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# Between Two Poles: Barukh Mitrani between Moderate Haskalah and Jewish Nationalism

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## Abstract

Barukh Mitrani was an Ottoman *maskil* who wandered between the Balkans, Istanbul and Palestine. While living in Edirne, Mitrani established his first periodical, *Carmi* (Pressburg 1881). *Carmi's* issues were an ongoing maskilic sermon, drawing on a deep acquaintance with the Jewish bookshelf. This paper examines selections from the fifth article in *Carmi*, 'Our Nationhood.' Influenced by the moderate Haskalah, Mitrani idealized a 'Golden Mean,' which sought to balance the agendas of 'the two poles': insular Ultra-Orthodox Jews on the one hand, and secularized 'Westernizers' on the other. Mitrani also espoused a Jewish nationalism which had affinities with the Hebrew 'republic of letters' and the national resurgence in the Balkans. He perceived every Jew as part of three circles: the individual, the family, and the nation. Yet his nationalism was not separatist; he obliged Jews to remain loyal Ottoman citizens and promote the Sultanate while also settling in Palestine.

## Keywords

Ottoman Empire – Haskalah – Jewish nationalism – Zionism – sermons – Jewish journalism

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Haskalah movement appeared in Berlin in the second half of the 18th century. The maskilim considered themselves responsible for an unprecedented negotiation of modernity, which entailed a rethinking of ‘traditional’ society in light of the values of the Enlightenment.<sup>2</sup>

During the Tanzimat (1839–1876) and Hamidian (1876–1908) eras, which were characterized by administrative, legal, economic, and technological attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire and to secure its territorial integrity against internal nationalist movements and imperial encroachment from without, a new Ottoman maskilic center developed in the southern Balkans and Western Anatolia, with a provincial annex in Jerusalem. In many respects, this center represented a continuation of the intellectual development of Ottoman Jewry over the preceding 350 years.<sup>3</sup> Around one hundred maskilim were active in the Ottoman Empire, but three were particularly prominent: Judah Nehama of Salonica (1825–1899), Abraham Danon (1857–1925), who was active in Edirne, Istanbul, and Paris, and the hero of this present article, Barukh Mitrani (1847–1919).<sup>4</sup>

Mitrani was born in Kırk Kilise in eastern Thrace, in the European part of the Ottoman Empire (today Kırklareli, Turkey). This city is situated some 200 kilometers from Istanbul, the capital of the empire, and around 65 kilometers from Edirne, a multiethnic city that served as a gate to Central Europe and became an important maskilic center from the 1850s. Mitrani was born to a provincial offshoot of a prestigious rabbinical family, and over his lifetime he moved between some fifteen cities in Anatolia and the Balkans, serving intermittently as teacher, rabbi, and preacher. In the 1880s and 1890s, he twice traveled to Jerusalem, but each time was forced to return after a few years due to

1 I am indebted to *Zutot*'s reviewers, and to Prof. Yaron Ben-Naeh, Prof. Eyal Ginio, and Or Pitusi for their valuable advice.

2 S. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Jerusalem 2010) esp. 29–30 [Hebrew]; D. Sorokin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton 2008).

3 O. Borovaya, *The Beginnings of Ladino Literature: Moses Almosnino and His Readers* (Bloomington IN 2017).

4 J.P. Cohen and S. Abrevaya Stein, ‘Sephardic Scholarly Worlds: Toward a Novel Geography of Modern Jewish History,’ *JQR* 100, no. 3 (2010) 349–384; T. Karkason, ‘The Ottoman-Jewish Haskalah (Enlightenment), 1839–1908: A Transformation in the Jewish Communities of Western Anatolia, the Southern Balkans and Jerusalem’ (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2018) [Hebrew].

difficulties making a living. Toward the end of his life, he returned to Edirne and shut himself off in his home, bitter and disillusioned.<sup>5</sup>

Between the 1860s and 1890s, Mitrani published a wide range of material in Ladino and Hebrew, including hundreds of articles in Hebrew-language newspapers based in Europe and Palestine, such as *Ha-Magid*, *Ivri anochi*, and *Havatzet*. The vast majority of the readership of these newspapers were Ashkenazic Jews, and Mitrani considered himself an unofficial spokesman for the Ladino-speaking Jewish communities of the Balkans and Asia Minor. He sought to acquaint his readers with the lives of the Ottoman Jews,<sup>6</sup> the educational and cultural changes that were occurring among them, and their internal power struggles.<sup>7</sup>

Mitrani longed to publish his own periodical devoted to the Ottoman Sephardim, explaining that '*Ha-Magid* was not created solely for us.'<sup>8</sup> He attributed the delays he encountered in realizing this ambition primarily to his position as a Sephardic Jew living on the edge of Europe, far from the main centers of the Jewish world. Referring to himself by the acronym 'Banim,' he commented: 'The man Banim was by nature born (had he found himself in the enlightened lands of Europe) to be the editor of his own journal, so that he could consistently present his thoughts for the benefit of his people and homeland.'<sup>9</sup> Mitrani finally managed to publish the monthly *Carmi* (1881), which was redacted in Edirne but printed in Pressburg in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (today Bratislava, Slovakia), in a model that itself reflected the contacts between neighboring cultures and empires.

*Carmi* appeared in a bilingual format, with Hebrew text on the top half of each page and Ladino text below. The content in both languages was similar, but the Ladino equivalent of a Hebrew text is around 30 percent longer. Accordingly, Mitrani was obliged to abridge the Ladino versions, often by omitting quotes from the Jewish sources. The positioning of the Hebrew text above the Ladino reflects a perception concerning the spiritual and cultural superiority of Hebrew over the Judeo-Spanish vernacular.

5 On Mitrani, see, for instance A. Rodrigue, 'Jewish Enlightenment and Nationalism in the Ottoman Balkans: Barukh Mitrani in Edirne in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,' in M. Greene, ed., *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton 2005) 129–143; M. Studemund-Halévy, 'Ivri, Daber Ivrit! Baruch Mitrani, a Turkish Sefardic Maskil in Vienna,' *Transversal* 13, no. 2 (2012) 9–39.

6 Mitrani generally confined the term 'Sephardic Jews' to the Ladino speakers of the Balkans and Anatolia, and did not include other groups. See, for example B. Mitrani, 'Parte literaria,' *Carmi sheli* 1, no. 1 (1891) 7.

7 Karkason, 'The Ottoman-Jewish *Haskalah*,' 24, 81–87.

8 B. Mitrani, 'Ha-Yehudim ha-Sefaradim!,' *Ha-Magid*, June 6, 1880, 188.

9 [B. Mitrani], 'Divrei Banim,' *Havazelet*, May 16, 1873, 104.

*Carmi* had the character of a Ladino sermon presented in installments, reflecting Mitrani's profound familiarity with the Jewish bookshelf – the Bible, Talmud, Medieval Jewish philosophy, maskilic literature, and so forth. Mitrani's ongoing sermon in *Carmi* focused on two distinct themes: (1) A 'golden mean' approach, reflecting Mitrani's moderate maskilic approach, including his observance of the religious commandments; (2) Jewish nationalism.

Mitrani's version of the 'golden mean' encompassed a maskilic conceptual platform for Jewish existence in the modern world, while his perception of Jewish nationalism was an ideological approach that transformed Jewish ethnic solidarity into national solidarity, and sought to settle Palestine, on the fringes of the Ottoman Empire. Not all the maskilim adhered to a nationalist approach,<sup>10</sup> but from the 1870s onwards, the two ideologies became intertwined in the case of Mitrani and some other maskilim. This will be apparent, for example, in the extracts presented below from the fifth article in the sermon in *Carmi*, entitled 'Our Nationhood' (*Le'umiyutenu*).

The first subject of the sermon in *Carmi* is the golden mean tenet, of which Mitrani became the most prominent advocate within the Ottoman Haskalah. Like many of their peers in Europe and North Africa, the moderate maskilim of the Ottoman Empire

shaped their worldview through a contest with the "poles" in Jewish society: Orthodoxy on one side and radical Enlightenment on the other. They adopted a self-image of "moderate maskilim" based on a synthetic and harmonistic approach to questions of religion and society.<sup>11</sup>

Mitrani explains that the golden mean lies between what he referred to as 'the two extreme poles' (*shtei ha-keztavot ha-rehoqot*). In various places, he referred to one of these poles by means of the term *Hasidim* (not in the sense of the well-known Hasidic movement, but perhaps influenced by this meaning). He used this term to refer to the members of the Ottoman rabbinical elite who rejected secular studies, the learning of foreign languages or Hebrew grammar, and the acquisition of crafts. The term he used for the opposing pole was *mistakelim*, a neologism formed from the same root as Haskalah and maskilim. According to Mitrani, the *mistakelim* were the radical enlighteners who had undergone processes of secularization, rejected the observance of the commandments to a

10 Indeed some maskilim, such as David Fresco (1853–1933), gradually became overtly anti-Zionist.

11 Feiner, *Jewish Enlightenment*, 164. On the 'moderate Haskalah,' see *ibid.*, 150–230. On the 'radical Haskalah,' see *ibid.*, 231–278.

lesser or greater degree, distanced themselves from the perception of the Jews as a distinct nation, turned their backs on the Hebrew language, and showed a preference for Western European culture over Jewish culture.

Throughout his life, Mitrani distanced himself from both these poles, advocating a golden mean that does not reject modernity and external wisdom, but equally maintains what he referred to as ‘the value of their faith and religion and all the splendor of their nationhood and their valuable and essential virtues.’

The second theme in the sermon is Jewish nationalism. Mitrani argued that the Jewish people meet the ‘six sources of nationhood’: family, history, language, spirit, land, and Torah; he referred to these jointly by the Hebrew six-letter acronym *meqasher et*, which means ‘bonding.’ I have not been able to find any earlier use of this term in this context, and it appears to be an innovation on Mitrani’s part. Four of the six sources are similar to those in primordial nationalist thought: history, language, territory, and the Herderian concept of ‘national spirit’ (*volksgeist*).

Regarding the concept of family, in his ongoing sermon in *Carmi* Mitrani depicted each individual in terms of three concentric circles: self, family, and nation. In this context, and like many nationalists of his time, he regarded the Jewish nation as a type of extended family.<sup>12</sup> Regarding Torah, Mitrani, as a believing and observant Jew, argued that no separation could be made between Jewish nationalism and the Jewish religion.

Like other Ottoman maskilim, Mitrani was an admirer of two of the earliest forerunners of Zionism: Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874) from Thorn in Western Prussia (today Toruń, Poland) and Rabbi Judah Alkalai (1798–1878) from Semlin (today Zemun, Serbia), a suburb of Belgrade (the capital of the Serbian principality), on the fringes of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>13</sup> Mitrani regarded Alkalai as ‘the first member of our generation who has awoken and inspired his fellows from all corners of the earth with a wonderful awakening and tremendous excitement’ regarding the Jewish nationalist cause.<sup>14</sup> In the sermon under discussion here, Mitrani quoted the writings of both rabbis in support of his position that ‘only in the Land of our ancestral inheritance will the House of Israel be put right both politically and morally.’

12 B. Mitrani, ‘Ha-Mishpaha,’ *Carmi* 1–2 (1881) 11–15, 17–26.

13 J. Katz, ‘The Forerunners of Zionism,’ in J. Reinharz and A. Shapira, eds., *Essential Papers on Zionism* (New York 1996) 33–46.

14 Ben Zion [B. Mitrani], ‘Prazot Yerushalayim,’ *Havatzelet*, December 7, 1883, 46.

Like Alkalai, Mitrani's nationalism did not have a separatist character. He argued that the Jews should continue to be loyal Ottoman citizens, contributing to development and progress in the empire:

All of the House of Israel raise our eyes to the Lord and to the grace of our lord the King, the merciful Sultan [Abdul Hamid II] [...], that he might act wondrously (*yafli la'asot*) with us, for our salvation and the redemption of our souls, and permit us to settle our ancestral homeland, over which the Lord has made him King [...], and to settle the capital of our inheritance, Jerusalem, which is sacred to us all...<sup>15</sup>

As a Jewish nationalist who was utterly loyal to the Ottoman Empire, Mitrani was similar to other non-Muslim Ottoman intellectuals of the time, including Greeks and Bulgarians, who advocated the realization of their particular nationhood within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, and not in a separate political entity.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, even if Mitrani emphasized that it was the Jewish God who had anointed the Sultan king over the Holy Land, his position was simultaneously a particularistic Jewish one and one thoroughly integrated in the Ottoman context in which he acted.

The fusion of Haskalah and nationalism – which, as noted, was the hallmark of Mitrani's worldview that was not necessarily shared by all his fellow maskilim – is reflected in diverse ways in the sermon presented below. By way of example, his quest for the golden mean led him to encourage scholars from both the poles he referred to 'to attempt always to preach to the people concerning the six bonds of our nation.' Mitrani opposed those *mistakelim* who advocated religious reforms, declaring that once the entire Jewish people would be gathered in the Land of Israel 'as an entire nation dwelling truly in a true homeland,' it would be possible to establish a new Sanhedrin that would introduce legitimate religious reforms. By adopting this position, Mitrani sought to bridge, at least in part, the gulf between his approach and that of those *mistakelim* who advocated religious reform without waiting for the establishment of a Sanhedrin.

The age of the nation-state militated against the survival of approaches that saw no conflict between particularistic national identity – Jewish, in our

15 Ibid., February 17, 1884, 126. For two additional examples of this common theme in the discourse, see B. Mitrani, 'Masa Turkiya ha-Eiropit,' *Ha-Magid*, April 17, 1867, 124; A. Rosanes, 'Masa'ot ha-Abir,' *Ha-Magid*, July 1, 1868, 204.

16 E. Kofos, 'Patriarch Joachim III (1878–1884) and the Irredentist Policy of the Greek State,' *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4.2 (1986) 107–120; İ. Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca, NY 2014) 53–60, 164–168.

instance – and imperial identity – Ottoman, in this case. This historical change is one of the reasons why Mitrani has been marginalized within the sites of collective memory. I hope that the first publication in English of excerpts from his article *Le'umiyutenu* may help restore him to these sites.

### Our Nationhood<sup>17</sup>

Barukh Mitrani

[...] The definition of nationhood varies from one people to another. Nationhood may depend on: (a) The origins of its homeland (*moledet mishpahto*); (b) The history of its ancestors; (c) The homeland of its forefathers [...]; (d) Its spirit, which is its strength, qualities, and mental capacities; (e) Its language; (f) Its Torah and faith. So that the national unity of one nation may stem from its unity in one of the above-mentioned sources of nationhood alone, or in two or more thereof, and some nations are unified in all of them jointly. For example, the ancient nations adhered solely to the harness of their religion (*be-mosrot datam*); the medieval nations to the shackles of their kingdom; and the nations of our times to their land – and so forth with the other harnesses of nationhood.

It is only natural that just as the stronger the connections that bind the different organs of the body, the more difficult it will be to separate them, so too is the case with a nation that includes many separate individuals. Accordingly, the nations that have many national connections will survive for many years, while those with few national connections will easily be divided and lost. All the ancient nations dissolved because they had few connections and were lost, while the medieval nations exchanged their nationhood like clothing [...].

In modern times, however, peoples have understood the need to increase the connections of their nationhood so that they may survive to the last generation. Accordingly, each people today, however small it may be in each of the sources of its national connections, is strengthening itself. And this is well-known and requires no proof, having extended to large and small peoples in our times.<sup>18</sup>

17 B. Mitrani, 'Le'umiyutenu,' *Carmi* 4 (1881) 49–61. Trans. S. Vardi. All the footnotes and comments in square parentheses are mine (T.K.). I removed Mitrani's emphases for ease of reading. I do not intend to list in the footnotes below all the biblical sources mentioned by Mitrani, but rather to point out some of the most prominent of these sources. An earlier version of Mitrani's article, in an annotated edition, was already published in Hebrew: T. Karkason, 'An Ottoman *Maskil* in the "Golden Mean": Barukh Mitrani and his Article "Our Nationhood," *Ha-Shiloah* 10 (2018) 156–171 [Hebrew].

18 The text was written just a few years after the Ottoman-Russian War (1877–1878), following which several Balkan nations received independence, or at least autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

As for our nation, the people of the Children of Israel, it adheres to all six sources of nationhood. We may refer to these by the acronym '*meqasher et*,' representing the [Hebrew] words: family, history, language, spirit, land, Torah. And who does not know that our nation is bound by all these six national connections? They are what stood firm for our ancestors and for us, for in every generation they rise against us to annihilate us, and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand through them. So that if we were deprived of some of these sources, would they be able to deprive us of them all? Even if they removed their existence from among us, they would be unable to remove their memory from our hearts. And we always maintained a little of our national connections in practice, and all of them in potential, and so we all remain alive and standing to this day.

The connection of family unity has always been a firm, mighty, and tremendous law by us that is not to be transgressed. And in our history and our present, we have all always been brothers in good times and bad [...]. And by adhering to our language, which is sacred to us, we have always been saved by the Lord's will and salvation, as our Sages said: 'Our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt because they did not change our language.' And we are familiar with the complaint of the Prophets in the time of the Babylonian exile that half the ordinary people spoke *Ashdodit* or the language of one of the other peoples (Nehemiah 13:24). But the Prophets and the Sages in general continued to speak and preserve the Hebrew language, as witnessed by their books, writings, and poems, through each generation and down to the present day [...].

• • •

Our people has contracted a grave disease [...], and accordingly I, too, shall girdle myself [...] and offer my opinion concerning the remedy for our people, as follows:

[...] Our maskilim should not loosen the leash by presenting research works in faith and religious criticism to the young folk (*tzeirei ha-tzon*) and the simple reading masses (*hamon ha-qore'im ha-pshutim*); for in so doing they will act very wrongly and present a major obstacle to those with limited intellect (*ivery eini ha-sekhel*). For only true faith and righteous following of the Torah are the medicines of life for both body and soul [...]. And if the scholars of the old generation should not persecute our brethren by imposing obstacles to the faith of the heart or insisting on every minor custom, so the scholars of the new generation should recognize and appreciate the great righteousness of the faith of the heart, and the honesty of the actions of the Torah and commandments, which are equal to all the research and science in the world and indeed greater and more sublime [...].



The scholars from both these poles must come together in a single group in complete love and discuss how to act wisely, so that although they differ a little in their opinions, nevertheless all will be equal in action. So the people may know what way it should follow and the action it should perform from all its teachers and scholars together [...].

Next, they<sup>19</sup> must always attempt to preach to the people concerning the six bonds of our nationhood, as mentioned above, so that they may hold on to these firmly [...]. And they must invigorate education for the children in both the old and the new schools, for it is in a poor state in general: in the former<sup>20</sup> because they lack the order of grammar, the use of language, and pedagogy; and in the latter<sup>21</sup> because they have enthroned an alien homeland above the 'barren woman become the mother of the sons!'<sup>22</sup> [...]

Anyone who acknowledges the truth has recognized [...] that those who adhere to these two distant poles have left many victims, and the blood of these victims cries out from the ground.<sup>23</sup> The reason is that in the early stage, when the desire for Haskalah and research (*ha-mehqar*) arose among our people,<sup>24</sup> the opponents [of the maskilim] forgot, or did not know, that research is a positive desire, and like all the positive desires God gave to man – only if he does not act in it in due measure, in time and limits, will it seriously harm him. But if they act in due measure, such desires will be highly beneficial.

Moreover, such matters must be given their natural and just social role [...], for education in languages and in scholarly wisdoms (*hokhmot limudiot*) relating to value of crafts that preserve the life of those that have them (Ecclesiastes 7),<sup>25</sup> such as the disciplines of arithmetic, geography, nature, and craftsmanship are essential for the human [...] [.]

After all, almost all our ancient Sages, Geonim, and Rabbis, of blessed memory, knew and employed these disciplines in their holy and sublime books. The masters of the Torah in our times<sup>26</sup> as the demand for Haskalah arose among us, failed to remember this, and as a result mercilessly persecuted the first scholars who spoke out in its name<sup>27</sup> and innocently sought to plant it among us. And thus a fire of dispute broke out between them (*naseqa esh merivah*

19 The scholars from both poles.

20 The traditional *Talmudei Torah*.

21 The modern schools.

22 Compare Psalms 113:9.

23 Compare Genesis 4:10.

24 Since the Berlin Haskalah.

25 See in particular Ecclesiastes 7:11–12.

26 The Ultra-Orthodox.

27 The Berlin maskilim and their successors.

*beineiheim*)<sup>28</sup> and the early scholars who demanded Haskalah, and this fire consumed our camp<sup>29</sup> so that the people was divided into two and distanced itself very much from the path of those who truly and justly sought to awaken it [...].

Those who wakened to Haskalah took this demand for enlightenment to its ultimate degree, to the point that they violated the law and went far beyond the goal of those who had awoken them. These awakeners failed to recognize that they would be like a blind man whose physician steals all that is valuable in their home while their eyes are closed, and by the time their eyes were cured and they could see – they found nothing to see. These *mistakelim* failed to see how the new seekers of enlightenment had taken from them all the value of their faith and religion and all the splendor of their nationhood and their valuable and essential virtues; and by the time they felt their pain and attempted to stop the evil [...], they had fallen and were unable to rise!

I do not seek here to discuss the history of the development of the Haskalah in Turkey: this is not the place for such a discussion,<sup>30</sup> and moreover in terms of the obstacle posed by the hatred of true Haskalah (*sin'at ha-haskalah ha-amitit*), and the zealotry of false Haskalah (*kin'at ha-haskalah ha-kozevet*), our brethren in all lands are similar [...].

[...] So we conclude that here in our exile, and in these wild times, this is neither the time nor the place to relax or to intensify any of the aspects of our faith and religion! This is a fateful matter for our nation! And according to the approach of the true and elevated sage Rival [...],<sup>31</sup> anyone who changes any coinage introduced by our ancestors in this exile shall surely lose out! Only when we the nation as a whole is planted in our own soil, as an entire nation dwelling truly in a true homeland – only then will the heads of the Sanhedrin, wise in all the Torah and wisdoms (Sanhedrin 17), be able to enact the regulations required to reform the religious and political (*ha-medini*) world, as our elders, the heads of the Sages did before when they illuminated the candle of our nationhood (*be-hilu ner le'umiyutenu*) over our heads as understood by the Sages of our Torah [...].

[Appeal to the radical enlighteners]: So today we urge our great and wise writers: let go! Let go of your free criticism (*bikoret hofshit*), lest it become a sword that smites<sup>32</sup> the young of Israel and the masses in their ways. For only a wise, old man who has gained true wisdom can select the wheat from your

28 Psalms 77:21.

29 Compare Numbers 11:1.

30 See Karkason, 'The Ottoman-Jewish Haskalah,' 61, 81–87, 289–292.

31 Rabbi Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788–1860), one of the most prominent maskilim in the Russian Empire.

32 Deuteronomy 13:15.

chaff [...]. Speak in the language of wisdom to the wise who know which of your words to accept and which to reject! [...]

[Appeal to the 'Hasidim']: And to our Rabbis, we say – please, do not any longer persecute those who seek true enlightenment. For those who persecute lovers of wisdom in faith, even if they read from the books of the nations, commit a sin. And open your eyes concerning those who seek false enlightenment<sup>33</sup> for there is death in their pot of enlightenment. And it is right and very necessary to distance the youth from all works of criticism of faith and religion, wherever possible, until they have gained wisdom, grown older, and are ready for this! [...]

And as for the wise men from both poles<sup>34</sup> – they bear an obligation to awake the people's heart to the hope of redemption, including by natural means and peacefully, internally and externally. For only in the Land of our ancestral inheritance will the House of Israel be put right both politically and morally (*ba-medini u-musari*)! [...] Oh ye hypocrites (*mithasedim*)! The Holy Torah and the Sages said the opposite of all your words! (And see the books *Derishat Tzion*<sup>35</sup> and *Me'orer* [sic] '*anavim*<sup>36</sup> by Rabbi Z.H. Kalischer and *HaReAL*.)<sup>37</sup> Oh ye *mistakelim* and cosmopolitanizers (*mitqosmopolitim*) – your own critical works point to the choice of our ancestral Land; why then do you head for distant America?!<sup>38</sup>

This is the goal we have pursued in our periodical (*mikhtavenu*): that it be known that those who adhere to both these poles are in error (*yishgu*), and lead our brethren into error (*yashgu*) so that they do not even recognize what they have lost and cannot save themselves [...]. All those from the one pole<sup>39</sup> have taught us to walk in the path of superstition and hatred of wisdom and the knowledge of essential crafts, and [have taught us matters] such as sorcery and such like (*mi-kishufim u-zulatam*); and now those from the other pole<sup>40</sup> would teach us terrible and dreadful heresies.

Pull yourselves together, for our situation is awful and terrible, and we are deeply concerned about our future material and moral condition! And we lift our eyes only to our Holy Lord that he might imbue us with a pure heart and renew a ready spirit (*ruah nakhon*) among us!

33 The radical enlighteners.

34 Ultra-Orthodoxy on the one side and maskilic radicalism on the other.

35 Kalischer's book (Lyck 1862).

36 The correct title is *Me'oded 'anavim* (Rabbi Judah Alkalai, Vienna 1864).

37 Rabbi Judah Alkalai.

38 The comments were written in the early stages of great Jewish migration to the United States.

39 The 'Hasidim.'

40 The '*mistakelim*.'