

# NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY: MODERATION IN TRANSITION

By

Moshe Pelli, Cornell University

Of all the important Hebrew writers of the German Haskalah in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Naphtali Herz Wessely ( נַפְתָּלִי הֶרֶץ וֶסֶלִי ) [1725-1805] is one of the most conservative in his attitude toward the Jewish religion. Nevertheless, he was selected by the historian of Hebrew literature, Joseph Klausner, to designate the beginning of modern Hebrew literature.<sup>1</sup> It is due mainly to four pamphlets that he had published between 1782 and 1785 that Wessely was so designated. דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹמִים וְאֵמֶת [Words of Peace and Truth]—the title of the first pamphlet, by which the other three pamphlets are also generally known—advocates major changes in Jewish education (or to be more exact: in religious education). These changes, to be sure, reflect the ideology of the contemporary Hebrew Haskalah, and are the forerunners of similar demands by the Hebrew *maskilim* for a period of one hundred years to come. As such, these changes do indeed represent the *Zeitgeist*. However, it is my contention that the choice of Wessely to signal the starting point of modern Hebrew literature merely because of the pamphlet דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹמִים וְאֵמֶת is rather simplistic; moreover it leaves too many questions unanswered and too many problems unresolved. This choice does not take into account the nature of Wessely's overall work, which is extremely conservative, and that work as such does not represent the general spirit of the Hebrew Haskalah.<sup>2</sup> Not only were the works he had published prior to דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹמִים וְאֵמֶת conservative, but furthermore, the works he has published concurrent with and subsequent to the said opus were typically (and problematically for some scholars) of a conservative nature.

In spite of Wessely's conservative attitude toward the Jewish religion in all this works with the exception of דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹמִים וְאֵמֶת, or, perhaps, because of the conservatism displayed in his writings, his works are of utmost significance to the student of the period. The reason for his significance is not only the impact that his works have had on the subsequent generations of *maskilim*, but more importantly it is due to his role as the *maskil par excellence* in the eyes of the contemporary *maskilim*.<sup>3</sup> One should note that Wessely's alleged conservatism does not stem from the fact that he had not been exposed to the writings and the ideology of European Enlightenment; on the contrary, it is abundantly clear that Wessely had been acquainted with the ideas of European Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> Unlike *maskilim* such as Isaac Satanow, Isaac Euchel, and Aaron Wolfsohn, Wessely seems to have rejected the fundamentals of Enlightenment, and to profess the values of traditional Judaism with almost no modifications — except in דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹמִים וְאֵמֶת.

His writings, then, are crucial to the understanding of the period, for they reveal one aspect of Haskalah thought which is seldom discussed. Students of the Haskalah are tempted to portray the innovations of that literature

rather than the aspect revealed in Wessely's work.<sup>5</sup> That often ignored aspect of Haskalah is the more traditionally oriented thought, which is found in the writings of the moderate among the Hebrew writers of the Haskalah.<sup>6</sup> If the above statements should be proven correct, at least with regard to the spokesman of the moderate line, namely Wessely (and I believe these statements to be correct), we may conclude the following: a) That the great forces of tradition had an enormous impact on the first Hebrew *maskilim* in Germany; b) As a result, their writings reflect the transitory and ephemeral nature of the philosophy of early Haskalah in Germany; Haskalah being both a movement and a literature in search of itself.

The first period of Wessely's literary work, until he came to Berlin in 1774, is characterized by an over-zealous and a non-compromising adherence to traditional Judaism. In his book לבנון, Wessely has a lengthy discussion of the various forms and synonyms of the word חכמה [wisdom] in the Bible. However, it should not mislead us to associate this book with the general trends of the Age of Reason.<sup>7</sup> For one, a great part of the book is devoted to an exposition on תרי"ג מצוות [the 613 precepts] which does not deviate one iota from the old school thought in Judaism. More significant is Wessely's interpretation of the concept חכמה. To him, חכמה, as found in the Bible, denotes and connotes the observance of the laws of Torah. חכמים, wise people, are those who observe these laws.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, סכלות, which is generally translated as foolishness, is said to be the violation of the מצוות.<sup>9</sup> There is no doubt in my mind that underlying the semantic and linguistic discussion there exists a clear *Weltanschauung* which contradicts that of the Enlightenment. חכמה is not to be considered as human wisdom,<sup>10</sup> or some form of a universal reason, by which the phenomena of life are evaluated — as suggested by the Enlightenment — but rather the old, familiar divine wisdom manifested in Judaism, according to Wessely, in the קצוות.

That we are faced here with a pre-Haskalah thought is especially apparent from Wessely's attitude toward the Jewish tradition and his attitude to secular knowledge. Regarding the former, Wessely accepts uncritically both תורה שבעל פה, the oral law, as well as תורה שבכתב, the written law, as God-given.<sup>11</sup> The authority of tradition is not even questioned;<sup>12</sup> thus Wessely accepts the idea that God revealed סגרי העבור [the secrets of figuring the leap years] to Moses, "and that these secrets were transmitted by word of mouth [ "איש ספר איש" ] to this day."<sup>13</sup> Concurrently, we find a completely negative attitude toward secular knowledge, the sciences, and toward Greek philosophy which is based on human reason.<sup>14</sup> Human reason, states the enlightener *par excellence* of Hebrew letters at that time, is not to be relied upon because of its limitations.<sup>15</sup> After having slighted the value of reason and secular knowledge, both the watermarks of Enlightenment and Haskalah, Wessely comes out against another tenet of the Enlightenment, namely that of quest, search and investigation. This objection is related at this juncture to his views of human reason and of tradition. Accordingly, the only possible quest is after things which are simple and uncomplicated from a religious point of view.<sup>16</sup> Undoubtedly Wessely abides fully by the adage "17 בסופלא סמד אל תדרוש" [you should not probe into that which is unknown to you]. Although we find Enlightenment and Haskalah writers who put some limit on the capacity of human reason, Wessely's attitude, I think,

goes back to the extremes of the old school of thought in Judaism.

Another criterion for the evaluation of the standpoint of a given writer with regard to the ideas of Enlightenment is applied in this study. It is in one's interpretation of the controversial concepts *יראה* and *חכמה* [fear of god and wisdom, respectively], and their relationship to one another that we find some indication as to one's views regarding the contemporary Jewish religion.<sup>18</sup> Since Wessely has already defined *חכמה* as divine wisdom and/or the divine law, there is not even a dichotomy here between *חכמה* and *יראה*, as found with other Haskalah writers. Both *חכמה* and *יראה* are in the realm of the divine, and as such they are regarded by this *maskil* as complementing one another. However, even if one should consider *חכמה* in a more modern sense, Wessely clearly expresses his stand, subordinating *חכמה* to *יראה* and proclaiming the latter to be "עיקר הכל" [the essence of everything].<sup>19</sup>

This attitude toward Enlightenment is expressed in some obscure passages of his book *לבנון*; in them I have found Wessely's previously unrecognized reaction to the religious ideas of the Enlightenment. Against the background of Wessely's complete rejection of the fundamentals of the Enlightenment, as discussed above, one should not be surprised to face a blunt attack on the deists and, of course, on the atheists. Although his framework or context is the Bible, and despite the fact that he refers to them by the indefinite term "מסחיתים" [destroyers, destructionists, corrupters], there is ample evidence that Wessely indeed means the deists and the atheists.<sup>20</sup> In his rejection of their Bible-criticism as well as their critical scrutiny of Judaism, Wessely again is a traditionalist of the old school of thought in Judaism. It is characteristic of the traditionalists — both Christian and Jewish — to regard the critics of religion, namely the deists, as more of a menace to established religion than the atheists who were completely anti-religious.<sup>21</sup> Wessely adopts this approach. His purpose, however, extends beyond the anti-religious phenomena in the Enlightenment; for what he has in mind is actually to protect Judaism from the anti-religious overtones of the Enlightenment. Thus, whereas Mendelssohn, Satanow and other Hebrew and Jewish enlighteners have accepted many ideals of the Enlightenment and even adopted some of the deistic ideas which suited them (while rejecting others), Wessely, at this stage of his development, completely rejected the ideology of Enlightenment with its critical view of religion.

It is for this reason that some of the strictest rabbis of the time did not hesitate to give Wessely their approbations — *הסכמות* — to his early books.<sup>22</sup> And on the other hand, it is for this reason that a *maskil* like Mendelssohn did hesitate to send his book *Phaedon* to Wessely. As he states in his letter to Wessely, Mendelssohn was apprehensive about Wessely's anti-Enlightenment stand, especially with regard to human reason and human quest or investigation based on human reason.<sup>23</sup> Thus, even Mendelssohn regarded him as representing the old school of thought.

The same attitude toward the Jewish religion and toward the fundamentals of the Enlightenment is found in Wessely's other writings prior to *לבנון*. *סלרס ראסת* Significantly, even the form of his second book is a traditional one; for *גיו לבנון* is written as a traditional exegesis to *מסכת אבות* — *The Ethics of the Fathers*. Thus we find a unity of form and content — both exceptionally conservative. It should be noted that a tradi-

tional work such as *The Ethics of the Fathers* lends itself to traditional exposition. However, the form by itself should not be considered as the only reason for Wessely's conservative views. Suffice it to mention what Isaac Satanow has done with the classical form of pseudo-biblical wisdom literature in קל"ג א, or what another Hebrew *maskil*, rabbi Saul Berlin, has done with the traditional format of the responsa in his בשמים א.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the *maskilim* did borrow the traditional tools and used them for their Enlightenment purposes.<sup>25</sup> Wessely's conservatism, I think, is inherent in his thought as well as in his personality.

Again, Wessely reiterates his views as mentioned above with regard to wisdom, human reason, tradition, and the oral and written law. He continues to express his negative attitude toward Enlightenment in general, and in particular toward human quest into the unknown in religious matters.<sup>26</sup> His traditional stand regarding the religious decrees manifests his conservatism. The general trend among Haskalah writers has been to demand the alleviation of the excessive religious decrees that have accumulated throughout the ages in order to save Judaism and make it bearable for the modern Jew. By contrast, Wessely still adheres to the old school of thought as typified in his exegesis to "ועשו סָבֵב לַתּוֹרָה" [make a (legal) fence around the Torah]. It is his opinion that at a time of religious decline, as was the period of Haskalah, the religious authorities should not make religious precepts and customs easier for the people to observe by introducing lenient modifications. Instead, they ought to be even more strict and institute new, stern and uncompromising religious decrees, wrote Wessely.<sup>27</sup>

In all fairness to Wessely, it should be noted that he was in no way unique among the Haskalah authors in his conservative attitude toward the religious precepts. The enlightener Moses Mendelssohn, too, voiced similar views with regard to religious observance.<sup>28</sup> In this respect both Mendelssohn and Wessely represent a rather conservative element of Haskalah. More than anyone else among the *maskilim*, perhaps with the exception of Isaac Satanow, both Mendelssohn and Wessely represent in their writings as well as in their personalities the generation of transition — the generation in transition. Despite the many distinct differences between them, both enlighteners attempted to preserve traditional Judaism in the face of Enlightenment.<sup>29</sup> Some of their contemporary *maskilim* exhibited similar tendencies, yet these more progressive *maskilim* were facing forwards rather than backwards, while drawing on traditional Judaism.<sup>30</sup>

In spite of Wessely's overall conservatism, we are able to detect some indications of change that took place in his thinking as expressed in ל"ג לכבוד. It should be emphasized that this change is very, very modest, and could be discerned and becomes meaningful only when compared with his later views in דברי שלום ואמת. When examined closely, the alleged modification in attitude in ל"ג לכבוד does not represent, to my mind, any definite break from the old school of thought, and does not mean necessarily the adoption of any new set of values. Thus it is very strange to find that there are those who believe that "it is in vain that the zealots accused him [Wessely] that in his proposals regarding the new order in education [in דברי שלום ואמת] he has forsaken his good [traditional] custom [habit] and turned into another man [. . .] for the truth of the matter is that

all his program for the correction of the established order of teaching had been expressed mainly in his exegesis to Masechet 'Avot [ . . . ]." The writer, Spiegel, goes on to say: "in this [ . . . ] [traditional] exegesis the whole revolution in the customs of the old-type education had been proposed [ . . . ]."<sup>31</sup>

The importance of this issue to the understanding of Wessely's thought merits a brief discussion. Commenting on Rabban Gamliel's saying " יפה ילמדו תורה עם דבר ארץ " [Splendid is the study of Torah when combined with a worldly occupation],<sup>32</sup> Wessely says that the study of Torah by itself is not enough; secular studies should complement the study of Torah.<sup>33</sup> Wessely reiterates this view in a number of places in his exegesis to *The Ethics of the Fathers*.<sup>34</sup> In my opinion, there is nothing innovative about his interpretation in יין לבנון. It may foreshadow his innovative ideas of דברי שלום ואמת, but I think that in no way is his interpretation here identical with that in the latter book, as some scholars would have us believe.<sup>35</sup> The terminology may be related in some ways; thus the early expression תורת האדם here might be identical with the later concept of תורה עם דבר ארץ.<sup>36</sup> However, it would be rather superficial to assume that the terms by themselves are sufficient to denote as far-reaching a conclusion as proposed by some writers. It is essential to understand that there is a great difference between Wessely's two views as expressed in the two books. Obviously, in יין לבנון Wessely still subordinates דבר ארץ to Torah. Whatever is implied by and is included in the former term is undoubtedly subservient to Torah; it is for the sake of Torah that one should have דבר ארץ.<sup>37</sup> However, in the first pamphlet of דברי שלום ואמת we witness a completely different world-view, for there the Torah is dependent on תורת האדם, or דבר ארץ. Thus, the broad and innovative implication of דברי שלום ואמת: secular knowledge, or western culture, in effect forms the basis for ' תורת ה', or Judaism.<sup>38</sup>

It should be noted that two other quotations which Wessely utilizes in דברי שלום ואמת to point out the necessity of secular knowledge do appear first in יין לבנון. The quotations are: "Derech 'Erez preceded the Torah by twenty-six generations";<sup>39</sup> and "A scholar [ תלמיד חכם ] who has no knowledge, even a carcass is better than he."<sup>40</sup> One can understand the excitement of the scholars who found these three important quotes in יין לבנון; <sup>41</sup> however, I think that their conclusion, mentioned above, is erroneous. It is not the quotations themselves which imply any change in Wessely's outlook. Both these quotations, it should be remembered, are taken from respected Hebrew sources. It is the interpretation of the quotations that creates the difference. In יין לבנון these quotations are explained in a traditional way. Only in דברי שלום ואמת do we see that Wessely parts ways with traditional Judaism of his time — in the place and the role that he assigns to secular knowledge in relation to sacred knowledge and to Judaism *in toto*.

We do discern in יין לבנון some development in Wessely's thought — his views on education in the making. He does suggest mildly, rather academically — unlike the tone of demand in his later educational thesis — that the teaching of דבר ארץ and the teaching of סקרא, the Bible, should precede that of Mishnah. Although this curriculum does deviate from the accepted traditional order, it is not his own revolutionary curriculum yet; in it he fol-

lows the text of פרקי אבות: " בן שרגב במקרא במשנה ." The center of gravity is still the Torah, and for its sake the changes are proposed. However, in his emphasis on grammar with regard to the study of the Bible, we do see a reflection of Haskalah.<sup>42</sup>

There is yet some internal evidence that Wessely at this point (1775) is still fluctuating between Haskalah and traditional Judaism, leaning heavily toward the latter. In his exegesis to the above-mentioned verse of פרקי אבות, Wessely mentions twice the desirability and perhaps the need to publish a book which should reproach traditional Jewry for the improprieties of its religious education. However, he notes — rather strangely for an author who within seven years was to become the primary warrior of Hebrew Haskalah — that he is not worthy of such a task because his own deficiencies are much greater than those of others.<sup>43</sup> Even if we accept this remark as a form of literary modesty and the customary humility, we are still faced with the fact that Wessely is not yet ready for any active struggle on behalf of and for Haskalah, nor is he willing to wage any war against the educational phenomena in traditional Judaism. For if he were, why are we unable to discern any such tendency in this book? Yet, on the other hand, if he were only fearful of the rabbis, why did he dare to publish any form of criticism against traditional Judaism and against the religious authority? The inescapable conclusion is that Wessely was, at that time, far from possessing one of the characteristics of the Hebrew *maskilim*: the burning desire to fight for their cause.<sup>44</sup> The image that we have of him as a fighting *maskil* had been formed on the basis of his later works, namely, the pamphlets שלום דברי ראמת. There, too, this image of him has been inflated mainly as a result of the rabbinic attack against him.<sup>45</sup> This attack in turn became a controversy which the other *maskilim* utilized — surprisingly in a rather moderate way — to enhance their Enlightenment objectives.<sup>46</sup>

Wessely's next book, in the order of publication (1780), is his translation and exegesis of חכמת שלמה [Wisdom of Solomon]. His traditional viewpoint is discernable in this book as well. His apologetic remarks in the introduction betray in a way his apprehensions that the traditionalists would regard his translation as an act of blasphemy. He explains that had he found anything in the book inconsistent with the faith, he would not have translated the book. However, he writes emphatically, it has been found to consist, from cover to cover, only of יראת שמים [fear of heaven].<sup>47</sup> From the totality of his writings we may deduce that these words were not merely lip service to the traditionalists. This utterance reflects Wessely's strong ties with traditional Judaism and his adherence to its accepted values.

In spite of these ties, or perhaps because of them, Wessely is seen in this book, too, discussing the topic of religious education in Judaism.<sup>48</sup> Although his discussion reflects some of the contemporary Enlightenment views with regard to religious education, it is to be regarded as a mild — very mild — declaration of Haskalah. It is a far cry from his own views as enunciated in his later educational pamphlets. The similarities which could be shown between his pedagogic viewpoints here and in דברי שלום ראמת are superficial. The underlying philosophy behind his educational views in חכמת שלמה stresses acceptance of the heritage of the past. This complete dependence on tradition, interestingly enough, is applicable to both sacred

and secular knowledge.<sup>49</sup> Other pedagogic comments by Wessely reflect the demands of Haskalah for a more modern approach to education, yet they are not in any way contradictory to Judaism. They are: the educator's professional ability to teach children, gradation of the material taught, and the adjusting of this material to the individual needs of each student.<sup>50</sup>

We are able to discern a typical Haskalah tone in his writing only in 1778. In מסלל הרי"ע [Praise of a Friend], a poem with an introduction published in conjunction with Mendelssohn's בחיבורת השל"ם, the translation into German of the Torah and its exegesis, Wessely's views of the contemporary educational system among traditional Jews are quite critical. Here he lashes out at the inability of the teachers to teach, and at the improper material that is being taught. Characteristically, Wessely blames the rabbis in part for the inappropriate way in which they conduct their own teaching — the old way of preaching which ignores the פסוק of the text. The rabbis are held responsible for the low ebb of Jewish education. Furthermore, this *maskil* believes that the deterioration of religious education among the Jews is the cause for the religious deterioration in general among German Jewry. Thus, according to Wessely's allegations, the rabbis are to blame for the decline in religious observance.<sup>51</sup> By these allegations Wessely embraces the official line, as it were, of the more extreme among the Hebrew writers of the German Haskalah. We can see here the development that took place in his thinking. Not only is he aware of the difficulties resulting from the confrontation between the old and the new, but he is also beginning to criticize the religious establishment, namely, the religious teachers and the rabbis, and to demand that changes be made.<sup>52</sup> The religious authorities are no longer infallible in the eyes of this conservative *maskil*, now that he has been in Berlin, center of Hebrew Haskalah, for a number of years, and has begun to collaborate with Mendelssohn in the preparation of the *magnum opus* of the Hebrew Enlightenment. In light of this background, Wessely's more progressive views are understandable. Moreover, it should be remembered that מסלל הרי"ע had been written for the sole purpose of praising this work of Mendelssohn *et al* as one of the Enlightenment tools for the improvement of both the religious education and the religious situation among the Jews. Nevertheless, the prime motivation for this *maskil*, it seems, is not so much Enlightenment for Enlightenment's sake as Enlightenment for Torah's sake.<sup>53</sup> The proper education, which is the obligation of every rabbi, writes Wessely, is to plant in his students "the seed of holiness, the fear of god, the purity of faith and the dignity of the Torah."<sup>54</sup> Equipped with the fundamentals of faith and with the dignity of the Torah, the students, according to Wessely, would be able and willing to come out and fight the war of Torah.<sup>55</sup> Since he is speaking of youngsters of ten, the fight of the Torah is no other than the study of the Torah.

It is safe to conclude that although Wessely uses some of the utterances of Haskalah, such as the introduction of modern education, and he attacks the rabbis and/or teachers, he still adheres to the old values of traditional Judaism even at this point in his work.

It should be emphasized that the above quotations from Wessely's writings as well as the material on which this study is based are generally taken at their face value. It would be farfetched to conclude that "the seed of holi-

ness, the fear of god, the purity of faith and the dignity of Torah" are anything else but what they appear to be. We do not find subtleties in Wessely's writings to this point such as are found in the writings of some of his contemporaries. In this respect, too, this *maskil* is very much a part of the old school of thought.

All of this changed, however, upon the publication of דברי שלום ואמת in 1782. Although a detailed analysis of this work is beyond the scope of the present study, a few remarks pertaining to the subject matter are in place.

The first pamphlet proposes the reformation of Jewish education and offers the pedagogic as well as the ideological reasoning for the proposed change. It appeared in conjunction with the Tolerance Edict of Joseph II. Even the cursory reader is impressed by the deviation of this work of Wessely from his previous works. It is no longer a work which is dependent on a sacred or semi-sacred text, as were most of his previous major works. No longer do we find an exegetical style and content. The expository, albeit argumentative, style is dominant. However, the tone, style and content of the first pamphlet are but a reflection of a more meaningful deviation in Wessely's thought. It is not the proposed reform in religious education *per se* that is the essence of Wessely's deviation, for we have seen some of his educational theories in their development in his previously discussed works. It is, I think, the status and the role that Wessely assigns to תורת האדם, with its many denotations and connotations, in relation to תורת ה', which bear the signs of a sudden change in this *maskil's* point of view. It is abundantly clear that in the first pamphlet of דברי שלום ואמת Wessely makes an about-face and subordinates תורת ה', the laws of God, i.e., Judaism, to תורת האדם — namely, to secular knowledge, to natural religion and natural laws, and to western civilization.<sup>56</sup> Not only is תורת ה' subordinated to תורת האדם in Wessely's new philosophy, but it is, significantly, completely dependent on it.<sup>57</sup> Thus we note a drastic change in values, for Wessely says in effect that Judaism in modern times is subservient to western civilization, and it could not exist as an entity by itself. Judaism is no longer self-sufficient, as it had been until the age of Enlightenment. His antithetical declaration could be summarized as follows: A Jew who violates the laws of God yet knows [and probably adheres to] תורת האדם, could be beneficial to the rest of humanity, whereas he who violates and does not adhere to תורת האדם, even though he knows [and probably observes] the laws of God, satisfies neither the Jews nor the rest of humanity.<sup>58</sup> In other words, a Jew could be a man, that is to say, part of humanity, if he lacks Judaism yet adheres to western civilization; however, a Jew could not be regarded as a Jew if he does not have secular knowledge even though he fully adheres to Judaism.

It was, no doubt, this new view of Judaism that infuriated the traditionalist rabbis.<sup>59</sup> For when put in the context of Jewish education, as indeed was the explicit intention of the author, Wessely's proposed reform meant a complete break from traditional Judaism not only in theory but actually in practice. True, there are many pronouncements in דברי שלום ואמת as to the superiority of תורת ה' over תורת האדם, which would tend to contradict our discussion above.<sup>60</sup> Yet there is also support for our contention as previously discussed. This seeming inconsistency warrants a



careful psychological as well as ideological examination of Wessely. However, even a study of Wessely's ideology may give us the clue to the understanding of this phenomenon.

Nothing in his writing up to this point would lead to — or even suggest — this new and revolutionary view about Judaism and its relation to European culture. One should note that in the three pamphlets that followed דברי שלום ואמת, Wessely retreats almost completely from his revolutionary view, or at least appears to be endeavoring to do that.<sup>61</sup> Significantly, his continued literary work does not reveal any change whatsoever in this thought.<sup>62</sup> In the middle of the דברי שלום ואמת controversy, in 1783, Wessely wrote editorial advice solicited by some Hebrew *maskilim*, editors of המאסף. Published in the prospectus, נחל הבשור, his advice is characterized by ultra-conservatism and strict adherence to traditional Judaism.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, his ספר המדות (1785), an ethical treatise on the soul and human behavior, his סאמר חקור הדיון, a treatise on *Gehinom*, reward and punishment after death, published in המאסף (1788), and the many other timely verses which he has published in that journal show the same conservatism and traditional approach.<sup>64</sup> Wessely's שירי תפארת, too, is not different in this regard.

My conclusion, then, is that most probably Wessely did not fully comprehend the meaning and the implication of what he had written concerning Judaism. Yet, significantly, he was perhaps subconsciously expressing the *Zeitgeist* of Hebrew Haskalah that prevailed among the Hebrew *maskilim*.

In summary, we have seen that the writings of one of the major authors of the early Haskalah in Germany, namely, Wessely, are more traditionally oriented than Enlightenment oriented. Moreover, there is a clear anti-Enlightenment tendency in his works. Yet Wessely was regarded by his contemporary *maskilim* (as well as by later scholars) as representing Haskalah. Possibly, his fellow *maskilim* saw in him more than he had seen in himself: a literary figure that achieved one of the ideals of Hebrew Haskalah, namely, bridging the gap between Enlightenment and Judaism. That Wessely himself consciously desired this task is rather doubtful as I have tried to prove from his major works. Nevertheless, there is no doubt in my mind that Naphthali Herz Wessely represents that period in Jewish history—that specific generation in Germany which underwent the change from the old to the new—in his attitude toward Jewish religion. He represents the conservative element of the Hebrew Haskalah which endeavored to preserve traditional Judaism. However, in his educational reform, Wessely reflects the ideas of the more progressive element of Haskalah; thus the ambivalence that we find in Wessely's writings as well as in the writings of his colleagues. It is apparent that in the power-play between the ideas and ideals of European Enlightenment and the values of traditional Judaism the latter played an important role in shaping the world view of the Hebrew Haskalah in Germany.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Klausner, *Historiah Shel Hasifrut Ha'ivrit Hahadashah* [History of Modern Hebrew Literature], I (Jerusalem, 1960<sup>3</sup>), pp. 9-11. It should be pointed out that at times it seems as though Klausner's choice of Wessely is not conclusive. He first says "I begin this literature with the generation of the *Me'asfim* [writers of *Hame'asef* school], to be more exact—with the publication of the first pamphlet of *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* by Naphtali Herz Wessely (1781)." He then goes on to plead the case for Wessely alone. Moses Kleinman, in his *Dmuyot Veqomot* [Portraits and Personalities] (London, 1928), pp. 13, 29, considers Wessely as the central figure of the Haskalah movement at the time and as "the first poet in our modern literature." Binyamin Shmueli, in his article "Naphtali Herz Wessely's Linguistic Method," *Leshonenu*, XIV (1946), p. 13 [Hebrew], accepts the view that Wessely opens a new period in Hebrew Literature, as does H. Bar-Dayan, "On the Question of the Beginning of Our Modern Literature," [First] *World Congress of Jewish Studies*, I (Jerusalem, 1952), pp. 302-306 [Hebrew]. Hayim Nahman Bialik regards Wessely as "one of the pioneers in the Haskalah generation," stressing the impact his writings have had on his contemporaries as well as on the following generations; however, Bialik does not see in him and in his writings the beginning of modern Hebrew literature. See his article on Wessely, published posthumously by M. Ungerfeld, in *Kneset* [New Series] (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 262-264. Cf. Bialik's view in this subject, "Shiratenu Haze'irah" [Our Young Poetry], *Kitvei H. N. Bialik* [The Writings of H.N.B.] (Tel Aviv, 1962<sup>22</sup>), p. 246, and his essay on Moshe Hayim Luzzatto, *ibid.*, pp. 244-245. See also: Eisig Silberschlag, *From Renaissance to Renaissance* (New York, 1973), pp. 85-87.

Biographical sketches of Wessely, in English, can be found in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII (1916), pp. 506-507, in Charles Ozer, "Jewish Education in the Transition From Ghetto to Emancipation," *Historia Judaica*, IX (No. 1, April, 1947), pp. 75-78, and in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, XVI (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 461-463. In Hebrew: David Friedrichsfeld, *Zecher Zadiq* [Memory of a Righteous Man] (Amsterdam, 1809); Yaḥbik [Joseph Kera], "Toldot Rabbi Naphtali," *Hamagid*, I (1847-1848), issues 26, 30, 33, 36, 37, 51; Samuel Joseph Fünf, *Kneset Yisra'el* [The Assembly of Israel] (Warsaw, 1886), pp. 272-276; Kalman Schulmann, "Toldot [. . .]," in his edition of Wessely's *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, I (Warsaw, 1886), pp. 1-31; Solomon Mandelkern, "Toldot R. Naphtali [. . .]," *Ha'asif*, III (1887), pp. 404-417; Z. Fishman, "Naphtali Herz Weisel," *Ma'anit* (Jerusalem, 1926), pp. 17-20; Shalom Streit, *Ba'alot Hashahar* [At Dawn] (Tel Aviv, 1927), p. 25; Judah David Eisenstein, "Ozar Yisra'el" [Treasure of Israel], IV (London, 1935<sup>3</sup>), p. 195; Klausner, *Historiah*, I, pp. 103-120 (including an extensive bibliography); *The Hebrew Encyclopedia*, XVI (Jerusalem & Tel Aviv, 1969), pp. 70-71. In German: Wolf A. Meisel, *Leben und Wirken Naphtali Hartwig Wessely's* (Breslau, 1841).

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Melkman, *David Franco Mendes* (Jerusalem, 1951), pp. 15-17, is also of the opinion that the selection of Wessely as the grand innovator is erroneous. However, Melkman's case is not only different but indeed antithetic to the one in this study. According to Melkman, Wessely did not offer anything new for he was following the examples already set by the Sphardi communities of Europe, especially in Amsterdam. Thus Wessely is not an innovator, but a follower. Our contention is that Wessely was neither — on the basis of all of his writings with the exception of *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*. It is rather surprising that Melkman should utilize Wessely's defense against the rabbinic attacks, in his second pamphlet, as a bona fide source of proof, taking Wessely's words at face value (*ibid.*, pp. 13-15). Compare our discussion below in note 61. Kurzweil is also of the opinion that the Sphardi literary tradition had its impact on Wessely who brought it to the Ashkenazi world. See Baruch B. Kurzweil, "The Image of the Western Jew in Modern Hebrew Literature," *Leo Baeck Year Book*, VI (1961), p. 170. A bitter argument against Wessely's significance, as portrayed by Klausner and other historians of Hebrew literature, is waged by Eliezer Steinman, *Bemizreh Hazman* [In the Winner of Time] (Tel Aviv, 1931). See also Dov Sadan, *Al Sifrutenu* [On Our Literature] (Jerusalem, 1950), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>In a letter to Wessely, which the editors of *Hame'asef* published in the journal's prospectus, *Nahal Habsor*, [The Brook 'Besor, ' or, Good Tidings], these Hebrew *maskilim* consider Wessely as the first poet after the destruction (of the Temple and the land) who follows in the footsteps of the great prophets of Israel (*Nahal Habsor* [1783], p. 4). It is interesting to note that these editors selected, at least for public consumption, Wessely and not Mendelssohn as the accomplished authority on literature, that is, Hebrew literature.

<sup>4</sup>Wessely lived in Amsterdam for a number of years and most probably was acquainted with the Enlightenment literature which had been coming out of the presses of Amsterdam.

<sup>5</sup>See the following important articles by Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay, "The Treatment of the Jewish Religion in the Literature of the Berlin Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, XXIV (1955), pp. 39-68; "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," *ibid.*, XXV (1956), pp. 1-35; "National and Anti-National Trends in the Berlin Haskalah," *Jewish Social Studies*, XXI (No. 3, July, 1959), pp. 165-192.

<sup>6</sup>See my article "The Stand of the Moderate Authors of the Hebrew Enlightenment with Regard to Religious Issues," *Abraham Golomb Jubilee Book* (Los Angeles, 1970), pp. 717-730 [Hebrew].

<sup>7</sup>Shalom Spiegel seems to generalize about the relevance of Wessely's grammatical discussions to the contemporary scene and to Haskalah issues; see Spiegel's article "The Synonyms in Our Literature," *Leshonenu*, VII (No. 1, Tishrei, 1935), pp. 24-25 [Hebrew]. Although I accept Spiegel's contention with regard to *Divrei*

*Shalom Ve'emet*, I tend to disagree with him in reference to the other works of Wessely, as I shall elaborate upon later in this paper.

\*Naphtali Herz Wessely, לבנון [Lebanon], I (Wien, 1829 [first edition: 1765]), p. 47b: "פְּתַח הַחֵכֶם הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים" ["that the laws of the Torah are the sole wisdom"] see also p. 47a; פְּתַח הַחֵכֶם הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים ["the word *Hachamim* is applicable only to those who practice the ways of the Torah and observe its *mitzvoth*"] (p. 10a, introduction). Wessely's discussion, although concentrating on the biblical interpretation, has nevertheless a contemporary coloring. See note 20 below. Relating wisdom to the Torah is, of course, an idea found in medieval writings and elsewhere as well.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 4a-b.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 23b-24a, criticizing ancient Greek philosophers who rely only on their own understanding, and who would not believe anything which cannot be proven by their reason. Wessely further states that "גְּבוּל הַבְּנֵי אָדָם לֹא יִשְׁכַּח" ["God had put a boundary limitation on human reason"] (p. 23b). Also F. Lahover points out that Wessely's concept of חֵכֶם is different from the general Enlightenment concept; we do differ, however, in our interpretation of Wessely's concept of חֵכֶם, and as a result in our conclusion. See his article "Maimonides and the Early Hebrew Haskalah," *Moznayim*, III (No. 1-6, 1938), pp. 542-544 [Hebrew].

<sup>11</sup>לבנון introduction, p. 4a.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3b, 4a (introduction), 32b, 51b: "עַד הַיּוֹם" ["...to this day"].

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51b.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 105a; vol. I, 23b-24a.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 23b.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8a (introduction).

<sup>17</sup>*Hagigah*, 13a, citing Ben Sira.

<sup>18</sup>See some reference to this in my article "Intimations of Religion Reforms in the German Hebrew Haskalah Literature," *Jewish Social Studies*, XXXII (1 Jan., 1970), p. 4. I developed this thesis in my study "Isaac Satanow's 'Mishlei Asaf' As Reflecting the Ideology of the German Haskalah," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, XXV (3, 1973), pp. 225-242.

<sup>19</sup>לבנון, II, p. 105a; I, p. 43a: "יִרְאֵה דֵי יִתְרֵהּ הַיְחִידִים" ["The fear of god is the foundation of everything"].

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, I, pp. 44b-45a. In the following discussion, Wessely does not limit himself to the biblical framework, and he comes out openly with contemporary comments without any biblical disguise about "people of knowledge and learning among the nations who are [note the present tense!] ridiculing us and speaking rebelliously against the *mitzvoth* and the religious injunctions" ["הַבְּנֵי אֲנֹשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים עַל יְדֵי" (p. 48b). Wessely cites their views rejecting revelation, prophecy, providence, and the like (*ibid.*; also p. 54a). Thus we may conclude that indeed Wessely means contemporary religious phenomena. In a letter to Moses Mendelssohn in 1768, Wessely explains that his attacks were against "the deniers of religion, those who blaspheme god, who rely only on their wandering [= erroneous, confused] reason, who say that human reason is wisdom, and who say to god leave us for we do not desire the knowledge of your ways" ["הַבְּנֵי אֲנֹשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים הַיְחִידִים עַל יְדֵי" (Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, XVI [Berlin, 1929], s. 122).

<sup>21</sup>לבנון, I, p. 48b.

<sup>22</sup>Rabbi Yehezkel Landau and Rabbi David Tevele Schiff; the former states clearly that he is writing the approbation to לבנון, although he had not read it, on the basis of Wessely's previously published books and on the assumption that the author's new book had been written in the same religious spirit. See יין לבנון [The Wine of Lebanon] (Warsaw, 1914 [first edition: 1775]). Both rabbis came out with vehement, at times personal, attacks on Wessely in the *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* controversy. On this controversy consult: Klausner, *Historia*, I, pp. 126-131; Ozer, "Jewish Education," pp. 137-145; and the article by Moshe Samet, "M. Mendelssohn, N. H. Weisel and the Rabbis of Their Time," מחקרים בתולדות [Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel] (Haifa, Israel, 1970), pp. 244-257 [Hebrew]. L. Levin discusses the controversy and publishes the sermon delivered by Rabbi Tevele in which he attacked both Wessely and his *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, in "Aus dem jüdischen Kulturkampf," *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft*, XII (1918), ss. 165-197.

<sup>23</sup>Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, XVI, s. 118. However, Selma Stern-Taeubler is of a different opinion. She writes: "None of the Jewish friends of his own generation understood Mendelssohn better than Naphtali Hartwig Wessely" ("The First Generation of Emancipated Jews," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, XV [1970], p. 29). She leans on Meisel's biography of Wessely, *Leben und Wirken* (see especially pp. 62-63). Apparently their relationship became closer while some basic differences still existed in their philosophies. It should be noted that following Mendelssohn's death, Wessely published an introduction to the translation into Hebrew of *Phaedon* (Berlin, 1787).

<sup>24</sup>On Satanow see my article cited in note 18, and Shmuel Werses' article "On Isaac Satanow and His Work 'Mishlei Asaf,'" *Tarbiz*, XXXII (No. 4, 1963), pp. 370-392 [Hebrew]. On Saul Berlin see my articles "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) pp. 1-23 [Hebrew], and "Some Notes on the Nature of Saul Berlin's Writings," *Journal of Hebraic Studies*, 1 (2, 1970), pp. 47-61.

<sup>28</sup>For details see my study "The Methodology Employed by the Hebrew Reformers in the First Reform Temple Controversy (1818-1819)," *Studies in Jewish Bibliography History and Literature* (New York, 1971), pp. 381-397.

<sup>29</sup>*יין לבנון*, pp. 13, 14, 20, 66, 74, 89, 121.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15. In his exegesis, Wessely discusses two kinds of סייגים, and his discussion has both historical and contemporary references.

<sup>31</sup>Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings* (New York, 1969), Alfred Jospe, trans. & ed. pp. 104-105.

<sup>32</sup>I discuss Mendelssohn's work in my book *Moshe Mendelssohn: Bechavlei Masoret* [Moses Mendelssohn: Bonds of Tradition] (Tel Aviv, 1972).

<sup>33</sup>See my study "The Stand of the Moderate Authors of the Hebrew Enlightenment with Regard to Religious Issues," cited in note 6.

<sup>34</sup>Spiegel, "The Synonyms," p. 23. See also Ozer, "Jewish Education," p. 89, note 21; Mordechai Eliav, *Jewish Education in Germany in the Period of Enlightenment and Emancipation* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 41 [Hebrew].

<sup>35</sup>Translation according to Judah Goldin's *The Living Talmud, The Wisdom of the Fathers* (New York, 1957), p. 80. Hebrew: *Pirquei Avot*, 2.

<sup>36</sup>*יין לבנון*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 157, 158, 362.

<sup>38</sup>See note 31.

<sup>39</sup>"*דברך שלום ראמת*," as Wessely has it in *תורת האדם*, literally means "the law of man," which the author broadens to mean secular knowledge in general.

<sup>40</sup>*יין לבנון*, p. 158: One should be versed in the sciences—Wessely writes—such as astronomy and geography so that he should be amazed at the creation of god, and as a result subordinate himself to the laws of the Torah. This view is evident especially in Wessely's exegesis to what appears to be an ambivalent verse in *The Ethics of the Fathers*, ch. 2, namely, "אין תורה אין דרך ארץ, אם אין דרך ארץ, אין תורה" [Where there is no Torah, there's no right conduct, where there is no right conduct, there's no Torah — *The Living Talmud*, p. 147]. Whereas the traditional exegesis generally tends to show the interdependence of both *תורה* and *דרך ארץ*, Wessely completely subordinates *דרך ארץ* on either side of the verse.

<sup>41</sup>*דברך שלום ראמת*, I (Berlin, 1782), pp. 1b-4a. Wessely states that the law of man precedes, in historical order, the divine law; the latter "is connected and affixed" ["הם קשורים ודבוקים בו"] to the former (pp. 2a-b), and that *תורת האדם* is in effect a necessary, preparatory stage for the divine law (p. 4a) [pagination is mine]. See discussion below. From Wessely's definition of *תורת האדם* it is abundantly clear that he means western culture; he includes in this term ethics, good [European?] manners, elegance of diction, customs of the country, etc. (*ibid.*, p. 1b). I disagree with Klausner, *Historiah*, I, p. 125, who thinks that there was no innovation in Wessely's *דברך שלום ראמת*.

<sup>42</sup>*יין לבנון*, p. 148; *דברך שלום ראמת*, I, p. 2a.

<sup>43</sup>*יין לבנון*, p. 362; *דברך שלום ראמת*, I, p. 2b.

<sup>44</sup>See note 31.

<sup>45</sup>*יין לבנון*, p. 362. Cf. *Pirquei Avot*, 6.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*: "אבל אני אינני כדאי, כי מי אני וחמרוני גדול כחמרוני."

<sup>47</sup>Compare, for example, the demanding, at times almost militant, tone in Mendel Breslau's article, *Hame'asef*, VI (1790), pp. 301-314.

<sup>48</sup>Although the controversy was indeed a major one; see Samet's article (cited in note 22), pp. 244-257.

<sup>49</sup>The major reaction in a literary form was Saul Berlin's *Ktav Yosher* [An Epistle of Righteousness] (Berlin, [1794]), a defense of Wessely's book, which is said to have been circulating in manuscript form before its publication; its controversial tone implies that it had been written close to the time of the *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* dispute. The editors of *Hame'asef* apparently preferred to remain silent. Aside from cursory, non-committal remarks by the editors (see *Nahal Habsor*, p. 4), and some references by Elijah Morpurgo, an admirer of Wessely (*Hame'asef*, III [1786], pp. 67, 169), the only direct, lengthy discussion on the controversy appears some twelve years after the beginning of the dispute (*Hame'asef*, VII [1794], pp. 158-160). However, subtle references indicative of the impact of *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* on the *maskilim* do appear in *Hame'asef*. See for example Breslau's discussion of "A scholar who has no knowledge, even a carcass is better than he" (*Hame'asef*, VI [1790], pp. 310-311); also: Abraham Asch's use of the same saying in his *Torah Kulah 'Al Regel 'Ahat* [The Whole Torah on One Foot] (Berlin, 1796), p. 27; and compare Wessely's use in *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, I, p. 2b. On the *maskilim*'s public actions on Wessely's defense see Klausner, *Historiah*, I, pp. 130ff.

<sup>47</sup> חכמת שלמה (Berlin, 1780), first introduction [no pagination]. Wessely wrote it in his youth.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 28a. Wessely cites three prerequisites which a teacher must possess: good schooling in traditional, authoritative, religious studies as well as in natural and mathematical sciences; the ability to teach not only that which he had learned from his own teachers, but the ability to grow and learn on his own; the ability to teach and the professional skill to educate.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 28a; the key word is קבלה, meaning: receiving, that is tradition — in both religious and secular studies.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>"מְהַלֵּל רֵיֵעַ" [Praising a Friend], נתיבות השלום [Paths of Peace], I (Berline, 1783), pp. 3b-6b, introduction. Wessely's use of the word "רב" [rabbi] is ambivalent, for he employs it to mean teacher as well as rabbi.

<sup>52</sup>His demands for changes are in the realm of the practical, for he cites the availability of Mendelssohn's translation as the most needed tool for the change.

<sup>53</sup>"מְהַלֵּל רֵיֵעַ", p. 4a: As a result of the old way of religious education—Wessely writes—the students have no Torah nor the foundation of the faith of Israel.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.* See note 51.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>Wessely defines תורת האדם in two ways: a. As secular studies including the social sciences, mathematical sciences and natural sciences (*Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, I, p. 1b); b. "The seven mitzvot," ["שבע מצוות"] namely, the seven Noahide laws, "which have the consensus of the majority of *Hachamim* [scholars, wise people]" ["תורת האדם כפי שיש לה רוב החכמים מכרעתה"] (*Ibid.*, p. 2a). The latter definition of תורת האדם as the seven Noahide laws, or the natural religion, which is clearly stated by the author, escaped all scholars dealing with the subject matter.

<sup>57</sup>See note 38.

<sup>58</sup>הברי שלום ואמת, I, p. 2a-b.

<sup>59</sup>J. Zvi Zehavi, in *Tenu'at Habitbolelut Beyisra'el* [The Assimilation Movement in Israel] (Tel Aviv, 1943), p. 23, is of the same opinion. The rabbis' reaction should be viewed against their high esteem of Wessely prior to the controversy. See also Jacob Katz, *Masoret Umashber* [Tradition and Crisis] (Jerusalem, 1963<sup>2</sup>), p. 304.

<sup>60</sup>הברי שלום ואמת, I, p. 2a: "The laws of god and his Torot [teachings] are superior to the law of man" ["תקרי האלהים ותורותיו נעלים מאת תורות האדם"]; see also: pp. 3b, 4a, 6a, 6b.

<sup>61</sup>In the second volume of *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, p. 13a, Wessely limits the contents of תורת האדם to the framework of Judaism alone, to "מצוות רציונליות" [rational commandments], as opposed to "מצוות תורתיות" [commandments which do not have an apparent rationale] which are in the domain of תורת האדם. The former מצוות, according to Wessely's second version, are to be taught prior to the teaching of Mishnah and Talmud. No doubt this is an about-face. Simon Bernfeld considers this change a hypocrisy (*Dor Tahapuchot* [A Forward Generation] I, [Warsaw, 1914], p. 106); Max Erik explains the change in Wessely in his realization that he had gone too far, farther than he intended to go (*Etuden zu der Geshichte fun der Haskole (1789-1881)* [Minsk, 1934] pp. 89-90 [Yiddish]).

<sup>62</sup>Although we do find him supporting the translation of the prayers into German (*Hame'asef*, III [1786], pp. 129-130). However, it was considered by him as part of the enlightenment of the Jews, part of the Haskalah activities. Furthermore, his positive attitude toward the translation of the Bible is well known (*Divrei Shalom Ve'emet*, I, ch. 7, pp. 11b-15). It should be remembered that the translation of the prayers into German had not as yet been institutionalized as was the case during the reform controversy of 1818. It is safe to assume that Wessely would have objected to the actual introduction of the translated prayers into the services.

<sup>63</sup>*Nahal Habsor*, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup>"אמר חקור הדין" [An Essay (on) Search of Justice], *Hame'asef*, IV (1788), pp. 97, 98. The article was published also as a book in a few editions; ספר הטהרה [Book of Ethics] was published in Berlin in 1785; שירי תפארת [Songs of Glory], the first part of which was published in 1789.