

GREAT PERSONALITIES

RAV YA'AKOV EMDEN (1697-1776)

'קנאי בן קנאי'¹

בית כנסת הנשיא

A] BIOGRAPHY

- 1676 Shabbatai Tzvi died an apostate but his movement was kept alive by Nathan of Gaza, and then beyond Nathan's death in 1680.
- 1696 Born in Altona, then in Denmark, son of the Chacham Tzvi.
- 1700s Studied until age 17 with his father in Altona and then Amsterdam. He was a prolific writer, Talmudist and kabbalist.
- 1715 Married the daughter of the Rav of Brod, Moravia and studied at his father-in-law's yeshiva. As well as Talmud, he also studied kabbala, philosophy, Latin and Dutch.
- 1718 His father and mother died in close succession. He became a jewelry dealer and declined to take a rabbinic post.
- 1728 Was pressed to accept the position of Rabbi of Emden. Served in Emden for 4 years which he describes very positively.
- 1733 Returned to Altona where he owned a private synagogue. His relations with many of the successors to his father were strained.
- 1730s Obtained permission from the King of Denmark to establish a private printing press in Altona and went on to print his famous **Siddur**. He received some opposition to the siddur which contains his own extensive notes and essays.
- 1740s He waged a war in life against neo-Sabbateans and their 'practical kabbala' - Rav Emden thought that kabbala should again be restricted to the mature talmudist as of old.
He joined in the opposition of the young **Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato** - see below.
One of his most controversial arguments was with **Rav Yonatan Eibenschutz** whom he regarded as a definite Sabbatean - see below.
- 1751 R' Eibenschutz was appointed Chief Rabbi of Altona/Hamburg/Wandsbeck - Kehillat Ah'u.
- 1750s R' Emden was called upon to launch a new effort repressing Sabbatean waves in the Jewish world. He undertook a controversial analysis of the Zohar which was often quoted by Sabbateans - see below.
- 1772 R' Emden had a personal connection with Moses Mendelsohn and early haskala figures. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin issued a decree forbidding burial on the day of death. The local Jewish community approached R. Ya'akov Emden to influence the Duke from Talmudic sources. He referred them to Moses Mendelsohn (1729-1786) who actually agreed with the Duke! R. Emden wrote back to Mendelsohn urging him to oppose the Duke, if only to removed suspicion by others of Mendelsohn's irreligiosity!
- 1776 Rav Emden died in Altona on a Friday afternoon. He was quickly buried before Shabbat in an already opened grave, which was in fact only a few spaces away from Rav Eibenschutz.



Rav Ya'akov Emden



The Jewish cemetery in Altona
where R' Emden and R' Eibenschutz are buried

1. A phrase from Sanhedrin 82b, which R. Emden uses about himself.

B] TORAH WRITINGS

Over 30 books covering every area of Judaism:

- **Edut be-Ya'akov** on the alleged heresy of Rav Eibeschutz and various other works associated with his views and experience of the affair
- **Shevirat Luchot Ha'aven** refuting R' Eibeschutz
- **Mitpachat Sefarim** setting out his views on the Zohar
- **Iggeret Purim**
- **Zikkaron be-Sefer** on money-changers and bankers
- **Lechem Shamayim** a commentary on the Mishnah
- **She'elat Ya'avetz** a collection of 372 responsa
- **Siddur Ya'avetz** with a commentary, grammatical notes, ritual laws, and various treatises
- **Etz Avot** commentary to Avot
- **Commentary on Seder Olam Rabbah ve-Zuta**
- **Mor Uktziah** novellæ on Shulchan Aruch
- **Megillat Sefer** a detailed and fascinating autobiography.² - see below

His unpublished rabbinical writings included the following:

- **Gal-Ed** commentary to Rashi and to the Targum of the Chumash
- **Em laBinah** commentary to the whole Tanach
- **Em laMikra V'laMasoret** commentary to the Tanach
- **Chidushim on Shas**

1. He was intensely curious about all forms of general knowledge including history, geography, science, astronom, nature, medicine, other religions and foreign languages. His works contain references to surgery, alchemy, shooting stars, crocodiles, opium, the game of chess, a microscope, volcano, magnet, solar eclipse, cannon and hot water bottle. He had some familiarity with Greek and Italian and quoted Aristotle, Avicenna, Jesus and even Confucius. In his halacha works he discussed such diverse topics as: the nature of sound, the importance of sleep and exercise, the process of making vinegar, how to pull a tooth, the width of the Jordan River, the pleasures and physical as well as psychological benefits of sex (he claimed that it can be a cure for insanity), why it is the head of a baby which emerges first from the womb, the importance of perspiration, why fire rises, the relative merits of various laxatives, how wine is prepared along the Rhine River, different types of tools and soaps, the direction in which goldenrod grow, and more. Unfettered by the discipline of a formal yeshiva background, his intellectual curiosity knew no bounds.

Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works, R. Jacob J Schacter unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard 1988

C] CONTROVERSIAL POSITIONS**C1] BAN ON R' MOSHE CHAIM LUZZATO**

- 1707 R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato born in the Jewish Ghetto in Padua, Italy.
- 1720s Received a classical Jewish and Italian education, become expert very quickly in Tanach, Talmud and also non-Jewish arts, literature and sciences. Due to his incredible charisma, he attracted many students and followers even as a teenager. His grasp of Hebrew and linguistic style was remarkable and innovative.
- 1721 Aged 14 was said to have mastered the kabbala of the Arizal.
- 1724 Joined a small group of mystics called the 'Mevakshei Hashem' who learned Zohar in rotation around the clock.
- 1727 Began to receive lessons from a maggid and became more immersed in mysticism and kabbala, writing thousands of pages of mysticism revealed by the maggid and ultimately by a gilui Eliyahu.
- 1729 His mystical developed attracted many. One of his students - Yekusiel Gordon of Vilna published a letter describing his heavenly teacher and the practical kabbala he imparted, as well as the 'new Zohar' that Ramchal was composing. His description includes the following:-

2. For further reading on this see - History and Memory of Self: The Autobiography of R. Jacob Emden, R. Jacob J. Schacter, Jewish History and Jewish Memory, Brandeis University Press p428.

2. *"There is here a holy man, my master and teacher, the holy lamp, the lamp of God, his honor Rabbi Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. For these past two and a half years a "maggid" has been revealed to him, a holy and tremendous angel who reveals wondrous mysteries to him... With the approval of the Holy One, blessed be He and His Shechina, the Maggid ordered him to compose a Book of the Zohar, called in Heaven "The Second Zohar" The angel speaks out of his mouth but we, his disciples, hear nothing. The angel begins to reveal to him great mysteries. Then my master orders Elijah to come to him and he comes to impart mysteries of his own. Sometimes Metatron, the great prince [and angel], also comes to him as well as the Faithful Shepherd [Moses], the patriarch Abraham, Rabbi Hamnuna the Elder, and That Old Man and sometimes King Messiah and Adam... To sum up, nothing is hidden from him. At first permission was only granted to reveal to him the mysteries of the Torah but now all things are revealed to him. But no one outside our circle knows of it As he has demonstrated to all, no one before him has had this kind of merit since the time of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai"*

This raised very significant concerns with Rav Moshe Hagiz (known for hunting down of Sabbateans) who campaigned against him. Ramchal was also opposed by the religious establishment of Padua which was still very conscious of the Shabbatai Tzvi disaster only 60 years earlier and nervous of a young unmarried man who was receiving a maggid. The Ramchal was threatened with excommunication but was able to come to an accommodation with the authorities. His letter tell of his pain at the persecution he received.

- 1730 He agreed not to engage in some kabbalist activities whilst outside Eretz Yisrael and not to publish his works without rabbinic approval. He also surrendered his thousands of manuscripts of kabbala the authorities - they were never seen again.
- 1735 He left Italy and was humiliated by the leaders of Frankfurt-am-Main who made him sign a document that all of the teachings of his maggid were false. He was also forced to take an oath that he would abandon further study and practice of the kabbala until he was 40 (he died at 39). Many of his writings were buried, others burned.
- 1735 Visited Altona (home of Rav Ya'akov Emden) and then moved to Amsterdam and took up work as a lens grinder and diamond polisher.
- 1740s R' Ya'akov Emden lead the public opposition of the Ramchal who remained in Amsterdam. In addition to his famous sefarim, the Ramchal also wrote poetry and plays. He did not wear regular rabbinic clothing or have a beard!
- 1743 Became Rosh Yeshiva in Amsterdam.
- 1743 Moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Tiveria.
- 1746 Died aged 39 from plague together with his family and was buried next to the grave of Rabbi Akiva.
- 1750s R' Ya'akov Emden later regretted his campaign against the Ramchal, stating:-

3. *"I am willing to accept truth from any source, even if it be from the smallest of the small, and if the only sin of the Ramchal was in revealing secrets told him by a heavenly voice, may my share be like his share and the mere fact that he was yet so young and not married [while learning kabbala] is a slight transgression on his part Nevertheless, no intentional persecution was brought upon him"*

- late 1700s After his death, the Ramchal was recognized as a great genius. The Vilna Gaon declared that if Ramchal was still alive, he would have traveled to Italy on foot to learn from his wisdom. The Maggid of Mezritch said:
"His generation did not merit this great man.... Many among our people, through lack of knowledge, have uttered on this saintly man calumny that was not justified."
- 1800s The Ramchal was adopted as a hero figure by Hassidut (who saw him as a tzaddik and mekubal), the Mitnagdim (who saw him as a ba'al mussar and in particular Rav Yisrael Salanter who adopted Mesillat Yesharim as the central text of the Mussar Movement) and the Haskala (who saw him as a revolutionary literist who blended the Jewish and secular Italian genres).

C2] BAN ON R' YONATAN EIBESCHUTZ

1690 Born in Poland and studied in Prossnitz and Holleschau
 1710s Married and lived in Hamburg.
 Settled in Prague and became head of the Yeshiva. Held very high esteem, second only to the Dayan.
 1724 First suspect of being a Sabbatean, while still in Prague.
 1725 He got up on Yom Kippur to denounce the Sabbateans and was among the Prague Rabbis who placed the Sabbateans in cherem, but he remained suspect by some. The majority of Rabbis in Poland, Moravia and Bohemia found the accusation to be 'utterly incredible'.
 1736 Appointed Dayan of Prague, but not Chief Rabbi.
 1741 Became Rabbi of Metz and was known as a Ba'al Shem and kabbalistic master.
 1750 Elected Rabbi of Altona~Hamburg~Wandsbeck - Kehillat Ah'u. A large number of women died during childbirth over the previous years and R. Eibeschutz was frequently approached to write protective amulets³. Rumors began to circulate that these amulets had Sabbatean leanings. Private letters were exchanged warning people of the new Chief Rabbi's possible Sabbatean tendencies. R. Eibeschutz dismissed this is a rehash of the claims made against him in the 1720s.
 The Ah'u community decided to monitor the amulets. They consulted with R' Emden who agreed that certain wording was Sabbatean. R. Eibeschutz first claimed that the wording meant something else, then claimed that he did not know what it meant as it was copied from another kabbalist, then he denied writing them.



Tue Feb 2 1751 R. Emden attended a meeting with the Representative Council of Ah'u. A second meeting was called for the Thursday. It never happened!

Thurs Feb 4 R. Emden announced in his Shul that an amulet prepared by R. Eibeschutz and which he had examined, was Sabbatean and that R. Eibeschutz should be excommunicated.

Fri Feb 5 Many in the community, including the leadership reacted with horror and supported R. Eibeschutz. An announcement was made that R. Emden's Shul must be closed down (he had received a special licence from the kehilla in 1733 to run the shul).

February The next week the community decreed that no one could have personal contact with R. Emden for 4 weeks and the public were banned from attending his shul. His right (which he had under licence from the Danish King) to run a printing press was 'revoked' and he was also forbidden to publish anything further on the matter. He was ordered to leave the community within 6 months. R. Emden rejected all of this and was placed under house arrest.



R' Emden recruited the support of **R. Yehoshua Falk** (the Pnei Yehoshua), **R. Shmuel Hillman** (Chief Rabbi of Metz) and **R. Aryeh Leib**, Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam.

Rav Eibeschutz also recruited many great Rabbis to support him, including the **Nodeh B'Yehuda** and the **Vilna Gaon**. As a consequence of the controversy with R' Eibeschutz.

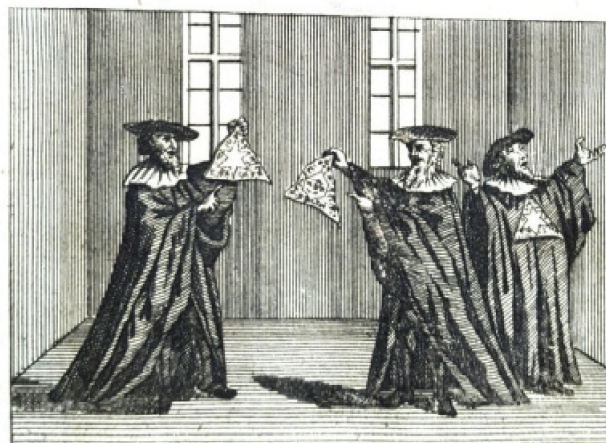
Feb 21 R. Eibeschutz delivered a major sermon denouncing Sabbanteanism and denying his involvement.

March 17 The amulets in questions were copied and notarized by Jewish officials in Metz.⁴

3. For more information see New Evidence On the Emden -Eibeschutz Controversy: The Amulets from Metz, Rabbi Sid Z. Leiman-Simon Scharzfuchs, Revue des Etudes juives 165 (1-2) pp 229-249, available at http://leimanlibrary.com/texts_of_publications/95.%20New%20Evidence%20on%20the%20Emden-Eibeschutz%20Controversy%20The%20Amulets%20from%20Metz.pdf

4. The original amulets were lost but the notarized copies were recently rediscovered.

- May 22 Realizing that his life was in danger, R' Emden was forced to flee to Amsterdam, leaving his wife and family behind.
- 1752 King Fredrick V of Denmark took up R. Emden's cause and judged in his favour, severely criticizing the community of Altona. R. Emden was allowed to return to his Shul and his printing press, but forbidden to continue his war against R. Eibeschutz.⁵
- However, the Eibeschutz camp continued to accuse him of publishing and his house was broken into on Friday night and papers seized to hand over to the government. In the end he was cleared of all charges. Local police were called to deal with Jewish disturbances, local non-Jewish newspapers ran the stories and violence spilled over into the marketplace, fairs, cemetery, synagogues, private homes and even into onto the floor of the Hamburg stock exchange (Bourse)!
- Cherems flew in all directions as the Rabbis of Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Italy, Hungary, Holland, France, Turkey, Lithuania, Ukraine and Eretz Yisrael got involved.
- The Hamburg government banned any more discussion of the amulets and suspended R' Eibeschutz. At his stage he was defended by Carl Anton, a former student of R' Eibeschutz who had subsequently converted to Christianity!
- 1756 Rav Eibeschutz was returned to his post as Rav of Altona and the dispute died down for a time.
- 1760 The quarrel flared up again when some of the students in R' Eibeschutz's yeshiva were discovered to be Sabbateans. At the same time his son, Wolf, declared himself to be a Sabbatean prophet and became close to Frankist circles. The yeshiva was closed down.
- 1764 Rav Eibeschutz died. In the final verdict the Jewish world concluded that he was NOT a Sabbatean and his numerous works are an important part of Torah literature.



Rabba

Some commentators feels that this terrible quarrel contributed in some way to a gradual lessening in the faith ordinary people had in Rabbanim. As part of a general anti-clericism of the 18C and move towards agnosticism and atheism, this may have sown one of the seeds of the coming wave of Reform and Haskala. It was also an Age of Revolution - America (1776) and French (1789). R' Ya'akov Emden died just weeks before the American declaration of independence.

C3] VIEWS ON THE ZOHAR

R' Emden looked closely into the Zohar since this was often cited as a source by Sabbateans. In his sefer Mitpachat Sefarim he takes the view that Zohar is not entirely from the writings of R. Shimon bar Yochai⁶

4. ואני אומר מבואר הדבר למי שרגיל בספר הזוהר שהרשב"י לא כתב כל הדברים שבו, אך כלול ובלול הוא מכמה חבורים שחוברו בזמן הגאונים ובדור שאחריהם (ואולי בימי רבנו סבוראי חובר הספר הקדוש ההוא) כמעט אין לי ספק בדבר זה. וגם יש לידע שהכניסו בתוכו דברים הרבה שאינם מגוף הספר כלל, רק הגהות מאחרונים מאד והמה רבו כמו רבו, ואוכל להכריח ולהוכיח זה בס"ד במופתים חותכים וחברתי ספר לזה קראתיו מטפחת ספרים

מור וקציעה כה

- The Chida bitterly criticized R' Ya'akov Emden for this approach to the Zohar and practically accused him of heresy.
- However, the Chatam Sofer came to the support of the Ya'avetz, calling him a Navi!

5. R' Emden is brutal in his criticism of R' Eibeschutz, accusing him in a number of places of using Torah material to wipe himself in the bathroom and claiming to have received such reports from reliable witnesses!

6. See an audio shiur on this by Rabbi Wein at <http://www.mywesternwall.net/2015/04/23/rabbi-berel-wein-how-authentic-is-the-zohar.html>

C4] VIEWS ON PHILOSOPHY AND THE MOREH NEVUCHIM

R' Emden was very opposed⁷ to the study philosophy and felt that this had destroyed Jewish communities over the centuries.

5. This was the very peg upon which evil was fixed throughout the entire period of the Second Commonwealth whose turbulence did not rest from beginning to end. From it sprouted all the opposing sects, who rivalled one another and were the cause of the war (against Rome). Indeed, it was the accursed Greek wisdom which was the cause of our trouble, that destroyed the Temple and despoiled the Land of Israel. It was this that caused the dispersion of Jerusalem that was in Sefarad (Ovadia 1:20) to be expelled and uprooted from the country of Spain where they had been on a very high level of wealth and wisdom. (They remained so) until their hearts became arrogant to exchange the honor of their distinguished, rich and pleasant Torah, which gave birth to them, for the harlot, naked maidservant which is philosophy.

Amudei Shamayim 249a

6. (Philosophy is) abhorrent unto God. . . malignant leprosy is in his right hand, a sword for great carnage that presses (Ezekiel 21:19). In her left hand are stored death and destruction.

Sha'arei Shamayim 77a

7. It is with justification that our Sages already prevented the study of higgayon, as I have written on occasion in EI and in Ir Elohit, for it is very, very dangerous. Please note that the two great masters, R. Abraham ibn Ezra and Maimonides, could not stand up against it with all the strength of their wisdom. They were not protected from the sword in its hand. For in their fleeing and escaping from the trap of anthropomorphism with all their strength, they utilized instruments of the study of philosophical logic. They became ensnared in the trap of the fowler (Psalms 91 :3) of the eternity of the world into which stumbled and fell many fools who did not understand their (i.e. Ibn Ezra's and Maimonides') words and advice for (in truth) their intention was for good, for they were imbued with a different spirit. However, in the generation that came after them, they took their words literally and rejected the Torah in its entirety. This became for them a snare and an obstacle, a stumbling block for the household of Israel.

Bircat Migdal Oz 23a

8. Maimonides was responsible for an obstacle (for Jews) for he left over a stumbling stone for generations, the Guide of the Perplexed, as is well known. . . . However, as for me, I do not think so, as I have revealed my opinion. This is not the work of the great author among the Jews but of one of the philosophers of his generation. . . . Since he benefitted the masses (with his work, the Yad ha-Hazakah (written) by him), for this reason I cannot believe that he was responsible for the aforementioned sinful striking stone. [After all], he accomplished good for Israel with several books of his talmudic works in which he strengthened the pillars of the faith. Therefore, he is remembered for good and for a blessing for eternity while the lawless wicked ones who make of the book Guide of the Perplexed an ax to cut off the branches of the Torah and mizvot, to chop down the roots of Prophecy and Providence, will be to everlasting abhorrence - (Daniel 12:2). The name of the wicked shall rot (Proverbs 10:7). May God save us from them and from any part of them.

Mishne Lechem 48b-49a on Avot 2:14

9. It is therefore impossible to ascribe the book, Guide of the Perplexed, to Maimonides who was himself meritorious and who brought merit to so many. For, "whoever leads many to righteousness shall not be the cause of sin." There is no doubt in the world that this obstacle of the book, Guide of the Perplexed, misled many from (a proper understanding of) the Torah. Who knows how many hundreds and thousands left the faith because of this? It is the direct cause of the destruction of many great and mighty Jewish communities and their total eradication from the lands of Spain and France. . . . Had there been found in the book, Guide of the Perplexed, nothing other than this alone, namely, the reason for the sacrifices that it contains, it is enough to condemn it to be burned.

Mitpachat Sefarim 61-62

7. See - Rabbi Jacob Emden, Philosophy, And the Authority of Maimonides, R. Jacob J. Schacter, Tradition 27:4 p131 - available at <http://traditionarchive.org/news/originals/Volume%2027/No.%204/Rabbi%20Jacob%20Emden.pdf>. The translated passages in this section are from that article.

10. It is certainly our duty to be involved in judging Maimonides favorably, as we have done in many places in our works. . . . For he was certainly a pillar and wellspring of the diaspora in his generation. To this day we drink from his waters. He illuminated our eyes to understand) many fundamental laws and fine ethical teachings. He also spoke beautifully regarding many matters of faith. . . . See, his reward is with him; his recompense before him (Isaiah 40:10; 62:11) for he strengthened the hands of the weak, those weary from the exile, who, in his days, were persecuted by the heretics and licentious ones who pressured them. It is they who impelled him to study philosophy in order to know how to respond to the heretic. I declare with regard to him, "Great is a sin (committed) for His Name's sake." His entire intention was for the sake of Heaven. . . .
- In truth, regarding the book, Guide of the Perplexed, I state once and for all: God forbid that I should believe that this great author, faithful to his God, who worked and struggled so assiduously to understand the minutiae of mizvot, in all their details and conditions, . . . that this obstacle would emerge from his hand, to provide an opening and an opportunity for heretics to prevail (and) to think that the ritual of the Temple service and the active meticulous fulfillment of the mizvot are nonsense, God forbid. . . . For it is impossible to bring into agreement the words of these two works together, as it is clear to an expert in them. (R. Emden goes on to contrast the dangerous Guide with the "holy Yad".)

Mitpahat Sefarim 64-65

C5] VIEWS ON CHRISTIANITY

R' Emden wrote a treatise on Christianity named Seder Olam Rabbah VeZuta.

11. Certainly, therefore, there is no doubt that one who seeks truth will agree with our thesis, that the Nazarene and his Apostles never meant to abolish the Torah of Moses from one who was born a Jew. Likewise did Paul write in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7) that each should adhere to the faith in which each was called. They therefore acted in accordance with the Torah by forbidding circumcision to Gentiles, according to the Halakha, as it is forbidden to one who does not accept the yoke of the commandments. They knew that it would be too difficult for the Gentiles to observe the Torah of Moses. They therefore forbade them to circumcise, and it would suffice that they observe the Seven Noahide Commandments, as commanded upon them through the Halakha from Moses at Sinai.

It is therefore a habitual saying of mine that the Nazarene brought about a double kindness in the world. On the one hand, he strengthened the Torah of Moses majestically, as mentioned earlier, and not one of our Sages spoke out more emphatically concerning the immutability of the Torah. And on the other hand, he did much good for the Gentiles (provided they do not turn about his intent as they please, as some foolish ones have done) by doing away with idolatry and removing the images from their midst. He obligated them with the Seven Commandments so that they should not be as the beasts of the field. He also bestowed upon them ethical ways, and in this respect he was much more stringent with them than the Torah of Moses, as is well-known. This in itself was most proper, as it is the correct way to acquire ethical practices, as the philosopher (Maimonides) mentioned. We have written similarly in our Siddur. However, it is not necessary to impose upon Jews such extreme ethical practices, since they have been obligated to the yoke of Torah, which weakens the strength of the (evil) inclination without it. They have taken the oath at Sinai and are already trained in proper practice and nature. These are clear words that will not be rejected by a clear-thinking person.

If certain Christians who consider themselves scholars would understand this secret, who believe that they are commanded to abolish the Torah of Moses from the seed of Israel, they would not engage in such foolishness. The people listen to their self-conceived words, something which was never intended by the writers of the Gospels. Quite the opposite, they have written clearly that they intended the contrary.

Because of these errant scholars, hatred has increased toward the Jews who are blameless of any guilt and proceed innocently to observe their Torah with all their heart, imbued with the fear of God. They should instead bring their people to love the ancient Children of Israel who remain loyal to their God, as indeed commanded to Christians by their original teachers.

You, members of the Christian faith, how good and pleasant it might be if you will observe that which was commanded to you by your first teachers; how wonderful is your share if you will assist the Jews in the observance of their Torah. You will truly receive reward as if you had fulfilled it yourselves - for the one who helps others to observe is greater than one who observes but does not help others to do so - even though you only observe the Seven Commandments.

Seder Olam Rabba VeZuta⁸

8. The translation was taken from <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/falk1a.html> and must be checked against the original.

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C6] VIEWS ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

- In Shu't Ya'avetz 2:15⁹. R' Emden addresses the issue of the Pilegish (concubine) and writes that:
 - The status of Pilegish is not in principle prohibited today, even for regular people.
 - The cherm of Rabbeinu Gershom not to have a second wife an improper measure and a stumbling block. It was influenced by the moral norms of Asheknazi Europe and is Chukat HaGoy. It was not accepted in most communities and anyway expired in the year 5000 (1240 CE).
 - Pilegish - which must be monogamous and fully observe the laws of taharat hamishpacha - is an appropriate measure to avoid sexual promiscuity, preserve sexual morality and promote having more children.
 - He fully analyses the positions of the Rambam, Ra'avad, Radvaz and Rivash and disagrees with them. However, he writes that one should not rely on his ruling without the agreement of other halachic authorities.

Almost all halachic authorities disagreed with R. Emden

- In the Leil Shabbat section of his Siddur he explains and expands in great detail on the mitzva of sexual relations between husband and wife on Shabbat

C7] MEGILLAT SEFER

- A large section at the beginning deals with his father's life.
- When dealing with his own life, his account is often shockingly unrestrained, dealing with:
 - his personal illnesses in graphic detail.
 - his love of a young woman whom his family would not allow him to marry.
 - the strains on his marriage and his rocky relationships with his father-in-law.
 - the sexual temptations he had from a forward young cousin¹⁰.
 - vilification of R. Yechezkel Katzenellenbogen¹¹, chief Rabbi of Kehillat Ah'u¹² 1713-1749.
 - the Eibeschutz affair in great depth - presenting a strong defence of his position.

9. A translation of most of the teshuva is available at http://www.aishdas.org/avodah/faxes/RYE_pilegish.pdf

10. 'In Prague I experienced a challenge similar to that of the (Biblical) saintly Joseph, in fact mine was somewhat more challenging. I was then a passionate young individual who had been separated from his spouse for a considerable period. I therefore longed for female company which I had the opportunity of fulfilling in the person of a lovely young lady viz. my cousin, who kept me company and who was audacious enough to evince a special affection for me, in fact she almost embraced me. Indeed when I was resting in my bed she came to see if I was well covered, in other words, she wanted me to embrace her. Had I yielded to my baser instinct she would not have denied me anything. On several occasions I almost succumbed, just as a flame is attracted to stubble, but the Almighty granted me strong willpower as well as an abundance of dignity and courage (cf.Gen.49:3) to prevail over my burning passion.'

11. "What can we say about the study of his novellae, his interpretations and his sermons, which literally lead to farce and mockery. It is incredible to relate all the absurdities nonsense, imaginations, hallucinations and foolishness. All who heard them were forced to burst forth in laughter, Any knowledgeable, understanding reader will be stunned by his decisions and rulings as I have demonstrated in writing." Megillat Sefer 134 - translation of R. J.J. Schacter in *History and Memory* ob cit. See ibid p436 for examples of even more personal criticism by R' Emden.

12. Ah'u was a post previously occupied by R. Emden's father, the Chacham Tzvi, and R. Emden appears to see all subsequent incumbents - particularly R. Katzenellenbogen and R. Eibeschutz - as unworthy. R. Schacter in his article ob cit makes the point that this community position was also one that R. Emden wanted, but was never given.