

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. Why does anti-Semitism continue to persist to this day?
2. What were the differences between the revised Hamburg Temple Prayerbook published in 1841 and the original one of 1818?
3. Describe the reaction to its publication.
4. In 1838, the community of Breslau hired an assistant rabbi. Identify this person and describe his religious philosophy.
5. Describe the reaction surrounding his appointment.

This and much more will be addressed in the tenth lecture of this series:
"The Struggle Over the Rabbinate of Breslau".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

This lecture is dedicated to the memory and *Li-ilui Nishmas*

ר' פתחיה מאיר בן ר' אברהם ע"ה

Mr. Pesachia Herzberg of blessed memory.

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XVIII Lecture #10

THE STRUGGLE OVER THE RABBINATE OF Breslau

I. Anti-Semitism

A. Divine Punishment

(1) והיה אם לא תשמע בקול ד' אלקיך לשמר לעשות את כל מצותיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה והשיגוך... ובגוים ההם לא תרגיע ולא יהיה מנוח לכף רגליך ונתן ד' לך שם לב רגז וכליון עינים ודאבון נפש. והיו חייך תלואים לך מנגד ופחדת לילה ויומם ולא תאמין בחיך. דברים כה:טו, סה, סו

But it shall come to pass, if you will not listen to the voice of the L-rd your G-d, to take care to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day; that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you. . . . And among these nations shall you find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest; but the L-rd shall give you there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; And your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of your life. **Deuteronomy 28:15, 65, 66**

(2) אמר רבי יוחנן נהירנא כד הוּו אמרין בי מדרשא דמודי להון נפיל דמתרחץ עליהון דיליה דילהון. בבא בתרא צא:

Rabbi Yochanon said, "I remember the time when it was said in the house of study (Bais Medrash), 'He that agrees with them (the heathens) falls into their hands; as to him that trusts in them, whatever is his becomes theirs.'" **Bava Basra 91b**

(3) פיזר (בזר) עמים קרבות יחפצון מי גרם להם לישראל שיתפזרו לבין אומות העולם קריבות שהיו חפצין בהן. פסחים ק"ה:

"He hath scattered the people that delight in approaches" (Psalms 68:31) What caused Israel to be scattered among the nations? The approaches to the nations which they desired. **Pesachim 118b**

B. Preventing Assimilation

במדרש רבה (שיר השירים א:כא) על פסוק לריח שמניך טובים מה שמן אינו מתערב עם המשקין אף ישראל אין מתערבין עם בני נח (ולעולם נשאר ההבדל על מקומו וקיומו) דהקב"ה נתן התורה והמצוה לישראל כדי שיהיו מובדלין מן בני נח וכמו שאה"כ (ויקרא ב) ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים. ואם ישראל היו מקרבים עצמם חלילה להם אז הקב"ה היה מחדש ההבדל עי"ז שמחדש שנאה בלבם, וכל זה היה לטובתן של ישראל כדי שלא יתערבו ביניהם, ומשו"ה אחרי שעשו ישראל מעשה ותחבולה להסתיר ההבדל שנתן הקב"ה ביניהם ובין המצריים ורצו להתקרב להם, אזי הבדלים הקב"ה עי"ז שחידש והוסיף שנאה בלב המצריים עליהם וכמאמר הכתוב ויקוצו מפני בני ישראל שפירושו הפשוט דכל כך היו הישראלים מאוסים בעיני המצריים עד שכשהיה המצרי רואה אותן היה קץ בעצמו כדרך מי שרואה דבר מאוס שקץ בו, והקב"ה הטיל שנאה ונתן מיאוס על ישראל כדי שלא יתערבו עמהם. וכל זה לא היה בגדר עונש כלל, כי לא חטאו אז ולא היה מגיע להם שום עונש

רק היה בגדר שמירה שלא יתערבו עמהם וכל זה היה לטובתן. . . . שישארו עם קדוש ומובדל בפני עצמם כדי שיהיו ראויים להגאל לבסוף. וזהו שאמר במדרש כיון שהפירו ברית מילה הפך האהבה שהיו אוהבים אותם לשנאה שנאמר הפך לכם לשנוא עמו, דמקודם שהיו הם מבדילין עצמם מן המצריים היו המצריים אוהבין אותם דאין בזה שום חשש נזק כיון דהישראל היה מרחיק עצמו, ואח"כ הבדיל הקב"ה את המצריים מהם ע"י השנאה. ושפיר חשיב הכתוב זה בתוך הטובות דזה היה עיקר הצלחתן של ישראל שישארו עם קדוש ומובדל בפני עצמן, ומזה צמחה כל הגאולה אח"כ: בית הלוי על התורה שמות א:א

The Midrash Rabbah (Shir HaShirim 1:21) interprets the verse, "Your anointing oils are fragrant," to mean that just as oil does not mix with other liquids, so too Israel doesn't mix with the [other] descendants of Noah [and remains separate in its place without dilution], for the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah and Mitzvos so that Israel remain separate from the [other] descendants of Noah, as it is stated in Scripture (Leviticus 20:26), "And you shall be holy to Me; for I, the L-rd, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that you should be Mine." If, G-d forbid, Israel attempts to bring themselves closer [to the other nations,] then the Holy One, blessed be He, renews the separation between them through recreating a hatred in their hearts [against Israel]. All of this is for the benefit of Israel to prevent them from assimilating amongst them. For that reason, after [the people of] Israel conspired to hide the distinction between them and the Egyptians [by covering the place of the circumcision with the remnants of the foreskin,] and wanted to become close to them, the Holy One, blessed be He, created and intensified a hatred for the Jews in the hearts of the Egyptians, as it says in Scripture (Exodus 1:12), "And they were repelled (disgusted) because of the people of Israel." The simple meaning is that the Jews were disgusting in the eyes of the Egyptians to such an extent that if an Egyptian would see them he would feel as disgusted as if he would see some filthy thing that would disgust him. The Holy One, blessed be He, created this hatred and gave the Egyptians this feeling of disgust in order to prevent the Jews from assimilating amongst them. All of this was not meant as a punishment [per se] but rather as a protective fence of sorts to guard them from assimilating. This was all done for their benefit. . . . so that they remain a holy and separate nation so that they would be worthy of redemption at the end. This is what the Midrash meant by saying, "Since they had annulled the covenant of circumcision (*bris milah*), He turned their feelings of love into feelings of hatred, as it says (Psalms 105:25), "He turned their heart to hate His people . . ." Previously, when they had separated themselves from the Egyptians, the Egyptians loved them. At that point there was no fear that this love would be harmful, as the Jews distanced themselves from them. Afterwards, however, the Holy One, blessed be He, distanced the Egyptians from them through this hatred. It fits in, therefore, that that verse ("He turned etc.") is included amongst the benefits [that He bestowed upon the Jewish people] as this was the basis of their success, that they remain a holy and distinct people. Through that, the redemption subsequently blossomed. **Bais HaLevi's Commentary to the Torah: Exodus 1:1**

II. The Hamburg Temple and its Revised Siddur

A. . . . The news concerning the arrangements of the synagogue there has been a most pleasant surprise. I had read in the public press that your house of worship was one of the most imposing structures; I also knew that every fourteen days you preach, edify, inspire, and enrapture and it did not remain unknown to me that your cantor there is a genuine delight for the musical ears of the Viennese. But that the spirit of G-d, the spirit of true piety had also entered your congregation's domestic and family life, that the marriage altar as well as the cradle and the grave are being sanctified and at the same time hallowed by the living word of religion, that I did not know. That German prayers were recited and German hymns introduced at your synagogue I

did not suspect either. . . . And now, since things stand the way they are, you have the least cause to complain about your situation. What? You say you are standing alone? But you have a complete congregation, while here I can barely dispose over a fragment of a community. I say, barely! For there is no unity even in this fragmented group; some have their children confirmed, others are against it; marriage ceremonies occur rarely in our group; the *brith* for newly born boys is not the most alluring. Funeral sermons are still taboo. There is a wide divergence of views amongst the trustees; one member is for advancement, the other thinks we have already advanced so much that no congregation can follow us and that, therefore, we are standing alone. You see, dear friend! That is what I call standing alone; that is what I call piecemeal labor. But yours is truly significant and blessed. You say that we are locally victorious. G-d have mercy on such victory and such victors! In my opinion, the triumph awaiting you is much greater and more extensive, for as soon as the principle of reform will be recognized there, its spirit will create and enforce its proper form, and thus the synagogue will become the norm for several kingdoms.

Letter from Gotthold Salomon, Preacher of the Hamburg Temple to Isaac Noah Mannheimer, the Preacher of the Vienna Congregation, June 1, 1830

B. . . . However, I have found out long ago that nothing is gained with superimposed reforms. Young people reject the new because only after a few years it becomes as old to them as antiquity. There has to be an inner strengthening, a strengthening of faith. **Isaac Noah Mannheimer, the Preacher of the Vienna Congregation, 1830**

C. . . . Because I am near my grave, I am unconcerned with most ephemeral interests but feel within me the power and the challenge to come forward with the fire of youth and to give witness: That I have not found in the prayer book which has come under attack any reason for condemning it for any believing Israelite; on the contrary, I have found in it many prayers which are worthy of general distribution. . . . Arad-January 17, 1842. **R. Aaron Chorin, Letter of Approbation for the Revised Siddur of the Hambug Temple**

D. . . . For us, the term synagogue does not mean the agglomeration of all the teachers of the synagogue, but the concrete understanding of Jewish teaching, whose progressive nature can be proved and which knows how to preserve the divine spirit of the Jewish religion through the course of the ages. The Synagogue of the Spirit follows principles different from those of a formal and fixed rabbinism which, happily, forms only a small fraction of our Judaism. In such rabbis we see a hierarchical authority which we reject as error. Hence we must hold up to obloquy all these apostles of regression. *Progress!*-that is our slogan. In Judaism, we distinguish between the kernel and shell, matter and form, the lasting and the ephemeral, the eternal and the temporal manifestation. This distinction is in the spirit of the synagogue, which disputes ceremonial law with Hillel but agrees with him that the whole law rests on *one* essential point. Israel needs more such teachers, and more and more of them do appear; for our time provides a natural school for such men, and in them we see the possibility and hope of complete Jewish regeneration. . . . But you men of regression! You who are kept in bonds by the spirit of the dark ages; you who misjudge the rights of the present and who can see in us nothing but frivolous iconoclasts, in vain do you battle against the necessity of change in religious life. . . . Learn wisdom from the sages of former centuries who paid attention to the heartbeat of the times. But if you reject organic change of ritual as heresy and apostasy, and declare its followers as non-Jews simply because they do not recognize all of the phrases of the old rite as obligatory prayers, then, as before, you will further hasten the ruin of our fathers' religion and will force the supporters of change to abandon you altogether. . . . Every attempt to stand in the way of, or even to suppress progress will be no more successful than Balaam's attempt to ban and curse, which turned into blessing. In the same way the latest reaction against the temple became helpful

rather than harmful, especially since the enlightened teachers in Israel had an opportunity to express themselves in favor of progress. . . . We, therefore, offer these pages of rabbinic opinions to our contemporaries and posterity as a true *monument of progress* and confidently look to the future of which it is written (Jeremiah 31:33), "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the L-rd, I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts . . . for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them . . . Hamburg, April 1842. Dr. M. Frankel, for the editorial board of the Temple Prayer Book. **Introduction to Theological Gutachten, the Collection of Approbations to the Revised Hamburg Temple Prayer Book**

E. The Response of HaRav HaGaon R. Yaakov Ettlinger

חיזוק האיסור על הסידור המחודש

קהילותי המכובדות הנתונות למשמרת הקודש ברבנותי! קהילות בישראל!

עד עתה שמרתי על הימנעות מחות דעה במאבק המפלגתי שמתקיים עקב הופעתו מחדש של סידור התפילה ע"י אירגון ה"טמפל" היהודי בהמבורג, המכונה: "סידור תפילה של הפולחן הציבורי והפרטי של בני ישראל". כונת שתיקתי היתה, שלא להוסיף עוד שמן ללהב המריבה על ידי התערבותי, כי אם לשתוק למען השלום. תמיד כאב לבי, כאשר נוכחתי לראות שישראל החלש והמפוזר בין האומות לא התגייס מסביב לאמונתו הקדושה, אלא חי עם משפטים קדומים המסכנים את האמונה הזאת, כמו שראינו בתקופתנו החדשה ביותר. היה בדעתי למנוע את הסכנה הנגרמת על ידי המאבק האומלל אשר בו ישראל רק מזיק לעצמו. לכן קייתי בבטחון שהמאבק שפרץ בקהילה בשכנות לעירנו יבוא לקצו ללא התערבות מן החוץ ושאנשי המריבה ימצאו בקרוב פתרון משביע את רצון כולם, כי כבר במשך שנים רבות וגם עכשיו לא היה שינוי בעמדתן של המפלגות במאבק זה. אפילו השם הכללי של סידור תפילה זה אשר נבחר במגמה להטעות את העם וגם שם הלואי שלו, לא הסיתוני לזעוק ולהרים קולי נגד הכוונה לסמאות עיני הרבים, כי מאז עשרות בשנים קיים האירגון "טמפל" בצורה נפרדת מהקהילה, דרכיו הנלוזים מוכיחים באופן מספיק, כי אין כל חשש שיתפשטו נם בקרבכם, קהילותי החביבות. אמנם מפלגה אחת המאיימת לבלבל ולבטל את המנהגים הקיימים, ולכן אני מכנה אותה "מפלגה מתקיפה", אוספת חוות דעתם של רבנים מבחוץ, וכך היא מוציאה את המאבק המקומי מגדרו המצומצם והופכת מאבק אומלל ומקומי למאבק על עקרונות ומסבכת גם את אוהבי השלום בתוך מאבקם. אפילו הרחיקו לכת וטענו, ששתיקתי מהוה הסכמה לסידור תפילה זה ולרעיונות המתבטאות ברוח מחבריו. לכן עלי לחשוש שאהבת השלום שלי תבוטל, אבל בעת ובכונה אחת חששותי הצודקים שדעת מטעה זו תמצא את הדרך גם אליכם, אנשי האמונה היקרים. לכן אני רואה את עצמי חייב להצהיר לפי אהבת האמת ולפי מצפוני, וגם מפני שאני מנהיגכם הרוחני, את דהצהרה הבאה:

כבר לפני 23 שנים הופיע הסידור הראשון של אירגון "טמפל", וכמעט כל רבני אירופה המוסמכים הביעו את דעתם השווה של כולם, שאין להתפלל את התפילות הקדושות בשפה אחרת חוץ מלשון הקודש, ואין רשות לאף יהודי לשנות את צורת התפילות הקיימות זה הרבה מאות בשנים; אמנם שני עקרונות אלו לא הגיעו לידי פועל אפילו בנוגע לתפילות החשובות ביותר. חוץ מזה הוסברו עקרונות אמונתנו בענין משיח וגאולה בצורה אחרת ממה שעקרונות אלה מובנות לכל ישראל בכל תפוצותיו כבר יותר מאלפיים שנה. לכן שוררת בסידור תפילה זה רוח ההטעה ואסור לכל יהודי לקיים את תפילותיו לפי ההנחיות של סידור זה. היות וסידור תפילה זה הופיע במהדורה חדשה והוא פסול ואסור לכל יהודי מאמין להתפלל מתוכו, וההפצה עומדת להיגדל, יש להזכיר את האיסור של הרבנים הנדולים ואני מסכים לדבריהם בכל לבי, ובטוח אני שכל רבני תקופתנו

האמיתיים, מלבד אחדים שוליים, יסכימו לדברי הגדולים האלה. לכן אסור לכל איש מישראל להתפלל מתוכו.

קהילות יקרות, שימו את זאת על לבכם ובקשו מאת א-לוקי אבותינו שהנחה אותנו עד עכשיו בשלום, שיפנה את לבם של אחינו המוטעים לטובה, שלא יחריבו כי אם יבנו ויחזיקו את בנין אמונתנו הקדושה עתיקת היוםיין, שיבקשו את תפקידם בעולם הזה ואת חלקם בעולם הבא יחד עמנו.

אלטונה יום ד', א' דחנוכה (8 בדצמבר 1841) יעקב אהרן עטלינגר, רב ראשי

Strengthening the Prohibition of the Revised Prayer Book (*Siddur*)

To the distinguished communities which have been placed under the holy guardianship of my rabbinate! To the communities of Israel!

Up until now I have restrained myself from becoming involved in the controversy surrounding the publication of the revised Siddur of the Temple Association of Hamburg, which is entitled, "Prayerbook for the Public and Private Worship of Israelites." The reason that I remained quiet was in order not to add fuel to the fire which would result from my participation. I decided, rather, to remain silent for the sake of peace and harmony. My heart is constantly aching at the sight of those amongst the frail and scattered Jewish people who don't muster the courage to assert themselves amongst the nations and live according to their holy faith but rather live such a life that threatens this faith, as it has become increasingly apparent in our own times. I had in mind to preclude the danger that would come about through becoming involved in this terrible controversy as it would only bring about harm to all those involved and I hoped that the conflict that erupted in the neighboring community [of Hamburg] would somehow resolve itself without outside intervention and a peaceful solution would be found to the satisfaction of all parties. After all, many years have passed [since the creation of the Temple Association] and nothing has really changed to alter the situation. Not even the name of the Siddur, ["Prayerbook for the Public and Private Worship of Israelites,"] whose goal is obviously to spread their [false] doctrine, moved me to cry out and raise my voice in protest against this attempt to blind the community, because for the last twenty some years the Temple Association stood apart from the mainstream community and its conspicuously perverse ways were sufficient reason not to fear that their doctrine would spread amongst you, my dear communities.

However, a certain group amongst them whose purpose is to confound and annul the present institutions, I call them the "party of aggression", brought together the opinions of outside rabbis and hence they took a limited and local controversy and turned it into a fundamental controversy that ensnares into its grip those who would otherwise desire peace. They even took a further step and claimed that my silence was actually an approbation to the Siddur and to the ideas that are contained therein. I have therefore taken the step of engaging in this controversy for fear that you, the precious keepers of the faith, might be affected [by these ideas] and, as your spiritual leader and out of my love of truth, I am making the following statement:

Twenty three years ago the Temple Association produced their first prayerbook and virtually all of the authoritative Rabbis of Europe expressed their united opinion that it is not permitted to utter the holy prayers in any other language except the Holy tongue (Hebrew) and, in addition, that no Jew has the right to change the present form of prayer which has been established for many hundreds of years. These two principles are not realized [in this prayerbook of theirs] even in regards to the most important of the prayers. Furthermore, the

principles of our faith regarding Moshiach and the redemption take on a completely different meaning [in this Siddur] from that which has been understood by all of Israel throughout the Diaspora for well over two thousand years. For that reason, their Siddur is permeated with the spirit of heresy and it is forbidden for any Jew to fulfill his responsibilities of prayer through the guidance of this Siddur. Since this Siddur is now coming out in a revised version, and it is invalid and forbidden for any believing Jew to pray from it and its distribution is poised to increase, it is appropriate now to mention the prohibition of the great rabbis. I agree with their position with all my heart and I'm certain that all true rabbis of our period, with the exception of some marginal ones, would agree with those great authorities. It is therefore forbidden for any Jew to pray from this Siddur.

Esteemed congregations, take heed to these words and beseech Hashem, the G-d of our forefathers who has guided us up until now in peace that He turn the hearts of our wayward brethren towards the good so that they not destroy but rather build and support the structure of our holy and ancient faith and seek out their true mission in this world and their portion in the next world together with all of us.

Altona, Wednesday, the eighth of December, the first day of Chanukah, 1841

Yaakov Aharon Ettlinger, the Chief Rabbi

III. Heresy and the Principles of Faith

A.

מה שצריך שנזכור בכאן והוא הראוי מכל מקומות שעיקרי דתנו ויסודותיה שלשה עשר יסודות:

. . . היסוד השביעי ואומר שנבואת משה רבינו ע"ה נבדלת מנבואת כל הנביאים בארבעה דברים. הראשון כי איזה נביא שהיה לא דיבר לו הש"י אלא על ידי אמצעי, ומשה בלא אמצעי שנאמר פה אל פה אדבר בו. והענין השני כי כל נביא לא תבא לו הנבואה אלא כשהוא ישן, . . . ומשה יבא עליו הדיבור ביום והוא עומד בין שני הכרובים . . . הענין השלישי כי הנביא כשתבא אליו הנבואה ואע"פ שהוא במראה וע"י מלאך יחלשו כחותיו ויתקלקל בנינו ויגיע לו מורא גדול מאד כמעט שתצא רוחו ממנו . . . ומשה ע"ה לא היה כן אבל יבא אליו הדיבור ולא ישיגוהו רתת ורעדה בשום פנים, כמו שנאמר (שמות לג) ודבר ד' אל משה פנים אל פנים כאשר ידבר איש אל רעהו . . . והענין הרביעי כי כל הנביאים לא תנוח עליהם רוח הנבואה ברצונם אלא ברצון הש"י שיודיע לו הדבר בנבואה . . . ומשה רבינו ע"ה בכל עת שירצה אומר (במדבר ט) עמדו ואשמעה מה יצוה ד' לכם. . . רמב"ם פירוש המשניות, סנהדרין פרק י'

It is important to now mention that there are thirteen principles upon which the Jewish religion is based . . . **The seventh principle** is that the prophecy of Moshe Rabbainu, of blessed memory, is distinct from the prophecy of the other prophets in four ways: The first distinction is that Hashem spoke to every other prophet through an intermediary (an angel). Moshe's prophecy was without any intermediary as it says (Numbers 12:8), "With him I speak mouth to mouth." The second distinction is that every other prophet received his prophecy while he was asleep . . . Moshe, on the other hand, would receive his prophecy by day while standing in-between the two Cherubs [in the Holy of Holies] . . . The third distinction is that every other prophet would receive his prophecy in a weakened state, even though it was only a vision and through the medium of an angel. [The prophet's] strength would leave him and he would be so overcome with such a tremendous fear that his soul was ready to depart from him . . . Moshe, on the other hand, would not experience any fear or trembling when the Divine communication would come

to him as it says (Exodus 33:11), “And the L-rd spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” . . . The fourth distinction is that the prophecy of the other prophets did not rest upon them whenever the prophets so desired but rather only when Hashem decided to communicate a prophetic message to them. . . . Moshe, on the other hand, would receive prophecy whenever he so desired, as it says (Numbers 9:8), “And Moses said to them, Wait, and I will hear what the L-rd will command concerning you.” **Rambam, Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin Chapter 10**

B.

היסוד השמיני: היות התורה מן השמים, והוא שנאמין כי כל התורה הזאת הנתונה ע"י משה רבינו ע"ה שהיא כולה מפי הגבורה, כלומר שהגיעה אליו כולה מאת ד' יתברך בענין שנקרא על דרך השאלה דבור ואין ידוע היאך הגיע אלא היה משה ע"ה שהגיע לו, וכי הוא היה כמו סופר שקוראין לו והוא כותב כל מאורעות הימים הספורים והמצות ולפיכך נקרא מחוקק, ואין הפרש בין ובני חם כוש ומצרים ושם אשתו מהטבאל ותמנע היתה פלגש ובין אנכי ד' א-להיך ושמע ישראל, כי הכל מפי הגבורה והכל תורת ד' תמימה טהורה וקדושה אמת. וזה שאומר שכמו אלה הפסוקים והספורים משה ספרם מדעתו, הנה הוא אצל חכמינו ונביאינו כופר ומגלה פנים יותר מכל הכופרים, לפי שחשב שיש בתורה לב וקליפה ושאלה דברי הימים והספורים אין תועלת בהם ושהם מאת משה רבינו ע"ה, וזהו ענין (סנהדרין צ.). אין תורה מן השמים אמרו חכמים ז"ל הוא המאמין שכל התורה מפי הגבורה חוץ מן הפסוק זה שלא אמר הקב"ה אלא משה מפי עצמו, (סנהדרין צט.). וזהו כי דבר ד' בזה הש"י ויתר ממאמר הכופרים, אלא כל דיבור ודיבור מן התורה יש בהן חכמות ופלאים למי שמבין אותם ולא הושג תכלית חכמתם, ארוכה מארץ מדה ורחבה מני ים ואין לאיש אלא להלך בעקבות דוד משיח לא-להי יעקב שהתפלל גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך (תהלים קיט), וכמו כן פירוש התורה המקובל ג"כ מפי הגבורה וזה שאנו עושים היום מתבנית הסוכה ולולב ושופר וציצית ותפילין וזולתם הוא בעצמו התבנית אשר אמר הש"י למשה והוא אמר לנו והוא נאמן בשליחותו, והמאמר המורה על היסוד הזה הוא מה שנאמר (במדבר טז) ויאמר משה בזאת תדעון כי ד' שלחני לעשות כל המעשים האלה כי לא מלבי: רמב"ם פירוש המשניות, סנהדרין פרק י'

The eighth principle is that the Torah is from Heaven and we are to accept that this entire Torah which was given through Moshe Rabbainu, of blessed memory, was entirely given through the mouth of the Al-mighty. This means that the entire Torah was communicated to him through what we humans would refer to as speech. We [who are not prophets] are not familiar with that mode of communication other than it was communicated to Moshe and Moshe was akin to a scribe to whom it was dictated all of the narratives and commandments. That is why he is referred to as a “*mechokek*” - an inscriber (Deuteronomy 33:21). There is no difference between the statements, “And the sons of Ham: Kush, and Egypt, and Put, and Canaan,” (Genesis 10:6), “. . . and his wife’s name was Mehetabel . . .” (Genesis 36:39), “And Timna was a concubine to Eliphaz Esau’s son . . .” (Genesis 36:12), [and the statements] “I am the L-rd your G-d, [who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery]” (Exodus 20:2), and “Hear O Israel” The L-rd our G-d is one L-rd” (Deuteronomy 6:4). All was given from the mouth of the Al-mighty. All is the Torah of Hashem. It is perfect, pure, holy, and true. Anyone who says that specific verses were written by Moshe on his own is considered by our Sages and prophets to be a heretic and acts with greater impudence than any other heretic, for he views the Torah as having an inner essence (lit. a heart) and an outward shell and that there is no benefit from the history and narratives and they are the work of Moshe Rabbainu, of blessed memory. This is the meaning of the statement (Sanhedrin 90a) that one who says that the Torah is not from Heaven [has no portion in the World to Come]. Our Sages have explained (Sanhedrin 99a) that this [even] refers to someone who believes that the entire Torah is from the Al-mighty with

the exception of a certain verse which was not dictated by the Holy One, blessed be He, but rather composed by Moshe himself. This is what is meant by the verse (Numbers 15:31), "Because he has despised the word of the L-rd, [and has broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him,]" . . . for every single statement of the Torah is full of wisdom and wonders to one who understands it. The wisdom of the Torah is beyond comprehension, "its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job 11:9). A person should only walk in the footsteps of David, the anointed of the G-d of Jacob who prayed (Psalms 119:18), "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in Your Torah." Similarly, the received explanation of the Torah is also from the Al-mighty. That form of the Sukkah, Lulav, Shofar, Tzitzis, Tefilin and similar things with which we fulfill the commandments is the very same form which was dictated by the Al-mighty to Moshe. He told it to us and he is trusted to have fulfilled his mission. The statement that indicates this principle is the following (Number 16:28), "And Moses said, Hereby you shall know that the L-rd has sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind." **Rambam, Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin Chapter 10**

C.

(1) היסוד התשיעי: ההעתק, והוא כי התורה הזאת מועתקת מאת הבורא הש"י לא מזולתו, ועליה אין להוסיף וממנה אין לגרוע לא בתורה שבכתב ולא בתורה שבעל פה, שנאמר לא תוסיף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו . . . רמב"ם פירוש המשניות, סנהדרין פרק י'

The ninth principle is regarding the authenticity of our version of the Torah. This is the belief that the Torah as we have it is a copy of the original dictation from the Creator, may He be blessed. One is not allowed to add to it or to take away from it. This refers to both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, as it says (Deuteronomy 13:1), ". . . you shall not add to it, nor diminish from it." . . . **Rambam, Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin Chapter 10**

(2) דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אין לה לא שינוי ולא גרעון ולא תוספת שנאמר את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אותו תשמרון לעשות לא תוסף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו ונאמר והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת הא למדת שכל דברי תורה מצווין אנו לעשותן עד עולם וכך הוא אומר חוקת עולם לדורותיכם ונאמר לא בשמים היא הא למדת שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה לפיכך אם יעמוד איש בין מן האומות בין מישראל ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שד' שלחו להוסיף מצוה או לגרוע מצוה או לפרש במצוה מן המצוות פירוש שלא שמענו ממשה או שאמר שאותן המצוות שנצטוו בהן ישראל אינן לעולם ולדורי דורות אלא מצוות לפי זמן היו הרי זה נביא שקר שהרי בא להכחיש נבואתו של משה ומיתתו בחנק על שהזיד לדבר בשם ד' אשר לא צוהו שהוא ברוך שמו צוה למשה שהמצוה הזאת לנו ולבנינו עד עולם ולא איש א-ל ויכזב: רמב"ם, משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי תורה פרק ט:א

It is a matter which is clear and explicitly stated in the Torah that it is a commandment which stands forever and ever. It cannot undergo any change, neither can it be diminished nor be added to, as it says (Deuteronomy 13:1), "What ever I command you, take care to do it; you shall not add to it, nor diminish from it," and it says (Deuteronomy 29:28), "The secret things belong to the L-rd our G-d; but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah." This teaches us that we are commanded to fulfill the words of the Torah forever. Similarly it says (Leviticus 3:17, 10:9, 23:14, 23:31, 23:41, 24:3, Numbers 15:15, 18:23) "It shall be an everlasting statute for your generations . . . , " and it says (Deuteronomy 30:12), "It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us." This teaches us that now that the Torah has been given, no prophet is

allowed to make any changes regarding it. Therefore, if a person arises, whether it be from the other nations or from Israel, and produces a sign or miracle and states that Hashem sent him to add a *mitzvah* (commandment) or subtract a *mitzvah*, or to explain any one of the *mitzvos* in a manner that we didn't hear from Moshe or that the *mitzvos* (commandments) which Israel were commanded were not given for all times and generations but were only given for a limited time, he is a false prophet, for he is coming to deny the prophecy of Moshe. He is put to death by suffocation because he willfully spoke in the name of Hashem that which He didn't command him, for He, may His name be blessed, commanded Moshe that this *mitzvah* (the commandments of the Torah) are for us and our children forever and the Al-mighty is not a man who would lie. **Rambam, Mishnah Torah, Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 9:1**

D.

היסוד השנים עשר: ימות המשיח, והוא להאמין ולאמת שיבא ולא יחשב שיתאחר, אם יתמהמה חכה לו ולא ישים לו זמן ולא יעשה לו סברות במקראות להוציא זמן ביאתו, וחכמים אומרים (סנהדרין צז:): תיפח רוחן של מחשבי קיצין, ושיאמין שיהיה לו יתרון ומעלה וכבוד על כל המלכים שהיו מעולם כפי מה שנבאו עליו כל הנביאים ממשה רבינו ע"ה עד מלאכי ע"ה, ומי שהסתפק בו או נתמעט אצלו מעלתו כפר בתורה, שיעד בו בתורה בפירוש בפרשת בלעם ופרשת אתם נצבים, ומכלל יסוד זה שאין מלך לישראל אלא מבית דוד ומזרע שלמה בלבד וכל החולק על המשפחה הזאת כפר בשם הש"י ובדברי נביאיו: רמב"ם פירוש המשניות, סנהדרין פרק י'

The twelfth principle is the belief in the days of Moshiach. This means that one should believe and hold to be true that he will come and not to think that he will tarry. Even if he tarries, await his coming. Don't posit a specific time and don't interpret Scripture in a way that will predict the time of his coming. Our Sages have said, "Blasted be the spirit of those who calculate the end, i.e. the arrival of Moshiach." This also includes the belief that Moshiach will be superior to and will be of a higher status and honor than all of the kings who ever lived. This is in keeping with all of the prophecies from Moshe Rabbainu, of blessed memory, until Malachi, of blessed memory. Anyone who doubts this or diminishes his stature is one who denies the Torah, for the Torah expressly bore witness to him in *Parshas Balaam* (Numbers 24:17) and in *Parshas Atem Netzavim* (Deuteronomy 30:1-10). Included in this principle is that this [future] king of Israel will come only from the house of David and from the seed of Solomon. Anyone who contests the rights of that family is denying the name of G-d and the words of His prophets. **Rambam, Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin Chapter 10**

E.

היסוד השלשה עשר: תחיית המתים וכבר ביארנוה וכאשר יאמין האדם אלה היסודות כולם ונתברר בה אמונתו בד' הוא נכנס בכלל ישראל ומצוה לאהבו ולרחם עליו ולנהוג עמו בכל מה שצוה הש"י איש לחבירו מן האהבה והאחווה, ואפי' עשה מה שיכול מן העבירות מחמת התאוה והתגברות הטבע הגרוע הוא נענש כפי חטאיו, אבל יש לו חלק לעוה"ב והוא מפושעי ישראל, וכשנתקלקל לאדם יסוד מאלה היסודות הרי יצא מן הכלל וכפר בעיקר ונקרא צדוקי ואפיקורוס וקוצץ בנטיעות ומצוה לשונאו ועליו נאמר (תהלים קלט) הלא משנאך ד' אשנא. רמב"ם פירוש המשניות, סנהדרין פרק י'

The thirteenth principle is the belief in the resurrection of the dead. We have already explained this. When a person believes in all of these principles and through them his belief in Hashem is clarified, then he is considered to be part of Israel (the Jewish people) and there is a *mitzva* (commandment) to love him, to have compassion for him, and to act towards him according to all that Hashem has commanded regarding the love and brotherhood that should be displayed between one person and another. Now if such a person committed sins, even to the [utmost]

extent of his ability, since they were done as a result of his craving and his overwhelming perverse nature, he will be punished in accordance to his sins but he will nevertheless receive a portion in the World to Come. He is considered amongst the sinners of Israel. If, however, [a person rejects] one of these [thirteen] principles, behold he has left the fold and has denied the essential creed [of Judaism]. He is called a *tzaduki (min)*, an *apikorus*, and a *kotzetz binitios* (a cutter of the saplings). One is commanded to hate such a person and, regarding him is it said (Psalms 139:21), “Do I not hate them, O L-rd, those who hate you? And do I not strive with those who rise up against you?” **Rambam, Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin Chap. 10**

IV. Abraham Geiger and the Rabbinate of Breslau

A. I was not in sympathy with the Frankfurt Reform Society; it had no clear idea of what it was striving for, neither was it honest enough in its utterances; instead of proceeding calmly and sanely, it aroused the greatest antagonism by attacking at once the rite of circumcision, which was considered a veritable foundation of Judaism. . . . As for myself, I must confess that I cannot comprehend the necessity of working up a spirit of enthusiasm for the ceremony merely on the ground that it is held in general esteem. It remains a barbarous, bloody act. The sacrificial idea which in former days invested the act with sanctity has no significance for us. However tenaciously religious sentiment may have clung to it formerly, at present its only supports are habit and fear, to which we certainly do not wish to erect any shrines. **Letter from Abraham Geiger to Leopold Zunz dated March 19, 1845**

B. The *people* of Israel live no longer, not even in the hearts and desires of the present. It is resurrected as a congregation of *faith* and only what touches it has an undisputed right to our concern. The exodus from Egypt will not lose its significance as the first cornerstone of the genesis of Israel, but it should no longer be given the exalted position which it has in our prayers, which as a national event outranks even the giving of the law at Sinai. The incessant repetition with which our prayers speak about this theme must go. . . . From now on, the hope for an after-life should not be expressed in terms which suggest a future revival, a resurrection of the body; rather they must stress the immortality of the human soul. We must eliminate the whole physical pictorialization of the divine household, the detailed description of angelic choirs and holy beasts, which is found especially in the morning prayers. **Some Suggested Changes, Abraham Geiger, Nachgelassene Schriften, vol. I pp. 203 ff.**

C. The question to be decided is whether progress is possible in Judaism or whether strict fixedness is commanded; whether the great number of our coreligionists, who entertain opinions about the value and validity of Talmudical enactments different from those held in former centuries, may still claim the name Jew or are to be considered unbelievers; whether Jewish theology can endure scientific treatment and free investigation or whether traditional views which are at variance with all culture may not be touched, nay, not even examined; and whether a man who champions openly and strives eagerly to spread a free, scientific, Jewish-theological conviction is entitled to occupy the rabbinical office or is unfit for it. Tiktin has emphasised these points with unmistakable clarity, and has declared most positively the non-permissibility of any progress; the impossibility of even the slightest change; Eger (of Posen) has even stated that any one who deviates from the Talmudic interpretation of Biblical commands must be considered an unbeliever and a renegade from the House of Israel. **Letter sent out to reform minded rabbis in 1842 by the governing board of the Breslau congregation in order to support the candidacy of Abraham Geiger**

D. “It is absolutely against the spirit of our holy religion to either condemn or excommunicate a rabbi because of individual views or opinions concerning the temporary forms of our faith. In as far as his activity furthers that higher religious and moral tendency, which is the chief object of our faith, he is deserving of that appreciation and respect which ought never to be withheld from him who strives to be true to the duties of the holiest vocation, and who perseveres courageously despite all the obstacles placed in his path.” **Aaron Chorin of Arad, in Rabbinic Responses (*Rabbinische Gutachten*) on the Compatibility of Free Investigation with the Exercise of Rabbinical Functions Vol. I, published by the governing board of the Breslau congregation - September, 1842**