

Isaac Satanow's 'Mishlei Asaf'
As Reflecting the Ideology of the German Hebrew Haskalah*

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In this study I shall attempt to show that Isaac Satanow's *Mishlei Asaf* could be used as a valid source for the study of the ideology of the Berlin Haskalah.¹ A study in depth of this modern version of the pseudo-biblical wisdom literature, I think, is indispensable to the understanding of Haskalah literature and of its intellectual milieu; for Satanow is one of the most important representatives — and perhaps also one of the most colorful figures in that milieu. Satanow's importance lies in the role he played in the Hebrew Enlightenment, and in the peculiar or even unique nature of his writings. In addition, there is another aspect of the Satanow phenomenon which calls for special attention. It is, to my mind, the negative attitude that Satanow's contemporaries expressed toward him² — very

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¹ For the present study I limited my discussion to the first two volumes of *Mishlei Asaf*: Proverbs of Asaf, published in Berlin in 1789 and 1792, respectively, while excluding the other two volumes, *Zemiroth Asaf* [Songs of Asaf] (Berlin, 1793), and *Megilat Hasidim* [Scroll of the Pious] (Berlin 1802).

The most comprehensive study, though by no means conclusive, on Satanow's *Mishlei Asaf* and on his personality and his place in Hebrew literature, is Shmuel Werses' article "On Isaac Satanow and His Work 'Mishlei Asaf,'" *Tarbitz*, XXXII (4, Tamuz, 1963), pp. 370—392 [Hebrew]. Werses' main contribution is his thesis regarding the relation between the text and the commentary of *Mishlei Asaf*, his exposition of Satanow's literary techniques, and his use of autobiographical material found scattered overtly and covertly in Satanow's works. An important discussion will be found also in H. N. Shapira, *Toldot Hasifrut Ha'ivrit Habada-shab* [History of Modern Hebrew Literature] (Tel Aviv 1967), pp. 317—333. Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay uses some examples from *Mishlei Asaf* in his significant article "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XXV (1956), p. 4—5. See the comments on the relation of the text and the commentary in note 66 below. Regarding the methodological question whether there is a unified system of thought and its relation to the style of presentation, consult Werses' above-mentioned article pp. 374—375, 382—384.

² In a review of the first three volumes of *Mishlei Asaf* in *Hame'asef* by a critic bearing the pseudonym Heyman (cf. 1 *Chronicles*, 15:19), the writer exposes Satanow as the author of the said books. The reviewer is quite critical of Satanow for misleading the public to believe that he had discovered an ancient

much as they did toward his colleague-in-arms rabbi Saul Berlin³ — which somehow penetrated into the so-called objective historical studies of the period⁴. A negative portrayal of his personality, I suspect, led to a negative

manuscript while having written it himself. He further accuses Satanow for being untruthful and conceited while preaching truthfulness and modesty (*Hame'asef*, VII [3, 1796], pp. 251—266). In eleven pages of a detailed analysis of quoted verses from the reviewed books, the critic lashes out against Satanow for his figurative language which does not make sense, to the critic that is; Satanow, he writes, did not understand in effect the meaning of certain biblical words. The criticism, at times, leans toward the personal such as the references to Satanow's place of origin (Satanow, in the province of Podolia in Poland — *ibid.*, p. 257). Satanow fights back by publishing a book entitled *Minḥat Bikurim*. An Offering, or: Gift, of Criticism], Berlin 1797, its author being Doctor Schoenemann, Satanow's own son. The authorship of the book as presented is rather doubtful; however, it is safe to assume that it remained within the Satanow family. In *Minḥat Bikurim* the identity of the critic of Satanow's works is being revealed; it is no other than the editor of *Hame'asef*, Aaron Wolfssohn, who is said to have suspected Satanow of publishing an attack on the journal. Thus the animosity is said to have been a personal one, and the author of *Minḥat Bikurim* answers in kind by exposing Wolfssohn's ignorance in his book *Avtalion* (*ibid.*, p. 28a). The editors of *Hame'asef* continue the exchange with a review of the former book, too (*Hame'asef*, VII [4, 1797], pp. 395—399).

Other contemporary negative reaction on Satanow appeared in Tuvyahu Feder's *Labat Haḥerev* [The Flaming Sword] (Vilna 1866; First edition: 1804), p. 28, and in Moses Mendelson (of Hamburg), *Penei Tevel* [Face of the World] (Amsterdam, 1872), p. 252. The latter is the author of the now famous saying on Satanow, "He is half a believer and half a heretic" ("Hu ḥatzi min vaḥatzi ma'amim"). Another such saying on Satanow, by Ben-Zeev: "His book contains new [innovations] and benefits, however, the news are not beneficial, and the benefits are not new" ("Yesh besifro ḥadashot umo'ilot, 'ach hahadashot 'einan mo'ilot veham'ilot 'einan ḥadashot") = Judah Loeb Ben-Zeev, *'Otzar Hashorashim* [Treasure of Roots] (Wien 1807), p. 8 in the introduction [my pagination].

³ See my articles "Some Notes on the Nature of Saul Berlin's Writings," *The Journal of Hebraic Studies*, I (2, 1970), pp. 47—48; "The Religious Reforms of Traditionalist' Rabbi Saul Berlin (A Chapter in the History of the Struggle of Hebrew Haskalah in Germany for the Revival of Judaism)," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XLII (1971) [Hebrew].

⁴ *Zvi Graetz: Divrei Yemei Hayehudim* [History of the Jews] (Warsaw, 1904, IX, 89—90: "He liked to disguise himself and to cheat the public in such forgeries. . . he was a man who was not truthful by nature." J. L. Kantor, "Dor Hame'asfim" [The Generation of the Writers of Hame'asef], *Hame'asef*, supplement of *Ha'asif* (1886), p. 23—24 (following Graetz). *Israel Zinberg: Toldot Sifrut Yisra'el*, Merḥavyah, Israel, 1954, V, pp. 119—120, 122, 125. Zinberg calls him light-minded and a forger. Zunz criticizes Satanow's edition of *Slihot*, summarized as follows: „Doctrinäre Sprachverbesserer sind keine Textkritiker" (L. Zunz: *Die Riten des Synagogalen Gottesdienstes*, Berlin 1859, 231—233). *Franz Delitzsch: Zur Geschichte der Jüdischen Poesie* (Leipzig 1836), p. 115, depicts him as follows: "Unter dem polnischen Kaftan, über den sein Bart herabwallte, trug er die feinste Kleidung eines deutschen *petit maitre*. . .". M. H. Letteris criticizes Satanow harshly for his edition of

evaluation of his works. Thus, I believe, a re-evaluation is very much in need,⁵ and I hope this study would contribute toward this objective.

I shall begin by presenting three observations which should shed light on the uniqueness of the works under study, and which have direct bearing on the understanding of the nature of the ideology of the Haskalah.

a) The biblical style which Satanow had adopted in order to convey his ideas and feelings has some inherent characteristics that serve his purpose. It creates an authentic-antique air about it, for one, and as a result bears the stamp of authority — the authority of the holy scriptures. Through literary devices such as repetitions and parallelism, the author supports that apparent authority. Satanow's text also has an epigrammatic-definitive tone that presents itself as the infallible words of truth and wisdom. This pseudo wisdom-literature style is moreover direct in its approach, imperative, slogan-like — as if calling for action. And, above all, it is didactic.

However, all of this is on the surface (perhaps a little below it). Underlying it all, there is the basic subtle dichotomy which the author is unable to bridge, in spite of his many efforts. It is basically the dichotomy between two completely different worlds:⁶ the world of the Bible, theocentric, which is typified by the deep-rooted faith in god, and the world of the new, anthropocentric, and full of questions and doubts; two utterly different kinds of *weltanschauung*. As a result the reader is faced with a contrast between the pseudo-classical form and what it implies, and the off-time modern contents, or rather the spirit of the contents — the cement of its ideas. This contrast is magnified many a time when one notes the attempts of Satanow to reconcile between the incompatible factions.

b) The second observation has to do with the relationship that Satanow established between the text of *Mishlei Asaf* and the commentary.⁷ Whereas both had been actually authored by Satanow, he attributed the pseudo-biblical verses to an ancient Levite, Asaf ben Berechياهو, and the commentary to himself.⁸ Parenthetically, this literary device led to an interesting comment, as follows: “All plagiarists steal from others and attribute

Ephraim Luzzatto's *'Ele Bnei Hane'urim* (under the title *Kol Shabal*) in his introduction to Luzzatto's *'Ele Bnei Hane'urim* [These Are the Youths] (Wien, 1839). Cf. Naphtali Ben-Menaḥem's article on Satanow's edition of *Kol Shabal* in *Kirjath Sepher*, XLIV (1969), pp. 560—562, in which the author claims Satanow forged one poem and attributed it to Moshe Ḥayim Luzzatto.

⁵ A significant contribution in this regard is Werses' article cited in note 1.

⁶ Cf. H. N. Shapira: *Toldot Hasifrut Ha'ivrit Haḥadashah*, 317—318.

⁷ Cf. Werses: On Isaac Satanow, p. 371. Werses points out, and rightly so, that Satanow's ideological outlook is revealed authentically in the commentary accompanying the proverbial text in *Mishlei Asaf*.

⁸ *Satanow: Mishlei Asaf*, I, 2 [my pagination], in the approbation attributed to five rabbis although it had been authored by Satanow himself.

[whatever they copy] to themselves, whereas this one [namely, Satanow] steals from himself and attributes [that which he steals] to others."⁹ Curiously enough, it was none other than Satanow who had made the statement about himself. The commentary in a way authenticates the text, for it follows the traditional Jewish pattern of the scriptures and their commentary. It further allows the author to interpret a sacred-oriented text in a secular fashion. Rabbi Saul Berlin resorted to a similar technique in his *Besamin Rosh*.¹⁰ This relationship between the text and the commentary has not been fully understood by many students of Satanow, and thus the discrepancies in the evaluation of *Mishlei Asaf* both as a literary work as well as a source for the analytical appreciation of the ideology of the Hebrew Haskalah in Germany.¹¹

c) The third observation, interrelated with the other two, is concerned with Satanow's declared methodology in the presentation of his ideas and with the techniques he utilizes to persuade and propagandize for the ideals of the Enlightenment. Satanow is aware of the pitfalls of presenting his readers with completely new and revolutionary ideas; his objective here is not to shock and surprise his reader, but rather to teach and persuade. Therefore, he introduces an idea in a manner acceptable to his reader; at first it looks as though Satanow agrees with the traditional view. He soon makes an about face and expresses his view openly. This technique, which

⁹ *Satanow: Kuntres Mifer Hazohar Hibura Tinyana* [Pamphlet of the Book of 'Hazohar' Second Composition] (Berlin 1783), p. 2 [my pagination], in the approbation penned by the author himself. (*Joseph Klausner: Historia Shel Hasifrut Ha'ivrit Habadashah*, History of Modern Hebrew Literature, Jerusalem 1960, I, 168, believes in the authenticity of the approbation. However, it does not seem proper that a respectable rabbi would use this humorous style, and that he would express distinct Satanovian ideas which could be found also in *Minhat Bikurim*). The second rabbinic approbation also hints that the purported ancient manuscript had been composed by a contemporary writer (*Kuntres*, p. 2). Similarly, we have such references in the approbations to the first volume of *Mishlei Asaf*: "... it is not known who composed it [the purported ancient manuscript], for the said Rabbi Isaac [Satanow] is saying that indeed he had found it... and it appears that truly it is a parable and perhaps Rabbi Isaac himself had composed it as was the case in his work *'Imrei Binah* [Words of Understanding, Berlin, 1784]... in conclusion, Asaf had not signed [= authored] it" (*Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 2). In the same vein, the second rabbinic approbation states "... the workmanship of your hands, the book Asaf" (*ibid.*, p. 4).

¹⁰ *Saul Berlin: Besamin Rosh*, Incense of Spices, Berlin 1793. Following the style and pattern of the responsa literature, Berlin begins each responsa item with the text said to have been composed by 13th and 14th-centuries authoritative rabbi Asher ben Yehiel, or his contemporaries; subsequent to each text Berlin has his own halachic annotation.

¹¹ See notes 1 and 7.

I have found also in the writings of Saul Berlin,¹² is reminiscent of the talmudic *Hava Amina*. Interestingly enough, Satanow himself explains this technique in an obscure commentary to one of the verses: “It is appropriate for the healer of souls to agree with them [with the fools] and then to transform them from one extreme to the other. . . little by little until he should place them on Truth and Justice, for they would not accept a remedy from the healer [doctor] who would suddenly show them the Truth which is in opposition to what he [they] imagine.”¹³

Against the background of these observations the ensuing discussion, I think, becomes more meaningful.

The ideology of Haskalah, as found in the books under study, may be classified in four categories: a. Ideas and ideals permeated mainly by the overall spirit of European Enlightenment; b. Ideas and ideals which bear the distinct mark of Deism; c. Practical comments regarding contemporary Judaism; d. Subtle allegations which, unlike those in the first three categories, are rather subconsciously expressed; thus if our interpretation of them is correct, they may serve as a vital indicator of the underlying ideological currents which shaped and formed the *weltanschauung* of Haskalah.

A word of caution should be stressed: The above categories are offered for convenience only and they are in no way conclusive; the first category, that of Enlightenment ideas, is by no means an entity by itself, completely detached from medieval thought. As has been pointed out, Enlightenment is much indebted to medieval philosophy;¹⁴ similarly, the Hebrew *maskilim* are very much under the influence of Jewish medieval thought, especially Maimonides.¹⁵ Thus, although Satanow employs the term “*Hochmah*”

¹² *Besamim Rosh*, pp. 73 a—b, item 225, regarding the question whether the majority can compel the minority. Berlin's immediate answer is “indeed in every matter the minority is compelled to act like the majority.” However, in both the Torah and the Talmud.

¹³ *Mishlei Asaf*, II, p. 26 a, ch. 24, vs. 10, in the commentary. For a similar technique see Satanow's *Divrei Rivot*, Words of Controversies, or: Disputes, Berlin 1793 43 b, and compare Shmuel Werses, “Joseph Perl Satiric Methods,” *Story and Source* (Ramat Gan, Israel, 1971), pp. 16—17 [Hebrew], regarding the use of the latter technique by some other Hebrew writers of the period.

¹⁴ *Carl Lotus Becker: The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, New Haven 1959, 29—31: “But, if we examine the foundations of their faith, we find that at every turn the *Philosophers* betray their debt to medieval thought without being aware of it.”

¹⁵ *F. Laḥover*: “Harambam Vehahaskalah Ha'ivrit Bereshitah”, Maimonides and the Early Hebrew Haskalah, *Moznayim*, III (1—6, Tishrei-Adar Beit, 1938—39), pp. 539—546, cites a basic difference between Maimonides and the early *maskilim*, yet admits the former's impact on the *maskilim*. See also *Joseph Schechter: “The Attitude of Haskalah Generation and Our Generation to Maimonides, Limudei*

[wisdom] in a pseudo-biblical context, one suspects that his concept of *Hochmah* is not identical with that found in the wisdom-literature; surely, one significant aspect of the biblical *Hochmah* is wanting here; it is *Hochmah* in the sense of proper religious conduct. To Satanow, *Hochmah* is knowledge, mainly secular knowledge, as well as sciences and philosophy.¹⁶ Thus he is closer to medieval Jewish philosophy than to the Bible in the usage of that term.¹⁷

There is a distinct feature about the *Hochmah* which Satanow attempts to portray, a feature typical to the age of Enlightenment, especially among the Hebraists. We note the many attempts by Satanow to present *Hochmah*, that is secular knowledge, and *Yir'ah* — the fear of god — as equals. He labors to show that both complement each other.¹⁸ At times he uses the term *Torah* for the same purpose.¹⁹ Although *Yir'ah* and *Torah* are two different terms, in our context they both denote the world of the sacred, the holy; an unshakable faith in god, a biblical kind of trust in god which sounds rather anachronistic to the modern man of Haskalah times. He thus views *Torah* and *Hochmah* as "twin sisters."²⁰ It is characteristic of Satanow's early writing — to show the compatibility of Judaism and the secular sciences and knowledge.²¹

Hayabadut Babinuch Ha'al Yesodi, Judaic Studies in Post Elementary Education, Tel Aviv 1968, 107—110 [Hebrew], and *Barzilai: The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah*, 4—7. Solomon Maimon, who owes his surname to Maimonides [Moshe ben Maimon], writes about his great admiration and indebtedness to Maimonides in his autobiography *The Life of Solomon Maimon*, Tel Aviv 1953, 260—261 [Hebrew]. Solomon Maimon is one of the *maskilim* who published commentaries on Maimonides' works: *Moreh Nevuchim*, Guide for the Purplexed, Berlin 1791; Mendelssohn's commentary on *Milot Habegayon*, Words of Meditation or: Logic, first published in 1761. Quotations from Maimonides in the writings of the *maskilim* and their application to the furtherance of Haskalah goals are too numerous to cite.

¹⁶ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 9 b, ch. 5, vs. 18. *Hochmah*, writes Satanow in his commentary, is the collective noun for the various sciences such as astronomy, mechanics, optics, law, etc. *Hochmah* is depicted also as philosophy (*ibid.*, p. 8 b, ch. 5, vs. 7).

¹⁷ Cf. Jacob Klatzkin: *Otzar Hamunahim Hafilosofiyim*, *Thesaurus Philosophicus*, Berlin 1928, I, 290—299, the definition of *Hochmah*; J. Steinberg: *Mishpat Ha'urim*¹⁰, *Lexicon zum Urtexte des Alten Testaments*, Tel Aviv 1937, 229—230.

¹⁸ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 12 a, ch. 6, vs. 16: Both fear (of god) and *Hochmah* together bring man to perfection. The author emphasizes the interdependence of the two by citing the saying from the *Ethics of the Fathers*: Where there is no *Yir'ah* there is no *Hochmah*.

¹⁹ *Mishlei Asaf*, II, p. 69 a, ch. 64, vs. 1 (commentary): "Torah and wisdom are twin sisters."

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See Satanow: *Holech Tamim* (He that Walks Upright), Berlin 1795; first edition: 1784, p. 6 b: There is no belief or knowledge in the Mosaic religion which contradicts reason. Satanow advises his reader to adhere to the concept of the

Understandably, reason is regarded by Satanow, like his fellow-*maskilim*, as one of the ideals of his age.²² On behalf of reason, Satanow wages a campaign against the unenlightened who would insist even in the age of Enlightenment that a proverbial Chinese wall separates traditional Judaism and reason. In order to contradict this contention, Satanow endeavors to show, in addition to the compatibility of wisdom and Judaism, also the interdependence of the two. He who denies wisdom is in effect denying god, and he who hates wisdom actually hates god; the foes of god are viewed as the foes of wisdom.²³ Satanow maintains that love of god and hatred of wisdom are contradictory,²⁴ and complains about the unenlightened who possess *Yir'ah* alone; they are deficient in the true and complete knowledge of god. By singling out *Yir'ah* from wisdom, the unenlightened, according to Satanow, are implying that the *Torah* in effect is geared only to the unwise.²⁵ Needless to say, that this implication with regard to the *Torah* is completely rejected.

In spite of Satanow's laborious endeavors to show first the compatibility of wisdom and Judaism, and then the interdependence of the two, the careful reader of *Mishlei Asaf* cannot escape the conclusion that this *maskil*, perhaps unknowingly and subconsciously, is advocating the utter subordination of Judaism to secular knowledge, and the dependence of the former on the latter. Only via secular knowledge, which Satanow elaborates upon in detail, can one achieve the knowledge of god.²⁶ No doubt that this is a clear statement of the subordination of religion to man's reason, which characteristically is one of the dogmas of both Enlightenment and Deism.

Indeed, to the mind of this enlightened Jew, *'Emunah* — faith, or belief

fear of god and not to be apprehensive of the supposed risks and pitfalls said by the ignorants, haters of wisdom, to be associated with *Hochmah* (*ibid.*, p. 1 a). In the title page of his *Imrei Binah* [Words of Understanding], (Berlin 1784), Satanow has tradition and investigation [*Kabalah* and *Hakirah*, respectively] as twin sisters. . .

²² Cf. *Barzilai*: "The Ideology", 1—7.

²³ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, pp. 7 b—8 a, ch. 4, vs. 20; II, p. 8 b, ch. 8, vs. 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 8 a, ch. 5, vs. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11 a—b, ch. 6, vs. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9 b, ch. 5, vs. 18 (commentary): "and he said [i. e., the author of the text] that the perfect one [= man] would not be able to know him [= god], blessed be he, but through wisdom, the latter being a collective noun for the various sciences such as. . . astronomy. . . mechanics. . . optics. . . etc. Cf. *Naphtali Herz Wessely's Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, Words of Peace and Truth, Berlin 1782, I. 1 b—4 a on the dependence of *Torat Hashem* [The Law of God] on *Torat Ha'adam* [The Law of Man] and my study *Naphtali Herz Wessely's Attitude toward the Jewish Religion as a Mirror of a Generation in Transition* (During the Early Period of Hebrew Haskalah in Germany), Beer Sheva, Israel 1971, 18—19 [mimeographed].

— functions under the supreme rule of wisdom. It is by *Hochmah*, wisdom — namely, human reason — that faith is checked for its authenticity and truth.²⁷ Man, then, is the ultimate factor in determining the religious truths — and not any ecclesiastical authority or scriptural tradition. Thus Satanow arrives at the end of his Enlightenment circle, which undoubtedly is also a beginning of and a springboard for more extreme views regarding his religion.

It appears that Deism exerted a great influence on Satanow's views of religion in general and of Judaism and Christianity in particular. This should not surprise anyone, for Deism indeed has been a major factor in the formation of the ideals of Hebrew Haskalah.²⁸ As I have pointed out elsewhere, Moses Mendelssohn, too, had been under the direct influence of the deistic movement.²⁹ This, however, does not necessarily make any of them a deist.

Very much like the deists, Satanow acknowledges the necessity of religion to the individual and by implication also to society.³⁰ It is clear, however, that he does not have in mind just any religion but the religion of reason, the religion of Enlightenment. By elimination it is pointed out that Christianity is not such a religion, for Christianity is beyond comprehension.³¹ Its followers proclaim that their religion is above and beyond reason, that is to say superior to reason and not governed by it; any search or investigation [“*Hakirah*”] into it is dangerous, they say.³² To a *maskil* like Satanow, whose banner is “reason,” such a religion is unacceptable: “very much like merchandise which had not been checked whether it is good or

²⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 61 a, ch. 56, vs. 1, (commentary): “. . . and wisdom . . . will investigate [search, study] faith whether it had been founded truthfully or falsely.” Similarly, it appears that wisdom outweighs *Yir'ah*; thus although *Yir'ah* precedes *Hochmah* (for one is supposed to fear god, namely, to observe the Torah and the *mitzvot* first), the latter has an advantage over the former in importance. For *Hochmah* — Satanow writes — is in the essence of *Yir'ah* and is its goal and objective (*ibid.*, I, p. 1 b, ch. 1, vs. 10). In the same vein, *Yir'ah* may increase one's days, however, *Hochmah* should increase one's eternal life (*ibid.*, II, p. 12 a, ch. 12, vs. 6). The twin sisters are in no way identical twins now in Satanow's mind; *Hochmah*, by far, had outweighed *Yir'ah*, thus revealing the author's philosophy of life in its transformation.

²⁸ See my study *The Impact of Deism on the Hebrew Literature of the Enlightenment in Germany*, Beer Sheva Israel 1971 (mimeographed), which was published also in the *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, VI (1, Fall 1972), 35—59.

²⁹ See my book *Moshe Mendelssohn: Bechavlei Masoret* (Moses Mendelssohn: Bonds of Tradition), Tel Aviv 1972, 16—19, 78—88 [Hebrew].

³⁰ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 25 a, ch. 14, vs. 9 (commentary): “The best of donkeys needs a bridle and curb, and likewise the most worth of men needs a religion.”

³¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 51 b, ch. 38, vs. 20.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 50 b, ch. 38, vs. 2; p. 84 a, ch. 47, vs. 2.

bad.”³³ He further criticizes the illogical promises of rewards by Christianity to its followers. The religion of reason [“Hadat Haḥachamah,” literally, the wise religion] — Satanow writes — would grant only appropriate spiritual reward in accordance with the nature of reality.³⁴

By contrast, the Jewish religion is portrayed over and over again by Satanow as a religion of reason; actually, as the religion of reason which Enlightenment and Deism aspired to bring about. “The true Torah of god,” he writes, “would under no circumstance contradict common sense” [“Hasechel Hayashar”].³⁵ As a matter of fact, the Torah itself commands its followers to probe logically into the truth of its ideas, unlike other religions.³⁶ These religions could not withstand an examination by reason, therefore they had been forced to say that they — the religions — were superior to reason. Satanow emphasizes that in essence the Torah is to be understood in a simple, non-mysterious way;³⁷ one can almost hear him say “Judaism Not Mysterious,” as indeed the deist Toland was trying to portray his deistic Christianity.³⁸ In a blunt assault against Christianity, Satanow attributes any unenlightened thought among the Jews and in Judaism to their alleged Christian origins; *Galut*, exile, brought about this negative influence of Christianity upon Judaism.³⁹

This attitude toward Christianity and Judaism was previously manifested by Mendelssohn. I think the same ideas and ideals of European Enlighten-

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 84 a, ch. 47, vs. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 10 b, ch. 10, vs. 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, p. 59 a, ch. 32, vs. 26; p. 55 b, ch. 31, vs. 13; p. 84 a, ch. 47, vs. 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84a, ch. 47, vs. 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23 a, ch. 13, vs. 14.

³⁸ *John Toland: Christianity Not Mysterious*, London 1702, in the title page: “A Treatise Shewing, That there is nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above it: And that no Christian Doctrine can be properly call'd A Mystery.”

³⁹ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, pp. 84 a—b, ch. 47, vs. 2. This argumentation is common with the deists, although in reverse roles, namely, that Judaism (and paganism) have been quite instrumental in the corruption of the pure form of Christianity, since the latter is founded on Judaism, and Judaism and its scriptures have been corrupted by the priests. (cf. my study *The Impact of Deism*). Similar references as to the negative influence of *Galut* on the Jewish people, its language and literature are abundant in the writings of the *maskilim*. (See my paper *The Attitude of the First Maskilim toward the Hebrew Language*, Austin Texas 1970; p. 4 [mimeographed]; scheduled for publication in a forthcoming issue of the *Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies*, London 1973. Isaac Euchel alludes to the negative impact of the Christian customs on Judaism employing the ironic and satiric twist: The Christians observe certain Jewish customs; however, these customs are not to be found in the early Jewish halachic sources such as the Talmud... (“The Letters of Meshulam ben Uriyah Ha'esthamo'i,” *Hame'asef*, VI [1790], p. 45 [Hebrew]). For similar use by Saul Berlin see my article “The Religious Reforms,” cited in footnote 3 above, notes 36 and 37.

ment that had been blowing the wind into Mendelssohn's sails, were also the driving powers behind Satanow's exposition.⁴⁰ As in the case of the latter, it is Satanow's intellectual way of advocating the adoption by the Jews of western civilization as presented by the Enlightenment, while at the same time rejecting Christianity (which is part of that civilization), and retaining the Jews' adherence to Judaism.

The same critical view of the history of religion found in the deistic literature is prevalent in Santanow's *Mishlei Asaf*. Religion is no longer a sacred "Holy of Holies," as it were, but rather a phenomenon which should be evaluated as a human phenomenon, in human terms. Satanow strikes a familiar note when he speaks about religious hatred ["Sin'at Hadat," the hatred of religion]; religion is depicted as being the major cause for the animosity that exists among the various nations which profess different faith. "No hatred is comparable to religious hatred," he writes.⁴¹ He describes quite a bloody picture of massacres done in the name of god.⁴² Like the deists, Satanow blames the priests for arousing this religious hatred.⁴³ This picture is magnified when Satanow puts it in a Jewish context, namely, the blood accusations and the massacres of Jews. Again, the Christian and pagan priests are blamed for these inequities.⁴⁴

As in the case of the deistic attack on the positive religions, Satanow's almost macabre depiction of religion is purposely so portrayed in order to introduce some values which are part and parcel of his Enlightenment ideology. The basis of it all is the recognition of the relativity of all religions and the understanding that there is no way to prove that any given religion is true and all the others are necessarily false.⁴⁵ To put it in Satanow's own words: "Most of the religious ideas are based on suppositions which cannot be proven. . . therefore there is no necessary decision as

⁴⁰ See my book *Moshe Mendelssohn: Bechavlei Masoret*, pp. 11, 16—20, 24, 78—87.

⁴¹ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, pp. 55 a—b, ch. 31, vss. 5—10.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 20 a, ch. 18, vs. 16 (commentary): "The priests of every nation would arouse hatred among nations thinking that god wants them alone, and as to those who profess other beliefs, it is obligatory to kill and annihilate [them]." *Ibid.*, vs. 17 (commentary): "The said priests would give the nation a poisonous drink, i. e., false ideas so that they would hold the hatred of [the other] religion."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 77 a, ch. 42, vs. 16 (commentary): "... alluding to blood accusation[s] that the Christians, under the advice of their priests, libeled falsely against the Jews, and killed many of them cruelly in every generation."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 44 a, ch. 39, vs. 9. In the deistic literature this argument is prevalent; see for instance John Toland, "The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church," *A Collection of Several Pieces* (London 1726), II, pp. 171, 172, 174; J. J. Rousseau, *The Creed of a Priest of Savoy* (New York 1957), pp. 54—55.

to one religion's authenticity over another.”⁴⁶ An echo of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* can be discerned.

Thus Satanow advocates religious tolerance and religious humanism as befitting the age of Enlightenment, alluding that they comprise the variants which prove the authenticity of the proverbial true ring.⁴⁷ Rejection of miracles is, generally speaking, a major preoccupation of the deistic writers, and is to be regarded as one of the characteristic ideas of the period.⁴⁸ Satanow warns against the falsification of miracles, however, he excludes those miracles done by the prophets of god and “his great followers.”⁴⁹ Typical to the Jewish enlighteners, Satanow embraces the deistic rejection of Christian and pagan miracles as false while approving of the miracles which were related in the bible and the talmud.⁵⁰ The same phenomenon is found in the writings of Mendelssohn.⁵¹ However, in order to fit his

⁴⁶ *Mishlei Asaf*, II, p. 44 a, ch. 39, vs. 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47 a, ch. 42 (text): “(6) Love the members of your faith, [but] do not hate those whose faith is different; (7) For one god had created them, and to one god, in various names, they call; (8) They would worship him in various ways, as their fathers have taught them; (9) With different gifts they would welcome one king.” It is interesting to note that Satanow does not have any commentary here, for the text itself bespeaks the author's ideas overtly. *Ibid.*, I, p. 55b, ch. 31, vs. 12 (commentary): “He [god] has established man to be social by nature, i. e., to be helping one another. . . and the true religion should help nature to do good to human beings where she is not able to.”

⁴⁸ *Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan*, Oxford 1964, 285—286; *Charles Blount: The Oracles of Reason*, London 1693, 9—10; *John Toland: The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church*, p. 174; *Matthew Tindal: Christianity as Old as the Creation*, London 1730, I, 192, 200, 370; *Anthony Collins: A Discourse of the Grounds and Reason of the Christian Religion*, London 1737, 33; *Ibid.*, first edition (London 1724), pp. 82—83; *Thomas Chubb: The Previous Question with Regard to Religion*, London 1725, 22; *Chubb: A Discourse on Miracles*, London 1741.

⁴⁹ *Mishlei Asaf*, II, p. 51 b, ch. 47, vs. 1 (commentary): Satanow uses the words “ḥasidav hagdolim,” *ḥasid* being a virtuous, or pious, person.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49 b, ch. 50, vs. 22 (commentary): Should the elders believe that two times two is five, or that three together would make one (one abstract), then there should be no place for their view, and no tradition can deny reason which, to Satanow, is the sole criterion for examination and testing. However, those miracles and prodigies cited in the scriptures and in the Talmud are “ta’alumat hochmah” and not contradictions to reason, and thus it is obligatory to believe in them. Note that subtle way in which the author refers to the Christian doctrine of Trinity in the apparent, down-to-earth — and thus disguised — context of a simple, unquestionable mathematical problem.

⁵¹ *Moshe Mendelssohn: Bechavlei Masoret*, pp. 85—86; Mendelssohn rejects the Christian reliance on miracles and prodigies, yet accepts some form of reliance on prodigies in Judaism through some mental gymnastics, saying that it is a positive law to follow a prophet who proves his authenticity by performing prodigies —

contention to his philosophy of Enlightenment, Satanow employs a device which is contradictory to and inconsistent with his *a priori* belief in reason. He utilizes a term, "ta'alumot hochmah," (secrets of wisdom, based on Job, 11:6) to denote the existence of unnatural phenomena which are beyond the comprehension of human reason yet are not contrary to reason.⁵² Satanow seems to accept John Locke's distinction between that which is contrary to reason and that which is above reason.⁵³ It is a typical concession which a Jewish *maskil* has to make in order to harmonize Judaism with the ideas and theology of the Enlightenment.

One of the characteristics of the thought of the age was the attitude of its writers toward tradition.⁵⁴ In *Mishlei Asaf* Satanow expresses the deistic disrespect for tradition and its axiomatic authority. In Jewish heritage one notes the distinction between *Rishonim* and 'Aḥaronim [the venerable early sages, and the more recent halachic scholars, respectively]. Repeatedly and laboriously, Satanow is very hard at work trying to remove the shackles off this traditional concept. "Not all Rishonim would possess wisdom," he writes, "and not all 'Aḥaronim [—] foolishness."⁵⁵ The past then, should not be venerated uncritically merely because of its antiquity, neither should any religious custom be held as obligatory just because it has been transmitted to us by previous generations.⁵⁶ The criterion of Deism is thus proposed by Satanow: "Beḥan amitam"⁵⁷ (examine their truth or authenticity).

However, when it suits his purpose, Satanow has no hesitations in making an about face regarding his views of *Rishonim* and 'Aḥaronim. In order to support the desire of the majority of the *maskilim* to lessen the burden of secondary customs and decrees instituted in recent generations by the 'Aḥaronim, he pays homage to the *Rishonim*. They were the ones who could deduce new religious laws because of their closeness to the origin of Judaism. This is definitely not the case with the late religious autho-

though one is not obliged to believe in the prodigies; by the same token, following this prophet would not necessarily mean that the prodigies are true (*Moses Mendelssohn: Yerushalayim, Ketavim Ketanim*, Jerusalem & Small Writings, Tel Aviv 1947, 200).

⁵² See note 50.

⁵³ *John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, New York 1959, II, A. C. Fraser's edition, pp. 423—426.

⁵⁴ See *The Impact of Deism*. Also see my article "Intimations of Religious Reform in the Hebrew Haskalah Literature," *Jewish Social Studies*, XXXII (1, January 1970), pp. 5—6.

⁵⁵ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 60 b, ch. 33, vs. 11. The same idea is to be found in vol. II, p. 27 a, ch. 25, vs. 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 15 b, ch. 15, vs. 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 60 a, ch. 33, vs. 7.

rities.⁵⁸ Very cleverly Satanow utilizes one of the most venerated expressions concerning tradition and the past that could be found in the sources for the furtherance of his ideas. “Im harishonim kivnei ’adam ’anahnu kaḥamorim” (If the first ones [forefathers] are like human beings we are likened to donkeys). Indeed we are like donkeys, says this *maskil* sarcastically, for we carry the abundance of laws which they load upon us as though these laws are divine precepts.⁵⁹ Not knowing for sure who the ambivalent “they” are, the reader may conclude that that pronoun indeed refers to the *Rishonim*; thus Satanow alludes to the abolishing of well-established, venerated religious laws and ordinances.

Of the other ideas and ideals of Enlightenment found in *Mishlei Asaf* it is worth mentioning the emphasis on morality as the essence of religion and the futility and impropriety of religious coercion.⁶⁰

Regarding the third category, namely, that of comments geared directly against certain phenomena in contemporary Judaism, it should be noted that this work by Satanow, as could be expected of a deductive writing, elucidates the major issues of the Haskalah. Thus we find many utterances critical of the *piyutim* and *sliḥot*, (Liturgical pieces for special occasions), of *pilpul* (casuistry), and of *ta’aniyot* and *sigufim* (fasting and self-affliction, respectively).⁶¹ He discusses *Ta’amei Hamitzvot*, the reasons for the precepts,⁶² and expresses his strong belief that his coreligionists have been in complete darkness as far as the distinction between the essential in Judaism and the trivial and unimportant. The strict and disproportionate observance of the trivialities of Judaism has led to the neglect of the essentials of Judaism. The concept of *syag* (halachic fence to guard the essentials) — a fundamental concept in traditional Judaism — is challenged.⁶³ He holds the views, as did other *maskilim*, that the abundance of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60 b, ch. 33, vs. 8.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: see also “Intimations of Religious Reform,” p. 6, note 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 47 a—b, ch. 32, vs. 5: *Yir’ab* is equated with morality; see also p. 1 b, ch. 1, vs. 9, and vol. II, p. 13 b, ch. 13, vs. 3. Against religious coercion: *ibid.*, II, pp. 15 a—b, ch. 15, vs. 10 — “faith cannot be gotten by coercion but by persuasion (reproach) of reason.” There are also references and allusions to utilitarianism (*ibid.*, p. 7 b, ch. 4, vs. 18).

⁶¹ Satanow, like his fellow *maskilim*, quotes mistaken citations from the *piyutim* and *sliḥot* which are made to look ridiculous (*ibid.*, I, p. 94 b, ch. 53, vs. 12; the author wittily relates the story of the man who prayed that god should open his womb; *ibid.*, pp. 24 b—25a, ch. 14, vs. 3; *ibid.*, p. 6 b, ch. 4, vs. 4: Some *piyutim* bring about an erroneous understanding of the deity; *ibid.*, II, p. 57 b, ch. 53, vs. 4: Some *piyutim* are blasphemous). On the *pilpul*: *ibid.*, I, p. 10 b, ch. 6, vs. 2; *ta’aniyot* and *sigufim*: *ibid.*, p. 25 b, ch. 14, vs. 12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, p. 30 a, ch. 17, vs. 4; p. 54 a, ch. 30, vs. 19; II, pp. 46 b—47 a, ch. 42, vs. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 61 a—b, ch. 34, vss. 1—3.

syagim does not serve as a guarding fence anymore, but rather as a heavy burden and yoke which necessitate unloading. In the process, one unloads both the trivial and unimportant customs as well as the essentials and nucleus of Judaism.⁶⁴ "Kalah Kaḥamurah" (minor injunction is as obligatory as a major one) is no longer held as an appropriate concept in the Judaism of the Enlightenment. While Satanow is advocating the removal of the unessentials of Judaism, he has no hesitation in suggesting the adoption of European customs and practices which are not of a divine origin, as had been proposed by other *maskilim*.⁶⁵

Our discussion so far has concentrated on conscious attempts on the part of the author to propagate in a deductive manner the *weltanschauung* of Enlightenment in its Hebrew Haskalah attire. In addition, I was able to detect some subconscious expressions manifesting the underlying changes between traditional Judaism and the kind of Judaism envisioned by the Hebrew enlighteners.

In spite of his apparent efforts to harmonize between *Hochmah* and *Yir'ah*, as discussed above, the inescapable conclusion is that these efforts by Satanow are made because of his subconscious feeling that the two, namely, wisdom or secular knowledge and the fear of god, are incompatible. Satanow struggles to propose these two entities as existing side by side and complementing one another; yet his terminology suggests a complete dichotomy between the two. He couples *Tzedakah* with *'Emunah* on the one hand, and *Hochmah* and *'Emet* on the other hand. Thus subtly and perhaps unknowingly he arrives at a two-fold dichotomy, the commentary revealing its clue: a. Righteousness and faith [commentary: *Yir'ah*] are on a different plain from wisdom and truth; wisdom, then, is regarded as a manifestation of truth. b. The other side of the coin is the dichotomy

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vs. 3; pp. 25 a—b, ch. 14, vs. 10; vol. II, p. 21 b, ch. 19, vs. 20 (commentary): Some of the *syagim* were enacted, according to Satanow, just because of the light-minded, so that they would not be as close to the essence of religion; thus good ones, the observant people, have to suffer because of the wicked; See also *ibid.*, vss. 22—23.

⁶⁵ Satanow employs a metaphor of the webs and the flies: the weak ones will stumble in them and will be captured while the strong ones will tear them and escape. In the commentary, the webs are said to be the social ordinances and the state laws ("Haḥukim hanimusiyyim"), indeed not the divine laws, which are being bypassed by the strong ones. (*ibid.*, II, p. 50 b, ch. 46, vss. 1—2). Against the background of his views of secondary laws and his views of the *syagim* (see note 64), I am inclined to think that Satanow is constantly, yet subtly, aiming at destroying the foundation of the religious ordinances and their all-encompassing, obligatory nature. In addition, he advocates adherence to the social and state customs as he cites the popular quote: You come to a city, go according to its custom (*ibid.*, p. 57 a, ch. 52, vs. 22). Cf. Euchel's use of this idea as the central theme of his "Letters of Meshulam," *Hame'asef*, VI (1790), pp. 40, 43, 45—50.

between faith and truth.⁶⁶ The inherent emphasis that Satanow lays upon wisdom and truth in *Mishlei Asaf*, as a result, excludes faith as an entity which is not on par with the Enlightenment. Judaism of the old school and Enlightenment do not go together. In a similar vein, Satanow concludes that the observance of *mitzvot* and the existence of wisdom are contradictory.⁶⁷ He endeavors to compromise between the two, saying that they, too, are on two different plains, not knowing that this answer in effect does not harmonize the two but rather forms a dichotomy between them. It appears that his many attempts at *Ta'amei Hamitzvot* [Reasons for the Precepts] are to be regarded as efforts on his part to apply traditional medieval thinking in the context of secularist Enlightenment. Surely, he would like very much that Enlightenment should accept what appears to be a Judaism founded upon reason — the traditional reasoning of *Ta'amei Hamitzvot* — yet after these exercises in futility his thinking implies the feeling that he had failed.

Similarly, a lengthy discussion of the trust in god [“*Bitahon bashem*”] — typifying the unshakable, total faith in the god of Israel and a complete trust in the divine providence — leads to the feeling that a totality of

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I, p. 2 a, ch. 1, vs. 13 (text): “*Hadrichem bederech tzedakah ve'emunah, horem netivot ha'hochmah veba'emet*” [Instruct them in the way of righteousness and faith, teach them the paths of wisdom and truth]. In the commentary the author refers to the two kinds of perfection discussed in this chapter, namely, *Yir'ah*—represented in the text by *Tzedakah*, and *'Emunah*, which is the Torah and the *mitzvot*—and *Hochmah*, represented here by *Hochmah* and *'Emet*. The biblical parallelism, I think, serves only as a textual facade, so that the author may portray *Hochmah* and *Yir'ah* as complementing each other, or as a gate within a gate, one leading to the other; however, he does not depict the two as being identical. Therefore it is safe to conclude that the selection of the terminology in the text is mainly dictated not by the literary needs of the text, i.e., biblical parallelism, but indeed by the exegetical objectives of the commentary. It is then the lineal connotation of the terms employed rather than the parallel which opens new avenues to the understanding of Satanow and his *Mishlei Asaf*. Thus the textual parallelism, as viewed through the commentary, serves as an ironical contrast rather than as a comparison between equals.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 18 a, ch. 17, vs. 7 (commentary): “*Shmirat hamitzvah umetzi'ut ha'hochmah hem shnei hafachim*” [The observance of the *mitzvah* and the existence of *Hochmah* are two opposites]. It follows that for the sake of the observance of the *mitzvot* one is better off not pursuing *Hochmah* at all. What Satanow does not say, yet is a logical and a textual conclusion, is that he who adheres fully to the concept of *Hochmah* may find himself negligent in the observance of the *mitzvot* as a result of the very nature of *Hochmah*. It appears now that *Yir'ah* (namely, the observance of the Torah and the *mitzvot* — see *ibid.*, I, p. 2 a, ch. 1, vs. 13; cf. note 66) and *Hochmah* do not complement each other as Satanow was trying consciously to have us believe, but rather contradict each other.

trust in god as known in traditional Judaism is non-existent in modern times.⁶⁸

Yir'at Hashem and *'Ahavat Hashem* (fear of god and love of god, respectively) which represent two major concepts of traditional Judaism are subject to a latter-day interpretation by this *maskil*. Satanow's discussion of the fear of god elucidates upon the theme of the limitations that confront an individual who desires to fear god as a result of human limitation in understanding god. Since these limitations are god-given, as it were, an individual — according to the Hebrew *maskil* — is not to blame for either his limitations or, as a result, for the lack of his fear of god.⁶⁹ Underlying Satanow's discussion, I think, is the notion that fear of god, in its classical meaning of total belief in him, is not obligatory in the age of Enlightenment.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 4 b, ch. 3, vs. 1 (text): "Mivtaḥ va'alilah nifgashu, beḥirah ugzerah nashaku," [Trust and action met, choice and decree kissed]. In the commentary, Satanow explains that one cannot trust his master fully that he should provide him food and at the same time look for the food by himself; for by so doing he shows that he does not trust his master fully. Similarly, free choice and predestination contradict each other. From the second part of the commentary we may deduce that the discussion is in the realm of the divine, thus the master is god, and the trust is the trust in god. Complete trust in god seems to be contradictory to human nature. Satanow now suggests a compromise in the second verse: God actually desires this contradiction and "makes peace between them." For one is supposed to have a complete trust in god like a righteous man, and at the same time continue his material activities as though he has no trust in god (verse 3). In the final analysis, Satanow's premise, namely, that trust in god and human activities somehow contradict each other, prevails. Even if the author does not wish to advise his readers not to trust god, he does indeed create some skepticism as to the possibility of a complete trust in god.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7 a, ch. 4, vss. 13—15; Satanow's treatment of these verses is subtle: he first advises the enlightened ones ["maskilei ha'am"] not to speak regarding the divine out of their own independent thinking, for the only way to know god (and thus to speak of him) is through his creation; they may though repeat what they have received from their ancestors, namely, tradition (following this the author refers his readers to ch. 19 vs. 1 where the opposite is argued; thus he causes confusion and skepticism). His conclusion: „God would not accuse you if you should not learn to fear him in things which are spoken by mouth alone, which have no sense" (commentary, vs. 15). Satanow's use of the double negative is intriguing; for what he is actually supposed to say, in light of the previous verses, is that god indeed will accuse the one who would learn to fear him through senseless things. It appears that the author is quite eager to leave with his reader the main clause: "God would not accuse you if you should not learn to fear him..." The rest is lost in the process of relating the double negative sentence to the ideas he cited before. It is possible to find support to our interpretation from the text of verse 15, which says in effect that man is not to blame if he is not able to fear god as a result of the limitations which god himself has put on that individual.

His treatment of 'Ahavat Hashem, too, represents in my opinion a complete break from traditional Judaism. Satanow maintains that pure love, love for love's sake, sort of 'Ahavah lishmah, is non-existent. All love is love with an ulterior motive, according to Satanow. Even love of god is not for its own sake. One loves god because one loves oneself and would like to be rewarded for this love materially and spiritually in this world and in the world to come, respectively.⁷⁰ One can discern, by contrast, an echo of the traditional concept of love in Judaism, as expressed in the *Ethics of the Fathers*: 'Ahavah she'einah teluyah bedavar.⁷¹ Thus we are faced with a new concept of the love of god which I think is nourished from Enlightenment sources. Moreover, it is evident that the center of gravity is no longer god, but rather man and the utilitarian aspects of his existence.

The superiority of human reason and the subordination of religion to it have been previously discussed. I also elaborated on the apparent contradiction between this attitude toward reason and Satanow's allowance for "secrets of wisdom," believed not to contradict reason but rather to be above it. Undoubtedly this contradiction stems from his desire to reject Christianity and Christian miracles, but at the same time to explain his acceptance of Judaism and its miracles. However, it is apparent elsewhere that reason reigns supreme even in matters which traditional Judaism cautioned against probing into. Traditionally it has been held that "bamufla mimcha 'al tidrosh."⁷² One is advised not to probe into the unknown in the realm of the divine. This traditional attitude harbors within it: a. an acknowledgment of the limitation of human reason, and b. an all-encompassing faith in god. This is unacceptable to Satanow. His skepticism is clear; no longer is the divine unknown regarded as taboo.⁷³ His Judaism of the Enlightenment is in many significant ways a far cry from traditional Judaism.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6 a, ch. 3, vs. 25 (commentary): "There is no love in the world which is caused by the love of the object alone, for self-love is the cause so that the one who loves should benefit something out of his love. . . And also all those who worship god lovingly, they will love him blessed be he for the love of their own good self in this [world] and in the coming one, materially or spiritually."

⁷¹ *Ethics of the Fathers*, 5:16: "Kol 'ahavah shehi teluyah bedavar, batel davar, betelah 'ahavah. veshe'einah teluyah bedavar, 'einah betelah le 'olam" ["If love depends on some selfish end, when the end fails, love fails; but if it does not depend on a selfish end, it will never fail" — translation according to Judah Goldin's *The Living Talmud* (New York 1957), p. 215].

⁷² *Hagigah*, p. 13 a, citing Ben Sira.

⁷³ *Mishlei Asaf*, I, p. 8 b, ch. 5, vs. 7 (text) "Look and examine his (god's) deed[s] in heaven above and on the earth below." The author advises his readers to further their knowledge and understanding in the creation, and to leave nothing which is not checked and examined by human reason, be it earthly or heavenly.

Another idea in his writing which appears rather traditionally oriented on the surface is actually an expression of Satanow's subconscious attitude toward his religion. He warns repeatedly against succumbing to doubts and skepticism resulting from reason and probe. He comes out with beautiful poetic expressions against forsaking or even betraying Judaism under the spells of "Mevuchot" — doubts.⁷⁴ However, one cannot avoid reaching the conclusion that in his writing "Mevuchot" is becoming a value, an asset which the enlightener should aspire to attain. Doubts, skepticism and questioning are a springboard for knowledge and wisdom.⁷⁵ It is apparent that the old, assuring value of *Bitahon Bashem*, unquestioning trust, is not only questioned, but moreover is substituted with its contrasting concept, namely, skepticism, as a desirous value.

In conclusion: In spite of his use of sacred biblical style and traditional concepts, many of the ideas expressed in the books under study can be traced to the Enlightenment and to Deism. Although it looks on the surface that Satanow is endeavoring to harmonize between religion and Enlightenment, and between Judaism and secularism, there is ample proof that the latter outweigh the former. Behind all of this we have found significant indications of meaningful break of Satanow's Judaism of the Enlightenment from the Judaism of old.

The choice of the words "bashamayim mima'al ["in heaven above"] — as contrasted with "al ha'aretz mitaḥat" ["and on the earth below"] — seems to be intentional and meaningful; human reason is held here as the supreme judge, and no one — not even god — is to be excluded from its scrutiny.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25 b, ch. 14, vs. 17 (text): "Should you become confused in the way of reason, do not betray the people of faith." Commentary: "Should skepticism and confusion in your faith rise as a result of search [examination, inquiry, or investigation], do not betray your faith because of that." And in the commentary of the following verse: "Do not run to sin because of the confusion which came up in your inquiry..."

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, vs. 17 (commentary): "... for this is the way of inquiry, that one would not realize its truth until after he had become confused and skeptical." *Ibid.*, p. 10 b, ch. 5, vs. 23: "Mevuchot" are depicted as "a flowing fountain" and the "source of wisdom" — as a necessary stage in the process of learning. See also *ibid.*, II, pp. 39 b—40 a, ch. 35. Although *Mevuchab* may mean also amazement, astonishment, Satanow uses the word here together with *Safek* [doubt], therefore, there could be no doubt as to the exact meaning of *Mevuchot*.