Concise and Succinct: Sixteenth Century Editions of Medieval Halakhic Compendiums*

By: MARVIN J. HELLER

> *"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with grain, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way (ẓeidah la-derekh); and thus did he to them." (Genesis 42:25)*
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> *"And the people of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way (ẓeidah la-derekh)." (Genesis 45:21)*
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> *"And our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, Take provisions (ẓeidah la-derekh) with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, We are your servants; therefore now make a covenant with us." (Joshua 9:11)*

We are accustomed to thinking of concise, succinct, popular *halakhic* digests, such as R. Abraham Danzig's (Danziger, 1748–1820) *Ḥayyei Adam* on *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* with an addendum entitled *Nishmat Adam* (Vilna, 1810) and *Ḥokhmat Adam* with an addendum called *Binat Adam* (1814-15) and R. Solomon ben Joseph Ganzfried's (1801–66) *Kiẓur Shulḥan Arukh* (Uzhgorod, 1864) as a

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somewhat modern phenomenon. After the closing of the Talmud, early *halakhic* works that readily come to mind, and there are certainly exceptions, are, more often than not, weighty tomes; for example, R. Jacob ben Asher's (c. 1270–1340) *Arbaʿah Turim* (Piove di Sacco, 1475) and R. Moses ben Maimon's (Maimonides, Rambam, 1135–1204) *Mishneh Torah* (Rome, c. 1475) and, of course, albeit somewhat later, R. Joseph Caro's (1488–1575) *Shulḥan Arukh* (Venice, 1564-65), although, in fact, that work too was actually prepared as an abridgement of Caro's *magnum opus*, the *Beit Yosef* on the *Arbaʿah Turim*, beginning with *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* (Venice, 1550).[1]

In contrast, R. Menaḥem ben Aaron ibn Zeraḥ's (c. 1310–1385) *Ẓeidah la-Derekh*, aptly named, is a medieval work prepared for Jewish nobles and aristocrats who lacked time to devote to learning in depth; its intent is to provide them with concise *halakhic* provisions for their way. *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* is not widely known today and, when mentioned, may appear to many as a singular work. This certainly is not the case. This article is intended to make clear that succinct *halakhic* works were neither rare nor unusual but, indeed, were a common and widespread phenomenon. The article will describe several such varied works, primarily written in the Middle Ages and all printed in the sixteenth century, thus attesting to their consistent popularity over centuries, although today most are less well known.[2]

The *halakhic* digests described here, despite their many similarities, are not alike, not in style, and not necessarily in content. Furthermore, not only are they dissimilar, but, despite their being de-

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1   The format and foliation of these editions of the above works are *Ḥayyei Adam* with *Nishmat Adam*, 2⁰: 3, 68, [1], 42, 13 ff.; *Ḥokhmat Adam* with *Binat Adam*, 2⁰: [4], 99, [1], 52 ff.; *Kiẓur Shulḥan Arukh*, 8⁰: [4], 144 ff.; *Arbaʿah Turim*, 2⁰: 138, 108, 70, 155 ff.; *Mishneh Torah*, 2⁰: [352] ff.; *Shulḥan Arukh*, 4⁰: 136 [10], 131 [1], 79, 165 [1] ff.; *Beit Yosef, Tur Oraḥ Ḥayyim*, 2⁰: 24, 494 [1] ff.

2   The core descriptions of the titles mentioned in this article are taken from my *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Brill, Leiden, 2004); S. M. Chones, *Toledot ha-Posekim* (Warsaw, 1910, reprint Israel, n.d.) [Hebrew]; Chaim Tchernowitz, *Toledoth ha-Poskim*, (New York, 1946) [Hebrew]; and Solomon Zucrow, *Sifrut ha-Halakhah* (New York, 1932) [Hebrew].

scribed as concise, succinct digests, these works are not overly brief nor of limited content, several being substantial works, albeit not comparable to well-known medieval works such as the *Arba'ah Turim* and the *Mishneh Torah*. The books are varied, some being general *halakhic* compendiums, others enumerations of the *taryag* (613) *mizvot*, and yet others on specific branches of *halakhah*, such as *issur ve-heter* (dietary laws, prohibited and permitted foods), liturgy, and halakhot specific to women; there are texts in Yiddish (Judeo-German) and Ladino, the last a translation and abridgment of the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Only a small number of these titles are described here, the emphasis being on general *halakhic* rather than specific subject works, space limitations and concern for the readers' patience being limiting factors.[3]

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3 Among the popular specialized texts, not addressed in this article, are David ben Joseph Abudraham's (14th century) classic work on Jewish liturgy *Sefer Abudraham* (Constantinople, 1513; Fez, 1517, and Venice, 1546, 1566), first printed in Lisbon in 1489; R. Baḥya ben Asher ben Hlava's (13th century) *Shulḥan Shel Arba* (Constantinople and Mantua, 1514, Venice, 1546, Cracow, 1579, and Lublin and in Prague, 1596) on the laws concerning meals; R. Solomon ben Abraham ibn Adret's (Rashba, c. 1235–c. 1310) *Torat ha-Bayit* (*ha-Kazer*) compendium on dietary laws (Cremona, 1565); R. Isaac ben Meir of Dueren's (late 13th century) *Sha'arei Dura* on forbidden foods and the kashering process (Cracow, 1534, Venice, 1547, Constantinople, 1553, Venice, 1564, Lublin. 1574, and Basle and Lublin, 1599); R. Moses ben Israel Isserles' (Rema, c. 1530–1572) *Torat ha-Ḥattat* (Cracow, 1569, 1577, and 1590) expanding upon *Sha'arei Dura* with additions according to the customs of Polish and German Jewry, and abbreviated laws of *niddah*; R. Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi's (Rabbenu Yonah, c. 1200–1263; this attribution is uncertain) *Issur ve-Hetter* (Ferrara, 1555); R. Samuel ben Isaac ha-Sardi, *ha-Terumot* (Salonika, 1596), *halakhic* code dealing with monetary matters; [R. Aaron of Barcelona], *Sefer ha-Ḥinnukh* (Venice, 1523), the *taryag* (613) *mizvot* according to their occurrence in the Torah; R. David ben Solomon Vital, *Keter Torah* (Constantinople, 1536), versified summary of the 613 commandments; R. Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz (c. 1115–c. 1198), *Sefer Yere'im* (Venice, 1566), an enumeration of the *taryag* (613) *mizvot*, according to the *Halakhot Gedolot*; R. Menaḥem ben Moses ha-Bavli, *Ta'amei Mizvot* (Lublin, 1570-71), annotations on and explanations of the precepts; and R. Benjamin Aaron ben Abraham Slonik (Solnik, c. 1550 – c. 1619), *Mizvot*

The books described here, then, are the more general works, mostly, but not always, in chronological order of their printing.[4] The reader should note the recurring emphasis in the introductions on the need for a succinct *halakhic* work for those who, due to the exigencies of daily life, are unable to study a more detailed work. We begin with the *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ*.

R. Eleazer ben Judah's (Rokeaḥ, c. 1165 - c. 1238) **Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ** (Fano, 1505, 2⁰, 110 ff; reprinted Venice, 1549 and Cremona, 1557), concerned with *minhagim* (customs) and including considerable ethical material, is among the better known general *halakhic* titles. Its author, a member of the renowned Kalonymus family, was a student of his father, R. Judah ben Kalonymus, R. Judah he-Ḥassid, and other prominent halakhists, such as R. Moses ha-Kohen and R. Eliezer of Metz. A scholar and kabbalist, Eleazer was one of the Ḥassidei Ashkenaz, qualities reflected in many of his books. A prolific writer, Eleazer is credited with more than fifty works, including *piyyutim* (liturgical poetry), many of a mystical nature; commentaries on the Torah; Megillot (*Yayin ha-Rekaḥ*); a *Haggadah*; and works of a kabbalisitic nature. Many of Eleazer's writings remain in manuscript.

Eleazer personally suffered from the persecution of the Jews in Germany. While he worked on his Torah commentary, two cru-

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ha-Nashim (*Ein Schon Frauen Buchlein*, Cracow 1577) compendium in Yiddish on the *miẓvot* specific to women.

4   Among the general *halakhic* compendiums not addressed in this article are R. Asher ben Jeḥiel (Rosh)/ R. Jacob ben Asher (Tur), *Kiẓur Piskei ha-Rosh* (Constantinople, 1515), summary of the *halakhic* rulings in the *Piskei ha-Rosh* prepared by his son, R. Jacob ben Asher (Ba'al ha-Turim); Anonymous, *Kol Bo* (Constantinople, 1519), *halakhic* digest of ritual and civil laws for the entire year; R. Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi (c. 1155–1215), *Sefer ha-Manhig* (Constantinople, 1519, 4⁰: 130 ff.) laws and customs on prayers, synagogue, Sabbath, and festivals; Elijah ben Moses Bashyazi (Bashyatchi, c. 1420–90), *Adderet Eliyahu* (Constantinople, 1531), Karaite *halakhic* compendium; R. Ishmael ha-Kohen Tanuji (16ᵗʰ cent.), *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*, (Ferrara, 1555) concise *halakhic* work providing a *précis* of the *halakhah* based on earlier authorities; R. Samson ben Ẓadok (thirteenth century), *Sefer Tashbeẓ* (Cremona, 1556), *halakhic* work based on the customs of R. Meir of Rothenburg (Maharam) by his student R. Samson ben Ẓadok.

saders entered his home on 22 Kislev 4957 (Friday, November 15, 1196), murdered his wife, Dulcina, his daughters, Belat and Hannah, his son Jacob, and his son's teacher. Eleazer was severely wounded. A week later, a perpetrator was apprehended and executed. The condition of Jewish life at the time of the Crusades, emphasized by Eleazer's personal tragedy, is reflected in the somber world-view and manner in which the correct service of the Creator is given in the *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ*.

The Fano edition of *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ* was printed by the renowned Gershom Soncino; it is the first Hebrew book with a title page.[5] The text of that title page is spare, really only a title-label, devoid of ornamentation, and providing no more than the most basic information, the title, author, and the name of the editor, R. Judah of Pesaro, who performed his task "with great care." Further information is given in the colophon, that is, the date of completion, *erev Pesaḥ* 265 (Wednesday, March 29, 1505), and the place, Fano. The editor of the third Cremona edition, perhaps to extol his own work, wrote, "The first printer 'has profaned the consecrated thing of the Lord' (Leviticus 19:8) and 'a ruin, a ruin' (Ezekiel 21:32), throughout the land. 'That which is crooked cannot be made straight'" (Ecclesiastes 1: 15).[6]

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[5]   The first printed book with a regular title page was a fifty-five-year calendar, 1475–1530, calculated by the German astronomer Johannes Müller of Königsberg (Regiomontanus), printed in simultaneous Latin and Italian editions by Erhard Ratdolt in Venice in 1476 followed by a German edition in 1478. Concerning the development of the title page see E. P. Goldschmidt, *The Printed Book of the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1950), p. 63; Douglas McMurtie, *The Book, The Story of Printing and Bookmaking* (New York, 1989), pp. 560–62 and Margaret M. Smith, *The Title Page, Its Early Development, 1460–1510* (New Castle & London, 2000), p. 43.

[6]   The editor of the third Cremona edition's comments should be understood in context. Alfred W. Pollard "Collectors and Collecting," in *Fine Books* (London. 1912, reprint New York, 1964), p. 14, discussing early presses, writes that "editors, an assertive and depreciatory race, always vaunting their own accuracy and zeal and insisting on the incredible blunders by which previous editions had been deformed past recognition."

In the introduction, Eleazer begins by stating his purpose in writing *ha-Rokeaḥ*,

> "I laid to my heart" (Ecclesiastes 9:1) the vanities of this world, which are "vain and false" (*Shevuʿot* 20b); this world is transitory and the days of man limited, "the workmen are indolent" (*Avot* 2:15) due to their many troubles and distress, lacking the heart of a man, for by the gentiles there is no Torah. I said to myself, "not everyone has the privilege" (*Berakhot* 5a) to have (to know) the heart for the study of halakhot, to sift fine flour. I will write a book "so that he who reads it may run" (Habakkuk 2:1) to "find acceptable words" (Ecclesiastes 12:10), to know how to fulfill the *miẓvot* as our God, may His name be blessed, commanded.

He continues informing that *ha-Rokeaḥ* is so entitled because the numerical value of Rokeaḥ (רקח = 308, the Perfumer), the family name, equals his personal name, Eleazer (אלעזר = 308).

Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ is not a detailed or casuistic work, but rather gives the *halakhah* in a direct manner, primarily based on Talmudic sources, referencing the Jerusalem as well as the Babylonian Talmud. Use is also made of midrashic sources, and the book reflects the influence of Kabbalah. It is intended for the average person rather than directed to scholars, obvious in its approach, which is practical rather than theoretical. *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ* begins with a discussion of the love and fear of God, prayer, and humility (*Hilkhot Ḥassidut*), followed by text divided into 497 sections, beginning with a chapter on repentance (29 sections). The remainder of the book deals with the laws encompassing Jewish life, such as prayer, Sabbath, festivals, mourning, and dietary laws. Written in a clear and lucid style, *ha-Rokeaḥ* is a popular and much reprinted work. The ethical portions have also frequently been reprinted apart from the complete *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ*.

Amudei Golah, or *Sefer Miẓvot Katan* (*Semak*) is the concise halakhic compendium of R. Isaac ben Joseph of Corbeil (d. 1280) one of the Baʿalei Tosafot. It was first printed in Constantinople (1510, 4⁰: 146 ff.; reprinted in Cremona, 1556; and Cracow, 1596) by [David and Samuel] ibn Nahmias. Isaac ben Joseph, the son-in-law and student of R. Jeḥiel of Paris and pupil of R. Samuel of

Evreux, was known for his outstanding piety. Among Isaac's students are eminent tosafists, who induced him to write an abridgement of R. Moses ben Jacob of Coucy's (13th century) *Sefer Miẓvot Gadol* (*Semag*). *Amudei Golah* is, therefore, also known as *Sefer Miẓvot Katan* (*Semak*) to distinguish it from that work. Indeed, according to the title page, *"Sefer Amudei Golah,* called *Sefer Miẓvot Katan*, is small in quantity and great in value."

In the introduction Isaac states his purpose in writing this book:

> Because of our iniquities the Torah is forgotten. I saw that many do not know well the reasons for the *miẓvot* we are obligated to perform. I wrote those commandments that are incumbent upon us today in seven pillars corresponding to the seven days of the week. I requested every man to read one pillar daily in order that "it may be well for him" (cf. Genesis 12:13) for there are many commandments that a person is not obligated to fulfill until they come to his hand. When one reads and takes to heart to perform them, the Holy One, blessed be He, considers it as if he had fulfilled the precept ... as it says in *Sifrei*, and remember and do them, from here remembering is as doing. At times a *miẓvah* will come to one's hand and he will not know how to fulfill it. Therefore everyone should take to heart for "if not now, when" (*Avot* 1:14)? ...

The seven pillars, each related to at least one of the Ten Commandments, described in the author's introduction, are: 1) service of the heart; 2) matters dependent upon individual action and time; 3) laws related to speech, for example, vows and prayers, 4) laws related to one's hands, that is, manual labor; 5) dietary laws; 6) financial matters, which includes laws of homicide, most often resulting from monetary transactions; and 7) the laws of Shabbat and *milah*. R. Perez ben Elijah of Corbeil (d. c. 1295), a student of Isaac of Corbeil, wrote annotations to the *Amudei Golah*, printed with subsequent editions, here interspersed with the text.

Amudei Golah is built upon the *Sefer Miẓvot Gadol* of R. Moses ben Jacob of Coucy. However, although it follows the enumeration and details of commandments in that work, it does not adhere to the *Semag*'s organization nor does it contain its detailed, involved *halakhic* discussions. There is no necessity or basis, from either the Torah or the Talmud, in the structure followed by the *Semak*. In-

tending it to be a popular work, Isaac included aggadic and ethical material.[7] As a result, *Amudei Golah* proved to be a popular work, combining contemporary *halakhah* for a large audience, with parables and similar matter of interest. It also found favor with other codifiers who often quote from *Amudei Golah*. The index of the commandments, found at the beginning of this edition, was included in a number of prayer books to be recited daily in lieu of *teḥinnot* (supplications) and psalms. Isaac of Corbeil had multiple copies made and distributed at his own expense. He requested that additional copies be made and be available to the public.[8]

Sefer ha-Terumah, by the *tosafist* R. Barukh ben Isaac (late 12th–early 13th century), is a popular *halakhic* code, well distributed in manuscript, and frequently quoted by later *rishonim* (early sages). R. Barukh ben Isaac was known as Barukh of Worms, after his birthplace, and, perhaps, although this latter identification has been seriously challenged, was known as Barukh of Regensberg, after his place of residence. Barukh spent considerable time in France—he was the foremost student of R. Isaac ben Samuel the Elder of Dampierre and later of R. Judah of Paris, and a colleague of R. Sampson of Sens—so that when he speaks of Germany he does not do so as a resident of that land. Barukh later immigrated to Eretz Israel, where he died.

First printed by Daniel Bomberg (Venice, 1523, 2^0: 139 ff.), this edition has a spare title page with a brief text that states that "All who look into it 'will find rest' (cf. Jeremiah 6:16) 'and will go out with a high hand'" (cf. Exodus 14:8) and the date 5283 (1523). The colophon dates completion of the work to Friday, 26 Nissan 5283 (April 21, 1523).[9] The title page is followed by a detailed digest of its

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7   Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature* (1933, reprint Cranbury, 1960), II pp. 127–29.
8   Ephraim Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot* (Jerusalem, 1980), II pp. 571–75 [Hebrew].
9   26 Nissan 5283 (April 21, 1523) was not a Friday but a Saturday. Perhaps the non-Jewish compositors altered the date in consideration of the sensitivity of the book's Jewish readers (purchasers). More likely, this being the colophon and there being no necessity, in any case, to spell out the date, the 26 is simply a typesetting error.

contents, in effect a synopsis and the essence of the halakhot covered in the book's twelve subject areas, in 254 chapters (paragraphs) of varying length. The purpose of this comprehensive listing is to enable the reader to study concepts prior to learning them in greater detail and to review them afterwards. Barukh places great emphasis on this preliminary abstract, referring to it in the colophon.

Sefer ha-Terumah is an important Ashkenazic code, also from the time of the Ba'alei Tosafot. It varies from contemporary *halakhic* codes in that the material is arranged not according to the order of tractates of the Talmud but rather by subject matter, which, within the *halakhah*, is then presented by tractate order. The contents are: *Hilkhot sheḥitah* (1–8); *treifus* (9–25); *issur ve-heter* (26–79); *ḥallah* (80–85); *niddah* (86–109); *gittin* (110–132); *ḥaliẓah* (133); *avodah zarah* (134–160); *yayin nesekh* (161–188); *Sefer Torah* (189–202); *tefillin* (203–213); and *Shabbat* (214–254), the last divided into nine subheadings. These contents encompass religious and family law, but do not include civil law or communal customs. Barukh based *Sefer ha-Terumah* not on his own understanding of the *halakhah*, but rather on the rulings of his teachers, particularly R. Isaac ben Samuel. He quotes his sources, mostly naming French sages, particularly R. Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), R. Jacob ben Meir (Rabbenu Tam), and R. Isaac ben Meir (Ribam). No Sefardic sages are mentioned. In the concluding paragraph Barukh states that he entitled this work *Sefer ha-Terumah* because it represents the best teachings of his time.

Sefer ha-Terumah was also a well distributed manuscript work, frequently quoted by later *rishonim*. Its popularity was due not to novellae or profundity, but rather due to its direct and concise summary of the *halakhah* and its being written in a clear and lucid style. Entire sections were copied by R. Simhah ben Samuel of Vitry in the *Maḥzor Vitry*. Barukh also wrote *tosafot* to tractate *Zevaḥim*, normally printed with the Talmud, and on a number of tractates that are not extant.[10]

Our next work, **Sefer ha-Agur,** is a concise *halakhic* compendium by R. Jacob Barukh ben Judah Landau (15th cent.). A member of a

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[10]   Urbach, I pp. 345–56.

prominent rabbinic family in Germany, Landau relocated to Italy as did many other Jews in the fifteenth century. After about ten years in Italy he settled in Pavia (1480) and afterwards in Naples (1487), where he worked for a time as a proofreader at the press of Joseph Gunzenhausen. Among the works printed at that press in 1490, by Azriel ben Joseph Gunzenhausen, is Landau's *ha-Agur*.

This, the second printing (Rimini, Italy, 1526, 4⁰: 102 ff.; reprinted, Venice, 1549), was published by Gershom Soncino, the preeminent pioneer of Hebrew printing. The title page, with an architectural frame, is dated from "the third year of our lord Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, 1478–1534, pope from 1523 to 1534)," that is, 1526. The text of the title page describes ha-Agur's subject matter as:

> *Hilkhot tefilah*, *ẓiẓit*, and *tefillin*, blessings, the laws of Shabbat and festivals, the laws of [ritual] slaughter, *issur ve-heter*, the scouring of utensils, the laws of *niddah*, *tevillah*, *mikva'ot*, Sefer Torah, *mezuzot*, and *eruvin*.

The text is followed by a table of contents and the book is completed with *Sefer Ḥazon*, also by Landau. *Ḥazon* is a small book of Talmudic conundrums. It does not, in this edition, have a separate title page, but its presence is noted on the title page of the *Agur*. In the introduction we are informed of the source of the title and Landau's purposes in writing the *Agur*. It begins,

> "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh" (Proverbs 30:1), to his distinguished pupil, R. Ezra ben David Ovadiah ha-Rofeh of the house of Leon. . . . "His soul longs" (Genesis 34:8) with a great desire to cleave to the sages all the day to plow יחרוש, to seek ידרוש "to spread יפרוש his wings" (Deuteronomy 32:11) to "frequent the shade of wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 7:12) ... And when I saw that his intentions were good and he was prepared to accept the wisdom of the Torah, with his good nature and clear intelligence, striving greatly to find the correct path. He cleared the path יסקל מסילות סלולות for him to go to "a city of habitation" (Psalms 107: 4, 7, 36) ... "He sought me daily to know" (cf. Isaiah 58:2) "the entrance to the city" (cf. II Samuel 17:17) the city of his intention "to enlighten his eyes" (cf. Ezra 9:8) to arrive at his "desired haven" (Psalms 107:30)...

This was the primary reason that I aroused myself when I saw my distinguished student putting forth his hands for the fruit "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (cf. Genesis 2:17), which are the commandments explained in the Talmud.

His student's time for Talmud was limited, however, by his studies of physics and metaphysics, necessitating this more concise work to instruct him in his Jewish studies. *Ha-Agur* is a distillation of *halakhah*, primarily in *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* and to a lesser extent from the other parts of the *Arba'ah Turim*. Although Landau makes use of a large number of sources, he relies primarily on the *Tur* of R. Jacob ben Asher, also following the arrangement of that work. Mention is made of the opinions of later decisors and their rulings subsequent to the *Tur*, among them R. Israel Isserlein, R. Jacob Weil, R. Joseph Colon and Jacob Landau's father, R. Judah Landau. *Ha-Agur* reflects the Ashkenaz tradition in *halakhah* and *minhag*. Landau also integrates kabbalistic content into the text, quoting from the *Zohar*, one, if not the first, to do so in a *halakhic* work, and provides a summary of the *halakhah*, all in a concise manner. An example of the conundrums in *Ḥazon* is:

> If a person does one *miẓvah* more than the required measure he forfeits the reward [for performing the *miẓvah*] and is not considered to have performed the *miẓvah*.
> Explanation: Terumah requires a first offering in which the remainder is recognizable. If one makes the entire heap terumah he has not fulfilled the *miẓvah* …

> There is water in which it is permissible to *tovel* (immerse) one's entire body and which is unfit for *netilat yada'im*, and specifically in a utensil.
> Explanation: The thermal springs of Tiberias. If they are in their place it is permissible to *tovel* one's hands in them, but it is prohibited to do so in a utensil (*O. Ḥ.* 160; *Ḥullin* 106a).

The incunabula edition of the *Agur* was the second Hebrew book published in the lifetime of its author, the first being R. Judah ben Jeḥiel's (Messer Leon) *Nofet Ẓufim* (Mantua, before 1480) and the first book to contain rabbinic *haskamot* (approbations), from R. Judah Messer Leon, R. Jacob ben David Provenzalo, R. Ben Zion ben Raphael, R. Isaac ben Samuel Ḥayyim, R. Solomon Ḥayyim ben

Jeḥiel Raphael ha-Kohen, and R. Nethaniel ben Levi of Jerusalem, reprinted with this edition.[11] Messer Leon writes that he has examined *ha-Agur*, and that "it is a work that gives forth pleasant words … and therefore I have set my signature unto these nectars of the honeycomb, these words of beauty." No other works by Landau are known.[12]

Piskei Halakhot is a *halakhic* work from the Italian kabbalist R. Menahem ben Benjamin Recanati (late 13th–early 14th centuries). Published by the Company of Silk Weavers, *Piskei Halakhot* (Bologna, 1538, 4^0: [12] 62 ff.) is the sole *halakhic* work known to have been written by Recanati. Little is known about him, although it is reported that Recanati was originally an ignorant person who became, miraculously, wise and understanding. Recanati is better known for his kabbalistic works, *Perush al ha-Torah* (Venice, 1523), *Ta'amei ha-Miẓvot* and *Perush ha-Tefillot* (Constantinople, 1544).

The title page, with a brief text and no ornamentation, notes the kabbalistic background of the author, stating "*Piskei Halakhot* from the kabbalist, Rabbenu Menaḥem of Recanati … " The volume begins with a twelve-page table of contents, followed by 601 concise *halakhic* decisions, without discussion. For example,

> Those days that people are accustomed to fast, for example, between the ten days of repentance [between Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur] even though they did not accept the fast upon themselves the day before, they may fast, for in such an instance prior acceptance is not necessary. 177.
> The *Halakhah* is like Rav Sheshet who says that even to wash before *Tishah be-Av* and to put aside is forbidden. 186.

This is not an original work, but rather is based on a large number of earlier authorities, primarily German and French

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11   Concerning this edition of Messer Leon's *Nofet Ẓufim* see Joshua Bloch, "First Hebrew Book Printed During the Lifetime of its Author" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 39:2 (1935), pp. 95-96 reprinted in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography* (New York: New York Public Library and KTAV Pub. House, 1976), pp. 143-44.

12   Moses Herschler, *Ha-Agur ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 5B14 [Hebrew].

decisors, most importantly R. Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz (c.1115–c.1198), author of *Sefer Yere'im*. Recanati also relies on many other Ba'alei Tosafot, such as R. Eliezer ben Joel ha-Levi of Bonn (Ravyah, 1140–1225) and Rabbenu Tam (c.1100–1171), the latest being R. Meir ben Barukh of Rothenburg (Maharam, c. 1215–1293). Sephardic authorities are quoted, including Alfasi and Maimonides, but to a lesser extent. A number of Recanati's sources would be unknown if not for their being referenced in *Piskei Halakhot*. With one exception, references to Rashba are not to R. Solomon ben Abraham Adret (c. 1235–c. 1310), but to R. Simeon ben Abraham. Recanati, who frequently quotes the Ramban (R. Moses ben Nahman, Nahmanides, 1194–1270) in his Torah commentary, makes no mention of him here.

References within a *halakhah* are made without consideration to their chronological order and much of the material lacks apparent order, suggesting that the work was prepared by Recanati for his personal use, as an outline for a later expanded work, or that this brief work was sufficient for someone who did not wish to devote considerable time to *halakhah*, but preferred to turn to other studies such as Kabbalah.

Later editions of *Piskei Halakhot* are censored, missing entire entries, primarily those with material pertaining to non-Jews. Among the objectionable material are the sections *yayin nesekh* (gentile wine) and the laws of *avodah zara* (idol worship). An example of the former is:

> 251: There are those who say that a gentile who pours out wine of a Jew, even intentionally knowing that it is wine, it is not considered as *yayin nesekh* for it (the wine) gets lost and that is not the way of a libation, as it says in the chapter *Ein Ma'amidim*, "it is like pouring water into clay" [*Avodah Zarah* 33a], and since it is not a libation, what is in the utensil is permissible. However, from utensil to utensil everyone forbids it . . . and there are those who forbid it in any case.

The title page of the 1820 edition of *Piskei Halakhot*, printed in Poland/Russia, gives the date as 1538 and the place of publication as

Bologna. Most likely this unexpurgated edition was backdated to avoid problems with the censor.[13]

Shibbolei ha-Leket is a *halakhic* compendium by the Italian sage R. Ẓedekiah (ha-Rofei) ben Abraham (c. 1230–c. 1300) of the Anav family.[14] Although it is known that Ẓedekiah was a student of R. Judah ben Benjamin, R. Meir ben Moses, R. Avigdor Katz, R. Jacob of Wuerzburg, and, perhaps, R. Meir ben Barukh of Rothenburg, little else is known of his life. Nevertheless, it is clear from *Shibbolei ha-Leket* that, at least when he wrote this work, he was a resident of Rome and was alive when the Talmud was burned in Paris in 1242. Also, from the appellation *ha-rofei* it is clear that he was a physician. His brothers, Benjamin (*Massa Gei Ḥizzayon*, Riva di Trento, 1560) and Moses, were both liturgical poets, the former also a physician.

 Shibbolei ha-Leket (Venice, 1546, 2^0: 55 ff.), printed by Daniel Bomberg, is a detailed compilation from earlier *halakhic* works and responsa covering prayers, holidays and the Jewish year. Ẓedekiah, without offering his own opinion, references a large number of early sources; quotes often from the Jerusalem as well as the Babylonian Talmud; notes divergent positions; and discusses various customs and laws. The title page, which does not mention Ẓedekiah, states,

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[13] Concerning further examples of backdating of books see my "Who can discern his errors? Misdates, Errors, and Deceptions, in and about Hebrew Books, Intentional and Otherwise" *Ḥakirah: The Flatbush Journal of Jewish Law and Thought* 12 (2011), pp. 284–87, and reprinted in *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book*, Brill (Leiden/Boston, 2013) pp. 410-414.

[14] Anav (Anau) is an ancient Italian family, mostly resident in Rome. According to family tradition, the Anavs are descended from one of four aristocratic families of Jerusalem brought by Titus to Rome from Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. In addition to the members of the family noted here, other prominent members include R. Nathan ben Jeḥiel (Ba'al he-Arukh, 1035–c. 1110), author of the lexicon known as the *Arukh;* and several liturgical poets (Milano, Attilio. "Anau." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 136. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*).

"Who is the man who desires life [and loves many days, that he may see good?]" (Psalms 35:13), for a sign, for the appointed times of the days and years, … "I beg you, let (me) glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves" (Ruth 2:7) in this book, full of the interpretations of the geonim and decisors …

In the introduction, Zedekiah relates that he has named it *Shibbolei ha-Leket* (Gleaned Ears) for he has selected from "a field of the understanding of the geonim, here and there הנה והנה as he found them and arranged the halakhot one to another אחת אל אחת "like a bed of spices, like fragrant flowers" (Song of Songs 5:13). I did not come to fill my sack and bag with grain with a lengthy commentary for the "hand is not shortened" Isaiah 59:1.

This edition is much abridged, the now more familiar *Shibbolei ha-Leket ha-Shalem*, based on a manuscript, not having been printed until 1886. Unlike the complete version, divided into 13 *arugot* (rows, sections) and 372 *shibbolim* (ears), this edition is divided into 12 sections and 121 subsections. Among the omitted material is the recounting of the burning of the Talmud, with the accompanying *she'elot ḥolim* (request for a response via a dream), as to the appropriate time to fast; the commentary on the *Haggadah*; and numerous references to his brothers. In 1988 a second part of *Shibbolei ha-Leket*, previously unpublished, covering dietary laws, interest, and vows, was published from a manuscript. In the description of the burning of the Talmud, Zedekiah writes:

> Since we are occupied with the laws of fasts and the burning of the Torah we will write as a remembrance that what befell us in our own days due to our many iniquities, for the Torah of our God was burned in 5004 [1244, *sic*.] of the creation on the sixth day of *Parashat Ḥukkat* [Numbers 29]. Twenty-four wagons full of volumes of the Talmud, halakhot, and aggadot were burned in France, as we have heard. We have heard from rabbis who were there that they asked a *she'elot ḥolim* to know if this was a decree from the Creator, and He responded to them that it was a decree of the Torah … and from that day on the leading individuals [of the community] accepted upon themselves to fast each and every year on the sixth day of *Parashat Ḥukkat*, not setting [the fast] by the day of the month, so that the ashes should be an atonement for us, as a burnt offering on

the pyre and may it be as pleasant for the sons of Judah as a meal offering brought according to *halakhah*. May our remembrance take place, and may God fulfill for us what is written, "Then shall the offering of Judah [and Jerusalem] be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Malachi 3:4).[15]

The volume is completed by a brief colophon, a table of contents; and the tale describing the encounter of the *amora*, R. Joshua ben Levi and the angel of death, in which R. Joshua is assured of his place in the Garden of Eden, given a tour of the Garden, which is described, and gets the angel of death's sword (*Ketubbot* 77b). It concludes with a single brief responsum from R. Solomon ben Abraham Adret (Rashba, 1235–c. 1310) concerning an individual who wished to be relieved from a vow to cease gambling, so that he would not violate both his vow and the prohibition against gambling. The response was negative.

Shibbolei ha-Leket was sufficiently popular that it was abridged as, or was a major source for our next work, **Sefer Tanya Rabbati,** also a comprehensive *halakhic* digest. It is ascribed to R. Jeḥiel ben Jekuthiel ben Benjamin ha-Rofei Anav (late thirteenth century), perhaps a grandson of Ẓedekiah's brother. R. Jeḥiel was a scribe,[16] *paytan,* and author of *Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Constantinople, c. 1511 as *Beit Middot*, and Cremona, 1556). Little personal information is

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[15] Ẓedekiah ben Abraham ha-Rofei, *Shibbolei ha-Leket ha-Shalem*, ed. Solomon Buber (Israel, 1977) p. 252 no. 263 [Hebrew]; Tchernowitz, II pp. 186–91. The discrepancy between the date normally given for burning the Talmud, 1242, and the date in *Shibbolei ha-Leket*, 1244, has been addressed by S. H. Kuk and D. Tamar (*Kiryat Sefer* XXIX (1953-54). It is suggested that the discrepancy may have resulted from misreading a daled ד (4) for a *bet* ב (2) in the manuscript of the *Shibbolei ha-Leket,* a not uncommon occurrence when reading manuscripts. Parenthetically, this fast day is noted in modern *halakhic* works. For example, the *Magen Avraham*, *Mishnah Berurah*, and the *Kaf ha-Ḥayyim* on *Shulḥan Arukh O.Ḥ.* 580:3 and the *Arukh ha-Shulḥan* 580:4 all mention the burning of the Talmud and comment on the associated fast day.

[16] His Leiden Manuscript (1289) is the only complete manuscript of the *Yerushalmi* in existence today.

available about Jeḥiel, except that he too was a scion of the Anav family.

Shibbolei ha-Leket was first printed in Mantua (1514, 4⁰: [99] ff.) and reprinted in Cremona (1565). The Mantua edition was printed by Samuel Latif without a title-page. The date of printing is known from the colophon, given the completion date as "the month of Sivan, 5074 (*sic.*) from the creation, 'Then the Lord your God will turn your captivity, and have compassion upon you ורחמך ([5]274 = May 26-June 23, 1514), and will return and gather you from all the nations, where the Lord your God has scattered you' (Deuteronomy 30:3)."

The title page of the Cremona edition notes that it is "'The rear guard of all the camps' (Numbers 10:25), assembling all the laws and customs appropriate for every Jewish man in a clear and easy language." A preface from R. Simon ha-Levi, who brought the book to press, follows, then a page of verse, table of contents, and the text. *Sefer Tanya* is so entitled because it begins with the word *tanya* (we learn in a *baraita*). It later became known as *Tanya Rabbati*, to distinguish it from the much-reprinted *Tanya* of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

The above attribution notwithstanding, the authorship of *Tanya Rabbati* is uncertain. R. Simon ha-Levi states that the author, "being most humble, not wanting to take the crown of greatness appropriate to him, did not mention his name," but there are those who say he was R. Jeḥiel, brother of R. Jacob, Ba'al ha-Turim, "which seems correct, for he mentions himself in this work as 'I, the scribe Jeḥiel.'" This attribution, often repeated, is no longer accepted. It is now believed that the author was R. Jeḥiel ben Jekuthiel, perhaps a great-nephew of Ẓedekiah (ha-Rofei) ben Abraham, author of *Shibbolei ha-Leket* to which *Tanya* has been compared.

Tanya differs from *Shibbolei ha-Leket* in a number of particulars. There are additions, omissions, rearrangement of entries, and abbreviations of supportive material brought by Ẓedekiah ha-Rofei. Nevertheless, the similarities, including identical language, leave little doubt as to the close relationship of the two works, *Tanya* being a concise edition of *Shibbolei ha-Leket*. The latter work, and Ẓedekiah ha-Rofei, are frequently referenced in *Tanya*, suggesting to some that Jeḥiel's intent, if it was he, was to conceal that his book

was an abridgment of *Shibbolei ha-Leket* and not an original work. In response, it has been asked why, if Jeḥiel wished to plagiarize Ẓedekiah's work, did he omit his name and frequently reference *Shibbolei ha-Leket*?

Several additional possibilities have been suggested. Ẓedekiah wrote both versions, omitting his name from the earlier concise work; Jeḥiel, a copyist, discovered the manuscripts, and, intending to write a popular *halakhic* digest, rewrote the first, adding material from the second, not realizing they came from the same author. Possibly Jeḥiel, in fact Ẓedekiah's grandfather, wrote *Tanya* as a *halakhic* digest for the family, a work later greatly augmented by Ẓedekiah in *Shibbolei ha-Leket*. Finally, perhaps the two works are indeed independent, their likeness resulting from the fact that both authors were students of Jeḥiel's uncle, Judah ben Benjamin Anav.[17]

We began by referring to **Ẓeidah la-Derekh**, R. Menahem ben Aaron ibn Zeraḥ's (c. 1310–1385) *halakhic* code. This concise code of law (Ferrara, 1554, 4⁰: 297 ff.) is unusual in that it is directed towards the wealthier strata of Jewish society. In the introduction, Ibn Zeraḥ informs us about his background and difficult early years, relating,

> In the year 5088 (1328) "the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people" (Isaiah 5:25) "and the king [of France who ruled over Navarre] died" (I Kings 22:37) and the people rose up and took counsel together "to destroy, slay and annihilate" (Esther 7:4) "all the Jews who were" (*ibid*. 3:6) in their kingdom and they slew in Estella and other places in the land about 6,000 Jews, including my lord, my father, my mother, and my four brothers, younger than I, dying in sanctification of the Lord's name. I alone survived from my father's house "stricken, struck by God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4), for twenty-five of the wicked "struck me and wounded me" (Song of Songs 5:7) and I was cast naked among the dead...

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17 Solomon Buber, ed., *Tanya Rabbati* (Warsaw, reprint, Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 24–31 [Hebrew]; Saul Kook, *Iyyunim u-Meḥkarim* II (Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 270–72 [Hebrew]; S. K. Mirsky, ed., *Shibbolei ha-Leket ha-Shalem* (New York, 1966), pp. 40–49 [Hebrew].

A knight, a friend of his father, found Ibn Zeraḥ, removed him from among the dead, brought him home and nursed him back to health. After he recovered, Menahem went to Toledo, where he studied under R. Joshua ben Shuaib and R. Judah ben Asher, grandson of the Rosh (R. Asher ben Jeḥiel). Ibn Zeraḥ subsequently went to Alcala de Henarez (in the vicinity of Toledo), where he studied under R. Joseph ben al-Aysh, whom he succeeded as rabbi in 1361. Eight years later a civil war between two aspirants to the throne left Menahem impoverished. The courtier, Don Samuel Abrabanel, interceded on his behalf and Ibn Zeraḥ was appointed rabbi of Toledo and head of the rabbinical academy.

Ibn Zeraḥ composed *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* for the honor and benefit of Don Samuel, whom he praises in the introduction. The book is directed towards the wealthy who, because of their responsibilities and lifestyle, including social intercourse with non-Jews, are not always rigorous in the performance of *miẓvot*, nor do they have sufficient time to master a detailed code, as he informs in his introduction

> I saw that they [Spanish-Jewish nobles] who are in the court-yard of our lord the king, may his majesty be exalted, are a shield and shelter for the rest of their people, each according to his position and status. However, due to the tumultuous times and their desire for attention and matters that are unnecessary "going continually" (Joshua 6:13 II Kings 2:11), lacking in obligatory *miẓvot*, ... prayers, benedictions, *issur ve-heter*, Shabbat, festivals, *Seder Nashim*, and "they also reel through wine" (Isaiah 28:7). I loved the above [Don Samuel Abravanel], may God preserve him . . . and set myself the goal ... and entered within my limits and wrote this book and entitled it *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* ...
>
> I arranged his table for soul and body ... and entitled it *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* and said for my soul to clear the way ...

His code, therefore, is directed towards the practical. It provides, as its name implies, *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* "provision for the way" (Genesis 42:25, 45:21) implies, the traveler's necessities, not too burdensome to bear. In addition to its *halakhic* content, *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* provides reasons for the commandments, based on the

Rambam, as well as philosophical and moral precepts, and medical advice.

The title page of the first edition, printed in Ferrara at the press of Abraham ibn Usque, has that printer's device, the astrolabe and anchor, and gives a completion date of 8 Adar, "in the shadow of the Almighty שד"י ([5]354 = February 20, 1554) I will take refuge," (cf. Psalms 57:2). *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* is divided into five *ma'amarim* (articles) and further divided into *kelalim* (rules), which are subdivided into 372 *perakim* (chapters). The *ma'amarim* are 1) prayers, blessings, *tefillin* and *ẓiẓit*; 2) *issur ve-heter*; 3) laws of matrimony and divorce; 4) laws pertaining to the Sabbath and festivals; and 5) fast days, and the laws of mourning. This last part ends with a discussion of the coming of the messiah and the resurrection of the dead.

The second edition (Sabbioneta, 1567) varies from the previous Ferrara edition, reflecting the censor's expurgations and changes. Most notable is the section on the *Amidah,* which initially included a discussion of the twelfth benediction, *malshinim* (slanderers, informers). This paragraph, comprising almost an entire leaf, is omitted, and the enumeration of the prayers comprising the *Amidah* was correspondingly adjusted in the Sabbioneta and subsequent editions of *Ẓeidah la-Derekh* up to the present. In some instances, in the first unexpurgated edition, rather than ink out so many lines, the entire quire was removed.[18]

Among the most influential compilations of customs and laws is R. Jacob ben Moses's (Maharil, c. 1360–1447) *Sefer Maharil*, composed by his pupil R. Eleazar ben Jacob (Zalman of St. Goar), from the discourses that he heard from Maharil. Maharil (Morenu ha-Rav Ya'akov Levi), the leading *halakhic* authority of his time, was also known as Mahari Segal and Mahari Moellin, these various appellations resulting in some confusion as to whether they referred to one or more individuals. Maharil was a student of R. Shalom ben Isaac of Neustadt (Sar Shalom) and the teacher of R. Jacob Weil

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18   Shlomo Eidelberg, "Menachem Ben Aaron Ibn Zeraḥ," in *Medieval Jewish Ashkenazic History. Studies in European Jewry* II. Hebrew Essays (Brooklyn, 2000), pp. 204–26 [Hebrew].

(Mahariv, d. c. 1455). He was among the first, together with R. Shalom of Neustadt, to be given the title *Morenu*, done to prevent abuses in the performance of marriages and divorces by unauthorized individuals. The slaughter of Jews in Austria in 1420 was followed by the Hussite wars, a time of great suffering for the Jews of central Europe. They beseeched Maharil to pray for them. He, in turn, requested that they fast for three days and pray, which they did (September, 1421). At the end of that period the Imperial army dispersed and the very soldiers who had harassed the Jews came to beg food from them.

However, *Sefer Maharil* is not only a *halakhic* digest, but also a compendium of the customs of German Jewry. It begins with the laws pertinent to Nissan, for it "is the month concerning which the Torah writes, 'This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you' (Exodus 12:2), therefore I am beginning the explanation of the customs relevant to each of the months of the year with [Nissan]." The text begins with Rosh Ḥodesh, thirty days before Pesaḥ, the laws of Pesaḥ, Shavuot, Yom Tov, Shabbat, fast days, continuing through Sukkot, and concluding with the laws of Purim. The halakhot of festivals are followed by laws pertaining throughout the year, such as prayer, marriage, *milah*, divorce, dietary laws, ritual slaughter, *ẓiẓit, tefillin, mezuzah, niddah*, and mourning. Interspersed with these halakhot are various customs and laws that do not fit into any of the above categories.

Sefer Maharil, much copied and often reprinted, is one of the most basic sources of Ashkenaz custom and practice, frequently referenced by R. Moses Isserles (Rema) in his glosses to the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Maharil wrote numerous responsa, collected by another student, and first published in Venice in 1549. He is also remembered for his cantorial abilities, composition of synagogal hymns, and advocacy for retaining traditional tunes. *Niggunei Maharil,* attributed to him, were sung until modern times by the Jewish community of Mainz. The volume, which measures 19 cm., is completed with an index, followed by the device of the printer, Tobias Foa. The Cremona edition, printed two years later, was an identical copy of this edition, including the text of the title page, and was printed at the expense of the apostate Vittorio Eliano.

Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah—Sefer Mesharim are two paired *halakhic* works, both by R. Jeroham ben Meshullam of Provence (Rabbenu Jeroham, c. 1290–1350). Jeroham was born in Provence, but with the expulsion of the Jews from France in 1306 wandered until settling in Toledo. He learned briefly by R. Asher ben Jeḥiel (Rosh) and for a longer period by R. Abraham ben Moses Ismail, a student of R. Solomon ben Abraham Adret (Rashba). Jeroham wrote two works, *Sefer Mesharim* in 1334, and *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah* in 1340 (Venice., 1557, 2⁰: 16, 13–238, 2–104 ff., printed previously in Constantinople (1516). The former work deals with civil law, primarily monetary issues, divided into thirty two paths (*netivot*).

Sefer Mesharim (uprightness) is not an original work, but rather a compendium of the decisions of earlier authorities. It is organized so that anyone, even if not a scholar, can benefit from the work. *Sefer Mesharim* begins with a long table of contents, unusual for that period. In the introduction he praises Alfasi and Rambam, but, with "the weakening of the heart" and the additions of later sages, it is not easy to find or master the law, which is not compiled in one location, as with the laws of property, where acquisition is dealt with in one place and laws of possession in another. Therefore Jeroham properly arranges each subject, reordering the organization of the Rambam, which is intended for scholars, following the Rosh. He is the first to include the laws of *shemittah* (Sabbatical year) and *prosbul* (formula for releasing debt in a Sabbatical year) as monetary matters, in contradistinction to Rambam who classifies them as agricultural laws. In this edition it follows *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah*.

In the introduction to *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah* Jeroham writes that friends, seeing the benefits of *Sefer Mesharim*, pressed and urged him to prepare a similar work on *issur ve-heter* (dietary laws). He accommodated them, writing *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah*, remarking that God and Israel know that he did not do this for honor nor to be considered a scholar, for he merely transcribed the words of the sages that preceded him. *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah* comprises twenty-eight paths, in two parts, according to the periods of a person's life, from birth to death. *Adam*, the first part, treats the precepts from a person's birth until marriage, encompassing birth, *milah*, benedictions, prayer, learning Torah, holidays, vows, *kashrut*, and

contemporary customs, all matters a person should know prior to marriage. *Ḥavvah*, the second part, deals with the period from marriage until death, covering marital laws, such as betrothal, weddings, divorces, levirate marriage, *niddah*, and mitzvot applicable to women. Here too Jeroham brings the opinions of earlier decisors, particularly *Piskei ha-Rosh*, and records the customs of Jewry in France, Spain, and Provence.

Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah and *Sefer Mesharim* are the only works known from Jeroham ben Meshullam. Although well received when written, they were quickly superseded by the *Arba'ah Turim* of R. Jacob ben Asher. This edition and subsequent printings are based on the 1516 Constantinople edition, which was based on a corrupt manuscript. Nevertheless, *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah* and *Sefer Mesharim* are highly regarded and referenced by decisors such as R. Joseph Caro and R. Samuel de Medina. It was more than two hundred and fifty years until the next printing of *Toledot Adam ve-Ḥavvah* (Kopyst, 1808).

Minhagim, by Abraham Klausner (d. 1407/8) is the earliest printed book of Jewish customs. The author was a student of R. Moses of Znaim, and, from 1380, rabbi of Vienna, together with R. Meir ben Barukh ha-Levi (d. 1404). R. Aaron of Neustadt (Blumlein) was his brother-in-law.

Minhagim (Riva di Trento, 1558, 16⁰: 43 [1]) records the customs of the Jews of France and Germany for the entire year, encompassing benedictions, prayers and ritual practice. Although it is based on a number of writers over a period of time, including the geonim, a primary source is the *Siddur* of Rashi, which details the customs of medieval French Jewry. R. Ḥayyim Paltiel (d. 1307), a student of Eliezer of Touques, and, perhaps, the Maharam of Rothenburg (Meir ben Barukh), and rabbi of Magdeburg, Germany, added the customs of German Jewry, composing a *Sefer ha-Minhagim*. This work was the basis of Klausner's *Minhagim*. Klausner did not, however, simply rework Paltiel's book, but rather added considerable explanatory marginalia of his own.

The title page is simple, without any decoration. On the verso is a brief preface from R. Jacob Marcaria. Within the book the text is surrounded by glosses, which often exceed the text in length. Cus-

toms are given in a straightforward manner, beginning with *Seliḥot* (penitential prayers) recited from the conclusion of the Shabbat prior to Rosh Ha-Shanah through the festivals and fast days to *Tishah be-Av* (9th of Av). Emphasis is placed on those customs dealing with prayer, Torah readings, and the synagogue. It is a basic work on prayers for Shabbat, festivals, including *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) included in *maḥzorim*. Among the interesting features is that here, for the first time, the prayer *Av ha-Raḥamim* for martyrs is mandated.

Minhagim concludes, on the last page, with a paragraph (from Klausner) relating that he had "vowed to fast on Mondays, Thursdays, and Mondays for a complete year. It happened, however, that *Tishah be-Av* occurred that year on a Tuesday. R. Yom Tov Lipmann [Muelhausen] from Neustadt and R. Mendel Klausner permitted me to eat after *Minḥah* (afternoon prayers), but only one cooked item, from lentils, without any fat and without anything else." The colophon notes that it was completed on 2 Kislev [5]319 (November 22, 1558).

Minhagim is an important and influential work, and, because of it Klausner is known as the father of Minhag Ashkenaz. The book's recognized value was enhanced by the fact that Klausner's students included such luminaries as R. Israel Isserlein (*Terumat ha-Deshen*, Venice, 1519), Jacob Moellin (*Sefer Maharil*, Sabbioneta, 1556), and Isaac Tyrnau (*Minhagim*, Venice, 1566), all of whom drew upon *Minhagim* for their books, and through them influenced R. Moses Isserles (Rema) in preparing his glosses on the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Klausner also wrote responsa, noted in the responsa of Israel Bruna (c. 1400–80).[19]

A somewhat different *halakhic* compendium is **Sefer ha-Aguddah** (Cracow, 1571, 2^0: 4, 250 ff.) by R. Alexander Suslin ha-Kohen of Frankfort. One of the leading Talmudists of Germany in the first

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[19]   J. Freimann, ed., *Leket Yosher* (1904, reprint Jerusalem, 1964), pp. xviii-xix [Hebrew]; Jonah Joseph Disin, ed., *Sefer ha-Minhagim le-Rabbenu Abraham Klausner* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 9–15 [Hebrew]; David Wachtel, A Memorialization Through Ritual and Liturgy in Medieval Ashkenaz, Master's Thesis, Columbia University (1995).

half of the fourteenth century, Suslin was a student of R. Isaac of Dueren (*Sha‘arei Dura*, late 13th century), and served as rabbi in Cologne, Worms, and Frankfort. Towards the end of his life he is reported to have settled in Erfurt, his birthplace, where, in the massacres following the Black Death, he reputedly suffered a martyr's death on March 21, 1349, one of more than one hundred Jews who perished that day.

Sefer ha-Aguddah is a *halakhic* digest organized by Talmudic tractates. It is dissimilar from similarly organized works, as here the tractates do not follow the order of the Talmud. Rather Suslin begins with *Nezikin* and *Niddah*, followed by *Nashim*. The subject matter also encompasses *Zera‘im, Kodashim*, and *Taharot*, matters generally not applicable today and normally omitted from codes.

The purpose of the book, as suggested by its name, is to collect and present halakhot. Most, but not all, entries are brief, the *halakhah* being extracted from the Talmud without detailed explanations or elaboration. The Talmudic discourse on issues is absent, again in contrast to similar works, such as that of Alfasi, based on the order of the Talmud. Suslin brings the decisions of a large number of early decisors, including Alfasi, Maharam, Mordekhai, Rashbam, Rosh, Rabbenu Tam, Semak, and Tashbetz. He does not hesitate, however, to express disagreement when he differs with their conclusions.

Ha-Aguddah was prepared for publication by R. Joseph ben Mordecai Katz (*She’erit Yosef*, 1510–1591), brother-in-law of R. Moses Isserles (Rema). The manuscript he used was imperfect, however, and his attempts to correct the text were not completely successful. Katz's introduction is followed by a list of the halakhot in the book, and the text is followed by a more detailed listing, concluding with verses of thanksgiving by the printer, Isaac Prostitz. The work is accompanied by Katz's annotations, written, as he explains in the introduction, because the concise style of *ha-Aguddah* frequently made it difficult to comprehend. The text, ordered by tractate, is further divided and numbered, permitting, with the indexes, easy reference. Katz notes that the author, in his humility, did not call the book by his name, but rather Katz found it attributed to Suslin in an old manuscript. The title page has the decorative frame topped

by a vignette of the *Akedah*, used previously in Cremona, Venice, and Padua and reused by Prostitz in Cracow over several decades.

Ha-Aguddah is highly regarded and considered authoritative, being quoted and praised by R. Jacob Weil, R. Jacob ben Moses Moellin (Maharil), R. Israel Isserlein (*Terumat ha-Deshen*), and Rema. Nevertheless, *ha-Aguddah* was not reprinted, and then in part only, until the late nineteenth century, when J. H. Sonnenfeld published, with notes, tractate *Bava Kamma* (Jerusalem, 1874) and Order *Nezikin* (Jerusalem, 1899). However, a much-abridged version, *Ḥiddushei Aguddah*, prepared by Weil, was published as an appendix to Weil's responsa (Venice, 1549), and republished in that form several times.

Minhagim is yet another popular compilation of customs written in the mid-fifteenth century by R. Isaac Tyrnau (b. 1380/85–1439/52) recording the religious conventions and practices of central European Jewry for the entire year. First printed in Venice (1566) and reprinted in Lublin (1571, 1581), Venice (1591), Cracow (1591, 1592, and 1598), it was also published in what proved to be a popular Yiddish translation by R. Simon Levi ben Judah Guenzburg (Venice, 1589, 1593). The latter Yiddish edition (8^0: 80, [10] ff.), printed by Giovanni di Gara, is noteworthy for being the first printing of *Minhagim* in which the text is accompanied by illustrations which were included in subsequent printings of *Minhagim*.

Tyrnau, born either in the Hungarian city of Tirnau (now in Slovakia) or in Vienna, resided in Tyrnau, Austria. He was a student of R. Abraham Klausner, R. Shalom ben Isaac of Neustadt (Sar Shalom), and R. Aaron of Neustadt (Blumlein) and later served as rabbi in Pressburg. It is reported that Tyrnau had a beautiful daughter with whom the Hungarian crown prince fell in love, renouncing the throne and converting to Judaism, studying under Sephardi rabbis and becoming a Talmudic scholar. Returning to Hungary he entered into a clandestine marriage with her and continued to study under his father-in-law. Discovered by Catholic priests who de-

manded his return to Catholicism, he refused and was burned at the stake; the Jews were expelled from Tyrnau.[20]

Although a Talmudic scholar of considerable accomplishment, Tyrnau wrote not scholarly works, but rather a popular and, given the times, a necessary book of customs for the average person. Guenzburg was involved previously in other Hebrew printing endeavors, most notably the Basle Talmud (1578–81), and later in an unsuccessful attempt to print a *Maḥzor* and *Ẓultot*, together with a R. Isaac Mazia, in Thannhausen in 1594.[21]

In the introduction Tyrnau informs as to his purpose in writing *Minhagim*, to arrange the customs for the entire year in a manner that will make it easy for everyone to find [what they need] in clear language for people who are not Talmudic scholars. Therefore he is concise in both his proofs and reasons, but elaborates somewhat and even repeats laws as necessary, for "due to our many iniquities, the number of students and scholars has decreased." After men of Torah and good deeds perished in the Black Death (1348–50) and the persecution of the Jews occurred in Vienna in 1421, Tyrnau "saw that there were communities in which not even two or three men could be found who are truly knowledgeable in the customs of their community, and all the more so of another city." He therefore "ordered, picked and gleaned after the gleaners (*Taʿanit* 6b, *Bava Meẓia* 21b) the conclusions only of the customs, for many times something is written in the [*Tur*] Oraḥ Ḥayyim, or the *Mordekhai, Or Zaruʿa*, and *Maimoni* that is not our practice at all, for example, … *Avinu Malkenu* on Shabbat Yom Kippur."

The text follows the order of the year, beginning with the start of the week, that is, the conclusion of Shabbat, then weekday practice, *Rosh Ḥodesh*, festivals, starting with the month of Nissan, and

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20 Ashkenazi, Shmuel. "Tyrnau, Isaac." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 20. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 219-220. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 20 Aug. 2012; Mordekhai Margalioth, ed., *Encyclopedia of Great Men in Israel* I (Tel Aviv, 1986), cols. 129-30 [Hebrew].

21 Concerning the expurgated Basle Talmud (1578–81) see Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (Brooklyn, 1992), pp. 241–65.

concluding with *berit milah*, weddings, various other customs, and finally matters dealing with orphans and Kaddish. This volume ends with ethical matter from *Orḥot Ḥayyim*. *Minhagim* is primary based on the work of Tyrnau's teacher, Abraham Klausner, also author of *Sefer ha-Minhagim* (Riva di Trento, 1558). *Minhagim* is highly regarded and frequently quoted by R. Moses Isserles (Rema) in his annotations to the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Its popularity is evidenced by its frequent reprintings, and by Guenzburg's Yiddish translation.

This Yiddish edition has a title page with, in the center, a depiction of a winged figure holding a shield with a pitcher in the middle. To the left and right, respectively, is the name Simon Levi/Guenzburg. At the sides of the depiction is the verse "[That this is] God, our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide [till death]" (Psalms 48:15). On the verso of the title page is an introduction, in Hebrew, from R. Solomon ben Isaac Selim, who praises Guenzburg for bringing this valuable book to press again, three years after the previous edition. Guenzburg has "removed the stones from the path for all whose souls desire to know the righteous customs followed throughout the dispersion of Judah and Israel, particularly according to the Ashkenaz custom … " The book has, due to its great value, disappeared from the market, and Guenzburg has spared no expense in publishing this edition. It is Guenzburg's name, but not that of Tyrnau, that appears in several places, even though, the translation and Guenzburg's additions notwithstanding, it is clearly Tyrnau's *Minhagim*. As noted above, the text is accompanied by numerous woodcuts, making it the first *minhag* book to be published with illustrations. These woodcuts depict events in the Jewish life cycle and the celebration of Jewish holidays. Twelve woodcuts are of the Zodiac and twenty-six pertain to Jewish customs. Five of the latter illustrations appear several times in the book. Among the woodcuts are depictions of the search for leaven, baking matzah, building a Sukkah, and lighting Sabbath lights.[22]

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22   The third edition (Venice, 1601) has different and finer illustrations. Nevertheless, it is the illustrations in this edition of *Minhagim* that have been much reprinted, independently and in *siddurim* and other books. According to some sources, also in Mantua in that year, but that printing is likely a misdating of the Venice edition.

We conclude with the **Shulḥan Arukh**, the single most influential and authoritative *halakhic* digest, of R. Joseph ben Ephraim Caro (1488–1575). The first edition of this seminal work was printed at the press of Meir ben Jacob Parenzo and Alvise Bragadin (Venice, 1564-65). The title page has the three crowns of the Bragadin press and dates the beginning of the work on the first volume, *Oraḥ Ḥayyim*, to 18 Kislev [5]325 (Wednesday, November 22, 1564) and the last volume, *Ḥoshen Mishpat*, to 6 Ḥeshvan [5]326 (Monday, October 1, 1565). It is, as stated on the title page, an abridgement of Caro's magnum opus, the *Beit Yosef*.

> *Shulḥan Arukh* from the *Tur Oraḥ Ḥayyim* entitled *Beit Yosef* ... an abridgement of his great work on the *Arba'ah Turim* entitled *Beit Yosef* which "He has declared to his people the power of His works" (Psalms 111:6) "and His eye sees every precious thing" (Job 28:10) in order "that everyone who sought the Lord" (Exodus 33:7) will find that which he seeks with ease ...

The *Shulḥan Arukh* follows the structure of the *Arba'ah Turim*. Unlike that work, and also differing from Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, it contains neither involved *halakhic*, theological or philosophical discussions, nor aggadic or kabbalistic material. Caro's intention in writing this *halakhic* summary is expressed in the introduction. He begins by referencing the *Beit Yosef*, noting that it includes "the laws found in all the *posekim* (*halakhic* adjudicators), new as well as old," and their sources, enumerates a variety of works, and notes that each law is explained in detail. Caro continues,

> I saw in my heart that it was good to collect the lilies and sapphires in a brief format, clear and succinct, in order that the Torah of the Lord will be complete, fluent in the mouth of every man of Israel, so that whenever a question in *halakhah* is posed to a [Talmudic scholar] he will not stammer, but will "say to wisdom, you are my sister (var. tractates)." Just as it is clear to him that his sister is forbidden to him, so shall every practical *halakhah* be fluent in his mouth. This book "built with turrets" (Song of Songs 4:4), a hill, divided into thirty parts, one part to be learned daily, so that he repeats his learning monthly, as it says, "Fortunate is he who comes here and his learning is in his hand" (var. tractates). Furthermore, young students may constantly reflect on it, learning the text by

heart, that which they learned as youths will be retained and have practical application and even when elderly will not be forgotten. Wise men (*maskilim*) will shine as the brightness of heaven when they have respite from their travail and the exertions of their hands … I have called this work *Shulḥan Arukh* (prepared table), for in it can be found all manner of delicacies …

Caro initially had a negative view of the concise *halakhic* works described in this article. His critical appraisal of them, according to Isadore Twersky, is expressed in his undertaking of the *Beit Yosef*, for the

Need was great for a comprehensive guide, which would stem the undesirable and almost unconscious proliferation of texts and provide a measure of religious uniformity in this period of great turmoil and dislocation. This would be accomplished, however, not by producing another compact, sinewy model—a small volume such as the *Agur*, which R. Karo treats pejoratively—but by reviewing the practical Halakhah in its totality. The oracular type of code, containing curt, staccato directives and pronouncements, was neither adequate nor reliable. It did not provide for intellectual stimulus and expansion of the mind, nor did it offer correct guidance in religious practice.[23]

Nevertheless, as Twersky also observes:

Ten years later, in the course of which the *Bet Yosef* spread far and wide and his authority was increasingly respected, R. Joseph Karo came full cycle in his own attitude towards the oracular-type code. Having previously and persuasively argued against the utility and wisdom of the apodictic compendium, he now conceded its need and efficacy. He himself abridged the voluminous *Bet Yosef* … [24]

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[23]   Isadore Twersky "*The Shulḥan 'Aruk: enduring code of Jewish law*," *Judaism* 16 (1967) pp. 142-43. In an accompanying footnote, Twersky suggests that the *Agur* was singled out either because it "was simply one of the most recent representatives of the genre" or because Landau stated that the Agur satisfied the reader's minimal *halakhic* needs.

[24]   Twersky, p. 148.

Bare of all commentaries, the *Shulḥan Arukh* is a small work. The text, divided into sections and subsections, is followed by a ten-page listing of the contents. The *Shulḥan Arukh* was printed nine times in the sixteenth century without R. Moses Isserles's (Rema, c. 1530–72) glosses and four times with them. The *Shulḥan Arukh*'s success may be attributed to a number of factors, not least the reputation and authority of its author. Nevertheless, the work was initially criticized by many leading rabbinic figures. Among their complaints were the *Shulḥan Arukh*'s excessive brevity and that the *Shulḥan Arukh* reflected Sephardic and neglected Ashkenaz tradition in *halakhah*. However, in the end it is the glosses of the Rema and other commentators addressing those complaints, that make the *Shulḥan Arukh* the primary *halakhic* work that it is to the present day.[25]

The widespread acceptance of the *Shulḥan Arukh* resulted not only in numerous reprints with glosses and commentaries, but also in translations. ***Shulḥan ha-Panim*** (*Misa de El Almah*) by R. Meir Jacob ibn Me'iri is a Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) translation and abridgment of the *Shulḥan Arukh*. It was first printed in Salonika (1568, 152 ff.) at the press of Joseph Jabez, the title page having the florets typical of Jabez imprints. It dates the beginning of the work to 15 Av 5368 (Monday, August 19, 1568). The text of the title page is, excepting the header and footer, in Ladino in vocalized Hebrew letters. There are both Hebrew and Ladino introductions, the former in a small rabbinic type.

Shulḥan ha-Panim (*Misa de El Almah*) is primarily the laws in the first two parts of the *Shulḥan Arukh*, that is, *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* (5a–113b) and *Yoreh De'ah* (114a–166b), with selections from *Even ha-Ezer* (177a–180b) and *Ḥoshen Mishpat* (181a–187a). The text, in Ladino, is

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25 Meir Benayahu, *Yosef Beḥiri, Maran Rabbi Joseph Caro* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 407-523 [Hebrew]; Reuben Margaliot, "The First Editions of the *Shulḥan Arukh*," *Sinai* XXXVII (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 25-29 [Hebrew]; Heller, II pp. 554-55; Naphtali Ben-Menaḥem, "The First Editions of the *Shulḥan Arukh*," in *Rabbi Yosef Karo: Iyunim u-Mehkarim be-Mishnat Maran Ba'al ha-Shulḥan Arukh*, ed. Yitzhak Raphael (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 101-03 n. 1 [Hebrew].

set in a single column, in square vocalized Hebrew letters. In his introduction, ibn Me'iri defends translating the *Shulḥan Arukh*, noting that Maimonides wrote in Arabic, that many do not know Hebrew, and that perhaps this will encourage them to learn the Holy language. Ibn Me'iri forbids with an oath the reprinting of this book in Latin letters, even if the act is well meant, out of concern that it will then be reproduced by someone unfamiliar with Hebrew writing, as has been done with the prayer book, and he requires that one swear by His holy name not to do so, so that non-Jews will not read it. Ibn Me'iri further includes in this oath a prohibition on printing the book anywhere in Italy because the censors alter the text, and unsuspecting readers will be unaware that this has been done.

Shulḥan ha-Panim was, however, reprinted in Venice (1602) at the press of Giovanni di Gara. In his introduction, R. Joseph ben David Franco, who brought the book to press, omits any mention that *Shulḥan ha-Panim* was printed previously. However, as ibn Me'iri's introduction is of value, Franco includes it, but not wishing to show that he has transgressed the translator's oath prohibiting printing the book in Italy, he has modified the prohibition to a restriction on printing anywhere in Italy but Venice, since there the censors remove only that which is explicitly against their religion, so that nothing has to be removed. The reference to non-Jews has been modified to read Ishma'elim.[26]

The *halakhic* works described here are timeless but, despite being republished over the centuries, are now only occasionally reprinted. Moreover, they are little studied today by most individuals interested in contemporary *halakhah*. Although available, albeit with some effort, they have largely become antiquarian works. Part of the

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[26] Meir Benayahu, *Copyright, Authorization, and Imprimatur for Hebrew Books Printed in Venice* (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 218–22 [Hebrew]; A. M. Habermann, *Giovanni di Gara: Printer, Venice 1564–1610*. ed. Y. Yudlov (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 106-07 no. 216 [Hebrew]; Isaac Yudlov, *Ginzei Yisrael*, *The Israel Mehlman Collection in the Jewish National and University Library* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 231-32 no. 1494 [Hebrew with English Appendix].

chain of *halakhic* development, they are, today, infrequently a component of contemporary *halakhic* discourse except by learned decisors. This is due to the overwhelming acceptance of the *Shulḥan Arukh*, which, together with its numerous commentaries and super-commentaries, is now the touchstone of *halakhic* discourse. Nevertheless, for centuries these works provided provision for the way (*ẓeidah la-derekh*), upon which the *Shulḥan Arukh* drew and which still remain, for interested contemporary readers, *ẓeidah la-derekh*. ℰ