

NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY

A STUDY OF THE EDUCATOR AND POET

BY

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A P P R O V A L

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PREFACE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ON

WESSELY'S PERIOD

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ON

WESSELY'S PERIOD

In order to achieve a proper perspective of the life and activities of Naphtali Herz Wessely, we need as a background the ideals and influences of the German or Berlin Haskalah. To describe, however, this German or Berlin Haskalah, which is the first period of the general Haskalah Movement, and to evaluate its activities and influences ~~are~~ not within the scope of this dissertation, for that is a subject which contains material for many dissertations. Nevertheless, some brief sketch of the period and its antecedents may prove of value here.

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Much that has been written on this Movement reflects prejudices, biases, and even personal animus. Many of the ills of modern Jewish life are laid at the door of the Haskalah. Many inaccurate assertions have been made about this Movement. One of them is that the Haskalah Movement is the well-spring of the Reform Movement in Judaism. Another is that the Haskalah is anti-nationalist. Some students of the period maintain that it bred baptism, assimilation, and a thinning out of the hitherto powerful stream of Jewish thinking and living.

It is not our aim at this point to refute or support these assertions. A more correct picture will emerge of itself as the ideals of the Berlin Haskalah are considered

objectively and in some detail.

During the nineteenth century the Haskalah was minimized and its supposed negative by-products were magnified. Nationalism took a hostile attitude toward this Movement. This may, in part, account for the relative lack of interest in the genesis and growth of the Haskalah on the part of research students during the nineteenth century. But in recent times historians have been re-examining this period and have begun to view it not merely as a series of intellectual and political developments, but also as a concatenation of social and economic phenomena.

This important period in modern Jewish history may be said to be an outgrowth of manifold forces. It is a truism by now that the Enlightenment Movement in eighteenth century Europe, a most significant movement in the world's history, served as a stimulus and guide to the Haskalah Movement. The ideals of Enlightenment - rationalism, individualism, secularism, cosmopolitanism, - are all reflected in its Jewish counterpart movement. In the train of these ideals follow the development of the critical faculties of man, a scientific attitude (even toward religion) and a revolt against authority.

The time was ripe in Jewish life for the operation of many of these forces. There had penetrated into the Ghetto a questioning of the hitherto unchallenged rabbinical authority. Aside from the general current of questioning which was prevalent in the world, a number

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of events in Jewish history proper had prepared the ground for the diminution of the authority of the rabbi and other leaders of the autonomous Jewish community. What were some of these events?

The violence against the Jews of Poland which commenced in 1648 and - in varying degree - lasted for over a century, was ruinous to Jewry and caused a great depression of spirit. Multitudes of Jews saw in these darkest disasters signs of "the pangs of the Messiah". Psychologically, then, the Jews were prepared for the coming Messianic pretenders. Towering above all the Messianic pretenders is the figure of Sabbatai Zebi. Sabbat~~h~~aism, in the main, depended on mysticism, whereas rabbinic Judaism stands predominantly for rationalism. Thus, Messianic movements like Sabbat~~h~~aism were bound to weaken the power of rabbinic Judaism. And the effects of Sabbat~~h~~aism upon Jewry did not end with Sabbatai Zebi. They continue, in one form or another, down to our own day. In the eighteenth century Sabbat~~h~~aism is reflected in the Frankist Movement. In fact, Frank claimed to be the reincarnation of Sabbatai Zebi. And even in the period under discussion, this Messianic Movement still constituted a threat to rabbinism and rabbinic authority.

At the same time, with the advent of the Haskalah, Messianic movements and Messianism suffered a serious setback. The disappointing Messianic movements bewildered

Jewry in Germany and elsewhere, and presented, as incontrovertible, the nightmarish evidence that the Jews are destined to remain in the Galuth. And so, it became clear that it was incumbent upon them to make their adjustments in the lands of their residence, particularly in view of the new era of Enlightenment in European affairs, seemingly holding out so many benefits to down-trodden Jewry.

Although Messianism was losing ground, the rabbis still were fearful of Kabbalistic studies, which were at the core of the structure of Messianism. They persecuted those occupied with the study of the Kabbalah, as in the case of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. But even among the rabbis there was difference of opinion as to the wisdom of discouraging Kabbalistic studies and persecuting its devotees. In fact, many prominent rabbis were themselves, openly or otherwise, Kabbalists. There is no doubt that this issue of Kabbalism caused a rift in rabbinic ranks and was therefore, in no small measure, responsible for the lessening of rabbinic prestige and power.

The Frankist Movement has already been mentioned. The tragic events in the career of the notorious Frank (1726-1791) and his followers certainly helped undermine the power of rabbinic Judaism in the eighteenth century. Rabbinic Judaism was also weakened through its strife with Hasidism. The rabbis saw in Hasidism, this

revivalist folk movement, another divisive force founded on Kabbalah. (The Haskalah, in turn, fought both rabbinism and Hasidism; though, in many respects, the Haskalah and Hasidism aimed at one and the same goal.) And finally, the bitter and unbecoming feud between the two prominent rabbis, Jacob Emden and Jonathan Eibeschuetz - which involved some of the greatest rabbis of Central and Eastern Europe, and lasted for six whole years - seriously damaged and undermined greatly the respect of the masses for their rabbinic leaders.

Unwittingly and unwillingly the rabbis themselves helped prepare the ground for the acceptance of Haskalah ideals. Add to these factors the intolerance and arbitrariness of many of the rabbis in their respective communities, and it becomes more understandable why there was a revulsion against rabbinic rule and a bias in favor of the Haskalah, which promised so much to the individual Jew.

There was also a number of economic and social factors that prepared the ground for the Haskalah. As a result of well-known economic developments, concomitant with the rise of Capitalism, there emerged, especially since the eighteenth century, a wealthy group of Jews in Germany. The German rulers found these affluent Jews very useful in many respects: they filled the regal coffers in exchange for grants of patents of protection; they were also instrumental in the industrial and financial

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development of the land. But the Jewish masses were, to say the least, personae-non-gratae to the rulers of the all-too-numerous principalities. These rulers divided the Jews into distinct legal groups: privileged, tolerated, protected, and rightless Jews. This was a factor working against harmony and democracy in the Kehillah. Some of the non-privileged Jews remained in a community because they were "attached" to the household of a privileged Jew as employees. The others were at the mercy of the Kehillah which, in turn, was responsible to the government. It was, for one thing, the responsibility of the Kehillah to keep the Jewish population below a fixed number. Thus, the Kehillah had it in its power to expel people from a community. Also, the Kehillah was held liable for crimes and misdemeanors of individual Jews. It therefore looked into the individual Jew's conduct and scrutinized his private life, not always without prejudice. In this social structure, the majority, who were without privileges, were dependent upon the goodwill of the minority of the privileged Jews who formed the Kehillah. Here then were multitudes of people controlled by a very small group. This small group even had it within its power to determine the influx of new residents into a community, and the distribution of occupations. Thus, they could and often did, tyrannize and direct the economic activities of the non-privileged Jews in such a fashion as to further

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their own interests. The poor and non-privileged Jews did not dare antagonize their patrons - whether they were the privileged Jews on whose lists they were registered as employees; or the influential Kehillah members who might, if provoked, try to expel them from the community. To these masses, the equal rights, which the Haskalah held out, were a crying need.

Still another aspect in the economic and social organization of the autonomous Jewish community was at the root of much tension and dissatisfaction. The Kehillah was responsible to the monarch for the collection of taxes from the members of the Jewish community. The parnasim or leaders of the Kehillah were charged by the government with a fixed sum which was imposed upon the community as a whole, and they in turn had the task of distributing the burden of the taxes among the Jews of the community. They thus exercised the immense power of assessment. Sometimes, this power was retained in the same families for generations. This assessment power was often exercised to the advantage of the vested interests of the parnasim themselves. And if an individual Jew tried to appeal from the decisions of the Kehillah to the government, the government naturally felt itself obliged to back the authority of the parnasim. Furthermore, in the Jewish community itself, there was an opprobrium attached to any Jew who made such an attempt. His effort

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was considered disloyal and taken as an attempt to weaken the prestige of the Kehillah and of Jewish unity. Public opinion considered such an act an abomination. But, these unjust assessments were a fact, and they bred dissension within the Jewish community. The impoverished masses bore their wealthy brethren, and specifically the parnasim, much ill-will. Class conflicts are in evidence in the Jewish community. They are reflected in the Musar literature as early as the sixteenth century. Even the kindly and wise Mendelssohn had some scathing things to say about the haughtiness and selfishness of the wealthy and privileged Jews.

The masses of poor and non-privileged Jews could not but distrust their communal leadership in view of such conditions; and of course these masses were ready to accept other leaders and other ideals in place of those that had proved oppressive. It is interesting to note, moreover, that the Jews at the other pole, the wealthy and privileged Jews, also smiled approvingly upon Haskalah ideals. With the rapid progress of commerce and industry, this class of Jews came in ever closer contact with non-Jews of their own economic stratum, and thus they were acquiring many of their cultural patterns. The growing non-Jewish middle class, which by and large constituted the rising capitalist class, favored the Jew, since they - unlike the guilds, clergy and nobility - had no tradition

of anti-Semitism. These wealthy non-Jews allowed the wealthy Jews to form close ties with them, and thus the wealthy Jews began weakening their ties with Jewish traditions. The rabbis frowned upon this process, but were nevertheless not very strict with the rich Jews. And the rich Jews developed a growing desire to free themselves from the grip of the Kehillah. The new Capitalist system, by its very nature, required greater freedom of movement. The wealthy Jews needed this freedom of movement in order to carry on their business enterprises on an equal footing with their non-Jewish competitors. All these considerations made the observance of the mores of their people difficult, and violations of mizvoth, such as Sabbath observance, began to take place on a considerable scale. To this group of Jews, just as to the down-trodden Jewish masses, emancipation came to fulfill a definite need. Haskalah ideals, in short, found sympathy with them, too.

It is clear then, that prior to the Haskalah Movement and during this turbulent period in Jewish life, profound changes were taking place in the very structure and nature of the Jewish community and thereby the ground was prepared for the Haskalah Movement. The German Haskalah was, in the main, an anti-traditional force and worked for radical reforms in Jewish life and leadership. Through it the traditionally accepted patterns and ideals of

Jewish education were metamorphosed. The masses, disillusioned in their religious leaders and distrustful of their communal leaders, desire secular knowledge and worldly diversions. The same was true of the growing class of wealthy Jews, but for different reasons. This growing group of wealthy Jews challenged the communal leaders and sought that leadership for themselves. Learning, piety, and yihus (descent), formerly essential to would-be communal leaders, gave way to new values. A premium was placed on wealth. Witness, for example, the leadership of the Berlin Jewish community of Wessely's day! The Itzigs and Friedlaenders were, above everything else, men of wealth. In this respect, Wessely was not a typical leader of the Berlin Haskalah. It will be pointed out in the section evaluating Wessely, that in some respects, he was an atypical Maskil, while in others, he was, if not the typical Maskil, then certainly a Tongeber.

What were these exponents and proponents of the Haskalah Movement seeking to accomplish? What was the aim of these Maskilim? We have seen how, in many respects, the time was ripe for them. The rabbinical power had been weakened. Economic and social factors had reached a climax, and the cumulative effect was making poor and rich Jewry alike seek for other ways of life. Jewry was ripe for the message of the Maskilim. What was this message?

Their immediate goal was Europeanization. This, in turn, was to lead to equal rights with non-Jews. The Maskilim were convinced that cultural and social auto-emancipation of the Jews must take place before they sought political and economic equality, or emancipation. Emancipation and equal rights seemed attainable goals in a world in which the germ of Enlightenment was afloat. But what price emancipation? A Mendelssohn or Wessely say, in effect: We will meet our non-Jewish environment on common ground; we will learn their language; we will acquire secular knowledge as it is an aid to a more effective economic existence and, at the same time, helps to a richer understanding of our own Jewish culture. But we will, under all circumstances, remain constant to our faith.

Then there was the other type of Maskil - with shades of difference, of course, within their own ranks. To these Judaism was a heavy burden, a misfortune, and they wished to cast off its shackles. They, men like Wolfsohn-Halle, Herz Homberg, Marcus Herz and David Friedlaender, believed that as the Jew became more and more emancipated and simultaneously more and more de-Judaized, Judaism would die a slow and gradual death. These men had no love for and no understanding of historical, traditional Judaism. They despised the Talmud. David Friedlaender placed the responsibility for the plight of Jewry squarely upon

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the Talmud and the rabbis. Herz Homberg suggested that all the Yeshivot in the Austrian Empire -with but one exception, in Prague - close their doors. Aaron Wolfsohn-Halle, in his brochure, "Yeshurun" (which was written in German) asserted that those brought up on the New Testament were bound to be upright and honorable men, while those nurtured on the Talmud must be unworthy and harmful people. Wolfsohn proposed that the government appoint a commission to examine the Talmud and the Midrashim and to delete those passages which it deemed harmful.

While on the subject of anti-Talmud sentiment, it should be pointed out that this sentiment is also found among the non-Jews, not only during the period under discussion, but for many centuries before. By order of Pope Gregory IX, thousands of copies of the Talmud were committed to the flames in Paris in the fifth decade of the thirteenth century. In ^{the} fifteenth century Spain, a papal bull (May 11, 1415) forbade the Jews to study the Talmud. In ^{the} sixteenth century Italy, the Talmud is time and again, burned or mutilated by the censor. During the eighteenth century, in the period under discussion, the non-Jews often obtained their misconceptions regarding the Talmud from apostates. Joseph II, a rather liberal Christian, believed that the Talmud exercised an evil influence upon the Jews. He even entertained the idea of appointing a commission to investigate and to "purify" (sic!) the Talmud.

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The anti-Talmud sentiment among a faction of the Maskilim might be considered indicative of another psychological phenomenon exhibited by these Maskilim, namely, their inferiority complex. In the Middle Ages, the Jew, in spite of all his oppressions, nevertheless enjoyed a sense of superiority. The self-sufficient, isolated life which he led was satisfying to him and he never attempted to imitate the non-Jewish life beyond the ghetto wall. As a matter of fact, he felt himself - morally and intellectually - superior to his non-Jewish neighbor. But now, toward the close of the eighteenth century, as an "enlightened" world beckoned to him, he stepped forth from the ghetto and saw what appeared to him a rich and a brilliant culture. The Jew had nothing comparable to point to. His own cultural life had reached a nadir in a history of many centuries. Psychologically, the Jew developed that insidious inferiority feeling which is so evident throughout the Haskalah period. The Jew was overwhelmed by European culture and was dazzled by it. He overrated it. At the same time, he had learned to disparage rabbinic culture. Thus began that tragic cleft in the psychic process of the modern Jew -- a disparagement of that which is his own and a glorification of that which is outside of his cultural pale.

One of the reasons Moses Mendelssohn was held in such great respect and veneration by the Maskilim is - aside

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from his saintly personality - that he received recognition and honor from the non-Jewish world. Even Wessely, who aligned himself with those Maskilim who continued to uphold their Jewish heritage, who had a healthy respect for Jewish tradition, and who showed no definite trace of anti-Talmudic bias, even he was not exempt from this inferiority complex. He was, after all, the son of a purveyor to kings. He never tired of emphasizing that secular learning would win for the Jew social standing and success in the general community. And with unmistakable traces of inferiority feeling he reiterated constantly the importance of finding favor and grace in the eyes of the gentiles, and especially the rulers.

This rapprochement was uppermost in the minds of all the Maskilim. The Absolutist Rulers of that period, Joseph II and Frederick the Great, for example, were prepared to meet this desire of their Jewish subjects. They, too, wanted an integration of the Jewish community into the general body politic. They viewed with suspicion and disfavor the seclusion of the Jewish community. They saw in a separatist Jewish community a state within a state, and this they did not like. They preferred to integrate all their peoples into their Absolutist State. The question is: what were their motives? Was it the conversion of the Jews to Christianity that they were seeking? Mendelssohn and the rabbis suspected Joseph II

of that very aim when he issued his famous Edict of Toleration, of which more will be said in Chapter Two. It seems to me that this was not a deliberate aim of the Absolutist Rulers. Rather, they sought to harness and to utilize the talents and energies of all their subjects, including the Jews, for the advancement and progress of their states. As Absolutist Rulers they desired to integrate all their peoples for a common goal set by them, the Rulers. They found it imperative that their Jewish subjects abandon their isolated existence. This was especially true of Joseph II, whose empire was composed of many heterogeneous groups, and formed a truly crazy-quilt empire. To some extent, these Rulers were also moved by the humanitarian principles prevalent in their day - the era of Rousseau, Voltaire, and their confreres. They wanted to make the Jews "better" human beings, and to help them enjoy the fruits of Enlightenment.

It is evident that the Jewish people had come upon new times. The standard-bearers of Jewish tradition, the rabbis, too, sensed it. They were therefore ready to make some slight concessions, such as the acquisition of a smattering of the vernacular, and a dash of secular studies, provided these were ancillary to Jewish studies. Some rabbis even made an effort to meet the trends of the times. Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, the Chief Rabbi of Prague, read a prayer he composed in rhymed Hebrew on the occasion of the

opening of the Juedische-Deutsche Schule in Prague, where secular subjects were studied. Rabbi Levin, the Chief Rabbi of Berlin, was one of the rabbis who endorsed Mendelssohn's Bible translation and the "Biur". He also gave his approval to the Berlin Freyschule, where secular subjects were taught and where German was the medium of instruction. There were shades of difference of opinion among the rabbis themselves as to how far the Jew was to make concessions in meeting the changing conditions. But the great majority of them was unyielding, uncompromising, and insisted that the structure which had been so faithfully built through the centuries should be kept intact and be made to continue as heretofore, despite the changing times. It was this view which caused them - even men like Rabbi Landau and Rabbi Levin - to attack Wessely so harshly when he expressed the educational ideals of the Haskalah in his "Words of Peace and Truth".

The rabbis tried to stem the tide of destiny. But destiny had its way. Destiny produced the Haskalah ideals. When these ideals arrived on the scene of Jewish history, certain conditions which had been germinating within the Jewish community for some centuries, reached a high point and thereby made the Haskalah ideals acceptable, even desirable to many members of the Jewish community. These Haskalah ideals filled a need. Many accusations and charges have been levelled against the Haskalah Movement. But,

there is another view of the matter. The fact that assimilation in Germany assumed threatening proportions in the period immediately following the German Haskalah, and the fact that a wave of baptism engulfed German Jewry in the nineteenth century, does not signify that the Haskalah Movement produced these events. Such a connection is the well-known and specious axiom of "post hoc ergo propter hoc". On the contrary, Haskalah ideals may have stemmed the tide of more radical changes. Obviously, changes in Jewish life were inevitable at this point, because of conditions within Jewish life and in the general world. These changes might have taken on serious, even disastrous proportions, had it not been for the Haskalah ideals, which lessened the shock of Jewry's transitional development. Maskilim of Wessely's type, with their emphasis on an improved Jewish education, their love of the Hebrew language, their emphasis on the Bible, their wholesome recognition of the value of secular studies in combination with Jewish learning, actually sustained the Jew when he was suddenly confronted by the new and dazzling world beyond the ghetto walls.

SECTION I - BIOGRAPHICAL

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Chapter 1. Naphtali Herz Wessely, His Life 1 - 30

CHAPTER ONE

NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY

HIS LIFE

Naphtali Herz (also called Hartwig) Wessely's great-grandfather, Joseph Hayyim Reis, escaped miraculously the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648. Wessely speaks of the fact in his "Words of Peace and Truth". (1) All the other members of the Reis family perished in the massacres. But seventeen year old Joseph succeeded in fleeing from his native town, Bar, in southern Poland (Podolia) to Cracow. (2) Not feeling secure there, he proceeded to Silesia and thence to Central Germany. At the age of twenty, we find Joseph in Amsterdam, a respected and influential member of the large Jewish community. (3) In 1671 his signature appears on a petition asking the Government for permission to erect a synagogue. The synagogue was erected in that same year.

Abraham, Joseph's older son, remained in Holland, while Joseph and his younger son, Moses, removed to Wesel on the Rhine. Hence the family name Wesel, which later became Wessely. Joseph died in Wesel. His son, Moses, prospered there and enjoyed the respect of the Jewish community. His name is inscribed on the lamps which he presented to the Wesel synagogue. Meisel, the biographer of Naphtali Wessely, speaks of these lamps as still preserved there. (4)

Moses was purveyor of the French armies stationed in Brabant. He found favor with the Holstein princes and followed them to Glueckstadt, the capital of Schleswig in the principality of Schleswig-Holstein, which at that time belonged to Denmark. Here he established the first munition factory in Denmark. Like the Portugese Jews, Moses obtained from King Frederick IV of Denmark (5) the status of a privileged Jew. Later, Moses became the King's agent in Hamburg. Here Moses was purveyor also for the armies of King Peter the Great of Russia.

One of Moses' children was Issakar Ber (Behrend). Issakar Ber was a man conversant with the practical affairs of the world. He married the daughter of the prominent Herz Beer of Frankfurt am Main. (6) Their oldest son, Naphtali Herz, was born in Hamburg in 1725. (7) While Naphtali was yet a babe, his parents moved to Copenhagen. His father continued to gain royal favor. Though his dealings were with the powers and the rulers, he nevertheless gave his son Naphtali the traditional Jewish education. At the age of five, Naphtali already knew how to read, and was brought to the Heder. (8) At the age of six, Naphtali began the study of Talmud. (9) The study of Bible and Mishnah was omitted. At the age of ten, Wessely was fortunate to be instructed by the wandering grammarian, Solomon Zalman Hanau (10), who happened to sojourn in Copenhagen. The impressionable Naph-

tali worshipped this teacher, who taught him and implanted in him a love for the Hebrew language.

After learning Hebrew grammar, Wessely turned to the Biblical texts. His admiration and love for the Bible continued to grow. Wessely felt that a knowledge of geography would aid him in a fuller comprehension of the Bible. His father taught him the geography of the world, and in three days young Naphtali committed to memory all the important facts. (11) Wessely pursued his Biblical and Talmudic studies diligently. He also read in the literature of the Spanish and Italian Schools. These studies stimulated him to learn about other peoples' literary products. Thus, Wessely commenced the study of foreign languages. He is said to have been proficient in German, French, Danish, and Dutch. (12) Like his distinguished predecessors of the Golden Age in Spain, whose works he perused, Wessely felt that secular learning was in harmony with traditional Judaism. He therefore read in natural sciences, especially in botany. But even Meisel, his over-admiring biographer, states that Wessely did not gain a basic knowledge of the natural sciences. Wessely also studied mathematics, a subject which proved to be his favorite. He is said to have been particularly fond of the mathematical works of Joseph Solomon Delmedigo. (13) Wessely devoted himself, furthermore, to the study of ancient and modern history, and Meisel says that Wessely knew ancient and modern history well. (14)

For a Jew in Wessely's age, this occupation with foreign languages, natural and social sciences, was most unusual.

In 1742, Wessely was a youth of seventeen. He was proficient in Jewish learning, and had studied in Talmudical Academies. Wessely was a favorite disciple of Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz. (15) Already then there began to stir in him the desire to improve the educational processes among his fellow-Jews, to emphasize the study of the Hebrew language and of the Holy Scriptures. (16)

Wessely's uncle, Joseph Wesel of Copenhagen, seems to have exerted a salutary influence on his young nephew. It is this uncle who is responsible for Wessely's first literary effort. Joseph Wesel is the stimulus for Wessely's translation of "Hokmat Shelomoh" ("The Wisdom of Solomon") and the commentary thereon, entitled "Rua'h Hen" ("The Spirit of Grace"). It occurred in the following manner: The seventeen year old nephew spent many an evening at the home of his elderly and learned uncle Joseph. The two discussed Hebrew literature. The older man was impressed with the young man's extensive reading and familiarity with the wide range of Hebrew literary products. (17) The discussions and free exchange of ideas often centered around the Bible. Young Wessely was grieved at the loss of so many literary works whose titles are mentioned in the Scriptures. (18) Indefatigably, he searched to recover these texts, but in vain. (19) Young Wessely also read the Apocrypha, and of

these "The Wisdom of Solomon" attracted him most. During one of these intellectual evenings at his uncle's, Wessely had occasion to quote from "The Wisdom of Solomon". Uncle Joseph, who was at home in Hebrew literature, could not identify the quotations. Upon learning their source from young Wessely, Joseph Wesel urged his nephew to translate the work into Hebrew. Translate it Wessely did, from German or French, or both (20); and in the course of a few days, he presented his uncle with the translation. The uncle felt that the translation merited a commentary, and urged his nephew to provide one. The obliging nephew did. (21) He labored lovingly, and pondered each word, its origin and development, and its distinction from other synonyms. Thus he was led into the subtle field of Hebrew synonymics.

Around this time - the exact year is not known - Wessely left for Amsterdam. (22) The banker of Frederick the Great, Ephraim Feitel, while passing through Copenhagen, had offered Wessely a position in his Amsterdam branch, where his brother, (or relative) Benjamin Feitel, was manager. Wessely proved himself a very capable man of business, and was considered an expert in precious stones.

In Amsterdam Wessely found a large and progressive Jewish community, distinguished for its liberalism. (23) This fine community made a profound impression upon Wessely. He joined the Spanish-Portuguese group, prayed according to

their ritual and pronounced Hebrew in their manner. (24) There is no doubt that Wessely was impressed by the educational system of the Jewish community of Amsterdam. We recognize the seeds of these impressions in his recommendations for educational reforms for the Jewish communities of Germany, Austria, and Poland, contained in his famous "The Words of Peace and Truth" (25) about which more will be said in subsequent chapters.

In Amsterdam, in spite of business obligations, Wessely continued his studies of the Hebrew language and his readings in Hebrew literature. He felt that Judaism cannot exist without the Hebrew language. (26) He was convinced of the necessity of preserving the original spirit, the purity and grandeur of that language. He felt, in fact, that he was in communion with the Spirit of the Hebrew language.

In 1765, Wessely completed his philological work "Lebanon" also called "Gan Na'ul" ("The Locked Garden"). The writing of this work had occupied him for many years. (27) "Mebo Ha-Gan" ("Entrance to the Garden") (28) is the introduction to the "Lebanon" and it opens with a poem in the Spanish-Arabic meter. Synonyms which apparently mean the same thing, says Wessely in this introduction, actually have definite distinctions in meaning which may not be obvious to everyone. At times, these distinctions are very fine and demand diligent study to discern them. Wessely aimed at pointing out the

primary meaning of roots, and the development and the ramifications of secondary and tertiary meanings. Wessely purported to show that a correct understanding of the language of the Talmud required a basic knowledge of Biblical Hebrew. Meisel says that in this gigantic undertaking, i.e. in the treatment of synonyms, Wessely had no predecessors.(29)

By this time, 1765, Wessely had established his own business and was a man of means. He therefore published, at his own expense, part one of "Lebanon" under the fanciful title "Gan Na'ul" which he distributed among his friends and the lovers of Hebrew literature in Amsterdam. (30) The work found great favor. (31) In the following year, 1766, Wessely published part two of "Lebanon", also entitled "Gan Naul". It, like part one, received the approval and praise of rabbis. (32) Being financially unable to distribute part two free, Wessely put it on sale. Expenses were not covered. However, after two years, the edition of part two was sold out in Poland and in Italy. (33)

Wessely had found his niche in the Jewish community of Amsterdam. He was a respected member. His advice in Jewish communal affairs was sought. He associated with the best, and was honored by the scholars. At the request of his father, however, he returned to Copenhagen (34) where he established his own successful business and married Sara Emanuel. In Copenhagen, too, Wessely is liked and respected. But unfortunately, due to the bankruptcy of

several commercial establishments which owed him money, Wessely's business here takes a bad turn. He therefore gladly accepts the offer of Joseph Feitel to manage his business affairs in Berlin. (35)

In 1774, when Wessely arrived in Berlin - the Prussian capital - it was a city thriving both culturally and commercially. Berlin was not as yet, as Meisel claims, the Athens of Germany. It was more like a French colony in its intellectual aspects, with Frederick himself leading the way in imitating and fostering French culture. But, the spiritual life of Berlin was blossoming, and next to Leipzig, the cultural capital of Germany, it was the most enlightened city of the land. While Frederick the Great was not personally favorably inclined toward his Jews, he nevertheless encouraged and treated well those who could help develop the commerce and industry of his land. There were many wealthy and influential Jews in Berlin. Wessely mentions (36) the Itzigs, (father Daniel, and son Isaac Daniel) (37), David Friedlaender, son-in-law of Daniel Itzig, (38) Dr. Marcus Bloch (39), Dr. Marcus Herz, (husband of the famous Henrietta) (40), and the medal engraver, Jacob Abraham (41) and his son, Abraham Abramson (42), the medal engraver to King Frederick. Of course, he mentions time and again in words of praise, Moses Mendelssohn, the outstanding Jewish personality of eighteenth century Germany.

Moses Mendelssohn had come to Berlin some thirty-one years before Wessely arrived there. It is a favorite theme of books on Jewish history to narrate the arrival in Berlin, in October 1743, (soon after Succoth), of an apprehensive, shy, and homely-looking lad of fourteen. He stood before the Rosenthaler Gate (the only one through which Jews could enter Berlin) seeking admission. The boy, son of a Torah Scribe of Dessau, was following his teacher, the erstwhile Rabbi of Dessau, Rabbi David Fraenkel, who had been appointed Rabbi of Berlin the August before. It is not within the scope of this work to trace Mendelssohn's development and career up to 1774, the time of Wessely's arrival; but it may be said that it is quite inaccurate to state - as so many historians do - that Mendelssohn was the first Jew in Germany to acquire secular education. (43) Suffice it to mention that Mendelssohn's teachers in Berlin, Zamosc, Gumperz, and Kisch, had secular training and helped Mendelssohn to acquire it. At any rate, when Wessely came to Berlin in 1774, Mendelssohn was the leading Jewish figure in Berlin, enjoying an international reputation as a philosopher and man of letters. Wessely says that statesmen and philosophers sojourning in Berlin make it a point to seek out Mendelssohn and spend some time with him. (44).

Kayserling, Mendelssohn's biographer, is incorrect in saying that Mendelssohn and Wessely met in Hamburg in 1761 and that by October 1761 they were friends. (45) True,

Mendelssohn knew of Wessely through the latter's younger brother, Moses Wessely, who lived in Hamburg, the city where Fromet Gugenheim, Mendelssohn's betrothed, also resided. (46) And Wessely most certainly knew of the famous Mendelssohn. But the personal meeting between Mendelssohn and Wessely is another matter. In a letter written on October 8, 1761 to his fiancée, Mendelssohn sends warm greetings, to Naphtali Wessely. In a letter dated October 16, 1761, Mendelssohn tells Fromet: "By the time you receive this letter, Mr. Hartwig Wessely will in all probability already have taken his departure, and I expect him here for the holidays." (47) It is on the basis of this letter that Kayserling assumes Mendelssohn and Wessely met in Berlin and were friends by October 1761.

That, however, does not seem to be the case. A letter from Mendelssohn to Fromet, dated October 24, 1761 -- in other words, a letter dated later than the one on which Kayserling bases his assertion -- clearly shows that Mendelssohn has not as yet met Wessely. In this later letter Mendelssohn is still hoping that an opportunity for their meeting will present itself; but ^{he} seems to have no definite occasion in view at the time he is writing this letter. "Rabbi Herz (Wessely) is, I presume, no longer there. However, in your writing to him, please assure him of my friendly regard for him. I should be truly sorry if the opportunity does not present itself for my making his acquaintance." (48) (Emphasis mine)

Still another point may be brought to bear on the question of the date of the first meeting between Mendelssohn and Wessely. Meisel, Wessely's biographer, gives clear indication that the two men ^{did} ~~do~~ not meet prior to 1774, inasmuch as he discusses (page 62) the initial impression that they make on each other when Wessely came to Berlin in 1774 to take up residence there.

It appears, then, that Mendelssohn and Wessely did not actually meet before 1774, but at some date later than 1761 they did begin to correspond. In a letter dated September 1768, from Berlin, Mendelssohn tells Wessely about his "Phaedon". Mendelssohn fears that Wessely will disapprove of this work. Wessely, being a very pious man, might not see the need to adduce logical proof for the immortality of the soul - a cardinal principle of the Jewish religion. And then, too, "Phaedon" was written in German and not in Wessely's beloved Hebrew. Incidentally, this letter is a fine illustration of Mendelssohn's concise, lucid and idiomatic Hebrew. Wessely replies in the same month from Copenhagen. Mendelssohn is pleasantly surprised, for Wessely praises the work, particularly its timeliness. (49) In fact, Wessely contemplates translating it into Hebrew. However, he did not carry out this project. The work was translated by Isaiah Beer-Bing (Berlin 1786)(50), and Wessely wrote the introduction to it.

Thanks to this correspondence with Mendelssohn, Wessely, when he arrived in Berlin in 1774, was not a total stranger,

but had a firm point of contact with Berlin's Jewish intellectual life in the person of Moses Mendelssohn. In addition, Wessely had been enjoying a reputation as a Hebraist for some time, having established that reputation in 1765-66 with his "Lebanon", a work which in all probability Mendelssohn and his circle of Maskilim had read. Mendelssohn appreciated Wessely's knowledge of Hebrew; and Wessely, in turn, like many another Jew, admired Mendelssohn for his high cultural attainments, which nevertheless did not interfere with his fidelity to Judaism, including its ritual. Now that they lived in such close proximity, Mendelssohn's influence on Wessely became direct and intimate. Many an ideal did they share in common; and in time, many of these common ideals became the principles of the Haskalah Movement. Both men wanted to see a harmonization of Judaism and European culture. Both desired changes in the education of the Jewish child. They urged a return to the study of the Bible - the greatest treasure of their People. They wanted their fellow-Jews to know both Hebrew and German. Yiddish was hateful to them; they did not consider it a language; held it to be a jargon, a contaminated and crippled German. They even considered Yiddish an index of spiritual demoralization. (51)

Much as they shared their ideals, the two men, nevertheless, were quite unlike in many respects. Wessely was passionate and easily aroused to enthusiasm; Mendelssohn was the cooler and more restrained of the two. Mendelssohn

had an enormous store of general knowledge compared with that of Wessely. Mendelssohn tried to give Judaism a philosophic basis, while Wessely derived his philosophy of life from Judaism. (52) In Mendelssohn's scheme of things, Reason reigned supreme; and he attempts, in his "Phaedon", to explain the immortality of the soul rationally. Wessely never finds it necessary to give rational proof for dogmas of Judaism.

Mendelssohn invited Wessely to become his associate in an historic undertaking, the "Biur", a commentary on the Torah. In the year 1778 Mendelssohn was engaged in the translation of the Pentateuch into German. The Hebrew commentary thereon, known as the "Biur", he entrusted to Solomon Dubno, the tutor of his son. Writers on that period (53) have assumed incorrectly that Mendelssohn invited Wessely to write the commentary on Leviticus only after Dubno had left Mendelssohn and this undertaking. The fact that Dubno and Mendelssohn parted company in the fall of 1780 actually had no bearing at all on Mendelssohn's invitation to Wessely to write a commentary on Leviticus. The truth of the matter was that Mendelssohn felt the task of commenting on the entire Pentateuch was too great for Dubno; and gave the assignment to Wessely while Dubno was still with him. (54) This must have been a blessing to Wessely, because at that time he was having serious financial difficulties, of which more will be said later.

Exactly when Wessely began writing the commentary on Leviticus has not been ascertained. But at the end of August

1781, his commentary was printed. (55) Wessely's commentary found favor with its readers, and in the main, pleased Mendelssohn. (56) Wessely, in turn, was delighted with Mendelssohn's translation. He saw in this translation a much needed text for the teaching of the Bible. The Bible, in Wessely's day, was taught by the translation method. The language it was translated into was Yiddish. Both Mendelssohn and Wessely, despising Yiddish, desired to discard the use of this language in the teaching of the Scriptures, and emphasized the desirability of using pure German. Here was the text, Wessely asserted, that could serve in the proper teaching of the Bible.

The use of Yiddish is but one of Wessely's criticisms of the existing educational system of his day. Further criticisms are found in his poem, "Mehallel Reá" ("In Praise of a Friend"), which appeared in 1778. The poem was inspired by "Álim li-Terufah" ("Leaves for Healing"), which was an announcement by Dubno of the forthcoming translation of the Pentateuch, plus some samples of the commentary. The aim of the announcement, "Álim li-Terufah", was to publicize the still incomplete work and to gain subscribers for it. (57) The poem which it inspired Wessely to write (58) is one full of praise both for the translator and the translation. Wessely uses the opportunity to criticize the educational system existing at the time. His chief objections are three-fold. First of all, he objects, as has been stated above, to the use of Yiddish as a medium of instruction. Secondly,

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he regrets the omission of the study of the Bible. And thirdly, he deplores the lack of gradation. The child is immediately plunged into the study of the Talmud. In this poem Wessely furthermore expresses the hope that the new translation into pure German, and the commentary in the rationalistic spirit, will find wide use. "Mehallel Rea", because it was laudatory of the translation and commentary, was prefaced by Dubno to his commentary on the Book of Exodus. It was a most significant poem. In it, Wessely laid down the program of the Haskalah Movement for the next century; and adumbrated his "Words of Peace and Truth", the work which wrought so profound a change in the course of his own life.

The participation in the "Biur" was not Wessely's first literary activity in Berlin. In fact, in 1775, one year after his arrival (59) Wessely had published his "Yen Lebanon", a commentary on "Aboth". Its aim was to make this gem of Rabbinic literature more understandable to the people, by explaining the times and the circumstances under which the "Ethics of the Fathers" ^{was} ~~were~~ written; also, by clarifying language difficulties, such as idioms. Wessely maintained that post-Biblical Hebrew literature, too, was inspired; and that the sages obeyed grammatical rules and were true to the spirit of the Hebrew language, unlike the rabbis of his own day, who admired their predecessors, but nevertheless ignored the proper use of the Hebrew language. Wessely is

said to have decided upon the writing of this commentary while yet a pupil of Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz. (60) As a matter of fact, he did write part of the commentary at that time. Now, in 1775, in Berlin, he completed and enriched the work. It is written in a gracious, flowing and poetic style. This work was highly praised and received the endorsements of the very rabbis who later waged a bitter war against Wessely. In "Yen Lebanon" Wessely claims that Jewish institutions are not merely products of the requirements of a certain period and ergo not useful to another, later period that is coping with different circumstances. He claims that these institutions can be used to good effect at all times, by those who know and understand them. 2
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In 1778 (61) Wessely published^d his translation of "The Wisdom of Solomon" and "Ruah Hen", the commentary thereto. It is not, of course, the commentary of the seventeen year old youth, but an enlarged and enriched one. (62) It might be that this work waited a quarter of a century for publication because Apocrypha were considered heretical. Lack of means to publish might have been another reason. The commentary is very verbose and tiring. Wessely himself, as well as his admiring biographer, Meisel, admits it. (63) The translation however is in beautiful Biblical style. And it must be admitted that Wessely's pioneer work in translating "The Wisdom of Solomon" stimulated others to similar efforts. (64) 2
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Joseph Feitel, Wessely's employer, who was now advanced in years, decided to retire. That meant that Wessely remained unemployed and without means of sustenance. (65) Poverty entered his once comfortable home, and afflicted him, his wife, and his six children. But they bore their deprivation bravely. (66) Bitterness did not enter ~~Naphtali~~ Wessely's heart, despite his sorry lot. His perfect faith in God sustained him. He provided for the barest necessities of his family through the remuneration he received for literary work (67) and for some services he rendered in the home of his friend, David Friedlaender, possibly tutoring or bookkeeping. /8

To his rescue came an offer of a group of Berlin Jews, led by Jeremiah Bendit, to lecture on the Pentateuch before the Jewish youth of the city twice or three times a week. The remuneration was adequate to cover the needs of his family, and Wessely accepted the offer. He undertook not merely to lecture to his pupils, but to lead them to the study of the Hebrew language. (68) However, he had dubious success in his endeavors. At the beginning his audience was large. But being accustomed to methods of exegesis other than those employed by Wessely, they dwindled away. (69) Then, too, Wessely was not "progressive" enough for some, since he did not follow Bonnet and Buffon, who were held in repute as popularizers of critical views on the Bible. (70)

Wessely was deeply hurt by this failure. There were, nevertheless, certain positive outgrowths from these lectures. During their course, the lack of suitable textbooks had become apparent to Wessely. He therefore began work on a dictionary of the Hebrew language. Lack of time and means obliged him to abandon this project. (71) Another attempt growing out of these lectures, did, however, materialize. Wessely wrote a commentary on the Book of Genesis. (72)

Whatever his lack of success as a lecturer may have been, there is no doubt about the profound impression Wessely made as a conversationalist upon an intimate circle. His home, especially on Sabbaths and Festivals, was frequented by admirers and friends. David Friedrichsfeld, one of his disciples and his biographer, recounts this interesting incident. (73) It was on a Sabbath, in Wessely's home. The conversation centered on Hebrew poetry and style. Wessely took the floor and spoke brilliantly. As he came in his discourse to the Revelation on Mt. Sinai, he was so moved that he shut his eyes and spoke as if in a trance. He forehead gleamed. His body trembled. His voice, at first mighty, became soft and low. The audience was spellbound, entranced by what they heard. Contemporaries say that Wessely believed himself to be divinely inspired. (74)

A similar incident concerns the Eve of Yom Kippur. Wessely was in the company of scholars at the home of his friend,

Rabbi Hirschel Loebel (Rabbi Levin), Rabbi of Berlin. He was asked to discourse on the significance of the Day of Atonement. He captivated his listeners to such a degree, that only the break of dawn reminded them to go to the synagogue.

It was in 1782 that Wessely's scholarly existence was broken. Joseph II, the "enlightened" Monarch (and considering the time, he was a tolerant and benign ruler), moved by humanitarian and other considerations, issued his famous "Toleranzpatent", on January 2, 1782. (75) Among other regulations, this Edict requires Joseph's Jewish subjects to learn the German language. In order to accomplish this, the Jews are either to attend the governmental schools or open schools of their own, in which German is to be taught. While the Jews welcomed certain aspects of this Edict, such as the removal of some shameful limitations that had hitherto been imposed upon them (e.g. clothes to identify them, body toll); and while they appreciated some of the concessions it granted (e.g. engaging in trade, commerce, and farming), nevertheless their general attitude -- because of bitter experience -- was that of wariness and suspicion. They distrusted the motives of the King, and suspected him of seeking the assimilation and conversion of the Jews. Even the wise and worldly Mendelssohn was sceptical. (76)

But Wessely, highly emotional and easily aroused to enthusiasm, hailed the document with joy, and upon its

appearance, composed a poem of praise for the benevolent King. (77) Wessely saw in the proper education of his people their salvation, and was therefore especially in accord with the school reforms proposed by the King. Wessely believed that the Europeanization of the Jew would lead to his emancipation. He felt that the knowledge of the German language was for the Jew a sine qua non in gaining their desideratum - emancipation. To Wessely emancipation held no threat of assimilation and loss of identity. To him it spelled the prestige of civil rights. He therefore could not understand the sadness, the resentment, the unwillingness of some members of the Jewish communities of Austria, especially of Vienna, to carry out the proposed school reforms.

What was it that orthodox Jewry feared? Briefly, orthodox Jewry saw in this Edict a serious threat to their traditional way of living, and they were apprehensive that the introduction of German and other secular subjects would relegate the Jewish subjects to a subordinate position. To Wessely, however, the school reforms contained in the Edict were a blessing, and he believed that God inspired the Monarch to issue this Edict.

He writes his letter, "The Words of Peace and Truth" early in 1782, in the hope of allaying these fears of the Orthodox, and in the further hope of persuading them that the school reforms ordered by Joseph II would not work

contrary to Judaism. He points out that there is precedent in our history for combining Jewish learning with secular knowledge. But, this letter had a totally different and opposite effect from the one its pious author had anticipated. There arose a flood of resentment, wholly unforeseen by Wessely. Orthodoxy saw in this letter neither *Peace* nor *Truth*. The rabbis declared war upon Wessely. He was now torn out of his quiet tower of intellectual pursuits and cast, as it were, into the dust of the arena. He became the cynosure of a bitter polemic, one which raised issues that are by no means resolved to this very day. This letter, this target around which the storm raged, is considered to be the first public manifesto of the Haskalah Movement. Furthermore, according to some historians of Hebrew literature, it marks the beginning of modern Hebrew literature and is a document that "will always occupy a place of honor in our controversial literature." (78)

Whatever the historical significance of the letter may be, the sharp antagonisms and bitter personal attacks that it produced were very painful to Wessely. Not being pugnacious by nature, he was terribly disturbed by the tumult in his life. But he was in the thick of the polemic and he had to carry on. On April 24, 1782, his second letter, "Abundant Goodness to the Household of Israel", appears. It is addressed to the Jewish community of Trieste and is explanatory of the first letter. Its tone is conciliatory.

The author gives assurances that he had not intended to offend anyone. Wessely's third and fourth letters were published as a result of an extremely sharp attack made upon him by Rabbi David Tevele of Lissa in his sermon on the Great Sabbath, end of March 1782. The third letter, entitled "The Well of Judgment", appeared on April 30, 1784 and in it Wessely reproduces letters of Italian rabbis wherein they express their views on the proposed reforms in Jewish education and find no fault with those upheld by Wessely. The fourth and last open letter, "Broad Ways", appears in 1785. Here Wessely elaborates on ideas expressed in his previous letters and refutes the charges of Rabbi David Tevele.

Wessely, who was thus in the thick of a battle for Haskalah ideals, was considered by the younger Maskilim as their leader and master and was admired by them as a Hebraist and stylist. It was therefore natural for the group of Maskilim organized in Koenigsberg in 1783 under the name of "Society for the Cultivation of the Hebrew Language", and headed by Euchel, Breslau, and the brothers Friedlaender, to call upon Wessely -- in a letter full of reverence and compliments (79) -- for contributions to their monthly journal, Ha-Meassef. Wessely, who loved Hebrew and hoped that the new venture would enrich Hebrew literature, approved of it, and replied to these young men. His letter is found in "Nahal Ha-Besor" ("The Brook Besor"), a prospectus an-

nouncing the coming of the Ha-Meassef, and stating its purpose and program. In this letter Wessely emphatically gives clear evidence of his adherence to traditionalism, his conservative bent of mind, and his desire to maintain peace in Israel. The letter begins with a general approval of the project of the young Maskilim, continues by praising the initiators, and proceeds to advise the young Meassefim. The manner and tone are so cautious and conservative as to be an emphatic indication of the effects which the controversy has had on Wessely. (80)

As to the request to ^{contribute to} ~~give~~ the Ha-Meassef of his poems, Wessely is not eager to comply, as he does not place high value on himself as a poet. (81) However, he tells his younger colleagues that he has a wealth of material dealing with exegesis and philology and he offers them his brief treatise on the verb "radom" and its usages in the Bible. (This is taken from Wessely's commentary on the Book of Genesis.) Because of lack of space, this article is not included in "Nahal Ha-Besor", but appears in the first issue of the Ha-Meassef.

Despite his reluctance with regard to his poetry, a few of Wessely's poems do appear in the Ha-Meassef. Some of this poetry might be termed "Gelegenheitsgedichte", that is, poems written on request, for specific occasions. (82) In the Kislev issue of 1784 we find Wessely's poem dedicated to David Friedlaender, composed on the occasion of trans-

mitting to him his "Gan Naul". In the Tammuz 1785 issue, we find Wessely's poem on the death of Duke Leopold of Brunswick, who was drowned in the Oder on April 27, 1785 while trying to save some of his soldiers. This poem is frequently quoted by critics and historians of Hebrew literature to show that Wessely was capable of reaching poetic heights. In this same issue and in the subsequent one, Wessely announced his plan to carry on his work on synonyms and to publish two volumes a year. This project materialized to the extent that there are, in manuscript, two works of Wessely's on synonyms: "Migdal Ha-Lebanon" and "Ma^cayan Ganim". Wessely also informs his readers that Isaac Euchel plans to translate his works on synonyms into German. This project did not, for some reason, come to fruition. In the Kislev 1786 issue, there appeared Wessely's poem in honor of Ludwig XVI. In the following month's issue, Wessely dedicates a poem to Naphtali Hirz Edelsheim of Strassbourg. In the Adar aleph 1786 issue, Wessely's Elegy on the death of his friend, Moses Mendelssohn, appears. It is called "Kôl Nehi" or is sometimes referred to under the title "Nahal Shotef Mavet". It is a poem full of deep and genuine feeling. In the Iyyar 1786 issue Wessely presents David Friedlaender with a poem on the occasion of the latter's German translation of the Prayer-Book. On the same occasion, Wessely dedicates a poem to Friedlaender's brother-in-law, Isaac Itzig. This is composed to order. (83)

righteous and the wicked is an heretic. To preserve our moral structure, Wessely implies, one must believe that God sees all actions and that man is judged according to his actions. This leads to the fear of God and to an avoidance of sin. Even if one sees that the righteous fare ill and the wicked prosper, he will not wonder, since he knows that there is another world where God judges every action. The sages give details of reward and punishment in order to make the entire subject comprehensible to the masses. Wessely refers to Rabbi ^aMenasseh ben Israel's book "Nishmat Hayyim" who treated the subject and compiled the views of the wise men of all times. Wessely posits this question: If the soul is incorporeal, how can we speak of it as burning or freezing? And he says that some philosophers assert that "everything that has been said concerning this matter of fire of hell is figurative." Rabbi Joseph Albo was inclined to this view. But Rabbi ^aMenasseh believes in real hell and that the fire is real and not symbolic. Wessely presents the views of Nahmanides, of Moses DeLeon, and of Don Isaac Abravanel. He also mentions Mendelssohn's "Phaedon".

This whole article, subject matter and tone, might seem to a modern reader to be impractical ^{and} trivial ~~ity~~. There is no doubt that it is written in the spirit of medieval /scholasticism. Wessely quotes, agrees and disagrees, pilpulizes, and splits hairs. (Incidentally, in quoting the Zohar, he

expresses the belief that Rabbi Simon bar Yohai is the author of the Zohar.) It is an article which tends to show that Wessely, rationalist though he was, is not completely, in a spiritual sense, the modern Jew. He still has a kinship with the medieval period. He seems to stand between two Ages. The medieval Jew in him is fascinated by this metaphysical subject; but the rationalist in him wants to treat it in a simple and lucid manner. Wessely reveals himself here a transition figure between the medieval and the modern Jew. (85) This is most especially obvious toward the end of the essay, where Wessely offers the editors of ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef his advice, already offered them previously in "Nahal ~~Ha~~-Besor". He urges them to avoid satire, and particularly to avoid publishing articles of the kind which had prompted him to write this essay. It is clear that he is somewhat disappointed in these younger men, the Meassefim, who are striking out onto new paths, away from the traditions and orthodoxy in which Wessely in his whole being was rooted. Wessely is standing on the bridge. His younger colleagues, it appears to him, are eagerly hastening to the other side, and Wessely is appalled by the implications thereof.

In 1785 Wessely's Book of Ethics, the "Sefer ~~Ha~~-Middot" or "Musal Haskel" appears^{ed}. Ethics is a favorite field of Wessely's. He is aware that Hebrew literature possesses

great works dealing with this subject, such as the "Duties of the Heart" of Rabbi Bahye and "The Path of the Righteous" of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. But, he felt that a systematic, practical text on the subject was sorely needed for the masses. A text - not a onesided one which either concentrated on the dire punishments awaiting the evil-doer, or described in great detail the bliss and happiness in store for the righteous - such a text, Wessely felt, was in order. This he attempts to carry out in "Sefer ~~Ha~~-Middot".

* * * * *

In 1785 Wessely's wife passed away. (86) The loss was a great shock to him. He withdrew from company; he became introspective. In the meditation of God and His ways he found consolation. He brooded over the history of his people, and was irresistibly drawn to the story of ~~that man~~ Moses. At the age of sixty, Wessely undertakes the writing of a national epic on Moses, his "Shire Tiferet" ("Songs of Glory"). These epic poems are at the same time, in some parts, a commentary on the Book of Exodus. (87) In their day they made a profound impression and were considered Wessely's crowning achievement, his magnum opus.

Wessely's literary activities at this time also included correspondence with Rabbi David Sinzheim (88), Michael Berr of Paris (89), David Franco Mendes (90), Heymann Binger (91),

Professors Hufnagel, Spalding, Eichhorn, and Michaelis. (92)

In 1804, one of Wessely's daughters, upon marrying Dr. Maier of Hamburg, settled in that city, and Wessely spent the last eight months of his life in the city of his birth, with his children. (93) There he was treated with great respect and reverence. (94) Eighty years old and weary though he was, he nevertheless continued his intellectual pursuits and even lectured from time to time. He did, however, sense that the end was near, and rejected the offer that was made him to become the spiritual head or Hakam of the London-Portugese community. (95) Soon illness stopped his activities completely. He became bedridden. Still his mind was active and delighted to ponder upon the Book he loved most, the Bible. Shortly before his death Wessely spoke to his pupil, Abraham Meldola (96) concerning Psalm 130, and drew the distinction between נִחַם and נִחַי . נִחַם said the dying man, refers to an hope for something which needs must come, like hoping for the night to come; while נִחַי implies a hope beset by uncertainties.

Wessely breathed his last on February 28, 1805, and his remains were deposited in the Portugese Cemetery of Altona, near Hamburg, on March 3, 1805. (97)

SECTION II - THE EDUCATOR

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CHAPTER TWO

"WORDS OF PEACE AND TRUTH"

How They Came To Be Written

Unlike his mother, Maria Theresa, ruler of Austria from 1740 to 1780 --- who had been very hostile toward the Jews (1) --- Joseph II (1741-1790) who ruled from 1780 until his death, took a more favorable attitude toward his Jewish subjects. While personally not free from prejudice against them, Joseph nevertheless felt the strong influence of men like Voltaire and Diderot, philosophers of the Enlightenment School, who preached the principles of humanitarianism. His legislation toward the Jews was marked by this School of Thought.

English

Another influence shaping his policy was an anonymous petition which clearly outlined the barbarities of the anti-Jewish laws in force at that time. This petition had been presented to Joseph by his secretary, Gunther, who was on intimate terms with the Eskeles family, (2) and it left a deep impression upon the Ruler. Joseph, in a spirit tolerant for his time, determined to alleviate the repressive measures governing the Jews of his lands. His officials, anti-Semitic bureaucrats, opposed the Monarch's humane intentions. These advisers stated their objections very carefully and made them on the basis of the welfare of the Christian population. (3) But Joseph

would not be deterred from his purpose. In a series of legal documents known as Patents or Edicts of Toleration (January, 1782), some shameful measures against the Jews were abolished. (4) Some examples follow:

1. The obligation to wear badges or clothes distinguishing the Jews from the rest of the population.
2. The restriction against appearing on the streets on Sundays and Catholic festivals before noon.
3. The restriction against visiting public amusement places.
4. The Leibmout or body-tax, paid by Jews upon entering a city. (5)

Henceforth, the Edict specified, the Jews are permitted:

1. To learn trades from Christian craftsmen (but they may not join the guilds and may not be called masters)
2. To master arts, architecture and the fine arts.
3. To engage in commerce and to open factories.
4. To engage in farming. But they may not own the land. They may, however, lease it and must cultivate it themselves. (Joseph hoped that farming would have a positive moral effect on the Jews.)
5. To attend government schools and universities, except the Faculty of Theology.
6. To send their children to the public schools; or to set up schools exclusively for them.

The Edict leaves some old restrictions in force, and adds some new ones:

1. The increase of the Jewish population must be checked.

2. The regions from which Jews were excluded heretofore will remain closed to them.
3. Residence in Vienna is strictly limited. Only special governmental or royal permission entitled a Jew to residence in the Capital.
4. Jews may settle in the villages of Lower Austria only if they establish factories there.
5. The right of residence in Austria enjoyed by a Jewish family is not transferable to the children upon their entering marriage.
6. The Jews of Vienna do not constitute a community. They are not allowed to erect a public synagogue, nor to hold public services.
7. In their bookkeeping, business correspondence, and in legal documents, Jews must employ the German language, and not Hebrew or Judaeo-German.

The consensus among historians (e.g. Graetz, Dubnow, and Pribram) is that Joseph II was somewhat moved by humanitarian principles in his relation toward his Jewish subjects, but that he was interested primarily in making them useful to his State. (6) It is probably for that reason that his Edict sought to afford the Jews more diverse means of participating in the economic life of his lands, and provided them with the opportunity to practice trades, farming and the arts. It is, in this connection, interesting to note the King's expressed reason for providing the Jews with more varied economic outlets. He aims to detract the Jews from usury and dishonorable practices, or in the King's own words "von dem ihnen so eigen-

en Wucher und betrügerischen Handel." Joseph had gained his unfavorable impression of the Jews while he was regent in the name of Maria Theresa in Galicia. There he had had occasion to observe the Jews, and he had not gained a very good impression of them. (7) He believed, for example, that the Jews exerted an evil influence on the peasants and encouraged drunkenness among them, thereby bearing the responsibility for the peasants' diminishing contributions to the royal treasury. These impressions and considerations had their influence on Joseph when the Toleranzpatent was drafted. He wanted to improve the Jews' moral qualities. (sic!) The Ruler thought that constructive work such as farming would accomplish this aim, and therefore the Toleranzpatent makes provisions for encouraging farming among the Jews. However, it does not allow the Jews to own land. They may lease farms which they themselves must cultivate. But if they turn Christian, they may acquire possession of the farms. This proviso especially caused the Jews to be distrustful of the King's motives, and to attribute to him the desire to bring about the conversion of the Jews. (8) Even the worldly Mendelssohn was suspicious. ✓

There is no doubt that Joseph aimed also, through the terms of his Edict, at binding together the heterogeneous groups of his empire. There were in Joseph's empire, among others, Jews, Hungarians, Lombards, Bohemians, and Walloons. Common ties of language and culture were to accomplish this

end. The Monarch grants the Jews a period of two to three years in which to learn the German language. We have seen above that all legal documents, in order to be valid, must be drawn up in German. In order to learn German, the Jewish children may attend the government schools. For those who do not care to attend these schools, schools for Jews only (to be maintained by taxes paid by the Jews) are to be established. But even in these Jewish schools, German must be taught.

In this provision the orthodox Jews saw a threat to their traditional school system, and their way of living. They feared that the knowledge of German would be an avenue to secular studies, and that secular studies would eventually predominate and lead to the neglect of Jewish studies. The Maskilim, Wessely among them, saw in these proposed reforms, on the other hand, an important step toward the realization of their ideals, namely, emancipation and a better adjustment to the culture of the country of their residence. (9)

The reaction of the Jews was by no means uniform throughout Joseph's lands. The Jews of Lombardy had had a long tradition of combining Jewish and secular learning, and so found no fault with the proposed school reforms. They opened schools patterned along the lines laid down by the Edict, in Trieste and elsewhere. In Prague, too, Jewish education was relatively progressive. Besides the tradition-

al subjects, German reading and writing and other secular subjects were taught, even before the Edict was issued.

(10) In 1774 the Jewish community of Prague had established a Girls' School. On May 2, 1782, just a few months after the Edict was promulgated, the Jüdische deutsche Schule was opened there. In honor of the occasion, Rabbi Ezekiel Landau composed and read a rhymed prayer in Hebrew. So we see that in some parts of Joseph's empire the Edict fell on receptive ground. But in other parts, especially among the Jews of Galicia, there were many misgivings and ill forebodings concerning the Patent. Many mourned, and public fasts were held. (11)

The reaction of Galician Jewry becomes understandable if the situation of this Jewry is analyzed. Galicia had been annexed to the Austrian empire with the first Partition of Poland in 1772, and was part of the empire of Joseph II. Until the promulgation of the Edict of Toleration their economic existence had been largely that of middlemen, keepers of small businesses, lessees of breweries and inns. This last fact explains, probably, the conviction which Joseph held, that Jews encouraged drunkenness among the peasants. At any rate, this Galician Jewry, some 300,000 of them, are mainly an urban, non-agrarian population. Joseph II was a physiocrat, and as such believed that all wealth is derived from the soil, that farming is the backbone of a national economy, and that a non-agrarian population is a non-productive one, nay even a harmful one. Hence, he incorporates

in his Edict of Toleration provisions that will convert the Jews' economic life to a different basis - an agrarian basis. As has already been pointed out, they, by its terms, may lease farms, though while they are Jews, they may not own them. The actual effect of these provisions of the Edict was to destroy the economic basis of Galician Jewry and to pauperize fully one-third of it. It is a fact that up to the First World War, Galician Jewry was the poorest of all Jewries. The Emperor's experiment was, for the Galician Jew, a failure. First of all, the experiment failed because the government provided insufficient funds for the settling of the Jews on farms. Secondly, the hostile beaurocrats entrusted with the task of adjusting the Jews to their new life, did not make a genuine effort. They were inefficient and dishonest. The result was that Galician Jewry, by the terms of the Edict of Toleration, was overwhelmed by untold suffering. With these troubles heaped upon them, they were in no mood to appreciate some of the measures of the Patent that were more favorable to the Jews. They see in the Edict an instrument responsible for their economic uprooting, dislocation, and impoverishment. They are in no frame of mind to examine objectively the school reforms contained therein. They are suspicious even of these school reforms and attribute to them sinister intentions, such as the weakening and disintegration of Jewish life, leading ul-

timately to the conversion of the Jews.

Wessely, it seems, had no understanding of this distressing situation among Galician Jewry. He was a Jew residing in Germany, and there conditions are quite different. The Jewish settlement in Germany is comparatively small. In 1750 there ^{were} ~~are~~ 152 Jewish families in Berlin. At the end of the seventies of the 18th century, there were some 4,245 Jews in Berlin, in a total population of some 138,719. The Jews in Germany form ^a small section of the total population, they reside ^{ed} mainly in the few large cities, and there they play ^{ed} an important role in the financial and industrial development of the land. To Jews such as Wessely the plight of Galician Jewry did not apply; the additional privileges granted by the Edict were welcome; and the educational reforms could be considered a boon. To them the school reforms offered an avenue for a rapprochement with an environment that seemed friendly.

Wessely, having this particular background and living mostly in German cities, could not comprehend the dissatisfaction and consternation with which the Toleranzpatent was greeted in some parts of Joseph's empire. He, from the very moment of its issuance, welcomed it, for he saw in its provisions the fulfillment of some of his own most cherished ideals. He composed a poem in praise of Joseph II, the Father of the Toleranzpatent. To Wessely, the school reforms which the Edict provided, were the basis for the

emancipation of the Jew and for his better adjustment to the life of the land in which he lived. He saw no reason for suspicion and fear, and no threat to traditional Judaism.

It was with the intention of allaying the suspicions and fears of Jewry hostile to the Edict that Wessely (12) published his famous letter "Words of Peace and Truth", in 1782. (13) It was printed in small format and fills almost seventeen sheets. Its title page reads: "Words of peace and truth to the congregation of Israel residing in the lands of the domain of the Great Emperor who loves mankind and gladdens people, His Majesty, Josephus II."

* * * *

Contents

Wessely opens his "Words of Peace and Truth" with the dictum from Proverbs (22:6) "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it," and he derives two lessons from it. 1. -- "Educate the child" - the optimum time for instruction is the period of childhood; and 2. -- "According to his way" - the methods of instruction should be adapted to the mental powers of the individual child. Wessely knows that individual differences do exist and he wants them to be taken into account in the educational process.

A systematic education, says Wessely, is to be differentiated into two departments: Human Knowledge and Divine Law. (14) By the latter category Wessely understands the teachings as found in the Written and Oral Laws. The Laws are binding only upon the Children of Israel. They have been revealed unto Moses, who transmitted them orally to Joshua. He, in turn, handed them down to the Elders of his generation; and so down the line of generations. This oral tradition continued until the Second Exile (70 C.E.). Then evil days followed. The fear that the Jews might forget these teachings made itself felt. Ergo, the Torah was written down. Only upon the children of Israel are these divine Laws, embodied in the Torah, obligatory. Had they not come down to us, the wisest of men would have been unable to discover them. These Divine Laws were revealed to man.

The case of Human Knowledge is altogether different. If it were not written down, the human mind and senses could reconstruct it. This knowledge can be learned from the wise. Human Knowledge encompasses: 1. - Social Sciences which include ethics, good manners or refinement, elegance of diction (a Leitmotif with Wessely), history, geography the customs of the country and the rules of the kings.

2. - Mathematical Sciences, which include arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.

3. - Natural Sciences, which include zoology, botany, chemistry, medicine.

The Human Knowledge, says Wessely, should precede (in time only) the knowledge of the Divine Law. (15) For it has been declared that "The knowledge of the way of the world preceded that of the Torah by twenty-six generations; for the Torah was not given until twenty-six generations after Adam. Prior to the Giving of the Law, men acted in accordance with the Laws of Man (Torath ha'adam), which really are the seven Noahide precepts and their derivatives." (Leviticus Rabba Ch.9) One who possesses Human Knowledge, although the wise men of Israel will not benefit from his knowledge of Torah, at least all others will derive benefit from his knowledge. But one who has knowledge of the Divine Laws only, and is devoid of Human Knowledge, such a one is useless to all the people. And here Wessely, to prove his point, unhappily quotes from Leviticus Rabba (Chapter I): "A scholar who has no knowledge (i.e. Human Knowledge), even a carcass is better than he". And Wessely interprets this Midrashic statement as follows: "A Jewish scholar, that is, one proficient in Divine Law and its teachings, but devoid of secular knowledge, that is, of the social sciences and the ways of the world -- even a carcass is better than he. For the Torah prohibits the eating of carcass only to the Jews; but a non-Jew may eat of it. Thus, a Jewish scholar who is unfamiliar with secular studies, is of no great worth to either Jew or gentile, for he lowers the honor

of the Torah". (16)

The Jews, in days of old, and particularly when they lived in their own land, paid heed to and were proficient in Human Knowledge. Progressive nations now, says Wessely, foster Human Knowledge. But in Galuth the Jews of Europe, and especially those of Germany and Poland have deserted it. Wessely grants that many of ^{the} Germany and ^{ish} Poland Jews are men of great understanding. But the trouble lies in the fact that they are ignoring the Teachings of Man. They pay no heed to Hebrew grammar and to elegant diction. They have no sound knowledge of the vernacular. Some are absolutely illiterate in the language of the land of their residence. (17)

Wessely extends his criticism further. He claims that the child does not acquire a systematic education. Why - bemoans Wessely - even the foundations of Religion are not transmitted to the children in an orderly fashion, let alone good manners. (18) Some, after leaving the Heder, remedy a few of these deficiencies - not of course in the most orderly and useful way - but by means of self-instruction, from books and from observing other people.

Wessely regrets this state of education among the Jews. It is clear that his ideal is a happy blending of Human Knowledge and Divine Law. He says that these two supplement each other. Both are derived from God. Only,

according to Wessely, some acquaintance with Human Knowledge is a necessary preparation for an understanding of the Divine Law. (19) This, however, is precisely what the rabbis doubted. They feared that the study of Human Knowledge would end there, and would not lead to but rather away from study of the Divine Law.

But why have the Jews, an intelligent people, ignored this Human Knowledge, Wessely asks. He answers with feeling and pathos, and lays the blame for this neglect at the door of the non-Jewish world. The non-Jew, through his ill-treatment of the Jew, has so oppressed and depressed his spirit, that he has no inclination to occupy himself with these Teachings of Man. (20) Wessely, in his excitement, overstates the case and becomes inaccurate. Says he: Since the Jews are surrounded by enemies who constantly plot evil against them and do them harm, there is no point in teaching the Jews the duty of loving their fellow-men, for they will not heed it. (21) And furthermore, the Jews are disinclined to learn to speak the vernacular correctly and beautifully - in an effort to find favor with the non-Jews and their Rulers - for they are consistently despised and humiliated. Then too, the non-Jewish world has limited their occupations to such an extent that they find no value in acquiring the natural and mathematical sciences. Thus, in the course of time, these knowledges

have fallen into disuse and oblivion. And even when some benevolent ruler has ameliorated the condition of the Jews, they have not sought the study of those subjects encompassed by Human Knowledge, for the Jews have grown accustomed to do without them. Furthermore, there are no Hebrew texts on these subjects. The books available are in the vernacular and therefore useless to the Jews, who are not conversant with that vernacular.

The Jew, troubled by hardships, has not learned good form in speech. That is understandable. But what is remarkable, Wessely points out, is that the Jewish group survived at all, in spite of most unfavorable conditions.

"And with it all, there remained with us the customs and manners of civilized men." The divine Torah is responsible for the survival of the Jew. It is the Torah, too, which prevented the Jew from acquiring, as a result of persecution, characteristics such as cruelty and disloyalty to the government. On the contrary, the Jew remained loyal to the government and to the country of his residence, prayed for their welfare, and hoped that God would bring about a change for the better in the attitude of the world toward him. (22)

And so, this pitiful and degrading situation, this indecent attitude toward the Jews, continues. But, there is a time for everything. Everything is preordained by God. (23) And now, God in His goodness, gave mankind a humani-

tarian ruler, the great Monarch, Joseph II. Wessely glorifies the Monarch and says that Joseph has remembered his Jewish subjects and has granted them many privileges. He has ordered the Jews to learn the vernacular. Ethics and good manners they will learn from textbooks to be composed in accordance with the Torah. Secular knowledge, on the other hand, the Jews are to acquire from the same texts as do all the other subjects in Joseph's realm. Joseph, Wessely feels, is an instrument of God, seeking to do Justice and Good. He praises Joseph for overcoming deep-seated prejudices against the Jews. Wessely, the rationalist, feels that Joseph has overcome these prejudices which had prevailed for so many generations, through his reason. Wessely prays to God that He be with this great King and that He protect him from all evil and make him great among the nations. He also hopes that Joseph's wise policy toward the Jews will be followed by other rulers. In gratitude to the enlightened Monarch, the Jews should, Wessely says, pray for him and carry out the terms of his Edict.

Wessely never tires of telling his fellow-Jews that if they deal with important Gentiles and high officials, then they must not forget to learn to speak elegantly, gracefully and wisely. He reminds them to teach their children the vernacular, so that they can deal effectively in the courts of the rulers.

Beside this reason for knowing the language of the land, Wessely gives reasons for knowing social, natural and mathematical sciences. According to him, they are needed for the proper understanding of Jewish subjects. Many passages of the Bible are wholly meaningless to him who is not well-versed in ancient history. A knowledge of ancient history will help him understand the Conquest of the Land (Palestine), and the peoples the Jews dealt with. The knowledge of ancient history has a beneficial moral effect. Such knowledge is conducive to a love and fear of God. By studying ancient history one sees how peoples have deserted Human Knowledge, and therefore were not chosen by God as His people. (Wessely maintains throughout that the Jews are God's Chosen People.) The discipline of acquiring a knowledge of ancient history will make the Jews see how true and useful the Torah narratives are. This same discipline will train them to reason properly and not by false analogy. They will learn to appreciate facts and will be averse to believing tales and superstitions. (24)

Geography, like history, leads to a better understanding of the Bible. It helps one follow the journeys of Abraham, the boundaries of Palestine, the wanderings of the Jews in the Wilderness, the seas and rivers whose names are mentioned in the Bible. To one devoid of a knowledge of geography, all the names and places referred to

in the Bible are confusing and meaningless.

Natural sciences and mathematical sciences also shed light on many laws contained in the Torah. (25)

The gracious Monarch orders the study of these subjects, as well as of religion and ethics. Joseph II wants textbooks written which will teach the Jewish children wisdom and morality in accordance with reason. Such texts, Wessely feels, should be composed by Jews and not by non-Jews. True enough, the Torah and Talmud and other Jewish books are teeming with wisdom, ethics and worldly knowledge, but they are not for beginners. For "they are the works of wise men, for the understanding of which great wisdom and insight are required."

The new textbooks should be written in simple, lucid Hebrew and the author of a text for children should keep in mind the child's level of comprehension. Wessely would like to see uniformity in the teaching of religion and morality. Every religious principle is to be based on a statement from the Torah and is to be clearly explained by the author of the text. The subjects should be divided and arranged attractively, so as to facilitate the study for the pupil. (Here and elsewhere Wessely shows a fine feeling for pedagogy.) He is, in all these recommendations, a product of his time, the Age of Reason; and at the same time shows himself faithful also to tradition. He says

that the author should constantly base his writing on Jewish Law, but "it should, by no means, contradict rationalist principles as enunciated by the wise men and scholars of the Gentiles." (26)

Wessely elaborates on the manner in which this Hebrew text on morality should be written. Grammar should be emphasized, as well as synonyms. These are essential for an understanding of the Bible, which is basic to the study of Mishnah and Talmud. Those incapable of studying Mishnah and Talmud will, if taught in the manner advocated by Wessely, at least be able to read the Torah and prayers with understanding. Such texts should be translated from Hebrew into pure German. The teacher is to explain the Hebrew text in German, according to the German translation. The pupils will thus derive a double benefit - they will learn Hebrew and German simultaneously.

Chapter Seven of "Words of Peace and Truth" begins with praise for Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah and of the Biur (the Commentary thereto) because the translation is in excellent German, and at the same time, it bases itself on Hebrew grammar. Wessely continues this Chapter with an attack on the teachers, who do not know German properly, and who in most cases are not proficient in Hebrew grammar and are unmindful of pure Hebrew. The use of the Mendelssohn translation and the Biur can remedy this regrettable situation. If the Bible is thus properly

studied, the pupils may even succeed in getting an understanding of the meaning of roots, and Wessely refers here to his "Gan Na'ul" and his Commentary on Leviticus. With this reference Wessely calls attention to one of his chief endeavors, namely, to emphasize the importance of grammatical construction, which was so blissfully disregarded in his day.

Wessely now enters into further discussion of the disregard for the vernacular, which, he says, is characteristic only of the Jews who live in countries where German is spoken. It is not true of other Jewries, which know and speak the language of their land correctly. Thus, Sephardic Jews speak Spanish correctly; Italian Jews, Italian; British Jews, English; French Jews, French; Jews of the East speak Turkish and Arabic; and even the Jews of Poland speak Polish properly. (27) Wessely can understand why the Jews of Poland speak a corrupt German, for these Polish Jews hail from Germany, and German is not spoken by the inhabitants of Poland. But Jews of lands where German is the vernacular really have no excuse for corrupting German, since they live among people who speak German properly.

Good German can be learned from gifted writers and poets. (28) But the Jews pay no heed to the works of these; instead they import teachers from Poland who speak

German in an absurd and ungrammatical fashion. (29)

Generally, it is in good Jewish tradition to know foreign languages. (30) Members of the Sanhedrin were proficient in languages. None but experts in languages were appointed to the Sanhedrin. Bilingualism among the Jews has precedent, says Wessely. Besides Hebrew, Jews employed Aramaic. (31) And here Wessely makes a very significant statement, to this effect. The Hebrew language is to be employed for sacred subjects, for matters of faith and belief and for Torah study; while the German tongue is to be utilized for mundane matters, for business purposes, for social intercourse and for the social, natural and mathematical sciences. (32)

Wessely continues to prove the thesis that a good knowledge of the vernacular is necessary to the Jew. He brings this illustration to bear: A Jewish scholar discusses with a Gentile scholar a point in theology. When the Jewish scholar wants to explain a point, he is handicapped, for he is at a loss to translate the verse properly. Thus, his wisdom is disparaged because of his poor knowledge of the vernacular. And Wessely adds: "But has not the anointed of the God of Jacob urged us to declare His glory among the nations." (Psalms 96:3)

Another illustration with which Wessely seeks to strengthen his argument is as follows: Most peoples believe in monotheism and thus have many religious doctrines

in common. That makes for common ground for discussion and better understanding among the various religious groups, without their touching upon the points of difference. The Jew, in order to participate in such discussion, needs must know the vernacular. And here Wessely asserts his belief in the principles of religious tolerance. (33) In fact, the common ground which exists between the Jew and the non-Jew should be stressed in the textbooks about to be written for Jewish children.

By not knowing the language of the country, one creates division between himself and the other citizens, being practically incommunicadoⁿ. This is not desirable nor in good Jewish tradition. Have not Rabbi Bahye and Maimonides written in Arabic²? If these men mastered the tongues of the countries of their residence, why should not the German Jews master German. Yes, through the use of Mendelssohn's excellent translation, and with teachers proficient in German, the children will learn not only the Torah, but also the German language. (34) And having thus been trained in German from early youth, they will speak it well and be in good position, when grown, to converse with important Gentiles about knowledge, both Jewish and secular - and when in need of quoting from Jewish literature, they will be able to do so in good German. (35)

Wessely has very strong opinions on the influence of poetry on one's hearers. Poetry is the most effective means of influencing people. The divinely inspired books of the Bible aiming to teach knowledge and fear of God, are written in poetry - Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Song of Songs. The Pentateuch contains wonderful and lofty songs, such as The Songs of Moses, and the Song of The Well. But the Ashkenazic Jews, complains Wessely, do not appreciate poetry. The Jews of Germany and Poland have not, for generations now, produced a poet.

At this point Wessely sounds another Leitmotif of the Haskalah Movement - the return to the Bible. The greatest poets of his generation grant that the poetry of the Bible is without a peer, and surpasses Homer, Pindar, and Horace. And yet, the Bible, for no reason at all, is neglected by the Jews. (36) All this, Wessely claims, is due to the teachers who are inarticulate and "stammering". Wessely believes, however, that this neglect of the Bible can be remedied if from now on children will learn Hebrew according to grammatical rules and the Torah through Mendelssohn's translation, which translates the poetic passages poetically. Teachers should teach the pupils the art of poetry. (37)

The great Ruler, Joseph II, is aware of all this, this

sad state of Jewish education in his lands, and therefore, he has ordered the Jews to set up schools for their children where they will learn German thoroughly, in addition to other subjects. Every intelligent Jew should, Wessely maintains, appreciate the benefit the Jewish children will derive from the new schooling. Wessely urges the Jews to make all necessary preparations for the opening of the new schools.

Wessely reminds his fellow-Jews that there is no novelty in the proposed reforms; that they had existed formerly among the Jews and had been given up because of persecution. Now, he says, they have the opportunity to once again have a proper educational system. And Wessely makes a number of suggestions for the proper functioning of this system. Once again he recommends the use of Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah and the Biur. They are ideally suited, for the translation is in elegant language and the Biur follows traditional *ad sensum* lines of interpretation. (38)

For the moment, Mendelssohn's translation will suffice, but Wessely has no doubt that proper texts will be forthcoming, texts that will be in consonance with Jewish tradition, acceptable to the government officials, written in pure Hebrew, and that will lend themselves to translation into German. Furthermore, fit teachers are essential and if they are not available locally, look for them

everywhere and import them.

Children must be carefully classified and placed in the proper Heder. Promotion should take place only after careful examination shows that the child knows the subject matter covered in the class he is to leave. (e.g. from the Bible to the Mishnah class). It must be ascertained whether or not the child is capable of learning Talmud. If the examiners find the child is not equal to the task of studying Talmud, it is better that he does not start it, and instead learns a trade that appeals to him or enters the business world. Through this selective process each one will go as far as his talents carry him. The selective few who succeed in Talmud, and who have prior to that acquired secular learning, will assume places of leadership in Jewish life. And here, as at the beginning of his Epistle, Wessely the pedagogue, reminds us that individual differences exist and that they must be considered. Not all are meant to be Talmudists or rabbis.

(39)

Wessely ends his Letter in an ingratiating manner. This sketch of his, he says, is meant for the general public, to show them that the King's Edict is in their interest and to their advantage. But, he modestly says, for the wise among his fellow-Jews he has not written this, for they know more than he can tell them. An

eloquent exhortation to carry out the Edict and a glorification of the author of the Edict, Joseph II, bring Wessely's first Letter to a close.

* * * *

The Controversy^S_K

A reader nowadays will find nothing revolutionary in Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth". Even the readers of Wessely's day could find nothing irreverential or anti-religious in the Epistle. Undoubtedly, the interpretation Wessely chose for "A scholar without knowledge" was offensive to the rabbis, and aroused their ire. However, nowhere does Wessely question rabbinical authority. On the whole, the principles enunciated in the beautiful, clear Hebrew of this Letter, show throughout the author's adherence to, and love of traditional Judaism.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that it was a revolutionary piece of writing in those days, on two counts: one, in its proposed reforms in the education of the young; and two, in its espousal of general studies. If these facts be kept in mind, it becomes understandable why a storm of resentment arose against the Epistle and its author alike. One of the outstanding rabbinical personalities of the age, Rabbi Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793), Chief Rabbi of

Prague, (40) who in 1775 had given Wessely's "Yen Lebanon" his endorsement and had praised it highly, now came out openly and sharply against Wessely and his Epistle. (41) In his sermon on the Great Sabbath of 1782, he calls Wessely a wicked man. Rabbi Ezekiel was one of the opponents of Mendelssohn's translation. He feared that it would detract from the study of Torah. He was not adverse to the study of the vernacular and secular subjects in themselves, provided the Torah retained a primary place in the course of study. He accuses Wessely, without justification, of saying that the Torah is not important at all and that secular learning is more important. (42) Then he issues the Solomonic admonition: "And meddle not with them that are given to change". (Proverbs 24:21) The current of Rationalism, which is finding its way among the Jews, Rabbi Ezekiel declares to be injurious to faith and religion. "Whoever speaks and writes according to Reason in matters of Faith, does nothing but detract from Faith", he says.

The Rabbi is aware that new men with new ideas are arising in Israel. He knows that they are a challenge to traditional Jewish life, and he admonishes his listeners not to associate with them. As he puts it: "And behold, because of our many sins, there have arisen various sects among our people; these sects, while differing from one another, have this in common - they all are injurious to

a perfect faith." Rabbi Ezekiel's arguments are understandable. The Rabbi is bent on preserving the old way of life, and has grave doubts concerning the proposed reforms. But, it must be added, he is not taking into account the new conditions of life which are necessitating adjustments in Jewish life. (43)

Wessely, in a letter to Trieste (44) says that when his "Words of Peace and Truth" reached Prague, Rabbi Ezekiel attacked him from the pulpit in a completely vitriolic manner. And Wessely had other formidable opponents among the rabbis, beside Rabbi Ezekiel Landau. In his third public Letter, which appeared in 1784, Wessely speaks of some of these, particularly of three Polish rabbis. (45) "Three rabbis sitting upon their thrones of judgment in Poland were wroth with me and poured forth their wrath upon me and my letters; and, following in their path, many of their masses spoke contemptuously of me and insulted me."

Who were these three rabbis? Wessely does not mention them by name in his four public Letters. In his second public Letter he says: "God forbid that I measure them according to their deserts. I will not mention them by name in this letter." (46) One scholar (47) attributes Wessely's failure to name his opponents, not to nobility of character, but to expediency. They were all celebrated personalities and Wessely knew that by mentioning their names, he would only weaken his case.

However, Wessely does name these three opponents in a private letter to the Jewish community of Trieste. (48) M. Guedemann (49) tells how he purchased a copy of Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" (Vienna 1827) from the library of M.S. Ghironi. On the inside cover of this book, Guedemann found a copy of a letter of Wessely's. The superscription reads: "Copy from Naphtali Herz Wessely's own manuscript" This is the same letter which Reggio (50) had published in Kerem Hemed I, page 5 - 7. Reggio claimed that his copy of Wessely's private letter to Trieste was the only one made from the original. This original, according to him, had been housed in the Synagogue of Trieste, and was destroyed when that Synagogue burned down. Reggio's statement is not true. (51) The Guedemann copy of Wessely's letter seems authentic and where the Reggio copy is beclouded and unclear, at that very point the Guedemann copy gives the names of Wessely's three opponents. The part of Reggio's copy which reads, "and therefore we have called them in them in this letter, etc." (52) is meaningless. Guedemann is probably right in saying that Reggio deliberately omitted the names of the opponents and wrote those meaningless words - "and therefore we have called them in them" - to ward off suspicion that the names did actually appear in the original letter.

In the Guedemann copy it is written: "And those are the opponents. One is the Rabbi of Posen, the son-in-law

of the Rabbi of Prague; the second one is the Rabbi of Lissa; and the third one is a resident of Vilna who is known as Rabbi Elijah the Pious, and it is they who have written, etc." This seems to be a genuine part of the letter to Trieste, and ties in perfectly with the statement from Wessely's second public Letter, quoted above, "God forbid that I measure them according to their deserts. I will not mention them by name in this letter." Guedemann lays stress on the words "in this letter" and interprets them to signify: I am not naming names in my public Letter to you, people of Trieste, for I have done so in my private letter to you.

Where Reggio's copy is unclear and meaningless, the Guedemann copy reads: "and therefore we have named them in this letter, so that you, gentlemen, may know who are the people who have come out against us." (53) A comparison of this section of the Guedemann copy with the Reggio copy shows the change which Reggio made (for $\rho\epsilon\gamma$ Reggio substitutes $\rho\eta\gamma$), and makes evident his deliberate omission of the names of Wessely's three rabbinical opponents. Reggio, who admired Wessely greatly, may have done this to make Wessely seem a nobler character.

Wessely's three opponents, as given in his private letter to Trieste, were then Rabbi Joseph, Rabbi Elijah, and Rabbi David Tevele. (54) Rabbi Joseph, called "The Righteous", was the son-in-law of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau

and was Rabbi of Posen from 1780 until his death in 1801. (55) As for Rabbi Elijah - there is some dispute as to whether the Gaon of Vilna is meant, or some other Elijah. Graetz, Guedemann, Klausner, Lewin, and others believe that he is the celebrated Elijah Gaon, who lived from 1720 to 1797. They are probably right. This is evident from a sermon of Rabbi Phineas Hurwitz, Rabbi of Frankfurt am Main, another opponent of Wessely's. In this sermon - besides calling Wessely a wicked man and an heretic - he says: "And I have heard that in some communities they have burned these books, while in Vilna they were publicly committed to the flames." (56) Graetz argues, and plausibly, that although the Gaon did not occupy a rabbinical position, still his influence in Vilna was so great that such an important step as burning a Jewish book publicly in his city would not have been possible without his consent. The fact that he must have given his consent lines him up among the opponents of Wessely, and hence makes it plausible that he is the Elijah referred to in Wessely's private letter to Trieste. (57)

Zinberg, however (58) casts doubt on the inclusion of the Gaon among Wessely's three outspoken opponents, by casting doubt on the burning of "Words of Peace and Truth" in Vilna. His reasoning is as follows: Rabbi Tevele, in his Sermon of March 1782, speaks of the burning of "Words

of Peace and Truth" in Vilna. "Words of Peace and Truth" appeared no earlier than January 1782 (in Zinberg's judgment). Considering the conditions of communication at that time, is it possible that in less than two months, this work had reached far-off Vilna, had been burned there, and the news thereof even spread to Lissa? Zinberg thinks that it was not "Words of Peace and Truth" at all that was burned in Vilna, but rather "Toledot Jacob Joseph", a Hassidic work (published in 1780 and reaching Lithuania in 1781), considered heretical by the Mithnagdim. He feels that the burning of this Hassidic work in Vilna gave rise to false rumors that "Words of Peace and Truth" had been burned there, which rumors spread far and wide, reaching Rabbi Tevele in Lissa and Rabbi Phineas Hurwitz of Frankfurt-am-Main.

Whether the Gaon of Vilna was one of the opponents of Wessely, and whether Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" was actually committed to the flames in Vilna, cannot be ascertained at this time. Perhaps hidden archival materials will some day yield the answers to these interesting questions.

But there is no doubt whatsoever concerning the identity of the third of Wessely's opponents, Rabbi David Tevele of Lissa. Dr. L. Lewin, in his "Geschichte der Juden in Lissa" tells us that Rabbi Tevele was a descendant of a prominent rabbinical family and that in 1760 he

is famed as a keen student of the Talmud and is called "harif". Lewin speaks of Rabbi Tevele as the author of "Nefesh David", a collection of sermons, and "Mikhtab le' David", pilpulim on Talmudical subjects. In 1774 Rabbi David Tevele became Rabbi of Lissa and in that year he approved of Wessely's "Yen Lebanon". But Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" infuriated Rabbi Tevele, and on the Great Sabbath in 1782 he delivers in the Synagogue of Lissa his venomous Sermon against Wessely. (59) The Rabbi attacks Wessely bitterly, and in a most unbecoming personal manner. Some of the epithets he hurls against Wessely are: stupid, wicked, ignorant, despised one, immodest one, heretic, idiot, despiser of scholars, crude and shaven one.

Dr. Lewin, who has high regard for Rabbi Tevele (60) tries to explain the tenor of the Rabbi's attack by saying that it was customary in those days to attack an opponent in a personal vein. He mentions Frederick the Great and Lessing, among others, as having used such lampoons. But Klausner finds no justification for this mode of attack on the part of Tevele and says it casts doubt on the Rabbi's wisdom and moral stature. Klausner furthermore states - not altogether accurately - that all we know of this rabbinical celebrity is through his endorsements, and through nothing else. (page 110) Graetz, too, disparages the Rabbi and calls him a "Winkelrabbiner". (61) However, the fact

that Wessely found it necessary (in his fourth Letter) to quote profusely from Tevele's Sermon and to refute it, tends to show that the Sermon had made a profound impression and that its author was well known, in Jewish life. This Sermon reached not only Berlin, but many other communities.

What does this Sermon contain? Quite naturally, Rabbi Tevele resents Wessely's interpretation of "A scholar without knowledge, etc." (62) He admits that German should be studied by Jewish youth, but only as a tidbit, an auxiliary to Jewish knowledge. The Jewish subjects must remain the essential and chief part of the curriculum. Wessely's proposals regarding the study of general subjects will lead, says Rabbi Tevele, to a neglect of the Jewish subjects. The Rabbi maintains that Wessely is not expert enough in the Talmud and therefore is not qualified to declare that a child showing no ability to study Talmud should learn a trade. This is undoubtedly a weak argument on the Rabbi's part. Wessely's proposals, according to Rabbi Tevele, are also a menace to the economic existence of the teachers, who do not know German and who would thus be disqualified from carrying on in their professions.

It will be seen later how Rabbi Tevele pursued his opposition to Wessely's program.

In connection with this controversy, another interest-

ing problem, which has already been hinted at, arises. Was Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" burned in Vilna, Lissa and Posen? The Morpurgo version of Wessely's private letter to Trieste -- which is a more complete and accurate version than those of Reggio and Guedemann -- speaks of three Polish rabbis who burned the Letters. (63) More will be said of Morpurgo in the next chapter, but suffice it to say at this point, he was one of Wessely's greatest admirers. Morpurgo, in a letter to Rabbi Bassan (64) also says that he was chagrined to hear that Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" was persecuted in Prague, and was burned by the order of the three rabbis in their respective communities.

Further corroborative evidence that "Words of Peace and Truth" was publicly burned in Vilna, Lissa, and Posen is contained in the following significant passage taken from a letter of Rabbi Tevele Schiff, Rabbi of London, to his brother, Rabbi Meir, Dayyan in Frankfurt-am-Main. He writes to this effect: That he has seen a copy of a letter from Rabbi Tevele to the Rabbi of Amsterdam (?) as well as a copy of Rabbi Tevele's famous Sermon against Wessely. Rabbi Schiff finds that the Sermon is written in elegant style (sic!) and is full of wisdom. He also remarks that the Rabbi of Lissa is tactful and careful not to offend Joseph II. Rabbi Schiff understands from the contents of the letter and from the Sermon that Wessely's epistle was

burned in Lissa, Posen, and Vilna. In the last named city it was publicly burned by command of Rabbi Elijah. Rabbi Tevele Schiff continues to relate to his brother that the letter of Rabbi Tevele of Lissa also speaks of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, who at first came out publicly against Wessely, but now must keep silent and avoid further public condemnation of him. (Rabbi Ezekiel, is after all, a subject of Joseph II, and Wessely is furthering the cause of the Monarch's reforms.) However, Rabbi Ezekiel carries on his campaign against Wessely secretly, by arousing rabbis of other communities, not within Joseph's domains, against Wessely. (65)

From this letter it would seem quite certain that "Words of Peace and Truth" was burned in Vilna, Lissa and Posen. Nevertheless, scholars are not quite in agreement on this subject. Regarding the burning in Lissa, Graetz asserts that it was publicly burned there. (66) The Jewish Encyclopedia (67) speaks of a Council in Lissa, under the presidency of Rabbi David Tevele, which condemned and burned Naphtali Herz Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth". On the other hand, according to L. Lewin, Wessely's Letter was not burned in Lissa. (68) We have already seen how Zinberg casts doubt on the burning of this Letter in the city of Vilna, while Graetz and others believe it was so. The burning of Wessely's Letter in Posen is substantiated by the research of Riv-kind. (69)

Rabbi Ezekiel Landau and the three Polish rabbis discussed above were not Wessely's only opponents. Among his active enemies were also the aforementioned Rabbi Phineas Hurwitz of Frankfurt-am-Main (70), and Rabbi Solomon Dov (or Baer or Berusch), Rabbi of Glogau. (71) This Rabbi of Glogau, as well as Rabbi Tevele of Lissa, stirred up action against Wessely in Berlin. They wrote to Rabbi Hirschel Levin, the Chief Rabbi of Berlin, to urge him to impose penalties upon Wessely. (72) The German rabbis as a whole had kept the peace and had not become involved in this controversy. But the notable exception was Rabbi Hirschel Levin of Berlin. Actually, he was not a zealot. He was rather a patient, peace-loving man, and liberal in comparison with the Polish rabbis. (73) He was known to be the friend of Mendelssohn and Wessely. (74) What prompted him, then, to attack Wessely as he did and to seek to prevent him from publishing any more works, and even to expel him from Berlin? It seems the Rabbi possessed the power to do both. (75) The answer may be that Rabbi Hirschel knew that his approval of Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah had greatly displeased the ultra-conservative rabbis, and now he saw an opportunity to regain their favor. By taking a firm stand against Wessely, he would please his rabbinical colleagues. Then, too, his own son, Saul Berlin, Rabbi of Frankfurt an der Oder, was known to be

a sympathizer with the Maskilim. (76) By taking the position he did, against Wessely, Rabbi Hirschel perhaps unconsciously was compensating for the aberration of his son. And finally, the letters he received from Rabbis Landau, Tevele and Berusch kept urging him to action. Rabbi Hirschel, therefore, called together some of the **parnasim** of Berlin, in order to get their approval of his plan. The plan was to stop Wessely from issuing any more writings and to expel him from the City. However, Rabbi Hirschel met with very strong opposition and was obliged to abandon his project. Wessely was saved from the ignominy of expulsion through the good offices of his friend, Moses Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn, upon learning of the Rabbi's intention toward Wessely, became infuriated. He saw in the Rabbi's proposed step a violation of the principle of freedom of the press, promulgated by King Frederick the Great himself. During a visit to von Zedlitz, Minister of Culture, who had high regard for him, Mendelssohn urged von Zedlitz to protect Wessely. On March 30, 1782, von Zedlitz wrote a private letter to Daniel Itzig, Head of the Berlin Jewish Community, inquiring about the Wessely matter. This letter evidently did not have the desired effect, for on June 4, 1782, von Zedlitz addressed an official rescript to the leaders of the Berlin Jewish Community, "Die Herren Ober-Landes-Altesten und

Vorsteher der Berliner Judenschaft", in which he asks for a clarification of the controversy, so that he may be able to protect an enlightened person of Wessely's calibre. (77) This official rescript finally frightened Rabbi Hirschel into silence. Wessely could freely proceed with the publication of his three other public Letters, and his other works.

Graetz, and even Wessely himself are not quite correct in saying that none of Wessely's friends came out (78) openly in his defense. The incident described above shows clearly that Mendelssohn did take a part in the controversy and made the required effort to protect Wessely from persecution. In addition to this intercession with von Zedlitz, Mendelssohn also wrote to David Friedländer, and urged him to come to Wessely's aid through his influential father-in-law, Daniel Itzig. (79) At any rate, Wessely's harassed position was somewhat improved, though opposition to his program for the education of the Jewish child by no means ceased.

CHAPTER THREE
WESSELY'S DEFENSE

Unlike the Jews of Austria, Germany, and Poland, the reaction of the Jews of Lombardy to the Toleranzpatent of Joseph II was friendly and welcoming. Lombardy was under Joseph's rule, and contained Jewish communities where a tradition of secular learning had existed for some time. Upon the issuance of the Toleranzpatent, they were, because of their background, prepared to open schools in accordance with the requirements of the Edict. The community of Trieste opened such a school. But, they were beset by the problem of suitable textbooks for the teaching of religion and ethics, and turned to the Governor of Lombardy, Count Zinzendorf, for advice. He, in turn, referred them to the celebrated Moses Mendelssohn. Thereupon, Joseph Hayyim Galigo, Secretary of the Jewish Community of Trieste, writes to Mendelssohn and asks him to send them a list of his writings. Mendelssohn fulfills their request, calls their attention to his friend, Wessely, and encloses a copy of Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth". Thus, the Jews of Trieste became aware of Wessely and wrote to him.

(80)

Wessely's private letter to Trieste has already been mentioned. (See pages 57 to 59) In this same let-

ter Wessely tells the Jews of Trieste that he is sending them his first public Letter through Arnstein of Vienna.

(81) Wessely also says that he has decided to address his second public Letter to them.

This second public Letter was published on April 24, 1782, and attempts to clarify the first public Letter.

(82)

The Second Public Letter

The second Letter begins with many compliments to the Italian Jews. But, Wessely admits, in Germany and in Poland too, there are great Jews, who are well versed in Human Knowledge. With great restraint he reproves his opponents for the manner of their attack upon him, and emphasizes that his intentions in writing "Words of Peace and Truth" had been of the highest and purest. He testifies to his own piety and faith. He is obviously deeply grieved by the flood of attack upon him. His opponents, he says, behave toward him as if he had, God forbid, burned the Torah. He is puzzled and grieved that none of his opponents sees fit to reason with him and debate the issues involved in an impersonal manner.

(83)

The assertion made by his opponents that he, Wessely, requires of a Jewish scholar that he know all the Human Knowledges before studying Mishnah and Gemara, is

a false one. He never made such an assertion. Wessely again emphasizes that he sees in secular knowledge merely an aid to a better understanding of the Torah. He praises the Torah in genuinely warm words, and avers that knowledge without faith is futile and disastrous. Any one can study secular subjects. But not so with the study of Torah. In order to learn ^{the} Torah and absorb its wisdom, one must possess both intelligence and purity of heart. And again Wessely comes to his main point. The Bible should be taught before Mishnah and Talmud.

All of education must be systematized, orderly, properly graded, and administered by teachers who speak elegantly. Why, asks Wessely, do not the Jews follow the dictum of Rabbi Judah the Prince, that at the age of five, the child commence the study of Bible; at the age of ten, Mishnah; and at the age of fifteen, Gemara? Instead, they begin, practically at once, with the study of Gemara, and attempt to train the tender mind of the child of six or seven in dialectics, for all of which the child is mentally unprepared. This method merely confuses the child.

It is not true that the child can learn Bible from Gemara. On the contrary, Wessely feels that in order to understand Gemara, the child must know the Bible. Wessely reminds his readers that he is not the first one to warn that the study of Bible should not be neglected.

Others, and very pious men at that, have done so before him; for example, Isaiah Horowitz, author of "Shnei Luhot Habbe'rit" (84) and his son Sheftel, author of "Vave Ha'amudim" (85) who, like Wessely, observed and admired the educational system of the Jewish community of Amsterdam, where the Bible is the study first begun. Even if the Jews of Poland and Germany should decide to devote time to the study of Scriptures (even until the age of twenty), it will not be of great value to them, unless the teachers translate the Bible properly, that is, into good vernacular.

Wessely proceeds to recommend to the people of Trieste a curriculum for their Talmud Torah. First of all, the child is to learn the reading of Hebrew and correct pronunciation. At the age of five, he is enrolled in the Bible class. Wessely warns them not to permit each teacher to translate as he pleases, but to employ a uniform, standardized and pure translation into the vernacular. He recommends that Mendelssohn's translation be translated into the language the people of Trieste wish to use as a medium of instruction.

The teacher is to translate first word for word, then a whole phrase or sentence. Thus, Wessely says, the child will learn both Hebrew and the vernacular. He is to commit to memory both the Hebrew and the translation. After one year of this, the study of grammar should be

undertaken. Grammar is to be taught simply and not pilpulistically. Let the child learn the conjugations, classes of verbs, and suffixes. This can be accomplished in the course of a few months. Proper texts, says Wessely, are available. (86) Once the rudiments are mastered, the child is to analyze grammatically the words in the Bible. Wessely feels certain that after a year and a half of this procedure, the child shall have learned Genesis and half of the Book of Exodus. Furthermore, the bright pupil will now be in a position to read the Prophets by himself, without the aid of the teacher, and to translate them correctly into the vernacular. The teacher, of course, is to continue the teaching of the Scriptures, in the manner just outlined.

When the child has reached the age of seven and a half, the teacher should commence to teach him the Principles of the Torah, by the question and answer method - a catechism. (87) For this purpose a textbook written in elegant language and systematically arranged should be composed. This text should be translated into the vernacular, in elegant style, so that the teaching of these Laws of the Torah will be uniform and the pupils will learn simultaneously both Hebrew and the vernacular. Among the chapters envisaged are some for Sores and Impurities. (88) A child can learn all these Principles of the Torah in one-half or one year. Wessely qualifies

by saying that the rate of learning will depend on the child's intelligence and memory. By review he will master the Laws. Not only that, but he will remember the Laws all his days and will not deviate from them. (89)

Once the pupil has mastered these, at the age of seven or eight, he is ready - after an examination by the supervisor - to enter the Mishnah and Talmud class. But he is not to give up the study of Bible. He is to continue for an hour or two daily in the Bible class, which he has just left. In the class which the child has just entered, he is to study Mishnah and Talmud for a few hours daily. Four or five hours of study of Bible, Mishnah and Talmud per day are sufficient. One must not overwork the child. Let him learn in a happy atmosphere. Some time is to be allotted for rest and play, supervised by the teacher.

Wessely contrasts this proposed method with the prevailing one, where Mishnah and Gemara are taught while the child lacks the apperceptive bases, in this case, Bible, and the teacher has to explain the Laws over and over again, for they are strange to the learner. The child does not follow the teacher. The teacher becomes angry and inflicts corporal punishment on the child. The child dislikes the school, the teacher, and the studies.

Wessely time and again stresses gradation. Thus, the beginner of Talmud should not be taught too much at

one time. One Mishnah at a time thoroughly explained will suffice. Let the student become familiar with the method and language of the Mishnah and Talmud. Wessely recommends highly Rashi's commentary and disapproves of far-fetched methods of study. Wessely is a great believer in the "ad sensum" method. The promising pupil, having been taught thus for a year or two, could now study by himself legalistic portions with commentaries. Thus, till he is fourteen or fifteen. From then on the pupil will continue advancing in his studies until he becomes a rabbi.

Wessely allots in his curriculum about two hours a day for Bible, about two hours daily for Mishnah and Talmud, and some time for recreation. The remaining hours are to be devoted to subjects that will help the student to a better understanding of the Jewish subjects and equip him with means to derive a living later on. These include:

One-half hour daily for reading and writing the
vernacular

One-half hour daily for geography (by means of
maps)

One-half hour daily for travel-books (describing
fauna and flora, inhabitants, their
religions and customs. (90)

What about the mathematical and natural sciences which Wessely mentioned in the first Letter? These, he says, he intends for the very bright pupils who, at the ages of ten or eleven, may be given a smattering of Euc-

clidean Geometry and arithmetic, during their spare hours. These studies sharpen one's mental faculties, and have a bearing on the Laws of the Torah. And here Wessely speaks of Polish Jews who came to Berlin, (91) men great in Torah, who taught themselves and became proficient in geometry and astronomy. They acquired their knowledge through textbooks written by Jewish scholars. (92) But had these gifted men mastered a European language, they would have learned all they know and more in less time from the many systematic texts on these subjects written in the vernacular. These men did not study natural sciences because there were no texts in Hebrew on these subjects.

The fear of acquiring knowledge through the instrument of a foreign language is without foundation, and Wessely quotes Maimonides to support this assertion. One can and should learn geography and history, and study a variety of subjects from a variety of books, regardless of the origins and beliefs of the authors of such books. (93) Wessely is a moralist, an enthusiast for spending time constructively. He makes the interesting point that the intelligent student of Jewish learning will acquire secular knowledge during the time which others spend in idle talk and gadding about. He realizes that some people are incapable of studying Talmud. These, he says, might, instead of spending their time running the streets or lounging in bars, busy themselves with books on secular

learning and also set aside hours for the study of Bible and books on ethics. Wessely knows that idleness is a source of mischief; empty gossip and foolish flitting about are not conducive to good morals. He himself reads travel books, history, sciences, in order to save himself from boredom. (94)

And what about those who leave school without having acquired a knowledge of Talmud? They are ignorant of Bible and of good manners. Nor do they know the vernacular. Concerning these Wessely pathetically asks: What will become of them? How will they spend their leisure time? He answers: They spend it in idle talk, jokes, and trivialities. Wessely here shows an awareness of the problem of education for the masses, the education of the non-Talmudist, the common man. (95) He enunciates as a chief aim in the educative process proper attitudes and actions - that the words of the Torah should "enter the heart".

And with this he returns once again to one of his favorite Leitmotifs. Torah cannot "enter the heart" while the system of translating the Bible into Yiddish prevails. Yiddish is inaccurate and confusing. A pure German translation is imperative. Once more the reader is reminded that a knowledge of German is useful in business. Furthermore, by not speaking German properly and elegantly, one causes the non-Jew to feel disrespect toward the Jew. And

here Wessely appeals to group pride. (96) Wessely complains that great is the number of the ignorant among the Jews, who know no Bible, no Mishnah, and have no practical secular knowledge. Had they at least studied Bible in the German translation, they would have retained, if nothing else, a knowledge of German.

Wessely speaks in laudatory terms of the Berlin Freyschule, in which Bible is studied by means of the German translation. This school was founded by David Friedlaender, and his brother-in-law, Isaac Itzig, under the stimulus of Moses Mendelssohn. (97) Included in the curriculum of this school are Hebrew grammar, German, French, geography, and arithmetic. Wessely also mentions something of the democratic character of the school. Rich and poor alike are accepted; the poor without paying fees and the rich paying them.

Wessely relates how the Berlin Freyschule at first met with some disapproval. (We know, however, from the Kislev 1783 issue of ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef, page 46, that Rabbi Levin, the Chief Rabbi of Berlin, gave it his approval.) Nevertheless, it succeeded in establishing a reputation and served ^{as} as a model for other reform schools founded under non-rabbinical auspices. The schools thus established are non-sectarian, accepting Jewish as well as non-Jewish children. These schools use pure German as the medium of instruction, and offer a diversified and secularized education. Such schools were founded in

Breslau, Dessau, Seesen, Wolfenbüttel, Frankfurt-am-Main, and Cassel.

Wessely, as he is bringing his second Letter toward its conclusion, expresses the hope that he has clarified the first Letter, and turns his attention to the famous quotation which he had used in his first Letter, and which had aroused so much ire and resentment. Concerning the dictum regarding "a scholar without knowledge", he offers in defense of himself the fact that he did not create it. And furthermore, says he, like many a dictum of the sages, it is not to be taken in a literal sense. Often the sages, in order to drive a point home, exaggerate that point. Had he known that this quotation would meet with such displeasure, he would have omitted it. He is aware that it offended the rabbis of Poland particularly, most of whom are devoid of secular learning. He attempts, therefore, to ingratiate himself with them by saying that he too is a descendant of Polish Jews, that he has nothing but genuine concern for the welfare and advancement of his fellow-Jews.

Wessely now sees better days ahead for the Jews. A survey of the European scene makes that evident. The European monarchs are espousing the cause of Enlightenment. In Holland religious tolerance has existed since

that country's liberation from Spain, in 1581. England followed Holland's example during Rabbi Menasseh b. Israel's lifetime. Frederick II of Prussia is the first ruler of the Holy Roman Empire to introduce religious tolerance and freedom of the press in his country. (98) From Naphtali Herz Edelsheim of Strasbourg (99) Wessely says he learned that Louis XVI of France and his advisers are favorably disposed toward the Jews. Goodwill toward the Jews prevails also among Catherine II of Russia, Stanislaus of Poland, Christian VI of Denmark, and Gustav of Sweden. (100) But more than all these monarchs does the mighty and wise Monarch, Joseph II, advance the cause of tolerance. This wave of goodwill toward the Jews emanates, no doubt, from God.

Wessely then discourses very fittingly upon the demands that Judaism makes for truth and respect of the human personality, and he finally brings his second Letter to an end by calling upon the three Rabbis, his opponents, to tell in print, within three months, wherein his Letter offends them and why they are vilifying him in their letters and sermons. Should such a reply not be forthcoming, then Wessely and his friends will take their silence to be a sign that there is nothing wrong with his two Letters. Again he states that his motives in writing the Letters have been nothing but noble. He has only the interests and welfare of his People at heart.

The Letter ends with a quotation from Mendelssohn's introduction to the translation (from English into German) of Menasseh b. Israel's "Vindiciae Judaeorum" (101) in which Jews and non-Jews are urged to foster tolerance, goodwill and peace.

The rabbis did not respond to Wessely's appeal; nor did they declare peace. That they continued in their persecution of Wessely is clear from the fact that on June 4, 1782, von Zedlitz had to address his official rescript to the leaders of the Jewish Community of Berlin. (see page 67) It was this rescript, together with the influence brought to bear on Wessely's behalf by leaders like Itzig, which finally forced Rabbi Levin to abandon his plan to act as censor over Wessely's works, or even to expel him from Berlin.

* * * *

In Lombardy, in northern Italy, Wessely did however find ideological friends, who were in accord with his proposed reforms in Jewish education. Trieste was the pioneer community as regards carrying out Joseph's educational decrees and Wessely's recommendations. Wessely, aware of the fact that the Jewish Community of Trieste is so favorably disposed toward him, asks them, in his

private letter to them, to obtain for him judgments on the controversy from the rabbis of their land.

These letters from the Italian rabbis might not have been forthcoming had it not been for the invaluable aid of one man, Elijah Morpurgo. (102) True, the Jews of Italy, by virtue of the Spanish descent of many of them, were known for their liberalism and possession of secular knowledge, in addition to Jewish learning. Wessely's proposals were by no means revolutionary to them. On the contrary, they were fully in agreement with his views. But agreement with some one's views does not always imply willingness to support these views openly, especially when such open support might incur the displeasure of others. Thus, the Italian rabbis, who understood Wessely's aims, might nevertheless have refrained from writing to that effect for fear of irritating their colleagues in Poland, Germany, Bohemia, and elsewhere, had it not been for Elijah Morpurgo. Morpurgo was instrumental in creating an articulate, favorable public opinion for Wessely.

Little is known of the life of Elijah Morpurgo. He was a descendant of a prominent family. He was born about 1740 and died in 1830. He first learned of Wessely by reading "Gan Na'ul". He probably never met Wessely, but merely corresponded with him. Morpurgo had much in common with Wessely. They were bound by many

ties - literary, linguistic, and ideological. Morpurgo's admiration for Wessely was great. He translated Wessely's first Letter into Italian. Wessely, in his private letter to Trieste, dated the sixteenth of Tammuz 1782, speaks in complimentary terms of Morpurgo, mentions with pleasure the fact that Morpurgo has translated his "Words of Peace and Truth" into Italian, and asks for some copies of the translation. (103)

It was Morpurgo who obtained for Wessely the letter of endorsement from Rabbi Bassan, who was his teacher. Morpurgo wrote to Rabbi Bassan and urged him to express an opinion on the controversy. Copies of Wessely's first two Letters were sent to Rabbi Bassan. (104) The Rabbi reacted in a letter which he addressed to Morpurgo and which Morpurgo in turn copied and sent to Wessely. At the end of this copy, Morpurgo and two other witnesses attest to the accuracy of the copy. As a result of the efforts of Morpurgo and of the Trieste Community, Wessely is able to publish, on April 30, 1784 his third public Letter, entitled "The Well of Judgment". (105)

The Third Public Letter

This Letter consists of an introduction, followed by the statements of seven Italian rabbis, and accompanied by Wessely's footnotes. In his introductory remarks, Wessely is correct in calling himself a friend

of his attackers. Of the Maskilim he was, after all, nearest to them in his views and in fidelity to tradition. By now Wessely has Rabbi David Tevele's Sermon and he finds it most harsh, even offensive. (106) He promises to refute Rabbi Tevele's charges against him in a fourth public Letter.

Wessely bemoans his fate, that he, so well-meaning and devoted to his People, should suffer so much humiliation. He is, however, consoled by the fact that greater men than he have suffered and have been misunderstood, men like Maimonides and Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. Wessely finds further consolation in the favorable expressions of the Italian rabbis.

The first endorsement is from the Rabbi of Trieste, Rabbi Isaac Formigini (107) who is under the impression that "Words of Peace and Truth" was written by Mendelssohn and Wessely. In a footnote Wessely clarifies this error and states that he is the sole author. In the main, the Rabbi endorses Wessely's proposals. He says that Jewish learning and general learning go very well together. To illustrate his point he mentions sages who excelled in both. (Some of the Tannaim, Amoraim, members of the Sanhedrin). In details he differs somewhat from Wessely, for he asserts that between the ages of five and ten the child is to study Bible only. From ten to fifteen he would have the child study Mishnah, and devote some time to the writing of Hebrew (108),

to the study of foreign languages, and if gifted, the child is to learn some other secular subjects, such as arithmetic. The Rabbi feels certain that the intentions of Wessely's rabbinical opponents are also honorable.

The next endorsement comes from the pen of Rabbi Samuel Yedidyah, Rabbi of Ferrara, who had been asked by the leaders of the Trieste Community to give his opinion. The Rabbi shows great reverence for Rabbi Formigini, whom he quotes. Rabbi Samuel Yedidyah sees no harm in the study of secular subjects. On the contrary, secular learning is an aid to the study of Jewish subjects. But the Jewish subjects must remain the essential part of the studies of the Jewish child, while secular subjects must be ancillary.

The Jewish Community of Trieste had also asked the three Rabbis of Venice to write their opinion of the issues involved in the Wessely controversy. (109) The Rabbis of Venice say that in Italy the order of study is that prescribed by the Tannaim - Bible, Mishnah, Talmud. Even though the Jewish children of Italy do not begin with the study of Talmud, nevertheless they claim Italy has produced great Talmudic scholars. In their long and interesting endorsement, they point out how important and useful secular learning is to the Jew. They illustrate with characters in the Bible who

possessed such secular learning - a knowledge of agriculture, geography, astronomy, music, botany, zoology, etc. They (and Wessely in his footnotes) make it clear that the study of secular things should under no circumstances be at the expense of Jewish learning. They also concur with Wessely in his contention that all cannot be Talmudists. In God's world there is room for people with various kinds of knowledge and skills. Their plan is that all children are to learn the written Torah, but those incapable of learning the oral Torah should be taught arithmetic, reading and writing of the vernacular, and a trade as well. They, more than the other rabbis, are fully in agreement with Wessely's views. And they say that Wessely's program of education should be carefully followed.

The next endorsement is from the Rabbi of Ancona, Hayyim Abraham Israel. This Rabbi says that the lack of secular learning on the part of Jews makes the non-Jews disrespectful toward the Jews. Therefore, let the Jews acquire secular learning and show the Gentiles that they are an intelligent people.

The last letter is from Rabbi Israel Benjamin Bassan of Reggio. As has already been related, the Rabbi addressed his letter to his pupil, Elijah Morpurgo, and Morpurgo forwarded a notarized copy of this letter

to his friend Wessely. Rabbi Bassan is impressed with Wessely's fine Hebrew style. Of course, he says, Wessely should not have used that unhappy dictum about the "scholar without knowledge". In the main, however, he agrees with Wessely, and upholds him in his views.(110)

Now Wessely prints a variety of personal expressions of esteem addressed to him by different people. There is, first of all, a letter from Rabbi Formigini, in which the Rabbi expresses the hope that the controversy will soon come to an end. Rabbi Simha Kalimani had composed a poem praising Wessely and his Letters. Wessely answers with a poem. Isaiah, son of Rabbi Samuel of Ferrara, had also composed a poem, in his name and in the name of his colleagues, the officers of the Trieste Talmud Torah. To this poem too Wessely replies with a poem. Isaac Luzzatti, physician and poet, had written a poem of praise honoring Wessely, which poem was forwarded to Wessely by Elijah Morpurgo. This poem is printed here, with an introduction by Wessely, in which Wessely refers to Morpurgo as a loyal friend, which indeed he was. Wessely also answers Luzzatti with a poem.

The third public Letter ends with an appeal by Wessely for comments on the subjects raised in the Letters.

The Fourth Public Letter

Wessely's fourth public Letter appeared in 1785. This last of his public Epistles, "Broad Ways" begins with some comments on the Italian rabbis whose endorsements Wessely had incorporated in his third public Letter. These rabbis, says Wessely, are recognized to be wise and venerable leaders; they enjoy authority and good reputation. They are mentioned in "Pahad Yizhak" of the late Rabbi of Ferrara, Rabbi Isaac Lampronti. (Wessely, Letter IV, p.2 spells the name Alpronti.)

This fourth Letter aims to explain and justify Wessely's views on education as he had expressed them in his first two Letters. Still another aim for publishing the fourth Letter was to refute the charges of Rabbi David Tevele as contained in his acrimonious Sermon delivered on the Sabbath before Passover in 1782. Wessely quotes from that Sermon, but omits the vituperative portions. (111)

Wessely now reviews the educational program and goes into some greater detail. Human Knowledge is divided into the Social, Mathematical and Natural Sciences. While the last two are to be learned after one is advanced in the study of the Divine Law, the Social Sciences are to be taught as concomitants at all times. By Social Sciences Wessely understands character education, and he divides it into four parts:

1. Foundations of the Torah:

Includes beliefs in the unity of God, His incorporeality, creatio ex nihilo, reward and punishment. All moral precepts may be derived from the Torah. Each derives as much as his powers of understanding permit him to. One is to look into the Torah all the days of his life, in addition to the study of Mishnah and Talmud. In order to understand^{the} Torah, one must know grammar and syntax.

2. Essentials of the Torah:

These include such precepts as - Love thy neighbor as thyself; Do not hate your brother in your heart; Do not covet; Modesty; Love of truth; Avoidance of haughtiness; or, to summarize, one should love Good and hate Evil.

All these precepts are best taught through parable and example. Texts on ethics should be composed. "Aboth" Wessely feels, is an excellent book on ethics, but is too concentrated and is suitable for adults, but not for children.

3. Factors Adding to the Honor of the Torah:

Manners and etiquette. Wessely tells us that if a Jewish scholar ignores manners, people may be misled into thinking that the Torah does not stress them. Therefore, the scholar should be very careful to observe these. If practiced, people will say that his knowledge of^{the} Torah is responsible for his good manners. Hence, Wessely calls these qualities factors increasing the respect for the Torah. Wessely adds to this division some knowledge of current events and geography. (112)

4. Guides to the Torah:

This includes a thorough knowledge of Hebrew and of the language into which the Bible is to be translated. A thorough knowledge of Hebrew is a sine qua non. Without it, one cannot comprehend the word of God.

All the four divisions of the Social Sciences are derived from the Torah.

Factual knowledge (e.g. what is forbidden food; what activity is prohibited on Sabbath; and similar matters) one can learn from the rabbi, merely by asking him. These are "aural commandments". Not so with the "ethical commandments". You cannot tell a person to be pious or to be humble, and expect that he will be so. He must feel these things, and understand them. The urge to be humble, pious, these things must come from within. The "ethical commandments" must precede the "aural commandments",--and must be inculcated into the pupil while he is young. "Ethical commandments" are derived from the words of the Torah and the Prophets. "Aural commandments" are derived from the words of the Mishnah. And both are obtained from the Talmud.

Wessely deplores again the neglect of the Bible in the education of the Jewish child in Poland. Thus, the large majority who do not become Talmudists remain ignorant of the Bible. They observe the Commandments only out of fear. But they lack a love of God, a comprehension of His greatness. They require a proper education, for in it lies the salvation of the individual and of the group.

Wessely proceeds to discuss and outline a curriculum much as he has done in the second Epistle. It may be added here that Wessely recommends the use of recog-

nitition and praise as a teaching aid. By means of praise, the pupil will eventually reach the stage of learning ^{the} Torah for its own sake. He speaks of examinations to be given by the leaders of the community in the communal Talmud Torah. He sees the need of competent teachers for the Jewish subjects, but also of four other teachers. These are: a teacher for arithmetic and geometry; one for natural sciences; one for drawing; and one for commercial education, such as languages, writing, and business practice. He speaks of twenty or more students in a classroom.

Toward the end of this fourth Epistle, Wessely attempts to refute the charges made by Rabbi David Tevele. Wessely denies the charge that because of his (Wessely's) advocacy of secular studies, the Jewish studies will sink to a secondary position. Wessely makes it clear that he never intended to put secular subjects on a par with the Jewish subjects, as the Rabbi charges. He has always insisted that the Jewish subjects must have primary importance. Wessely also complains (and with justice) that the Rabbi's fragmentary quotations from "Words of Peace and Truth", taken out of context and ending with et ceteras, are unfair weapons, and sickening. Furthermore, Wessely once again asserts that he had meant no offense to the

rabbis with his quotation of "A scholar without knowledge".

Toward the end of this fourth Letter, it is evident that Wessely, who had been so sincere in his recommendations and so hopeful of their results, is now disappointed in those reform schools which were established. He complains that in these schools the old method of translating into Yiddish is still employed in the teaching of the Bible. Moreover, he protests that the secular subjects occupy most of the time, while the Jewish subjects are neglected. Says he: "But I deeply regret to say that the command of his Majesty, the Emperor has been fulfilled, but the Torah of God is forsaken. I sincerely intended that they should teach the beauties of the German language through the study of the Torah. But look what they are doing! They spend many hours in teaching the boys reading and writing of German, and arithmetic, but the Torah of God they study as heretofore, in confused and corrupt language..... In fine, instead of wheat, thistles grew; and noisome weeds instead of barley." The Talmud Torah of Trieste, however, is not a disappointment to Wessely. He has been in touch with the leaders of that school, and has nothing but admiration for the work of that school, and for Sephardic Jewry in general. (113)

Regarding the Kulturkampf between the rabbis and Maskilim of Wessely's type, time has shown that the fears of the rabbis had not been unfounded. Wessely himself, as can be gleaned from some of the concluding comments in his fourth public Letter, does not rejoice in any victory, but is disappointed in the spirit that was developing in the reform schools in his own day. Changes were taking place, but their direction was not in accordance with the program so ardently championed by Wessely.

Reform was imperative, inevitable at this time, the eighties of the eighteenth century. The isolationist character of the education which the Jewish child of Poland, Austria, and Germany had received until then was no longer feasible. The new conditions of life -- industrialization and the emergence of capitalism -- were beginning to affect the Jew, particularly since a more liberal attitude was assumed toward him by the governments of various countries. The ghetto walls which had hitherto hemmed him in were now crumbling, and the Jew had to learn to adjust to the new environment which he found beyond these walls. In order to deal with his non-Jewish neighbors, the Jew needed a knowledge of the vernacular. In order to carry on in business, secular subjects like geography and arithmetic, were essential to him. The exclusively Jewish

curriculum no longer served him as completely as it had heretofore.

Wessely was realistic and practical enough to recognize this need for change in the education of the Jew. He gave clear expression to this need and enunciated a two-fold program: first, the inclusion of secular learning; and second, the shift in emphasis in the method of teaching the Jewish subjects. Wessely loved Hebrew and wanted to see it studied properly. He wanted to impress upon his fellow-Jews the importance of form, in addition to the content which they valued. He realized that the Bible and Talmud are inter-related, and wished that inter-relation to be integrated in the education of the Jewish child. He assigned the study of the Bible - so sadly neglected in his day - first place in his curriculum, in point of time. The study of the Bible is to precede the study of the Talmud. He recommended the use of the vernacular in the translation of the Bible. He wished the Jew to know the vernacular well, in order that he might be better able to cope with his environment. For the same reason, he visualized a combination of Jewish learning with secular learning.

Through this last proposal in particular he became the target of a rabbinical assault. This is ironical, because Wessely did not desire any break with Jewish

tradition. All his proposals are in consonance with those traditions, and he published Letters II, III, and IV mainly to prove this. He did not question the authority of the rabbis, nor did he wish to detract in any way from their position. He belonged to the conservatives among the Maskilim, was a man of great piety, a lover of orthodox Judaism, deeply loyal to the traditions of his people. He was ideologically close to the rabbis; but the rabbis refused to recognize this fact. In their desire to continue the traditional structure of Jewish education, they opposed practically any change. Had the rabbis encouraged Wessely and cooperated in the new venture in education; had they recognized that changes were inevitable to meet the new conditions of life; had they accepted this fact and acted accordingly, bending every effort to harmonize new trends with old traditions, then the results, in all probability, would have been satisfactory both to the rabbis and to Maskilim of Wessely's type.

Instead, the rabbis ignored and even persecuted the bearers of the new idea. The result was that the leadership of the reform schools fell into the hands of people who were very different from the type of Wessely; with the further result that they proved to be a disappointment to all those who loved their traditions,

including Wessely himself. (114)

The problem of reforms in Jewish education raised by Wessely was of tremendous importance to his people. The Meassefim and the Maskilim of Eastern Europe, too, grappled with it. It is as yet not solved. Certain things have become clear - namely, that secular learning is indispensable to the Jewish people. But in what form secular learning is to be acquired; and how those receiving it are to be retained as loyal and active members within the Jewish fold - these things are problems which have not been solved to this day. (115)

CHAPTER FOUR

INFLUENCES

Wessely, Mendelssohn and their circle of friends were influenced by their environment. During the time in which they lived, European thinkers were paying much heed to education, its theory and practice. Education was beginning to be recognized as a very important aspect of life. In fact, it was an age which tended to see in education a panacea, the solution to all problems.

The eighteenth century witnessed great changes in the state of education, and the reason for that was threefold: the rise of nationalism, with its corollary - the waning of the power of the church; the development of democracy; and the extension of industrial civilization.

As the national state develops and becomes stronger, it takes an ever greater interest in education, and since it sees in a common culture the foundation of nationhood, it assumes responsibility for formal and organized education. Particularly in Prussia, under the "benevolent" rule of the Hohenzollerns, the rulers displayed an active interest in education. Their interest did much to raise the educational level of the masses. This interest of the state in education found legal expression in 1794, in the "Allgemeine Landrecht", fundamental code of Prus-

sian law, in which schools and universities were defined as state institutions. (116) While under church control, education naturally had had a religious bias. It aimed to save souls and make good communicants. But as control of education passed from the church to the state, a secular bias becomes evident. The state aims to make good citizens and to promote national welfare. National culture is exalted through education. The program of instruction is widened. Educational opportunities are extended to larger groups.

This brings us to the second reason for the changes in the state of education - the development of democracy. The ideal of equality of opportunity was leaving its impress on education. Whereas, heretofore, the privileges of a formal education had been limited to a very small part of the population, now, at this time, through compulsory elementary education, formal education became available to the masses also. By the nineteenth century, compulsory education for all children between the ages of six or seven and thirteen or fourteen had become widespread among the advanced nations of the world.

As a third factor, the advent of the industrial revolution, the rise of cities and of a trading class, transformed the educational institutions of the age. The system of education at home and of apprenticeship which hitherto had been adequate as the education for the masses,

no longer sufficed to fit a person into the increasingly complicated world of science and machinery. Schools had to take on the task. And even the schools had to extend considerably their hitherto purely classical curriculum. Mathematics, science, social studies, modern languages, and literature gained admission into the new type of school.

Of the educational theorists of this age, whose influence was greatly felt in the eighteenth and in the subsequent centuries, John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788) must be mentioned. Locke's famous essay "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" appeared in 1693. Locke says, among other things, that:

1. Learning from books is less important than virtue, wisdom, and breeding.
2. Methods of instruction should be based upon the natural activities of the child.
3. A sound mind should be in a sound body.
4. Aims of the school should be secular rather than religious in nature.

Rousseau's "Emile" appeared in 1762. It created a tremendous stir and became one of the most influential books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rousseau was influenced by John Locke. In "Emile" Rousseau

1. Urges a return to nature.
2. Advocates that the child be treated as a child and not as an adult in miniature.
3. Emphasizes motor activity, sense perception, natural interests, simple reasoning, and the

psychological rather than the logical method of instruction.

4. Attacks artificiality and formalism in education.

Moses Mendelssohn read Locke. (117) In all probability he read Locke's essay on education, and also Rousseau's "Emile". Mendelssohn was interested in education, and in educational theory and improvement. He was on friendly terms with Basedow. (118) It was part of the "Zeitgeist" to concern oneself with these matters. The age is education-conscious; it has great faith in the power of education to improve mankind. Mendelssohn undoubtedly discussed educational problems with his circle of friends, which included David Friedländer, Isaac Itzig, Euchel, and Naphtali Wessely. In fact, the improvement of Jewish education and the use of the German language on the part of the Jews, these topics were favorite themes of his. (119)

It is not known whether Wessely read Locke and Rousseau. But he must have heard the modern ideas on education in the Mendelssohnian circle. These ideas were, so to speak, in the air, and were timely topics of conversation among Aufklärer and Maskilim, and a man as alert as Wessely could hardly remain immune from them.

In Germany the modern views on education find expression in the Philanthropinistic Movement. The exponents

of Philanthropinism aim to apply, in the main, Rousseau's ideas on education. J.J. Basedow (1724-1780) is the leader of this movement. Basedow wanted an "education which was in touch with real life and in accordance with human nature and the spirit of the age, an education which may be described by such terms as modern, realistic, middle-class." (120) Basedow and the other Philanthropinists (Trapp, Campe, Salzmann), eliminated corporal punishment and replaced it with an elaborate system of rewards for good conduct and work. (121) Philanthropinism aimed, and to a certain degree succeeded, in bringing to school life some happiness. Thanks to this Movement, too, physical training began to receive attention. In general, the Philanthropinists wanted the educational process to take the child's interests into account and the educators to be humane (*menschenfreundlich*). Hence they chose for their Movement the name Philanthropinism.

To carry out the ideals of Philanthropinism, Basedow, with the aid of Leopold, Prince of Dessau, and others, founded the Dessauer Philanthropin in 1774. The Jews responded to Basedow's ideas and when he appealed to them for funds, they helped him. (122) Wessely was strongly influenced by Basedow and the Philanthropinistic Movement. He became actively interested in the Dessauer school when that school, in 1778, turned non-sectarian and accepted Jewish teachers and Jewish pupils. One of Wessely's sons

attended the Dessauer Philanthropin. (123)

In the German supplement of ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef of January 1784 we find a letter from Moses Mendelssohn to Campe. (124) The Jews, it seems had not availed themselves of the offer made by the Dessauer Philanthropin to admit them. Not one Jewish child was enrolled in the school following this offer. The management wrote to Moses Mendelssohn to inquire why such kindness was ignored. Mendelssohn's reply to Campe is somewhat ironical. The offer, says he, is not extraordinary, since Jewish children may enter German government schools. Also, Mendelssohn sees nothing unusual in the offer to accept Jewish teachers, if they are competent. He urges Campe to be patient and give time its due course, and to be careful to select Jewish pupils on the basis of talents and not merely on ability to pay tuition fees. Mendelssohn mentions Wessely as being enthusiastic about the admission of Jews to the Dessauer Philanthropin. He says that Wessely's support through his literary efforts will be of value to the school. (125)

Before leaving the discussion of this Dessauer school, it might be said that it aroused much attention throughout Europe. Its dissolution in 1793 is attributed to the fact that Basedow was ~~x~~ a poor administrator and a temperamental man, though there is no doubt he was a fine educational agitator. Then, too, Neo-Humanism, which despised any-

thing smacking of Philanthropinism, was on the ascent.

Mendelssohn, Wessely and their like-minded companions had not been satisfied merely to discuss educational matters. They attempted to put their theories into practice by establishing a modern Jewish school in Berlin, the Jüdische Freyschule. (126) Possibly this school was patterned after the Dessauer Philanthropin. Wessely worked energetically for the founding of the school. (127) It was opened in 1781. The house and monies had been obtained in 1778. In 1784 a printing press and bookstore were established under the auspices of this Freyschule in order to help maintain the school. The press printed textbooks for the pupils and in general it aimed to foster Hebrew culture by making works in Hebrew easily available. (128) By 1786 the school must have progressed far and gained quite a reputation, for Friedrich Nicolai, in his description of Berlin, mentions the Freyschule. (129) In 1806 Lazarus Bendavid (130) became the director of the school. Financially this school seems to have had a difficult time, for over and again it appeals for aid. Its wealthy patron, Daniel Itzig, had died in 1799, and the school felt the loss keenly. (131) The Berlin Freyschule and similar institutions elsewhere were non-sectarian, and had some Christian pupils. However, a governmental decree of 1820 forbade the Jewish schools from receiving Christian pupils. Thus, the Christian pupils had to leave the Freyschule. The school

closed in 1825, and was replaced by the Jüdische Gemeindegemeinschaft.

We see thus that even before writing his "Words of Peace and Truth" and entering into that significant controversy over education, Wessely had a considerable background of interest in educational matters. Enthusiastic and impressionable as he was by temperament, he readily absorbed the educational ideas and thoughts of his time. Analysis of Wessely's proposals for educational reforms reveals the influences that played upon him, non-Jewish as well as Jewish. Let us first mention some examples where Wessely shows the influences of the Philanthropinists.

Christian G. Salzmann (1744-1811), the most successful of Basedow's followers, established a school in Schnepfenthal where, among other progressive procedures, proper attention was given to the individual child's talents and inclinations. Wessely is a firm believer in individual differences and he pleads throughout his "Words of Peace and Truth" that these be taken into account in the educational process. (132)

Wessely, like the Philanthropinists, disapproves of corporal punishment. In his somewhat exaggeratedly negative account of the heder, and the learning process employed there, he does not fail to mention that physical punishment is inflicted on the child. (133) Actually, the heder was

never the gloomy place that the non-Jewish school was before the eighteenth century. The Philanthropinists, in full awareness of the joylessness of most of the educational institutions of the time, set up happiness as one of the aims of their educational process. This is a sentiment which Wessely endorses wholeheartedly, and expresses in "Words of Peace and Truth". (134)

The Philanthropinists endorsed a realistic and utilitarian education, one suited to the times. As has already been pointed out, with the rise of cities and of a trading middle class, a new type of school was needed - one which put greater stress on practical values and less stress on purely cultural ones. The Realschule developed from this need. This new type of school included in what had previously been a purely humanistic curriculum, drawing, mechanics, geometry, geography, history, architecture, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. At the Paedagogium at Halle, a secondary school for upper class boys, these significant modifications on the old Latin curriculum may be noted.

1. Reading and writing were first taught in German and not in Latin.
2. Rules of Latin grammar were taught in German and not memorized, parrot-fashion, in Latin.
3. Textbooks in use for the teaching of Latin grammar were written in German.
4. In studying a modern foreign language, elegance of diction and purity of style were emphasized.

5. The child was not to be overburdened with work.
6. In the teaching of mathematics, sciences, history, geography, practical applications were emphasized.
7. The curriculum included manual training in turnery, glass-grinding, and wood-sawing.
8. Pictures and maps were used.

Of course, historically speaking, these innovations were not all new. For example, the last provision - the use of pictures and maps (realia) - was already strongly urged by Comenius in his "Orbis Pictus".

But the point under discussion is that the similarity of the modifications at Halle (135) and Wessely's own recommendations in "Words of Peace and Truth" is really striking. One cannot say with certainty that Wessely consciously adopted these changes and wanted to apply them to Jewish education. But it would seem that he was aware of the new trends in general education and considered that they had valuable application to Jewish education. These reforms in education which Wessely recommended for Jewish education, once they were introduced into the curriculum of the Jewish schools, completely transformed the nature and character of that important Jewish institution, the heder. The heder was essentially a humanistic institution. But Wessely and his fellows in the Haskalah Movement, aimed to convert it into a realistic, utilitarian institution. This is approximately the equivalent of what was happening

to the humanistic secular school of the eighteenth century.

Wessely recommends for the Jewish schools the use of the German language as the medium of instruction, instead of Yiddish. (136) This is very much like the development in the secular schools, where German was replacing Latin.

Wessely champions purity of style and elegance of diction. This is not only a tenet of the practical curriculum of the Realschule, but an ideal of the whole Enlightenment Era. Wessely adopts this ideal and endorses it heartily. He never tires of stressing its importance. (137) Ever since the Edict of Joseph II was issued, Wessely admonishes the Jews to mind their speech and their manners. In "Words of Peace and Truth" he advises that it is time that the Jews abandoned their carelessness in speech and diction, and speak with elegance and taste henceforth. (138)

Wessely accepts the trends of the time on still some other important issues. He too believes that the child should not be overburdened with work and that he should be provided with time for recreation. (139) Those who lack scholarly aptitudes, Wessely says, should learn a trade, or enter the business world. (140) Therefore, he sees a need for the introduction into the curriculum of secular subjects which will help one to earn a livelihood. (141) Wessely says also that learning should be made less abstract and verbalistic and recommends the use of realia. In learning geography, he urges the use of maps and he

narrates how his father taught him geography in a very brief time with the aid of a map. (142)

It is interesting to note that in one respect Wessely does not accept the trend in European education. Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a contemporary of Wessely's, bitterly attacks learning by rote, and the tendency was away from memory work and catechisms. In the Jewish schools there was no uniformity in regard to memory work. In the heder in Lithuania, memory work was generally practiced, while in Galicia it was opposed. (143) Wessely, however, definitely approves of it. (144)

* * * *

So much for the influences of the general European scene upon Wessely's educational views. There are also some unmistakable influences upon Wessely exerted by the Jewish environment in which he lived. He drew ideas and inspiration from the educational system of the Sephardim, whose ways he had observed during his residence in Amsterdam. Wessely not only admired the educational system of the Sephardim, but in general he had an affinity, a spiritual kinship, with their way of life. (145) He admired the order and gradation of work in the Talmud Torah in Amsterdam. He particularly approved of their curriculum because they taught the Bible, (146) and because they gave prominence to the study of the Hebrew

language and grammar. Furthermore, they had order, cleanliness, and good buildings, and Wessely appreciated the value of these things. Some of his predecessors, too, like Sheftel Horowitz and Sabbetai Bass, had been impressed by the educational system of the Sephardim. (147)

Wessely's admiration of the Sephardim was based on one other important factor. They included secular learning and the study of the vernacular with Jewish learning. It can be said that with the exception of Italian Jews and a few Spanish and Portugese congregations (London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg), secular education was rare among the Jews. (148) The Jews of Italy, in their desire to prepare their children for a profession, like medicine, or for a commercial career, of necessity had to teach them the vernacular and secular subjects, in addition to the Jewish studies. This motive of preparing for an occupation comes into its own in Wessely's educational program and that of his younger fellow-Maskilim.

One must not be misled by the fact that a few Sephardic communities laid emphasis on some secular subjects and on the study of the vernacular. Essentially, Jewish education before Wessely was quite uniform, because all Jewries, in all regions, agreed on the ultimate aim of education, which was: to develop and foster a deep and abiding loyalty to Jewish tradition. Among the Ashkenazim there were very few differences even as regards ~~method~~

method and content. Jews of Germany, Poland and Lithuania all received the same type of education. Teachers who taught in Germany came, in most cases, from Poland or Lithuania, and taught in the same way as their colleagues in their native lands. (149) They followed a strictly Jewish curriculum. Only in a few rare cases a little arithmetic was included. (150) It was, in the main, a static and uniform educational system.

But, from time to time, considerably before Wessely's day, certain criticisms recur. These criticisms foreshadowed the changes advocated by Wessely, and undoubtedly were part of the forces that played upon him and contributed to the development of his views on reforms in Jewish education. These criticisms were directed against the order of studies, the emphasis given to various subjects, the lack of homogeneity in the heder, the omission of the study of Mishnah (151) and the neglect of the Bible and the Hebrew language and grammar.

Great dissatisfaction with the educational system was expressed by a number of rabbis and scholars as early as the sixteenth century. Possibly they were stirred into protest and into a desire for reform through contact with Italian and Spanish Jewry. (152) R. Judah Loew, son of Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague, towers above the others in his forceful criticisms and urgent appeals to improve

the educational system. Continuing after him in criticism and demands for reforms were Maharal's brother, R. Hayim, R. Ephraim Lunchitz, Maharal's successor as Chief Rabbi of Prague, and R. Isaiah Horowitz. (153)

These men want to see the order of study prescribed by the Tannaim - Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud - followed by their contemporaries. The Maharal levels a scathing criticism against teaching the child part of the portion of the week read in the synagogue, leaving it unfinished, and then next week beginning the study of only a fragment of the following sidra. The sidras read in the synagogue "between terms", (the vacation time of the child) remain entirely unknown to the child. This he finds to be a harmful procedure, as it has no continuity and does not give the child a unified picture of the Torah. He also sees no sense in teaching a young child, in parrot-like fashion, Talmud, at a time when the entire subject is above his level of comprehension.

Maharal's successor, R. Ephraim, extends the Maharal's criticisms, and finds that there is instruction, verbalism, translation of words, but no real education - that is, character education and good manners. Maharal, his contemporaries and followers, who are of the same opinion, want to see the Torah studied without interruptions and omissions. Others, like R. Isaiah Horowitz, want the entire Bible studied first, before Mishnah and Talmud. (154) The

study of Torah is to serve as a basis for the study of Mishnah, and they bemoan the neglect of the study of Mishnah and assign it a prominent place in the curriculum. The study of Mishnah is to precede that of Talmud. Talmud, according to these great men, would be begun at about the age of thirteen. They oppose pilpul. Maharal and his associates, in demanding reforms in education, also urge the study of Hebrew grammar. Therefore, Maharal urges Joseph Heilperin to publish his "Em Hayyeled", a grammar of the Hebrew language designed for children and gives it his endorsement. (155) Isaiah Horowitz and his son Sheftel also urge that Hebrew grammar be taught to the child. The melammedim, too, come in for their share of criticism. They are taken to task for excessive competition among themselves, and for misrepresenting to parents the child's abilities and progress.

Maharal was bitterly disappointed. Except among a few chosen spirits, his recommendations found no response and were not carried out. The time was not yet ripe for them. But they must have had their influence upon Wessely and his views on education. The points of similarity in their reforms are obvious. There is, however, one significant exception. While the Maharal and many of his disciples occupied themselves with general knowledge, like mathematics and astronomy, they do not propose, as Wessely does, to include secular subjects into the curriculum of

the heder. (156)

Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" contains many complaints concerning the meager knowledge of teachers.

(157) It is interesting to note that early in the seventeenth century a similar criticism is levelled by R. Sabbetai Sofer in his introduction to his commentary to the Siddur. He says that the teachers not only do not know the meaning of Hebrew words and their usages, but they also mispronounce the words. (158)

R. Joseph Haan of Frankfurt was influenced by Maharal. This seventeenth century rabbi speaks of Maharal and his reforms. He mentions, in his "Yosef Omez", Maharal's suggestion of learning ^{the} Torah in order (and not fragments of a sidra each week) as something that is not being practiced. (159) R. Joseph urges the study of Bible and says that in his day there are rabbis who have never seen a text of the Bible. (160)

Himself a teacher of children, Moses Marpchik, in his "Kezad Seder Mishnah", portrays the state of education during his time, the seventeenth century. He too is influenced by Maharal. He complains that the children in the heder do not form a homogeneous group. There are several groups in the same heder learning different subject matter. There is no gradation in the studies. The skipping from one fragment to another is distasteful to

him. In the hurry to come to the study of Talmud, the study of Mishnah is too brief, and the pupil comes to the Talmud without adequate preparation. After listing the faults of the educational system, R. Moses makes his recommendations. A teacher is to instruct one group only. Either his class is a Bible, a Mishnah, or a Talmud class. The teacher is to have periodic reviews with his pupils. The teacher is to teach cheerfully and is to take individual differences into consideration. He is to take great pains and watch over the morals of the boys. It is interesting to note that R. Moses finds corporal punishment a pedagogical necessity and depriving the teacher of the right to inflict it he regards as a serious error. (161)

The Takkanot for the Talmud Torah of Cracow (of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) provide for the study of Hebrew grammar, (for the bright pupils) and speak of individual differences, and of a course in ethics and etiquette, as well as arithmetic and Judeo-German. (162) If a boy, say these Takkanot, when he is fourteen years old, is not capable of learning Talmud, he is to learn a trade or become a servant.

The famous preacher, Judah Leyb Puhovicher, in his "Dibre Hakhamim" (Hamburg 1692) says that it would be fitting to issue a ban to the effect that no teacher is to commence teaching Talmud to a boy unless he knows at

least the Pentateuch well. He praises the Sephardim for fostering knowledge of the Bible. In discussing the faults of education in his time, he quotes from Maharal and Ephraim Lunchitz. (163)

In "Or Le-^cet Boker" (Amsterdam 1759) the author, R. Naphtali Hirz b. Judah Leyb from Halberstadt, speaks against pilpul and recommends that the Tannaitic order of Bible, Mishnah and Talmud, taught according to rules of grammar, be followed. (164) Wessely may well have read this work.

In 1760, in Berlin, with the approval of the Chief Rabbi of Berlin, R. David Fraenkel, Judah Leyb Minden arranged and published a Biblical dictionary entitled "Millim le'Eloha". He arranged the roots of words found in the Bible in alphabetical order and he translated the words into German. Insofar as any translation is, in a sense, a commentary, the compiler follows the "ad sensum" method. He is influenced by Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Kimhi, especially by the latter's "Sefer Hashorashim". This work, says Professor Assaf, prepared the way for Mendelssohn's translation, which filled a need in its day. (165) Judah Leyb Minden's dictionary is the first attempt known to us to introduce the use of pure German among the Jews.

Gedaliah Taikus' "Torat Kattan" (Amsterdam 1765) is of great interest. Taikus was himself a melammed. His work consists of two parts. Part One, called "Eleh Hammiz-

"zvot" is a catechism of the six hundred and thirteen commandments which the pupils are to learn by heart. This knowledge will serve them as a basis for Mishnah and Talmud. "Eleh Hammizvot" was composed by Moses Hagiz and adapted by Gedaliah Taikus. In the introduction, Gedaliah mentions Maharal and Isaiah Horowitz, and bemoans the neglect of Bible and Mishnah. He also says that now that he has abbreviated and adapted Hagiz' work, it is an excellent text for the young. (166) Part Two of "Torat Kattan" is entitled "Hen Hallashon" (Amsterdam 1771). It is a grammar of Hebrew, written in Judeo-German. The author stresses the importance of Hebrew grammar. He urges its study - but not too much of it. (167)

In his "Megillat Sefer", R. Jacob Emden tells how his father, the Hakam Zebi, felt that the complete neglect of the Bible was harmful. Some became rabbis without ever having read the Bible and without any knowledge of the Mishnah. When the Hakam Zebi became Rabbi of Lemberg, he summoned the melammedim of that community and told them to teach Bible, according to grammar. (168)

In 1771 there appeared in London an anonymous booklet on the education of children, written in German. The author thinks it the obligation of each parent to teach his child the vernacular and another foreign language, namely, French. As for the Jewish subjects, he thinks the Bible should be taught in a rational manner. The

Hebrew text should be translated into pure German. The author recommends furthermore for the use of the teachers, "Millim le'Eloha", (169) since Mendelssohn's translation was not in print as yet. He feels that walks and listening to music will have a beneficial effect on the boys, particularly on their morals, with which he is greatly concerned. He speaks also of the education of girls. They are to be taught more or less like the boys. They are to learn writing, foreign languages, arithmetic, domestic arts, and some trade. They need not be taught Talmud. (170)

Now we have come to the educational program laid down by Wessely's great contemporary, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797), who was also Wessely's most important opponent, in the controversy over education. The Gaon urged that first the Bible be carefully studied and mastered, then to be followed by the study of Mishnah and Talmud. Hebrew grammar is to be given proper attention. The Gaon did not oppose the acquisition of secular knowledge. He especially approved of mathematics, natural history, and astronomy. He believed that these subjects are helpful toward a deeper understanding of Jewish knowledge. His disciples, too, displayed a keen interest in reforming the school system. (171)

One would expect, considering the many points of similarity in the educational views of the Gaon and Wessely

that the Gaon would approve of "Words of Peace and Truth". (In fact, some consider the Gaon the originator of the Haskalah Movement!) Yet it has been shown in previous chapters that that was not the case at all. The Gaon disapproved of Wessely's total educational program, even though there was agreement on certain aspects between himself and Wessely. The Gaon had no objection to secular knowledge per se, and advocated certain subjects very highly. But in Wessely's plan for the education of Jewish youth he sensed there was that which would play havoc with Jewish learning and would cause it to fall into neglect and desuetude.

This summary of educational views and criticisms from the sixteenth century to Wessely's time makes evident the fact that many of the recommendations which Wessely made regarding Jewish education were made by others before him. In the main, the recommendations of Wessely's predecessors had been ignored. It might be that Wessely's proposals would have met with the same fate, had it not been that the age was his ally. The era of rationalism had succeeded in bringing to the attention of certain Jewish groups the need for new methods and new approaches in Jewish studies. The times demanded some knowledge of secular subjects. There was the government to enforce the acquisition of the vernacular on the part of the Jews.

Wessely's recommendations regarding Jewish education undoubtedly fell upon receptive ground. His recommendations were, moreover, an historical event, because they were a direct outgrowth of the Edicts of Toleration of Joseph II.

The large number of Normalschulen (modern German-Jewish schools) that arose toward the end of the eighteenth and during the first half of the nineteenth century in Austria, Hungary, Germany, Bohemia, Italy, and Russia, show - both in their spirit and in their actual curriculum - unmistakable influences of Wessely's educational program, as promulgated in "Words of Peace and Truth". (172) No doubt, governmental patronage stimulated the spread of these schools among the Jews. This same patronage made many Jews wary of them. In fact, there was some open opposition to them. But, the new schools were bound to grow because the new conditions of life required them. Secular knowledge became essential to the rising Jewish middle class. The knowledge of the vernacular became almost indispensable. For a commercial career or a profession, one had to be proficient in these very things.

But, before entering upon details regarding the new schools, it might be said here that Wessely, the spiritual leader and revered master of the Meassefim, exerted a great influence on the educational ideals of this group. A reading of the issues of ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef readily reveals

this. The writers of articles on education refer to Wessely frequently. For example, in one of the early issues of ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef, there is a letter on education. (173) The writer, at the very outset, attacks the teachers who, because of lack of orientation, are responsible for children's misbehavior. (174) The writer refers to Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth", when speaking of the need for character education and good manners. He also tells us that he has derived his ideas on education from both Jewish and non-Jewish authors. (175) Besides referring to Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth", he refers also to his "Gan Naul". He stresses the influence of environment upon the child. He discusses the great influence exerted upon the child by parents, teachers, and others. He finds the existing educational system unsound, attacks it, and compares the heder to a prison. He claims that individual differences among children are ignored. Verbiage is crammed down their throats, but good moral qualities are not implanted. The proper education of the child, says he, should be the paramount concern of the parent. Parents should read and inform themselves on the subject of education. (176) Attempts to remedy character faults in a child should be made by parents and teachers in a patient and gentle manner. (177) The author concludes by stressing the importance of speaking the truth - and not mixing it with falsehood - lest the child be influenced to do likewise. Throughout this

letter on education the influence of Wessely is evident. Even the language is similar.

* * * *

It has already been mentioned that Wessely helped in the founding of the Berlin Freyschule. (178) (see page 103) The Berlin Freyschule was the laboratory in which Wessely and his like-minded colleagues sought to test their educational ideals. Aside from this reason, there was another one. The school was established essentially for the children of the poor, whose education in the communal Talmud Torah (179) was in a deplorable state. The children of the rich were educated by tutors at home. Thus, Mendelssohn was at first tutor in the home of the silk manufacturer, Bernahrd. He also tutored Isaac Itzig for eleven years. Mendelssohn's own children were tutored by Homberg. (180) Wessely, too, possibly was a tutor in the home of David Friedländer. (181) There were certain drawbacks even to the tutorial system of the rich. According to the Reglement of 1750, a teacher of boys had to be unmarried and was not allowed to remain in the same community for a period longer than three years. This made for constant turnover of teachers. Later on, however, a Schutzjude could take an unmarried teacher into his home and retain him in the community indefinitely as his domestic. The Schutzjude was obliged to give the

teacher board and wages in exchange for the teaching of his children. (182) The instruction for which these tutors were responsible included, in addition to Bible and Talmud, German, Yiddish (reading and writing), arithmetic and other practical subjects, and at times even French, which was especially popular with the girls of the wealthy Jews of Berlin.

For the children of the poor Jews there was no satisfactory education provided in Berlin in the eighteenth century. The turnover of teachers was felt particularly in the communal Talmud Torah. Those teachers had not the right of permanent residence. In most cases they had come to Germany from Poland and Lithuania, and had left their wives and families behind. They did not know German. Wessely speaks of them disparagingly as "stammerers". In addition, there was no system, no gradation, no proper method employed in the communal Talmud Torah. Communal leaders like David Friedländer, Isaac Itzig, Moses Mendelssohn, and Naphtali Wessely deplored this condition, and the Berlin Freyschule was established to give a proper education to the children of the poor. The curriculum included Hebrew, German, French, geography, and arithmetic. The school was organized on democratic lines, accepting rich and poor alike, but the latter were required to pay no tuition fees.

Some years before the Freyschule was established, Levin Joseph, a Jewish teacher in Potsdam, pointed out

the unsatisfactory state of Jewish education in Berlin. In 1772 he submitted to Frederick II a plan for improving the education of Jewish youth. His criticism of the teachers is sharp. He prefers native to foreign teachers. Foreign teachers, he says, should be required to settle in their new country. Joseph wants a licensing system for teachers. Before teachers are permitted to engage in teaching, they are to submit themselves to an examination given by him. It is interesting to note how many ideas Levin Joseph and Wessely held in common. Joseph wanted instruction to be systematic. He says a child should not begin the study of Talmud before he has some knowledge of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and of the Hebrew and German languages. Once the child has fulfilled these requirements and he is eager to learn, he may enter a Talmud heder. But here too, Bible study must not be completely neglected. (183) For the use of the teacher Joseph recommends the Biblical dictionary "Millim le' Eloha". (184) He urges that in teaching the Bible, the commentaries of Gersonides and of Ibn Ezra be used. Joseph too is concerned with building character. He would make it obligatory upon the teacher to read daily to his pupils a chapter or half a chapter from "Hobot Ha-Lebabot" and subsequently to teach them from "Moreh Nebukhim", "Ikkarim", "Millot Hahiggayon" and from similar works. It is, says Levin Joseph, the duty of the teacher to

inform the parent if the child shows no aptitude in his studies, so that he may be taught a business or a trade.

Levin Joseph was suspected of selfish motives. Frederick II rejected his plan and the status quo in Jewish education remained. But soon voices more powerful than that of Levin Joseph were heard. Men like Mendelssohn and Wessely held similar views, and they expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of Jewish education in Berlin by founding the Berlin Freyschule.

Joseph II, the fellow-monarch of Frederick II, is more active in his interest in Jewish education. He issues the Edicts of Toleration, and he makes money grants for the establishment of Jewish schools. The modern German-Jewish schools organized in Joseph's domains were modeled after the Freyschule in Frederick's capital, and became the bearers of Wessely's educational ideals. On May 2, 1782 (185) the jüdische-deutsche Schule was opened in Prague. On March 27, 1783 the first public examination was held there, and the pupils gave a good account of their knowledge. In 1785 a School for Jewish Girls was opened by the government in Prague. Needlework was included in its curriculum. By 1800 Bohemia numbered twenty-one German-Jewish schools (186) and the educational program could be deemed a success there.

The teachers seem to have been very competent and enjoyed a good reputation. (187) In fact, the Jewish teachers of Bohemia were so well thought of professionally that in 1787 the school officials of Joseph II made attractive offers to them to come to Galicia.

The situation in the schools of Galicia presents a different picture. In 1787, Herz Homberg becomes the government inspector of the Galician schools. (188) The Jews of Galicia bitterly opposed the government schools and despised Homberg. Neither Homberg nor the teachers that staffed his schools brought with them a positive attitude toward traditions, or a sympathetic understanding of Galician Jewry and its peculiar problems. And Galician Jewry retaliated. They devised all sorts of ways to keep their children away from these schools. At first the schools were only for boys. In 1792 a Girls' School was opened. But the opposition of the Jewish populace continued to be overwhelming. The government finally lost confidence in Homberg. It became clear that the new schools were doomed to failure in Galicia and in 1806 they were dissolved. (189) Wessely's valiant efforts in his "Words of Peace and Truth" had not availed. Galician Jewry saw the Patents of Toleration and the educational program with hostile eyes, from the first to the last.

In Italy there was no such opposition to the new schools. Schools were opened in accordance with the orders of the Monarch and Wessely's educational program was willingly followed. Accustomed as Italian Jewry was to secular learning, they saw nothing revolutionary in Wessely's proposals. The only novelty to them in Wessely's proposals lay in the introduction of geography and Jewish and general history. (190) In fact, Wessely was asked to undertake the task of organizing the Italian provinces of Austria for the purpose of founding the new type Jewish schools. This offer, however, Wessely did not accept. (191)

In Germany, besides the Freyschule, many other schools were established which, in their aims, methods and curriculum show the influence of Wessely. Wessely's contact with the Freyschule was direct, immediate, and personal. Though that was not the case in the schools about to be discussed, these schools nevertheless give strong evidence of the growing acceptance of Wessely's educational ideas and ideals.

BRESLAU

The Breslau Königliche Wilhelmsschule came into being on March 15, 1791. Joel Loewe was the founder. (192) On the first page of the "Nachricht" of the Wilhelmsschule (193) we learn that the school is being

founded for the purpose of offering an improved education to the children of the local Jewish community. (194) Joel Loewe and Elkana (also written Elcona) are the first two teachers of the school at Breslau. Joel Loewe was Oberlehrer and inspector of the school, as well as a member of the Direktions-Collegii. Elkana was Oberlehrer, inspector, and librarian. (195) Both of these men spoke at the opening exercises of the school. Addresses on this occasion were also held by Zimmermann, the Assessor of the Jewish Community at Breslau and member of the School Board (Collegium), and by Gedike, a teacher at the Elizabethan Gymnasium and member of the Wilhelmsschule Board. Of the four named addresses only Elkana's contained some Hebrew quotations. The others were all in German. The addresses emphasized the aims of the school as follows:

1. The development of the sensory perceptions and of the body. (196)
2. The development of the child's reasoning powers.
3. The improvement of the child's moral character.

From a circular dated January 15, 1791 (197) announcing the opening of the Wilhelmsschule, we learn that besides Bible and Talmud, this school will offer German, French, writing and arithmetic, history, geography, natural sciences, and Polish. (198) The circular states that the school will be a blessing for the Jews and it

requests that the parents or their representatives indicate how many boys they are planning to send to the school. It states that boys under six years will not be accepted; that for poor children there will be no tuition fees, while those who can, will have to pay. The school opened with a registration of one hundred and twenty-five children.

From a program of studies (199) we learn that there are three grades, that classes are held from Monday through Friday, and that the hours of instruction are from eight to twelve and from two until five. The subjects and the names of the instructors are also given. Professor Loewe is listed as instructor in Hebrew, geography, ethics, Jewish history and world history. Bible, Hebrew and Hebrew grammar are listed as separate subjects.

In an open letter to the parents, written in Hebrew characters and in Judeo-German (200) and dated the first day of Kislev 1793, the school authorities state, among other things, that the number of pupils in the third grade has become so large that it was necessary to divide the class into two parallel groups; and that two teachers were appointed for the teaching of the Pentateuch to these third grade classes. It also informs the parents that their request to have more time devoted to the study of Pentateuch has been fulfilled.

DESSAU

In Dessau, the birthplace of Moses Mendelssohn, and the home of the Dessauer Philanthropin, a school was founded in 1799. It was intended at first for the children of the poor. (201) Instruction was in German (reading and writing), French, arithmetic, the Bible and the Prayer-Book (in Hebrew). Girls were also taught in a school organized somewhat later by David Frankel, where, in addition to the subjects taught the boys, necessary feminine handicrafts were given. The progress of this school was so remarkable that the parents of those able to pay requested a school of this type for their children. On Sunday there was instruction at this school. Talmud was offered in the highest class. Religion was taught. Translation of prayers was listed among the studies.

In the petition to Prince Franz, the founders of this Jüdische Haupt-und Freischule in Dessau, had stated the aim of the school thus: to make good moral citizens and faithful loyal subjects. (202)

SEESSEN

The aim of the Seesen school, a non-sectarian institution, founded in 1801 by Israel Jacobson, (203) was to make the Jewish children good German citizens; and to inculcate the non-Jewish children with ideals of

tolerance, to teach them to consider and to treat their Jewish classmates as fellow-men and later as fellow-citizens. From 1801 to 1838 two hundred and eighty-two boys were educated there, paying tuition fees; one hundred and ninety-two boys without paying any fees. Of these four hundred and seventy-four boys, one hundred and seventy-one were Christian. (204)

WOLFENBÜTTEL

Modeled after the Seesen school, Isaac Herz Samson, brother-in-law of Israel Jacobson, founded a school in Wolfenbüttel, which was known as the Samson'sche Freischule. There were free and paying pupils. In educational achievements this school even surpassed the Seesen school. It was under the direction of Samuel Meyer Ehrenberg (1773-1853). Zunz and Jost were among its pupils. (205) Before it assumed its secular character in 1806, this school had been a Yeshibah or Talmud School. Even when arithmetic and German (reading and writing) were added to the curriculum, only four to five hours per week were devoted to these subjects. Two hours weekly were given to Jewish writing; the study of Talmud still occupied the greatest part of the time. The Pentateuch was studied only on Friday mornings, and the teacher had Mendelssohn's translation before him. Later on we find Religion, geography, French and calligraphy in the curriculum. (206)

CASSEL

During Napoleon's sway in Germany (1806-1812), the Kingdom of Westphalia was the first of the German states to grant the Jews full emancipation. Following a government decree, a Consistory of the Jews, with Israel Jacobson as President, was organized in the capital, Cassel. (207) The Consistory has the merit of organizing throughout Westphalia Jewish schools (non-sectarian) staffed with trained teachers, for, associated with the school founded in Cassel in 1809 was a Teachers' Seminary. (208) The Jewish schools in Westphalia were carefully supervised by the Consistory, as becomes evident from the correspondence between it and Benedict Schott, the Director of the Jacobson school in Seesen. This correspondence gives us some interesting information about the Consistory schools and the relation between them and the Consistory. The Consistory insists on examining the teacher of religious education. It recommends textbooks: for biblical history "Maaseh Adonai" of Gedaliah Mohr, a teacher in Copenhagen; for religion, Herz Homberg's "Imre Shafer"; and Peter Beer's "Dat Yisrael". (209) The Consistory asks that it be sent some of the notebooks kept by the pupils in religion. Besides religion, the curriculum contains history of religion, Bible, writing (Hebrew), the German

language, French, history and geography, nature study, arithmetic, orthography, reading, singing, drawing, and technology. (210) The Consistory ruled that on Sabbath no instruction except religion and Biblical exegesis is to take place. The Consistory is interested in a list of boys who show an aptitude for manual trades.

FRANKFURT AM MAIN

The Frankfurt am Main Jüdische Philanthropin was founded in 1804 as a school for orphans. The stimulus for its foundation occurred through an accidental meeting between Mayer Anshel Rothschild and a Galician beggar-boy. At first, only the orphan and the very poor were admitted to this school. Later, others who paid tuition fees were enrolled. For the poor it was a trade school, and for the well-to-do a Realschule. (211)

In the Jewish Community of Frankfurt am Main, Mendelssohn's works and teachings had spread rapidly. In 1783 Mendelssohn's Pentateuch translation had gained fifty-seven subscribers among the Frankfurt Jews - at that time a very large number indeed. (212) It is not to be wondered at that in this city the idea of a modern school, one incorporating the educational ideas of Mendelssohn's friend and ideological partner, Wessely, should find a positive response. In the very city where in 1794, only a decade before, Rabbi Phineas Hurwitz

had declared a ban against the first attempt at a secular school (213) the Jüdische Philanthropin was established and made remarkable progress. In 1810 a girls' school was organized and became associated with it. In 1811 the first Christian pupil entered the school. The institution thus became non-sectarian, and the word "Jewish" was omitted from its name. Until 1813 it was a privately endowed school. But in that year the Philanthropin, thanks to the efforts of Hess, its capable head-teacher, became a public school, subsidized by the state and the Jewish community, and known as the "Real-und Volksschule der israelitischen Gemeinde".

This school evoked great interest. Prince primate Karl von Dalberg was a friend of the school. Goethe was informed of its progress through his friend, Bettina, and he made repeated inquiries about it.

Before leaving this discussion of the Frankfurt am Main school, it might be mentioned that corporal punishment was prohibited there. Religious instruction began with ethics and humanitarianism for all pupils - Jewish and non-Jewish alike; and ended with the dogma of the particular religion. At this point, the Jewish and non-Jewish pupils received separate instruction. Salzmann's books on ethics were used. In Jewish religion, Josef Johlsen's catechistic text, "Shorshe Hadat"

(Frankfurt am Main 1814) was used. Another interesting feature of this school was its attitude toward memory work. Philanthropinism opposed learning by memorizing, but Wessely approved of it. The Frankfurt am Main Philanthropin curriculum included exercises in memorizing. (214)

RUSSIAN SCHOOLS

The ideals of the Haskalah Movement, including their views on education, travelled from Germany eastward. (215) Dr. Frank, a physician who studied in Berlin, proposed to Dyerzhavin, Russian statesman, that schools for the Jews be established where the media of instruction would be the Russian, German and Hebrew languages. (216) In 1804 the government schools were opened to the Jews, but relatively few of them took advantage of this concession. This despite the fact that the Jews were warned that if they did not take advantage of the government's offer, the government would set up special schools for the Jews, to be maintained financially by the Jews.

The initiative for the foundation of modern schools for the Jews of Russia came indirectly from Germany, ironically enough, through the Jews of Galicia. In 1813 Joseph Perl (217) founded in his native city,

Tarnopol (which then belonged to Russia) a modern school. The school progressed and the number of pupils grew so that in 1815 Joseph Perl erected a school building with his own funds. Perl was influenced by Isaiah Horowitz. And like Wessely, he was impressed by the educational system of Amsterdam Jewry, an account of which he read in "Vave Ha'amudim". It might well be that he read Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth". Wessely was more popular in Russo-Poland than in Germany. (218) German was taught in Perl's school and Mendelssohn's translation was used in the teaching of the Pentateuch. Grammatical explanations were emphasized. French was also included. (219) Religion was taught. But religious practice was also emphasized. Thus, in Perl's school, the children prayed morning and evening under the teacher's supervision.

We can detect Wessely's views in many of the precepts to which Perl adhered. Perl attempted to teach the Talmud on a level with the child's intellectual powers. (220) Perl was sympathetic and understanding in his approach to the child, and like Wessely, he was critical of the melammedim, who do not treat the child gently. (221) Perl, too, like Wessely, opposes corporal punishment. Like Wessely, Perl has a positive attitude toward manual work. The school has a special shop room for girls, where women teach them practical skills

necessary for women. The school includes in its curriculum ethics, manners, and emphasizes cleanliness. The school fostered friendliness and cooperation among the pupils. Perl, like Wessely, seems to have been loyal to tradition and observant of religious customs.

Perl's school served as a model for other schools. In 1820 another Galician Jew, Meyer Horn, founded with private funds, a school in Uman in the Province of Kiev. In 1826 the school of Odessa was opened and became popular. (Odessa had a considerable settlement of Austrian Jews.) The Odessa school was founded by Zittenfeld and headed by Basilius Stern of Tarnopol. On the faculty of this school were such distinguished men as Simhah Pinsker and Elijah Finkel, the grandson of Elijah Gaon. (222)

In 1840 a Jewish school was opened in Riga. The faculty consisted of three Jews and one Christian. Its principal was the newly-elected Rabbi, Dr. Max Lilienthal, who occupies a prominent place in the history of the Haskalah in Russia. The Russian government, through its Minister of Public Instruction, Uvaroff, was interested in converting the Jews to the Greek Orthodox Church. It hoped to accomplish this goal gradually with the aid of government schools, maintained by Jewish funds, and which Jewish children were forced to attend. The government selected Rabbi Lilienthal to win Jewish public

opinion over in favor of the government schools. Ostensibly, Dr. Lilienthal was assigned the task of investigating the new schools. But the real and primary purpose was to have Dr. Lilienthal persuade Russian Jews of the usefulness of the government schools. For some three years Dr. Lilienthal was a cynosure. His efforts were watched with great interest in Europe. (223) The Maskilim, a minority, encouraged him in his task. But the traditionalists, who were the large majority, had no confidence in his undertaking and looked askance at his enterprise. Both Mithnagdim and Hasidim came out openly against the government schools.

Formerly, German Jewry had depended on Poland to supply it with melammedim. Now, Russian Jewry had to rely on Germany for trained Jewish pedagogues, as Russia, except for Solomon Salkind, had none of its own. Teachers from Germany were to be engaged for the government schools only upon the recommendation of Rabbi Ludwig Philippson and Jost. (224) These men and other leaders of Enlightenment such as Auerbach and Levi, were enthusiastic over the task attempted by Dr. Lilienthal, and through correspondence with him, spurred him on in his efforts. Rabbi Philippson and Jost also corresponded with Count Uvaroff, the Minister of Public Instruction. A commission was even set up to work out a course of study for the government schools. But the

pronounced anti-Jewish attitude of the government, which was all too apparent to the Jews, and the true intention of Uvaroff, which was all too evident, made the carrying out of the Russian school reforms impossible. Dr. Lilienthal himself was disillusioned. He fled from Russia in 1844 and settled in the United States.

With this, the struggle for Haskalah was by no means over. German Haskalah continued to serve their Eastern brethren as a model and an inspiration in their conflict with both Hasidim and Mithnagdim. In this struggle Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788-1860), known as the Russian Mendelssohn, plays a prominent role. He is one of the foremost exponents of Haskalah in Russia. (225) Like Wessely, Levinsohn was absorbed in attempts to improve the educational system of the Jews. His "Tefudah be-Yisrael", published in 1828, has many points of similarity with Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth". (226)

* * * *

From the above discussion of schools established during the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, it becomes apparent that Wessely's educational program - despite the intense opposition of many outstanding men of his day - gained ground and won followers. His ideas on education became an essential part of the Haskalah Movement. His re-

forms in education are among the chief tenets in the Haskalah program, in Central Europe, and wherever it pursued its way in Russia and elsewhere during the nineteenth century. (227) The efforts of the Haskalah are among the important developments in modern Jewish history. If the results were disappointing, the fault did not lie with the program which Wessely fathered. It lay rather with the opposition and with the executors of the reforms. If an account were to be drawn up for the Haskalah, there would surely be listed on the credit side contributions such as: revival of interest in the Bible; improved methods of instruction; use of realia; gradation; training of teachers. In these contributions Wessely's efforts are readily recognizable. On the strength of these alone his name must occupy a place of honor in a history of Jewish education since Mendelssohn's time, which has not as yet been written.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"SONGS OF GLORY"

How They Came To Be Written

Wessely was almost sixty years of age when he began composing his "Songs of Glory". (1) This was in 1785. Historians of Hebrew literature (2) raise the question: What motivated a man approaching old age and one who hitherto rarely had been stirred by the Muse of Poetry (3), what motivated him who all his life had dealt with rather prosaic endeavors such as exegesis, philology, translation, and education, to soar upon the wings of poetry? At an advanced age, Wessely undertook to treat a majestic subject, one beset with difficulties of immense proportions. This magnificent theme - the life of Moses and the Exodus - is superbly treated in the Bible. It is so superbly treated that one critic (4) says that he who attempts to deal with this Biblical subject is bound to suffer by the inevitable comparison with the source material, the Bible. And this same critic's verdict is that Wessely does indeed suffer by this comparison.

Two things then emerge from the above remarks. First, Wessely up to 1785 had not shown any particular passion for or any gift for poetry. Nor had Wessely himself thought much of his occasional flights into the poetic realm. His

opinion of his own poetry has already been cited. (see page 23) (5) The poems which were composed before "Songs of Glory" were stiff and correct as regards craftsmanship, but very little more. There are a few notable exceptions. The elegy commemorating the death of Duke Leopold (6) shows imagination, deep feeling, and lofty sentiments. It can still be read with enjoyment and is worth quoting: (7)

How can we call the righteous dead
Or life - a life of wrong and dread?
A guiltless soul can ne'er be slain,
A sinner's life is ever vain.
For what is life but strife and care;
We all must die, there is no gain
In years of sin that blanch our hair.

If man's whole task, his only need,
Is daily bread on which to feed,
Then death's a blessing in disguise.
No! Moral force and height of soul
Are life's concern, man's only goal.
He who is noble, who is wise,
Enjoys a life we may all prize.

(Translation taken from J.L. Landau's "Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature" page 59.)

Probably there could be mentioned as a second exception to the general mediocrity of Wessely's occasion verses the poem "Mehalel Réa", which appeared in front of the Bi^{ur} to the Book of Exodus. (see pages 14 and 15). This too shows genuine poetic inspiration. Wessely's Elegy on Mendelssohn's Death also rings true, and thus forms a third exception. (8)

The second item that emerges is that the subject of "Songs of Glory" is extremely difficult. This is attested

to by the fact that no one, either before or after Wessely's time has attempted this tremendous task, that is, an epic treatment of the Exodus and the Life of Moses. Wessely himself recognized the enormity of the task. (9) And in the lyrical opening of these Songs our poet felt compelled to invoke divine aid, very much like the classicists of Greek dramas calling upon the Muse of Poetry for assistance and inspiration.

The question then recurs: What is it that prompted Wessely to compose the epic poems, "Songs of Glory"?

Meisel (10) Wessely's biographer, tells us that the tutor of Wessely's children dreamt a strange dream and in this dream he had been told to urge Wessely to treat of the life and deeds of the Head of the Prophets. The dream repeated itself to the tutor. He conveyed the dream to his employer. This is said to have made a profound impression upon Wessely, and he determined to make the dream a reality. A similar motivation is found in ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef of 1790, (page 219), but there it is a pupil of Wessely's who has the dream. However, one cannot take these tales too seriously. Usually, an artist is not moved to creation by another's dreams.

Friedrichsfeld's conjecture (11) that the "Songs of Glory" were an outgrowth of Wessely's exegetical activities is more plausible. Wessely planned a running commentary on the Torah, and "Songs of Glory" take the place of a

commentary on Exodus; or are rather a poetic commentary on the Book of Exodus.

One just does not rush into a majestic theme such as Wessely treats. Usually one lives with it, meditates upon it, and broods over it for a long, long period of time. By way of analogy, Goethe's manner of the composition of "Faust" may be cited at this point. Goethe played with the theme of Faust during the greater part of his lifetime, over a period of sixty years. He occupied himself with this subject when he was a very young boy; his first literary drafts were executed in 1771, when he was a young man of twenty-two; and the entire plan was completed in 1831, when he was an old man of eighty-two. Wessely, too, it seems, dwelt upon the themes connected with the Exodus for a very long time. (12) These themes must have fascinated and awed him alike.

To this inner urge may be added, perhaps, the external stimulation of Johann Gottfried Herder, who urged a German Jew to treat of Moses' magnificent activities in an epic poem. (13) Wessely's biographer, Meisel, does mention Herder's exhortation (14), but Meisel does not say that Wessely knew of it or was influenced by it. Klausner (15) assumes that Meisel surmises that such an influence was exerted. However, as we have said, Meisel does not actually say so. He merely says that Herder could not have wished for a better, more ideally suited poet than Wessely

to treat this subject.

One keen student of modern Hebrew literature (16) finds in some of Wessely's poems which appeared before "Songs of Glory" harbingers of these "Songs", as regards inner content and outer form. This, he claims, is especially pronounced in Wessely's poem "Mehalel Rea", which appeared in 1778, or eleven years before "Songs of Glory", and some five years before Herder's call. A consideration of these facts casts doubt upon the assertion that Herder's challenge served as an external stimulus to Wessely. Then, too, the famous quotation, "A scholar without knowledge" - which aroused so much resentment on the part of Wessely's rabbinical opponents - is from a context where God speaks to Moses. Dr. Schapiro sees in this quotation a further indication that Wessely was preoccupied with the subject of Moses for a long time before Herder's call was issued. Schapiro also supports his contention by citing the discourse of Wessely on the Revelation, to which allusion has already been made above. (see Note 12)

One more supposed external influence on the composition of "Songs of Glory" remains to be discussed, namely, Klopstock's "Messias". It is generally stated, as a matter of course, in history and literature books when mentioning the "Songs of Glory", that Wessely modeled his work after that of Klopstock's "Messias". (17) There is, however, no sound basis for this assertion.

Wessely nowhere, neither in the several Introductions nor in the many Notes to the "Songs", indicates any outside influence upon him. On the contrary, he implies the very opposite. In the Introduction to Volume I of "Songs of Glory", after enumerating eight reasons for writing these "Songs", Wessely says: "These then are the reasons which prompted me to try my hand and see if I could do something toward the fulfillment of these glorious goals. Predecessors greater than myself have not attempted this task. I have seen but one composition of a scholar by the name of Abraham Cohen, who, in a book entitled "The Priesthood of Abraham", ventured to do with David's Psalms (he poetically expounds David's Songs) something akin to what we are doing in these "Songs of Glory" with the Story of Moses and the Exodus. But I have not found anything along the lines of our Songs." (Emphasis ours)

The review of Ha-Meassef (1790) has nothing to say about Klopstock and the supposed influence of the "Messias". It might be added that Wessely's biographers say nothing of Klopstock, his "Messias" or of any influence of Klopstock on Wessely. Friedrichsfeld was a disciple of Wessely and knew him well, and nowhere does he speak of such an influence. Nor do Meisel and Moses Mendelssohn (Hamburg) - both of whom were in an excellent position to know and speak of any influence Klopstock's work may have exerted on "Songs of Glory". Franz Delitzsch, the his-

torian of modern Hebrew literature in its early stages, who lived close to the period under discussion and knew it intimately, says the following in his authoritative work: "Wessely had no other model for his Moses epic than the paraphrase of the Psalms by Abraham Cohen of Zante." (18) *

Had Wessely really followed Klopstock, he would probably have followed his model in such externals as the number of Songs. The "Messias" has twenty Songs. But Wessely completed his "Songs of Glory" - as will be established conclusively below - with the Eighteenth Song. Furthermore, had Wessely consciously been influenced by Klopstock in his choice of subject, he would undoubtedly have said so. He had ample opportunity to do so. In fact, veracity would have demanded it, and Wessely was not the man to do truth violence.

After a careful examination of the two works under consideration, we fail to find any influence of Klopstock's work on that of Wessely. It so happens that both poems have prominent religious leaders as their heroes. There is that resemblance, no doubt. But, Klopstock and Wessely differ radically in outlook and manner of composition. Klopstock has left Classicism almost completely and has turned Pietist and Mystic. These pietistic and mystic strains are very prominent in the "Messias". Wessely, on the other hand, is predominantly rooted in Classicism and

* see page 272 Supplement I

Rationalism. Nor is there any resemblance between the two works in structure and meter.

Perhaps because of the assumed influence of Klopstock on Wessely, Klausner (19) says that Wessely did not complete his work, that he planned to compose twenty Songs in all (the same number as in Klopstock's "Messias"), and not the eighteen Songs which he did compose. Lachower (20) says that Wessely probably intended to compose twenty Songs, following the "Messias", which was his model, but that he did not accomplish his aim. In a footnote on the same page, Lachower contradicts himself and states that one may also suppose that we have before us a finished product, since its ending is similar to the ending of Klopstock's poem, both of which conclude with the ascension of the hero. In the case of Klopstock the ascension of the hero is to heaven, sitting at the right of the Lord; and in Wessely's poem, Moses ascends the Mount, to receive the Tablets. (21) Lachower is correct in his footnote, when he says that "Songs of Glory" is a finished product, but he arrives at his conclusion by way of a doubtful reason. The same conclusion can be reached from Wessely's own statements on the subject.

Wessely himself leaves no doubt that he completed his "Songs of Glory". Eighteen Songs he planned to compose and eighteen Songs he did compose. He says as much at various points in the Introductions and Notes to "Songs of

Glory". Let Wessely speak for himself:

From the Introduction to Volume I: "And I plan to say more on the subject, God willing, in the introductions to the five remaining volumes if I be privileged to see them published." (Emphasis ours)

From the same Introduction: "All in all, there will be six volumes, containing eighteen Songs".

In the Introduction to Volume II Wessely says: "And thus it is in all the eighteen Songs of these six volumes."

And again in the Introduction to Volume IV: "And thus have we done in all the eighteen Songs".

At the end of the "Notes" to Volume II Wessely states:

"And I hope that, with God's aid, the remaining four volumes will soon be published."

And finally, in his Introduction to Volume VI (22) Wessely says: "The eighteenth Song with which we have sealed this book". (emphasis ours) In no other place in his opus does Wessely speak of "book" and "sealing". All the other five parts of his "Songs of Glory" he refers to as "volumes". It is obvious from this that with the eighteenth Song in the sixth Volume Wessely considered his task completed.(23)

Therefore, we must conclude that Wessely left us a completed work. Indeed, he completed his "Songs of Glory".

Eighteen Songs in all he planned and eighteen Songs he executed. (24)

To summarize. The "Songs of Glory" show no traces of Klopstock's "Messias". The idea that Wessely did not complete his epic (based on the false assumption of the influence of the "Messias") is untenable. Wessely completed his "Songs of Glory". Herder's exhortation did not, in all probability, play a major role, if any, in the urge to create these Songs. They came into being primarily as a result of inner motivation. Our Poet came to compose them as a result of an evolutionary process, of years of preoccupation with Biblical Exegesis. Wessely being an enthusiast, by the very nature of the themes, he could not help being attracted, even fascinated and impelled toward them. He was a lover of the Bible and of his People's past, of the rich events of his People's history. But above all, the life story of that magnificent man, Moses, and that supreme moment on Mount Sinai must have impressed his whole being and left indelible marks upon him. That that was the case is substantiated by a number of incidents in Wessely's own life, which we have enumerated above. (see page 144) The more he pondered and perused the Torah, especially the Books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, the more seized and overpowered he became by the emotions evoked by the majestic panoramas portrayed in these Books. In this respect, Wessely's own words in his Introduction to

Volume I are particularly revealing. There he speaks of a catharsis. He says that in order to ease yourself of emotions overflowing and overpowering you, you either write poetry yourself, or read some one else's poetry appropriate to the emotions you are experiencing. Wessely evidently did the former.

* * * *

Aim Of The Poet

We have spoken, thus far, of what motivated Wessely to take up the subject of his epic poem, how the urge to create these came about. So much for the poet. What aim, however, did he have in mind for his readers? Wessely expresses himself on this subject. His aim is didactic. (25) To Wessely, poetry had a moral aim. He wants to instruct his readers in the words of the Torah, to glorify the Torah, and to point out its truth and beauty. Wessely aims to implant morality and to educate his readers. Wessely does not desire to entertain or to amuse them. The poet hopes that his poetry will serve as a guide to beginning poets; that they will learn from him pure poetic diction, pleasing melizoth, and the orderly and lucid arrangement of subject matter.

Another aim of Wessely's is to reveal God's wonders to the Gentiles. He therefore looks forward to the German

translation, the execution of which was promised him by a German scholar. (26) This German translation, Wessely says, will also benefit Jewish girls who do not, as a rule, understand Hebrew. Then, too, those Jews whose knowledge of the Hebrew language is meager, also will read the German translation.

It is interesting to examine Wessely's own words on this subject of his aims in writing "Songs of Glory".

"God is my witness that everything I have written to date I have done because of my love for the word of God and that it may serve a useful purpose to our children, as well as to our contemporaries. (Introduction to Volume I "Songs of Glory" pages 4b-5a)

"It is not our object in these Songs to entertain others with pleasant poetical language, with pure diction and beautiful figures of speech, but whatever we utter in these Songs purports to convey to my contemporaries the deeper meaning of the Bible stories." (Notes to Volume IV, opening paragraph)

"By means of its brevity, parables and elegant similes, the poem can elucidate to the reader the depth and heart of a matter. This is something which ordinary prose cannot accomplish. We have, therefore, chosen to compose these volumes in pleasing poetry, which is sweet to the ear, in order to inculcate the sayings of the Torah into the heart

of the reader and to glorify the words of our God, which are written with divine pen in the Torah". (Introduction to Volume II, page 1a) (27)

Very telling is this quotation from the Introduction to Volume I, page 5b: "The poems include precious teachings, words of knowledge and wisdom, which are instructive and which emanate from the mouths of the spiritual and righteous characters; and likewise, in these poems are words of ignominy, haughtiness and contempt, spoken by the mouths of the wicked. From these the reader will judge the fruits of righteousness and those of wickedness, and he will learn to reject evil and to choose good."

And finally, the rationalist Wessely reveals himself fully: "I am moved to expound the words of our God by means of poetry, for I observe that not many strive to obtain a true understanding of the words of the Torah, nor do they persist in a literal and rational interpretation..... Biblical exegetes deplore this deviation from rational interpretation. Even if we say that these exegetes have written in a perfectly lucid manner, very few readers look into their works, and upon those who do, no lasting impression is left, for many reasons that will take too long to enumerate here. But this much we will say. The exegete seems sesquipedalian to the intelligent reader, who is bored by the verbosity, while the unintelligent reader fails

to grasp what the exegete, with all his prolixity, is aiming at. But the path of clear and measured poetry is smooth to all who tread upon it. In its succinct metaphors and examples it instructs much more than does the exegete with his verbiage. Nor does the poem weary the reader, for the beauty of poetry is pleasing to his soul.....And because the reader loves the poem, he reads it time and again; and after reading it many times, at last he is thoroughly familiar with it." (Introduction to Volume I)

Wessely's aim in writing "Songs of Glory" becomes unmistakable from the above quotations. He hopes to teach his readers, to improve their morals, and to instruct them in the glory of God. Let us now turn to an examination of the form and structure of these Songs.

* * * *

Form, Style, Meter, and Imagery

Form

Wessely's "Songs of Glory" appear in six volumes and are composed of eighteen Songs. Volume Six, consisting of Songs Sixteen, Seventeen, and Eighteen, appeared posthumously in Prague in 1829. (28) Each Song is preceded by a rhymed lyrical introduction (aa-b-cc-b). It is in these somewhat subjective verses that the cold and

regular Classicist Wessely yields - now and then - to romanticist temptation. These introductions, too, reveal Wessely's true piety and contain his best poetry. They create the mood for the epic narrative proper.

What do these Introductions deal with? (29)

Song I - In telling the story of Moses, which is a revelation of God's glory, our Poet feelingly invokes divine aid. This request is made in touching lines:

If Thou but teach my lips to sing,
Then a new song I'll bring,
A pearl from wisdom's sea.
Wide are the waves that toss,
Vast the expanse to cross,
Oh, God, carry Thou me.

Then will my song bring joy and banish
pain
And be the oil to light men's souls
again
If dim their flame,
For of Thy wonders and Thy might I'll
sing,
Of glorious Moses like unto a king,
To glorify Thy Name.

(Translation from Waxman III, page 111)

Wessely then proceeds to recount briefly the highlights in Israel's history, beginning with Adam and leading up to the events immediately preceding the appearance of Moses, namely, the death of Joseph's generation and the fear and hatred of the new Pharaoh toward the Israelites. Thus, the Poet leads us directly into the narrative proper, which depicts the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt.

Song II - This Song bespeaks the mysteriousness

surrounding God's deeds. Limited man cannot comprehend the designs and patterns of God, the Unlimited. Even the wisest of men cannot foresee the beginnings and ends of God's plan. A case in point is the birth of Moses and his rescue from death by Pharaoh's daughter.

Song III - Wessely treats of God's elect, of those whose lives are dedicated to perform mighty deeds. God's chosen - no matter in what wicked environment they be - rise to their historic mission and perform glorious and righteous deeds. This is illustrated in the life story of Moses, who was brought up in the palace of a wicked king.

Song IV - God tries righteous men, as gold is tested in a crucible. The wicked do not go through trials; they are similar to dross which, if put in the crucible, is consumed. God tries Israel, but not Egypt. Egypt is the instrument through which God tries Israel.

Song V - God bestows of His holy spirit, the power of prophecy, upon those He finds worthy of such signal recognition. The most modest of men, Moses, is chosen by God as His Prophet. Moses is to rescue Israel.

Song VI - Here is a discourse on Hope. Man should not become resigned in times of trouble and distress. Sometimes, however, man declares that he is beyond help and cries out "I am lost", while really help is near at hand.

The oppressed people of Israel despair and presently, Moses, God's agent, appears before them together with his brother Aaron and brings them a message of good cheer.

Song VII - Wessely comments upon God's forbearance. Let man not be puzzled when he sees the wicked prosper, for their hour of punishment is near. The abused Israelites, cheered and warmed by the message of God which they have received through Moses and Aaron, feel that their oppression is approaching an end and that retribution awaits the evil-doers.

Song VIII - Wessely speaks of God's judgments, the secrets and sequence of which are known to Him alone. The Poet enumerates the four chief blessings of God. Opposed to these blessings are God's four main punishments. We are thus introduced to the four divisions of the Plagues upon Egypt. (see page

Song IX - God's Kingdom rules everywhere. The earthly kings are merely His representatives. If they fear Him, they receive His blessings; but if they forsake Him, they cannot escape His judgment. This God proved to Pharaoh and to Egypt through the judgments of the first group of Plagues brought upon them.

Song X - God loves the soul of man. God will chastise the wicked one who corrupts his soul. It happens that man reaches a height of corruption by bowing and worship-

on this earth would have been paradise. The righteous are taken care of by the Lord, even in desert places. Even where no source of sustenance is available, God provides the wants of the faithful. And thus Israel was given the gifts of quail and manna.

Song XV - To God, the author of creatio ex nihilo, nothing is impossible. But those contemptuous of the knowledge of God, keep on trying and testing Him. Those devoid of a real knowledge of God are quick to question and to challenge God's power when they are in trouble and His aid is not immediately forthcoming. The souls of our forefathers, while in the desert, were not attuned to God's greatness. Manna He gave them in plenty, yet they were poor in faith in Him and dared collect manna on the holy Sabbath day. But God in His mercy forgave them. Not so in Rephidim. Wessely begs God to help him narrate the famous incident in Rephidim.

Song XVI - God takes revenge upon those who defy and hate Him. Our Poet is indignant with the non-believers who rely on those very weak and fragile instruments - their limited understanding and their physical strength. To these rebels, who recognize no master, their desires are their statutes. All God's planned events are to them mere chance. Of such incorrigible brood is the people of Amalek. The war of Israel and Amalek is accounted for in

the Song proper and the origins of the eternal enmity between these two peoples are traced.

Song XVII - The righteous and wisdom-loving non-Israelites, too, like the Israelites, are beloved by God. The poet speaks of the Kingdom of God and of the brotherhood of man. In the fraternity of man, wisdom is of the highest value. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, is a wise and God-fearing non-Israelite. This Song deals with the cordial relations between Moses and Jethro.

Song XVIII - Wisdom is handed down from generation to generation. To preserve mankind, God has set up "do's" and "don'ts". And here the Poet reviews the lives of our ancestors (Adam, Noah, Abraham) in terms of their obedience or disobedience of God's specific commandments. At this point Wessely reaches the supreme moment in Israel's and mankind's history - the Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, on the sixth day of the third month. Song XVIII treats of the loftiness of the Ten Commandments.

* * * *

Style and Meter

The actual story of the eighteen Songs proper need not be told, since - as has already been indicated - Wessely follows closely the well-known Biblical account, from the birth of Moses to the giving of the Law. It is, however, in order now, to say something about Wessely's style and meter.

Wessely loved Hebrew passionately. He knew it thoroughly and believed himself inspired by the spirit of the Hebrew language. The "Songs of Glory" possess linguistic significance since Wessely knows how to employ Biblical Hebrew to best advantage. His style shows effectively of what beauty the Hebrew tongue is capable. His lucid and flowing Hebrew is the more appreciated when compared with the rabbinic Hebrew of his day. Now and then Wessely is obliged to deviate from idiomatic Hebrew and to employ an awkward construction because of the exigencies of the meter.

(30) Now and then too, despite his pure Biblical Hebrew, Wessely (like his fellow-Maskilim) shows the influence of the European languages. As an example, the following sentence from Note Seven to Volume IV will serve: (31)

כי אלהים יצאנו אל ארץ מצרים
 ואלוהים יצאנו אל ארץ מצרים

This is German word order. Also, there are many instances where Wessely violates grammatical rules. (32) But, in the main, it may be said without fear of contradiction, that Wessely introduced and set the tone for vivid, elastic, and colorful Hebrew. "He moulded the language in various ways and made it pliable enough for nuances and shades of meaning." (33)

Wessely excelled in metrics. It is generally recognized that Wessely has earned great merit in the new versification in modern Hebrew poetry. He is, if not the innovator, certainly one of the pioneers of the new system of metrics. He released Hebrew poetry from the fetters of

the complicated Spanish-Arabic meter. On very rare occasions Wessely follows the Spanish meter - a vestigial manifestation of the power of the past. But on the whole, he discarded this prevailing meter, and employed almost exclusively the syllabic one. (34) In this he was followed by Hebrew poets for a period of over sixty years; for his form of meter and stanza prevailed right through Judah Loeb Gordon's period. (35)

In the Introduction to Volume I of "Songs of Glory", Wessely comments on the metrics of his poetry. He points out the obvious fact that his lyrical Introductions are rhymed while the epic proper is mostly in blank verse. The lyrical introductions are cast in the form of six-line stanzas. Each line is an independent thought unit and does not require - for completion of thought - the following line. Nevertheless, the six lines of the stanza have an inner unity. Each line of the stanza consists of eleven vowels. A caesura divides each line, and the stanza too is divided into two parts of three lines each. Always in these rhymed Introductions, and at times in the epic proper (e.g. Volume I page 14a), Wessely rhymes the first line with the second, the third with the sixth, and the fourth with the fifth. (aa-b-cc-b) (see example page 154)

In the epic itself Wessely's line consists usually of twelve and a half vowels. There are also lines of eleven and thirteen vowels. The caesura divides each line,

usually into six and six and a half vowels, and sometimes into five and seven and a half vowels. Only rarely does a line begin with a sheva and where it does, it is reckoned as a vowel. Wessely counts a hataph, at the beginning of a word, as a full vowel. When a hataph occurs in the middle of a word, he does not count it at all as a vowel. Each line ends with a word accented on the penult. In other words, the line ends in an unaccented syllable.

* * * *

Imagery

Let us now examine the imagery with which Wessely embellishes his poetry. Generally speaking, the imagery introduced by Wessely is borrowed from the Bible with which our Poet was imbued. The Biblical imagery was part and parcel of Wessely. It was, as it were, in his very bloodstream. Even when the imagery is not directly taken from the Bible, nevertheless, the spirit of the Bible permeates it. It must be admitted that Wessely knows how to utilize Biblical imagery in order to emphasize and enrich the point he is making. But it must also be asserted that not much of original imagery adorns his poetry. This section will point out first, some of the Biblical imagery employed by Wessely; and second, some of his extra-Biblical imagery.

Biblical Imagery in "Songs of Glory"

The new Pharaoh becomes alarmed as he beholds the

unity of Israel; the Hebrews help one another and are closer to one another than even the hair on one's head. (I, 5a)

(36) Compare: They are more than the hairs of my head.

(Psalms 40:13).

The ill-disposed monarch of the Egyptians plots against the increasing and multiplying Hebrews. They, says Pharaoh, increase like the fishes. (I, 5b) Compare: And let them grow into a multitude (like fishes) in the midst of the earth. (Genesis 48:16). The Hebrews, says Pharaoh, cleave fast together like clods. These are the very words the Lord addresses to Job. (Job 38:38).

Miriam stands at a distance from the Nile, watching to see what would befall her baby brother, Moses. The Poet speaks of her: She is a maiden better than rubies and more precious than gold. (I, 15a) Compare: For wisdom is better than rubies (Proverbs 8:11); More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold (Psalms 19:11); and I will make man more rare than fine gold. (Isaiah 13:12).

Yokhebed, upon learning from her daughter Miriam that Moses is still alive, is dumbstruck and for joy her eyes run down with rivers of water. (I, 17a) Compare this with Mine eyes run down with rivers of water (Psalms 119:136).

Moses is about to come to the aid of Reuel's daughters. He lifts himself up as a lion and as a bear robbed of her

whelps in the forests. (I, 31a) Compare with: And as a lion doth he lift himself up (Numbers 23:24) and as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field. (II Samuel 17:8)

The children of Israel groan under the oppression of Pharaoh. They hope that Pharaoh's successor will be more lenient with them. But they are doomed to disappointment. For the new ruler is even harsher than his predecessor; for out of the viper's root came forth a cobra. (I, 37a) Compare in Isaiah 14:29: For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk.

The Lord is about to put an end to the suffering of Israel and to fulfill His covenant with them. (I, 39b) He clad himself with zeal as with a cloak and put on garments of vengeance for clothing. This is an almost literal transfer from Isaiah 59:17.

Wessely discourses upon the attributes of the wicked. The wicked person does not, says Wessely, see things in their true perspective. He has a distorted sense of values. He is like a blind one groping in the darkness. (II, 46a) Compare: As the blind gropeth in darkness. (Deut. 28:29)

When Sorrow and Care deal a person heavy blows, they set him staggering and reeling like a drunkard. (II, 51b) Compare Psalms 107:27 They reeled to and fro, and staggered like a drunken man.

The Israelite officers come to Pharaoh and plead with him to mitigate the sufferings of the children of Israel. Pharaoh is annoyed with them. He silences them by giving his voice forth like a lion. (II, 52b) Compare this with: Will a young lion give forth his voice out of his den. (Amos 3:4) Also compare Job 4:10 and Hoseah 11:10.

The children of Israel, stationed before the King's palace, are anxiously awaiting their officers. Upon beholding their fallen faces, the Jews realize that the officers have failed in their mission to Pharaoh. The hearts of the Jews turn to water. (II, 52b) Compare this with Joshua 7:5 And the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

The Israelite officers, upon leaving Pharaoh's palace, meet Moses and Aaron. They accuse the two brothers of having spoken to Pharaoh harsh words which God did not authorize. Say the Israelite officers to Moses and Aaron: Your words have been like arrows and like the piercings of a sword. (II, 53b) Compare with: Who have whet their tongue like a sword and have aimed their arrow, a poisoned word. (Psalms 64:4) Similarly, Psalms 57:5 and Proverbs 12:18.

Moses and Aaron are hurt to the quick by the reproaches of the Israelite officers. They cannot witness the sufferings of their brethren. They had rather fly to a desert

or a waste land, than see calamity upon calamity befall their fellow-Jews. Though the exact wording is not Biblical, the spirit is. Compare: They gnaw the dry ground, in the gloom of wasteness and desolation. (Job 30:3) Also compare Psalm 107:4. Instead of peace, they see fury, whirl like a storm upon their brethren. (II, 53b) Compare this with: Behold, a storm of the Lord is gone forth in fury. (Jeremiah 23:19 and 30:23).

Moses is at a loss to comprehend why the lot of Israel has become harder after his and Aaron's visit to Pharaoh. The officers of Israel lay the blame for this situation at their door. It is with the officers a case of "post hoc propter hoc". Moses, unable to explain the latest turn of events, in his people's pain, turns to God for enlightenment. Moses, the pure of heart, pours out his soul before the Lord, and his eyelids lifted up were like the eyelids of the morning. (II, 54a) This may be compared with: And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. (Job 41:10)

Moses speaks words of consolation and assurance to his fellow Israelites. (III, 7b) But they are in no mood for his words. Suffering and torture are their lot. Because of their wretched condition, they have no patience with Moses' words. Or, in the words of Exodus 6:9, "they hearkened not unto Moses for impatience of spirit and for cruel bondage". The poet tells: Their backs are given to

the smiters. Compare with: I gave my back to the smiters. (Isaiah 50:6) The poet continues: Their bread is the fist of wickedness, and blood drips from their flesh, which is all wounded; they are like an ass lying under its burden. Compare this with Exodus 23:5.

In the Introduction to Song IX, Wessely speaks of kings and their power. He points out that a king - if he is to be a force for the good, an authentic instrument of God - should care for his people. The mortal king, with all his seeming great power, is limited and circumscribed. He is not like the omnipotent King of Kings. And when the Almighty summons the heavenly or mundane forces to punish the wicked, then their knees drip with water, and the cry of the suffering ones becomes great and goes up to heaven. (III, 18b) For the first part of this image, compare: and all knees shall drip with water (Ezekiel 21:12) and for the second part note: and their cry came up unto God. (Exodus 2:23) The latter part of the imagery may also be compared with Genesis 18:20 and I Samuel 5:12.

The Maskil, Wessely, discourses on the degenerate anti-Maskilim, Pharaoh and the officers of Egypt. (III, 19a) As in a serpent enmity for man is implanted, so in Pharaoh and his advisers is there rooted hatred for men of understanding and knowledge. This imagery undoubtedly has its

origin in Genesis 3:15, where the Lord addresses the serpent and says: And I will put enmity between thee and the and the woman and between thy seed and her seed.

God addresses Moses and predicts that Pharaoh will beg Moses to intercede on his behalf with the Lord. (III, 20a) Pharaoh, says the Lord, will lift his eyes to you, Moses, as the eyes of a servant are lifted unto the hand of his master. This compares well with: Behold, as the eyes of servants unto the hand of their master (are lifted) in Psalm 123 Verse 2.

Pharaoh and his magicians do not wish to recognize God's great deeds. They prefer to seek for excuses and to carry on their nefarious activities. In order to glorify themselves they pretend that the shadows of mountains are truly mountains. (III, 32a) Compare Judges 9:36 Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.

Pharaoh's land is afflicted with the Plague of Frogs. He calls in his magicians for consultation. (III, 36a) He is wretched and eats his food in gloom and his wine tastes to him like gall. Compare with: Their grapes are grapes of gall in Deuteronomy 32:32.

One of the reasons for inflicting the Plague of Frogs was to humiliate the haughty and arrogant Egyptians. (III, 41a) They who with the crown of pride have beauti-

fied themselves like drunkards are now humbled. Compare this with: The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim. (Isaiah 28:3)

In the section containing the Poet's reflections on the Plague of Gnats, Wessely speaks of the complete corruption of Egypt. (III, 47a) In Egypt the moral law is honored in the breach. There, justice is turned away backward and righteousness stumbles in the broad places. Compare this with: And justice is turned away backward and righteousness standeth afar off, from Isaiah 59:14.

The depraved ones fail to perceive the perfect patterns of God. They gloat when they pervert His righteous judgments. But their attempts to interfere with God's designs are ridiculous, like the desire of a lame one to skip and jump upon the mountain top. (IV, 3a) This is a combination of Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as a hart and of Song of Songs 2:8 Leaping upon the mountains.

The Plague of Hail was extremely terrifying to the Egyptians. And even a man whose heart is like the heart of a lion will melt because of such terrors. (IV, 15a) The reference to the heart melting with terror is frequent in the Bible, occurring, to cite a few examples, in Joshua 2:11, 5:1, 7:5; in II Samuel 17:10; and Nahum 2:11.

Moses finds it difficult to account for Pharaoh's conduct. Pharaoh is frightened by God's plagues. But no sooner are they removed, than he is his former self again - rebellious and unwilling to recognize God's power, unmindful of his past experience and of his many promises. (IV, 21a) God explains to Moses that it is His doing. It is He who hardens Pharaoh's heart. If his audacity leaves him, then through God's will, it is renewed like the eagle. This might be compared with Psalm 103:5, where this phrase renewed like the eagle occurs.

Many of Pharaoh's advisers, upon hearing from the mouth of Moses and Aaron the announcement of the Plague of Locusts, are fearful. Pharaoh, seeing that fear has seized them, mocks them. (IV, 25a) They pick up courage and reply, in language full of colorful and vivid imagery. They say: Our land cries out loud and the furrows thereof weep. Compare Job 31:38. The forests put on mourning apparel (II Samuel 14:2), for their cedars are cut down. (Isaiah 9:9)

The children of Israel speak to their Elders and say: Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord. Let us go and journey as the stars do in their courses. (IV, 50b) Compare with: The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. (Judges 5:20)

Pharaoh, in his brazenness and haughtiness scolds

Moses and orders him not to come to the palace again, under penalty of death. (IV, 55a) Moses makes no reply, not because of fear, but because he considers Pharaoh a dead dog, and an impotent moth. For the first simile, consider: That thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog in II Samuel 9:8. For the second part, we might make comparison with Hoseah 5:12 Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth.

The stricken and smitten first-born of Egypt narrate their nightmares to horrified listeners. (IV, 57b) Their loins are seized with convulsion and all knees drip with water. The first part of this vivid description can be likened to: Therefore are my loins filled with convulsion (Isaiah 21:3); while the second part is a favorite figure of speech of Wessely's and may be traced to that very phrase in Ezekiel 21:12.

God reveals to Moses some divine designs. (V, 7b) And He says: And I will make My righteousness go forth as the light and My judgment as the noonday. Compare: And He will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light and thy right as the noonday. (Psalm 37:6)

Moses speaks to God of the Israelites' mortal fear of the pursuing Egyptians and of the hostile environment. (V, 13b) Says Moses: They all cry out as a woman cries out in her pangs. This is readily identified in Isaiah 26:17.

Moses sings songs of glory to the Lord, the Benefactor of Israel. (V, 27b) He says to God: You protect this People and lead them gently even as a shepherd leads those of his flock that give suck. Compare this lovely passage with Isaiah 40:11, for the very same phraseology.

God and Moses converse. God tells Moses that the Israelites are not faithful to Him. He will therefore try them and chastise them in order to perfect them. (V, 31a) Just as a medicine may be bitter to the palate and yet a healing to the flesh of man (Proverbs 4:22), so His chastisement to these wayward ones is a healing for their souls.

Jethro is enlightened by Moses. Moses clears up for his father-in-law matters that have puzzled him. Moses, the man of God, instructs Jethro in the ways of the Lord. (VI, 15b) And Moses' mouth utters wisdom like an overflowing stream. Compare: Like an overflowing stream in Isaiah 66:12, as well as in Jeremiah 47:2.

Moses ascends the Mountain to learn that God will make the People of Israel His Chosen People, if they will keep their Covenant with Him. Moses conveys the content of God's Message to the Elders of Israel, and the Elders in turn reveal it to the people of Israel. All the people are eager to follow God's path. (VI, 30a) Moses is thrilled, and his heart blossoms like the rose. Compare with: And the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the

Wessely says that the name of God is like oil that *Bibb*
is poured forth. (II, 45b) Ointment is soothing and
 healing to a person. But if the ointment is poured over
 burning coals, it fans the flame instead of extinguishing
 it. So it is with the name of the Lord - soothing and
 healing to the good, infuriating to the wicked and corrupt.
 This imagery, though Biblical in spirit, has a rather
 original turn. Oil as a soothing and gladdening agent is
 found in the Bible (Proverbs 27:9; Psalms 109:18; Deut.
 33:24; Isaiah 1:6), but the comparison of God's name with
 oil is, I believe, original with Wessely.

In spite of Pharaoh's stern warning, Moses and Aaron
 return to the palace, for God has bidden them. (III, 22b)
As men go to celebrate a festival and to offer a sacrifice,
 thus went they to perform God's command.

Moses is thrilled with the people's enthusiastic
 reception of the Law. (VI, 60a) He rejoices and their
voice to him is sweeter than the sound of a lyre.

* * * *

We have already stated that not much of Wessely's
 imagery is extra-Biblical. His use of the Biblical
 language was so natural and extensive that his "Songs of
 Glory" needed little else to adorn them. But there are
 a few passages where Wessely's poetic imagination is re-

leased from the Bible, and where his imagery is vivid, graphic and effective nevertheless.

Extra-Biblical Imagery in "Songs of Glory"

Of Pharaoh's heartlessness, Wessely says: A human's blood is a plaything to him. (II, 53a)

When Moses and Aaron address Pharaoh, threatening him with God's intention, they say: But to tell you, you Godless one, the design of God, is like telling a blind man the colors. (III, 23a)

Pharaoh, personally unaffected by the Plague of Blood, will not submit to the will of God for his people's sake. Our Poet exclaims: O, haughtiness! Thou art the mother of cruelty and viciousness. (III, 32b)

Jethro is about to give Moses advice. Knowing the superiority of Moses full well, he says: Who am I to offer you advice? It is as if a fly says to the eagle, "I will teach you to fly".

Some of Wessely's extra-Biblical imagery is particu-

larly interesting in that it reveals something of the man himself. Wessely had a professional interest in precious stones. (See page 5, where we discuss the fact that in Amsterdam Wessely dealt in precious stones and was considered an expert in them) To this knowledge of stones may be traced a whole group of imagery in "Songs of Glory". Some instances are cited below:

During the Plague, Pharaoh makes promises which he promptly forgets as soon as the Plague is removed. This is the usual breach of faith. In vain do Pharaoh and his people see the glorious deeds of the Eternal One. It is as futile as for a man to adorn himself with precious ornaments in the darkness or to weigh a topaz or an emerald under cover of night. (III, 57b)

Moses is eager to enlighten Jethro regarding the matters which are puzzling him. Moses considers his reply most carefully. He counts his words as if they were pearls and weighs them as one weighs precious stones. (VI, 13b)

There are other passages where the Rationalist and Moralist in Wessely are revealed, through the imagery. In these instances the Maskil in Wessely creates the figure of speech. Such is the case when the Lord describes the servility of Pharaoh and his Egyptians. It cannot be mistaken for true repentance. And here comes moralization expressed in imagery. "A murderer seizing his sword

in order to slay his fellow-man - when his hand is cut off or his sword is taken away from him - does not cease to be a murderer at heart. He has merely been stopped from the act of murder. Likewise, an habitual house-breaker, when he is prevented from entering a house because the door has been securely locked against him, does not cease to be a thief, but has merely been stopped from the act of stealing. Thus, a man walking in moral darkness, who deals corruptly upon the earth and even sets his tongue against God; who chooses wickedness and despises righteousness - of what use is it if such a man forsakes his evil path merely because he is at the moment powerless to pursue it. Should such a one become strong again, he will return to his old ways, for his heart delights in them." Thus the reasoned image is concluded.

CHAPTER SIX

~~EMPLOYMENT AND~~ INTERPRETATION

OF

BIBLICAL AND MIDRASHIC PASSAGES

One of Wessely's chief aims in writing "Songs of Glory" was to expound the words of the Torah. (see page 150 ff.) Wessely was an exegete. His commentary on Leviticus (which appeared in Mendelssohn's Biur) and his commentary on part of Genesis (published posthumously by the Hebrat Mekize Nirdamim in 1868 and entitled by them "Imre Shafer") have already been referred to. (see pages 13 and 18) Now it is in order to examine Wessely's exegesis as contained in "Songs of Glory".

First, Wessely justifies the use of poetry as an exegetical vehicle. In the Introduction to Volume I of "Songs of Glory", he says: "Poetry is the best way to arouse the feelings of the reader and to stimulate his understanding, for on account of the brevity of form its words are impressed upon the soul and are retained in memory. I have, therefore, undertaken to explain the words of the Torah in poetry for the following reasons: first, because the exegete tires the reader by his verbosity, who is thus unable to follow him; the poet conveys more by his brevity and chosen similes than the

former by his elaborate and wordy comments. Second, the way of the poet differs from that of the exegete, for the latter aims only to explain the words correctly, while the former, in addition to this, presents also the thoughts of the heroes of the Biblical stories and intersperses in his poems noble teachings and moral maxims." (37)

The following exegetical remarks contained in Wessely's "Songs of Glory" and in the Notes at the end of the Songs do not exhaust the subject, but they will serve as a representative sampling.

EXEGESIS

Wessely comments on "He made them houses" (Ex.1:21) on page 10a of Volume I and in Note 2. The rabbis (Sotah 11b-12a) say: Priests and Levites were descended from the two good midwives. Wessely mentions that the rabbis identify Shiphrah and Puah with Yokhebed and Miriam. He, however, does not choose to do the same. He likes the rabbinical interpretation of "making houses" as signifying the conferring of honor and glory (הוֹדָה וְכָבוֹד) as in II Samuel 7:11, "the Lord will make thee a house". Wessely takes the occasion to disapprove of the explanation of this phrase offered by Rashbam, namely, that Pharaoh put the midwives in a guard house. Nor does Wessely see Mendelssohn's suggestion, which is: "them" refers to the people and God enabled the people to build families

that is, to increase and multiply. Wessely, then, with the rabbis, takes "them" to refer to the midwives. The grammarian in Wessely prompts him to comment that the masculine is said because the pronoun refers to the husbands and to the families of the midwives. "And He made" really refers to both God and Pharaoh, says Wessely. Pharaoh made the midwives free; but in reality, God is the cause and agent of this.

In commenting on Exodus 2:24, "and God remembered His covenant", Wessely says:

וְיִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר
 וְיִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר
 (Volume I, p. 39a)

וְיִזְכֹּר, in reference to the Lord, means the day of reckoning, when God metes out justice. (v. Note 3).

In Note 4, Volume I, p. 40b, Wessely comments on Exodus 2:25, "and God took cognizance". It refers, he says, to Moses and he points out that "to take cognizance" in reference to God connotes the bestowing of His spirit on some one. "To take cognizance" denotes the charismatic leader, the one chosen by Him, who is near Him and is a blessing to the world.

In Song V page 9a Wessely says: "I, who created the eye, have seen their oppression in advance and I who implanted the ear have heard their crying". In the foot-

note Wessely tells us that this is the meaning of Exodus 3:7 "And the Lord said: 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters.'" This interpretation seems to be original with Wessely.

Exodus 3:10 reads: "That thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel out of Egypt". In Song V, page 9b, Wessely's comment on this verse is: For a ruler I have appointed thee (Moses), a prince over holy officers. You will tend My people. In wisdom shalt thou lead them. If you go out before them, securely they will go out; if you come before them, securely they will come. In other words, according to Wessely, "That thou mayest bring forth My people" means: I, God, am appointing you, Moses, a prince, a chief over Israel, who leads them in battle and who brings them victorious back home.

Exodus 3:14, "I will be what I will be". Wessely comments on these words (Song V, p. 17b ff) in a manner befitting the solemnity and profundity of this utterance. Only God, in contradistinction to mortal, can speak of himself as "I will be". Man, at best, can pronounce "I was" and "I am". But it is meaningless for him to proclaim "I will be", since he came into being by God's command and his existence can be terminated at any moment by God's will. The future does not belong to man. Only God, therefore, can apply "I will be" to Himself. Wessely

further elucidates the concept "I will be" as God applies it to Himself. God reveals His will to mankind through His judgments and actions. God has definite plans - appointed times, especially set for punishment and reward of His Chosen People, Israel. To conclude, God is "I will be" as He reveals Himself in history, and especially to Israel. Wessely also embodies in his verses on "I will be what I will be" the idea that these three words signify that God metes out punishment and reward to Israel according to their just deserts. On page 18a we have the following verses:

"I will be unto them as an enemy if
they rebel.

As I counselled, so it shall be and
the blasphemers will behold it.

But I will be unto them as dew, if
from evil they return." (38)

In Volume II, page 34b, Wessely comments on Exodus 4:25, "and she cast it at his feet". Wessely takes "his feet" to refer to the feet of the angel, and in the same verse, "and she said: 'Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me'", also refers to the angel whom Zipporah is addressing. (39) In this exegetical comment Wessely shows his independence. He does not follow Rashi or Ibn Ezra, who take "at his feet" to refer to the feet of Moses.

(40) Wessely's interpretation, though an independent one, is indeed not a happy one.

On Exodus 4:24-26, Wessely says (Volume II, 34a) that Moses is so absorbed in his divine mission to Egypt that he forgets to circumcise his son, Eleazar. That is Wessely's explanation. Rashi says Moses was given the death penalty because of this act of negligence. (41) Ibn Ezra makes this act of omission of the covenant of circumcision a deliberate one on Moses' part.

Wessely counts twelve, and not ten Plagues inflicted by God upon the Egyptians, (Introduction to Volume III) and instead of the three-fold division of the Plagues (v. Aboth 5:6) Wessely arranges the Plagues into four orders. Each order consists of a warning followed by two Plagues or Penalties. The Plagues are more severe than the warnings. (v. Introduction to Volume IV, p. 1) Heading each of the four orders respectively are: Blood, Motley of Beasts, Hail and First-Born. These Plagues represent the four chief afflictions of the world, namely, Hunger, Wild Beasts, Sword and Hail. Wessely also points out (in many places; e.g. Introduction to Volume I, p. 1b) that the four gifts granted by God to Israel correspond to these four afflictions. For Plagues of Blood, the water from the rock; for Motley of Beasts, the quail; for Hail, the manna; and for Darkness and First-Born Plagues,

the pillars of clouds and of fire. Wessely learned his division of Plagues from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon. This he states in the Introduction to Volume IV, page 2b. Wessely sees - as an orthodox Jew does - order and system in the world. Even plagues are arranged and graded. (42)

In Note 1 of Volume III Wessely explains the word "Shaddai" ("Almighty") in Exodus 6:3. "Shaddai" indicates creation through God's great might.....And all the happenings of the world, good and evil, the blessings and the curses which befall the righteous and the wicked respectively, derive from the abundance of the Supreme Power. The term "Shaddai" applies to the various emanations from God at all times; its essential meaning is the all-supplying source. Scriptures, says Wessely, ascribe the Good and the Evil to this "Shaddai". Wessely goes on to tell us that he knows that some derive the word "Shaddai" from "shad" (breast), but he fails to understand their reasoning. How much more lucid and succinct Moses Mendelssohn is on this point. He simply says that "Shaddai" signifies "Strength", "Might". (43)

On Exodus 9:23 "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down unto the earth" Wessely disagrees with commentators like Sforzo and with Mendelssohn's translation. The latter takes "אֶרֶץ" to refer to thunder and

"על" to lightning. Wessely maintains that קר and פגז in Hebrew mean the same thing. And he interprets - on the basis of Wisdom of Solomon 16:16 - חִסְפוֹ to refer to storm (פגז). This storm hurled mightily the "hail". (44) As to על - it refers to the fire of God. (45) Wessely follows here the interpretation given in Exodus Rabbah, of a miracle within a miracle -- fire burning in the midst of hail. *

On Exodus 9:24 "fire flashing up" (אֵשׁ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם), Wessely does not agree with Mendelssohn's translation: "und mitten im Hagel flammender Blitz". The hithpael of חִסְפָּא indicates here, says Wessely, as it does in Ezekiel 1:4, a supernatural fire. (Note 5, Volume IV)

Wessely's method of exegesis, at least in "Songs of Glory" is not always ad sensum, rationalistic exegesis. It is, at times, rather fanciful. A case in point is his exegesis on Exodus 9:27. "And he (Pharaoh) said unto them (Moses and Aaron): 'I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.'" Wessely questions why, just after this Plague of Hail, does Pharaoh make this statement, calling the Lord righteous and himself wicked. After the previous Plagues, Pharaoh also pleaded with Moses that he intercede with the Lord on behalf of the afflicted Egyptians; but previously he did not say that he and his people were wicked, while the God of the Israelites was the righteous One.

This, says Wessely, is due to the fact that those Egyptians who obeyed the divine commandment, namely, to seek shelter for themselves and their cattle, had been miraculously spared. Their frail shelters held, while mighty trees fell. This fact had made a profound impression upon the Egyptians and their King, and he is, therefore, moved to make the statement in Exodus 9:27. (Note 4 Volume IV)

Exodus 9:33 "and the rain was not poured upon the earth". Of this phrase, Mendelssohn says in the Biur: גָּשָׁם (to melt) is equivalent to גָּשָׁה (to pour, to cast) as in Ezekiel 22:22 "As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof". Wessely disagrees. According to him גָּשָׁם and גָּשָׁה are not synonymous. גָּשָׁה refers to liquids poured into a vessel or upon a person; and גָּשָׁם refers to solids that are melted by means of fire. (Note 9, Volume IV)

As for the meaning of "manna". In Volume V, Note 13, Wessely says that manna is an exclamation to express amazement. It refers to greatness and glory. When the Jews beheld the manna, they did not know what to call it, but in amazement exclaimed לֵבִיָּהּ מֶלֶךְ , which, according to Wessely, may be translated: "that is remarkable, great, or a rendition in a similar vein". Wessely takes issue with Rashi and Ibn Ezra, who derive מֶלֶךְ from מִלְכָּה , which

is the equivalent of "food" (אֵלֶּכָּה). Even if the noun
אֵלֶּכָּה is to be derived from the root, אָלַח, surely says
Wessely, the root cannot connote the meaning of "food",
for the Bible clearly states that they "knew not what
it was". (Ex. 16:15) Wessely asserts that the root אָלַח
must signify "greatness" and "rule", and refers to Daniel
1:10 "who hath appointed your food", and to I Chronicles
9:29 "appointed over the furniture". Wessely continues:
אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה
and quotes Proverbs 29:21 "And at last he shall become
a master" (אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה). This last word Rashi in-
terprets to mean greatness and rule, as in Psalm 72:17
"may his name be continued as long as the sun" (אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה
אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה). Perhaps, says Wessely, אֵלֶּכָּה is a syncopated
form of אֵלֶּכָּה (like אֵלֶּכָּה from אֵלֶּכָּה). In Psalm 61:8 אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה אֵלֶּכָּה
Wessely says that in his opinion אֵלֶּכָּה there, too, means
greatness and importance. Wessely disagrees with Rashbam,
who considers אֵלֶּכָּה an Egyptian word, the Hebrew equivalent
of which is אֵלֶּכָּה (what). Mendelssohn follows Rashbam at
this point, and Wessely therefore takes exception to
Mendelssohn also. Wessely is amazed that Rashbam takes
to be an Egyptian word. He quotes the sages, who say
that the Israelites spoke Hebrew and did not adopt the
language of the Egyptians. "And Israel, since Patri-
archal times, spoke the Hebrew language; and our Sages,
blessed be their memory, have already said that they

never exchanged their language for any other".

In Song XV page 56a Wessely says that the rock out of which God caused water to flow (Exodus 17) still stands in Rephidim. In the same Song, on page 64a, Wessely speaks once again of the Rock, as still existing in his own time. And in Note 20 Volume V he comments that his source for this statement are the Englishman Pococke, the Frenchman Havez, the Dane Hazelquist, and Captain Niebuhr, sent by the King of Denmark to investigate the matter. All testified that they had seen the rock of which the Torah speaks. He also tells that Napoleon, at the time of his conquest of Egypt, had sent an archaeological expedition to explore, and Wessely is awaiting publication of their report.

In Exodus 20:5 we read that God is a jealous God, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me". Mendelssohn, in the Biur (ad loc) quotes Nahmanides' interpretation to the effect that God punishes the offspring because of the sins committed by the parents. (46) Wessely does not see it that way at all. In Song XVIII (47) he says that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, only if the latter follow in their forebears' paths, and are punished therefore for their own sins and not for those of their fathers. Here Wessely

follows the interpretation of the rabbis.(v. Sanhedrin 27; also Onkelos and Rashi ad locum.)

There is an interesting footnote of Wessely's on the meaning of "hand" (Volume I, p. 39b to 40a) as in "the hand upon the throne of the Lord" (Exodus 17:16). All the acts of God are just and wise. Some of His acts are in accordance with natural law. Others are supernatural. When God performs in a manner which seems natural to us, we speak of Him as a Judge sitting upon a Throne, as in Psalm 9:5. But when the Lord does things in a supernatural or miraculous way, as in the punishment of Egypt and Amalek, Scriptures refer to it as כֹּחַ . So that the verse above "the hand upon the throne of the Lord" means, says Wessely: Added to the judgment (דִּין) of God is also the hand (כֹּחַ), the supernatural way of His dealing with Israel's enemies. It is, as it were, that God's mighty hand does all these wondrous things.

* * * *

Klausner (48) says that "Songs of Glory" are but a paraphrase of the Bible. In the main this is a true statement. But there are notable exceptions. This section will show that Wessely does avail himself of some extra-Biblical, especially Midrashic materials; and that at times he shows originality, deviating from both Biblical and Midrashic accounts.

USE OF EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCES

Where Pharaoh gives the order to the Hebrew midwives to do away with every male child born, (Ex.1:15 ff) Wessely elaborates upon - as he often does - the Biblical account. (Volume I, page 7b ff) Pharaoh, at first, promises the midwives great wealth and honor and later, when they fail to carry out his command, the infuriated monarch threatens them with dire consequences. The reply they concoct satisfies the King. Wessely here is drawing upon Sotah 11b and Exodus Rabbah 1:15.

The relations between Moses and Aaron are ideal. Aaron is a brotherly brother, the brother par excellence. No envy of his younger brother ever enters Aaron's heart. On the contrary, Aaron is happy and rejoices in Moses' glory. (Volume II, 35b) Here Wessely follows the Midrashim, for example, Tanhuma Ex. 27. (49)

Pharaoh does not yield to the request of Moses and Aaron, while Egypt is afflicted with the Plague of Blood. (Volume III, 32a) (Ex.7:19 ff.) The reason for this, Wessely tells us, is that this Plague did not affect Pharaoh personally. He and his household enjoyed water. Wessely is drawing here on the Midrash. Midrash Hagadol 7:23 states this and also gives three reasons why God permitted Pharaoh not to suffer from this Plague. (50)

In his reflections on the Plague of Gnats (Volume III, 46b ff.) Wessely states that God intended man to rule over nature, but the Egyptians committed the folly of subjugating themselves to it by worshipping animals and inanimate objects. Therefore, God punishes them with this Plague of Gnats. The Midrash expresses itself in a similar vein, and Wessely follows it. (51)

Commenting in the Songs (Volume III, 54b ff.) on Exodus 8:19 "by tomorrow shall this sign be", Wessely says that prior to letting loose the Plague of Animals and Crawling Creatures (52) God gave them respite in order to afford them an opportunity to mend their evil ways. In a similar vein does the Midrash express this same idea of warning the culprit and giving him a chance to retract from his recalcitrance before he is struck. (53)

When Wessely describes the tenth Plague - the slaying of the first-born, he says that this calamity befell the Egyptians because they molested Israel, the first-born of God. (Volume IV, 57a) Here Wessely follows the Midrash. (54)

Wessely follows the Mekhilta (from Nahmanides to Exodus 12:31) when he has Moses reply to the urgent plea of Pharaoh that the Israelites get out of Egypt at once, that is, during the night. He replies that the Jews will not flee Egypt as thieves do. (Volume IV, 61a) This is

also found in Midrash Tanhuma to Bo, Verse 7.

When Wessely comments on Exodus 16:31 "and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey" he elaborates to this effect. (Volume V, 44b) Each one tasted in the manna whatever food his heart desired. In this instance, too, Wessely avails himself of the Midrash. (55)

Amalek harasses Israel with his guerilla warfare. This he does with the approval, of course, of the Lord, who employs Amalek as the rod of His wrath to make token payments to Israel for its faithlessness. (Volume VI, 6a) In this detail Wessely leans upon the Midrash. (56) Incidentally, Wessely maintains (l.c.) that the aim of Amalek in waging war on Israel was to prove that the God of Israel is impotent.

* * * * *

DEVIATIONS FROM BIBLICAL AND MIDRASHIC ACCOUNTS

"And he took to wife a daughter of Levi" (Ex.2:1) In Volume I, 13a, Wessely gives his own original interpretation of these words. He does not choose to avail himself of the legend (Sotah 12a) that Amram divorced his wife - in view of Pharaoh's diabolical decree that every male child born be destroyed - and that אִיִּל in

אִיִּל אִיִּל אִיִּל refers to their re-marriage. Ins-

is not an "Egyptian", but a Hebrew. (Volume I, 34a)

Here Wessely is at odds with the beautiful Midrash (Tanhuma ed. Buber, Volume 2, 134) which tells that Moses was denied the privilege of dying in Eretz Yisrael, because he heard himself referred to as an Egyptian, yet protested not.

When he praises the daughters of Reuel before their father, Moses is offered the choice of one as a wife. But, Moses asks Reuel to make the choice for him. (Volume I, 34b) Jewish folklore, on the other hand, created many more interesting details as to the manner in which Moses chose his Zipporah. (v. Pirke R. Eliezer, Chapter 40)

Moses leads the sheep in the Arabian desert. (Volume II, 4b) He comes near Mt. Sinai. Moses dares not enter Egypt, but he comes near it with the hope of meeting with shepherds and travelers and learning from them how his brethren in Egypt fare. This is Wessely's, the Maskil's, very own reason. The Midrashim advance entirely different reasons for Moses' leading the sheep in the desert, reasons which bring out, among other things, Moses' great moral qualities. (57)

In narrating the events included in Chapter V of Exodus, Wessely deviates somewhat from the Biblical and Midrashic accounts. The officers of the children of Israel meet Moses and Aaron and make their complaint. Why, they

contend, ever since you two have addressed Pharaoh, our lot has become more severe and more unendurable. As Verse 21 of Chapter V in Exodus puts it, "Ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh". The Midrash makes this more vivid than the Bible or Wessely, by having the contentious brothers, Dathan and Abiran, utter the complaints against Moses and Aaron. (58) Moses and Aaron are moved and hurt to the core by the pain and suffering of their brethren. Moses addresses God: "Lord, wherefore hast Thou dealt ill with this people?" And Moses repeats the charge of the officers before the Lord. In describing this scene, Wessely shows real depth of feeling. He animates and elaborates upon these two Biblical verses (Ex.5:22 and 23). He creates a gripping scene between Moses and his Master. (Volume II, page 54a-55b) Moses pleads so eloquently, so sincerely and touchingly, that his words find favor in the eyes of the Lord. It is in this reaction of God to Moses' plea that Wessely differs from the Midrash - and in this case, to the distinct advantage of the narrative. Wessely shows fine perception. While according to the Midrash, Moses' words were not pleasing to the Lord (59), according to Wessely, Moses' words find a favorable response.

Prior to Moses' second visit to Pharaoh, he, in accordance with God's command, addressed the children of Israel. "But they hearkened not unto Moses, for impatience of spirit

and for cruel bondage." (Ex.6:9) Wessely varies from the Biblical narrative at this point. According to him (Volume III, 10a), the people hearken indeed. Their faith returns to them. They express regret for having become impatient with God and Moses, and wish Moses success in his second visit to Pharaoh. Thus, Wessely establishes effectively the leadership of Moses.

Wessely elaborates on the visit of Moses and Aaron during which Aaron performs the wonder of converting the rod into a serpent. (Exodus 7:10) In the ensuing dialogues, (Volume III, 23a,b,ff.) Moses says very uncomplimentary things to the King. The Monarch is both dazed and enraged, and would undoubtedly have killed the two impudent brothers, but for the halo of God surrounding them. This aura, this glory of God, which rests upon Moses, injects great fear into the heart of Pharaoh. In this nuance we recognize Wessely's deeply religious nature. The Midrash (60) merely speaks of Moses and Aaron as majestic looking and awe-inspiring in appearance - so much so, that Pharaoh's secretaries all prostrate themselves before them. But the Midrash does not tell of the inexplicable fear, the almost holy fear which fills Pharaoh's heart before these two Israelites.

And Wessely goes on to narrate that the wonder of the rod-serpent caused the King and his officials to

quake. Silence fell upon the royal chamber, in which all but Moses and Aaron were dumbfounded. (Volume III, 24 b) The Midrash, with a fine sense for dramatic development, (61) has Pharaoh ridicule this performance; thereby making the impact of subsequent developments so much more effective. In fact, throughout this narrative, Wessely's skill falls short of that of the Midrash. As in the Bible, Wessely has Pharaoh summon his magicians to vie with Moses and Aaron. But Wessely's magicians miss fire. They are ethereal beings, without character. The Midrash gives us magicians that are flesh and blood beings. Furthermore, the Midrash adds concreteness to the scene by having Balaam and his sons, Jannes and Jambres, stand out among them. The vividness of this entire scene in the Midrash is absent in Wessely.

As in the case of the Plague of Blood, so with that of the Frogs. Wessely gives us a section containing his reflections on this Plague. (Volume III, 33b, ff.) The Plague of Frogs - unlike its predecessor, the Plague of Blood - began with Pharaoh. The Bible states (Ex.7:29) that second Plague commenced with the King. The Midrash and Wessely follow the Biblical text. But Wessely and the Midrash differ as to the reason for God's inflicting this Plague first on Pharaoh. Wessely, with his proclivity for generalizations, gives a generalized reason; namely, that Pharaoh discriminated against the Jews,

plotted against them, and plagued them. Pharaoh did not deem the Hebrews good enough to dwell with him; now the Frogs, without consulting him, will dwell in the land of Egypt. The genius of the Midrash is, as has been pointed out time and again, more concrete and colorful. According to the Midrash, God inflicted the Plague of Frogs on Pharaoh first, because Pharaoh had been the instigator of the oppressions against the Jews. The Midrash derives this from Exodus 1:9, "and he said unto his people", etc. The Midrash advances still another reason. When Pharaoh himself was unaffected by the Plague of Blood which preceded the Plague of Frogs, he remained haughty and recalcitrant. Therefore, God decided that this Plague of Frogs shall commence with him. (62)

While afflicted with the Plague of Frogs, Pharaoh summons his magicians (Volume III, 36a-37b). Here Wessely creates an interesting dialogue between Pharaoh and his magicians. This dialogue is not found in the Bible (Ex.8:3) nor in the Midrashim, though such a conversation is implied in both sources. (63)

Why has the Lord inflicted the Medley of Animals upon Egypt? The Midrash gives interesting reasons. (64) Wessely does not employ these. Whether it be to his advantage or disadvantage, the point is that Wessely is at times quite independent of sources. In this instance, Wessely

asserts that God inflicted these animals upon the Egyptians because the Egyptians worshipped animals. (Volume III, 53b)

When God removes from Egypt the affliction of the Medley of Animals, these creatures are not dead. They merely cease to plague Egypt; but they remain alive. (Volume III, 57b). The Midrash and Wessely extract this meaning from Exodus 8:27, "There remained not one". Here too, however, Wessely deviates from the Midrash. The Midrash advances a homely and folkloristic reason. God permitted the Medley of Animals to remain alive (unlike the frogs) so that the Egyptians would not profit from their hides. (65) Wessely, in his high-mindedness and idealism, gives a reason which is on a far loftier plane. Wessely sets up the withdrawal of the Medley of Animals as an example. They were prepared to battle the Lord's enemies, but among themselves they dwell in peace.

Wessely does not choose to avail himself of the reason given by the Midrash for God's infliction of the Plague of Hail, a reason typical of Midrashic psychology. (66) Nor does he use Midrashic reasons regarding the cessation of this Plague. Wessely animates the two Biblical verses (Exodus 9:27-28) as follows. Pharaoh calls for Aaron and Moses and asks them to intercede with the Lord, so that He will stop the Hail. The wicked Ruler is contrite; he is aware of God's impartiality and justice. (Volume IV, 15b-16b). Moses assures Pharaoh that the Plague of Hail

will cease before sunset. Moses sets a time limit for the cessation of this Plague, which is different from that set for the other Plagues, in order to show Pharaoh that it is the will of God operating, and not a regular, periodic force of nature. It might occur to Pharaoh that on the next day, after twenty-four hours - this Plague too might have stopped naturally. Therefore, does Moses set the time before sunset as the time for the cessation of the Plague of Hail. The Midrash too has reasons on this subject, but they are by no means such rationalistic ones. (67)

In the treatment of the Plague of Darkness (Volume IV, 41b) our Poet shows an originality which at the same time, affords an insight into his inner life and into the ideals of his age. During this ordeal, the Egyptians are beset by fears of retaliation from the Hebrews. But they receive instead nothing but kindness from them. The Israelites comfort them, feed them, and give them drink. The Egyptians are deeply moved by this behavior toward them. They are full of gratitude toward and admiration for the children of Israel. This noble and altruistic behavior of the oppressed toward their oppressors during the three days of darkness supplies a motive for the Egyptians' appreciation of the greatness of the people of Israel and their leader, Moses (as narrated in Exodus 11:3), and is a fine and sensitive expansion of the Bib-

lical account. Only Pharaoh remains unmoved, and is still obdurate and ill-disposed toward the Israelites. But it is God's will that he should be so. In Note 15 to Volume IV, Wessely informs his readers that he modeled his handling of the Plague of Darkness after the Book of Wisdom of Solomon.

In connection with the Plague of the First-Born, Wessely has the Lord put a sign upon the forehead of the First-Born of all Egyptians, thus marking them for death. (Volume IV, 46a) This, of course, is extra-Biblical. Wessely's source for this is again the book which exerted so profound an influence upon him, the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.

The elders of Israel issue instructions to the people concerning that fateful night preceding the Exodus. The people are told to be ready, and to help one another in getting ready. This latter point is original with Wessely and gives us something of an insight into his humane and pious nature. (Volume IV, 49a)

During the night preceding the Exodus, while the First-Born of the Egyptians are being slain, the children of Israel eat their roast and their unleavened bread. In this Wessely follows the Book of Exodus. But in Wessely's account, the children of Israel also sing songs of praise unto the Lord. (Volume IV, 56a) Wessely derived this additional detail from the Wisdom of Solomon.

God smites the First-Born of Egypt for the Egyptians have molested Israel, the First-Born of God. In Wessely's account they are stricken with horrible dreams, these First-Born of Egypt. Theirs is not a quick and sudden death. In agony they cry out the terrifying visions they see, and inject mortal fear into the hearts of their families. Pharaoh's eldest son, in the agony of death, chastises his father and holds him responsible for his own impending doom, and for the horrible fate of all other dying Egyptians. (Volume IV, 56a ff.) Wessely derives this dramatic treatment from the Wisdom of Solomon.

Wessely has the Egyptian people rush to Pharaoh's palace. Urgently they ask that Pharaoh summon Moses and Aaron and fulfill all the requests of the Israelites. According to Tanhuma to Bo:7 it is Pharaoh who goes from house to house, awakens his entire retinue, and goes with them to look for Moses and Aaron.

Wessely says that the Jews left Egypt on the same day on which their ancestor, Abraham, left his father's home in Ur of Chaldees. (Volume IV, page 62) Ibn Ezra says this concerning Exodus 12:40, and Wessely evidently used him as a source for this point.

On Exodus 14:16 "And lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the Sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground",

PERPETUAL BOND

Wessely adds a sentimental touch of his own. The sea not only parted, but the dry land was converted into a grass-growing valley. (Volume V, 14b)

Wessely tells us that some faint-hearted and lazy Egyptians, who did not pursue the Israelites into the sea as their brethren did, witness at dawn the destruction of the Egyptian army, and they recount the events in Egypt. (Volume V, 22a ff.) Here Wessely might have availed himself of some magnificent Midrashic material, but fails to do so.

The manna had to be gathered before sunrise. Wessely asks: Why did the uncollected manna melt immediately after sunrise? The moralist in him replies: This was so in order that the Jews would rise and behold the work of the Lord. (Volume V, 52a) Wessely's explanation of this point also was influenced by his reading of Wisdom of Solomon. This we learn in Volume V, 52a, Note 18.

Wessely gives the account of Exodus 17:1-4 a slightly different turn. The people hearken unto Moses' words and are ashamed of themselves. They pray unto the Lord. But in vain. The Lord does not hear their supplication. And again - unlike the Biblical account - they turn to Moses for help. They do not merely complain (as in the Biblical account, Ex. 17:3), but they show appreciation of Moses' greatness and address him as Our Master, Pure

of Heart, Righteous One, Man of God, and Good Shepherd. They plead with Moses to intercede with God on their behalf, which Moses does. (Volume V, 57-60) This deviation, too, Wessely derived from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.

Why did Joshua and not Moses lead the Jews in battle against Amalek? Wessely's view is that God did not wish him to do so, for two reasons. (Volume VI, 6b) First, only very recently, at Meribah, the Israelites had spoken against Moses and quarreled with him. God did not wish him, who had so recently been abused by the Israelites, to lead them in battle. Secondly, the Lord chose to humiliate Amalek. It would have been too much honor for them to have Moses, the favorite of God, do battle against them. Joshua, Moses' subordinate, is enough of honor for them. He will humble and crush the enemy. The Midrashim advance very different reasons for this choice of Joshua as military leader, reasons of a less spiritual and more practical kind. (68) Among other reasons, the Midrash says that Joshua needed the training in leadership, since he was to lead the Israelites into Palestine. It is interesting to notice in this same connection that Wessely creates a speech for Joshua, whereby he arouses the fighting spirit of the men who are to do battle against Amalek.

Jethro is puzzled why God, who had performed so

gloriously in behalf of his people now permits the Amalekites to wage war on the Israelites. (Volume VI, 10a ff.) Why, asks Jethro, did not the Almighty smite the Amalekites before they began battle with Israel? Unable to find an answer, Jethro (in the manner of a Maskil) decides to seek a solution to this puzzle from Moses. Here Wessely shows himself quite original. The Bible does not speak of reasons compelling Jethro to go out and meet Moses in the desert. Although the Midrash has something to say on this subject, it varies altogether from Wessely's motivation. (69) The father-in-law of Moses, overwhelmed by a desire to learn the true causes of events, wants to understand why God - who had protected and shielded Israel up to this point - now seemingly forsakes them in their struggle with Amalek. To find the answer to this problem Jethro proceeds to the desert to seek out Moses.

The people, on the third day, when God was to reveal Himself on Mt. Sinai, are awestruck by the thunder and lightning. They flee to their tents. (Volume VI, 35b) Moses assuages their fears and summons them to return to the foot of the Mount. Here Wessely differs somewhat from the Biblical account. (Exodus 19:21 ff.) The people do as they are bid. They return and remain within the prescribed area, but still terror-stricken

they plead with Moses that he speak with God for them. They are not fit, not pure enough; they have transgressed. This is not in the Bible. It is a case of Wesselyan animation.

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This section on harmonies with Biblical and Midrashic sources, and deviations therefrom, was designed to give some idea of the extent to which Wessely follows the Biblical narrative, how much he draws upon sources other than the Bible, and wherein he strikes a path all his own, using neither the Biblical nor the Midrashic accounts.

In evaluating Wessely's "Songs of Glory" the criticism that can be made with good reason is that Wessely failed to use Midrashic material sufficiently and thereby dealt his epic a serious blow. This task of creating an epic poem dealing with the life of Moses was a most difficult and staggering one. The full import of this statement is borne out by the fact that no one before Wessely, and for that matter, no one after Wessely, has attempted such an epic. Wessely's "Songs of Glory" had the potentiality of being a work of enduring value, one that would stand the test of time and find favor to this very day, and beyond it. But Wessely did not realize the

potentialities of his epic. Its one major defect lies in the fact that Wessely did not utilize fully the rich, folkloristic, Midrashic material which was begging to be employed. Had Wessely availed himself of it more fully and consistently, his epic would undoubtedly have gained greatly. Midrash is folklore, and folklore is the very life and blood of an epic. Wessely, it seems did not realize this. The Classicist in him could succumb only now and then to the legendary and the miraculous. There are so many wonderful Midrashim which the Rationalist in Wessely ignored -- Midrashim about that magic child, Moses; the two Hebrews fighting each other; the flight of Moses from Egypt; his meeting with Reuel's seven daughters; and many others. This is a really legitimate charge against our Poet. He avails himself of Midrash, but does not sufficiently use this vast legendary material which is a sine qua non to an epic dealing with the life story of a national hero. (70)

Wessely should not be criticized, however, as some critics have, (71) for following the Biblical narrative too closely. The epic does not lose thereby. Furthermore, there are ample deviations from the Biblical narrative, as we have enumerated above in detail. Also, at times, Wessely shows originality and boldness, giving free rein to his poetic imagination. (72) The charge

which, in my opinion, can be and should be made against Wessely (as has been stated above) is that he does not sufficiently draw upon the rich store-house of raw materials for a national epic, namely, the Midrashim. Wessely is far too concerned with exegesis and exegetical innovations, and not sufficiently with creating a national epic poem of enduring value. But then, we must not lose sight of the fact that Wessely's expressed serious purpose in writing "Songs of Glory" was exegesis, the teaching of the Torah. (see page 151 ff. and page 178) In that sense, he fulfilled himself and accomplished his task.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE LITERARY EFFECT
OF
"SONGS OF GLORY"

It is of interest and importance to know what the reactions to Wessely's Epic were during his own lifetime and subsequently.

In ~~the Ha-Meassef~~ of 1790 (the Kislev issue page 87 ff.), in a review of Moses Mendelssohn's German translation of "Song of Songs", the reviewer, while deploring the neglect of the Hebrew language, says that when a redeemer of the fallen Hebrew tongue does arise, he is not appreciated. Thus, he introduces Wessely and his "Songs of Glory". He states that a well-known personage in the reviewer's city had dared to disparage "Songs of Glory", and the reviewer uses this as his point of departure for his praises of these Songs. Such Songs, says he, have not been composed since the canonization of the Bible. The reviewer also records the fact that the Songs were in general well received, and their author highly praised, even by Christian scholars. (73) He continues by complaining of the lack of understanding among his own brethren, and the contempt they show of their great. (Preface p. XIII, where the inferiority complex of the Maskilim is discussed.)

While the above reactions to Wessely's "Songs of

Glory" were incorporated in a review dealing with Mendelssohn's German translation of "Song of Songs", the book review section of the Nisan issue of the Ha-Meassef of 1790 (page 210-221) is devoted exclusively to the first volume of "Songs of Glory", that is, to the first four Songs. The reviewer (74), after a lengthy introduction on the nature of poetry, analyzes Wessely's first four Songs and sings their praises. This review is continued in the Ab issue of the same year (pages 346 - 352), but here the reviewer ventures some adverse criticism of Wessely's Songs. He finds Wessely's characterization of Pharaoh, his advisers, and of Amram, inconsistent. The reviewer correctly senses that Wessely leaps from epic description to didactics - thereby detracting from the value of his epic. The motivation which Wessely assigns to Moses prior to his murder of the Egyptian is a faulty one, according to this reviewer. He finds it psychologically unsound, and illustrates his point thus. Moses wonders: Would decent people issue forth from this Egyptian? Perhaps, muses Moses. But then God assures him that such would not be the case, and thereupon, Moses commits the murder. This reasoning the reviewer finds too didactic, academic. The motives of revenge and righteous indignation are not used, though they would be psychologically sound. The lengthy analysis is concluded in the Elul issue (page 357 to 362), and here the reviewer becomes somewhat of a hairsplitter.

He enumerates portions that please him and those that fail to please him.

I believe that a great deal of Franz Delitzsch's famous criticism of "Songs of Glory" (v.next page) stems from this detailed and thorough review in the ~~Ha~~-Meassef. The prevailing impression that the Ha-Meassef review was nothing but a paean of praise of the "Songs of Glory" and that adverse criticism began with Delitzsch, is erroneous. A study of the Ha-Meassef reviews enumerated above reveals that negative criticism of Wessely's Songs was made in 1790, that is, forty-six years before the publication of Delitzsch's "Poesie". (75)

In the main, however, there is no doubt that "Songs of Glory" created a tremendously favorable impression in its day. As early as 1795 two Christian professors, Hufnagel and Spalding, translated the first two Songs into German. Hufnagel translated Song I and Spalding rendered Song II. (see Note 92 in Biographical Section) Songs III and IV were translated into German anonymously. (76) Parts of the Songs were translated into French, by Micahel Berr, in 1815. (77) Another translation is that of Wessely's son, Menahem Emanuel, who translated the first five Volumes into German. (78)

Some of the most favorable views of Wessely's Poem we find prefaced to the sixth Volume of "Songs of Glory", published posthumously in 1829 in Prague by Moses Landau. (79)

As part of this Preface there is a poem by Ben-Zeeb. (80) Ben-Zeeb is full of exaggerated praise of Wessely and his Songs. To a modern reader the high-flung phrases concerning these Songs and their author almost jar, as being unwarranted. Yet, undoubtedly, they represent the judgment of a capable and gifted contemporary of Wessely's. (81)

Solomon Judah Rapoport, in his "The Remanant of Judah" - an adaptation of Racine's "Esther", which appeared in Bikkure Haittim of 1827, page 184 - has high praise for Wessely and his work. Since Bible days, he says, there has not appeared such sacred poetry as the "Songs of Glory". (Compare this comment with the statements of the reviewer in the Ha-Meassef, page 210 this Chapter) In fact, Rapoport would have Jews read the "Songs of Glory" in the synagogue during the month of Nisan, for they have the advantages of both the Piyyutim of the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim. (82)

In 1836 Delitzsch published his "Poesie", in which "Songs of Glory" is viewed rather adversely. We have shown above that there had been some adverse criticism of these Songs much earlier, in the ~~Ha~~ Meassef of 1790. But we have also shown that other than that, Wessely's contemporaries were unanimous in their approval. From this time forth, however, reaction to Wessely's poetry among literary critics has varied. Delitzsch said of Wessely: "He was

completely at home in the world of Biblical imagery, but he did not know how to color his pictures with the delicate enamel of its pastels. The fairyland of orientalism was for him a closed garden of Hesperides. For that reason, his style, imagery, thoughts, -- all are with him more Germanic, often trivial, and not Jewishly oriental; not at all oriental. His poetry is more the product of the spirit of his own times than of the past." And Delitzsch continues: "Wessely's style flows on in a melodious manner like a clear stream, but the bottom of this stream is not made up of the colored gravel, the glistening golden sand, and the glimmering pearls of Oriental legend." (83)

Samuel David Luzzatto (84) had great respect for Wessely and his exegetical works. In fact, it was at his request and with his financial assistance that the society "Mekize Nirdamim" ("The Awakers of the Sleeping" - a group organized for the publication of old Hebrew works) published, in 1868, Wessely's fragmentary commentary on Genesis (see page 18) under the title of "Imre Shafer" ("Words of Beauty"). But Luzzatto found no interest in Wessely's exegetical "Songs of Glory", and could not bring himself to read the work in toto. In a letter to Max Letteris, dated 1837, Luzzatto says: "Compose all your songs like these. Then I shall sing your praises and consider you the supreme poet of the poets of Germany and Poland. I

shall consider you even superior to Wessely - whose "Songs of Glory" I have never really had the patience to read in their entirety". (85)

Abraham Baer Lebensohn (1794-1878), also called Adam Haco^khen, was considered King of Poets of his generation. This poet laureate of his day shows the influence of Wessely. He devoted one of his better known poems, "Evening Reverie" to Wessely. (86) The poem opens on a sad note. It is the fateful Fast of Ab. Adam Haco^khen is despondent and bemoans the fact that the glories of Israel have departed. The poet is hurt to think that his beloved Hebrew is forsaken by the Jews and is not used by them as a living language. He complains that no Hebrew literature is being created. Lebensohn broods and muses that even in the lands of France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, where Hebrew is written, the spirit of the vernacular is reflected in the Hebrew writings. As the poet meditates thus, a man appears to him, and points to Wessely and his works. Wessely writes in the true spirit of the Hebrew language. His mastery of the Hebrew tongue and the loftiness of his Hebrew poetry are impressive. Adam Haco^khen now enumerates some of Wessely's works and lauds them. Of "Songs of Glory" he says: "In it, one tastes the pristine purity of Hebrew". (87)

In the sixties of the nineteenth century a bitter controversy broke out because of difference of critical opinion

regarding "Songs of Glory". Abraham Uri Kovner, an apostate (1842-1909) in his "Heker Dabar" ("The Examination of the Case") 1866, and in "Zeror Perahim" ("A Garland of Flowers") 1868, took a most critical, negative and cynical attitude toward Hebrew literature immediately preceding his own time. Wessely's "Songs of Glory" were a favorite target for him. Says Kovner (88): "There was no need for Wessely to imitate the non-Jews in writing an epic. For in the Books of the Bible we already have a most precious epic." It is interesting that the conservative Isaac Noah Mannheimer, the famous Viennese preacher, foreshadowed this very view of the radical Kovner. In a letter to Leopold Zunz (89) Mannheimer says that Volume VI of "Songs of Glory" of Hirz Wesel has just appeared. He says that he prefers the narrative of the Exodus in the Bible, as being more poetic.

In "Zeror Perahim" (page 50) Kovner continued his attack on Wessely. He was not at all disturbed by the storm of protest and resentment that his criticism in "Heker Dabar" had aroused among the champions of Wessely, especially the Maskilim. Kovner's opposition cited Jost's opinion of "Songs of Glory", namely, that it is a great epic. (90) Kovner disagreed with Jost's verdict. He insisted that "Songs of Glory" was superfluous, lacking in great thoughts and in dynamic spirit. To Kovner, the "Songs of Glory" were, from beginning to end, high-flown

phrases, full of praise to the Lord. But Wessely's words of praise of God, Kovner declared, could in no wise compare with the beautiful hymns that sparkle throughout the Bible. The poetry of the Bible, Kovner found, is full of the joyous spirit, whereas Wessely's verses teem with a gloomy, monotonous, and depressing atmosphere. (sic!) Kovner doubted that a sensitive reader could complete the "Songs of Glory" in one reading, for, to his mind, they chill and depress. That God is great and awesome is the central theme of "Songs of Glory", according to Kovner. But, he argued, we know all that from the Bible, where these same sentiments are expressed far more beautifully.

The most articulate among Kovner's attackers and Wessely's defenders were Alexander Zederbaum (1816-1893) and Abraham Baer Gottlober (1811-1899). Zederbaum's praise of "Songs of Glory" appeared in the *ha-Meliz* of 1866 (No. 15). Gottlober's attack on Kovner, for his having dared to criticize and minimize their revered Wessely, appeared in a brochure in 1868. (91)

Moses Mendelsohn (Hamburg) (1780-1861) who was an objective critic of Wessely, called him "the renewer of Hebrew poetry". He recognized that Wessely served as a model to his and to subsequent generations. Wessely was, in the judgment of this Mendelsohn, a great poet. (92)

Dr. J.L. Landau revealed himself as a fair and understanding critic of Wessely. (93) Dr. Landau said that Wessely was imbued "with an overwhelming religious passion

which is reflected in all his writings, more especially in his poems". He also held that Wessely "was lacking in the art of plastic representation, such as a great epic requires". Landau further characterized Wessely's poetic accomplishments by saying that "he was more dignified than passionate, more concerned with his religious theme than with his artistic task". Landau was indeed favorably disposed toward Wessely, and he said of "Songs of Glory" - with some justification - that "that poem enjoys - at least with regard to its form and conception - the distinction of originality." His description of Wessely as "The Nestor of the Berlin Haskalah" is also rather apt.

Klausner (94) considers Wessely a poet of stature; more, a poet by the grace of God. (sic!) The fact that Wessely valued exegesis and moralization in his poetry more highly than poetry per se, Klausner attributes to the period in which Wessely lived and to the old-fashioned education which Wessely had received. Klausner is undoubtedly correct in calling Wessely the poet of his generation, and in asserting that the chain of evolution of modern Hebrew poetry began with Wessely and continued with Shalom Hachohen, Max Letteris, Adam, Michal, J.L. Gordon, et alia. Klausner finds that part of Delitzsch's adverse criticism -- namely, that Wessely fails to portray the environment of Egypt and of the Desert -- is just. Klausner also

feels that Wessely followed the Biblical narrative too closely and does not allow his poetic imagination freedom to soar. (see page 189) In the main, however, Klausner's criticism is favorable.

Israel Zinberg's criticism (95) of Wessely's "Songs of Glory" is as contemptuous as it is unfair. Zinberg makes no attempt to approach Wessely's epic objectively, to evaluate it in the light of literary standards prevailing in Wessely's day. Instead, he capriciously and arbitrarily condemns the work as being "a pompous poem - a mere stillborn creature". (96)

Dr. Ch.N. Shapiro, a very serious and profound student of the history of modern Hebrew literature (97) claims that the Maskil, Wessely, has received full recognition; but Wessely, the Poet, has not. Shapiro is only too familiar with all the criticisms levelled against Wessely's poetry. But, he justly maintains, all these criticisms are not really directed against Wessely, but rather against classicism in all literature, especially against classicism at its close and decline. Wessely created in the poetic climate of his day and in accordance with the dictates of his own temperament. A critique of Wessely's poetry, Shapiro argues, should be made with the above considerations in mind, that is, from a vantage point within classicism itself, and not from that of a later literary perspective. If that is done, he admits, Wessely

will not emerge as a great figure in poetry, but as a poet who played an important role in his and in subsequent generations. According to Shapiro, Wessely is the first classicist in Modern Hebrew Literature.

In giving the reactions to "Songs of Glory", both favorable and unfavorable, it is not my primary aim to agree or disagree. The aim is rather to show that the epic under consideration is of great significance. It is a sure sign in literary criticism that a work which arouses wide difference of opinion over a long period of time, is a landmark in the history of literature. This is the significance of "Songs of Glory". It is a landmark in Hebrew literature by which many greater and lesser lights have been guided. It has served as a model in structure, style, and conception for many writers. Its influences upon others are unmistakable. It is in order at this point to trace some of these influences.

* * * *

Shalom Hach^Kohen (1772-1845) was Wessely's disciple and literary heir. Wessely's influence upon him was unmistakable. The first fruits of Hachohen's pen were contained in a collection of poems entitled "Plants of the East upon the Soil of the North" (Roedelheim 1807) which Hachohen also translated into German, and this trans-

lation appeared together with the original Hebrew. In the introduction to "Plants of the East" (which was written in German) Hacoheh lauded Wessely's work. While he realized that Wessely wrote in accord with the literary tastes of his own, Wessely's generation, nevertheless, Hacoheh felt that Wessely's death dealt the renaissance of Hebrew literature a most serious blow. (98) But, says Hacoheh, Hebrew literature and learning are not doomed as long as they still possess devotees such as Solomon Pappenheim (1740-1814), the author of "Curtains of Solomon", a dictionary of Hebrew synonyms (1784) and Wolf Heidenheim. (99)

In Hacoheh's work Wessely's influence is especially evident in the "song of glory", "The Deliverance of Abraham". (100) This poem, in its rationalistic conception, its style, meter and rhyme scheme, showed the influence of Wessely clearly. Hacoheh's Abraham, like Wessely's Moses, was the representative or typical Maskil, struggling for "light" against the forces of "darkness". As in the "Songs of Glory", so here in Hacoheh's work, the epic account was prefaced by a lyrical introduction. Hacoheh followed Wessely in the use of these lyrical introductions, even to the extent of using six line stanzas, each line having eleven syllables, and the rhyme scheme being aabccb (sometimes aabccd). The epic narrative proper, as in Wessely's opus, was written in blank verse.

The similarity between these two poets is great, and an analysis of their respective masterpieces bears out this fact still more fully. Let us examine Wessely's "Songs of Glory" and Hacoheh's "The Hope of David". (101) Both poets choose their themes from the Bible. Just as Wessely's mood and imagination were captivated by the figure of Moses, so did David become Hacoheh's hero. In form and structure, Hacoheh follows Wessely. In the twenty Songs comprising "Nir David", each Song consists of a rhymed lyrical opening followed by the epic account proper. Hacoheh, like Wessely, does not begin his work with the hero and the hero's time, but leads us back to the past. Hacoheh opens his poem with Moses and the Giving of the Law. And like Wessely, he too, now and then, breaks the narrative for a lyrical outpouring.

But further analysis of these two works also reveals many differences. Wessely's lyrical introductions are permeated by a loftiness and religious enthusiasm which are lacking in the work of the disciple. Hacoheh's poetic talents find scope and stand revealed before us to greater advantage in the epic accounts themselves. In these Hacoheh shows greater elasticity and greater descriptive powers than Wessely. In descriptions of nature and in character portrayals, Hacoheh is superior to Wessely. This might be due to the different literary atmosphere in which Hacoheh created. In Hacoheh's day, the power of

classicism was already on the wane. His is the period of "Sturm und Drang", when sentimentalism comes to the fore. Thus, for Wessely's characters, Reason was the Leitmotif, the mainspring, the guiding star. In Hacoheh's characters, not only reason, but the emotions too, play a part. Wessely depicts his hero as a rationalist; Moses' activities are all governed by reason. But Hacoheh depicts King David as a personality dominated by many emotions. Wessely's characters are drawn in clear-cut lines of all black or all white. Hacoheh presents his hero, David, as having weaknesses as well as virtues. He shows him at his great moments; but also in his weak and unheroic hours, as in the Bath-Sheba incident. Therefore, Hacoheh's characters are flesh and blood beings, and not mere ideals like the characters of Wessely. And finally, still another difference may be pointed out. There is in Hacoheh's work that which in Wessely's work is so deplorably deficient, namely, legendary material.

Today, neither Wessely nor Hacoheh is read for enjoyment. In his own day, Wessely was considered a great poet. So was Hacoheh. Delitzsch (102) is full of exaggerated praise for Hacoheh. But today, the works of both are, in the main, neglected, and have little appeal. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that their position is secure in one respect: they are important links in the chain of the evolution of modern Hebrew literature.

Joseph" are imitations of "Songs of Glory". These two poems appeared in his book, "Pene Tebel", which may be considered the most important work of the second generation of the German Haskalah Movement.

Gabriel Berger, the apostate, composed the Biblical poems entitled "Pleasant Plants" (107) which show, despite their deviations from classicism, definite traces of Wessely's influence, especially of Wessely's lyrical introductions and Wessely's meter. (108) In his opening page, Berger gives a bird's eye view of Jewish history. In mentioning Israel's great, he begins with Moses and ends with Wessely, Hacoheh, and Ephrati.

Joseph Ephrati Troppelwitz (109), sometimes spelled Elphrati Troplowitz (1770-1804) is the Ephrati to whom Berger has reference. Ephrati was one of those who came under Wessely's spell. While residing in Ratibor, where he was engaged as tutor in the home of a wealthy Jew, Ephrati "chanced to read Wessely's poems and some volumes of the 'Meassefim' and his soul at once responded to the clarion call that came from a strange distant dream-land. His spirit felt itself suddenly touched and set aflame, as it were, by a magic spark." (110) His interesting historical drama - the first original one of the Haskalah period - "The Reign of Saul" (Vienna 1794), earned him fame. It saw no fewer than twelve editions and was translated into Yiddish. This Yiddish version

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was regularly performed on Purim by Purimspieler. (111)
 This drama, in its concept and form, clearly reflects Wessely's epic and lyrical verses. Already Graetz detected the influence of Wessely on this magnum opus of Ephrati. (112)

Eliezer Rashkov's (1798-1870) Biblical drama, "Amnon and Tamar" (Breslau c. 1821) is not without traces of Wessely's influence, especially as regards characterization. Like Wessely's characters in "Songs of Glory", so do Rashkov's characters represent types. They are expressionistic and not individualistic.

Ben Zeeb (1764-1811) (113) was influenced by Wessely's translation of the "Wisdom of Solomon". (see pages 5 and 16). This influence of Wessely is apparent also in Ben Zeeb's translations of the Books of Ben Sira (Breslau 1798) and Judith of the Apocrypha (Vienna 1799). In his systematic book on Hebrew grammar, "Talmud Leshon Eber", ("A Study of the Hebrew Tongue"), Wessely's influence, too, is recognizable. This grammar text of Ben Zeeb was very popular for almost a century, until "Maarke Leshon Eber" ("The Order of the Hebrew Language") of Joshua Steinberg appeared in 1884 and replaced it in popularity. In his grammatical text, Ben Zeeb, in the chapter on Hebrew poetry, quotes from Wessely's "Songs of Glory"; and on the same page (189a) quotes from Wessely's famous Elegy on the Death of

Duke Leopold; on pages 189b and 190a appears Wessely's Ode on the Death of Mendelssohn.

Solomon Loewisohn (1789-1822) gifted poet and grammarian, studied Wessely's works and revered their author. In his "Melizat Yeshurun" ("The Poetry of Israel"), a work on Hebrew rhetoric (on pages 53, 54, and 55a) the sensitive and brilliant Loewisohn quotes from Wessely's poetry. He selects from "Songs of Glory", the Elegy on the Death of Duke Leopold, In Praise of a Friend, Elegy on the Death of Moses Mendelssohn, and from the poem occasioned by the recovery of King George III of Britain.

Max Letteris, in his Hebrew adaptation of Racine's "Esther" (Prague 1843) adopted the meter used by Wessely.

For almost a full century, Wessely's influence in Hebrew literature has made itself felt, on more and on less gifted poets, dramatists, and scholars. No matter what one's opinion of his poetry may be, there is no doubt that Wessely must be regarded as a pivotal force in the evolution of modern Hebrew literature. His epic "Songs of Glory" exerted a great influence on Hebrew literature in form and content. Even at the present time, it is being discussed and quoted by writers like Bialik, Eliezer Steinman, and Jacob Fichman. (114) B. Halper, in his Anthology, "Post-Biblical Hebrew Literature" (115) includes selections from Wessely's "Songs of Glory". And as late as 1942, a translator of Hebrew

poetry and himself a gifted poet, I.J. Schwartz, in his "Anthology of Hebrew Poetry" containing selections from Hebrew literature from the second century B.C.E. to the twentieth century, includes two selections from the "Songs of Glory". They are the soliloquies of Yokhebed and of Miriam. So we see that even today, more than one hundred years after his death, Naphtali Herz Wessely, the Poet, is a figure that simply cannot be ignored in any history of modern Hebrew literature.

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CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Naphtali Herz Wessely is a figure deserving an important place in Jewish history. The writer is certain of this, and hence this dissertation. Even the brilliant and biased Graetz declared (1) that Wessely had become an historical figure. Graetz maintained, however, that Wessely won his place in Jewish history through Mendelssohn. According to Graetz, the wise, retiring and modest Mendelssohn, fearing the limelight himself, delegated (2) to Dohm the task of conducting the struggle for Jewish emancipation among the non-Jews. As regards the struggle within the Camp of Israel, Mendelssohn knew full well that there was a crying need for inner emancipation. He knew too that attempts to bring about innovations within the Jewish community would be met with fierce and stubborn resistance by the conservative and traditional forces within the ghetto. And Graetz tells us, without any substantiation, that Mendelssohn pushed Wessely forward for this fateful Kulturkampf.

We have shown that this was not the case. It is true, that Mendelssohn avoided any clash with the rabbis and constantly sought their favor and obtained it -- until the appearance of his Bible translation and Biur. But it was not he who assigned the struggle for an improved Jewish education to Naphtali Herz Wessely. There is no basis

for such an assertion, other than that these ideas were in the air among those who gathered around the great Mendelssohn. (see page 100) To this struggle for an improved Jewish education Wessely came out of his own inner compulsion and as a result of observations and convictions that had been coloring his literary life for years. (See page 4; and consider the educational program laid down by Wessely in "Mehallel Rea" in 1778 -- see page 14 and 15)

For that matter, neither did Wessely wish a break with the spiritual leaders of the Jewish community. He himself was a conservative and pious Jew. Following the accepted custom of his day, Wessely had sought and obtained the endorsements of the rabbis for works preceding "Words of Peace and Truth", such as "Lebanon", "Ruah Hen" and "Yen Lebanon". But his concern with the subject of education was so great that it surmounted any fears he may have had regarding the reactions of the rabbis to his "Words of Peace and Truth". In fact, so deep were Wessely's enthusiasms on this subject that he could not possibly have anticipated the degree of hostility which "Words of Peace and Truth" encountered among the rabbis.

Wessely was convinced (as were many of his predecessors, including good and pious rabbis - see pages 110 ff.) that the state of Jewish education was most unsatisfactory and that reforms were imperative. His interest in the problems

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of improving Jewish education was of long standing. That entire first generation of Maskilim was keenly conscious of the need for changes in the curriculum of the Jewish schools. A perusal of the issues of the Ha-Meassef shows how large this matter of improvements in the education of the Jewish child loomed in the eyes of the Meassefim, who were Wessely's contemporaries and his disciples. Preceding the Meassefim, in the Mendelssohnian circle of which Wessely was a member, discussions centering on educational reforms took place time and again. (see page 100) It might be stated that as a whole, the eighteenth century was an education conscious century. It placed great hopes for improving the lot of mankind on the proper education of youth. (see page 97) The Jewish people, it is well known, have throughout their history laid great stress on the values of education. They have almost always emphasized its great importance, both in the life of the individual and of the group. But Jewish life, particularly in Germany and Poland during the two centuries preceding Wessely, had been at a low ebb. Spiritual life had become stereotyped and stagnant. And the unprecedented conditions of Jewish social and economic life - which have been discussed in detail in the Preface and in the Chapters on Wessely as Educator - demanded adjustments. The status quo could not cope with the impact made on the Jewish community by the outside world, the "enlightened" world of

eighteenth century Europe. A re-awakening of Jewish life and a striving for a rapprochement with the non-Jewish environment, came about. The stimuli of the European world acted upon and inter-acted with the strivings and stirrings within Jewish life itself, and education once again became the rallying point of Jewry seeking the better life.

Wessely entered the battle for the improvement of Jewish life through Jewish education, because of his own deep convictions. He believed that inner emancipation was a prime requisite to the political, economic, and social emancipation of the Jews. He felt intensely that the salvation of his people lay in a proper education of the young. He did not plunge into educational theorizing merely upon the appearance of the Toleranzpatent of Joseph II on January 2, 1782. His interest in and emphasis on the problems of reforms in Jewish education are a matter of long standing even at that point, and prior to the publication of "Words of Peace and Truth" had already been clearly expressed in his well-known poem, "Mehallel Rea", as was stated before. "Mehallel Rea" adumbrated "Words of Peace and Truth". In fact, it may be said that in this poem Wessely already laid down the program for the Haskalah Movement for a full century.

The immediate stimulus for the publication of this famous Epistle, the "Words of Peace and Truth", was the

issuance of the Toleranzpatent by Joseph II on January 2, 1782. Wessely was enthusiastic about the educational reforms contained therein. He saw in them a means of achieving the improved Jewish education which he so ardently desired, and wrote his "Words of Peace and Truth" championing those provisions of the Edict.

There is no evidence to support Graetz' statement that the task was urged upon Wessely by Mendelssohn. In fact, Mendelssohn had none of Wessely's enthusiasm for the Toleranzpatent. He was the more worldly of the two, and he somewhat distrusted the intentions of the Monarch. (see page 34) Of course, there can be no doubt that Mendelssohn was in agreement with the position taken by Wessely in his Epistle. Nevertheless, Mendelssohn did not choose to become personally involved in the Kulturkampf which the Epistle provoked, and participated in the controversy only in small measure and from an abstract point of view, at that. He defended Wessely against his rabbinical opponents on the ground that their attempt to prohibit Wessely from expressing his views represented a breach of the principle of freedom of the press. (see page 67) Wessely naturally was disappointed that Mendelssohn and other like-minded fellow-Maskilim did not aid him more actively. (see page 68) Wessely himself had not expected such a storm of protest to arise over his sincere and well-meant efforts in "Words of Peace and Truth". He was

somewhat frightened by the violent reaction. The opposition included, after all, outstanding Jewish personalities like the Gaon of Vilna and Rabbi Ezekiel Landau. (see pages 56, 57, and 60) Even Rabbi Tevele, that most vitriolic of all of Wessely's opponents, cannot be disparaged. It will not do to call him a "Winkelrabbiner", as Graetz does. (3) In his own day, Rabbi Tevele was a celebrity and a man with whom one had to reckon, especially if he was aligned with the opposition. Wessely considered this opponent formidable enough to devote a good part of his fourth Letter to an attempt to refute Rabbi Tevele's charges.

"Words of Peace and Truth", and the controversy in which it involved Wessely, made Wessely a leader in the Haskalah Movement, and thus gave him his place in Jewish history. The educational program which he laid down in this work, served as a guide to Haskalah leaders for the next one hundred years, in their efforts to adjust the Jew to the widening horizons of his environment. His recommendations met with fierce resistance; yet despite the resistance, they exerted tremendous influence (see pages 118 to 139). They even succeeded in transforming one of the basic institutions of Jewry, namely, the heder.

Wessely's younger contemporaries, the Meassefim, recognized him as their teacher and master. "Words of Peace and Truth" was translated into German by David Friedlaender, and into Italian by Elijah Morpurgo. (4)

The Meassefim, in entering upon their historic venture, the publication of the Ha-Meassef, turned to Wessely for guidance. His sincere and conservative advice to them has been discussed. (see pages 22 and 23 and Notes 79 and 80 to Chapter 1) Until 1794 Wessely was a frequent contributor to their publication. But from then on, he left the group because he strongly disapproved of the rather radical spirit that made itself felt in their attitude toward Jewish traditions. Wessely felt that the Meassefim had disregarded his advice to them. (see page 28) But even though Wessely severed his connection with them, his influence upon them does not cease. It continues and is unmistakable. It is an influence not limited to Germany only. It continues in time and space and exerts itself especially in Italy, Galicia, and Russia. It is evident particularly in the "Russian Mendelssohn" - RiBal. (see page 138)

In "Words of Peace and Truth" Wessely was actually giving expression to the Haskalah view on that perennial problem in Jewish history, namely, the socio-cultural relationship between the Jew and his surrounding world. This is a problem that arises time and again in Jewish history. It arose in Alexandria in the last century before Christ and the first Christian century; and again in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, C.E. in the Maimonidean controversy. Now, in the eighteenth century the problem recurs,

revolving this time around the question: Shall the Jew become Europeanized, and to what extent? Protagonists in this problem play historical roles. On that basis, Wessely has his place in Jewish history. He is not one of the great men of Israel, but he is not what Graetz asserts of him, "a dabbler in words and a petty critic".... "who had no proper comprehension of the movements and rhythms of the forces that shape the affairs of the world."

Graetz' view is that Wessely lacked an historical sense. That is one of the criticisms levelled against the Haskalah Movement in general. It is true of men like Wolfsohn-Halle, Herz Homberg, Marcus Herz, and David Friedlaender, who had no real appreciation or understanding of historical Judaism, and who simply by fiat wanted to excise Rabbinic Judaism and refused to take into account millennia of Jewish history. (see Preface page XI) But, as we have already pointed out (see Preface pages XI and XII) these were a different type of Maskilim than was Wessely. It was foreign to Wessely's whole outlook to ignore Rabbinic Judaism. He merely wanted to bring the study of the Bible into its own, and wished the study of the Talmud to be delayed until the child had been properly prepared for it. (see chapters 2 and 3) Wessely understands the historic evolution of Judaism and has no wish to break with traditional Judaism. He emphasizes this over and over again in "Words of Peace and Truth". He is aware

of the importance of history. In his Fourth Letter (5) Wessely says: "We are to be guided by past events as to the future course of events". He shows an historical sense. (see pages 43 and note 20 to Chapter 2). Moreover, Wessely feels - in the main - the pulse of his own times, and has an appreciation and understanding thereof. His "Words of Peace and Truth" was an attempt to meet the problems of his times. In fact, "Words of Peace and Truth" and the controversy around it, was an important expression of that clash between Jewish particularism and cosmopolitanism which was shaking Jewry during the eighteenth century and which has not been resolved to this day.

Viewed in that light, "Words of Peace and Truth" not only gives Wessely a place in Jewish history, but makes him, according to some students of the history of Hebrew literature, the "Father of Modern Hebrew Literature". This title merits some discussion. There are those who claim this honor for Wessely, while others confer it upon Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. The late Dr. Simon Ginzburg defended the thesis that Luzzatto is the "Founder of Modern Hebrew Literature". (6) Dr. Ginzburg's predecessors, Nahum Slouschz, Bar-Tubiah, Bialik, and Lachower (7) advance the same thesis. But these distinguished men of letters are not convincing. Undoubtedly, Luzzatto was a man of genius, and Wessely cannot and should not be com-

pared with him in gifts and greatness. But the conferring of the title of "Father of Modern Hebrew Literature" must be based on other criteria. This title must be accorded to one whose work deals with a modern, secular problem; has "social significance"; and is associated with an event in modern Jewish history. If we apply these criteria to Luzzatto, then there is no basis for asserting that he inaugurated the period known as Modern Hebrew Literature. And indeed, he, the great Kabbalist, did not intend to do so and did not do so.

It is true that Luzzatto betrays the influence of Italian literature, which was secular. It is also true that he exerted an influence upon modern Hebrew literature; e.g. in meter and style. But it will not do to say that Luzzatto's "Migdal Oz" is the "opening page of modern Hebrew literature" (8) because it contains a love of Nature. By this criterion we might as well begin modern Hebrew literature with the Bible, which is permeated with a most intense love and understanding of Nature. Luzzatto, in the main, was immersed in the world of Kabbalah and the world of Jewish mysticism, in Musar; and his spirit and outlook are those of medieval times. Baron (9) sums it up rather well. Luzzatto was a "distinguished Kabbalist and philologist, Messianic dreamer and poet, who incidentally produced three plays which, according to a popular fallacy, inaugurated modern Hebrew literature."

Klausner (10) convincingly and succinctly states the case for the thesis that Luzzatto is not the "Father of Modern Hebrew Literature", while Wessely is. He points out, first of all, that the three dramas upon which the claim for Luzzatto is based, are actually not modern. Even into these Luzzatto injected the medieval spirit and Kabbalistic subject matter. Furthermore, these plays did not exert an influence in Hebrew literature until much later; in fact, long after Wessely's influence had made itself felt. Only fifty copies of "La-Yesharim Tehillah" were published in 1743 by Luzzatto to himself, and were distributed by him among his friends in Amsterdam, and did not reach any other place. Luzzatto's "Migdal Oz" was not published until 1837 (11), that is, fifty-five years after Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" had appeared. That span of fifty-five years is very significant with regard to the question under discussion. And lastly, there can be no doubt that Luzzatto all his life fought for Kabbalah and Messianism. He belonged spiritually to sixteenth century Safed. Wessely, on the other hand, struggled for Haskalah, a new manner of writing Hebrew, a new type of education, and an adjustment to the new European scene. The great Luzzatto is, at best, and only in some respects, a forerunner of modern Hebrew literature. Modern Hebrew literature actually begins with the appear-

ance of Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" in 1782. (12) This literary work deals with contemporary issues facing the Jew of the eighteenth century; it concerns itself with the daily, practical problem of education, thereby putting literature at the service of the people; and it grows, furthermore, out of an event in modern Jewish history, namely, the promulgation of the Edict of Toleration by Joseph II on January 2, 1782. These criteria applied to "Words of Peace and Truth" incline one to assign to Wessely the distinction of being the "Father of Modern Hebrew Literature". (13)

The question of who is the "Father of Modern Hebrew Literature" is one that is difficult to resolve. Klausner's reasoning, it seems to us, is plausible and convincing. (14) But the question is a moot one, and the answer is largely a matter of opinion and depends upon the criteria that are set up. There can be no question, however, about the fact that Wessely has an important place in Jewish history through his "Words of Peace and Truth", and through the leadership that it gave him in the Berlin Haskalah Movement. There can also be no question about the fact that he was the outstanding figure in the literature of that Haskalah Period. In this first Haskalah Period, he was considered the poet-laureate. And here his fame rests chiefly on his magnum opus, "Songs of Glory". This work has been dealt with in great detail

in the previous chapters. (see pages 140 to 228 and the notes thereto.) Some of the varied reactions to this work have been cited. (see pages 210 to 220) We might add at this point Graetz' opinion of Wessely, the Poet. "Wessely had not at all penetrated into the secret depths of genuine poetry. He possessed neither imagination nor vividness nor intuition; and still less did he possess descriptive power and verve. His technically correct verses leave the reader cold, arousing neither his imagination to any illusions nor his intellect to any meditation. The Muse had not kissed Wessely, but had only smiled at him from afar, and had only shown him her shadow..... Wessely was pretty much the Hebrew Klopstock." (15)

It is clear that Graetz exaggerates and is unjustified in his verdict. Suffice it to quote but two stanzas from "Songs of Glory" (Introduction to Song VII) to indicate that Wessely was capable of rising to poetic heights, that he does not always leave the reader cold, and that he does, quite often, create a mood for meditation:

"But the grass and cedar sprout and grow,
Fed by dew and rain, the cloud above
Likes them all, the lofty and the low.
Just so God in His paternal love
Grants His help to ev'ry man in need,
Never asking for his race or creed.

As man bears the godlike, noble stamp,
Why still ask him who his people are?
In his soul there glimmers God's own lamp,
And his wisdom glitters even from afar.
May he come from distant East or West,
He is just as good, and so divinely blest."

But it is not our aim - in an historical evaluation - to defend or to refute reactions of historians, literary critics, poets, and scholars to Wessely's poetry. From an historical point of view, what is significant and of interest is this: The epic, "Songs of Glory", exerted an influence from the day of its appearance to this very day. It was a milestone in Hebrew literature by which many greater and lesser writers and poets have been guided. It served as a model in structure, style, and conception for many men of letters. (see page 220 ff.) It aroused many contradictory opinions of literary critics and historians over a long period of time, from its appearance to the present. As was pointed out before (see page 220), this is a reliable index in literary criticism of the importance of a work. A work which calls for wide difference of opinion over a considerable interval of time, is a significant work in the history of literature. Undoubtedly, "Songs of Glory" is such a work in the history of modern Hebrew literature. And since the history of Hebrew literature forms an important part of Jewish history, "Songs of Glory" is of historical interest as well.

In their own day, "Songs of Glory" created a profound impression. (see page 212) We have repeatedly stressed the critical canon that a literary work, if it is to be evaluated fairly, must be evaluated from the vantage point of the standards, tastes, and ideals of its own day. If

a work fulfills the requirements of its own day, it is an important work. One scholar goes even further by declaring that if a work is considered great by the readers of its own generation, it is to be considered a great work for all time. (17)

Wessely's contemporaries received "Songs of Glory" with enthusiasm. This may well have been - among other reasons - because that generation found in these Songs that which it desired and enjoyed. In its rationalistic approach, in its aspirations, and in its artistic standards, "Songs of Glory" suited and soothed Wessely's readers. Indeed, in Song I, Wessely prays to God that his Songs may have a soothing effect upon the reader, and that they may cause him to forget suffering and oppression in the Galut. (Song I, page 4a)

The Poet continues his prayer to the Almighty: Would that his Songs prove "a soothing to the soul" to "the captivity of this host" of the children of Israel, that they despair not, and that they draw courage and inspiration from their past history, for, "they that wait for the Lord have never been forsaken". (Song I, page 4b) There is, in "Songs of Glory" - and the reader of Wessely's epic cannot but feel it - a nostalgia for the glories of the past, as well as an ardent hope that the unnatural Jewish life in Galut might assume some of the normalcy and wholesomeness of the past.

In fact, "Songs of Glory" abounds in what might be termed overtones and undertones of Jewish nationalism. To some extent that can be said of all of Wessely's works, for his consistent espousal of the Hebrew language places him - in a sense - with the forerunners of Jewish nationalism. As regards "Songs of Glory", the very choice of themes - Israel's redemption from slavery by its glorious hero, Moses - embraces nationalism. Already Franz Delitzsch recognized these nationalistic strains in "Songs of Glory", (18) as did S.J. Rapoport. (19) (see page 213) Any careful reader will find in the verses and between the verses hints thereof. Wessely speaks of the Galut in Egypt -- but one senses that the Galut of his own day is being described. Wessely is fully conscious of the havoc wrought in Jewish life by the Galut. His people's pain is his pain. There are many telling lines in "Songs of Glory" where Wessely shows deep concern for his people and their suffering. (20) His ardent hope, reiterated throughout these verses, is for better days for his people. (21) This yearning Wessely thinks will be realized because, unlike the evil Egyptians, the people of Europe are beginning to follow the dictates of humanitarianism and the rulers are "enlightened". (22) (see pages 79 and 80) With such benign hopefulness shining through the "Songs of Glory", it is no wonder that the reader of Wessely's day welcomed this work and found in it a gladdening spring

that soothed and sustained him. (23)

The reader of Wessely's day found more than comfort and solace in "Songs of Glory". He found in these Songs the hopes and aspirations by which his own life was guided. Wessely, in many ways, reflects his own times in his epic, even though he is treating an historical subject. Rarely can the artist dissociate himself from his own environment. He is conditioned by his times, its ideas and ideals, and consciously or unconsciously he injects these into his work. As Goethe said: "Dichten heisst beichten". This dictum is true of Wessely too, and we find in "Songs of Glory" many contemporary ideals and contemporary allusions, especially in the Introductions to the Songs and in the Notes.

Wessely's age was the age of "Enlightenment" and "Reason", an age which placed its hope on wisdom and knowledge. To Wessely and others like him, these ideals were all incorporated in the person of their revered friend, Moses Mendelssohn. And so, we find in Wessely's Biblical hero, Moses, many of the characteristics of Moses Mendelssohn. (24) In some passages of "Songs of Glory" Moses Mendelssohn answers the description of Moses more closely than does Moshe Rabbenu himself. For example: Wessely describes Moses' flight from Egypt. Moses leaves behind him riches, comfort and luxury. But, our good Poet tells us, Moses has no regrets, for he is not a man seek-

ing glory and striving to gather wealth. He is a man seeking wisdom and knowledge. And on his journeys among various peoples, he increases his knowledge, but does not divest himself of his simplicity and sincerity. Of course, it is almost impossible to state how well this description fits the Biblical Moses. But, this is certain, that the description fits perfectly Moses Mendelssohn, as he was seen through the eyes of his worshipping fellow-Maskilim.

Another much-admired contemporary of Wessely may be recognized in the portrayal of Moses' father-in-law, Reuel. Reuel may be, consciously or otherwise, Mendelssohn's great friend, the Rationalist, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. (25) The dialogues between Moses and Reuel (Song I, 32a,b,33a) express admirably the feelings of mutual veneration and respect that existed between Lessing and Mendelssohn.

The daughters of Reuel are also portrayed more in terms of the eighteenth century than Biblical days. The girls are wisdom-loving. (26) Their difficulties with the shepherds arise largely from the fact that they do not care for their inane and erotic talk. These maidens are the ideal Maskilot of Wessely's day. They fill all its requirements of how cultivated young ladies should look, speak, and conduct themselves.

The Rationalism of the age certainly left its im-

print on Wessely. This is evident throughout "Songs of Glory". But it is particularly evident - jarringly so - when Wessely describes the scene where Moses witnesses the bush that burns and yet is not consumed by the fire. Our Poet, instead of seizing this majestic and awesome moment to rise to poetic heights, descends to the prosaic planes of Reason and Common Sense. Moses is puzzled by the sight and in mechanical and pedestrian fashion speaks to this effect: I must go and see the sight in order to get to the root of this strange matter and investigate it. (27)

Wessely was a Rationalist, to be sure, and yet, at the same time, he is a deeply religious personality. Religious doctrine has first place with him. When Reason questions Faith, Wessely abandons the former and clings to the latter. In that respect, Wessely remained unaffected by the age in which he lived. Waves of doubt, disbelief and rebellion against the sway of Queen Theology were sweeping the eighteenth century world which was Wessely's environment. Anything contrary to reason, such as miracles, was rejected and scorned. Even Biblical criticism was affected by this trend of the times. Thus, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (28) expressed disbelief regarding the miracles mentioned in the Bible. Wessely takes Eichhorn severely to task for denying the Miracle of the Parting of the Red Sea. His Introduction to Vol. V in "Songs of Glory" refers to Eichhorn even though his

name is not mentioned. (29)

The anti-Maskilim, opponents of "Enlightenment" and all it implied, also find their place in Wessely's epic. They are represented by Pharaoh, who is portrayed as contemptuous of wisdom and hostile to knowledge; (30) by Pharaoh's counsellors, by the shepherds of Midian, and by the Amalekites. These people are, in Wessely's characterization, godless, arrogant and wicked. (31) They rely on their own very limited wisdom and power, and turn not to the Almighty. (32) One cannot help feeling throughout these Songs (33) as Wessely describes Pharaoh's and the other anti-Maskilim's rebellion against God, that through these Biblical protagonists he is attempting to combat and refute the skeptics and heretics of his own day, who had done so much to undermine the power of tradition and the authority of Religion, and with whom he was not at all in sympathy. (34)

We have said that through these epic poems, the "Songs of Glory", Wessely held the distinction of being the poet-laureate of the Berlin Haskalah. We have also stated that through his work on education, his "Words of Peace and Truth", he became one of the leaders of that Movement. We are by no means implying, however, that the Educator Wessely failed to accompany Wessely the Poet. From the contemporary allusions we have just cited, and

throughout the entire epic, especially in the lyrical Introductions, we can glean the fact that in "Songs of Glory", too, Wessely reveals many of his educational ideals. We find the picture of the ideal Maskil. We find, too, the charming and wise maiden who is the ideal Maskilah. We hear much of good manners and behavior, of reward and punishment, of pure faith and true worship. We sense the Poet's ardent devotion to the Bible, his love of loves. In "Words of Peace and Truth" Wessely had already established the fact that for him, the Bible is the very fountainhead of an ethico-esthetical education for the Jews. Here, in "Songs of Glory", the Bible is presented as an invigorating, refreshing source of hope and life for the Jew, as he faces an unprecedented era in his historical evolution. The very language of "Songs of Glory" is Biblical. Wessely primarily employs pure Biblical Hebrew in these Songs, and his use of the language demonstrates of what beauty the Hebrew tongue is capable. His mastery of Hebrew language and style made him the meliz of his day. Moses Mendelssohn, with his highly-cultivated esthetic sense, praises Wessely's style. He says: "Of all my Jewish fellow-writers, I know of but one who can express his thoughts in writing precisely as he wishes; that man, of course, is the author of "Words of Peace and Truth". (35)

There are, in "Songs of Glory", passages of such

beauty and effectiveness -- most particularly in the lyrical Introductions to the Songs -- that they possess permanent poetic value. Wessely was a deeply religious personality, and where his poetry is religious-lyrical in character, - where he sings of God and His wonders, - there it is at its best. It has a sincerity, a festivity and a pathos that is deeply touching. (36) He has even been called a poet by the grace of God. (37) This is undue praise. Wessely was not truly equal to the gigantic task he undertook in writing his "Songs of Glory". No one before or after him has undertaken this task of writing an epic on the life of Moses. (v. page 142) Nor did Wessely possess the essential ingredients for such an undertaking. He was not endowed with great gifts to describe Nature and her beauties. He lacked the ability to portray characters, especially great characters like the heroes of this epic, so that they become living, pulsating beings and do not remain incorporeal entities. Furthermore, Wessely did not have the capacity to depict human emotions, without which a work of art cannot truly live for all time. Wessely's "Songs of Glory" is not great poetry, except in certain passages. As a whole, the work does not bear the stamp of immortal inspiration. But it has poetic value, and it made a considerable contribution in reviving and revitalizing the Hebrew language and helped that language to become a modern, living tongue once more. (38) He loved the Hebrew language passionately. In fact,

he believed himself to be inspired by the Spirit of the Hebrew Language. His lucid, flowing Hebrew must be all the more appreciated when it is compared with the stilted rabbinic Hebrew of his own day.

And now that we have spoken of the Educator and the Poet, we might, in parting from our subject, say something of the man. That he was a fine spirit even his harshest critics do not deny. (39) He was not, like Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, a man of genius. He was not even, like Moses Mendelssohn, a man of great learning and culture. (40) But, for his day, his interests were manifold, ramifying into many fields - education, poetry, exegesis, synonymics, grammar and philology. (v. pages 4,6,7,13,15,16,18,28,) In all these activities his devotion to his people is apparent. He was a pious Jew, a truly religious man. Meisel, Wessely's biographer (41) relates a telling incident regarding this. It was at the time in his life when poverty had entered his hitherto affluent home. (v. page 17) Wessely bore his deprivation with the calm of a God-fearing and God-loving man; but the future of his beloved children was naturally of great concern to him. Suddenly an offer came from a wealthy man, who wished to make a place for one of Wessely's sons in his business. Wessely inquired into the character of this man who was offering his son a secure future. Wessely discovered that the man was a freethinker. Graciously he declined the offer. To

Wessely, financial security was of no worth in an environment barren of the love of God.

Of all the Maskilim, Wessely was the one who ideologically stood closest to the rabbis. (This fact was emphasized throughout the chapters on Wessely as Educator) Yet, it was the irony of history, Graetz remarks, (42) that this man fired the first serious shot against the rabbis, very much as the Kabbalist, Jacob Emden, dealt Kabbala the first mighty blow. Concerning the outcome of this historic clash of ideologies, Graetz asserts (43) that Wessely was the winner, and his opponents eventually had to lay down their weapons; but that time has shown the rabbis had been right. These rabbis, these "Stocktalmudisten", according to Graetz, saw into the future more clearly than did Wessely, who, unwittingly and unwillingly, was instrumental in tearing down the walls of the rabbinic edifice in which he himself was quite at home.

One fails to grasp Graetz' view of this Kulturkampf. Surely he does not mean to imply - in view of his constant attacks on the rabbis - that the rabbinic structure should have been preserved intact. Certainly the Jew could not continue his life in the ghetto. Eighteenth century "enlightened" Europe was penetrating into the ghetto and was removing some of the restrictions that had made the separatism of the Jew workable. Those are the facts of history. There is no gainsaying that the Jew had to make adjust-

ments to a new European scene. Of course, the rabbis were right insofar as a wave of assimilation and conversion took place immediately after Wessely's day. But as we have pointed out in our Preface (v. page XVII) that is the fallacy of post hoc ergo propter hoc. It might well be that this development would have taken place on an even larger scale had not the ideals of Wessely and like-minded Maskilim brought to bear some check and balance in the kaleidoscopic scene of Jewish life during the confusing transition from ghetto to participation in European life. Wessely's emphasis on the Bible and his great love of the Hebrew language exercised some salutary effect in maintaining the solidarity of Jewish group life during that era of upheaval. And finally, Wessely should not be accused of firing the first serious shot against rabbinic Judaism, with his "Words of Peace and Truth". We have discussed in the Preface (v. pages II to X) how the rabbis, as well as the communal leaders of Jewish life, had been losing prestige during the period preceding Wessely; and how, by the time Wessely came upon the scene of history, there already was a revulsion against that leadership and a bias in favor of new ideals and new ways of life.

This we can say of Wessely. Destiny intended him to play a role in Jewish history. Without really being opposed to rabbinic Judaism, Wessely was catapulted into

the center of the struggle against the rabbis. As a protagonist in this struggle concerning the Jew and his adjustment to the surrounding world, Wessely played his historic role. Actually, he was a lover of Jewish traditions. But he was convinced that certain changes in the traditional Jewish education were imperative in order that the Jew of the eighteenth century might cope with the rapidly changing times. He advocated that the primacy of Jewish learning be retained. But secular learning was to be added so that the Jew would be able to make a more effective adjustment to the wider horizons that were opening to him.

At any other time in Jewish history, Wessely's epistles on educational reforms surely would not have aroused the storm of protest that met the "Words of Peace and Truth". But at the time under discussion, the rabbinical edifice was being seriously threatened by many factors. (v. Preface pages II to X) It could stand no attacks, not even the well-meant and by no means hostile proposals of Wessely. Even then, the rabbis in all likelihood would have paid small heed to "Words of Peace and Truth" were it not for the fact that it was intimately connected with the Edict of Toleration of Joseph II. The rabbis therefore engaged Wessely in a polemic for which Wessely had no inclination. In fact, throughout his second, third and fourth Letters he seeks to explain his

views, as being in no wise inimical to the rabbis, and he seeks to appease them.

Wessely was not the winner in this struggle, as Graetz says. (44) Wessely himself would not have considered that he was. Even in his own lifetime he witnessed developments that made him protest in anger and sorrow. We have pointed out on several occasions his opposition to the radical and anti-traditional spirit that was becoming apparent among his younger contemporaries. (v. pages 28, 92, 93, and 235) Indeed, Wessely was not the winner in this Kulturkampf. Nor were the rabbis. A speculative expression of opinion might be pardonable at this point. It might very well be that, had the rabbis realized that Wessely, like themselves, was deeply concerned with the welfare of Judaism and the Jews, and had they reckoned with the exigencies of their times, they would have collaborated with Wessely in his efforts, instead of opposing him. Had that been the case, then perhaps Jewish history in Germany would have followed a different course.

PERPETUAL BOND

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SUPPLEMENTS

I. Abraham Ben Sabbetai Hacoen (1670-1729) was born in Crete (also called Candia). He was a physician, poet and an essayist. He studied medicine and philosophy at the University of Padua, but he also occupied himself with Talmudical and Biblical studies. His "Kehunnat Abraham" appeared in Venice in 1719 and is now quite a rare book. It is a poetical paraphrase of the Psalms. Extracts of this work appear in Ha-Meassef III page 1 ff. and in Bikkure ha-Ittim V, p. 83 ff. Abraham Hacoen lived on the island of Zante (Zakynthos). His "Kehunnat Abraham", which Wessely read, shows a good command of the Hebrew language. But his poetry is not of a high order. (v. Encyclopaedia Judaica and Jewish Encyclopedia s.v.)

II. In *ad locum* Ibn Ezra says: *אמר חזקיהו אביו השם מקדש אבנים משה שהיה בלויאל*
אביואל מלך, רק בקדש אבנים אלוהים.

III. Ibn Ezra, too, *ad locum*, follows the interpretation of the Midrash and says: *פלא דמק פלא.*

ABBREVIATIONS

Klausner will refer to:				"Historiyah shel ha-Sifrut ha-Ibrit ha-Hadashah" Vol.I
Lachower	"	"	":	"Toledot ha-Sifrut ha-Ibrit ha-Hadashah" Vol. I
Landau	"	"	":	"Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature"
Waxman	"	"	":	"A History of Jewish Literature" Vol. III
Schapiro	"	"	":	"History of Modern Hebrew Liter- ature" (Hebrew)
Graetz	"	"	":	"Geschichte der Juden" Vol. XI
Assaf	"	"	":	"Mekorot le-toledot ha-hinnuk be-Yisrael"

NOTES

to

CHAPTER I

NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY

HIS LIFE

1. Letter II p. 28a (1st ed.) Also in *נאחל* p. 3b

Wessely's first biographer and disciple, David Friedrichsfeld in *נאחל* (Amsterdam 1809) page 1, says: Joseph Reis was Wessely's *אבא אבא אבא* i.e. great-great-grandfather. Really Joseph Reis was Wessely's great grandfather.

2. W.A. Meisel, "Leben und Wirken Naphtali Hartwig Wessely's" (Breslau, 1841) was Wessely's second biographer. He relates these facts, page 13.
3. l.c. p. 15
4. l.c. p. 16
5. Meisel p. 16 and others after him say erroneously Frederick VI. The error is pointed out by Klausner, in *המאמרים של הרב חיים חזקוני* p. 90 Vol. I. (Henceforth, references to this work of Klausner's will be given merely as Klausner.)
6. Meisel, p. 17; Klausner p. 90; and others say that she was from Frankfurt an der Oder. But they are incorrect, for Wessely himself states in Letter II of "Words of Peace and Truth" p. 28a:
אמלכתי אמו ריאל מליך פרינק פארט צאמין.
7. The day and the month are not ascertainable. Graetz (Vol. XI p. 83, 1900 ed.), Margolis-Marx p. 597, and others err when they say that Wessely was born in Copenhagen.

Dubnow, in "Weltgeschichte des juedischen Volkes" Vol. VII, p. 382, gives 1726 as the year of Wessely's birth. This is not correct, since Meisel (who had access to family records of Wessely and personal contact with the family, and therefore was in a position

to know the facts first-hand) gives 1725 as the year of Wessely's birth and Hamburg as the place of his birth. (Meisel, p. 17)

8. Meisel, p. 19, shows himself most unsympathetic to the Heder and to the melammed. He says that Wessely was not taught the elements of Hebrew, for his teacher himself did not know them!
9. In Letter II p. 28a Wessely says: *א"ל דהיום הן חמל*
טנוס אובלם זק לאם זכרנו מלחמנו זכרנו וזכרנו דמלחמנו זכרנו זכרנו
הזכר דאמלל גמיר קבלין.
10. Solomon ben Judah was born at Hanau (whence his sur-name) in 1687. His Hebrew grammar *דנין אלמל* (Frankfurt am Main 1708) aroused the displeasure of the rabbis, since Hanau dared to criticize the medieval grammarians -- Abraham Ibn Ezra, David Kimhi, and especially Abravanel. He was obliged to write a retraction which was attached to each copy of his grammar. He was constantly in difficulty with the rabbis. Because he pointed out grammatical errors in a prayer-book endorsed by the rabbis, he had to wander from one community to another - from Frankfurt to Hamburg, thence to Amsterdam.

Besides *דנין אלמל* he is the author of numerous works, among which may be mentioned:

- נסח דהן קול* (Amsterdam 1730) - on Hebrew vowels;
זכר - דתורה (Berlin 1733), the well-known Hebrew grammar. Moses Mendelssohn of Hamburg says of this grammar in p. 240: *אמר היה דוד בן משה אלמל זכר*

(v. Jew. Encycl. VI p. 210 and Zinberg's "History of Literature Among the Jews," V, p. 177 ff)

Wessely refers to his teacher, Solomon Hanau, though he does not mention him by name, in *דל* Letter II, p. 28a

11. "Words of Peace and Truth" Letter II, p. 18b
12. Friedrichsfeld p. 2. According to Mandelkern in *דאמלל (גרמאניש)* p. 404, Wessely studied also Spanish, Portugese, and Italian. Wessely's knowledge of German was rather meager. Klausner p. 48-49 cites examples to show Wessely's poor comprehension of the German language. These examples are taken from Wessely's translation of Mendelssohn's "Reply to Lavater." Zinberg, too, in Vol. VII, Book I, p. 80 Note 2, brings a telling example of Wessely's shortcomings in the German language.

13. Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591-1655) (Borodianski, in the "Jubilaumsausgabe of Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften" Vol. XVI, p. LX, says Delmedigo was born in 1595) was a physician, philosopher, mathematician and astronomer. Mathematics and astronomy were his favorite studies. The latter he studied under Galileo. His free thinking tendencies and preference for secular studies made him a persona non grata to the orthodox. In the course of his wanderings he associated with Karaitic scholars. Wessely read Delmedigo's *פירוש* (Amsterdam 1629). Wessely quotes from it in his introduction to the Hebrew translation of Mendelssohn's "Phaedon". Wessely also mentions Delmedigo's work in "Words of Peace and Truth" Letter II, p. 20a. Wessely also read Delmedigo's *מגילת גנים* which was printed together with *פירוש*. One of Wessely's unpublished philological works is called *מגילת גנים*. These works of Delmedigo contain, among other subjects, treatises on mathematical paradoxes, on algebra, and trigonometry. (Jew. Encycl. IV, 508)
14. Meisel, p. 25
15. Meisel, p. 28. M. Mendelssohn of Hamburg, too, in *ספר הגלגל* p. 240 says that Wessely was *ממשיג דחכמים* of Eibeschuetz. (See also Mortimer J. Cohen: Jacob Emden p. 254). Klausner, p. 92, note 6, points out that Eibeschuetz was elected Chief Rabbi of the Triple Community (Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbeck) in 1750. So Wessely became his pupil at the age of twenty-five! But Wessely may have been his student not in the formal sense. He may have met R. Jonathan informally and consulted him from time to time as he met with difficulties in his studies.
16. Meisel p. 28
17. l.c. p. 30-31
18. e.g. *ספר מחמאות* ה' ספר היסוד. דברי, שאלה דברי, *גן הנדב*.
19. Meisel, p. 30. But Meisel fails to tell us how Wessely went about this search.
20. Friedrichsfeld p. 14: *דברי תורה* ה' *פירוש* דברי, *פירוש* דברי, *פירוש* דברי, *פירוש* דברי. *פירוש* דברי, *פירוש* דברי, *פירוש* דברי. Meisel, p. 33, says that Wessely followed Martin Luther's translation.

I believe that Wessely employed both translations,

NOTES

TO

NAPHTALI HERZ WESSELY

A STUDY OF THE EDUCATOR AND POET

BY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning.

1944

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for in his commentary to *מכתב ארבעה* p. 310, he says:
(Warsaw 1885 edition) *הוא לא היה שם*

21. Meisel, p. 33. It is probably the manuscript in the library of Samson de Boer of Amsterdam.
22. Klausner, p. 94, says probably between 1750 and 1760 or around 1755. Klausner's supposition that such a responsible position would not be given to one under the age of thirty is not germane.
23. Klausner, p. 94-95 says that the influence of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, who sojourned in Amsterdam, from 1735-1743 was still felt. David Franco Mendes, his disciple, founded and presided over a group of Jewish scholars called *אגודת דוד*.
24. Friedrichsfeld, p. 44-45. But later, while in Berlin, Wessely prayed as the Ashkenazim do, since he did not choose to offend them and appear arrogant by using the Sephardic pronunciation and ritual.
25. In "Words of Peace and Truth" Letter II, 3b and 4a, Wessely praises the Jewish community of Amsterdam. Sabbetai Bass, in his book *אורח חיים* gives a very interesting description of the curriculum of the Amsterdam Talmud Torah.
26. Meisel, p. 47-48
27. Friedrichsfeld p. 10; Meisel p. 49. Meisel overestimates the value of "Lebanon".
28. Fanciful titles to literary works are not uncommon, in Hebrew literature. Such titles are frequently found in the Golden Age. (e.g. *המלך המשיח*). This is probably the influence of Arabic literature.
29. Meisel p. 51. Klausner p. 95 says that up to Wessely's time only one work dealing with synonyms appeared, *מכתב* of Rabbi Solomon ben Abraham of Urbino (Venice 1748). 5? (1548)
- S. Spiegel, in his illuminating article *המקורות והשפעות*, Vol. VII, first issue, points to other predecessors in this field.
- Herder, in his "Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie", I, p. 27, points out the need for such a book.
30. Friedrichsfeld p. 11

31. Meisel p. 54
32. Part I is preceded by the endorsements of Rabbi Saul of Amsterdam, R. *שלמה* of the Sephardic community of Amsterdam, and R. Saul of the Hague.
33. Friedrichsfeld p. 12; Meisel p. 56
34. Friedrichsfeld p. 13 says erroneously that he returned to Hamburg. (v. also Meisel p. 58). And Delitzsch in his "Poesie" p. 96 follows Friedrichsfeld in this error.
35. Friedrichsfeld p. 13-14
36. *183* II p. 24-25
37. Daniel Itzig (1722-1799) banker, member of the banking firm of Itzig, Ephraim and Son. Itzig was appointed Mint Master by Frederick the Great. He was active in the communal affairs of the Jews of Prussia from 1764 to 1799. In 1782, through the good office of Moses Mendelssohn, Itzig was instrumental in stopping Rabbi Hirschel Levin from putting Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" under the ban. (Jew. Encycl. VII, 12)
38. David Friedlaender, communal leader, was born at Koenigsberg in 1750 and died in Berlin in 1834, where he had been living since 1771. He was a friend and pupil of Moses Mendelssohn, and one of the founders of the Berlin Jewish Free School, founded in 1778. He was one of the first to translate the Hebrew prayer-book into German. He wrote textbooks for use in Jewish schools. He sought reforms in the Jewish cult, tending "to reduce Judaism to a mere colorless code of ethics". He offered to accept Christianity, provided he might evade certain ceremonies and not be obliged to believe in the divinity of Jesus. This offer was rejected. In 1787, Friedlaender translated Mendelssohn's *הקדמה*. He translated "Koheleth" into German, as well as "Aboth", and wrote a German commentary thereto. He wrote on Moses Mendelssohn. He was the first Jew to be a member of the Municipal Council of Berlin. (Jew. Encycl. V, 514-515)
39. Bloch, Marcus Eliezer (1723-1799) - physician and celebrated ichthyologist.
40. Herz, Marcus (1747-1803) - physician and student of philosophy. He studied under Kant. He was a physician at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. His Lectures, on medicine and philosophy, attracted much attention in Berlin. In 1779 he married a girl of fifteen, the famous Henrietta. Herz was a friend and pupil of Moses Mendelssohn. (Jew. Encycl. III, 368)

49. l.c. p. 121
50. Beer-Bring (1759-1805) also translated "Phaedon" into French.
51. In a letter to Klein, 1781, apropos this subject, Mendelssohn says: "Ich fürchte, dieser Jargon hat nicht wenig zur Unsittlichkeit des gemeinen Mannes beigetragen und verspreche mir sehr gute Wirkung von dem unter meinen Brüdern aufkommenden Gebrauch der reinen deutschen Mundart".
52. Meisel, p. 63
53. e.g. Friedrichsfeld ^{לציון} p. 21
54. P. Sandler, in his ^{פריאלר} (p. 136-137) points out and substantiates that Mendelssohn felt that this task of commenting on the entire Pentateuch was too great for Dubno, and hence the assignment to Wessely while Dubno was still with Mendelssohn.
55. Kayserling p. 307-308; 2nd edition.
56. Meisel p. 86; Kayserling p. 305; 1862 edition.
57. The front page of the announcement reads:
 צוים אַתראַפּע
 אַרענטן דאָס זיין אַזוי אַקאָ אַזוי דער מאַך אַזוי אַקאָ. אַזוי אַקאָ
 פּאַטאַרציוס דאָס אַקאָ אַ פּאַטאַר אַ פּאַטאַר אַ פּאַטאַר אַ פּאַטאַר
 אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי
 פּאַטאַר אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי
 אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי
 אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי אַזוי
58. ^{פּאַטאַר} does not appear in ^{צוים אַתראַפּע} as Zinberg Vol. VII, Book I, p. 82 asserts, and as Klausner p. 99 states; but it is prefaced to the Biur of the Book of Exodus.
59. Friedrichsfeld p. 14
60. Meisel p. 65
61. Mandelkern, l.c. p. 409, says 1780
62. Says Wessely: ^{דאָס זיין אַזוי אַקאָ אַזוי דער מאַך אַזוי אַקאָ}
 (Warsaw 1885) p. 10 ^{אַזוי אַקאָ} ^{אַזוי אַקאָ}
63. Wessely in the third introduction to ^{אַזוי אַקאָ} and Meisel p. 68
64. e.g. J.L. Ben-Zeeb and Solomon Plessner (an admirer of Wessely)

65. Klausner, p. 100, thinks that "chill penury" knocked at Wessely's door between 1778 and 1780.
66. Friedrichsfeld p. 15; Meisel p. 72-73.
67. Klausner p. 100 thinks that the literary works were the commentary of Wessely on חכמה טמאה and that perhaps he received some remuneration for מהלל ריש
68. Meisel p. 80
69. M. Mendels^sohn in Pene Tebel p. 240 describes this incident as told him by Wessely himself, as follows:
 הנה עדתי קול, כי יש אה נכשו, אפרט מורח אלקים, אימאספא זלי דמאן
 אנשים בדוקר בדוקר, אכל החצרים מאליהם דה אל דה ממדקו מורח.
 איה, אחי נמיס אחציוס אמספר השלמים האוק אמסר, זג כי זלי דא
 רק חצרי אחצ. אז משה לא צמח רק דאם השגת, אז משה לא
 דאליה רק דמור אחצ השלמה לו. אחרי כן לא דאליה רק דבסאל
 אהר סודר מל זלי, אז אספח אה יצ, אולגה דצד במה
 טמיהם אלה שנים.
70. A. Benesra in "Ost und West" of May 1905, p. 332.
71. Friedrichsfeld p. 16; Meisel p. 80
72. This commentary פתח ארמון is in large part in manuscript. The חקירת מקור נכונים published (Lyck 1868) part of it (up to אורח) under the title אמרי שפר
73. Friedrichsfeld p. 20
74. Friedrichsfeld p. 17; Meisel p. 81
75. A. Pribram: "Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien" I, p. 440.
76. Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften (1929), Vol. 16, 278
77. Ha-Meassef 1784 in the Ab and Elul issues.
78. J.L. Landau: "Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature" p. 57 in the 1923 ed; or page 66 in the 1938 ed.
79. Ha-Meassef, Tebeth 1783
80. דא כי מאכתבם מאכתב שמים אמר "אליהם יפול חולד דמאן קהל
 אצד. הן כן דצדו דצדונים מאל, זלא ואלא מלכא אלקי, כי דיוס

חורשי רצה בינינו. אהיה כי דגוי למחלה אוקחים קורי עכדיש ונאמר עזאזל
חדשים הם. לא עזר עליהם על גורם אמורה. ואז חים מתקיים אשר
תשאקן מחזר מפרה שרים ונאמר מיום הם. על כן חזיבם אהטקיה על
דברים קצרים מאלו אפניכם בה. ואז הן:

(א) ראשית חברה ונאמר ה' אנאמר ונאמר ה' נאמר נדח
אזא מנהיגה מוליגומם וספוריכם באזויס דרכי ונאמר ה'
אנאמר.

(ב) לך ההסתקל השמים ארצמילת לא תזכיר מלא
העצבים שזכרם הונם אהחמים בשיריהם אהמסריהם. ואחריהם
נמשכו כל משוררי זמנא באילופא. וכל באור חלק ודקד. לא
ישמשו כל פיהם.

(ג) אז תשובו כפיהם שני חלק דברי עקדים אהדדה. כמ
מקל שני זמנא ארבים ממנו משוררי זמנא כל העמים.
הסיכו מכם שירים אמילור או ספורים שמשן רעל אהדה.
האהדה אילר הלב ונאמר השכל האד. ואז יסוה אמנם לחמ
אשנים אוה. מילתם. אשנים בין אבני קצב אשר אמם מהחכים הם.
(ד) חזא אכס מדבר או מהסתק מילור וספורי האזויס אהמ
באחיהם אהמיהם הן אכא או אפרט כדרכי הסאטירד. אהמיהם
מסריכם האדום אצדים דעני שומיהם אצלניסם קצב. זמניהם.
דגש אהר תהיה מחג אשנים. אדבר בענה אדברק מוסר אבד
בדריהם אמילור חן דעני אהרים אדס.

(ה) בהיות ממנה פניהם אהודד לחמ אשנינו הקצב או

תשומה גדולה באמצעות דרכי האשן אשר אדבר לומר ואכתוב לומר.
 כדור שמאמצים דרכי האשן על חוץ. אלה הם היום הקצוץ וס חכמה
 המורה יהיה גדולה. שם יציצת האשן על מכונת הבין
 אדם אמנות טהורה שבמורה. אשר קצטל שדה נביאיו
 אקדחת אמת שהורה היו חכמי המעלה והמאמר שיוצא
 הדור קצוץ האשן והמילר הנאצות בקצטל. אלה זה
 הבחנה דעני המכתבים אשר רבו עליון מקצת מחינה
 דני וטחול. כי לא מצאנו על הבחנה הוקרה שכלל
 דבר.

93. According to M. Mendelsohn l.c. p. 241, the entire Wessely family removed to Hamburg upon the daughter's marriage, which was a few years before Wessely's death.
94. M. Mendelsohn l.c. p. 241 „אומנם ע' דעם אקראמל איבערצאל וויסנשאפט, איתנו אל צו מחקרן צו פארברייטערן און שטרענג נאך אלס געבן, דעם אויפן אפגאנג ווערן קלאר געזעהן פונעם דריטן אלט אים זעלבסט, און דער האנדל אין מיטל-אשע, אלס אלס אחר מילד.".
95. Meisel p. 169
96. Meldola, Abraham - scion of an ancient Sephardic family, son of Rabbi Raphael Meldola; born in Amsterdam in 1754 and settled in Hamburg in 1772.
97. D. Simonsen: "Hartwig Wessely's Todestag", MGWJ 1905 p. 205-208.

NOTESToCHAPTER TWO"WORDS OF PEACE AND TRUTH"

1. A.F. Pribram: "Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien", I p. LIII.
2. M. Gruenwald: "Vienna" (Engl. transl. of J.P.S.) p. 145-6
3. Articles of L. Singer in volumes V and VI of "Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Juden in der Czechoslovakischen Republik".
4. A.F. Pribram No. 205 (p. 440)

The dates of the documents are between May 13, 1781 and January 2, 1782. The Patent issued on January 2, 1782 is an especially famous one.

Franz Anton, Freiherr von Sonnenfels, called the "Viennese Lessing" attracted the attention of Joseph II (because of his great talents), and took part in drawing up the "Patents of Toleration". (v. Gruenwald, "Vienna" p. 149) Gruenwald, in the same book, p. 154 says: "Patent of Toleration" proved to be a turning point, not only in the history of the Jews, but in that of Austria and civilization.

On Sonnenfels v. also Jew. Encycl. XI p. 469.

5. Mendelssohn had to pay the Leibmunt upon entering Dresden in 1776, and made his well-known remark: "The laws of Saxony place in the same category the educated Jews of Berlin and the Polish oxen." (M. Waxman: "History of Jewish Literature" III p. 59)
6. A.F. Pribram l.c. p. LXVII
7. Dr. A. Brawer: *התאחדות היהודים בארץ ישראל*, חלק XXIII
8. Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften (Jubilaeumsausgabe 1929) Vol. 16, p. 278

9. As to the reaction of the Christians to the Patent of Tolerance. A minority of freedom-loving and progressive people welcomed it. Klopstock dedicated an Ode to Joseph II on the occasion of the granting of the Patent. But the large majority of non-Jews opposed the Patent and the numerous enemies of the Jews were very articulate in opposing it and in attacking the Jews. Gruenwald, in "Vienna" p. 157-8 lists some of these anti-Jewish works published anonymously: About the Uselessness and Harmfulness of the Jews in the Kingdom of Bohemia, Moravia and Austria by J. Klinger (1782); About the Harmful Influence upon the State and the Ruination of the Burghess Caused by the Unlimited Freedom of Trade Granted the Jews, by Cobalt; Be Happy, Dear Jews, a Happy Event Is About to Reach You, or a Brief Investigation of the Question Whether the Jews Are to Be Admitted to Manual Labor. (1782)
10. Singer, l.c. Vol. V p. 242 (v. Note 3)
11. Gruenwald, however, says: "Most of the Viennese Jews greeted the Patent with joy". "Vienna" p. 160
12. Graetz XI p. 89 says that Wessely aimed to allay the fears of the orthodox Jews of Vienna. It seems from the title page of "Words of Peace and Truth" that Wessely's aim was not limited to the Jews of Vienna only, but rather to the Jews throughout Joseph's domains who distrusted the terms of the Edict.
13. The first edition which I used is not dated. Nor is the place of publication given. It seems to have been printed (like the next three Letters) at the Press of the Berlin Freyschule. Graetz XI p.89 dates the publication of the first Letter March 1782. It seems that the date of publication set by Zinberg, January 1782, is more accurate, since by March 1782 Rabbi David Tevele is already attacking the Letter in Lissa. (v. Zinberg: "History of Jewish Literature VII p. 86 and 273)
14. Mendelssohn's influence is recognizable. Although his "Jerusalem" was published in 1783 (after "Words of Peace and Truth") nevertheless, the two friends undoubtedly discussed the problem of reforms in Jewish education. This subject was a favorite topic of conversation with Mendelssohn. In "Jerusalem" the same division occurs; the terminology alone is different. Mendelssohn speaks of "Moral Law" and "Ceremonial Law".

23. And here Wessely used an incorrect illustration (as Lewin l.c. p. 168, points out). Wessely says:
 שְׁפֵרוּ הַנְּדִיאוֹת יִשְׁמְרוּ חַי כָּמוֹ שֶׁשֶׁ מְאֻלָּה מִן הָאֲפִי חֲרִיבִין
 דָּרָא. אֲנִיכָא דִּלְכֻמְהוֹ וְקִרְיָא דְגִמְ. בְּאֵמְרָא, כִּי אִמְרֵי דִּי
 (Isaiah 45:1) אֲמַלְחָא לְבָרִיט.
- Wessely obviously is unaware of a Deutero-Isaiah.
24. Letter I, Chapt. 4. This is indeed claiming a great deal for the value of studying ancient history.
25. Letter I, Chapt. 5.
 כָּמוֹ צִינִי בְּאֵלֹס וְקִרְיָא דְגִמְ וְהַמְלִיכִים
 אִסְמִינִי הַמִּידָה הַנְּאֻכָּרָא וְאִיזֵר אֵל מֵאֵל אֲבֻלָּא. וְאֵל הַמְּלִיכִים
 מִכָּמוֹ אֵלֶּה אִיזֵרִים נְאֻמְרֵי אֵלֶּה פֶּה דִּי זֶה יִבְטָל אֵלֶּה מִדְּמֵי יִצְחָק
 לֹא כָּא.
26. Letter I, Chapt. 6
27. This is probably an incorrect statement. See p. 241 Note 1.
 by E.N. Frenk in *הַתְּקִיפָה י"ג*
28. Perhaps Wessely has Klopstock, Herder and Lessing in mind.
29. Obviously these Polish melammedim were well versed in Jewish learning, and the German Jews imported them, for they had none of their own.
30. The study of foreign languages became one of the ideals of the Haskalah Movement.
31. Wessely says:
 אֲנִימָה הַמִּלְכָּה יִמְצָקִיבָא שְׁהוּ כָּאֵם לְצִינִיקִים אֲנִיכֵי לֹא
 אֲמַרְנָא לְרִבְבִּינֵי דְבִרְרָא אֲרִימִיָּה בִּי שְׁלֹמֹה אֲנִיכָא אֲמַרְנָא אֵלֶּה אֲנִימָה
 וְיִבְטָלִים הַמְּלִיכִים שְׁהוּ מִצְדִּיקִים בְּלֹאן הַקְּדֻשָּׁה דִּי בָּרִיט אֲמַרְנָא גִּי
 זֶלֶן אֲרִימִיָּה שְׁהוּ דִּי זֶלֶן הַמְּלִיכִים מִדְּמֵי אֲנִיכָא אֲמַרְנָא גִּי
 בִּיזְנָא מֵאֲנִיכָא הַקְּדֻשָּׁה דִּי מִקְּדֻשָּׁה הַמְּלִיכִים בְּכֹחַ סִמְנֵי הַקְּדֻשָּׁה
 אֲמַרְנָא מִתָּה יִצְ מִלְכָּה אֲמַרְנָא הַמְּלִיכִים שְׁהוּ אֲשֶׁרֶנְכִי. מִכָּמוֹ נִפְדִּיָּה
 דְּצִינִיקִים כֹּאֲנִים הַמְּלִיכִים אֲמַרְנָא גִּי.

Wessely is aware that the 24 Books do not contain the entire Hebrew vocabulary of those periods, but only fragments thereof.

32. Klausner (p. 108) calls these words *כִּבְדֵּי-הַמִּשְׁקָל* to which Wessely's critics of his and our own day have not given due attention. Of this statement Klausner says:
 מִכָּאן דָּא כִּי הַמִּשְׁקָל, מֵאֲרִיבֵי אֲמַרְנָא וְאִסְפְּרָא
 דְּמִשְׁקָל מֵאֲרִיבֵי מִשְׁקָל אֲמַרְנָא: הַקְּדֻשָּׁה קִבְּרָא אֲמַרְנָא, הַמְּלִיכִים הַמְּלִיכִים
 הַמְּלִיכִים לְרִבְבִּי וְהַמְּלִיכִים מִלְּמַלְכִּים בְּכֹחַ-אֲמַרְנָא הַמְּלִיכִים הַמְּלִיכִים
 הַמְּלִיכִים נִימָא מִן אֲמַרְנָא הַמְּלִיכִים, אֲמַרְנָא הַמְּלִיכִים....

33. וְאֵלֶּכָּה אִתְּךָ גַּם הַיּוֹם אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ
גַּם כֵּן. וְאִין קִיאָה זְאִיר אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
הַיּוֹם גַּם הַיּוֹם אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
34. In truth, Mendelssohn's translation became the First German Reader to the ghetto youth. This knowledge of German was the avenue to the acquisition of a general European education.
35. Wessely is tremendously concerned with the ability of the Jew to engage in conversation with the — It again reflects his own background at home, where, to his father, as Purveyor, a knowledge of German was essential.
36. This is not true. For a discussion of the neglect of the Bible, v. Schapiro מְסֻבֵּה הַשְׂפָּטָה הַזֵּה p. 21-22, 25, 34, 45, 68.
37. It seems that Wessely conceives of the gift of writing poetry as a craft of versemaking. This conception is very similar to that of Hans Sachs and the Meistersinger of the 16th century in Germany. Wessely himself writes poems (Gelegenheitsgedichte) to order.
38. Joseph II did not want the Torah to be studied by means of Mendelssohn's translation and Biur, for he disliked Mendelssohn and suspected him of being a "Naturalist". (i.e. an atheist) (v. Zinberg, l.c. p. 90 Note 1)
39. בִּי אֶשֶׁר נִצְטָרָה בְּלִילָה אֶחָדָה דְּהַיּוֹם אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ
הַיּוֹם גַּם הַיּוֹם אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
Wessely refers to "Gan Na'ul" חַנּוּךְ הַיּוֹם אֲבֻלְתִּי אֲבֻלְתִּי דִּילְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִדְעוּ שֶׁנֶּחֱמָה לְפָנֶיךָ
where he speaks of the same subject.
40. Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793). His tactful dealing in the Emden-Eibeschutz controversy attracted to him the attention of the leaders of the Prague community and in 1755 he became the Rabbi of Prague. His best-known work is — -a collection of responsa.
41. Assaf מְסֻבֵּה הַשְׂפָּטָה הַזֵּה I, p. 238
42. Ibid.
43. Klausner, p. 109
44. Kerem Hemed I, p. 5-7

45. Letter III p. 3b
46. Letter II, p. 6b
47. L. Lewin, l.c. (v. Note 21 above) p. 173 and 197
48. How Wessely came to know of the Trieste Community will be told later.
49. M.G.W.J. 1870 Vol. XIX p. 478
50. Reggio, Isaac Samuel (YaShaR) Rabbi Abraham Vita, his father, supported Wessely's ideas. YaShaR was greatly influenced by Wessely. (Jew.Encycl.X, p.360)
51. I, Rivkind, in the Freidus Memorial Volume, in an article entitled "Elijah Morpurgo as Wessely's Associate in the Struggle for Enlightenment" claims with good reason that the copy made by Morpurgo of Wessely's private letter to Trieste is more accurate and complete than the Reggio and Guedemann Copies.
52. Kerem Hemed p. 7 line 10 from top ואכן קראנאס
דהם
53. ואכן קראנאס דעם
זאגט דאס וואס
האט דאס קראנאס
און דאס קראנאס
54. It is interesting to note how Graetz, Vol. XI p. 89 and 544-545, without possession of this Guedemann letter, brilliantly reconstructs the names of Wessely's opponents, and errs in identifying only one of the three. That is, Solomon Dov Berusch, Rabbi of Glogau is to be omitted from the triumvirate and Rabbi Elijah of Vilna is to be substituted instead, as the latter is mentioned by Wessely himself.
55. J. Perles: "Geschichte der Juden in Posen" p. 126
56. אדאמאטאס קראנאס
דאס קראנאס
דאס קראנאס
57. Graetz XI p. 545. Graetz reverses himself (see note 54 above) in view of new information available to him.

M. Brann believes that Rabbi Elijah does not refer to the Gaon, but to the Dayyan of Vilna, Rabbi

Elijah Sabbetai Hefetz (died 1790). This supposition is not convincing, in view of the reasoning presented.

- ואם האין דער חפץ ארצות נפש ואברו כי שאן כזר דבר
האין אן מליסא נגזר ה' אן אהיה אוכל ארצות נפש דבר
האין אן א'ל' דק הארבע אל' נר' אן דבר אנאם וחיות
נרצות אן העצה.

The rabbis see a threat to their authority. Thus R. Ezekiel and R. David Tevele speak contemptuously of Wessely, who is not a rabbi. (See also Weinryb's article *הרב זלמן וסלוצקי* in *היהודים בימי הרמב"ם*) Weinryb discusses the management of the Kehillah and the authority the rabbis exercised. This authority they saw threatened by secularism and challenged, wittingly or unwittingly, by non-rabbis, such as Mendelssohn and Wessely. The struggle for secular education was part of a general opposition of the Maskilim to the powerful grip of the Kehillah, Parnassim, and the rabbis over the individual.

66. Graetz XI p. 90
67. Jew.Encycl. VIII, p. 108
68. L. Lewin: "Geschichte der Juden in Lissa" p. 199
69. Rivkind, l.c. p. 152
70. M.Horovitz: "Frankfurter Rabbinen", Vol. IV p. 65 ff.
71. A. Walden *הרב זלמן וסלוצקי* Vol. I p. 122 No. 25
הרב זלמן וסלוצקי היה בנו של הרב זלמן וסלוצקי
היה בנו של הרב זלמן וסלוצקי
 R. Solomon Dov was the son of Rabbi Zebi Hirsch of Halberstadt.
72. "Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften" 1844 ed. IV, p. 493 and 593.
73. About him see C. Duschinsky: "The Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue" and Jew.Encycl. VIII p. 39ff. Also, see Moritz Stern: "Die Anfänge von Hirschel Löbel's Berliner Rabbinat" in "Jeschurun" Vol.17.
74. See Chapter I, page 19.
75. In order to publish a Jewish book in Berlin, one needed Rabbi Hirschel's approval. Mendelssohn, in a letter to Avigdor Levi of Glogau, dated *יום ח' סיון ת"ק* says: *באשר לא ארצה לפרסם שום ספר ללא יאן ואן חבט, כי אם*
אין פני הסכמת הרב האדמו"ר.
76. About this extremely interesting Rabbi Saul of Berlin, v. L. Ginzberg's article in Jew.Encycl. III, p. 83.
77. M. Kayserling: "Mendelssohn" p. 312

78. Graetz XI p. 90; Wessely: Third Letter p. 7a and 7b.
79. "Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften" 1844 ed. Vol.V
p. 594. Letter of Mendelssohn to David Friedländer,
dated April 17, 1782.

NOTES TO

CHAPTER THREE

WESSELY'S DEFENSE.

80. Graetz XI p. 87; Zinberg, l.c. p. 95 denies that Trieste ever wrote to Wessely.

81. It seems that Nathan Arnstein (later Baron von Arnstein) was distributing Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" for propaganda purposes.)

82. At the end of this Letter Wessely dates it כ"ה אל תקמ"ה This must be a later edition. The first edition of the second Letter appeared on י"ג אלול תקמ"ד as Wessely says in his third Letter page 5b.

83. אלה חרפתו הרבנים האלה ואם גזלו אותם שמהם, זכורו עליו דמויותיו זרים
אין ושלש חומות. בדעו! כל קהל ישראל גדלו מכתב זה באופן ה'!
שרפה את כל המורה של זה האיש. אין קלף להם אינו. כי צריך אפודת ל'
וצא. אין אחד מהם מדבר את השטות או טענה של צדקה רחוקה,
אל האמת או לעולם הזה אשר הוא נאמן את כל הפסוקים
דבור והנצחיים, אך בזה.
(Letter II, p. 5b)

- Since the Austrian rabbis could not very well openly attack Wessely, who advocated the fulfillment of the proposals of Joseph II, they asked the Polish rabbis to come out against Wessely. (Graetz XI, 88)

84. Isaiah Horowitz (c. 1565-1630) was a Talmudist and Kabbalist. He urged the study of the Bible before that of Talmud, and the study of Hebrew grammar. (v. Encycl.Jud. Vol. VIII p 226)

85. Sabbetai Sheftel published in 1649 in Amsterdam his Father's work. The Son's Homilies and Addenda go by the name of אורייתא דצופר. The many editions attest to the popularity of the book. (v. Encycl. Jud. Vol. VIII, p. 229)

86. Probably Wessely has Hanau's פני הדור in mind.

87. Later on, this method became notorious, especially in Galicia during Herz Homberg's educational reign. (v. Chapter Four, page 125)

88. All this for a seven and a half year old child!

89. Letter II p. 16b: יהיה כמגדל על אבן ואלו ממנו אלא

Wessely seems to assume that knowing automatically leads to doing, which is not the case, as has been pointed out in recent studies in education.

90. Wessely has a high opinion of travel-books, for
 דברים רבים נאמרו על אדם אחד מהם ואלו
 מהם ארבעה ספרים המהר"ה ארבעה
 (p. 18b)

91. Wessely probably has Zamosc and Maimon in mind.

92. e.g. ספר אלונים and ילדיו ביהודא, ספר יסוד אלונים
 of Delmedigo. (See Chapter I, p. 3)

93. To the 18th century rabbi, who drew nearly all his knowledge from Jewish sources, this liberal statement must have seemed bold.

94. אדם כי הקצוץ אוקראין דלמאן ודספריהם לא לאמא
 אלא לאו שתרואה עשה נא, אך אמר ארבעה ארבעה נא
 ארבעה נא ודספריהם כי ארבעה נא
 (Friedrichsfeld p. 19a)

95. And indeed, the masses sought and found amusement in the theater, in games, and flirtations. (see Weinryb's article, l.c. Note 62)

96. Wessely is concerned with correct and elegant speech. He assumes that content is there, only the form is lacking. In his emphasis on form, Wessely seems to be a forerunner of Ahad Ha-Am and D. Frischman.

97. Daniel Itzig, the father of Isaac Itzig, contributed five hundred thaler to the founding of the Berlin Freyschule. Ephraim and other prominent Berlin families also contributed. Isaac Itzig, and Daniel Friedländer, and three supervisors, observed during teaching hours and kept a watchful eye on the boys' development. All these bits of information are gleaned from the Kislev 1783 issue of the Ha-Meassef, p. 43. Other items gleaned from the same source are: at this time the school has 73 boys; the teachers are Jews and non-Jews; the principle of competition was much used. It is interesting to note that this article gives the date of the opening of the Freyschule as Rosh Hodesh Iyyar 1781. (See Chapt. IV, p. 103)

98. Wessely, Letter II p. 31; Marx & Margolis p. 591-592. Wessely exaggerates in his praise of Frederick.
99. See Chapter I p. 24.
100. These remarks about Catherine II are partly true. They take into consideration only one phase - her favorable attitude. Wessely seems to think solely of her liberal acts toward the Jews, such as giving them a share in municipal government. But he forgets her discriminatory measures against the Jews, such as the Pale of Settlement. (see S. Dubnow: "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland" Vol. I p. 307 ff. and pages 313 and 314)
101. This work of R. Menasseh's was translated in 1782 by Marcus Herz. Wessely says the work was done by a capable translator. (see C. Roth, Menasseh ben Israel, p. 264, who says that it was translated by Henrietta Herz or her husband) Mendelssohn published the work.
102. I. Rivkind, l.c.
103. *על אלה בלוד אלול חמאל שמה זק שמה ממנה החכם הסופר
נר' הר"ר [Galico] ד"ר הנדן מהר"ר אליה דר' וזמן מקראות
נר' שנגדנו אהמק מכנהו הרמלן זלמן איסלואני, וזה מקור
דבר, נולד אס וגו' דר' אסלואני אבן אבן דכס' מחור.*
104. See Wessely's Letter III p. 38b, where he narrates how R. Bassan received, by mistake, Letter I twice, and refused to express any judgment until he received Wessely's Letter II also.
- R. Bassan or Bassani, Israel Benjamin (1703-1790) Rabbi at Reggio, was a skillful poet in both Hebrew and Italian. (Lachower, in his History of Hebrew Literature, Vol. I p. 14, speaks of R. Bassan as a friend of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto.) See also Ghirondi, p. 153; and Jew. Encycl. Vol. II, p. 585.
105. The Letter is dated at the end: 9th of Iyyar, 1784.
(See also Kayserling p. 313 Note 2.)
106. Letter III p. 5b: *אמלח דה דר' קרוב קרוב, כח' זון.*

107. See Ghironi *תורת חכמים* p. 169
108. It is interesting that Rabbi Formigini believes Hebrew to be the most difficult language.
(Letter III, p. 10b)
109. The three Rabbis of Venice are: Simha Kalimani, Abraham Hayyim Karkuvia (?) and Abraham Pacifico.

About Kalimani, see Jew. Encycl. Vol. III p. 515, and Ghironi, l.c. p. 345. About Pacifico, see Ghironi, l.c. p. 147.
110. See Wessely's interesting note to this statement of R. Bassan's. (Wessely's Letter III, p. 40a) Wessely rationalizes and says that having used that statement was perhaps a good thing, since it aroused controversy and brought the issue of education to the fore.
111. The complete text of the Sermon was first published by L. Lewin, l.c.
112. Wessely stresses the importance of a knowledge of geography. Without certain geographical information, many a thing is meaningless. For example, if Philadelphia, says Wessely, should be mentioned to one devoid of a knowledge of geography, he will not know whether it is the name of a city or a person.
113. Wessely talks of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic pronunciation and says that the Sephardic is the superior one, the more pleasing to the ear. (He heard and used the Sephardic pronunciation in Amsterdam.) It would be desirable for the Ashkenazim to adopt the Sephardic pronunciation. But that being practically impossible, Wessely urges that care be exercised in pronouncing accurately (long and short vowels and accenting the proper syllable).
114. v. K. Schulmann: Sketch of Wessely's Life, which is prefaced to later editions of *תורת חכמים* (Warsaw 1886 edition)
It is difficult to find justification for Graetz' assertion XI, p. 90, that the rabbis were right in the controversy, but that Wessely won. Dr. M. Waxman's characterization in "History of Literature" III, p. 117, is more to the point. He calls Wessely's opponents, the rabbis,

"honest, but short-sighted people". This seems to be a true statement. The rabbis were refusing to reckon with the new conditions, and any change was repugnant to them.

115. The Jewish schools of Palestine found an answer. The Tarbuth schools, outside of Palestine, also offered the solution of acquiring Jewish and secular knowledge by means of the Hebrew language alone. Though they included in the curriculum, the language, history and geography of the country in which the school was established.

NOTES TO
CHAPTER FOUR
INFLUENCES

116. Encl. of Social Sciences Vol. V p. 410 ff.
117. Kayserling: "Moses Mendelssohn" p. 23 ff.
118. Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften (Leipzig ed) Vol. III p. 416.
119. David Friedländer: Moses Mendelssohn, von ihm und über ihn (Berlin 1819); quoted by I. Ritter: David Friedländer, p. 36.
120. Friedrich Paulsen: German Education Past and Present, p. 134.
121. It might be stated that von Zedlitz, Minister of Education of Frederick the Great, was a follower of Basedow. Von Zedlitz made it obligatory for Prussian universities to have lectures on the theory of education, and he established a Chair of Education at Halle for Trapp, the above-mentioned follower of Basedow.
122. Elmwood P. Cubberley: History of Education, 535.
123. Kayserling, l.c. (1862 ed.) p. 304.
124. Campe, Joachim Heinrich (1746-1818), was Basedow's successor at the Dessauer Philanthropin. Campe translated Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" and Rousseau's "Emile" into German.
125. Wessely did gain supporters for the School among the well-to-do Jewish families of Berlin.
126. This school was also discussed on page 78.
127. I. Ritter: David Friedländer p 38.
128. Wessely's 1813 and 1814 were printed by the Freyschule press.
129. Friedrich Nicolai: Berlin Vol. II, p. 699.

130. Lazarus Bendavid-philosopher, disciple of M.Mendelssohn, author of "Aufsätze verschiedenen Inhalts", in which he has an article "Ueber den Unterricht der Juden". (v.MGWJ LXI 26-50 and 176-211)

131. "Sulamith" Second Year, p. 137, where it is stated that the school is in a very precarious financial position. In the same Year, on pages 159-163, Bendavid, in a circular dated May 28, 1807, appeals for funds for the Frey-schule.

132. At the very outset of the first Letter, Wessely says:

כי אין אנו דני אצמ אבאר נפלאותן של אלה. אלה יקרא
 על פאמז אקרא ואלמר וכדז על פשני. וצדדים אחרים יקרא על
 פשני ויבדלו אל זה.

In Chapter 8 he states:

כי השם העצום בין הנפלאות והנח אלה אלה במה אחר
 וצדדים. אבל אחר העולם כפי ענינה אכסו במה.

133. Wessely's Letter II p. 17a: אמרנו: אלן ואלן

אל פדנינים בלי צדד. הענין אינו מבין מה טעמו אלה והיה
 מוקדם אמה בחימה את הנער הרק. ואל הענין נמאן קרעו
 מפחד רב. ומאז ברר אבולונו. אבל מאוולו זכרנו מביט השמר.
 אבולונו בוקאור באלף מאין באן המקום אהארוק בהן.

Wessely, Herz Homberg, and Lazarus Bendavid, and other educators of the Haskalah period, in their eagerness to spread the new type of school, exaggerated the evils of the heder. For a more objective and sympathetic account of the heder, see

א.מ. איפמיר: "החצר" (הקלפר 3)

and Louis Ginzberg: The Primary School.

Like the Philanthropinists, Wessely is in favor of the use of praise, recognition, and rewards. He believes in them as effective stimuli toward greater effort in learning. See Letter IV, p. 41b, Note.

134. Letter II p. 16b: כי צו צדד איס ואלמר, ואם לא צו אל
 חמש שאלה דמקרא ודמשנה. ואל ויבדלו צויל דמאלד צו שיהיה דמאלד
 צויל דמאלד. אלא דכל דשמה ודמאלד ודצדד חן ואלדד.

135. In Halle, at the University, von Zedlitz had established a Chair of Education. See Note 121 above.

136. See page 12 for discussion of Wessely's attitude toward Yiddish.

137. "Words of Peace and Truth" Chapt I e.g.
 אלכסנדר זקס'ן דער דערין חן וואסן זאגט.

138. Chapter 5:
 דאס איז אים געווען א גרויסע פראבלעם.
 דאס איז אים געווען א גרויסע פראבלעם.
 דאס איז אים געווען א גרויסע פראבלעם.

Wessely has great contempt for the melammedim from Poland who are slovenly in their speech. This antagonism between the German and the Eastern European Jew finds ample expression in the writings of German Jews, of the 18th, 19th and even the present century. To the Eastern European Jew "Deitch" or "Berliner" were terms employed to show contempt for some one.

139. Wessely constantly admonishes: Letter II p. 17a
 צוויי געזאגט אים האט ער געזאגט אזא יעדעס זאגט...

and Letter II p. 16b
 אזא יעדעס זאגט אים האט ער געזאגט אזא יעדעס זאגט...

As to recreation, the child is to be given time for rest and play. In fact, Wessely recommends that the teacher participate with the children in their play and thus exert a moral influence upon them.
 אים איז צו געבן זיין צייט צו רעסט און שפילן.
 אזא יעדעס זאגט אים האט ער געזאגט אזא יעדעס זאגט...

(Letter II p. 18a)

140. "Words of Peace and Truth" Letter I, end of Chapter 6.

141. Letter II p. 18a:
 אידענטיקאציע און אידענטיקאציע

In secular knowledge Wessely also sees a social value.
 אידענטיקאציע און אידענטיקאציע
 אידענטיקאציע און אידענטיקאציע

Wessely further justifies the acquisition of general knowledge as an auxiliary to a better grasp of the Jewish subjects.

142. Letter II p. 18b.

143. p. 339
 אידענטיקאציע און אידענטיקאציע

144. Thus, in Letter II p. 15b, he writes: לצורך הגמול
למקום אשר תחלה כל מה ומה דברי שלמה ואמר כן אמרנו לא חזר
המאמר בל. והנני נשאל ויבין לשון הדברי ולשון ההשקפה ולמנהג
שמה דברו שם שיהיה מקורו אל לשון. ויגיד דבר דברי והתקדש.
Mendelssohn, too, seems to have believed in the question and answer method, or catechisms. His "Phaedon" is written in that form. See "Mendelssohn als Paedagoge" by Spanier-Magdeburg.
145. For an interesting explanation of this kinship between Wessely and the Sephardim, v. Schapiro: p. 28, 206, 207 ff.
המנהג והשקפה
146. He quotes with approval from והדמיון of Sheftel Horowitz, who also passed through Amsterdam and was greatly impressed by the educational system of the Sephardim, especially by their emphasis on the Bible. See Letter II p. 14b and 15a.
147. Assaf המנהג והשקפה Vol. I p. X-XIII and p. 155.
148. G. Deutsch: Scrolls Vol. I p. 138.
149. Assaf, l.c. p. VIII
150. א.מ.א.י.פ.ד. p. 340
151. Assaf, l.c. p. XVIII
152. Assaf, l.c. p. XVIII
153. About R. Isaiah Horowitz, see page 72.
154. Assaf, l.c. p. XXI
155. Assaf, l.c. p. XXIV and 52-53.
156. Ibid. XXVI
157. "Words of Peace and Truth" Letter I Chapt. 7
158. Assaf, l.c. p. 73: כי זה לא דבר שמונים, ואצחק פורח
המנהג והשקפה, ואין אף כל שמונים, ואצחק קריאה המנהג דברי
אברהם אבינו וכו' וכו' וכו'. והסברים שמונים דבר אף והתקדש.
159. Assaf, l.c. p. 84
אמר אנו, אל קריאה מן שמונים אל שמונים

160. Ibid. p. 80
שדצאנאווינא ויש כמה דברים שאלו חז"ל האקראין מומצאם.
161. Ibid. p. 85-97
162. Ibid. p. 101: אצורק אחר אפנהקה ושרה עם כל אחד
אחז אפי שכל אמצאגא ... גם ואמצא עם האטכאיום מהטאיונים
זאג הפטאיום כזי טצטא מהא אשון הקצט, עבר, האר, עמיז, וחוז, רדום,
נאכ, נסתר, טאמיק, חסרום, כפאליס אבן כל העניא, אהדנינום. גם
ואמצא עם אצאכר החטקאן, חגור, חסור, כפא, חאק.
163. Ibid. p. 164
164. Guedemann: Quellenschriften, 195-196
165. Assaf l.c. p. 200
166. It seems that catechisms were recommended by Jews before Wessely and Homberg. But their use was probably very limited at first.
167. Guedemann: Quellenschriften p. 199 and 201; Assaf, l.c. 201-203
168. Assaf, l.c. p. 212
169. See page 115
170. Assaf, l.c. 223-224
171. J.S. Raisin: The Haskalah Movement in Russia, p. 119-121.
172. Baron: Social & Religious History of the Jews, Vol. II p. 216: "The foundation of a modern school in Berlin by Friedlaender in 1776, followed by similar institutions in Trieste, Frankfurt, Seesen, and Wolfenbüttel, can be traced to his (Wessely's) preachment".
- Max J. Kohler: Educational Reforms in Europe, in Jewish Forum, Vol. II p. 778
173. Ha-Meassef 1784 p. 133 ff. Under מכאריס
The title reads: אקרג אהצאל עם אכא דז צבר
הכרה חאק הדניס כראל.
174. האוריס הא דצורק החאק אהדניס האדיוס אצ וצירם זא כל אקג.
175. שאקרי אהדיו חכאום, צרשא אהא סכרי חכא דמינא ואשר לא אהדיו.
- Thus Locke's famous comparison of the child's

mind with a tabula rasa is expressed by the author of this letter. *דוהאט גאר אנש הנער באט זאגן.*
אטער יקרא בל הרטאגאג החראטאג גאנל.

The influence of Basedow is also evident when our author bemoans: *אזישע הינדזיק צוים אצאח קים הינן*
 Basedow recommended loosely fitting clothes.

176. The author of the letter naively urges:
קראל דספרי החנאן האגים אקחט מביהם מארה.
177. *דנחט אלאס. אלא דנחט.*
178. See page 78 and 103
179. The supervisors of the Talmud Torahs were elected at the triennial elections.
180. For details see Note 188 below
181. See page 17.
182. Moritz Stern: Jugendunterricht in der Berliner Juedischen Gemeinde während des 18. Jahrhunderts -- in Jahrbuch der Juedisch-literarischen Gesellschaft, Vol. XIX, p. 39-68.
183. Lazarus Bendavid, the Director of the Berlin Freyschule, in an article Ueber den Unterricht der Juden, in his Aufsätze verschiedenen Inhalts, tells how the teacher of Talmud considered it beneath his dignity to occupy himself with the teaching of the Bible. His assistant usually continued with the teaching of the Bible at the home of the child.
184. See page 115.
185. See page 36.
186. B. Strassburger: Geschichte der Erziehung, p. 192
187. The well-known textbook writer and educator, Peter Beer, became a teacher in the Prague school in 1811. See "Sulamith" Second Year.
188. Herz Homberg was a native of Bohemia. In Prague he was a pupil of R. Ezekiel Landau. He first learned to read German when he was a boy of eighteen.

192. Joel Loewe (1760-1802) known also as Professor Loewe and Joel Brill, was a disciple of Mendelssohn's. He tutored in the home of David Friedländer. Together with Aaron Wolfsohn-Halle he edited the Ha-Meassef in Berlin. (v. Landau: Short Lectures; Klausner; and Jewish Encycl.)
193. The Nachricht of the Wilhelmsschule which I used at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library in New York City, numbered 115209, is not paginated; nor is the name of the editor or compiler given.
194. The front page reads: "Zu einer verbesserten Unterweisung der Kinder dasiger Juden-Gemeinde".
195. The school must have been very progressive, for it even had a library and a librarian.
196. "Die Ausbildung der sinnlichen Werkzeuge und des Körpers überhaupt".
197. In the J.T.S. Library, a sheet numbered 114506.
198. Polish was indispensable to the Jewish merchant of Breslau.
199. In the J.T.S. Library, sheet numbered 114505, called Lektionsplan.
200. In the J.T.S. Library, a circular numbered 114504.
201. Nachricht von der Jüdischen Haupt-und Frey-Schule in Dessau by David Frankel (Dessau 1804)
202. Guedemann's article on Pedagogy p. 721 in Rein's Enzyklopaedisches Handbuch der Paedagogik. (2nd ed)
203. Graetz: Geschichte Vol. XI, p. 287 ff (1900 ed) Israel Jacobson had absorbed the educational ideas of the Mendelsohnian circle; and later, in accordance with his wish, the school aimed to prepare pupils for farming, manual trades and business.
204. Same source as given in Note 202 above.
205. Zunz became a teacher in the Wolfenbüttel school. He has written a biography of Ehrenberg (Braunschweig 1854). See also Leopold Zunz: "Mein erster Unterricht in Wolfenbüttel" in Jahrbuch

für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur (1936) p. 131 ff. It is interesting to note that the first German book Zunz ever read was "Philadelphia's Kunststücke".

206. v. Die jüdischen Realschulen Deutschlands bei A. Fürst in M.G.W.J. Vol. 58 p. 430 ff.
 207. Margolis and Marx: A History of the Jewish People p. 616-617
 208. v. L. Horwitz: Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte und Tätigkeit des Königlich Westphälischen Consistoriums der Israeliten zu Kassel. 1807-1815 in M.G.W.J. Vol. 53 p. 513 ff.
 209. A study of the textbooks used in Jewish schools in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries - as to point of view and organization of materials - should prove interesting and instructive. For a bibliography of Jewish pedagogic literature v. Strassburger l.c. p. 273 ff.
 210. For the number of hours devoted to the subjects, see L. Horwitz, l.c. p. 726.
 211. Festschrift Philanthropin Frankfurt am Main, 1804-1904.
 212. Ibid. p. 4
 213. It will be recalled that this rabbi had also been one of Wessely's outspoken opponents. See page 60
 214. "Sulamith" Second Year p. 136
 215. And not as Jacob S. Raisin in "The Haskalah Movement in Russia" p. 78, maintains - that it travelled from the East westward. The same author, in this same work, p. 77, tells of Mendelssohn (without giving a source for his statement) that "when he became famous and took his place among the greatest of his age, he still sought diversion and instruction among the Slavonian Jews."
 216. Julius Hessen: Die russische Regierung und die westeuropäischen Juden, in M.G.W.J. Vol. 57, p. 259
- Dr. Frank was influenced by the Mendelssohnian circle. He may have met Wessely and may have read

"Words of Peace and Truth". Dr. Frank, like many another Maskil in Russia, wished to weaken the primary position occupied by the study of Talmud in the Jewish school.

217. Joseph Perl (1773-1839) born and died in Tarnopol. After his death, his school was transformed into the Deutsch-Israelitische Hauptschule. (v.Jew.Encycl Vol. IX p. 641 and Landau: Short Lectures)
218. J.S. Raisin, l.c. p. 105. Raisin erroneously states that it was ^{היה} ^{היה} ^{היה} which found favor and was sold out in Russo-Poland. It was ^{היה}.
219. B. Goldenberg: ^{היה} (1866)
220. Ibid. p. 11
221. Ibid. Goldenberg quotes Perl: ^{היה}
222. Raisin, l.c. p. 163-164
223. Raisin, l.c. p. 173 ff
224. The name of Isaac Erter is found among the list of fifty-five young men recommended by Jost for teaching positions. Representatives of the Russian Foreign Office in Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, Vienna, and elsewhere actually made inquiries about the candidates.
225. Louis S. Greenberg: Isaac Baer Levinsohn (Columbia University Press)
226. P. Wiernik: Jew.Encycl. s.v. Haskalah, considers ^{היה} in essence an amplified ^{היה}.
227. Mr. Wiernik, in the same article, says: "Ahad Ha Am, as foremost Maskil of the end of the nineteenth century, advocates harmonization of Jewish with general culture by means of the Hebrew language; this, except for the nationalistic tendency, is in essence, the old program of Wessely and the Berlin school of Haskalah.

NOTES TOCHAPTER FIVE"SONGS OF GLORY"

1. Zeker Zaddik p. 43
2. Klausner I, p. 118
3. Wessely's reputation as a poet rests almost exclusively on the "Songs of Glory". The twenty or so "Gelegenheitsgedichte" (see page 23 ff) do not figure as being of any poetic significance. Wessely himself did not attach any great importance to them. But they have cultural and historical interest for us.

This genre of poetry was widespread in 18th century Europe and was especially popular among the Jews during the second half of that century. Particularly were these poems presented to the "enlightened and benevolent" monarchs.

Wessely's fame as a writer of these panegyrics was great. Far-away Jewish communities turned to him and "ordered" these poems. (e.g. Warsaw, Posen). In 1766-67 Wessely wrote a Song in honor of the marriage of Christian VII, King of Denmark and Norway, at the request of the Jewish Community of Copenhagen. At the request of the Jewish community of Amsterdam, Wessely composed a poem in honor of the coronation of Wilhelm V. Wessely also composed poems for Frederick II and his brother, Prince Heinrich.

The Crown Prince of Russia, Paul (son of Catherine II) visited Berlin in 1776 and received from the Berlin Jewish Community a poem of thanks. This poem was "ordered" from Wessely and Mendelssohn translated it into German. In fact, the Parnassim of the Berlin Jewish Community exempted Mendelssohn and his family from paying taxes to the Kehillah as a reward for his German translations of poems of this type. This resolution exempting Mendelssohn from paying taxes is recorded in the Berlin Kehillah Pinkas.

Dr. Chaim Borodianski, in "Yivo Historische Schriften" II(1937) p. 531 ff. arrives at the conclusion that certain anonymous poems eulogizing Catherine II of Russia had

been composed by Wessely and translated by Mendelssohn. He has reference to two poems submitted by the Shklov Community and one submitted by the Mohilev Community. Catherine II visited White Russia in 1780 and the Jewish communities honored her with poems of praise. Baruch Schick, the son of Shklov's rabbi, had connections with the Berlin Maskilim and was friendly with Wessely. Perhaps the poems submitted by the Shklov Community were ordered from Wessely through this Rabbi Baruch. Likewise, the poem presented by the Mohilev Community betrays Wessely's pen. The strophe, meter, style and content of these poems are unmistakably those of Wessely, while the German translation again seems that of Mendelssohn. Dr. Borodianski arrives at these interesting conclusions on the basis of literary analysis.

- 4.A.Kovner: Heker Dabar p. 41
5. See Note 81 to Chapter I
6. See page 24
7. Professor Hufnagel translated it into German and published it in his journal "Zeitschrift für Christenthum, Aufklärung und Menschenwohl" I, p. 466.
8. v. Ha-Meassef of Adar Aleph 1786; also page 24, this thesis.
9. v. Wessely's Introduction to Volume II, "Songs of Glory" p. 1
10. Page 165
11. Zeker Zaddik page 44. "אבני הפנינה אשר כל אחד מהם הוא הנביא ז"ל ואנו
סו' הוללים ונאמרים אל ה' אלהינו ואל כל מי שיש בו חלק
מאלה. אך אין הוא אלא שם אל זך, אלא ופרש שפי' הנה הוא
מיוחס הנה כבדו השמים זכרו. והענין הוא שכל הנה
כדע נראה בקדש מעברו וס' לך והוא, אי הנביא קולו מן הארץ ואלו
הענינים. וידע כי לא יכלו אלהם אל שם והענינים מהם האלהים
אשר בו יצר לו צמח אלה: ויחזק מעלה השם. וכל זאת כדי
קראו. אולם כאלו יאמר האל זכו, והוא בזה וזה וזה
אל אלה (אפי' צמח) אל הנביא והנביא אלהי הנה קדש
לך, ואלו אל מהי תפארת האלה."
12. See page 18 about Wessely's discourse on the Revelation.

13. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803): His "Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie" Vol. II page 78
14. Meisel page 159-160
15. Klausner I, page 118-119
16. Schapiro page 212 ff
17. Klausner I, pages 20 and 119
Lachower I, page 72; and "Rishonim ve'Aharonim" Vol. I, 20
N. Slouschz: "The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature p.35
S. Spiegel: "Hebrew Reborn" page 58
Baron: Social & Religious History of the Jews, page 217,II.
18. Delitzsch: "Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie", published 1836, p. 97: "Wessely hatte bei seiner Mosaide kein anderes Vorbild als die Psalmenparaphrase des Zantiers Abraham ha-Kohen". *
19. Klausner, l.c. page 119
20. Lachower I, page 77
21. Waxman, III, page 108 says, like Klausner and Lachower, that Wessely's work remained unfinished.
22. Volume VI was published posthumously in 1829 in Prague, by Wessely's son, Solomon, and printed by Moses Landau, the grandson of Wessely's great opponent in the controversy over education, Rabbi Ezekiel Landau.
23. In the Introduction to Volume VI Wessely speaks of "Notes" at the end of the Volume. The volume, however, does not contain Wessely's Notes. Probably Wessely did not carry out his intention, or possibly the notes were lost.
24. M. Mendelsohn (Hamburg) also makes it perfectly clear that Wessely completed his "Songs of Glory". See Note 94 to Chapter I.
25. This was also the aim of Wessely's distinguished predecessor, Moses Hayyim Luzzatto.v.S. Ginzburg: "Moses Hayyim Luzzatto".
26. v. Introduction to Volume I, the eighth reason. Wessely probably has Professor Hufnagel in mind, who actually did later translate Song I into German. See page 212.

* see page 272 of the text, Supplement I

27. Incidentally, writing poetry is a labor to Wessely. Says he: כו מלאכה רחוקה מן השירה.
28. The German subscription on the title page reads: "Die Mosaide von Hartwig Wessely." The other five Volumes have no such German title. It is quite possible that Wessely's son, Solomon, or the publisher, Moses Landau, inserted the German title to this sixth Volume. It may be that the German translations of Hufnagel and Spalding (see page 212) and of Wessely's son, Menahem Emanuel, may have borne this title "Mosaide". I cannot ascertain this, as these rare books are not available to me.

At any rate, the title "Mosaide" proves nothing as to the influence of Klopstock's "Messias" or "Messiade" upon "Songs of Glory". It merely means that the title "Mosaide" - whosoever gave it - may have been modelled after Klopstock's "Messias", which was also called "Messiade".

29. A good characterization of these lyrical Introductions is found in Waxman III, page 111-112.

30. e.g. Volume II, 51b 1773 15 קטל instead of
1773 לר קטל as in Genesis 42:7.

31. v. Delitzsch page 69 and 98; Schapiro page 210.

32. Quite often Wessely ignores the agreement of subject and verb.

"בספר השמות זכרו חסד [i.e. Poetry] III פ' במהר הלאמר ע.י.
זכורנו כל אדם צדיק הנגלה וְעַל כֵּן מִצֻּר הָאֵל"

l.c. p. IV: חלח and חלח

I 19^b: . וְהָיָה הַכֶּסֶף לְבָרְכִי : אֵלֶּיךָ יָבוֹאוּ כָּל הַמִּשְׁחָה.

בית מדרש פומאן אהרן קצנאן / זאטע: פומאן אהרן קצנאן

המחבר

VI 44b: 2/517 110

Interaktion in R: \rightarrow Handout

I Ibid. in 1867

קו/מז המצגים: פ. 16 פ. 16 המצגים

הסכום הנדרש הנכס ע"י פ.ק: טב

הדמחלקא דהאמא והמחלקא דהמחלקא
ל.ע. פ. 1:

p. 20: PIN (H) m + letter iv

" p. 30: ה'קק and p. 53 316 ה'קק

p. 58 *proleg. n. 10* and *ibid.* 10/3 p 10 n

Letter IV 32b מלך ופרך and 48b: מלך ופרך and 51a: מלך ופרך

and 63 and 64: הנה

Many more such examples can also be adduced.

Foreign Influences: 17/12/1911 II 26: 1/10/1911 II

1. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

אברהם בן יצחק

השם והחוקר בן זלמן מנחם וסלובודין 3/6 1862

כאן נאמר.

also is at times disregarded. e.g. when we

VI 59a: γ k l j γ γ l γ γ γ and l.c. 2/b: γ γ γ γ γ

And l.c. III 2a: $\mu_{\text{max}} \approx 100$. 25 126

and l.c. 27b: Γ_{10} to Γ_{10} and l.c. 60a:

כח 17/1 13/1 * 17/1 13/1

33. Waxman III, page 114.
34. It is true that the syllabic meter was first employed by the great Luzzatto, but not consistently. In some of his poems, Luzzatto still employs the medieval Spanish-Arabic meter.
35. Dr. S. Ginzburg: "Life and Works of Luzzatto" p. 118-119, states, not without justice, that "By simplifying Hebrew versification, Luzzatto set Hebrew poetry free of the shackles of medieval meter, thus paving the way for Naphtali Herz Wessely, author of the epic "Shire Tif'eret", famous for the naturalness and ease of its style more than for anything else. Wessely drops even the rime, using it only in his preludes to the different parts of his epic; and of all rules of versification, he leaves only that of an equal number of vowels in each line".
36. Wessely gives the root **פ3ג** a meaning different from the accepted one. See Note I to Volume I of "Songs of Glory".

NOTES TO
CHAPTER SIX
EMPLOYMENT AND INTERPRETATION
OF
BIBLICAL AND MIDRASHIC PASSAGES

37. Translation taken from Waxman's History of Jewish Literature III, page 88.
38. Here Wessely seems to follow a Midrash. "According to an unknown Midrash quoted by numerous authors, these words *וְהָיָה כְּמִי וְאֵלֹהִים כְּמִי* signify: 'As thou art to Me, so shall I be to thee', i.e. God deals with man according to his merits". Ginzberg, Legends V, 421, Note 128.
39. Wessely, the Maskil, cannot refrain, on this occasion, from calling Zipporah "a woman of good understanding". The Midrash calls her nimble as a bird. (v. Ginzberg, Legends II, p. 328)
40. Ibn Ezra also says: *וְהָיָה כְּמִי וְאֵלֹהִים כְּמִי* Ibn Ezra quotes R. Samuel, who takes *כְּמִי* (at his feet) to refer to the feet of Eliezer. *
41. Rashi quotes R. Jose's reason, which is opposed to his own.
42. In Song VIII page 3b Wessely indicates that he realizes that the wicked, the heretics, who consider themselves all-knowing, will assert that it is all chance, and not God's design.
43. cp. Driver, Exodus, Cambridge Bible, page 42 ".... The idea of Might for Shaddai does suit the context in many passages in which the name occurs; but whether 'Almighty' is its real meaning is more than we can say, neither tradition nor philology throwing any certain light upon it, and all suggested explanations of it.....being open to objection of one kind or another".

* see page 272 of text, Supplement II

44. As Wessely puts it in Note 3 Song XI page 12a:

"והזכר אלהים המסר הנצח בזה של יצא ויבא אלהי הדור רבם ונצח מלך."

45. "והוא פלא דפני עולם שהיה לו מלקוח עמך דהא דדור."

46. "והוא שיהיה בוקר העולם אשר עשה האל על גוף ומכונתו דהא
אלהים"

47. בוקר על אלה אשר ושחור

על דגים אשר תאכלוהם וצא.

48. Klausner page 126

49. v. Ginzberg, Legends II, 328 ff.

50. Klonitzky-Kline: "Ozar Taamei Hazal" p. 262 Note 8

51. l.c. page 261 Par. 30, 31

52. J.P.S. translation - "swarm of flies". Wessely, like the Midrash, takes צר to mean "medley of animals and crawling creatures".

53. Klonitzky-Kline, l.c. 265, Par. 58

54. v. Ginzberg, Legends II, page 347

55. v. l.c. III, page 44

56. v. l.c. II, page 354

57. v. l.c. II, page 302

58. v. l.c. II, 337-9

59. v. l.c. II, page 339

60. v. l.c. II, page 332

61. v. l.c. II, page 335

62. Klonitzky-Kline l.c. 262-263; Ginzberg, Legends, II, 343, 346, 349-351.

63. v. Ginzberg, Legends II, 350

64. Klonitzky-Kline p. 265, Par. 61, 62, 63

65. l.c. 265, Par. 66

- 66. l.c. 266, Par. 74
- 67. l.c. 267, Par. 81
- 68. l.c. 312, Par. 134 ff.
- 69. Ginzberg, Legends III, 63-64
- 70. Lachower's statement (I, page 72) that Wessely held aloof from Midrashic material is not true.

Nor is Landau's contention (p. 71) that Wessely "made full use of rabbinical legends". These two positions are equally exaggerated.
- 71. Klausner I, page 125
- 72. J.L. Landau, Short Lectures 1938 ed. page 71, advances a doubtful but interesting explanation for Wessely's obvious failure to be more free and inventive. Says Landau: "He was not permitted to invent freely. He had to guard himself against the reproach of profanation. His fanatic opponents lay in wait, examining closely every word he wrote or uttered, to espy a new opportunity for a renewed and more vehement attack".

NOTES TO
CHAPTER SEVEN
THE LITERARY EFFECT OF
"SONGS OF GLORY"

הספר היקר המטנה שמו תבארה, מדמי וני הרב המפורסם הגאון
הגדול מלח היהודי וזל נרד. ומה האלט משכיל אוצד ספר אשר לא ירפאל. 73.
אם הספר הנחמד הזה? כי כמאלו לא היה מן הוואס אשר גאל
ושראל מלח ארצלם אנחתמל ספרי תנ"ך! אקאמר במלך כאל חכמי הדמים
אם הספר הזה בן תמהל אונטאל חלר המחדר היקר הזה במאלר
איהאל מלח גלדריס.

74. Isaac Euchel (v. Zinberg VII, p. 244 Note 3)
75. Wessely replied to the criticism made by the Ha-Messef reviewer in the Notes to the German translation of the "Songs of Glory". (v. Meisel, page 167) This German translation is a rare book and I have been unable to obtain it.
76. Meisel page 167
77. About Michael Berr, v. Landau 1938 ed. of Short Lectures; also Note 89 in Biographical Section on page 10 of these Notes, and page 29 of text.
78. Friedrichsfeld page 43 does not give the year of publication.
79. The grandson of Ezekiel Landau, Wessely's opponent in the controversy over education. See page 55 ff.
80. More about Ben-Zeeb, on page 226 ff.

81. מלחם שלח אל קרנצל גרנצקד
! כלח אלחיום מנחצח צל טורי קרנצקד
גלדי צלן אלח אלח קלן אלחיום קרנצח!

82. כוללם שני הורבאנל מל פולטל הספרדים והאשכנזים כאחד,
לחום אנחלום הם מלח, אמצברים מלחל מלחום אמלחם הקאלח
אנפאלחל מל קנלם מלח חקר, צל בי ימדט מלח היום קל
מלכנל מלח און מלכ קני ימקד אלח אשר צלחל ערק
שורחל היקריום.

83. Delitzsch "Poesie" page 98 and 99
84. As a boy, Luzzatto attended the Talmud Torah of Trieste, which had been founded largely through Wessely's influence. See page 69.
85. „אשכנז בן שורק בארץ . איז תימנה טעם כי אצחק זקן ,
ואליו הנהגה גדולה , ומהך עילון על כל מהלכי אשכנז
ובאלוין , גם על רנה' , אשר גאמר מאלים זמן עצומה
בן אלהים קריאה מאד ופלאיר אשכנז' אלגאר ל'צ' ו'ו' p.374
86. Vilna 1895 page 200 ff. The first edition of Hacoheh's Songs appeared in Leipzig in 1842.
87. ישראלי - יהודה אשכנזי - דער פערטער :
יערי-נעים נחמה , יערי , געפאלער .
פה דערדערדיג פערטער אשכנזי ,
נעים - קצמאי תורה דעה ו'טעם פאר יערי .
88. Kovner: "Heker Dabar" page 41
89. In MGWJ 1917 page 306, Mannheimer (Sept. 11, 1829) says: "Ferner ist erschienen 6 Teil oder Gesang von אשכנזי Aut. ו'ו' ; mir gefaelt dieselbe Erzählung in der Bibel viel besser - poetischer ist sie gewiss."
90. I.M. Jost, "Geschichte der Israeliten" Vol. 9, p.84 Berlin 1828
91. His brochure is entitled: אגרת גער דעם חיים - אהרן
דברים נבואים אל אהרן העלויים הנסנים המהלים כרים ספרותא ו'ו'
מאת אברהם דוד הכהן גאסטאכאנדל (מורה נבוכים דבר
מצוטט הרבנים ד'טע אמונה) 1868 .
92. Pene Tebel 138-139
93. J.L. Landau, Short Lectures 1938 ed. page 63
94. Klausner Vol. I, page 128, ff.
95. Zinberg: "History of the Jewish Literature" Vol. 7 Book 1, page 244, Vilno, 1936.
96. „אין זיין צוק די ביידע באשטאנד איז פאקטיש אז אונט=געבוירן
דאשעפעניש."

97. C.N. Shapiro: "The History of Modern Hebrew Literature" page 246.
98. In ~~the~~ Ha-Meassef of 1809 Hacoheh's Elegy on Wessely's Death appeared, entitled מחנה אצל נביא
99. Concerning Heidenheim, v. Jew. Enc. VI, p. 319-320
100. Hacoheh used the term shir tif'eret quite frequently. In fact, since the appearance of Wessely's epic, shir tif'eret became a generic term for an epic in Hebrew.
101. Landau p. 132 (1938 ed) and Waxman III page 155, entitle the work "Ner David" instead of "Nir David". This is an error. The title of the poem is נור דוד
102. Delitzsch: "Juedische Poesie" page 99
103. Lachower: "History of Modern Hebrew Literature" I, 76 and 146
104. Part I, consisting of 7 Cantos, was published in Prague in 1816.
105. Lachower I, page 118.
106. "ואם אמת ודבר, כי קצרה וזו אצלה וזו חלד העלמה הזאת ולבוא
אלה בראי, וחסד דבירה וחלמה מעלה וזו אלן חלד חדרים ממש,
עם כל זה לא נשקל חלד, גלגל קצרה ראש משורי זמנא
דחל מחיר טורי תפלה, אצלה גלגל צמח תכניר קולא דקדואה
מעלה הוקר מכל כלי חמה."
C.N. Shapiro: "The History of Modern Hebrew Literature" page 523.
107. Only Part I appeared in print, Vienna 1814. The full title reads: נשמוס מני חור קצם הנשמוס
באצמח המערה.
108. C.N. Shapiro page 511-512, 516, 521.
109. v. Delitzsch page 107.
110. Landau: "Short Lectures" 1938 ed. page 86-87.
111. Klausner I, page 170
112. Graetz: "Geschichte der Juden" XI, page 219, 1900 ed

Professor Landau sees also the influence of Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen on this historical drama. (Short

Lectures page 87). Shapiro, page 452, flatly contradicts this.

113. Samuel Joseph Funn, in "Keneseth Yisrael", ^{what volume?} page 392, gives 1768 as the year of Ben Zeeb's birth.
114. Bialik in ^{כא כהנא ח.נ.ד.} Tel-Aviv 1938 page 230 says: (without complete justification) "אין ..."
 אין המרחק האמיתי, הפסיכולוגי-הרוחני, בחינתו, בלשון, זא
 חמאס וזא קרובא, זאן הצאח מרביה גממחם ..."
 E. Steinman in ^{הספוא המניח המצאח} Tel-Aviv 1936 makes totally unfair and bitter statements regarding Wessely. His violent prejudices do not merit repetition here.
115. B.Halper: "Post-Biblical Hebrew Literature" p. 197 - 202.

NOTES TO
CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Graetz: Geschichte der Juden Vol.XI p. 83 1900 ed.
2. Dohm, Christian Wilhelm (1751-1820) was the spokesman for the emancipation of the Jews. He is the author of the very influential "Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden" (2 vols. Berlin 1781-83) This work was written at the request of M.Mendelssohn.
3. Graetz: l.c. p. 89
4. "Words of Peace and Truth" was also translated into French and Dutch. The late Dr. Siegmund Seeligmann of Amsterdam has shown this Dutch translation to Dr. Jacob Shatzky, who told me about it.
5. "Words of Peace and Truth" Fourth Letter, page 52a.
6. v. Simon Ginzburg: "Life and Works of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto".
7. Slouschz: "Renaissance of Hebrew Literature" p. 17;
Bar-Tubiah: "The Beginning of Our Modern Literature",
in ha-Shiloah Vol. XVI (Hebrew);
Bialik: "Ha-Bahur mi-Padua" (in "Works of Bialik",
Book II, p. 307)
Lachower: "History of Modern Hebrew Literature", I,
page VI, 45, 103, etc.
8. S. Ginzburg: "Life and Works of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto"
page 103
9. Baron, "Social and Religious History of the Jews",
II, page 212.
10. Klausner: "History of Modern Hebrew Literature", I,
pages 1 to 4.
11. It was published in Leipzig, by Franz Delitzsch and
Max Letteris.
12. Klausner is not correct in giving 1781 as the year
in which "Words of Peace and Truth" appeared. (l.c.
p. 3)

13. Dr. C.N. Shapiro begins modern Hebrew literature with the appearance of the Ha-Meassef in 1783. According to this ever-interesting historian of modern Hebrew literature, there is no one founder of modern Hebrew literature, just as there is no single originator of the Haskalah Movement. He accords this honor to the Meassefim group. (Shapiro: "History of Modern Hebrew Literature" page 58)

Dr. Shapiro's reasoning is not convincing. He asserts that Wessely's "Words of Peace and Truth" (which is publicistic in character) cannot be considered as opening Haskalah literature, which was a belles-lettres literature. This is simply not correct. The pages of Ha-Meassef themselves, which contain a great deal of publicistic subject matter, disprove Dr. Shapiro's statement.

14. Klausner's reasoning is followed by Kleinmann and Waxman. v. Kleinmann: "Demuyot ve-Komot" p. 13 & 28
Waxman: "History of Jewish Literature"
Vol. 3, p. 88 and 107.

15. Graetz, l.c. page 85.

16. Translation from Landau: "Short Lectures" 1938 ed.
page 68.

17. Landau, l.c. page 95.

18. Delitzsch: "Poesie" page 97.

19. S.J. Rapoport: "The Remnant of Judah" in Bikkure Ha-Ittim, 1827 p. 184.

20. הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

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הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

21. הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

הנהגה נא להעתיק
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הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

הנהגה נא להעתיק
הנהגה נא להעתיק

22. "Songs of Glory", Song I, 4b.
23. Landau, l.c. page 68 and 69 says: "I have personally known in my native country aged men of letters who were able to recite Wessely's poems, and even his six-volumed epic, by heart. They were as proud of that feat as of their profound knowledge of the Bible! It would seem, then, that not only the reader of Wessely's day, but men of subsequent generations, took real pleasure in Wessely's poetry."
24. Lachower, l.c. page 76.
25. Perhaps the very name, Reuel רֵעוּל (friend of God) hints at Gotthold (Beloved of God) Lessing.
(v. Shapiro, l.c. page 223)
26. "Songs of Glory" Vol. I, page 29b and 30b.
27. ... אֵלֶּיךָ מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה יִשְׁמָעֵל ...
l.c. II Satb. שִׁשְׁלֵשׁ צִדְרֵי אֱלֹהִים מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל
28. Eichhorn: "Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in das Alte Testament" (Leipzig, 1783)
29. ... וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל צִדְרֵי אֱלֹהִים מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל ...
הַפְּלִיאָה הַגְּדוֹלָה בְּמִלְחָמָהּ אֶת מִצְרָיִם שֶׁלֹּא יָדָעוּ
אֶת־הַיְּהוָה וְהַפְּלִיאָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת ... וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל
מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל
וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל
וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל וְהָיָה הַשֵּׁם הַגָּדוֹל מִצִּיּוֹן אֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׁמָעֵל
30. "Songs of Glory", II, 20b line 2.
31. These Anti-Maskilim are different from their counterparts in the Eastern Haskalah, the well-known "Rebels Against Light", who opposed secularism, but could not be (and were not) accused by Galician and Russian Maskilim of atheism, skepticism or irreligiosity. In the Eastern Haskalah, the Anti-Maskilim are charged with fanaticism, narrow-mindedness, wickedness, hypocrisy, but not with atheism or godlessness. Wessely's Anti-Maskilim in "Songs of Glory" are to be identified with the skeptics and heretics of 18th century Europe.

posite. Then, too, the Hebrew of the Haskalah literature is not without the influence of the European languages. (Delitzsch p.69,98;Shapiro 210)

39. Graetz, Delitzsch, S.D. Luzzatto, Klausner, and Landau all emphasize Wessely's piety, sincerity, loftiness of character, and enthusiasm for the good, the true and the beautiful.
40. Delitzsch: "Poesie" p. 96 says that Wessely did not know a classical language.
41. Meisel, l.c. page 75.
42. Graetz, l.c. page 90
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.

32. "Songs of Glory" Opening of Song XVI, p. 26.
33. e.g. Vol. III, 60a ff.
34. Wessely undoubtedly had in mind the Deists of the 17th and 18th centuries, and men like Hobbes, Hume, and the Encyclopedists, who had done so much to undermine the power of tradition and the authority of religion.

Wessely was a believer in "Enlightenment" and "Reason". In his "Words of Peace and Truth" he entered the struggle for progress and reform. But even in those Four Epistles, he makes it clear that he is a firm believer in traditions, piety, and religious observance. In "Songs of Glory" that is reinforced. Wessely's lack of sympathy with the irreligiosity and skepticism of the age is evident.

35. Mendelssohn's Gesammelte Schriften, Jubilaeumsausgabe, Vol. XVI p.

Other scholars, too, have expressed high opinion of Wessely's Hebrew style. R. Bassan, after reading "Words of Peace and Truth" is impressed with Wessely's lucid Hebrew style. (v. page 87) Jawetz, who is extremely critical of the Berlin Haskalah, and its exponents, has high praise for Wessely's style. (v. his article *המחשבה והשפה* in *אורח חיים* ed. by S.P. Rabinowitz, Vol. I 1886) M. Mendelssohn (Hamburg) in his *Pene Tebel* p.138 declares: *השפה העברית של וסלי*

Shapiro (l.c. p.210) says: *השפה העברית של וסלי היא אחת מהנאות*

36. Waxman: "History of Jewish Literature" p. 111
37. Klausner: "History of Modern Hebrew Literature" p. 128
38. There are some scholars who say that the Berlin Haskalah, because of its emphasis upon Biblical Hebrew, retarded the development of the Hebrew language. (Bernfeld, S. "Die neue hebräische Litteratur" in JJGL III, 1900 p. 167 ff. and S. Ginzburg: "Life and Works of M.H. Luzzatto" p. 121) It is not quite true that the Berlin Haskalah employed Biblical Hebrew exclusively. In the imaginative writings of the Haskalah literature there is indeed a harking back to Biblical themes, style and vocabulary. But in its speculative writings, the language is synthetic, com-