anti-Christian.⁸⁶

In Emden's long response to Megerlin, he insisted that his opposition to Eibeschuetz had nothing to do with anti-Christianity on any level. He went on to make the same argument that he presented earlier against the Frankists in his letter to the Polish authorities, that Christianity is infinitely superior to Sabbatianism. Referring to this essay, now entitled "Resen mat'eh," several times, Emden stated explicitly that "even though it is well known that our religion is very different from theirs [Christianity], nevertheless it is better for Noahides than the new cursed Sabbatianism. And therefore we pursue it to destroy it from our midst. And we hand them over to the hands of the Christians to uncover their wickedness so that they [the Sabbatians] not destroy us or them."

Once again Emden set up an alliance between Jews and Christians against Sabbatians, arguing that Jews and Christians had a lot more in common with one another than either of them had with Sabbatians and that, therefore, Sabbatianism should be anathema to them as it is to Jews. Citing "the words of the authors of their Holy Scriptures (*'avengeliyon*)," he reiterated, in language very similar to the most striking passage in his "Resen mat'eh" essay, that they were responsible for providing "a double kindness, for their only purpose was to establish and strengthen the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvot among genuine Jews and to bring the nations, the Sons of Noah, close and to strengthen them with regard to that which is theirs, namely, the Seven Noahide Laws in which they are obligated." And, once again, he

⁸⁶ David Friderich Megerlin, *Geheime Zeugnisse, vor die Wahrheit der Christlichen Religion, aus vier und zwanzig neuen und seltenen Jüdischen Amuleten oder Anhang Zetteln gezogen* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1756). For the quote, see 59. See also Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts From Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven, 2001), 86.

Moshe Aryeh Perlmutter already pointed out that the other (in this case apostate) Christian defender of Eibeschuetz, Karl Anton, also made the argument that Eibeschuetz was being pursued by the Jews because of his admiration for Christianity. See his *R. Yehonatan Eibeschuetz ve-yahaso el ha-Shabbeta'ut* (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 1947), 157–158.

repeatedly invoked the terminological distinction between *tippeshim* and *pik'him* already noted earlier.⁸⁷

Emden also returned to “Resen mat’eh” and the events that precipitated its composition in his *Sefer shimmush*, a book-length response to the Frankist threat, which he began working on during this time. Here he reported that after his essay had been made public he was attacked for favoring Christians over Sabbatians and he responded by affirming that, indeed, this was precisely his position.⁸⁸ And here he expressed himself in even sharper language about Sabbatians. He wrote that the notion of comparison is possible only when the objects being compared have at least some elements in common, but that is not the case here at all. Sabbatians are no better, and even worse, than animals of the forest, and certainly worse than any person, regardless of who they may be, even idolaters. “But with regard to Christians, if they observe the Seven [Noahide] Laws as they are obligated and as I mentioned in ‘Resen mat’eh,’ then certainly not only is there no place to deprecate them at all but they are worthy of praise without doubt.” Emden went on to apply to them the principle that “the righteous of the nations of the world (*hasidey ’ummot ha-’olam*) have a share in the World to Come.”⁸⁹ At the end of the work, Emden presented a full history of the events in Podolia and included copies of letters he received from Poland about the matter.⁹⁰

More than ten years later, in 1769, Emden briefly referred to this essay in his *Sefer hit’avkut* where he summarized its basic point as follows: “The intention of their teacher was not to abrogate the Torah from Jews. On the contrary, his entire intention was to support, affirm, and endorse it with full strength while establishing anew for the nations of the world [the obligation] to abide only by the Seven Noahide Laws.” Emden also reported there that his words were very favorably received by the leaders of the Polish Jewish community who

⁸⁷ See *’Edut be-Ya’akov*, 19b–27a, esp. 23b; above, at nn. 16, 73. Later in the work Emden repeated the notion that Christianity does not allow new religions (49b, 54a) and that Sabbatians are worse than idolaters (76b). See also *Mor u-kezi’ah* no. 330.

⁸⁸ In *Megillat sefer*, 185, Emden stated that it was Eibeschutz himself who accused him of heresy for being supportive of Christianity.

⁸⁹ See, especially, “Meteg la-hamor,” in *Sefer shimmush*, 24a. For other references to Christians as being worthy of a place in *’olam ha-ba’*, see above, n. 43. Here (10b) he also repeated his play on words noted earlier (at n. 65), *posehim ’al sheney ha-ziyyufim*, and also noted that later Christians misunderstood Jesus’ position on the centrality of Torah observance for Jews (39a).

⁹⁰ *Sefer shimmush* 87a and on.

found it helpful, and who requested many copies of his essay. He even wrote that Christian authorities praised it as well.⁹¹

At the very end of his life, Emden addressed the subject of the merit of Christianity over Sabbatianism for one final time, although on this occasion he did not reference his anti-Frankist essay penned almost two decades earlier. On Shabbat Shuvah and Shabbat Parashat Ha'azinu 1775, less than a year before he died, Emden delivered an abridged version in Altona of a sermon he had first delivered as rabbi in the town of Emden forty-five years earlier, in 1730. On that occasion, he added an entirely new section which, in the printed version, contains two long passages on Gentiles in general and Christians in particular.⁹² Here he made a number of points directly relevant to our discussion. First, he noted, in passing, that Jesus, "the founder of the new religion for Gentiles, commanded his disciples who were Jews like him" to accept the authority of Jewish law, and asserted that the Halakhah does not differentiate between Jews and Gentiles when it comes to the prohibition of robbing and stealing.

He then addressed a comment that he heard the week he delivered this sermon from a Gentile (*'arel*) who claimed that the morning blessing recited by Jews, "Blessed be He... Who has not made me a Gentile (*Barukh she-lo' 'asani goy*)," indicates that the Jews consider Gentiles to be like animals and therefore deem their lives and possessions to be of no significance. In response, Emden claimed that the two blessings recited immediately thereafter, "Blessed... Who has not made me a slave" and "Blessed... Who has not made me a woman," prove that this is not the case because Jews do not treat slaves in a lawless fashion

⁹¹ *Sefer hit'avkut* 18b. See also 69b. For another reference to Christian scholars' praise of "Resen mat'eh," see *Edut be-Ya'akov*, 26b.

Emden also referred to his involvement in this case in his introduction to the second volume of his *Mor u-ketzi'ah* (Altona, 1761), 2a, in a responsum (*She'elat Ya'avetz* 2:24, end) dated 1765, and in his *Mitpahat sefarim* (Altona, 1768), 2, 5, 31, 112, 114, and elsewhere. It would also appear that the repeated references to the Zohar by the Frankists actually motivated Emden to publish this work which, he noted, had been on his mind for the last four decades. See 11.

⁹² The sermon was published in Altona, 1775, as *Derush tefillat yesharim* and the additional section was published as an appendix entitled "Hali ketem." It was reprinted in Podgórze, 1911; all references to this work here are to this later edition.

As is the case with printed versions of sermons in general, it is hard to determine which parts were actually delivered orally and which were added at the time of publication.

(*minhag hefker*), and are also obligated to treat women with great honor. All three blessings rather refer, he suggested, to the fact that the male is here expressing his gratitude to God for being obligated in more mitzvot than any of the other three categories of individuals mentioned, whether Gentile, slave, or woman. In fact, he continued, the Talmud already prohibited stealing from a Gentile, and this from Gentiles of Antiquity (*'amim ha-kadmonim*) “who knew not the Lord (Judg 2:19). But these nations under whose wings we take shelter and who protect us, [who allow us] to observe our Torah, who believe in the Giver of the Torah and who observe certain *mitzvot*, who have lovely qualities and for whose welfare we are obligated to pray... certainly, God forbid, [never can one] entertain the possibility of stealing from them or doing anything bad to them.”⁹³

In an afterword, Emden once again contrasted Sabbatians who desecrate the Name of God and reject Torah law with observant Christians. “A Gentile who observes [even] only the Seven Noahide Laws... and helps the Jewish people observe the Torah is in the category of blessed (*bikhlal barukh*) and even a Jew who observes all six hundred and thirteen mitzvot but makes no effort to strengthen Torah is in the category of cursed (*bikhlal 'arur*).”⁹⁴ He continued to point once again to the obligation to treat Gentiles nicely and noted that not only did the Sages of the Talmud prohibit stealing from a Gentile, they even prohibited misleading a Gentile. “And all of this with regard to nations of antiquity (*'ummot ha-kedumot*) who had no connection with us at all. Certainly [it applies with regard to] those nations in whose shade we take shelter and who are brothers with us in faith, in Torah, in prophecy, and in other matters, and in whom are found good qualities. They do not treat us in an evil way but, on the contrary, protect us in the observance of the Torah. There is no doubt that we are obligated to look out for, care for, and guard their possessions and property like our own.”⁹⁵ From Emden’s perspective, there were many positive aspects of Christianity and, especially when seen in contrast to Sabbatians, these qualities were even more wonderful and deserving of praise and respect.

⁹³ “Hali ketem,” 26b–27b.

⁹⁴ See above, n. 7.

⁹⁵ “Hali ketem,” 29b–30a.

In conclusion it must be noted that these positive statements about Christianity, as sincere as I believe they were, reflect only Emden's perspective in the abstract, in an ideal state, but do not reflect the day-to-day reality of the world in which Emden lived and of which he was most acutely aware. Like others before him who wrote very positively about Christianity, there was a significant difference between theory and practice.⁹⁶ Even in "Resen mat'eh," where Emden portrayed the Christian *attitude* toward Jews and Judaism in such a positive light, he recognized that the reality of Christian *behavior* toward Jews throughout the centuries did not reflect this view. Indeed, Emden repeatedly called on Christians to follow their classical traditional position regarding Jews as it had been formulated by the founders of their faith.

Happy would they and we be were they to act toward us in accordance with their faith as commanded in their Holy Scripture.... Were they to fulfill those commands they would be worthy of great praise. Then we would certainly be happy and successful among them in this, our exile, at the highest levels. Then, for sure, thousands and tens of thousands of our martyrs would not have been killed...and their masses would not have hated us.⁹⁷

He claimed that "over the course of time they sank into strange ideas because they did not understand the advice of those who came before them."⁹⁸ And he addressed himself directly to the Christians: "And you, the Christian nation as a whole, 'how good and how pleasant' (Ps 133:1) would it be if you were to observe that which is incumbent upon you from your first masters and teachers.... How good would be your lot. If you were to help the Jews observe their Torah (on which the world stands) you would, in truth, receive reward as one who performs [what is written there]."⁹⁹

In fact, stark expressions of the unpleasant reality of Christian-Jewish relations in his day abound in Emden's writings;¹⁰⁰ his responsa contain several negative reflections on this reality. For example, he wrote that the Gentile has an ingrained hatred for the Jew and is

⁹⁶ For this dichotomy in the position of ha-Meiri, see Katz, *Bein Yehudim le-goyim*, 126–128; idem, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 125–128.

⁹⁷ Gottlieb, "Resen mat'eh," 302.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 306. See too 309.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 313.

¹⁰⁰ For the state of Jewish-Christian relations in Hamburg and Altona during Emden's lifetime, see Joachim Whaley, *Religious Tolerance and Social Change in Hamburg, 1529–1819* (Cambridge, 1985), 84–110.

therefore suspected of lying if it will be to the detriment of the Jew.¹⁰¹ Elsewhere, he addressed a question posed to him by his (first) father-in-law regarding what to do when a Gentile wants to forcibly convert two children—a boy and a girl—and there is only enough money to ransom one of them. Which one should it be? Even if this question was a theoretical one, it demonstrates the prevailing perception of Gentiles during his time and is very instructive.¹⁰² Also, at the end of a long rebuke of those who own a dog, he wrote that such a practice is prohibited and identified a dog owner as someone engaging in “the behavior of uncircumcised ones (*ma’aseh ‘arelim*).”¹⁰³

In addition, in his presentation of the laws of the Ninth of Av in his commentary on the *Siddur*, Emden noted that although wearing shoes is prohibited on that day, it is permissible to do so temporarily “when one passes a Gentile street” presumably not to arouse their ridicule.¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere, in that work, he drew attention to the danger of traveling with a Gentile (*goy*)¹⁰⁵ and in another work he ruled that if a woman is traveling and is afraid that she will be raped by Gentiles (*‘akum*), she is permitted to wear a nun’s habit for protection.¹⁰⁶ He also wrote in a pejorative manner about the “ways of Gentiles (*middat nokhrim*)” who are happy to do something only if they will receive a reward for it, as opposed to Jews who will act in an appropriate fashion even in the absence of a reward.¹⁰⁷

And, as a traditional Jew, Emden’s theoretical tolerance had very limited practical applications. After discussing the important value of studying medicine, he wrote in one of his responsa:

However, to travel a long distance to their schools is not, in my view, something appropriate.... Do not come near to the door of their houses and do not desire to be with them in the rooms of their temples (cf. Num 33:52), to stand in their courtyards and palaces to learn from their customs and manners. Our Sages enacted many decrees and instituted

¹⁰¹ *She’elat Ya’avetz* 1:32.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1:68.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1:17, end.

¹⁰⁴ *Siddur sha’arey shamayim*, 71b. This issue has long been discussed in halakhic literature, especially in medieval Ashkenaz; see the sources cited in Daniel Sperber, *Minhagey Yisra’el*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1994), 83–84 (add *Haggahot Maimuniyyot* on *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot ta’anivot* 5:200). However, its inclusion by Emden here leads me to believe that this was also a practical, not just theoretical, ruling.

¹⁰⁵ *Siddur ‘ammudey shamayim*, 273b.

¹⁰⁶ *Migdal ‘oz*, 29a.

¹⁰⁷ *‘Etz ‘Avot* on *‘Avot* 1:3, 5b.

regulations that a person should not live with Gentiles (*ha-'akum*) so as not to learn from their ways. And blessed [be He] Who chose us and separated us from all the nations so that we not follow their statutes (cf. Lev 18:3).¹⁰⁸

But the most telling example of this attitude is found in *Megillat sefer*, Emden's autobiography, in the midst of a description of a trip he took in Central Europe in 1722. Absent any ideological analysis and unadorned by any theoretical positioning, Emden here is simply telling a story, and it reflects volumes on the reality of the attitude of Christians to Jews and of Jews to Christians in the world in which he lived. It is worthy of being cited in full:

From Prague I traveled "for life and peace" by covered carriage (cf. Num 7:3), called a land coach, traveling from there to the city of Bruenn, most prominent in the Land of Moravia. I thought that I placed myself first in the company of Jews from Moravia who were returning to their homes. We rented from the carriage driver the first and best place in the carriage in accordance with the custom that whoever rents first merits priority in the seating on the wagon. However, when we came to the carriage, two wicked Christians came as well, one an Italian businessman and one a priest. Although they arrived late, they pushed us Jews from our place of priority in a manner of scorn and derision (Ps 44:14). The carriage driver was unable to stand up to them even had he so desired, knowing that this was against the law and precedent (cf. Esth 1:13), and was therefore forced to be silent. We suffered various affronts from these evil wicked ones who did not leave us in peace for a moment. We were unable to fulfill the mitzvah of putting on tefillin to pray properly on account of them. They constantly taunted us and called us Jewish dogs. Whenever the road was at a slight angle they would direct their voices to us with anger and rebuke and with a deprecating expression: "Leave, go down from the carriage, and walk away." They would push us out, as was their desire.

But this too was for the good because God saw our humiliation (cf. Gen 29:32). After they had been distressing us for the distance of around ten parasangs from Prague, there came before us a very dangerous way, for we had to pass a very narrow path, on one side a mountain straight as a wall and the other side an incline as deep as the Deep (Gen 1:2). When we arrived there, near to the very dangerous place, these wicked ones pushed and chased us out of the carriage, as was their wont. We did not object, we went by foot, and they were left sitting securely (cf. Lev 25:18) in their places.

¹⁰⁸ *She'elat Ya'avetz* 1:41.

We had traveled only several steps from the carriage and behold the carriage turned over, falling on its front on the incline in the road as mentioned. It was carrying a heavy load of crates and boxes and some fell on the aforementioned uncircumcised Italian businessman, almost breaking all his bones. He lay destroyed (Jud 5:27), very ill, and could no longer return to the carriage. He was forced to remain there on the way and to seek lodging in a nearby village. Although the priest was not injured at all, the sick businessman did not want to let him go from his side for he told him that he was obligated to grant him his last rites (cf. 'Avot 4:17) should he die. In addition to this, they became terribly distraught (cf. 1 Sam 25:37) for they knew that we rejoiced over their downfall (cf. *Megillah* 10b)...In this manner these wicked ones who troubled us separated from us and we departed from them in peace.

We witnessed revenge from our enemies, and we continued on our way (cf. Gen 32:2) in the name of God (Ps 20:8) with gladness and goodness of heart (Deut 28:47), sitting by ourselves in the carriage with lots of room (Gen 34:21), thanking and blessing God, may He be blessed, for the goodness that He wrought for us in this way and for our ability to observe his mitzvot without any hindrance or misfortune on the way. We arrived in the place of Bruenn with the help of God, may He be blessed, complete and good of heart (cf. Esth 5:9). There I found and saw the priest who separated from us on the way. He nodded to me and said that he would never again travel with a Jew in the same carriage.¹⁰⁹

In his analysis of the attitude of early Maskilim to Maimonides, Allan Nadler noted how they were more attracted to the biography of Maimonides, to the drama of his life as halakhist, doctor, and philosopher, than to the actual content of his philosophy, which they found irrelevant and unappealing.¹¹⁰ We have seen how Mendelssohn was attracted to Emden, but for the opposite reason, for Emden's conceptual perspective rather than for the way he lived his life. For if Emden had a remarkably tolerant attitude to Christianity, which Mendelssohn appreciated and wanted to access, and which continues to interest both modern historians and those engaged in interfaith activity, it did not express itself in his personal life. Theoretically analyzing the issue in the privacy of his study was one thing; looking out his window was something else entirely.

¹⁰⁹ *Megillat sefer*, 83–84. I translated from the Bodleian manuscript (Ad. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, 590, no. 1723:2), 156a–b. I am completing a new edition of this text.

¹¹⁰ Allan Nadler, "The 'Rambam Revival' in Early Modern Jewish Thought: Maskilim, Mitnagdim, and Hasidim on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*," in Jay M. Harris, ed., *Maimonides after 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence* (Cambridge and London, 2007), 238, 243.

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