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JEWISH REFUGEES IN AMSTERDAM

*QUESTIONS BY A CHRISTIAN
CLERIC FROM ROUEN, FRANCE,
AND ANSWERS BY THE
EXCELLENT, EMINENT, AND
WISE SAUL LEVI MORTERA*

Translated with commentary by
GREGORY B. KAPLAN

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS



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For my son,
Andrew Cruz Kaplan

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCE	before the Common Era
CE	Common Era
Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
EHLM	Ets Haim—Livraria Montezinos
Ezek.	Ezekiel
ff.	and the following
fol.	folio
fols.	folios
Gen.	Genesis
Hos.	Hosea
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Lev.	Leviticus
Mal.	Malachi
Num.	Numbers
Ps.	Psalms
r.	reigned
Zech.	Zechariah
Zeph.	Zephaniah

Texts are cited by page number or, in the cases of manuscripts with folios, by folio number preceded by “fol.” or “fols.”

All English biblical quotations come from the *Jewish Study Bible*. The biblical quotations in Spanish in my edition of the Spanish text of *Questions* come from the 1995 edition of the *Biblia Reina-Valera*.

INTRODUCTION

Saul Levi Mortera: Chief Rabbi and Polemicist

Saul Levi Mortera (ca. 1596–1660) was the spiritual leader of Amsterdam’s Jewish community during the city’s Golden Age. Mortera (whose surname is sometimes spelled Morteira) was born in the Venetian Ghetto into a prominent family of Ashkenazic (German) Jewish origin. His grandfather, Judah Katzenelellenbogen (1521–1597), was the chief rabbi of the Jewish community of Venice, where Mortera may have begun his rabbinic career under the tutelage of another renowned Ashkenazic theologian, Leon Modena (1571–1648).¹ Mortera may have remained in Venice to follow in his grandfather’s footsteps were it not for the relationship he developed with Elijah Montalto (1567–1616), a physician from Lisbon seeking edification in Jewish doctrines.

Montalto was a *converso*: a descendant of Spanish or Portuguese Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Much has been written about this period of religious persecution, and there is scholarly consensus that the fact that conversions were forced and preceded by outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence, and without an official program of Catholic indoctrination, meant that many *conversos* were insincere Catholics.² While they behaved as Christians in public, these *conversos* practised a secret and skeletal form of Judaism, or crypto-Judaism, in fear of persecution by an Inquisition that operated as a moral police in Spain and Portugal. Crypto-Judaism was influenced by Catholic traditions, such as those that involved Mariology, personal salvation, and the adoration of saints, and involved practices that varied from one individual to another. The reduced and Catholicized nature of crypto-Judaism is evident in the few

¹ Saperstein first identified the relationship of Mortera to Katzenelellenbogen in *Exile in Amsterdam*, 381. Concerning the possibility that Mortera was Modena’s student, see Mortera, *Arguments Against the Christian Religion*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 20–21 (henceforth, simply *Arguments*); and Mortera, *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés*, ed. Salomon, xl.

² See Cohen, *The Spanish*, and Ray, *Jewish Life in Medieval Spain*, for some of the most recent assessments of the period.

observances that were kept: 1. a belief in the Jewish concept of a unitary God; 2. messianic views that opposed Church doctrines; 3. a belief that personal salvation could be achieved through adherence to the Law of Moses; 4. a conviction that adherence to Judaism would bring good fortune; 5. devotion among many to “Jewish” saints (most notably Moses and Esther); and 6. a belief in the superiority of Judaism.³

Montalto travelled to the Venetian Ghetto because the open practice of Judaism was tolerated, and because Ashkenazic and Sephardic (Spanish and Portuguese) synagogues had been established during the sixteenth century. The first to come into existence were Ashkenazic congregations led by rabbis such as Mortera’s grandfather, Judah Katzenelellenbogen, whose opinions concerning religious doctrines were treated as authoritative by Jewish communities throughout Europe. Montalto was one of many *convertos* who came to Venice to seek guidance in learning to practise Judaism—a process known as “rejudaization.” Mortera worked to rejudaize Montalto from 1610 to 1612, which appears to have been very successful insofar as Montalto developed his own desire to be a rejudaizer and wrote letters inviting relatives to join him in Venice.⁴

In 1612, Montalto was summoned to Paris to serve as a court physician, and Mortera formed part of a retinue that would remain in France until Montalto died in 1616. During this time, Mortera gained fame as a rabbinic authority and expert in Jewish mysticism (or Kabbalah), and in a French decree from 1617 he is described as being “known for his wisdom.”⁵ The need to bury Montalto in the closest Jewish cemetery, which had been founded in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, approximately ten kilometres south of Amsterdam, fortuitously brought Mortera to the city. After Montalto’s burial, Mortera quickly established a reputation in Amsterdam and, in 1619, he was named chief rabbi of the Beth Jacob synagogue—a post that he held until he died in 1660. In addition to delivering weekly sermons, Mortera—whose marriage to a Jewish woman of Portuguese descent would produce five children—taught Talmud to seventh-grade students. In his role as spiritual leader, Mortera dedicated much of his time to rejudaization, and the success

3 These observances are identified and discussed by Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit*, 99–125.

4 For the letters written by Montalto, see Cecil Roth, “Quatre lettres d’Elie de Montalte,” 148–65.

5 “cognoist pour en sçavoir” (Mortera, *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés*, ed. Salomon, xliii).

he initially had with Montalto was one of many similar stories of *conversos* embracing Judaism and, in some cases, achieving renown as Jewish scholars.

One example was Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto (1625–1697), who was born in Amsterdam to *converso* parents whom Mortera rejudaized. Zacuto studied under Mortera before becoming a rabbi and Kabbalist in Venice. Zacuto was one of several rabbinic scholars trained by Mortera, and Zacuto's rise to prominence can be attributed to his thorough education in Jewish subjects and a talent for written communication that Mortera influenced. Zacuto authored many Hebrew liturgical poems as well as a dramatic work in Hebrew, *יסוד עולם* (*Yesod Olam*, or *Foundation of the World*), which portrays the midrashic legend about Abraham smashing his father's idols and his appearance at the court of King Nimrod, where he is thrown into a fiery furnace and saved by an angel.

Zacuto may have learned to dramatize a midrashic story while studying with Mortera, who in the early 1620s co-authored a play in Portuguese, *Dialogo dos montes* (The Controversy of the Mountains), with Rehuel Jessurun (1575–1635)—a *converso* and synagogue official at Beth Jacob. *Dialogo* anticipates Zacuto's Hebrew play by expanding on a midrashic tradition, which in *Dialogo* is a dispute among mountains in ancient Israel for the privilege of being the place where God would reveal the Torah.⁶ The midrashic tradition on which *Dialogo dos montes* is based is linked to Jewish eschatology. The resolution of the dispute among the mountains in the play is a symbolic portrayal of an event that will occur in the Apocalypse according to the Midrash: namely, the reunification of two mountains, Mount Moriah (where Isaac is brought by Abraham to be sacrificed in Gen. 22) and Mount Sinai: "In the future world, Sinai will return to its original place, Mount Moriah."⁷

The seven sermons composed by Mortera to conclude *Dialogo dos montes*, in which individual mountains (Zion, Sinai, Hor Hahar, Nebo, Gerizim, Carmel, and Zetim) present their cases to be considered superior, deviate from the midrashic tradition. Mortera includes five mountains not mentioned in the Midrash (Zion, Hor Hahar, Nebo, Gerizim, and Zetim), and he omits four that are mentioned in the Midrash (Hermon, Lebanon, Moriah, and Tabor). The way in which Mortera differs from the Midrash reflects the overarching importance of rejudaization in *Diálogo dos montes*. In this light, Polack interprets Mortera's decision to include Zion and Sinai as "a reminder to those

⁶ For a discussion of this tradition, which is found in Midrash Tehillim (68: 15–18), see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:82–85.

⁷ Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 3, p. 84.

marranos who had not yet embraced Judaism as wholeheartedly as the author. It showed that Torah and Temple were more important than, among other things, the celebration of a death or triumph over the heathen.”⁸ Similarly, the omission of Mount Moriah—the mountain that is privileged in the Apocalypse according to the Midrash—speaks to Mortera’s perception of the distance between his congregants and *halachic* (biblical/rabbinic/Talmudic) Judaism.

Rejudaization is also the principal theme of Mortera’s polemical works, which he composed (mostly in Spanish but also in Portuguese) during the final decades of his lifetime, including the one translated from Spanish into English in the present volume, *Preguntas que hizo un clérigo de Ruan de Francia a las cuales respondió el excelente y eminentísimo señor hacham Saul Levi Mortera*. In general, these works establish a clear motivation for rejudaization: namely, that the free choice by *conversos* to practise Judaism would trigger the Apocalypse and the inception of a Jewish polity in which civil authority was subordinate to the Mosaic Law. Those who refused to conform could receive the penalty of *herem*, or excommunication, as in 1656, when Mortera imposed this penalty on his congregant, Benedict Spinoza (1632–1677).

Mortera went to great lengths in his writings to identify biblical justifications for rejudaization. While the Apocalypse is a constant theme, Mortera also contextualizes rejudaization in contemporary terms. For example, Mortera asserts in his writings that the abandonment of crypto-Judaism and the adoption of rabbinic Judaism promised economic benefits for *conversos* and the Amsterdam Jewish community at large, thereby enabling it to establish commercial ties with prosperous Mediterranean centres of Jewry by recognizing their rabbinic courts. Mortera expresses this view in a fictional dialogue between two *conversos* written around 1650, *Arguments Against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam*, in which he envisions rejudaization as a trigger for an apocalyptic establishment of a Jewish republic enjoying “continuous prosperity.”⁹ The link between rejudaization and economic prosperity resonates in *Questions* in what is asked of Mortera (for example, Question 11, “For what sins has God, for so many centuries, left the Jewish republic in ruins and captivity during such a long exile?”), and in Mortera’s replies (for example, to Question 13, “On what do the Hebrews base their enduring hope for their Messiah?” when he describes a Jewish “return to their ancient lands and property”).

8 Polack, “Introduction,” xxv.

9 Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 64.

By the mid-1600s, Mortera's Beth Jacob congregation had grown from a few hundred individuals to more than two thousand and received a steady stream of *converso* refugees from Spain and Portugal.¹⁰ This influx contributed to the survival of crypto-Judaism and explains why Mortera felt compelled to write *Questions* toward the end of his career. Mortera's efforts were successful, as evidenced by the prosperity of Amsterdam's Jewish community. Through his writings, Mortera played a pivotal role in elevating the profile of his adoptive city as a hub for a community that adhered to rabbinic norms, which unified Jews throughout Europe and the Middle East. More broadly, Mortera's efforts at rejudaizing Amsterdam's *conversos* ultimately contributed to the rise of the city as an important global trade centre, a crucible of modern liberal political thought, and a laboratory of interconfessional tolerance. Christian polemicists such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) actively involved themselves in the city's governance. They composed treatises advocating for the protection of religious and cultural minorities to stimulate trade and economic development. Mortera's participation in interconfessional dialogues with these polemicists left a profound impact on his writings. The evidence of this impact in *Questions* demonstrates a fusion of rabbinic and philosophical thought that comprised a unique formula for religious indoctrination.

The Contents of *Questions by a Christian Cleric from Rouen, France, and Answers by the Excellent, Eminent, and Wise Saul Levi Mortera*

Research by Miriam Bodian and Yosef Kaplan highlights the close interaction between rabbis and *conversos* undergoing religious instruction in seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Other scholars have focused on works composed by the Amsterdam rabbinate to facilitate this process, including Saperstein, who has analyzed the techniques used by Mortera in his sermons (*Exile in Amsterdam*), and Yaacob Dweck, who has studied the late seventeenth-century writings of Mortera's junior colleague, Rabbi Jacob Sasportas (1610–1698). Most recently, Benjamin Fisher suggests that Mortera was unique in persuading *conversos* because of his profound knowledge of "Christian doctrine" and his use of "philosophical deductions."¹¹ These are

¹⁰ Bodian observes that, "during its heyday in the 1670s, the community had a population of about 2,500" (*Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 2).

¹¹ Fisher, *Amsterdam's People of the Book*, 169 and 193, respectively.

tendencies that will be identified below for the first time in *Questions*, which has been neglected because it is preserved only in manuscript form.

Questions has four textual witnesses housed by the Ets Haim Library of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam. All four witnesses are available online in a digital format. One is found on fols. 1r–27r of MS EH 48 C 09 (23.8 × 17 centimetres), which is a copy made in the eighteenth century of a work with a title page listing a date of 1646.¹² This date would, therefore, be a *terminus ad quem* for the composition of *Questions*. Another eighteenth-century witness is included in MS EH 48 E 41 (21.4 × 16.1 centimetres), in which *Questions* occupies fols. 1r–19r.¹³ A third witness occupies pages 1–20 of MS EH 48 A 21 (22.9 × 29.3 centimetres), which was copied in 1712 as the title page reveals (and which includes page numbers rather than folio numbers).¹⁴ Finally, *Questions* is also found on fols. 86r–108r of MS EH 48 D 38 (19.4 × 15.6 centimetres), which is the copy made in 1712 on which my translation is based.¹⁵

In *Questions*, Mortera responds to twenty-three queries on Jewish doctrines posed by a Christian cleric from Rouen whose historical identity is unknown:

1. How is it proved that in God there cannot be a plurality, or three persons in one essence?
2. Has faith in the Saviour Messiah always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins?
3. Will there be only one Messiah?
4. What evidence proves that the Messiah must be purely a man, and not both man and God?
5. Will the redemption of the Messiah be only corporeal and temporary?
6. Will the Law of Moses regarding ceremonies be kept in the time of the Messiah so that no other law or ceremonies need to be given?
7. By what means do the Jews obtain forgiveness for their sins at this time, since without it they cannot be saved?
8. How is it confirmed from Holy Scripture that the Messiah has not come?

12 Amsterdam, Ets Haim—Livreria Montezinos (hereafter EHLM), MS EH 48 C 09.

13 EHLM, MS EH 48 E 41.

14 EHLM, MS EH 48 A 21.

15 EHLM, MS EH 48 D 38 (hereafter *Questions*).

9. How does one respond to prophecies that Christians claimed to have been fulfilled, like those in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the twenty-second Psalm?
10. Which people will receive and obey the Messiah, the Jews or the Gentiles?
11. For what sins has God, for so many centuries, left the Jewish republic in ruins and captivity during such a long exile?
12. What are the main articles of your faith, and how many are there?
13. On what do the Hebrews base their enduring hope for their Messiah?
14. What good do those who die before his coming expect from him in this life?
15. What use will your Messiah be at the final judgment and then in the afterlife, since he and everyone will die and the world will end?
16. Do the Jews now have the pure Hebrew text of the Holy Scripture with its ancient truth?
17. Is it permissible for Jews to interpret the Holy Scriptures, and are they free to follow the meaning they prefer?
18. Who has the authority to adjudicate in matters concerning the observance of the Law and the punishment of transgressors?
19. Will Jews who have converted to Christianity be saved or damned after abandoning the Law of Moses and living and dying as Christians?
20. What just cause exists for pardoning Jews who return to Judaism after having received and professed the Christian Catholic faith?
21. Can Jews still be saved if they have not been circumcised or observed the Law in the lands where it is not permitted, after having gone against it and their consciences by practising Christianity sincerely, worshipping idols, attending mass, and denying being Jews even though they are in their hearts?
22. What happened to the Ten Tribes that the Assyrians took captive, and where are they?
23. Do the Jews confess to the Original Sin with which we were all born, and if not, why do they deny it?

As the queries reveal, the central topics discussed in *Questions* are Jewish eschatology and the place Mortera envisioned for rejudaised *conversos* and other exiled communities in the Apocalypse.

Questions provides a unique rabbinic perspective on the Apocalypse, which was widely thought to be imminent in the Netherlands, as evidenced throughout the 1500s by the following acquired by a self-proclaimed Anabaptist messiah, David Joris (1501–1556).¹⁶ According to both Jewish and Christian eschatology, the ingathering of Jews and rejudaized *conversos* portends the restoration of the Hebrew Republic, which names the political system by which the biblical Jews were governed by civil magistrates (Moses, judges, kings, prophets) whose authority was not invested by or superseded by the Mosaic Law, from the time they received the Torah at Mount Sinai until the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in 70 CE.¹⁷ The separation of civil and religious authority in the Hebrew Republic served as a model pre-apocalyptic polity in their fight to break from Spanish (Habsburg) divine right rule.¹⁸

Amsterdam rabbis forged two paths toward a revived Hebrew Republic. One was championed by Mortera's younger colleague, Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657), who envisioned an apocalyptic ingathering in England of exiled Jews and rejudaized *conversos*, which would trigger the inception there of a Jewish polity.¹⁹ This vision anticipated the Jewish messianic fervour that escalated during the mid-1600s and culminated in the movement dedicated to Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), which reached its zenith in Amsterdam in the mid-1660s. Zevi was born in Smyrna, where he began to proclaim himself as the Messiah in the 1640s, and during the 1650s he travelled to major Jewish communities to spread the news of his arrival. Zevi attracted thousands of followers, including many European *conversos*, who sold their possessions and prepared for the Apocalypse. In 1666, Zevi's conversion to Islam (under pain of death) in Constantinople greatly diminished his movement and ended his call for the establishment of a Jewish homeland.²⁰

Mortera forged the second path in *Questions* and other works by grounding rabbinic exegesis in logical reasoning to argue that the practice of Judaism by

16 For more on the ideas espoused by David Joris, see Waite, "Writing in the Heavenly Language."

17 This eschatological tradition is based on Isa. 11:12 ("He will hold up a signal to the nations / And assemble the banished of Israel, / And gather the dispersed of Judah / From the four corners of the earth").

18 For more on the significance of the Hebrew Republic to Christian polemicists, see Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*.

19 Menasseh depicted his messianism in *The Hope of Israel*. For more on this topic, see Fisch, "Messianic Politics of Menasseh ben Israel."

20 For the most comprehensive study of Zevi, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*.

descendants of *conversos* in Amsterdam would contribute to the reestablishment of a Jewish State in the Holy Land.²¹ This path would ultimately prove to be more enduring, as scribes continued to replicate the works of Mortera in the century after his death.²² However, Mortera's legacy would have both positive and negative aspects. Successful instances of rejudaization, such as that of Miguel de Barrios (ca. 1625–1701), would reflect the ongoing impact of Mortera's theological and philosophical arguments in persuading conversos to adhere to Judaism and act as catalysts for the Apocalypse. Barrios, who was born in Spain and who lived in Portugal before fleeing the Inquisition, arrived in Amsterdam in 1672—more than a decade after Mortera had died. As he declares in his *Triumpho del gobierno popular* (*Triumph of the Popular Government*), Barrios regarded Mortera as an authoritative figure who preserved “the fire of the Law,” and who inspired, even in death, rejudaized *conversos* “who, in the shadow of his obedience, are enlightened by his healthy doctrine.”²³

Mortera's attempt to establish to rabbinic authority would not be accepted by everyone with whom he came into contact, as was the case with Uriel da Costa (1585–1640), a Portuguese *converso* who arrived in Amsterdam in 1623 after being excommunicated in Hamburg for composing an attack on rabbinic Judaism, *Propostas contra a tradição* (*Propositions Against the Tradition*). Da Costa continued to disseminate anti-rabbinic concepts during the 1620s in *Exame das tradições phariseas* (*Examination of Pharisaic Traditions*) and, in 1623, his Hamburg excommunication was sanctioned by the Amsterdam rabbinate, which excommunicated him again in the 1630s, several years before he took his own life by suicide in 1640. Saperstein has shown how da Costa came to be at odds with Mortera after publishing *Examination*.²⁴ A more famous case of the rejection of Mortera's rabbinic authority, that of Spinoza, will be considered below.

21 For an analysis of this second path in Mortera's *Arguments* and *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés*, see Kaplan, *The Origins of Democratic Zionism*, 67–86.

22 For example, Mortera's *Providencia de Dios con Israel* (*The Providence of God with Israel*)—the Spanish translation of *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés* (*Treatise on the Truth of the Law of Moses*)—was copied on some thirty occasions from the late 1600s to the mid-1700s.

23 EHLM, MS EH 9 E 43, 65; the translation into English from *Triumpho del gobierno popular* is my own.

24 Saperstein, “Saul Levi Morteira's Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul,” 140–41. For more on the works of Barrios, see Lieberman, *El Teatro alegórico de Miguel*, and Scholberg, *La poesía religiosa de Miguel de Barrios*.

The Sources for Mortera's Ideas in Questions

Questions contains more than seventy-five biblical quotations from the Old Testament, many of which are incomplete. Mortera sometimes indicates omitted biblical text by using a symbol for “etcetera” (&^a). Most of the time, there is no symbol, and Mortera incorporates a condensed version of the biblical quotation. An example in which Mortera uses both techniques is found in his reply to Question 6 (“Will the Law of Moses regarding ceremonies be kept in the time of the Messiah so that no other law or ceremonies need to be given?”), where he quotes from Deut. 30:1–8, 10:

Primero. Lo que dice el señor quasi en el fin de la ley después de haber publicado el premio y pena a los obedientes y transgresores de ella. Dice, “Sucederá que cuando hayan venido sobre ti todas estas cosas, la bendición y la maldición que he puesto delante de ti, &^a y [91r] (*omitted from 30:1-te arrepientas en medio de todas las naciones adonde te haya arrojado Jehová, tu Dios*) te conviertas a Jehová, tu Dios, y obedezcas a su voz conforme a todo lo que yo te mando hoy, tú y tus hijos, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma, entonces Jehová hará volver a tus cautivos, tendrá misericordia de ti y volverá a recogerte de entre todos los pueblos adonde te haya esparcido Jehová, tu Dios. Aunque tus desterrados estén en las partes más lejanas que hay debajo del cielo, de allí te recogerá Jehová, tu Dios, y de allá te tomará. Jehová, tu Dios, te hará volver a la tierra que heredaron tus padres, (*omitted from 30:5-y será tuya; te hará bien y te multiplicará más que a tus padres.*) Y circuncidará Jehová, tu Dios, tu corazón, &^a y (*omitted from 30:6-el corazón de tu descendencia, para que ames a Jehová, tu Dios, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma, a fin de que vivas.*) Pondrá Jehová, tu Dios, todas estas maldiciones sobre tus enemigos (*omitted from 30:7-y sobre los que te persiguieron con odio.*) Tú te convertirás, escucharás la voz de Jehová y pondrás por obra todos sus mandamientos que yo te ordeno hoy. (*omitted 30:9-Entonces Jehová, tu Dios, te hará prosperar en toda la obra de tus manos, en el fruto de tu vientre, en el fruto de tu bestia y en el fruto de tu tierra, para bien; porque Jehová volverá a gozarse sobre ti para bien, de la manera que se gozó sobre tus padres,*) cuando obedezcas a la voz de Jehová, tu Dios, y guardes sus mandamientos y sus estatutos escritos en este libro de la Ley; cuando te conviertas a Jehová, tu Dios, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma.”

First, what the Lord says near the end of the law after having established the reward and punishment for those obedient to it and the transgressors: “When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you &^a [91r] (*omitted from 30:1-and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which the LORD your God has banished you,*) and you return to the Lord your God, and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day, the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will bring you together

again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the LORD your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And the LORD your God will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, (*omitted from 30:5-and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.*) Then the LORD your God will open up your heart &^a (*omitted from 30:6-and the hearts of your offspring to love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live.*) The Lord your God will inflict all those curses upon the enemies, (*omitted from 30:7-and foes who persecuted you.*) You, however, will again heed the LORD and obey all His commandments that I enjoin upon you this day. (*omitted 30:9-And the LORD your God will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the LORD will again delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your fathers.*) since you will be heeding the LORD your God and keeping His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching—once you return to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.”

In the passages above, the sections in italics comprise the biblical text omitted by Mortera on two occasions with “&” and three times without this symbol. For the most part, when Mortera omits part of a biblical passage, he does so without any indication, resulting in a condensed version of the original.

The likely reason for the omitted biblical text in *Questions* is that Mortera quoted the Bible from memory, which I have suggested as an explanation for the incomplete biblical quotations in Mortera’s *Arguments*.²⁵ Mortera wrote *Arguments* around the time that he wrote *Questions*, and the biblical quotations in both works reveal that Mortera was familiar with multiple versions of the Old Testament and both Jewish and Christian versions of the Bible. In *Arguments*, Mortera includes hundreds of biblical quotations, the vast majority of which derive from the Old Testament. (There are a dozen biblical quotations from the New Testament.)

The primary source for the Old Testament quotations in *Arguments* and *Questions* is the *Biblia de Ferrara* (*Ferrara Bible*), which was first published in 1553 and widely used by Jews.²⁶ For the composition of both works, Mortera also consulted the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (*Reina-Valera Bible*), which was first published in 1569 (in Basel) and then as a revised edition in Amsterdam in 1602. The *Biblia Reina-Valera* was widely available and several revised editions were published during the seventeenth century. Benjamin Fischer

²⁵ Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 51–52.

²⁶ Saperstein believes that Mortera owned a copy of the *Biblia de Ferrara* (*Exile in Amsterdam*, 80).

argues that Mortera's affinity for the *Biblia Reina-Valera* owed much to the fact that it "was closer to the Jewish version of Scripture than any other Christian Bible written in Spanish."²⁷

The influence on *Questions* of both the *Biblia de Ferrara* and the *Biblia Reina-Valera* is evident, for example, in Mortera's response to Question 17 ("Is it permissible for Jews to interpret the Holy Scriptures, and are they free to follow the meaning they prefer?"), when he quotes from Deut. 5:27–28: "Go, say to them, 'Return to your tents.' But you remain here with Me, and I will give you the whole Instruction—the laws and the rules—that you shall impart to them." Although in the *Biblia de Ferrara* (p. 159) this quotation corresponds to Deut. 5:27–28, it corresponds to Deut. 5:30–31 in the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (fol. 58v), which are the chapter and verse numbers given on fol. 102r of EH 48 D 38. The reason for this difference is that Deut. 5 has three additional verses in the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (18, 19, and 20), which correspond to commandments (respectively, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not steal," and "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"); these are all included within Deut. 5:17 in the *Biblia de Ferrara* (and in the *Jewish Study Bible*).

At the same time, while the chapter and verse numbers used by Mortera correspond to those used in the *Biblia Reina-Valera*, a comparison of Mortera's quote to those in the Bibles under consideration indicates that the *Biblia Reina-Valera* rendition was not the textual source:

anda di a ellos tornad a vuestras tiendas, y tu aqui esta conmigo, y hablare a ti todas las encomendanças, los fueros, y los juizios, y los enseñaras. (Mortera, *Preguntas*, fol. 102r)

Ve, diles, Bolveos à vuestras tiendas. Y tu estéte aqui conmigo para que yo te diga todos los mandamientos, y estatutos y derechos que tu les enseñaras. (*Biblia Reina-Valera*, fol. 58v)

"Anda, di a ellos: tornad a vos a vuestras tiendas. Y tu, aqui estaa comigo, y fablare a ti a toda la encomendança, y los fueros y los juizios que les abezaras. (*Biblia de Ferrara*, 159)

As is evident, the closest source for Mortera's quote is the *Biblia de Ferrara*, with the only significant difference being Mortera's use of the verb "enseñaras" (you shall impart) rather than "abezaras," which derives from the Ladino verb "ambezar" (to teach). However, the appearance of "enseñaras" in Mortera's quote, as well as the use of the numerical reference Deut 5:31 in EH 48 D 38, suggests the Mortera also consulted the *Biblia Reina-Valera* for the composition of *Questions*.

²⁷ Fisher, "Opening the Eyes of the 'Novos reformados,'" 128.

In addition to the Old Testament, Mortera also refers to other Jewish sources to establish the authoritative status of rabbinic Judaism. According to Jewish tradition, the foundation of rabbinic Judaism was dictated to Moses by God on Mount Sinai as the Oral Law and then preserved in two compilations of rabbinic commentaries: the Mishnah (ca. 200 CE) and the Talmud (or Babylonian Talmud, ca. 500 CE), which includes both the Mishnah and a later compilation known as the Gemara (ca. 500 CE). Mortera recognizes the importance of rabbinic Judaism in his response to Question 17: “Today, this tradition is recorded in the Mishnah and the Talmud, according to which the only way to know it is by consulting the Holy Scripture.”²⁸ Mortera’s use of the term Mental Law (in EH 48 D 38, “Ley mental”), rather than Oral Law, reveals that he consulted a work by Imanuel Aboab (ca. 1555–1628) for his response. Aboab was a Portuguese *converso* who emigrated to Italy, where he dedicated himself to the rejudaization of *conversos* and wrote *Nomología* (*The Theory of the Names*), a defence of the Oral Law first published posthumously (1629) in Amsterdam. Aboab uses the term “Ley mental” to refer to the Oral Law in *Nomología*, which anticipates Mortera’s use of the same term in *Questions*.

In replying to Question 18 (“Who has the authority to adjudicate in matters concerning the observance of the Law and the punishment of transgressors?”), Mortera again presents the rabbinic perspective that the Talmud contains the Oral Law:

Later, however, we were taken captive because of our sins from our land and dispersed throughout many places, and both prophecy and the great senate ended. Nobody had the authority to adjudicate the Law in any case, except in those cases for which we had a written record by the most learned men of the Talmud, who left us examples of what occurred in their time.²⁹

Since the Jewish Diaspora, which began after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the “authority to adjudicate in matters concerning the observance of the Law and the punishment of transgressors” is held by the rabbinate, as Mortera declares.

Aside from drawing on Jewish and *converso* texts, Mortera also bases his ideas on Christian sources in *Questions*.³⁰ In his response to Question 16

28 *Questions*, fol. 102v. Translation mine for all quotations from *Questions*.

29 *Questions*, fol. 103r.

30 For discussions of Mortera’s use of Christian sources in his other works, see Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 60–61; and Kaplan, *The Origins of Democratic Zionism*, 67–93.

(“Do the Jews now have the pure Hebrew text of the Holy Scripture with its ancient truth?”), Mortera uses Augustine’s *City of God* for support:

To answer this question, it would be enough to point out that all the Hebrew Bibles found throughout the world do not differ from each other, not even a single syllable, which is very clear proof of their authenticity. Since the people of Israel are scattered throughout the world and subject to different nations, their Bibles are always exactly the same. There cannot be any doubt about this, so I will refer to declarations made by the most respected Christian scholars, including Augustine, who says, on pages 15 and 13 of his book *City of God*, that it cannot be believed that the Jews have in any way contaminated the Holy Books.³¹

Mortera refers to specific pages of an edition of Augustine’s *City of God* that has not been identified. It is interesting to consider that, while growing up in Venice, he may have had access to an edition published in Venice in 1475. In any case, it appears that Mortera is referring to Book 18 of *City of God*. In particular, Mortera’s declarations that “the fact that all the ancient and modern Hebrew originals are consistent in everything, and in all ways, even though they were written at different times and places, speaks in favour of their authenticity” and “it should not be presumed that such an innumerable people, who have no other good thing in their captivity than the possession of the holy books, would have wanted to falsify them to satisfy the ill will and rancor that could have been directed toward a nation, or people” are attributed to “the words of Augustine.”³²

Mortera’s declarations are likely grounded in Book 18, Chapter 42 of *City of God*:

When the high priest had sent them to him in Hebrew, he afterwards demanded interpreters of him, and there were given him seventy-two, out of each of the twelve tribes six men, most learned in both languages, to wit, the Hebrew and Greek and their translation is now by custom called the Septuagint. It is reported, indeed, that there was an agreement in their words so wonderful, stupendous, and plainly divine, that when they had sat at this work, each one apart (for so it pleased Ptolemy to test their fidelity), they differed from each other in no word which had the same meaning and force, or, in the order of the words; but, as if the translators had been one, so what all had translated was one, because in very deed the one Spirit had been in them all. And they received so wonderful a gift of God, in order that the authority of these Scriptures might be commended not as human but divine,

31 *Questions*, fol. 101r.

32 *Questions*, fol. 101v.

as indeed it was, for the benefit of the nations who should at some time believe, as we now see them doing.³³

For additional support by Christian theologians in his response to Question 16, Mortera enlists Jerome and Thomas Aquinas: “Jerome affirms the same thing in his book *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, as does Bede, in *Greater Chronicle*, and Thomas Aquinas exonerates Paul’s Epistle in Chapter 9 of *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*.”³⁴ Mortera is probably alluding to Jerome’s stated intent to establish the authoritative status of the Hebrew biblical text:

Therefore it shall be my concern both to rebut the errors of those who make different kinds of conjectures about the Hebrew books, and to restore to their proper authority those things which in the Latin and Greek codices seem to burst forth in abundance; and to make plain through consideration of the native language the etymologies of objects, of names, and of territories which have no meaning in our own language.³⁵

Mortera also likely refers to the manner by which Bede privileges “the Hebrew Truth” while elucidating an aeonian chronology in Chapter 66 (“The Six Ages of this World”) of *Reckoning of Time*—a chapter that circulated independently under the title *Greater Chronicle*—and Chapter 9 of Thomas Aquinas’ *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, in which Aquinas explains that the “the Apostle...recounts the greatness of the Jews...shows how the Gentiles have been drawn into that greatness...[and] shows his affection for the Jewish people, lest anything he had said or was about to say against them should seem to proceed from hatred.”³⁶

As his response to Question 16 continues, Mortera utilizes a more contemporary source before returning to Augustine: “In addition, Alexander de Tartagnis upholds the same truth in *Queries* and Augustine calls us ancient treasurers of the Holy Books in *Expositions on the Psalms*, Psalm 40. He confirms this in Chapter 43 of Book 18 of *The City of God*, in which partial confirmation is worth more than one hundred witnesses.”³⁷ Alexander de Tartagnis (ca. 1424–ca. 1477) was an Italian jurist and author of *Consilia* (whose earliest textual witness is from 1477), which may be the work mentioned by

33 Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Dods, 875.

34 *Questions*, fol. 101v.

35 Jerome, *Saint Jerome’s “Hebrew Questions on Genesis,”* trans. Hayward, 29.

36 Bede, *Greater Chronicle*, trans. Wallis, 157–237; Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul*, trans. Larcher, 245.

37 *Questions*, fol. 101v.

Mortera, even though the work in question is called “Consultas” (Queries) in three of the four textual witnesses to *Questions*.³⁸

Concerning Mortera’s direct allusion to *Expositions on the Psalms*, although Augustine displays a derogatory attitude toward Jews in his commentary on Psalm 40, he does, like other Christian sources mentioned by Mortera, declare that the Jews possess the Law:

Hear wherein the Jews serve us, and not without reason.... With them are the Law and the Prophets, in which Law, and in which Prophets, Christ is preached. When we have to do with Pagans, and show this coming to pass in the Church of Christ, which before was predicted of the Name of Christ, of the Head and Body of Christ, lest they think that we have forged these predictions, and from things which have happened, as though they were future, had made them up, we bring forth the books of the Jews.³⁹

The authoritative status of the Hebrew Bible, which Augustine treats as equal to that of the Septuagint, and the truth revealed by exegesis, are core concepts that Mortera exploits in *Questions* to persuade *converso* readers to submit to his authority in spiritual matters, which was a gratifying process for most *conversos* but which was, on occasion, an exasperating one.

Questions as a *converso* Text

Like his patron Montalto, the large majority of Mortera’s congregation descended from Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forced to convert to Catholicism. At great risk, these *converso* forebears maintained their Jewish identities secretly while living in nations where royally sanctioned Inquisitions punished any religious behaviour that deviated from Catholic norms. After the signing in 1579 of the Union of Utrecht, which united the northern provinces of the Netherlands in a revolt against Spain and prohibited anyone from being “investigated or persecuted because of his religion,” several hundred Portuguese *conversos* fled to Amsterdam. They founded the Beth Jacob synagogue in the early 1600s and soon discovered that they would not be accepted within the larger network of European and Mediterranean Jewry until they relinquished crypto-Judaism and followed norms that regulated every aspect of daily life for Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities. These norms, including the 613 biblical commandments, Talmudic laws and

³⁸ Camerino, Biblioteca Valentina, 28. In MS EH 48 C 09, the work by Tartagnis is called “*Exposición de los psalmos*” (fol. 20r).

³⁹ *Expositions on the Psalms*, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801.htm>.

the *Shulchan Aruch*—a sixteenth-century codification of Jewish law—were unknown to the founders of Beth Jacob.

At the same time, an obstacle Mortera faced was the reluctance of some *conversos* to abandon crypto-Jewish practices and be rejudaized by adhering to rabbinic Judaism. While the toleration instituted by the Union of Utrecht created an opportunity to embrace Judaism, *conversos* lacked familiarity with rabbinic laws or the motivation to abandon crypto-Judaism. Mortera's rabbinic career and his writings responded to the need for *conversos* to receive a formal education in Jewish doctrines and traditions. Such education was prohibited in inquisitorial Iberia, where any evidence of Jewish religious or scholarly activity by *conversos* was treated as heresy and grounds for punishment. *Conversos* were not accustomed to expressing their crypto-Jewish spirituality in public and required encouragement to perceive the value of leaving what they considered to be Judaism and submit to communal norms.

Moreover, *conversos* were hesitant to replace their Catholicized beliefs with Talmudic norms that forbade their individualized practices by imposing a uniformity monitored by the rabbinate. Rejudaization required *conversos* to relinquish a spirituality that had evolved in the shadow of Catholic doctrines, such as individual salvation, which was perhaps the most ingrained crypto-Jewish tradition and is not discussed in rabbinic Judaism. Mortera was aware of the importance of this tradition and attempted to lead his congregants away from crypto-Judaism by redefining it in Jewish terms.⁴⁰

Mortera demonstrates this technique in his response to Question 2 ("Has faith in the Saviour Messiah always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins?"). Mortera envisioned personal salvation as an attribute achieved through adherence to Judaism.⁴¹ His response to Question 2 describes a similar spiritual path:

It is necessary to identify the type of faith being asked about here, because if what is understood is the faith that the faithful are obligated to have in God and the Messiah, then this is due only to God, not to the Messiah, who will be a man. And if what is understood is the faith and belief that one must have that he will come to redeem the people of Israel, the Jews are obligated to possess this as one of the articles of faith of the Law of God, so much so that whoever does not believe that God will send the Messiah to redeem the Jews from the captivity in which they are because of their sins and gather them

⁴⁰ I discuss this theme elsewhere with respect to Mortera's *Arguments* (Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 40–41).

⁴¹ Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 157.

in their lands is banished and cut off from the people of Israel, and has no salvation.⁴²

Like Mortera's assertion in *Arguments* that Judaism "bestows salvation" on *conversos* who embrace Judaism, in Mortera's response salvation is not bestowed on the Jew who rejects Jewish eschatology.⁴³

Mortera reveals his attitude toward the spirituality of *conversos* living outside of Amsterdam in his response to Question 21 ("Can Jews still be saved if they have not been circumcised or observed the Law in the lands where it is not permitted, after having gone against it and their consciences by practising Christianity sincerely, worshipping idols, attending mass, and denying being Jews even though they are in their hearts?").⁴⁴ In his response, Mortera identifies three types of *conversos*:

The first are those who reside in the kingdoms where it is not only forbidden to observe the Law, but where the ports are also closed to prevent them from leaving. These people are guilty before the Lord for not trying to leave for free ports, even though they risk their lives, as the Lord explicitly commands: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."⁴⁵ Here it is revealed that we must leave all things for divine love, and the examples of Hanania, Mishael, and Azariah, in Babylon, show this truth because they were willing to jump into a fire alive rather than worship a statue. He is still merciful today, and slow to anger, and takes into account human weakness and the great respect owed to the ones who are persecuted in the lands I have mentioned. He tempers His severity and favours them when He sees that their spirits are willing to serve Him, as we have seen on many occasions.⁴⁶

The first type of *converso* evokes the most sympathy in Mortera. The phrase "those who reside in the kingdoms where it is not only forbidden to observe the Law" refers to the Jews of inquisitorial Spain and Portugal. The phrase "where the ports are also closed to prevent them from leaving" alludes to the order issued in 1496 by King Manuel I to close all Portuguese ports except Lisbon to prevent Jews who refused to convert to Catholicism from escaping the country. Thousands of Jews who went to Lisbon were forcibly baptized

⁴² *Questions*, fols. 88v–89r.

⁴³ Mortera, *Arguments*, ed. and trans. Kaplan, 157.

⁴⁴ The following text ("In his response...on the pulpit") is a revised segment extracted from my study, "*Converso Spirituality*."

⁴⁵ Deut. 6:5.

⁴⁶ *Questions*, fol. 105r.

in 1497. Mortera is aware in *Questions* of the difficulties faced by crypto-Jewish *conversos* living in Spain and Portugal, who risked being recognized as such by the Inquisition if they attempted to flee, which was essentially an inescapable situation. Therefore, Mortera proclaims that these *conversos* will be treated positively: “He tempers His severity and favours them when He sees that their spirits are willing to serve Him.”

Mortera does not have the same faith in *conversos* of the second type, who have not taken advantage of the opportunity to be rejaudized:

The second type of people are those who live in kingdoms where they are not prevented from leaving, and who are free to go wherever they choose. These people are an utter abomination to God and are destined for damnation because they are truly worshippers of gold. Since they act in the sheer interest of accumulating property, they deceive God, or think they can deceive God, for the love of worldly things. And they deceive the world for love of God. They think that because they love in their hearts, they have fulfilled their obligation, but they do not see what the Lord explicitly says in the Law, in Deut. 30:14: “No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.”⁴⁷ Here it also explicitly says that to observe the Law, it is necessary to proclaim it with one’s mouth, believe it in one’s heart, and carry it out through one’s acts. It would have been better if they had not known the truth, rather than having it and pretending the opposite. In the latter case, they would have had some excuse, which they do not have, although they do know what suits them.⁴⁸

The second type described by Mortera appears to refer to communities of *conversos* like those that inhabited the coast of France: “Marrano settlements had been formed in several of the French seaports, notably Bordeaux and Bayonne. The country was Catholic, and officially in sympathy with the policy followed in Spain and Portugal. Declared Jews were, indeed, unable to settle there. Marranos, on the other hand, might immigrate without interference, so long as they continued to call themselves Christians.”⁴⁹ Implicit in this observation by Roth is the notion that many *conversos* who lived in French seaports were crypto-Jews who lived outwardly as Catholics, perhaps because of a desire to take advantage of economic opportunities that were unavailable to “declared Jews.”

A realization of the benefits of continuing to live publicly as a Catholic may also explain failed cases of rejaudization, such as Esteban de Ares de Fonseca,

⁴⁷ Deut. 30:14.

⁴⁸ *Questions*, fols. 105v–106r.

⁴⁹ Roth, *A History of the Marranos*, 222.

whose encounter with Mortera is recorded in a deposition Fonseca gave in 1635, in Madrid, before an inquisitorial tribunal.⁵⁰ Fonseca was a Portuguese *converso* who emigrated to Bayonne, where he continued to live as a Christian. Fonseca's reluctance to practise Judaism motivated some of his *converso* friends to send him to Mortera and, in 1625 or 1626, he arrived in Amsterdam to undergo rejudaization by Mortera. For six months, Mortera unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Fonseca to stop practising Christianity, and Fonseca was ultimately excommunicated by a rabbinic tribunal overseen by Mortera.

It is instructive to underscore that this case of failed rejudaization, like those of da Costa and Spinoza, was an exception. The growth of Mortera's congregation during the 1600s attests to his success in persuading most *conversos* to abandon crypto-Judaism and follow rabbinic norms. However, the need for Mortera to write about rejudaization during the 1640s testifies to lingering reluctance among *conversos* to abandon their Iberian identity. Communities such as those in Bordeaux and Bayonne formed among *conversos* who were required to be Catholics in public. In his response to Question 21, Mortera condemns the unwillingness of such *conversos* to take the next step and undergo rejudaization in Amsterdam.

Mortera reserves his harshest criticism in *Questions* for a third type of *converso*:

To these we might add a third group, which resembles the first two in its pretence. They are the people of Israel who, though Christians in their hearts, for fear of torture and death, confess to being Jews although they are not. They deceive God so that they can know the truth, as if they possessed an understanding. This is a result of the moral failing of the Inquisition, which spills so much innocent blood. For they see explicitly that they were forced to confess against their conscience what they were not. About such people, the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 20:32–33, says: “And what you have in mind shall never come to pass—when you say, ‘We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands, worshipping wood and stone.’ As I live—declares the LORD God—I will reign over you with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with overflowing fury.”⁵¹ These are the ones who, by the “strong hand” of torture, the “outstretched arm” of prisons, and with “overflowing fury” from apprehension about life, confess to being Jews and that the God of Israel is their king. If they do not deny what they said afterwards, it is because they know the punishment they deserve.⁵²

50 This document, titled “Vida y aventuras de un malsín” (The Life and Adventures of an Informer) is transcribed by Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España*, 332–36.

51 Ezek. 20:32–33.

52 *Questions*, fol. 106r–v.

Mortera opens his discussion of the third type by asserting that this type “resembles the first two in its pretence.” The “pretence” to which Mortera refers is an insincere spirituality that, in his opinion, is shared by the three types of *conversos*. Concerning the first two types, this insincere spirituality is the Catholicism they practise in public. However, each of these types has the potential to be rejudaized. Mortera criticizes the willingness of the first type to “worship a statue,” or live publicly as Catholics, although he recognizes “that their spirits are willing to serve Him, as we have seen on many occasions.” Mortera thus commands such *conversos* to flee the Inquisition and undergo rejudaization “even though they risk their lives.” Similarly, Mortera accuses the second type of *converso* of “pretending the opposite,” or acting publicly as a Catholic, even though they possess “knowledge of the truth.” Mortera proclaims that these *conversos* “are free to go wherever they choose,” which enlists them as candidates for rejudaization.

In his depiction of the first type of *converso* in *Questions*, Mortera demonstrates a willingness to accept that his *converso* congregants might never fully abandon the crypto-Judaism practised by their ancestors for centuries at great risk. After escaping Iberia, the first type of *converso* can, therefore, be guided toward rejudaization, albeit by preserving the Catholic tradition of reverence for personal salvation. Conversely, while the second type of *converso* knows the “truth,” the refusal of such a *converso* to stop practising Catholicism in public and “and carry it out,” or practise Judaism, prevents rejudaization.

Like the first two types of *conversos*, the “pretence” of the third type is an insincere spirituality. However, while the first two types are insincere Catholics, the third type of *converso* is an insincere Jew. The third type includes *conversos* who, while they “are the people of Israel,” are also “Christians in their hearts, [who] for fear of torture and death, confess to being Jews although they are not.” Mortera lays the blame for the false confessions of such *conversos* on the “moral failing of the Inquisition, which spills so much innocent blood. For they see explicitly that they were forced to confess against their conscience what they were not.” At the same time, Mortera refers to Ezekiel 20:32–33 to illustrate the reason that their forced confessions do not reveal sincere Judaism: namely, because they are sincere Catholics, “worshipping wood and stone.” Although the Inquisition, along with what Mortera attributes to an “apprehension about life,” motivates the third type of *converso* to “confess to being Jews and that the God of Israel is their king,” such a *converso* merits additional “punishment” until they “deny what they said afterwards.”

In comparison with type one, Mortera's *converso* typology presents a relatively negative view of types two and three. Type one has the potential to be rejudaized by travelling to places such as Amsterdam and Rome, although Mortera appears to realize that their crypto-Judaism will never be fully erased. Mortera reviles types two and three because they remain outside of the sphere of rabbinic influence. Type two *conversos* are "destined for damnation" because they pretend to be Christians, and type three *conversos* will face "the punishment they deserve" because they are "Christians in their hearts." Mortera's depiction of type three is, in fact, a continuation of a rabbinic attitude toward *conversos* that had formed in Spain during the early fifteenth century, shortly after the initial waves of conversions occurring from 1391 to 1416. According to the Catalan Jewish philosopher Profiat Duran (1350–1415) and subsequent rabbinic authorities, *conversos* were not "forced converts [but rather] gentiles," which is the viewpoint Mortera maintains in his depiction of type three.⁵³

Mortera's attitude toward type one invites a comparison with textual and artistic portrayals of his congregation made by two non-Jews: Philipp von Zesen (1619–1689) and Jan Veenhuysen (ca. 1631–ca. 1685). In his chronicle of life in mid-seventeenth century Amsterdam, *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam* (*Depiction of Amsterdam*), Zesen observes that Jews of Portuguese (*converso*) origin preserved their Iberian identity by celebrating Catholic festivals.⁵⁴ Fernando Pancorbo has recently asserted that a similar expression of this "doble identidad,"⁵⁵ or double identity, surfaces in an engraving by Veenhuysen of the interior of Mortera's synagogue that is included before page 263 of Zesen's *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam*. Zesen and Veenhuysen were, like Mortera, commenting on the *conversos* from a non-*converso* perspective; it is noteworthy that Zesen and Veenhuysen, who had much less contact with the *converso* community than Mortera, detected the same double identity as the rabbi who oversaw rejudaization. One logical conclusion is that some *conversos* fled the Inquisition to Amsterdam to practise publicly the crypto-Judaism they perceived to be authentic Judaism. Rather than just reluctance, the fact that the persistence of crypto-Judaism among *conversos* inside and outside of Iberia made a significant impact on Mortera's writings suggests that instances in which *conversos* refused to be rejudaized occurred with some frequency over the course of Mortera's four decades on the pulpit.

⁵³ Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain*, 282.

⁵⁴ Zesen, *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam*, 263–65.

⁵⁵ Pancorbo, "Retratos de una minoría," 124.

Another example of how Mortera appealed to *conversos* on their own terms was his awareness of the fact that they were refugees from religious persecution, which Mortera himself experienced.⁵⁶ Mortera began on this path after meeting Montalto, a *converso* refugee from Portugal. Mortera was undoubtedly well versed in rabbinic doctrines concerning a particular form of travel, namely, flight from religious persecution. One such doctrine traces its origins to the onset of anti-Jewish sentiment in southern Spain after its conquest by the Almohads in 1146. In contrast to Almoravid rulers who permitted Christians and Jews to live within their realms, the Almohads mandated conversion to Islam under pain of death or exile. While many Jews fled, many Jews chose conversion, an act that was condemned in a rabbinic responsum enlisting as an apostate “any Jew who publicly uttered the Moslem confession, although secretly performing all of Jewish precepts,” and which declared that “the only course for a steadfast Jew was not to submit to compulsion in any form but accept martyrdom.”⁵⁷

A reply to this responsum, the “Letter of Apostasy” (or “Iggereth ha-Shemad”), was composed by Moses Maimonides (ca. 1135–1204) around 1160.⁵⁸ Writing from the Maghreb after he and his family had escaped Almohad persecution in Córdoba, Maimonides takes issue with the responsum and proclaims that Jews can remain within the faith after being forcibly converted to Islam by “practicing the six hundred and thirteen [Jewish] precepts in secret.”⁵⁹ Maimonides then expands his definition of what constitutes sincere Judaism among forced converts: “Notwithstanding the fact that we may be forced to commit many serious transgressions such as the desecration of some crucial laws of the Sabbath, this should not preclude the possibility of observing less significant laws, such as carrying forbidden articles on the Sabbath.”⁶⁰ Maimonides’ classification of converts who fail to secretly observe all the Jewish precepts as sincere Jews recalls the minimal form of Judaism practised by crypto-Jewish *conversos*, and it is logical to speculate that Mortera would have looked to the “Letter of Apostasy” for insight into how to approach the spirituality of his congregants.

56 The following text (“Mortera began...favorable location”) is a revised segment extracted from my study, “*Converso* Refugee Travel.”

57 Stitskin, “From the Pages of Tradition,” 104.

58 The final sections of the “Letter of Apostasy” have been translated into English by Stitskin (“Letter of Apostasy,” 107–11).

59 Maimonides, “Letter of Apostasy,” trans. Stitskin, 107.

60 Maimonides, “Letter of Apostasy,” trans. Stitskin, 108.

One topic discussed by Maimonides in which Mortera may have found inspiration is the importance for converts to commit themselves to the practice of Judaism after fleeing from intolerance. In this spirit, Maimonides advises forced converts to seek refuge in lands where they can practise Judaism openly: “the crucial advice I wish to give to those and to those I admire and to those who seek my opinion is to leave those places of hostility and go to a location where one could fulfill the Law without compulsion and fear.”⁶¹ Moreover, Maimonides obligates converts as well as Jews to join “Jewish communities...[that are] superior...in the promotion of good deeds, well established customs and strict observance of the *mitzvot*.”⁶² Further on, Maimonides establishes that it is incumbent on converts and Jews “to make every effort, no matter at what peril, to leave a hostile, non-Jewish place where religious practices cannot be observed properly and move to a more favorable location.”⁶³

Mortera knew well the work of Maimonides, whom he often quoted “approvingly in his sermons,” and Maimonides’ call for converts and Jews to seek refuge in tolerant lands is a theme treated in *Questions*.⁶⁴ Specifically, the spirit of Maimonides call to refugees informs Mortera’s response to Question 21 (“Can Jews still be saved if they have not been circumcised or observed the Law in the lands where it is not permitted, after having gone against it and against their consciences by practising Christianity sincerely, worshipping idols, attending mass, and denying being Jews even though they are in their hearts?). To encourage *converso* refugee flight, Mortera replies that there are two groups of uncircumcised Jews, or potential refugee *conversos*, to whom his answer applies. Mortera’s second group includes *conversos* such as those of Rouen, who “are not prevented from leaving, and who are free to go wherever they choose.”⁶⁵ Although they can go to places such as Amsterdam to practise Judaism openly, Mortera condemns these *conversos* for not fleeing and for choosing wealth over faith: “These people are an utter abomination to God, and are destined for damnation because they are truly worshippers of gold.”⁶⁶

⁶¹ Maimonides, “Letter of Apostasy,” trans. Stitskin, 108.

⁶² Maimonides, “Letter of Apostasy,” trans. Stitskin, 108.

⁶³ Maimonides, “Letter of Apostasy,” trans. Stitskin, 109.

⁶⁴ Saperstein, *Exile in Amsterdam*, 212.

⁶⁵ *Questions*, fol. 105v.

⁶⁶ *Questions*, fol. 105v.

Mortera expresses greater hope for refugee travel among members of the first group, which includes *conversos* living:

in the kingdoms where it is not only forbidden to observe the Law, but where the ports are also closed to prevent them from leaving. These people are guilty before the Lord for not trying to leave for free ports, even though they risk their lives, as the Lord explicitly commands: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."⁶⁷ Here it is revealed that we must leave all things for divine love...⁶⁸

In making a clear allusion to *conversos* in Spain and Portugal by speaking to *conversos* "in the kingdoms" where Judaism is prohibited, Mortera finds a biblical justification for flight from persecution. Moreover, his conclusion that *conversos* "must leave all things for divine love" at the risk of life itself, to reach "free ports," echoes the instructions by Maimonides for Jews "to make every effort, no matter at what peril, to leave a hostile, non-Jewish place where religious practices cannot be observed properly and move to a more favorable location."

The parallels between the call in *Questions* for *conversos* to flee Iberia and the "Letter of Apostasy" speak to the broader philosophical influence of Maimonides on Mortera's attitude toward rejudaization. For Maimonides, as for Mortera with respect to *conversos* in Iberia, Jews who have been forced into apostasy must make every effort to recover their spiritual heritage even in the face of extreme adversity. This pragmatic view of returning to God, or "teshuvah," one of the fundamental tenets of Judaism, is complemented in *Questions* by philosophical ideas that sprang from Mortera's contemporary Christian milieu.

Mortera's Philosophical Approach and Its Impact on Spinoza

Mortera's responses in *Questions* are intended not only to convince the cleric of the superiority of Judaism over Christianity but also to reach his congregants by discrediting their Catholicized crypto-Jewish beliefs. Mortera's method for reaching *conversos* was shaped by the philosophical knowledge he acquired through his involvement in Dutch Christian intellectual circles. One of the most influential figures on Mortera was Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), a jurist and theologian whose works Mortera knew well enough to quote verbatim.

⁶⁷ Deut. 6:5.

⁶⁸ *Questions*, fol. 105r.

Mortera reveals in *Questions* that he had views like those of Grotius concerning the Catholic doctrine of mediated individual salvation, which was disapproved by many Protestant thinkers and the most popular Catholicized crypto-Jewish belief Mortera worked to eradicate. In a Latin treatise published in 1627, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (*The Truth of the Christian Religion*), Grotius rejects the Catholic doctrine of the necessity of the mediation of the Church and argues instead that salvation is a matter of personal choice and that individuals can attain salvation through faith, good works, and philosophical reasoning. By elucidating logical proofs, Grotius concludes that salvation is found not in the Catholic Church but in Scripture. Grotius also highlights the importance of reason in understanding God's will and asserts that individuals can reason their way to a correct understanding of faith without the intervention of an intermediary.

Like the Protestant philosophy of Grotius, the Jewish theology that Mortera taught opposed the Catholic belief in a priestly intermediary authorized by the Church with a decisive role in individual salvation. Grotius encourages his reader to proceed "without any Mixture of human Decrees" because "every one is absolutely obliged to follow the Light of his own Mind."⁶⁹ Such a reader will "know no other Laws of obtaining eternal Salvation, but those laid down by Christ and his Apostles in the Books of the Gospel Covenant, as everyone can understand them."⁷⁰

Similarly, Mortera insists in *Questions* that his reader "proceed logically" and look for "proofs and demonstrations" of the correct spiritual path to follow.⁷¹ For example, in his reply to Question 2 ("Has faith in the Saviour Messiah always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins?"), Mortera asks his reader to consider the matter logically and "identify the type of faith being asked about here."⁷² Mortera explains that the type of faith that Jews are "obligated to have" according to the Old Testament is in "God and not the Messiah...who will be a man."⁷³ As Mortera continues, individual salvation is not achieved through an intermediary but, in

69 Grotius, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, trans. Clarke, 268 and 269, respectively.

70 Grotius, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, trans. Clarke, 270.

71 Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 87r.

72 Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 88v.

73 Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 88v.

a manner echoing Grotius, by understanding that Scripture contains all the necessary “articles of faith” for salvation.⁷⁴

Mortera situates this salvation in an apocalyptic Jewish homeland in which all Jews observe the Law of God, a concept that he amplifies in his response to Question 11 (“For what sins has God, for so many centuries, left the Jewish republic in ruins and captivity during such a long exile?”). Mortera first presents the traditional rabbinic view that the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in 70 CE—the event that “left the Jewish republic in ruins”—was orchestrated by God to complete an exile that had begun with the expulsions of the Ten Tribes by the Assyrians around 720 BCE and the Tribe of Judah by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, which preceded the destruction of the First Temple.⁷⁵

Mortera then modifies this view through cause-and-effect reasoning, according to which one entity, or cause, produces another entity, or effect. For Mortera, the fact that the Ten Tribes remain lost proves that their exile by the Assyrians is not the “cause” of the exile that he endures with his congregants, which began seven centuries later, after the destruction of the Second Temple.⁷⁶ The causes for the continuation of the exile in Amsterdam are seventeenth-century “serious sins,” or crypto-Jewish practices, which “instead of paying old debts, create new ones”; Mortera posits that the spiritual gap between crypto-Judaism and Judaism prevents an end to exile and a Third Temple in an apocalyptic Jewish homeland.⁷⁷

While cause-and-effect reasoning has been employed since ancient times, the popularization of scientific investigation in Mortera’s Pre-Enlightenment milieu enhanced the importance of understanding the cause-and-effect relationships responsible for natural and spiritual phenomena.⁷⁸ *The Truth* is heavily grounded in cause-and-effect reasoning and, for Grotius, “God is the Cause of all Things” and “Every Thing that is, derives its Existence from God.”⁷⁹ Mortera employs similar terms in his response to Question 12 (“What are the main articles of your faith, and how many are there?”), when he declares that the first article of faith is “to believe that there is only

⁷⁴ Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 88v.

⁷⁵ Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 96v.

⁷⁶ Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 97v.

⁷⁷ Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 97r.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the place of cause-and-effect reasoning in Enlightenment thought, see Trundle, *From Physics to Politics*.

⁷⁹ Grotius, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, trans. Clarke, 35.

one God who is the cause of all causes, [98r] and that everything depends on Him and He does not depend on anyone.”⁸⁰

The cause-and-effect reasoning by Grotius and Mortera finds parallels in the writings of Spinoza. One example is Spinoza’s assertion, in his posthumously published *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well Being*, that “God is a cause of all things.”⁸¹ Spinoza amplifies this assertion in his *Ethics*, which was also published after his death:

Proposition 18

God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.

Proof

All things that are, are in God, and must be conceived through God, and so God is the cause of the things that are in him, which is the first point. Further, there can be no substance external to God; that is, a thing which is in itself external to God—which is the second point. Therefore, God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.⁸²

Scholars are beginning to understand the impact of Mortera on Spinoza. Jonathan Israel has recently suggested that Spinoza’s “antipathy...to all dominant churches” was rooted in his perception that rejudaized *conversos* underwent a transition from one “superstition” (crypto-Judaism) to another (Judaism).⁸³ The influence of Mortera’s philosophical approach to rejudaization in *Questions* on Spinoza casts new light on the origins of Spinoza’s disdain for religious authority and religious laws.⁸⁴

Mortera wrote *Questions* shortly after he may have served as Spinoza’s elementary school teacher during the 1640s, when Mortera was also busy persuading *conversos* to abandon crypto-Judaism and submit to rabbinic authority. The possibility that Spinoza was Mortera’s “disciple,” as Steven Nadler suggests, is reinforced by the fact that Spinoza knew Mortera’s writings.⁸⁵ As I explain in a previous study, Spinoza’s knowledge of works composed by Mortera before his excommunication in 1656 is exemplified by Spinoza’s depiction in his *Theological-Political Treatise* of God’s covenant with

⁸⁰ Mortera, *Questions*, fols. 97v–98r.

⁸¹ Spinoza, *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well Being*, trans. Shirley, 50.

⁸² Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Shirley, 229. For a discussion of cause-and-effect reasoning in Spinoza’s *Ethics*, see Lin, “The Many Faces of Spinoza’s Causal Axiom.”

⁸³ Israel, *Revolutionary Jews*, 43.

⁸⁴ Spinoza’s contemptuous attitude has been studied by James, *Spinoza on Philosophy, Religion, and Politics*, and Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*.

⁸⁵ Nadler, *Spinoza*, 90.

Israel at Mount Sinai as a “democracy,” which was influenced by Mortera’s depiction of rejudaization in *Arguments* as a democratic choice.⁸⁶

At the same time, Spinoza’s reverence for Mortera’s views on democracy conflicted with his vision of Mortera’s leadership of the Amsterdam community. Whereas the construction of arguments in which determinate causes lead to solutions, or cause-and-effect reasoning, is a tendency that reflects the positive impact of Mortera on Spinoza, *Questions* reveals that Spinoza was opposed to Mortera’s method of conflating Jewish theology and Protestant philosophy to persuade *conversos* to abandon crypto-Judaism. Spinoza saw such conflation as meaningless, and in *Theological-Political Treatise* he endeavours “to separate faith from philosophy which, indeed, has been the principal purpose of the whole work.”⁸⁷ Additionally, Spinoza argues that philosophical rabbinic exegesis misinterprets prophecies about Jewish doctrines by condemning “anyone who makes reason and philosophy the servant of theology,” which are terms that speak directly to the influence of Mortera’s philosophical approach in *Questions*.⁸⁸ For Spinoza, Mortera’s efforts to rejudaize *conversos* were tantamount to coercion, which is an attitude that informs Spinoza’s depiction of the inception of the Mosaic Law:

Moses did not attempt to persuade the Israelites with reason but rather to bind them with a covenant, by oaths and with benefits; he then constrained the people to obey the law by threatening them with penalties and encouraging them with rewards. These are all methods for inculcating obedience not knowledge.⁸⁹

Further on, Spinoza proclaims that “no one is faithful except on the ground of obedience.”⁹⁰ In fact, Spinoza perceives the pursuit of religious obedience to cause “harm” and “danger”:

I think that I have done sufficient justice to my own case in showing how philosophy is to be separated from theology, and what both essentially are: neither is subordinate to the other; each has its own kingdom; there is no conflict between them. Finally, I have also demonstrated, as opportunity arose, the absurdities, harm and danger, caused by men’s amazing confusion

86 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 214. Spinoza is commenting on Deut. 5:23–27. See Chapter 6 of Kaplan, *The Origins of Democratic Zionism*, 87–104.

87 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 179.

88 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 186.

89 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 179.

90 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 184.

of these two branches and their not knowing how to distinguish accurately between them and separate the one firmly from the other.⁹¹

Spinoza's assertion that "harm and danger, [are] caused by men's amazing confusion of these two branches and their not knowing how to distinguish accurately between them and separate the one firmly from the other" may be understood as a direct attack on Mortera's method for rejudaization.

Spinoza also dissociates individual salvation from the type of philosophical "truth or falsehood" on which Mortera bases his arguments in *Questions*.⁹² To discredit this method, Spinoza argues that individual salvation can be attained through logical cause-and-effect reasoning, rather than Scripture, which:

offers no demonstration of anything, and does not teach the things about which it speaks by means of definitions and their own first causes. According to Maimonides, therefore, its true sense cannot be established from itself and should not be sought from the Bible itself. But...this too is incorrect. We have shown by both reason and examples that the sense of Scripture is established from the Bible itself and, even when it speaks about things known by the natural light of reason, is to be sought from the Bible alone.⁹³

Spinoza attempts in this passage to undermine *The Guide to the Perplexed*, whose author, Maimonides, was highly revered by Mortera in his writings.⁹⁴

Traces of the interaction between Spinoza and Mortera during the 1640s surfaced decades later in *Theological-Political Treatise*, in which Spinoza discredits:

some arguments by which certain people seek to persuade themselves that the election of the Jews was not temporal and applicable only to their commonwealth, but eternal. We see (they say) that, after the loss of their state, the Jews were scattered everywhere for so many years and separated from all nations, and yet they still survived, as no other nation has. The sacred books, we see also, seem to teach in many places that God has chosen the Jews for himself for ever, and therefore although they have lost their state, they still remain the chosen of God. The passages which they think show this

⁹¹ Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 194.

⁹² Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 182.

⁹³ Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 115.

⁹⁴ More broadly, Spinoza's attitude contrasts with a longstanding rabbinic reverence for the ideas of Maimonides, which during early-modern times impacted rabbinic attitudes toward mysticism (Kabbalah), messianism, philosophical thought, and science. On this topic, see Robinson, *Cultures of Maimonideanism*.

eternal election most clearly are: (1) Jeremiah 31:36,⁹⁵ where the prophet testifies that the seed of Israel will remain the people of God for ever and goes so far as to compare them with the fixed order of the heavens and of nature; (2) Ezekiel 20:32ff.,⁹⁶ which apparently means that although the Jews give every sign of abandoning the worship of God, he nevertheless will gather them together again from the many regions to which they have been scattered, and lead them to a place which is empty of peoples, just as he had led their parents to the empty places of Egypt, and in the end, after separating them from the rebels and the backsliders, he will bring them from there to his holy mountain, where the whole household of Israel will worship him.

Other passages besides these are frequently cited, especially by the Pharisees [i.e., the rabbis], but I think that responding to these two will adequately cover them all. I shall do it without much difficulty by demonstrating from the Bible itself that God did not choose the Hebrews for ever, but only on the same condition on which he chose the Canaanites before them. They too, as we showed above, had priests who worshipped God zealously yet God rejected them because of their luxury and idleness and bad behaviour. Moses warns the Israelites (Leviticus 18:27–28)⁹⁷ not to be polluted with inces like the Canaanites, lest the land spit them out as it had spat out the nations that inhabited those places before them. And at Deuteronomy 8:19–20 he threatens destruction in very explicit words saying, “I warn you this day that you shall certainly perish; like the nations that the LORD will cause to perish before you, so shall you perish.”⁹⁸ Other things to this effect are found in the Law, which expressly indicate that God did not elect the Hebrew nation absolutely and for ever.⁹⁹

Spinoza sees contradictions in the rabbinic interpretations of biblical passages that, in his view, “expressly indicate that God did not elect the Hebrew nation absolutely and for ever.” As the chief rabbi of Amsterdam and an

95 “But now, assuredly, thus said the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the city of which you say, ‘It is being delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon through the sword, through famine, and through pestilence’” (Jer. 31:36).

96 “And what you have in mind shall never come to pass—when you say, ‘We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands, worshipping wood and stone’” (Ezek. 20:32).

97 “for all those abhorrent things were done by the people who were in the land before you, and the land became defiled. So let not the land spew you out for defiling it, as it spewed out the nation that came before you” (Lev. 18:27–28).

98 “If you do forget the LORD your God and follow other gods to serve them or bow down to them, I warn you this day that you shall certainly perish; like the nations that the LORD will cause to perish before you, so shall you perish—because you did not heed the LORD your God” (Deut. 8:19–20).

99 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 53–54.

individual who spent his life persuading *conversos* to practise Judaism, Mortera is a likely one of the “certain people [who] seek to persuade themselves” mentioned by Spinoza, who concludes:

there is no interaction and no affinity between faith or theology, on the one side, and philosophy, on the other. By now this must be obvious to anyone who knows the aim and the foundations of these two disciplines, which are certainly as different from each other as any two things could be. For the aim of philosophy is nothing but truth, but the aim of faith, as we have abundantly demonstrated, is simply obedience and piety.¹⁰⁰

Spinoza’s assertion that there is “no affinity between faith or theology” is exemplified by his interpretations of biblical verses that contradict Mortera’s philosophical approach in *Questions*. In a broader context, Spinoza’s contempt for the conflation of theology and philosophy, his vision of religious obedience, and his assertion that “the method [of Maimonides] is plainly useless” may be understood as components of his negative attitude toward religious authority that first evolved during the time he spent with Mortera before informing his own works decades later.¹⁰¹

In his response to Question 8 (“How is it confirmed from Holy Scripture that the Messiah has not come?”), Mortera declares:

We have already said that whoever asks in this way does not pay the respect owed to science, which requires proofs about such matters. The one who asks is the one who must offer proof, and the one who is asked only needs to respond with a simple *nego* to end the discussion. However, since the path to the truth is long, I will point out some of them. There are many signs given to us by Scripture and the prophets that foretell the coming of the Messiah, although none has been fulfilled until now, so I will choose only four for the sake of brevity.¹⁰²

Mortera’s reference to “proofs” and his use of the Latin term “*nego*” (I deny) speak to the influence of science and philosophy on *Questions*. One of these “proofs” is a passage from Jeremiah that precedes the one mentioned by Spinoza:

Second, we will consider what the prophets say about religion and the knowledge of God. The whole world will be without division in the time of the Messiah, as the prophet Jeremiah says, chapter 31, verse 34: “No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, ‘Heed the

100 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 184.

101 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 115.

102 Mortera, *Questions*, fols. 92v–93r.

LORD'; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me— declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities, / And remember their sins no more."¹⁰³

Spinoza uses Jer. 31:36 as an example of why "God did not elect the Hebrew nation absolutely and for ever," while Mortera asserts that Jer. 31:34 reveals that the Jews will form part of an eternal bond with God in a "world [that] will be without division in the time of the Messiah," which was at the cornerstone of his desire to lead *conversos* toward rejudaization.

The extent to which Mortera insisted that *conversos* become practising Jews surfaces in his response to Question 21, in which he refers to the same biblical passage that Spinoza would use many years after *Questions* was written. As discussed above, Question 21 concerns three types of *conversos* that Mortera wished to rejudaize: The first type includes *conversos* who refused to leave Spain and Portugal, who must "risk their lives" to be rejudaized because "their spirits are willing to serve Him," that is, because they are crypto-Jews. The second type includes *conversos* "who live in kingdoms where they are not prevented from leaving" but who resist rejudaization because "they are truly worshippers of gold." However, Mortera insists that these "worshippers of gold" are also crypto-Jews who "love [Judaism] in their hearts but who refuse to practise it in public. The third group includes *conversos* who "confess to being Jews although they are not." Mortera condemns these insincere crypto-Jews to the "punishment they deserve" by the Inquisition.

While Mortera sought to eradicate widespread crypto-Judaism, according to Spinoza, the rejudaization of *conversos* was not necessary because crypto-Judaism did not exist:

When the king of Spain at one time compelled the Jews to accept the religion of his kingdom or go into exile, a large number of Jews converted to the Catholic faith. All those who accepted it were granted the privileges of native Spaniards and were considered worthy of all positions of dignity. Hence they immediately integrated with the Spanish, so that in a short time there were no remnants of them left and no memory of them. But quite the opposite happened to those whom the king of Portugal compelled to convert to the religion of his kingdom. For though they submitted to this faith, they continued to live apart from all men, doubtless because he declared them unworthy of all higher positions.¹⁰⁴

103 Jer. 31:34. Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 93v.

104 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 55. The phrase "When the king of Spain at one time compelled the Jews to accept the religion of his kingdom or go into exile" refers to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in

Since the Jews of Spain “immediately integrated with the Spanish, so that in a short time there were no remnants of them left and no memory of them,” and the Jews of Portugal “submitted to this [Catholic] faith,” they arrived in Amsterdam, in Spinoza’s opinion, without any need to be rejudaized. The efforts to persuade *conversos* to become Jews that Mortera describes in *Questions* corroborated Spinoza’s conviction that “the aim of faith...is simply obedience,” which stands in opposition to his vision of individual liberty:

For no one can transfer to another person his natural right, or ability, to think freely and make his own judgments about any matter whatsoever, and cannot be compelled to do so. This is why a government which seeks to control people’s minds is considered oppressive, and any sovereign power appears to harm its subjects and usurp their rights when it tries to tell them what they must accept as true and reject as false and what beliefs should inspire their devotion to God. For these things are within each person’s own right, which he cannot give up even were he to wish to do so.¹⁰⁵

Spinoza’s perception of Mortera’s persuasive techniques in *Questions* resonates in these words. For Spinoza, rejudaization was tantamount to coercion, and his excommunication for “heresies” in 1656 by a rabbinic panel led by Mortera may be understood to reveal the profound impact on this view of sermons and works such as *Questions* produced by his rabbi.¹⁰⁶ It is ironic that Mortera’s philosophical approach ultimately contributed to the disdain for faith by one of the great early-modern philosophers. However, the prosperity of the Amsterdam Jewish community testifies to the general success of *Questions* as a tool for rejudaization.

Observations on MS EH 48 D 38 and on the Spanish-to-English Translation of *Questions*

The copy of *Questions* on which I base my translation of *Questions*, MS EH 48 D 38, was produced in 1712 by a copyist, Miguel López (1662 or 1663–ca. 1740), most likely in Amsterdam, where it later acquired an ornate leather cover with a marbled book board that indicates that it was bound around 1800.¹⁰⁷ I decided to use MS EH 48 D 38 for the sake of continuity—namely, because

1492. The phrase “the king of Portugal compelled to convert to the religion of his kingdom” refers to the forced baptism of thousands of Jews in Lisbon, in 1497.

105 Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Silverthorne and Israel, 250.

106 Nadler, “The Excommunication of Spinoza,” 40.

107 Richard Wolfe explains that “the real beginnings of marbling in the Netherlands occurred...just after the turn of the nineteenth century” (*Marbled Paper*, 55).

that is what I used for my translation of *Arguments*. In fact, MS EH 48 D 38 includes three works by Mortera: fols. 1r–84v contain *Obstáculos y oposiciones contra la religión cristiana en Ámsterdam* (which I translated into English as *Arguments Against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam*); fols. 86r–108r contain *Questions*; and fols. 109r–181v contain *Preguntas al mismo clérigo de Ruan por el autor* (*Questions for the Same Cleric from Rouen by the Author*).

The reason that these three works were copied together may be that they all deal with Jewish eschatology. This may explain the imagery on the title page to MS EH 48 D 38, which includes a woman standing on top of a figure who appears to represent the Devil and who exhales a smoky substance that may be his last breath. This scene is meant to symbolize an apocalyptic triumph of liberty (evoked by the woman) over evil, and the other scene at the bottom of the title page, which includes a representation of the Davidic Messiah mounted on a horse being led by the prophet Elijah, symbolizes the inception of a messianic age.

Although the identity of the person who created this imagery is unknown, the italic handwriting style is consistent throughout MS EH 48 D 38, revealing that all three texts were copied by the individual named on the title page, Miguel López, who made copies of Mortera's works for several decades during the early eighteenth century. The fact that these works were copied by López many decades after having been written reveals that they continued to interest readers after Mortera's death. Mortera's works were never produced in printed editions, perhaps because Mortera never intended to publish them or perhaps because of their polemical content, which might arouse attention if they circulated in places, such as Italy and France, which were in reach (or close to being in reach) of inquisitorial scrutiny cast on printed works.

In any case, Mortera's works survive as copies, perhaps of his autographs, with the sole exception being his last work, *Tratado da verdade da lei de Moisés*, which he completed shortly before his death in 1660. As copies, they contain errors that can be safely attributed to the copyist, including the following examples in *Questions*:

- “pergunta” rather than “pregunta” (question) (fol. 89a);
- the repetition of “desta” (of this) (fol. 89a);
- “absoluto” rather than “absuelto” (fol. 93r);
- the repetition of “sin” (without) (fol. 95r);
- the repetition of “que el mundo” (that the world) (fol. 100v);
- the omission of “la ley” (the law) (fol. 104 v);

- the omission of “no” (no) (fol. 104 v);
- “reçibe” (receives) rather than “reside” (resides) on fol. 105r;
- the omission of “dice” (says) (fol. 105v);
- “y” rather than “ir” (go) (fol. 105v);
- “si” rather than “se” (fol. 107r);
- two different spellings for the word “tribe” (“tribus” [fol. 106v] and “tribos” [fol. 107v]);
- the repetition of “y que las almas” (and that souls) (fol. 107v).

Likely copyist errors also include those involving gender agreement, explained in the notes to my Spanish edition. In my Spanish edition of *Questions*, I have corrected errors by the copyist and included the original (incorrect) text in the notes.

During the translation of *Questions*, I made minor emendations to Mortera’s text for clarity. For example, in Mortera’s response to Question 13 (“On what do the Hebrews base their enduring hope for their Messiah?”), he introduces a quote from Jeremiah without including the verb “says” (“Jeremias en sus lamentaciones, viendo la dilacion deste cauptiverio”), which I have added in my English translation (“Jeremiah, in his Lamentations, sees our captivity linger, and says”).¹⁰⁸ For consistency, in several cases, I have changed the indirect questions used by Mortera to direct questions:

Question 2: If faith in the Saviour Messiah has always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins. = Has faith in the Saviour Messiah always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins?

Question 5: If the redemption of the Messiah must be only corporeal and temporary. = Will the redemption of the Messiah be only corporeal and temporary?

Question 6: If the law of Moses regarding ceremonies will be kept in the time of the messiah so that no other law or ceremonies will be given. = Will the law of Moses regarding ceremonies be kept in the time of the Messiah so that no other law or ceremonies be given?

Question 16: If the Jews now have the pure Hebrew text of the Holy Scripture with its ancient truth. = Do the Jews now have the pure Hebrew text of the Holy Scripture with its ancient truth?

108 Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 99r.

I have also used cardinal numbers for the questions for consistency, and I have, therefore, changed to cardinal numbers some of the ordinal numbers used by Mortera to introduce the questions (Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13).

I have preserved Mortera's style of sometimes citing a biblical verse by chapter and verse number, as in the following example from Question 8:

Fourth, we will consider what the prophets foretell about the prosperity of Israel in the time of the Messiah. Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 1, says: "Awake, awake, O Zion! / Clothe yourself in splendor; / Put on your robes of majesty, / Jerusalem, holy city! / For the uncircumcised and the unclean / Shall never enter you again."¹⁰⁹ The prophet Jeremiah, chapter 3:17, says: "At that time, they shall call Jerusalem 'Throne of the LORD,' and all nations shall assemble there, in the name of the LORD, at Jerusalem. They shall no longer follow the willfulness of their evil hearts."¹¹⁰ The prophet Ezekiel, 48, verse 35, after having described the magnificence of the city of Jerusalem and its impressive dimensions, says at the end of his book: "and the name of the city from that day on shall be 'The LORD Is There.'"¹¹¹ Today, we see the city of Jerusalem destroyed and controlled by barbarians. Therefore, the Messiah has not come.¹¹²

Concerning the chapter and verse numbers in *Questions*, there are twenty places in MS EH 48 D 38 where these numbers do not correspond (or correspond only partially) to the biblical quotation introduced in the text. These discrepancies, which I have indicated in the notes to my Spanish edition, may be divided into two groups. The first group includes ten biblical references, in Questions 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 22, that involve a partial reference to a quotation, which Mortera indicates at times with the symbol for etcetera ("&^a") and which can be explained as abbreviated references by Mortera, or perhaps the copyist.

The second group of biblical references includes ten that do not correspond to the biblical quotations, which occur in Questions 6, 7 (two references), 8 (two references), 9, 13, 19, and 23 (two references). The notes to my Spanish edition reveal that these discrepancies often differ from one textual witness to another, as described, for example, in a note¹¹³ to the Spanish version of Question 23 ("Do the Jews confess to the Original Sin with which

I 09 Isa. 52:1.

I 10 Jer. 3:17.

I 11 Ezek. 48:35.

I 12 Mortera, *Questions*, fol. 94r-v.

I 13 See below, note 87 in the Spanish edition of *Questions*.

we were all born, and if not, why do they deny it?"): "Isa. 25:8–9. EH 48 D 38 refers to Isa. 25:10. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 26v) refers to Isa. 25:8. EH 48 E 41 (fol. 19r) and EH 48 A 21 (20) do not contain chapter or verse numbers." The presence of many discrepancies that vary among the textual witnesses speaks to the popularity of *Questions*. In other words, the discrepancies cannot be attributed to Mortera, a renowned rabbinic scholar who would not have included inaccurate biblical references, and the discrepancies must be errors made by copyists who were using copies that had been made previously. These previously made copies may not have included all the biblical chapter and verse numbers and, in this context, it is instructive to point out that these numbers are omitted on several occasions in MSS EH 48 E 41 and EH 48 A 21. The omissions in some copies of the chapter and reference numbers that are included in others, as in the example above from Question 23, suggest that *Questions* was copied on many more occasions than can be confirmed by extant witnesses. More broadly, the existence of many copies of *Questions* testifies to the popularity of the work and suggests that it was an effective tool for rejudaization.

ANNOTATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF QUESTIONS

EH 48 D 38

[86r] Questions by a cleric from Rouen, France, which were responded to by the excellent, most eminent, and wise Saul Levi Mortera, of blessed memory, doctor and professor of divine theology and preacher of the Jewish nation in the opulent city of Amsterdam.

[86v] Blank

[87r] Questions by a cleric from Rouen, France, which were responded to by the excellent, most eminent, and wise Saul Levi Mortera, famous doctor and professor of divine theology and preacher of the Jewish nation in the distinguished and opulent city of Amsterdam.

QUESTION 1 — How is it proved that in God there cannot be a plurality, or three persons in one essence?

There is no doubt that if the inquirer were to proceed logically, he would not get tired of asking about what he asks us to prove, because invented novelties bring with them an express obligation for proofs and demonstrations. Still, since the truth [87v] is so long, those who possess it are not afraid to proclaim it frequently. Thus, I say that among the many that prove the very simple unity of God, I will mention a few from the Holy Scripture and others that are commonly known. It will be the first to see that His beloved people, even His beloved prophets and priests, never heard of such a doctrine. On the contrary, in explicit terms, He taught them to flee from that, saying in Deuteronomy 6, verse 4: “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.”¹ And, as it also says in Deuteronomy 32, verse 39: “See, then, that I, I am He; There is no god beside Me.”² Through the prophet Isaiah, He also says: “My witnesses are *you*—declares the LORD—My servant, whom I have chosen. To the end that you may take thought, And believe in Me, And understand that I am He: Before Me no god was formed, And after Me none shall exist.”³

1 Deut. 6:4.

2 Deut. 32:39.

3 Isa. 43:10.

The prophet Zechariah, prophesying the confession of the entire world in the most pure unity of God, says: “there shall be one LORD with one name.”⁴ It is the same as saying, “He will be one in essence, one in name, and there will be no more distinction of persons.” In addition to this, many other passages in the Scripture demonstrate the purest [88r] and singular unity of God through conclusive arguments. Since there are many, we will only speak about three here.

First, if the divine essence involved a distinction among persons, then there would need to be a reason for distinguishing them, which would mean that the divine essence would be found in one and not in the others. The reason must be one or the other, that is, perfection or imperfection. If it is perfection, those who lack it are imperfect. And if it is imperfection, the one who possesses it is imperfect. In God, there cannot be imperfection, ergo, there cannot be any distinction.

Second, one of two things must be true about each of the persons who form the divine essence. Each is either all-powerful without the need of the others or is not all-powerful without the good grace and assistance of the others. If they proclaim the first thing, that each one can do everything by himself, then the other things are superfluous. Accordingly, two-thirds of the divine essence is superfluous. If they proclaim the second, that each one needs the backing of the others, then it follows that none by itself is infinite or omnipotent. However, it is necessary [88v] for the divine essence to be infinite and omnipotent, and not superfluous; ergo, there cannot be any distinction of persons within it.

Third, everything infinite in act cannot be given a measure to measure itself. Blessed God is infinite in act, ergo no measure can be given for Him to measure Himself. If there were different individuals in the divine essence, one could be measured against the others, and therefore none could be infinite.

QUESTION 2 — Has faith in the Saviour Messiah always been necessary for Jews to attain grace and forgiveness for their sins?

It is necessary to identify the type of faith being asked about here, because if what is understood is the faith that the faithful are obligated to have in God and the Messiah, then this is due only to God, not to the Messiah, who will be a man. And if what is understood is the faith and belief that one must have that he will come to redeem the people of Israel, the Jews are obligated to possess this as one of the articles of faith of the Law of God, so much

4 Zech. 14:9.

so that whoever does not believe that God will [89r] send the Messiah to redeem the Jews from the captivity in which they are because of their sins and gather them in their lands is banished and cut off from the people of Israel, and has no salvation.

QUESTION 3 — *Will there be only one Messiah?*

To respond to this, we must know the meaning of the word “messiah,” which derives from the verb מָשַׁח, or “massah,” which means “to anoint.” And because the great priests and kings were anointed with the anointing oil, they were called the great ones in the Holy Scripture, or the chosen of God, with the name of “messiah.” As Isaiah says, chapter 45, verse 1: “Thus said the LORD to Cyrus, His anointed one.”⁵ And David says: “Do not touch My anointed ones.”⁶ For this reason, the captain we wait for must be called “messiah,” and to the question we answer that there are many “messiahs,” but there is only one who will return to the people.

QUESTION 4 — *What evidence proves that the Messiah must be purely a man, and not both man and God?*

We have already said that whoever invents new things is the one who must present [89v] the evidence and not ask for it by proposing a doctrine that the Scripture does not teach and that is repugnant to the mind. Because it is the same to ask for evidence against the Messiah being both man and God as it is to ask for proof that the Messiah is a centaur or hermaphrodite. Rather, we can more easily present some evidence for what is asked of us. What can anyone do to test these proposed chimeras? Firstly, the prophet Ezekiel says, chapter 37, verse 24: “My servant David shall be king over them; there shall be one shepherd for all of them.”⁷ You can well see how different His servant David is, because one was a God and the other was a king. The prophet Hosea says: “Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the LORD their God and David their king” (chapter 3, verse 5), and he does not say “David, their God.”⁸ In addition to this, Isaiah, speaking of the Messiah, says in chapter 11, verse 2, that in him will be “The spirit of the LORD.”⁹ And from what we demonstrated in the first question, the pure unity of the Lord is

⁵ Isa. 45:1.

⁶ Ps. 105:15.

⁷ Ezek. 37:24.

⁸ Hos. 3:5.

⁹ Isa. 11:2.

seen.¹⁰ If the Messiah had to be man and God, it would have been necessary for him to be the only God, and in this respect, it does not make sense to say that [90r] he feared himself. And it is sufficient for the first response above that it is reason enough on its own that, if such a monstrosity were to exist in the world, the Holy Scripture would mention it in numerous places, but it does not mention it anywhere, ergo, there is no such thing.

QUESTION 5 — *Will the redemption of the Messiah be only corporeal and temporary?*

The redemption of the Messiah will only be corporeal, as was that of Moses for the captive people in Egypt, because spiritual redemption depends only on observing the law given by the Lord on Mount Sinai, which could be more easily observed then because of the tangible assets enjoyed by the people of Israel.¹¹ This will occur again by removing all the impediments that obstruct the Jews until today, except for one, which is the particular divine favour that the Lord promises to it. As Ezekiel 36:26–28 says: “And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit into you: I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My spirit into you. Thus, I will cause you to follow My laws and faithfully observe My rules. Then you shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall be [90v] My people and I will be your God.”¹² These are very clear words that do not need interpretation, and whoever wants to quote the passages of Scripture that manifest this truth will need to translate everything.

QUESTION 6 — *Will the law of Moses regarding ceremonies be kept in the time of the Messiah so that no other law or ceremonies need to be given?*

The verses from Ezekiel that we cite in the answer above resolve these things so clearly that we need look no further.¹³ Nevertheless, from the multitude of

10 Mortera is referring here to the first question asked by the cleric from Rouen (“How is it proved that in God there cannot be a plurality, or three persons in one essence?”).

11 The phrase “bienes corporales” (tangible assets) may refer to the Ark of the Covenant and the First Temple. Insofar as these entities have traditionally been interpreted as physical symbols of Judaism, Mortera’s assertion by Mortera that the observation by the Jews of the Law of Moses was easier during biblical times does not contradict the condemnation by Judaism of the worship of physical objects.

12 Ezek. 36:26–28.

13 Mortera is referring to Ezek. 36:26–28, to which he refers in his response to the fifth question.

texts showing that the law of Moses must be kept in the time of the Messiah without any alteration, we will choose only three, which are the ones that follow.

First, what the Lord says near the end of the law after having established the reward and punishment for those obedient to it and the transgressors: “When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you [91r] and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day, the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will bring you together again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the LORD your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And the LORD your God will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers. Then the LORD your God will open up your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live. The LORD your God will inflict all those curses upon the enemies, and foes who persecuted you. You, however, will again heed the LORD and obey all His commandments that I enjoin upon you this day. And the LORD your God will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the LORD will again delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your fathers, since you will be heeding the LORD your God and keeping His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching—once you return to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul” (Deut. 30).¹⁴ It is here, at the conclusion of the law, where the Lord says that for us to come out of captivity it is necessary to keep the law that He entrusted to us that day. And so as not to leave any room for doubt, He not only gives us the time, saying “that I enjoin upon you this day,”¹⁵ but also [91v] He gives us the place to find it: “keeping His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching.”¹⁶ In light of these precise terms, what could be expected of any other law?

14 Deut. 30:1–8, 10. The text includes the reference to “Deut. 30” after the biblical quotation.

15 Deut. 30:8.

16 Deut. 30:10.

Second, through all the prophets, He repeats this truth in the same way as He does in the law. As the last prophet, Malachi, says, chapter 3, verse 22: “Be mindful of the Teaching of My servant Moses, whom I charged at Horeb with laws and rules for all Israel.”¹⁷ And that is called the law of Moses, so that it cannot be falsified.

Third, the Holy Scripture says in Deuteronomy 11, verse 1: “Love, therefore, the LORD your God, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments.”¹⁸ Consequently, since there are days we are obligated to keep all the law of Moses without increasing or diminishing it, as the Lord commands in said book: “You shall not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I enjoin upon you.”¹⁹ These few reasons suffice for the many others that could be considered.

[92r] QUESTION 7 — *By what means do the Jews obtain forgiveness for their sins at this time, since without it they cannot be saved?*

The means by which forgiveness of sins is achieved are those proclaimed by the law and the prophets in many places. And in particular we will consider what the prophet Isaiah says, chapter 55, verse 7: “Let the wicked give up his ways, / The sinful man his plans; / Let him turn back to the LORD, / And He will pardon him; / To our God, / For he freely forgives.”²⁰ And the prophet Ezekiel 18, verses 21–23 says: “Moreover, if the wicked one repents of all the sins that he committed and keeps all My laws and does what is just and right, he shall live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions he committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness he has practiced, he shall live. Is it my desire that a wicked person shall die?—says the LORD God. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live.”²¹ This reconciliation will be much easier with the special virtue and privilege that the Lord gave on the day of atonement, as Leviticus 16:29–30 says: “And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the [92v] month, you shall practice self-denial; and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you

¹⁷ Mal. 3:22.

¹⁸ Deut. 11:1.

¹⁹ Deut. 4:2.

²⁰ Isa. 55:7.

²¹ Ezek. 18:21–23.

shall be clean before the LORD.”²² Even though today there are no sacrifices, which were the means of achieving this forgiveness more easily, it is still achieved through penance and by retreating from evil paths. As the psalmist says, 51:19: “True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; / God, You will not despise / a contrite and crushed heart.”²³ Because of this, we cannot make sacrifices today since we lack the wherewithal that would make forgiveness easier. Consequently, the psalm ends: “May it please You to make Zion prosper; / rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. / Then You will want sacrifices offered in righteousness, / burnt and whole offerings; / then bulls will be offered on Your altar.”²⁴

QUESTION 8 — How is it confirmed from Holy Scripture that the Messiah has not come?

We have already said that whoever asks in this way does not pay the respect owed to science, which requires proof about such matters. The one who asks is the one who must offer proof, and the one who is asked [93r] only needs to respond with a simple *nego* to excuse himself from the discussion. However, since the path to the truth is long, I will point out some of them. There are many signs given to us by Scripture and the prophets that foretell the coming of the Messiah, although none have been fulfilled until now, so I will choose only four for the sake of brevity.

First, we will deal with the peace that the whole world will generally enjoy with the coming of the Messiah, as Isaiah chapter 2, verses 2–4, says, and which is repeated in Micah, chapter 4, verses 1–3, where it says: “In the days to come, / The Mount of the LORD’s House shall stand / Firm above the mountains; / And it shall tower above the hills. / The peoples shall gaze on it with joy, / And the many nations shall go and shall say: / ‘Come, / Let us go up to the Mount of the LORD, / To the House of the God of Jacob; / That He may instruct us in His ways, / And that we may walk in His paths.’ / For instruction shall come forth from Zion, / The word of the LORD from Jerusalem. / Thus He will judge among the many peoples, / And arbitrate for the multitude of nations, / However distant; / And they shall beat their swords into plowshares / And their spears into pruning hooks. / Nation shall not

22 Levit. 16:29–30.

23 Ps. 51:19. EH 48 D 38 refers to Ps. 51:17, which corresponds to Ps. 51:19 in *Jewish Study Bible*.

24 Ps. 51:20–21.

take up / Sword against nation; / They shall never again know war.”²⁵ This peace is promised by the Holy Scripture in many places. However, [93v] we never see anything but wars in the world because, two hundred years ago, people invented and popularized new firearms unknown to the ancients, rather than destroying the ones they already had, which clearly establishes that the Messiah has not yet come.²⁶

Second, we will consider what the prophets say about religion and the knowledge of God. The whole world will be without division in the time of the Messiah, as the prophet Jeremiah says, chapter 31, verse 34: “No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, ‘Heed the LORD’; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me—declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities, / And remember their sins no more.”²⁷ The prophet Zephaniah, chapter 3, verse 9: “For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, / So that they all invoke the LORD by name / And serve Him with one accord.”²⁸ The prophet Zechariah, chapter 14, verse 9, says: “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD with one name.”²⁹ And it is explained this way in many places, and we see that the world was never [94r] more divided into religions than today. Therefore, the Messiah has not come.

Third, we will look to the people of Israel and their condition, which the Scripture very clearly affirms that the Messiah will restore to its land and greatness. The prophet Isaiah, chapter 11:12, says: “He will hold up a signal to the nations / And assemble the banished of Israel, / And gather

25 Mic. 4:1–3. Mic. 4:1–3 closely parallels Isa. 2:2–4: “In the days to come, / The Mount of the LORD’S House / Shall stand firm above the mountains / And tower above the hills; / And all the nations / Shall gaze on it with joy. / And the many peoples shall go and say: / ‘Come, / Let us go up to the Mount of the LORD, / To the House of the God of Jacob; / That He may instruct us in His ways, / And that we may walk in His paths.’ / For instruction shall come forth from Zion, / The word of the LORD from Jerusalem. / Thus He will judge among the nations / And arbitrate for the many peoples, / And they shall beat their swords into plowshares / And their spears into pruning hooks: / Nation shall not take up / Sword against nation; / They shall never again know war.”

26 Mortera asserts here that the Messiah has not come because of the invention of modern firearms (“nuevas armas de fuego” in EH 48 D 38) during the late Middle Ages. In particular, Mortera may be referring to the invention of the musket in the late fifteenth century Ottoman Empire, which is a topic studied by David Ayalon.

27 Jer. 31:34.

28 Zeph. 3:9.

29 Zech. 14:9.

the dispersed of Judah / From the four corners of the earth.”³⁰ About this, it is necessary to quote entire chapters rather than specific verses. See the same prophet, chapters 52, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 66, from beginning to end, and Jeremiah, chapters 30 and 31, and Ezekiel, chapters 36, 37, 38, and 39, until the end of his book.³¹ Many other chapters reveal that the result of the coming of the Messiah will be the prosperity and happiness of the people of Israel. Today, we see it scattered and spread all over the world. Therefore, the Messiah that the Lord promises us in so many places has not come.

Fourth, we will consider what the prophets foretell about the prosperity of Israel in the time of the Messiah. Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 1, says: “Awake,

30 Isa. 11:12.

31 The contents of the chapters mentioned by Mortera lend support to his declaration “the Scripture very clearly affirms that the Messiah will restore to its land and greatness.” The following summaries of these chapters are found in *Jewish Study Bible*: “God speaks again to Zion, telling her that her nightmare is over” (Isa. 52); “the city of Jerusalem or Zion is portrayed as a woman...She is childless (i.e., without inhabitants) and apparently forsaken by her husband (i.e., the LORD). This passage assures her, however, that God remains her husband and protector and that she will soon have abundant children. In other words, the exiles will soon return to Judah” (Isa. 54); “This lengthy poem portrays Jerusalem (Zion) as a bereaved woman. In this respect it resembles many passages encountered in the previous section of Deutero-Isaiah’s work, ch[apter]s 49–57. Its enthusiasm and optimism recall the prophecies in ch[apter]s 40–48, and like them it heralds the dawn of a new age. The restored Zion will be home for a righteous nation newly returned to its land and its God; universal recognition of the one God will lead all the nations to enrich Zion and her inhabitants” (Isa. 60–62); “A short and disturbing passage concerning divine vengeance against God’s enemies” (Isa. 63:1–6); “A communal complaint, this text is spoken by the nation and addressed to God” (Isa. 63:7–64:11); “Deutero-Isaiah takes up an old prophetic theme. Although God commanded the nation to offer sacrifices, God does not need them. Neither generous attention to the Temple nor punctilious observance of cultic ritual grants Judeans license to sin” (Isa. 66:1–4); “In highly emotional tones, the prophet [Isaiah] lashes out against those disloyal to the LORD and predicts vindication for the faithful” (Isa. 66:5–18a); “All nations will come to know the one God and will travel to the Temple in Jerusalem” (Isa. 66:18b–21); “A final description of the fates awaiting those who accept the LORD and those who reject the LORD” (Isa. 66:22–24); “Consolation prophecies are collected in these two ch[apter]s, but additional proclamations of hope are sporadically placed within the book” (Jer. 30–31); “The oracle concerning the restoration of the mountains of Israel is a deliberate contrast with that against Mount Seir” (Ezek. 36:1–15); “The purification and restoration of Israel and the sanctification of God’s name” (Ezek. 36:16–38); “Vision of the dry bones and the future of the kingdom of Israel” (Ezek. 37); “Vision of the eschatological war with Gog from the land of Magog. Ezekiel’s oracles against Gog, ruler from the land of Magog, express an apocalyptic scenario of God’s victory over the nations that threaten Israel” (Ezek. 38–39).

awake, O Zion! / Clothe yourself in splendor; / Put on your robes [94v] of majesty, / Jerusalem, holy city! / For the uncircumcised and the unclean / Shall never enter you again.”³² The prophet Jeremiah, chapter 3:17, says: “At that time, they shall call Jerusalem ‘Throne of the LORD,’ and all nations shall assemble there, in the name of the LORD, at Jerusalem. They shall no longer follow the willfulness of their evil hearts.”³³ The prophet Ezekiel, 48, verse 35, after having described the magnificence of the city of Jerusalem and its impressive dimensions, says at the end of his book: “and the name of the city from that day on shall be ‘The LORD Is There.’”³⁴ Today, we see the city of Jerusalem destroyed and controlled by barbarians. Therefore, the Messiah has not come.

QUESTION 9 — How does one respond to prophecies that Christians claimed to have been fulfilled, like those in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and the 22nd Psalm?³⁵

To respond along these lines, it would be necessary to compose large volumes, but, as with other prophecies, the frequently mentioned chapter 53 of Isaiah explains it. Concerning Psalm 21, we will be as brief as possible.³⁶ To agree with what Christians believe about chapter 53, one must set forth different basic principles, [95r] which, since they are refuted, will be necessary

32 Isa. 52:1.

33 Jer. 3:17.

34 Ezek. 48:35.

35 According to the Christian tradition, Isa. 52 and 53 contain a prophecy of Jesus as the Messiah, who is represented by an individual called “My servant” by God in Isa. 52:13 and who is commonly referred to as the “Suffering Servant” because of the manner by which his personal suffering saves his people as depicted in verses such as Isa. 53:5 (“But he was wounded because of our sins, / Crushed because of our iniquities. / He bore the chastisement that made us whole, / And by his bruises we were healed”) and Isa. 53:12 (“Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion, / He shall receive the multitude as his spoil. / For he exposed himself to death / And was numbered among the sinners, / Whereas he bore the guilt of the many / And made intercession for sinners”). According to the rabbinic tradition, the “Suffering Servant” symbolizes the people of Israel. EH 48 D 38 refers to Ps. 21, which appears to be an error by the copyist. According to the Christian tradition, Ps. 22 contains verses that allude to the suffering endured by Jesus during his crucifixion, such as Ps. 22:17–18 (“Dogs surround me; / a pack of evil ones closes in on me, / like lions [they maul] my hands and feet. / I take the count of all my bones / while they look on and gloat”). For an extended discussion of the “Suffering Servant,” see North.

36 EH 48 D 38 again refers to Ps. 21, rather than Ps. 22, which appears to be another error by the copyist.

to prove first before they are applied to the declaration of said chapter. The path to get there is very long, and the chapter contains things that are not discussed by Christians, such as what is meant by “Through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment,” which are words that refer to many and not only to one.³⁷ Similarly, “That, if he made himself an offering for guilt, / He might see offspring and have long life,” are words that do not make sense except for people who begot their own children, and who lived a long time, lengthening the days, which are things so different from the true interpretation and the meaning that the Christians give to it.³⁸ The true interpretation is that the one who speaks for the people of Israel is here called God’s servant.³⁹ This is a very ordinary title in the Holy Scripture, where it says that: “Kings shall be silenced because of him, / For they shall see what has not been told them, / Shall behold what they never have heard”⁴⁰—which is explained in the preceding chapter⁴¹—“Who can believe what we have heard? / Upon whom has the arm of the LORD / been revealed? / For has grown, by His favor, like a tree-crown, / Like a tree trunk out of arid ground. / He had no form or beauty, that we should [95v] look at him: / No charm, that we should find him pleasing. / He was despised, shunned by men, / A man of suffering, familiar with disease. / As one who hid his face from us, / He was despised, we held him of no account. / Yet it was our sickness that he

37 The verse “Through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment” is the conclusion of Isa. 53:8: “By oppressive judgment he was taken away, / Who could describe his abode? / For he was cut off from the land of the living / Through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.” Mortera’s wording of the conclusion in Spanish, “por rebello de mi pueblo, llaga a ellos” (whose translation in the Jewish Study Bible is “Through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment”), indicates that his source for this verse was the *Biblia de Ferrara* (“por rebello de mi pueblo llaga a ellos” [Lazar 348]), rather than the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (“Por la rebellion de mi Pueblo plaga à el” [fol. 211]). Mortera’s use of the *Biblia de Ferrara* is significant here insofar as his interpretation of Isa. 58:8 is based specifically on the plural verb “ellos” [them], which appears in the *Biblia de Ferrara* text and which is the basis for his assertion that these “are words that refer to many and not only to one.” According to Mortera’s interpretation of Isa. 53:8, the verse should be understood to refer to the Jewish people rather than an individual. Consequently, Mortera asserts that prophecies have not been fulfilled because the exile of the Jews was ongoing in the seventeenth century.

38 Isa. 53:10.

39 Mortera is referring here to the “Suffering Servant.”

40 Isa. 52:15.

41 Mortera’s reference to a “preceding chapter” alludes to Isa. 51, in which God exhorts the Israelites not to despair and promises the future redemption of the Jews.

was bearing, / Our suffering that he endured. / We accounted him plagued,
 / Smitten and afflicted by God; / But he was wounded because of our sins, /
 Crushed because of our iniquities. / He bore the chastisement that made us
 whole, / And by his bruises we were healed. / We all went astray like sheep,
 / Each going his own way; / And the LORD visited upon him / The guilt of
 all of us.' / He was maltreated, yet he was submissive, / He did not open
 his mouth; / Like a sheep being led to slaughter, / Like a ewe, dumb before
 those who shear her, / He did not open his mouth. / By oppressive judgment
 he was taken away, / Who could describe his abode? / For he was cut off
 from the land of the living / Through the sin of my people, who deserved
 the punishment. / And his grave was set among the wicked, / And with the
 rich, in his death— / Though he had done no injustice / And had spoken no
 falsehood."⁴² All these things, says the prophet, will be uttered by the kings
 of the world on seeing the prosperity of Israel. And the same prophet con-
 cludes by saying: "But the LORD chose to crush him by disease, / That, if he
 made himself an offering for guilt, / He might see offspring and have a long
 life, / And that through him the LORD's purpose might prosper."⁴³

The psalm also speaks of the people of Israel in captivity, and says: "My
 God, my God, / why have You abandoned me?"⁴⁴ These are terms often taken
 from what the prophet Isaiah proclaims in 49:14–15: "Zion says, / 'The LORD
 has forsaken me, / My Lord has forgotten me.' / Can a woman forget her
 baby, / Or [96r] disown the child of her womb? / Though she might forget,
 / I never could forget you."⁴⁵ Similar wording is used by the psalmist in the
 name of the people and their deeds, and for this reason, the psalm is clear.⁴⁶

QUESTION 10 — Which people will receive and obey the Messiah, the Jews or the Gentiles?

All will receive and obey him, as is foretold in many prophecies, some of
 which we will consider here. Balaam says: "What I see for them is not yet, /
 What I behold will not be soon: / A star rises from Jacob, / A sceptre comes

⁴² Isa. 53:1–9.

⁴³ Isa. 53:10.

⁴⁴ Ps. 22:2.

⁴⁵ Isa. 49:14–15.

⁴⁶ Mortera may be relying here on the interpretation by Rabbi Shlomo Titzchaki (1040–1105), better known by the acronym Rashi, of Ps. 22:2 ("My God, my God, / why have You abandoned me?"). According to Rashi, King David's act of questioning God's silence in Ps. 22 in the face of his suffering is a reference to the future suffering of the Jewish people.

forth from Israel; / It smashes the brow of Moab, / The foundation of all children of Seth,” because from Seth, the son of Adam, came all mankind.⁴⁷ The prophet Isaiah, 60, verse 12, says: “For the nation or the kingdom / That does not serve you shall perish; / Such nations shall be destroyed.”⁴⁸ Psalm 72:8 says: “Let him rule from sea to sea, / from the river to the ends of the earth,” and further on, “Let all kings bow to him, / and all nations serve him.”⁴⁹ Daniel, chapter 7, verses 13–14, speaking about the Messiah, [96v] captain of the fifth monarchy after the destruction of the four beasts, says: “As I looked on, in the night vision, / One like a human being / Came with the clouds of heaven; / He reached the Ancient of Days / And was presented to Him. / Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; / All peoples and nations of every language must serve him. / His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, / And his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.”⁵⁰ In the same way, many prophets show that the Messiah will be venerated and received by all the kingdoms of the world and by all its peoples.

QUESTION 11 — For what sins has God, for so many centuries, left the Jewish republic in ruins and captivity during such a long exile?

Although the Jews do not confess to man but to Blessed God, it is necessary to confess our sins to honour and uphold divine justice, and because our sins are made known by all the prophets. You can see this in Ezekiel, chapter 16, verse 48, when he points out the sins of Israel and says: “As I live—declares the Lord GOD—[97r] your sister Sodom and her daughters did not do what you and your daughters did.”⁵¹ One no longer marvels at the length of our captivity because of its cost, which is complete destruction, like what occurred in Sodom out of pure divine mercy, as the prophet Isaiah testifies: “Had not the LORD of Hosts / Left us some survivors, / We should be like Sodom, / Another Gomorrah.”⁵² It is not difficult to argue that these sins had been forgiven already by the restitution from the Babylonian captivity, and that we suffer our long captivity for other sins committed during the time of the Second Temple. This is because the redemption from Babylon was only

47 Num. 24:17.

48 Isa. 60:12.

49 Ps. 72:8 and Ps. 72:11, respectively.

50 Dan. 7:13–14.

51 Ezek. 16:48.

52 Isa. 1:9.

a test to see if they could annul their serious sins of adultery, homicide, and idolatry by living with the security of the kingdom and the Temple. However, instead of paying their old debts, they created new ones and, so that no one would imagine otherwise, the Lord made the Ten Tribes captive by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar in a foreign land around 600 years before the destruction of the Second Temple.⁵³ Even today, they have not yet returned to their land and dominion. This was decreed [97v] by special divine providence so that no one could link the cause of the previous captivity to any sin committed in the Second Temple. Since the Ten Tribes were not there, their captivity is 600 years longer than ours. Implicit in this question is the need to see clearly, and without bias, any hint or sense of the truth that the sins of the Jews reached a point by which the memory of any people would have been erased, except for the people to whom the Lord pledged His word with an undying oath. There is no reason, then, to wonder why our punishment has become a long captivity, just as a delinquent who, although deserving of death, is granted his life out of mercy and put in prison for many years.

QUESTION 12 — What are the main articles of your faith, and how many are there?

There are thirteen articles and foundations of our faith.

First: to believe that there is only one God who is the cause of all causes, [98r] and that everything depends on Him and He does not depend on anyone.

Second: that this God is one, and that His unity is most pure and most perfect, and that He is not divisible in any way.

Third: that this God is neither a body nor a form that occupies any body and is not subject to any corporeal needs.

Fourth: that this God is eternal, that He had no beginning and will not have an end, and that all other things had a beginning through Him.

Fifth: that this God alone should be honoured, served, and obeyed, and no other besides Him can be an intermediary between Him and us.

Sixth: that it is necessary to believe that this God communicates His spirit and manifests His will to wise and virtuous men favoured by His wisdom, who are the prophets.

53 Mortera is referring to King Nabucodonosor II (r. 605–562 BCE).

Seventh: that the greatest of all the prophets was Moses, by whose hand the Lord gave the Law on Mount Sinai.

Eighth: that the entire Law, from the first letter to the last, was given to Moses by the blessed God and, therefore, the traditions and their profession were preserved by the congregation of Israel.

[98v] Ninth: that the Law given by the Lord through the hand of Moses and the translation of it are eternal and cannot be increased or decreased in any way.

Tenth: that God knows the nature of human actions and thoughts, and nothing is hidden from Him.

Eleventh: that blessed God rewards those who observe His Law and He punishes transgressors, and that the essence of the reward is the glory of the soul and eternal life, while the essence of the punishment is the cutting off of the soul and hell.

Twelfth: that God will send a redeemer from the house of David and descended from Solomon who will exceed in honour all the kings of the world who came before him, and that all the prophecies of the prophets will be happily fulfilled.⁵⁴

Thirteenth: that God will raise the dead at the time determined by His divine wisdom.

These are the articles of our holy Law, which branch off in many directions, whose consideration is beyond the present scope.

[99r] QUESTION 13 — *On what do the Hebrews base their enduring hope for their Messiah?*

Well, by asking that, you are completely overlooking the Holy Scripture, in which there is not any page where the foundations of the irrefutable divine word that sustain our hope are not firm and clear. If you still wonder what such enduring hope is based on, you should consider that, no matter how many centuries pass, the divine word is never missing in those who are truly His followers. You could also remember what Isaiah says, chapter 40:8: “‘Grass withers, flowers fade— / But the word of our God is always fulfilled!’”⁵⁵ For however long this lasts, we will not be neglected because the

54 According to Jewish eschatology, the Messiah will be a descendant of the biblical King David.

55 Isa. 40:8.

Lord warned us beforehand not to wonder about it. The prophet Hosea says, chapter 3, verses 4–5: “For the Israelites shall go a long time without king and without officials, without sacrifice and without cult pillars, and without ephod and teraphim. Afterward, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the LORD their God and David their king—and they will thrill over the LORD and over His bounty in the days to come.”⁵⁶ Jeremiah, in his Lamentations, sees our captivity linger, and says: “Why have You forgotten us utterly, / Forsaken us for [99v] all time? / Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself, / And let us come back; / Renew our days as of old!”⁵⁷ Above all, it is considerate not to remind the one asking this question that Christians who inquire are told that the whole world waited for the Messiah around 400 years because that is how many years passed from the sin of Adam until the time they say their Messiah came in the hopes of saving the souls they say were lost until his arrival, except the righteous Jews, who went into limbo.⁵⁸ They denounce the Jews for waiting around 1600 years to return to their ancient lands and property.⁵⁹ Hope and time, very different from theirs, which was all was foreseen by divine wisdom when He said through the mouth of the psalmist, 89: “Remember, O LORD, the abuse flung at Your servants / that I have borne in my bosom [from] many peoples, / how Your enemies, O LORD, have flung abuse, / abuse at Your anointed at every step.”⁶⁰ In sum, the question being asked, like others that make clear our enduring hope, is similar to what is said here, “Your enemies, O LORD, have flung abuse, / abuse at Your anointed at every step,” which means that it will take a long time for him to come. Therefore, like someone who ends up [100r] sighing, the psalmist concludes

56 Hos. 3:4–5.

57 Lam. 5:20–21. Mortera’s attribution of the Book of Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah follows rabbinic tradition.

58 The phrase “the whole world waited for the Messiah around 400 years” refers to the Intertestamental Period, which occurred during the 400 years between the composition around 430 BCE of the Book of Malachi (the last book of the Old Testament) and the composition of the New Testament.

59 The phrase “waiting around 1600 years to return to their ancient lands and property” refers to the time by which the Messiah will arrive according to the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a–b; Avodah Zarah 9a), the Midrash (Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 18.12), and the *Zohar* (Vayera 119a). This time will be six thousand years after the creation of the world, which corresponds approximately to the year 2240 in the Gregorian calendar. Mortera appears to arrive at his approximate calculation by adding the 400 years of the Intertestamental Period to 1600 years, which totals 2000 years and refers roughly to the year 2240.

60 Ps. 89:50–51.

by saying, “Blessed is the LORD forever; / Amen and Amen,”⁶¹ as if to say, “praise God for everything.”

QUESTION 14 — *What good do those who die before his coming expect from him in this life?*

The prophet Isaiah asked God the same question, in chapter 26:13–14, by saying: “O LORD our God! / Lords other than You possessed us, / But only Your name shall we utter. / They are dead, they can never live; / Shades, they can never rise; / Of a truth, You have dealt with them and wiped them out, / Have put an end to all mention of them.”⁶² It is as if he were saying, “Lord, we endured many evils, and because of these evils and the suffering, we withered away and died. In what way will we then enjoy in this life the good that You will bring to Your people if the dead do not rise again?”⁶³ The Lord responded to him: “Oh, let Your dead revive! / Let corpses arise! / Awake and shout for joy, / You who dwell in the dust!— / For Your dew is like the dew on fresh growth; / You make the land of the shades come to life.”⁶⁴ Look at the good things we wait for as we trust in the divine promise for those who die before the Messiah arrives. A dialogue about this is devised by the prophet Malachi, 3:14, [100v] who speaks to the people in the name of God: “You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping His charge and walking in abject awe of the LORD of Hosts?’”⁶⁵ The Lord responds: “And you shall come to see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him who has served God and him who

61 Ps. 89:53.

62 Isa. 26:13–14.

63 Insofar as the biblical quote that follows these two sentences is Isa. 26:19, they may be Mortera’s interpretation of the depiction of Isaiah’s despair in Isa. 26:16–18: “O LORD! In their distress, they sought You; / Your chastisement reduced them / To anguished whispered prayer. / Like a woman with child / Approaching childbirth, / Writhing and screaming in her pangs, / So are we become because of You, O LORD. / We were with child, we writhed— / It is as though we had given birth to wind; / We have won no victory on earth; / The inhabitants of the world have not come to life!” In the two sentences in question (“It is as if he were saying, ‘Lord, we endured many evils, and because of these evils and the suffering we withered away and died. In what way will we then enjoy in this life the good that You will bring to Your people if the dead do not rise again?’”), Mortera presents the rabbinic view that bodily resurrection will occur in the Apocalypse, which was codified by Maimonides as the thirteenth principle of his Thirteen Principles of Faith (Angel 151–72).

64 Isa. 26:19.

65 Mal. 3:14.

has not served Him,” and with many other verses that come after “And you shall come to see the difference between the righteous and the wicked.”⁶⁶ With this, another question is answered.

QUESTION 15 — *What use will your Messiah be at the final judgment and then in the afterlife, since he and everyone will die, and the world will end?*

As the one who asks what the Jews believe about their Messiah must know, what Christians believe is very problematic. However, after understanding that the salvation of the Messiah is not spiritual but corporeal, as we said in the fifth response, your question is answered since neither on the day of judgment nor in the afterlife is there any need for the Messiah. Also, what is said here presupposes that the world must end. This is not a matter that has been so proven that it does not have much evidence [101r] to the contrary, although it is not a matter of faith and only God knows what will happen.

QUESTION 16 — *Do the Jews now have the pure Hebrew text of the Holy Scripture with its ancient truth?*

To answer this question, it would be enough to point out that all the Hebrew Bibles found throughout the world do not differ from each other, not even a single syllable, which is very clear proof of their authenticity. Since the people of Israel are scattered throughout the world and subject to different nations, their Bibles are always the same. There cannot be any doubt about this, so I will refer to declarations made by the most respected Christian scholars, including Augustine, who says, on pages 15 and 13 of his book *City of God*, that it cannot be believed that the Jews have in any way contaminated the Holy Books.⁶⁷ He provides many proofs of this truth.

First, it seems impossible that they all agreed to this with the same evil intention while being scattered throughout [101v] the world with nothing better to do than the great sacrilege of adulterating holy things. In addition, the fact that all the ancient and modern Hebrew originals are consistent in every way, even though they were written at different times and places, speaks in favour of their authenticity. Also, it should not be presumed that a captive people who possess no good thing aside from the holy books would have randomly wanted to falsify them to satisfy the ill will and rancour that

66 Mal. 3:18.

67 As I discuss in my introduction, it appears that Mortera is referring to Book 18 of *City of God*.

they might have felt toward a nation, or a people. These are the words of Augustine.⁶⁸ Jerome affirms the same thing in his book *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, as does Bede, in *Greater Chronicle*, and Thomas Aquinas exonerates Paul's *Epistle* in Chapter 9 of *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*. In addition, Alexander de Tartagnis upholds the same truth in *Queries*, and Augustine calls us ancient treasurers of the Holy Books in *Expositions on the Psalms*, Psalm 40. He confirms this in Chapter 43 of Book 18 of *City of God*, in which partial confirmation is worth more than one hundred witnesses.

QUESTION 17 [102r] — *Is it permissible for Jews to interpret the Holy Scripture, and are they free to follow the meaning they prefer?*

When blessed God gave the law on Mount Sinai, after the people had heard the voice of the Lord, He told Moses the ten commandments of the Decalogue and that he should tell the people to return to their houses while he would wait there and learn the divine will to instil it in the people, as it says in Deuteronomy, Chapter 5:27–28: “Go, say to them, ‘Return to your tents.’ But you remain here with Me, and I will give you the whole Instruction—the laws and the rules—that you shall impart to them.”⁶⁹ Afterwards, Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights, during which time God revealed to him the Law that we call the Mental Law, which he taught to the senate of Israel, and in particular to Joshua.⁷⁰ Over the years, the tradition and the Mental Law mandated by God was passed from parents to children under pain of death, as it says: “If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault—matters of dispute in your courts—you shall promptly repair to the place that the LORD your God will have chosen, and appear before the levitical priests, or the magistrate in

68 As discussed in my Introduction, Mortera's declarations that “the fact that all the ancient and modern Hebrew originals are consistent in everything, and in all ways, even though they were written at different times and places, speaks in favor of their authenticity” and “it should not be presumed that such an innumerable people, who have no other good thing in their captivity than the possession of the holy books, would have wanted to falsify them to satisfy the ill will and rancour that could have been directed toward a nation, or people” appear to allude to Chapter 42 of Augustine's *City of God*.

69 Deut. 5:27–28.

70 Mortera presents here the rabbinic tradition concerning the doctrines of Judaism, according to which the Written Law was recorded in the Five Books of Moses while the Oral Law was delivered to Moses orally by God and transmitted orally until it was recorded in the Talmud.

charge at the time, and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place that the LORD chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you. You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the ruling handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you, either to the [102v] right or to the left. Should a man act presumptuously and disregard the priest charged with serving there the LORD your God, or the magistrate, that man shall die.”⁷¹ Today, this tradition is recorded in the Mishnah and the Talmud, according to which the only way to know it is by consulting the Holy Scripture.⁷² We see the true continuation of this tradition expressed in the exact same way, from generation to generation and by different authors whom the curious individual might consult to see where it is written. Therefore, your question has been answered.

QUESTION 18 — Who has the authority to adjudicate in matters concerning the observance of the law and the punishment of transgressors?

From the verses quoted in the previous answer, we see who had the authority to adjudicate the commandments of the Law, as it is written: “you shall promptly repair to the place that the LORD your God will have chosen.”⁷³ This verse refers to the great senate of Israel, which consisted of 71 senators in remembrance of the fact that Moses and 70 elders were present in God’s Temple.⁷⁴ For them, it says: “you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left.”⁷⁵ This senate, according to any prophet held to be true, had the authority [103r] to adjudicate in matters of law for a limited time, except in matters of idolatry, in which case we have the express obligation to kill anyone who is found to profess it. As is

71 Deut. 17:8–12.

72 Mortera is alluding to the Mishnah (ca. 200 CE) and the Talmud (or Babylonian Talmud, ca. 500 CE), which includes the Mishnah and a later compilation, the Gemara (ca. 500 CE). On the biblical passage in question, see, for example, in the Talmud, Sanhedrin 86b:17–21, which is a commentary on Deut. 17:8–13.

73 Mortera again quotes from Deut. 17:8.

74 Mortera is referring to the seventy elders of Israel, who are mentioned several times in the Old Testament, for example: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather for Me seventy of Israel’s elders of whom you have experience as elders and officers of the people, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting and let them take their place there with you.’” (Num. 11:16).

75 Mortera again quotes from Deut. 17:11.

written in Deuteronomy, in the cities of Judah, it was necessary to punish the delinquents and transgressors of the law according to their crimes, which is explained at length in the Talmud in the tractate of Sanhedrin.⁷⁶ Later, however, we were taken captive because of our sins from our land and dispersed throughout many places, and both prophecy and the great senate ended. Nobody had the authority to adjudicate the law in any case, except in those cases for which we had a written record by the most learned men of the Mishnah and the Talmud, who left us examples of what occurred in their time. Concerning the right to punish those who transgress the law today, except for the death penalty, which our Law prohibits outside of our land, all other cases are adjudicated by the judges elected by the people of Israel in all the places of its diaspora, according to the authority granted to them by the princes to whom they are subject.⁷⁷

[103v] **QUESTION 19 — *Will Jews who have converted to Christianity be saved or damned after abandoning the Law of Moses and living and dying as Christians?***

After deliberating to answer in respectable, innocuous terms, I will not respond at length to this question so as not to be superfluous and will only translate three verses of Holy Scripture word for word that demonstrate the eternity of God's pact with His people across the generations, as is written in Deut. 29, verses 13–14: "I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here this day."⁷⁸ The second one that shows the eternal punishment that God promises for whoever breaks and leaves His covenant, is revealed in Numbers 15, verse 30: "But the person, be he citizen or stranger, who acts defiantly reviles the LORD; that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has spurned the word of the LORD and violated His commandment, that person shall be cut off—he bears his guilt."⁷⁹ This small sample suffices for a lot more that could be said.

76 Mortera refers here to the Talmudic directive (Sanhedrin 90a) to execute any prophet who undermines the prohibition against idol worship.

77 Mortera refers here to the Talmudic prohibition on the judicial infliction of punishment by rabbinical courts in places that are not subject to the Mosaic Law (Sanhedrin 82b).

78 Deut. 29:13–14.

79 Num. 15:30–31.

QUESTION 20 — [104r] *What just cause exists for pardoning Jews who return to Judaism after having received and professed the Christian Catholic faith?*

It would be more reasonable for me to ask if there is a just cause for the great terror and intensity with which tyrants force the free minds of the Jews to receive the Christian faith, whose own cruelty is so incessant and dreadful that a lengthy book could be written about it. However, suffice it to say that Bishop Osorio, in the first of his twelve books of the prayers of Don Manuel, King of Portugal, calls what he did to the Jews violence, which indicates criminal and cruel injustice.⁸⁰ How can one rightfully ask what just cause exists for excusing those who return to Judaism when such a great effort has been made to make them believe that which they did not believe, and love that which they abhorred? For what reason would anyone ask if there is a just cause that excuses the Jews from leaving the Law of their forefathers that they received for eternity from the mouth of God Himself, the universal creator, which was delivered with such solemnity on Mount Sinai and proclaimed by all peoples and nations as a true privilege that is not enjoyed by any of the other faiths professed today [104v] in the world? Well, they are not truly professed except by the observant ones. For what reason did they leave what their forefathers believed for so many centuries without interruption? For what reason did they take upon themselves the new rites and privileges that their parents did not teach them? This was the real issue. This was the fitting question, rather than the one that has been asked. After reviewing all the aforementioned things, the answer to this question was clear, with many examples from Scripture, such as such as Jethro, Ruth, Naaman,⁸¹ who, being Gentiles who knew the truth about the God of Israel, converted to Him, as will all peoples, as the prophet Jeremiah says, chapter 16, verses 19–20: “O

80 Osorio (7) writes of the abuse of Portuguese Jews during the reign of Manuel I (r. 1469–1521).

81 For the stories of Jethro, Ruth, and Naaman, see, respectively, Exod. 18:11 (“Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, yes, by the result of their very schemes against [the people]”), Ruth 2:11–12 (“Boaz said in reply, ‘I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had no known before. May the LORD reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge!’”), and II Kings 5:15 (“Now I know that there is no God in the whole world except in Israel! So please accept a gift from your servant”). Although Jethro does not renounce other gods, he does convert to Judaism according to rabbinic tradition (see, for example, Sanhedrin 94a).

LORD, my strength and my stronghold, / My refuge in a day of trouble, / To You nations shall come / From the ends of the earth and say: / Our fathers inherited utter delusions, / Things that are futile and worthless. / Can a man make gods for himself? / No-gods are they!"⁸² Therefore, it is quite clear that there is no doubt whatsoever in this question.

QUESTION 21 — *Can Jews still be saved if they have not been circumcised or observed [105r] the Law in the lands where it is not permitted, after having gone against it and their consciences by practising Christianity sincerely, worshipping idols, attending mass, and denying being Jews even though they are in their hearts?*

There are two types of people to whom this question refers. The first are those who reside in the kingdoms where it is not only forbidden to observe the Law, but where the ports are also closed to prevent them from leaving.⁸³ These people are guilty before the Lord for not trying to leave for free ports, even though they risk their lives, as the Lord explicitly commands: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."⁸⁴ Here it is revealed that we must leave all things for divine love, and the examples of Hanania, Mishael, and Azariah, in Babylon, show this truth because they were willing to jump into a fire alive rather than worship a statue.⁸⁵ He is still merciful today, and slow to anger, and takes into account human weakness and the great respect owed to the ones who are persecuted in the lands I have mentioned. He tempers His severity and [105v] favours them when He sees that their spirits are willing to serve Him, as we have seen on many occasions.

The second type of people are those who live in kingdoms where they are not prevented from leaving, and who are free to go wherever they choose. These people are an utter abomination to God and are destined for damnation because they are truly worshippers of gold. Since they act in the sheer interest of accumulating property, they deceive God, or think they can

82 Jer. 16:19–20.

83 In my Introduction, I discuss the phrases "those who reside in the kingdoms where it is not only forbidden to observe the Law" and "where they also close the ports to prevent them from leaving," which refer to anti-*converso* persecution in Spain and Portugal.

84 Deut. 6:5.

85 The story of the resistance by the three Judean courtiers to the order by King Nabucodonosor II to worship his golden statue is narrated in Dan. 3, in which they survive being thrown into a fiery furnace through divine intervention.

deceive God, for the love of worldly things. And they deceive the world for love of God. They think that because they love in their hearts, they have fulfilled their obligation, but they do not see what the Lord explicitly says in the Law, in Deut. 30:14: “No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.”⁸⁶ Here it also explicitly says that to observe the Law, it is necessary to proclaim it with one’s mouth, believe it in one’s heart, and carry it out through one’s acts. It would have been better if they had not known the truth, rather than having it and pretending the opposite. In the latter case, they would have had some excuse, which they do not have, although they do know what [106r] suits them. This is taught by the prophet Isaiah, chapter 26:10, who says: “But when the scoundrel is spared, he learns not righteousness; / In a place of integrity, he does wrong— / He ignores the majesty of the LORD.”⁸⁷ They should consider how great their ingratitude is toward their Creator, who brought them out of the fire of Sodom, and they, like Lot’s wife, instead of following the path and saving themselves, look back and remain in the middle of the road, and become statues of salt who fool themselves by their material wealth, and by not knowing the divine precepts that the psalmist proclaims, Psalm 92:8: “though the wicked sprout like grass, / though all evildoers blossom, / it is only that they may be destroyed forever.”⁸⁸ Solomon says, Prov. 1:32, that: “The tranquillity of the simple will kill them, / And the complacency of dullards will destroy them.”⁸⁹

To these we might add a third group, which resembles the first two in its pretence. They are the people of Israel who, though Christians in their hearts, for fear of torture and death, confess to being Jews although they are not. They deceive God so that they can know the truth, as if they possessed an [106v] understanding. This is a result of the moral failing of the Inquisition, which spills so much innocent blood. For they see explicitly that they were forced to confess against their conscience what they were not. About such people, the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 20:32–33, says: “And what you have in mind shall never come to pass—when you say, ‘We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands, worshipping wood and stone.’ As I live—declares the LORD God—I will reign over you with a strong hand, and

86 Deut. 30:14.

87 Isa. 26:10.

88 Ps. 92:8. EH 48 D 38 refers to Ps. 92:7, which corresponds to the quotation in the *Biblia de Ferrara* and the *Biblia Reina-Valera*, while it corresponds to Ps. 92:8 in the *Jewish Study Bible*.

89 Prov. 1:32.

with an outstretched arm, and with overflowing fury.”⁹⁰ These are the ones who, by the “strong hand” of torture, the “outstretched arm” of prisons, and with “overflowing fury” from apprehension about life, confess to being Jews and that the God of Israel is their king. If they do not deny what they said afterwards, it is because they know the punishment they deserve.

QUESTION 22 — *What happened to the Ten Tribes that the Assyrians took captive, and where are they?*

The prophet Isaiah sufficiently answers both questions in chapter 27, verse 13, by saying: “And in that day, a great ram’s horn shall be sounded; [107r] and the strayed who are in the land of Assyria and the expelled who are in the land of Egypt shall come and worship the LORD on the holy mount, in Jerusalem.”⁹¹ Calling those who were Assyrian captives “the strayed who are in the land of Assyria” means that no one can know what He did to them, because if this were known they would not be called “the strayed” ones. However, since that is what the Holy Scripture calls them, they are forced to remain hidden until divine and infinite wisdom determines that they be revealed. In the same way, Joseph was hidden for 22 years in Egypt, and there was no news of him until God revealed him to his brothers.⁹² The phrase “shall come and worship the LORD on the holy mount, in Jerusalem” responds to the second matter, which concerns what is expected of them, since the prophet clearly promises that they will once again worship the Lord in Jerusalem. The same thing was said by the prophet Hosea, chapter 2:2: “The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall assemble together and appoint one head over them; and they shall rise from the ground—for marvelous shall be the day of Jezreel!”⁹³ The prophet Ezekiel, in chapter 37, writes at length [107v] about the redemption of the Ten Tribes in Jerusalem, and that they will be again subject to the kingdom of David, whom they have not obeyed since the day they rebelled against it, as can be seen in that chapter.⁹⁴

90 Ezek. 20:32–33.

91 Isa. 27:13.

92 Mortera refers here to the twenty-two years that pass between Gen. 37, in which Joseph has a dream about his future superior status and is sold into slavery by his older brothers, and Gen. 42, in which Joseph encounters his brothers in Egypt after fulfilling his dream by being named vizier to the Pharaoh.

93 Hos. 2:2.

94 Mortera is referring to Ezek. 37:21–26, which describes an apocalyptic ingathering of the Jews and the establishment of Davidic rule in the Holy Land: “and you shall declare to them: Thus said the Lord GOD: I am going to take the Israelite

QUESTION 23 — *Do the Jews confess to the Original Sin with which we were all born, and if not, why do they deny it?*

The Jews deny Adam's Original Sin with very great reason because the heart of sin is in the soul, and souls do not proceed from Adam but from God, their Creator. Therefore, the souls of the descendants of Adam did not sin because of him since sin resides in the soul. This is clearly true because sin is a vice that comes from the soul and understanding. The Holy Scripture says, "that person shall be cut off—he bears his guilt," which shows that sin lies in the soul and that souls are servants of God, without any intervention by a mediary.⁹⁵ This is what the prophet Isaiah says, chapter 57:16: "Nay, I who make spirits flag, / Also create the breath of life."⁹⁶ This is modified by Ezekiel, 18, verse 4, [108r] who says: "all lives are Mine; the life of the parent and the life of the child are both Mine. The person who sins, only he shall die."⁹⁷ The clear consequence that remains is that the souls of the descendants of Adam could not sin because of him. The Jews confess rightly that the entire human race was subjected to the penalties of Adam's sin, which, being corporeal, affects all his descendants corporeally, since they are his children. It is just like what happens to a slave, which all of his children are because they were born to a slave father, until the time that the Lord promises that the world will return to its initial perfection. As said by the prophet Isaiah, chapter 25:8–9: "He will destroy death forever. / My Lord GOD will wipe the tears away / From all faces / And will put an end to the reproach of His people / Over all the earth— / For it is the LORD who has spoken. In that

people from among the nations they have gone to, and gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will make them a single nation in the land, on the hills of Israel, and one king shall be king of them all, Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. Nor shall they ever again defile themselves by their fetishes and their abhorrent things, and by their other transgressions, I will save them in all their settlements where they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. My servant David shall be king over them; there shall be one shepherd for all of them. They shall follow My rules and faithfully obey My laws. Thus they shall remain in the land which I gave to My servant Jacob and in which your fathers dwelt; they and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, with My servant David as their prince for all time. I will make a covenant of friendship with them—it shall be an everlasting covenant with them—I will establish them and multiply them, and I will place My Sanctuary among them forever."

95 Mortera again quotes from Num. 15:31.

96 Isa. 57:16.

97 Ezek. 18:4.

day they shall say: / This is our God; / We trusted in Him, and He delivered us. / This is the LORD, in whom we trusted; / Let us rejoice and exult in His deliverance!”⁹⁸ Amen.

[108v] Blank

98 Isa. 25:8–9.

Incipit

Incipit Evangelium secundum Mattheum
In illo tempore Iesus exiit de Galilea
et venit in Nazareth. Et factum est
ut daretur ei librum et legere. Et
aperuit librum et invenit scriptum
dicens Spiritus Domini super me
propterea unxit me et misit me
ut predicares in synagoga et
respondit et dixit. Spiritus Domini
est super me.

Preguntas

Que hizo vn Clerigo de Ruan de Francia alas
quales respon dio el Excelente, y Eminentissimo
Señor A: R: Saul Levy Mortera, Doctor Ce-
lebre, y Profpesor, de la Divina Theologia, y Pre-
dicador de la Nacion Judaica en la Insigne, y
opulenta Ciudad de Amsterdam ~ ~ ~

Primera pregunta.

Como se prueba, que en Dios no puede haver pluralidad, ni
ser tres personas en vna Essencia ~ ~ ~

No ay duda, que si este Señor, procediera como Lógico
no dexaria de cansarse en preguntar el sugeto, que nos pide que
provenes, por que las novedades inventadas traen consigo, obliga-
cion expressa, de pruebas, y demostraciones, toda via como la verdad

Figure 1. Ets Haim—Livraria Montezinos, MS EH 48 D 38, fol. 87r.
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22
La Essencia Divina no sea superflua, mas infinita, y Omnipoten-
te, ergo, no puede haver en ella, distincion de personas. ~

Tercera, Todo lo que es infinito en acto, no se le puede dar me-
dida con que medirse el Dio Bendito, es infinito en acto, ergo no
se puede dar medida, con que medirse, si se dieran diferentes
personas en la Essencia Divina, una fuera medida de la otra,
luego ninguna puede ser infinita. ~

Segunda pregunta

Si la fee, del Messias, salvador, fue siempre necessario a los Judios
para alcanzar la gracia, y perdon de sus pecados. ~

Es necesario distinguir la palabra de fee, que aqui se
pregunta, por que si es, que se entiende por la fee, que son obligados
atener todos los fieles, en Dios, y en el Messias, pues esta se deve solo
a Dios, y no al Messias, que ha de ser hombre; y si se entiende por la
fee, y credito, que se deve tener, que vendra a redimir al pueblo de Is-
rael, son obligados los Judios atenerla, como vno de los Articulos
de la fee, de la Ley de Dios, tanto que quien no creyere, que Dios ha de
embiar

Embiar el Messias para redimir a los Judios del Captiverio en q
están por sus pecados, y juntarlos en sus tierras; Es deserrado, y des-
vnido del pueblo de Israel, y no tiene salvación.

Tercera pregunta. Si el Massias es vno solo.

Para responder a esto, conviene que sepamos, la inteligencia desta
desta palabra Massiah, que deziva del verbo ~~Massah~~ Massah, que signi-
fica vngr; y por que los Sacerdotes grandes, y los Reyes, eran vngridos
con el aceite de la vnction, se dominaron, en la S. S. los grandes oes-
cogidos de Dios, con el nombre de Massiah, como dice Jesayas
Cap. 45. vers. 1. Assy dixo el Señor a su vngrido a Ciro, y David di-
ze, no toqueis en mis vngridos, y por esto el Capitan que esperamos,
se hade llamar Massiah, y a la pregunta respondemos, que Los
Massias, son muchos, mas el que hade tornar al pueblo como solo.

Quarta pregunta

Con que testimonio se prueva que el Massiah hade ser hom-
bre pure, y no juntamente hombre y Dios.

Ya diximos, que quien inventa, cosas nuevas, es el que hade traer

Figure 2. Ets Haim—Livraria Montezinos, MS EH 48 D 38, fols. 88v–89r.
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ANNOTATED SPANISH EDITION OF PREGUNTAS
BASED ON ETS HAIM—LIVRARIA MONTEZINOS,
MS EH 48 D 38

FOR MY SPANISH edition of *Preguntas* based on MS EH 48 D 38, I have used modern accentuation, orthography, capitalization, and punctuation, and expanded abbreviated terms. Copyist errors have been eliminated, and the notes include the original text. Grammatical errors have been maintained and explained in the notes.

EH 48 D 38

[86r] Preguntas que hizo un clérigo de Ruan de Francia, a las cuales respondió el excelente y eminentísimo señor hacham Saul Levy Mortera, DFM: doctor y profesor de la divina teología y predicador de la nación judaica, en la opulenta ciudad de Ámsterdam.

[86v] blank

[87r] Preguntas que hizo un clérigo de Ruan de Francia, a las cuales respondió el excelente y eminentísimo señor hacham rabi Saul Levy Mortera, doctor célebre y profesor de la divina teología y predicador de la nación judaica en la insigne y opulenta ciudad de Ámsterdam.

PRIMERA PREGUNTA — ¿Cómo se prueba que en Dios no puede haber pluralidad, ni ser tres personas en una esencia?

No hay duda que si este señor procediera como lógico no debiera de cansarse en preguntar el sujeto que nos pide que probemos, porque las novedades inventadas traen consigo obligación expresa de pruebas y demostraciones. Todavía como la verdad [87v] es tan larga, los que la poseen no recelan publicarla con abundancia. Y así digo que entre las muchas que prueban la simplísima unidad de Dios traeré algunas brevemente de la escritura sagrada y otras del entendimiento. Y será la primera el ver que su amado pueblo, ni sus queridos profetas ni sacerdotes, jamás tuviesen noticia de tal doctrina, antes al contrario con expresas palabras les enseñó que huyesen de ella diciendo en el Deut. 6, ver. 4: “Oye, Israel: Jehová, nuestro Dios, Jehová uno es.”¹

¹ Deut 6:4.

Y en el mismo Deut. 32, ver. 39: “Ved ahora que yo, yo soy, y no hay dioses conmigo.”² Por el profeta Isaías, dice también: “Vosotros sois mis testigos, dice Jehová, y mi siervo que yo escogí, para que me conozcáis y creáis y entendáis que yo mismo soy; antes de mí no fue formado dios ni lo será después de mí.”³ El profeta Zacarías, profetizando la confesión de todo el mundo en la purísima unidad de Dios, dice: “Jehová será único, y único será su nombre.”⁴ Como si dijera, “será uno en la esencia, uno en el nombre, y no habrá más distinción de personas.” Y además de esto hay otros muchos lugares en la Sagrada Escritura que muestran también la purísima [88r] y singular unidad del Señor por argumentos demostrativos. Y siendo muchos, sólo pondremos aquí tres.

Primero, si con la esencia divina hubiera algún supuesto de personas, necesario era que hubiese algún supuesto de personas que las dividiesen. Y ese tal convenía que se hallase en una, y careciese en las otras. Ese supuesto no puede faltar de una de dos, o es, perfección o imperfección. Si es perfección, los que carecen de ella son imperfectos. Y si es imperfección, el que la posee es imperfecto. En Dios no puede haber imperfección, ergo, no puede haber distinción.

Segunda, no puede faltar de una de dos a cada una de las personas que hay en la esencia divina.⁵ Es toda poderosa por sí sin necesidad de otros, o no puede todo, sin favor y auxilio de las demás. Si confiesan la primera, que cada una por sí misma puede todo, luego superflua son las demás. Y será conforme a esto superflua esencia divina de dos tercios. Y si dijeran la segunda, que cada cual tiene necesidad del favor de las otras, síguese que ninguna por sí es infinita y omnipotente. Pero es necesario [88v] que la esencia divina no sea superflua, mas infinita y omnipotente, ergo, no puede haber en ella distinción de personas.

Tercera, todo lo que es infinito en acto no se le puede dar medida con que medirse. El Dio Bendito es infinito en acto, ergo no se puede dar medida con que medirse. Si se dieran diferentes personas en la esencia divina, una fuera medida de la otra, luego ninguna puede ser infinita.

2 Deut 32:39.

3 Isa. 43:10.

4 Zech. 14:9.

5 The gender change from the masculine adjective “Primero” (which modifies the masculine noun “argumentos” [arguments]) to the feminine adjectives “Segunda” (Second) and “Tercera” (Third) occurs in EH 48 D38, EH 48 C 09 (“el 1º,” “2ª” [fols. 1v–2r]), and EH 48 E 41 (“primero,” “2ª” [fol. 1v]). In EH 48 A 21, the masculine adjectives “Primero,” “Segundo,” and “Tercero” are used (2).

SEGUNDA PREGUNTA — *Si la fe del mesías salvador fue siempre necesario a los judíos para alcanzar la gracia y perdón de sus pecados.*

Es necesario distinguir la palabra de fe que aquí se pregunta, porque si es que se entiende por la fe que son obligados a tener todos los fieles en Dios y en el mesías, pues esta se debe sólo a Dios y no al mesías, que ha de ser hombre. Y si se entiende por la fe y crédito que se debe tener que vendrá a redimir al pueblo de Israel, son obligados los judíos a tenerla como uno de los artículos de la fe de la ley de Dios, tanto que quien no creyere que Dios ha de [89r] enviar el mesías para redimir a los judíos del cautiverio en que están por sus pecados y juntarlos en sus tierras es desterrado y desunido del pueblo de Israel y no tiene salvación.

TERCERA PERGUNTA⁶ — *Si el mesías es uno solo.*

Para responder a esto conviene que sepamos la inteligencia de esta palabra “mesías,” que deriva del verbo מָשַׁח, “masah,” que significa “ungir.”⁷ Y porque los sacerdotes grandes y los reyes eran ungidos con el aceite de la unción se denominaron en la Sagrada Escritura los grandes, o escogidos del Dios con el nombre de “mesías.” Como dice Isaías, capítulo 45, verso 1: “Así dice Jehová a su ungido, a Ciro.”⁸ Y David dice: “No toquéis —dijo— a mis ungidos.”⁹ Y por esto el capitán que esperamos se ha de llamar “mesías” y a la pregunta respondemos que los “mesías” son muchos, mas el que ha de tornar al pueblo es uno sólo.

CUARTA PREGUNTA — *¿Con qué testimonio se prueba que el mesías ha de ser hombre puro, y no juntamente hombre y Dios?*

Ya dijimos que quien inventa cosas nuevas es él que ha de traer [89v] la prueba y no pedirla. Y proponiendo doctrina que no enseña la escritura, y repugnante al entendimiento porque lo mismo es pedir pruebas para repugnar ser el mesías hombre y Dios, como pedir las para probar ser el mesías centauro, o hermafrodito. Mas antes, con más facilidad podremos traer algunas pruebas para lo que se nos pide. De ello que podrá alguno hacer para

⁶ The correct spelling “pregunta” (question), rather than “pergunta,” is used in EH 48 C 09 (fol. 3r) and EH 48 A 21 (3). The term “pregunta” is not used to indicate questions in EH 48 E 41, although in the title to the work the term “Perguntas” appears (fol. 1r).

⁷ The copyist repeats the term “desta” (de esta) in EH 48 D 38 (“desta desta”).

⁸ Isa. 45:1.

⁹ Ps. 105:15.

probar estas quimeras propuestas. Primeramente dice el profeta Ezequiel, capítulo 37, verso 24: “Mi siervo David será rey sobre ellos, y todos ellos tendrán un solo pastor.”¹⁰ Bien se puede ver que diferente es su siervo David, pues uno era por Dios y otro por rey. El profeta Hoseas dice: “Después volverán los hijos de Israel, buscarán a Jehová, su Dios, y a David, su rey” capítulo 3, verso 5, y no dice “a David, su Dios.”¹¹ Además de esto, hablando Isaías del mesías, dice en el capítulo 11, verso 2, que habrá en él “temor de Jehová,” y por lo que mostramos en la primera pregunta se ve la pura unidad del Señor.¹² Y si el mesías había de ser hombre y Dios, era necesario que fuese el Dios único, y en este tal no cuadra decirse que [90r] temía a sí mismo. Y basta para la primera respuesta ultra de que es suficiente razón por sí que si tal monstruosidad hubiera de haber en el mundo, la debía publicar la Sagrada Escritura en infinitos lugares, lo que no hace en ninguno, ergo no hay tal.

QUINTA PREGUNTA — *Si la redención del mesías ha de ser sólo corporal y temporal.*

La redención del Mesías ha de ser sólo corporal, como fue la de Moisés por el pueblo cautivo en Egipto, porque la redención espiritual depende sólo en la observancia que dio el Señor en el monte de Sinaí, la cual con más facilidad se podía observar con los bienes corporales que entonces gozaba el pueblo de Israel y quitándose todos los impedimentos que hasta hoy le sirven de entropiezo, ultra de una, que es favor divino particular que entonces le promete el Señor. Como dice Ezequiel 36:26: “Os daré un corazón nuevo y pondré un espíritu nuevo dentro de vosotros. Quitaré de vosotros el corazón de piedra y os daré un corazón de carne. Pondré dentro de vosotros mi espíritu, y haré que andéis en mis estatutos y que guardéis mis preceptos y los pongáis por obra. Habitaréis en la tierra que di a vuestros padres, y vosotros seréis [90v] mi pueblo y yo seré vuestro Dios.”¹³ Palabras bien claras y que no sufren interpretación, y quien quisiere alegar los pasos de la Escritura que manifiestan esta verdad tendrá necesidad de trasladarla toda.

10 Ezek. 37:24. In his paraphrased reference to Ezek. 37:24 (“Y serán a mí por pueblo, y yo seré a ello por Dios, y mi siervo David rey ellos”), it is possible that Mortera also had in mind a passage from Jeremiah: “y ellos serán mi pueblo y yo seré su Dios” “They shall be My people, and I will be their God” (Jer. 32:38).

11 Hos. 3:5.

12 Isa. 11:2.

13 Ezek. 36:26–28. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Ezek. 36:26.

SEXTA PREGUNTA — *Si la ley de Moisés, cuanto a las ceremonias, se guardarán en el tiempo del mesías de modo que no haya de dar otra ley ni ceremonias.*

El verso de Ezequiel que alegamos en la propuesta de arriba resuelve tan claramente éstas que no tenemos para que buscar más. Todavía entre la multitud de textos que muestran que la ley de Moisés se ha de guardar en el tiempo del Mesías sin alteración alguna, escogeremos solamente tres que son los siguientes.

Primero. Lo que dice el señor quasi en el fin de la ley después de haber publicado el premio y pena a los obedientes y transgresores de ella. Dice, “Sucederá que cuando hayan venido sobre ti todas estas cosas, la bendición y la maldición que he puesto delante de ti, y [91r] te arrepientas en medio de todas las naciones adonde te haya arrojado Jehová, tu Dios te conviertas a Jehová, tu Dios, y obedezcas a su voz conforme a todo lo que yo te mando hoy, tú y tus hijos, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma, entonces Jehová hará volver a tus cautivos, tendrá misericordia de ti y volverá a recogerte de entre todos los pueblos adonde te haya esparcido Jehová, tu Dios. Aunque tus desterrados estén en las partes más lejanas que hay debajo del cielo, de allí te recogerá Jehová, tu Dios, y de allá te tomará. Jehová, tu Dios, te hará volver a la tierra que heredaron tus padres, y será tuya; te hará bien y te multiplicará más que a tus padres. Y circuncidará Jehová, tu Dios, tu corazón, y el corazón de tu descendencia, para que ames a Jehová, tu Dios, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma, a fin de que vivas. Pondrá Jehová, tu Dios, todas estas maldiciones sobre tus enemigos y sobre los que te persiguieron con odio. Tú te convertirás, escucharás la voz de Jehová y pondrás por obra todos sus mandamientos que yo te ordeno hoy. Entonces Jehová, tu Dios, te hará prosperar en toda la obra de tus manos, en el fruto de tu vientre, en el fruto de tu bestia y en el fruto de tu tierra, para bien; porque Jehová volverá a gozarse sobre ti para bien, de la manera que se gozó sobre tus padres, cuando obedezcas a la voz de Jehová, tu Dios, y guardes sus mandamientos y sus estatutos escritos en este libro de la Ley; cuando te conviertas a Jehová, tu Dios, con todo tu corazón y con toda tu alma” (Deut. 30).¹⁴

He aquí que por conclusión de la ley, dice el Señor para que salgamos del cautiverio es necesario guardar la ley que nos encomendaba aquel día.¹⁵

¹⁴ Deut. 30:1–8, 10.

¹⁵ The imperfect form “encomendaba” (entrusted) is used in EH 48 D 38, EH 48 E 41 (fol. 4v), and EH 48 A 21 (5), while the preterite form “encomendó” is used in EH 48 C 09 (fol. 6r).

Y por no dejar algún lugar de duda, no se contenta sólo en darnos la señal del tiempo, diciendo “que yo te ordeno hoy.”¹⁶ Más aún, [91v] nos da la señal del lugar para guardar sus encomendanzas y ceremonias escriptos en el libro de la ley está. ¿Qué recelo puede haber de darse otra ley con palabras tan expresivas?

Segunda.¹⁷ En el remate de todos los profetas, duplica esta verdad del mismo modo, como se hizo en el remate de la ley, diciendo el profeta Malaquías, capítulo 4, verso 4. Y último¹⁸: “Acordaos de la ley de Moisés, mi siervo, al cual encargué, en Horeb, ordenanzas y leyes para todo Israel.”¹⁹ Y es denominada aquella ley de Moisés por ser una señal que no se puede falsificar.

Tercera. Dice la Sagrada Escritura en el Deuteronomio 11, verso 1: “Amarás, pues, a Jehová, tu Dios, y guardarás sus ordenanzas, sus estatutos, sus decretos y sus mandamientos, todos los días.”²⁰ De modo que en cuanto hubiera días somos obligados a guardar toda la ley de Moisés sin acrescentar ni disminuir de ella, como manda el Señor en dicho libro: “No añadiréis a la palabra que yo os mando ni disminuiréis de ella, para que guardéis los mandamientos de Jehová, vuestro Dios, que yo os ordeno.”²¹ Estas pocas razones bastan en lugar de otras muchas que se podían traer.

16 Deut. 30:8.

17 The gender change from the masculine adjective “Primero” (which modifies the masculine noun “textos” [texts]) to the feminine adjectives “Segunda” (Second) and “Tercera” (Third) occurs in EH 48 D38. In EH 48 C 09, the copyist uses three feminine forms (“1^a,” “2^a,” and “3^a”), after referring to the masculine “textos” as the feminine “las siguientes” (those that follow) (fols. 5r–6v). In EH 48 E 41, “Primero,” “Segunda,” and “Tercera” are used (fols. 4v–5r). In EH 48 A 21, all three correct masculine forms, “primero,” “segundo,” and “tercero,” are used (4–5).

18 The phrase “Y último” (And last one) may refer to the fact that “Malaquías” (Malachi) is considered to be the last prophet of the Old Testament.

19 Mal. 4:4. EH 48 D 38 refers to Mal. 4:3. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 6r) and EH 48 A 21 (5) refer to Mal. 3:22. EH 48 E 41 (fol. 4r) does not include chapter or verse numbers. Concerning EH 48 D 38, in the Jewish biblical tradition (and the Greek Septuagint), the book of Malachi is divided into three chapters, while it is divided into four chapters in the Latin Vulgate and subsequent Christian bibles. Mortera’s quotation from Mal. 4:4 (rather than 4:3, which may be a copyist error) therefore corresponds to Mal. 3:22 in The Jewish Study Bible and Mal. 4:3 in the *Biblia Reina-Valera*.

20 Deut. 11:1.

21 Deut. 4.2.

[92r] **SÉPTIMA PREGUNTA** — *¿Por qué medio alcanzan los judíos en este tiempo el perdón de sus pecados, pues sin él no se pueden salvar?*

Los medios con que se alcanza el perdón de los pecados son los que publican la ley y los profetas en muchos lugares. Y en particular traeremos lo que dice el profeta Isaías, capítulo 55, verso 7: “Deje el impío su camino / y el hombre inicuo sus pensamientos, / y vuélvase a Jehová, el cual tendrá de él misericordia, / al Dios nuestro, el cual será amplio en perdonar.”²² Y el profeta Ezequiel 18, versos 21–23, dice: “Pero si el impío se aparta de todos sus pecados que cometió, y guarda todos mis estatutos y actúa conforme al derecho y la justicia, de cierto vivirá: no morirá. Ninguna de las transgresiones que cometió le será recordada; por la justicia que practicó, vivirá. ¿Acaso quiero yo la muerte del impío? dice Jehová, el Señor. ¿No vivirá, si se aparta de sus malos caminos?”²³ Y muy más fácil será esta reconciliación con la virtud y privilegio particular que dio el Señor en el día de la expiación, como dice el Levítico 16:29–30: “Esto tendréis por estatuto perpetuo: En el mes séptimo, a los diez días del [92v] mes, afligiréis vuestras almas, y ninguna obra haréis, ni el natural ni el extranjero que habita entre vosotros, porque en este día se hará expiación por vosotros, y seréis limpios de todos vuestros pecados delante de Jehová.”²⁴ Y aunque hoy no hay sacrificios que eran los medios para se alcanzar este perdón más fácilmente, todavía con la penitencia y el retirarse de los malos caminos se alcanza. Como dice el salmista 51:17: “Los sacrificios de Dios son el espíritu quebrantado; / al corazón contrito y humillado no / despreciarás tú, oh Dios.”²⁵ Y esto porque no podemos hoy sacrificar pues nos faltan los medios que cuando se alcancen será el perdón más fácil. Y por esto acaba el salmo: “Haz bien con tu benevolencia a Sión. / Edifica los muros de Jerusalén. / Entonces te agradecerán los sacrificios de justicia, / el holocausto u ofrenda del todo quemada; / entonces se ofrecerán becerros sobre tu altar.”²⁶

22 Isa. 55:7.

23 Ezek. 18:21–23. EH 48 D 38 and EH 48 E 41 (fol. 5r) refer to Ezek. 18:20. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 7r) refer to Ezek. 18:21. EH 48 A 21 (6) refers to Ezek. 18:21–24.

24 Levit. 16:29–30. EH 48 D 38 refers to Levit. 16:28. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 7v) refers to Levit. 16:29, EH 48 E 41 (fol. 7v) refers to Levit. 16:30, and EH 48 A 21 (6) does not include chapter or verse numbers.

25 Ps. 51:17.

26 Ps. 51:18–19.

OCTAVA PREGUNTA — ¿Cómo se confirma de la Sagrada Escritura que el Mesías no es venido?

Ya hemos dicho que quien pregunta por este modo no observa el término que se debe a la ciencia, que pide razones sobre materias que quien las propone es quien las que debe traer y a quien se pregunta [93r] con un simple nego queda absuelto de todo argumento.²⁷ Mas como son los caminos de la verdad tan largos, apuntaré algunos de ellos. Y entre las muchos señales que la Escritura y los profetas nos dan que se han de ver en la venida del Mesías, no es cumplida ninguna hasta ahora.²⁸ Escogeré sólo cuatro por brevedad.

Primero. Trataremos a lo que toca a la paz, que todo el mundo generalmente gozara con la venida del Mesías, como lo dice Isaías capítulo 2, versos 2–4, y lo repite Miqueas, capítulo 4, versos 1–3, diciendo: “Acontecerá en los postreros tiempos que el monte de la casa de Jehová será colocado a la cabeza de los montes, más alto que los collados, y acudirán a él los pueblos. Vendrán muchas naciones, y dirán: ‘Venid, subamos al monte de Jehová, a la casa del Dios de Jacob; él nos enseñará en sus caminos y andaremos por sus veredas,’ porque de Sión saldrá la Ley, y de Jerusalén la palabra de Jehová. Él juzgará entre muchos pueblos y corregirá a naciones poderosas y lejanas. Ellos convertirán sus espadas en azadones y sus lanzas en hoces. Ninguna nación alzará la espada contra otra nación ni se preparará más para la guerra.”²⁹ Esta paz promete la Sagrada Escritura en muchas partes. Y [93v] no

27 In EH 48 D 38, the term “absoluto” is a copyist error (which literally means “absolve,” but which I have translated as “to excuse himself [from the discussion]”). The term appears correctly as “absuelto” in EH 48 C 09 (fol. 8v). EH 48 E 41 and EH 48 A 21 provide abridged versions of Mortera’s response that do not include the term or the sentence in which it appears in the other two textual witnesses.

28 The term “señales” is a feminine noun in Spanish, and EH 48 D 38 (fol. 93r–93v) includes cases of gender disagreement: “los muchos señales” (many signs), rather than the correct “las muchas señales”; “no es cumplido ninguno” (none has been fulfilled), rather than the correct “no es cumplido ninguna”; the masculine “Primero” (First), rather than the correct “Primera,” and “4º,” rather than the correct “4ª,” although the feminine forms, “Segunda” (Second) and “Tercera” (Third), are correctly used. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 8v) repeats these same cases of gender disagreement, although “1ª,” “2ª,” “3ª” and “4ª” are correctly used (fols. 8v–10v). In EH 48 E 41 (fols. 6r–7r), the phrase “las muchas señales” is correct with respect to agreement, although the phrase “no cumplido ninguno” and the use of “Primero,” “Segundo,” “Tercero” and “Cuarto” (Fourth), are not correct. In EH 48 A 21 (6–8), the phrase “las muchas señales” is correct with respect to gender agreement, as is the phrase “no se ha cumplido ninguna,” although “Primero,” “Segundo,” “Tercero” and “Cuarto” are the incorrect masculine forms.

29 Mic. 4:1–3. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Mic. 4:1 and Isa. 2:2. Mic. 4:1–3 closely

vemos en el mundo jamás que guerras. Y de doscientos años a esta parte se inventaron y aumentaron nuevas armas de fuego no sabidas de los antiguos en lugar de cesar las primeras luego claramente consta que aun no vino el Mesías.

Segunda. Tomaremos de la materia de religión y conocimiento de Dios que prometen los profetas. Será todo el mundo sin división en el tiempo del Mesías, como dice el profeta Jeremías, capítulo 31, verso 34: “Y no enseñará más ninguno a su prójimo, ni ninguno a su hermano, diciendo: ‘Conoce a Jehová,’ porque todos me conocerán, desde el más pequeño de ellos hasta el más grande, dice Jehová. Porque perdonaré la maldad de ellos y no me acordaré más de su pecado.”³⁰ El profeta Sofonías, capítulo 3, verso 9: “En aquel tiempo devolveré yo a los pueblos pureza de labios, para que todos invoquen el nombre de Jehová, para que le sirvan de común consentimiento.”³¹ El profeta Zacarías, capítulo 14, verso 9, dice: “Y Jehová será rey sobre toda la tierra. En aquel día, Jehová será único, y único será su nombre.”³² Y por ese modo se habla en muchos lugares, y vemos que nunca el mundo estuvo [94r] más dividido en religiones que hoy. Luego no ha venido el Mesías.

Tercera. Tomaremos del pueblo de Israel y su estado que clarísimamente afirma la Escritura que el Mesías ha de restituir a su tierra y grandeza. El profeta Isaías, capítulo 11:12, dice: “Levantará pendón a las naciones, juntará los desterrados de Israel y desde los cuatro confines de la tierra reunirá a los esparcidos de Judá.”³³ Y para esto no hay que alegar versos particulares sino capítulos enteros. Véase el mismo profeta, capítulo 52, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66, desde el principio hasta el fin y Jeremías, capítulo 30 y 31, y Ezequiel, capítulos 36, 37, 38, 39, hasta el fin de todo su libro y muchas otras partes que muestran que la fin de la venida del Mesías es la prosperidad y felicidad del pueblo de Israel. Hoy lo vemos esparcido y derramado por todas las partes

parallels Isa. 2:2–4: “Acontecerá que al final de los tiempos será confirmado el monte de la casa de Jehová como cabeza de los montes; será exaltado sobre los collados y correrán a él todas las naciones. Vendrán muchos pueblos y dirán: ‘Venid, subamos al monte de Jehová, a la casa del Dios de Jacob. Él nos enseñará sus caminos y caminaremos por sus sendas.’ Porque de Sión saldrá la Ley y de Jerusalén la palabra de Jehová. Él juzgará entre las naciones y reprenderá a muchos pueblos. Convertirán sus espadas en rejas de arado y sus lanzas en hoces; no alzaré espada nación contra nación ni se adiestrarán más para la guerra.”

30 Jer. 31:34.

31 Zep. 3:9.

32 Zec. 14:9.

33 Isa. 11:12. EH 48 D 38 and EH 48 E 41 (fol. 7r) refer to Isa. 11:13. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 10r) and EH 48 A 21 refer to Isa. 11:12.

del mundo. Luego no es venido el Mesías que el Señor nos promete en tantos lugares.

Cuarta. Tomaremos de lo que prometen los profetas sobre la prosperidad de Israel en el tiempo del Mesías. Isaías, capítulo 52, verso 1, dice: “¡Despierta, despierta, / vístete de poder, Sión! / ¡Vístete tu ropa [94v] hermosa, / Jerusalén, ciudad santa, / porque nunca más vendrá a ti / incircunciso ni inmundo!”³⁴ El profeta Jeremías, capítulo 3:17, dice: “En aquel tiempo llamarán a Jerusalén Trono de Jehová, y todas las naciones vendrán a ella en el nombre de Jehová, a Jerusalén; y no andarán más tras la dureza de su malvado corazón.”³⁵ El profeta Ezequiel 48, verso 35, después de haber explicado la magnificencia de la ciudad de Jerusalén y sus dilatadas medidas, dice en el último de su libro: “Y desde aquel día el nombre de la ciudad será Jehová-sama”³⁶ Hoy vemos la ciudad de Jerusalén destruida en poder de bárbaros. Luego no vino el Mesías.

NOVENA PREGUNTA — ¿Cómo se responde a las profecías que los cristianos alegan haberse cumplido como en el capítulo 53 de Isaías y en el salmo 22?³⁷

Para haber de responder por este modo, era necesario componer grandes volúmenes, pero como en las demás profecías, especifica el dicho capítulo 53 de Isaías tan nombrado. Y del salmo 22³⁸ diremos con la brevedad posible el capítulo 53. Para declararse conforme los cristianos quieren, es necesario proponerse diferentes fundamentos, los [95r] cuales, como son refutados, es necesario primero probarlos y después aplicarles la declaración del dicho capítulo. Y para llegar a eso hay mucho camino que andar. Mas tiene el capítulo parte que no sufre la declaración de los cristianos, como lo que dice “por la rebelión de mi pueblo fue herido,” que son palabras que se refieren a muchos, y no a uno solo.³⁹ Del mismo modo, “Cuando haya puesto su vida en expiación por el pecado, / verá descendencia, vivirá por largos días,” términos que no cuadran sino en personas que tuvieron simiente hijos propios,

34 Isa. 52.1.

35 Jer. 3:17.

36 Ezek. 48:35. EH 48 D 38 refers to Ezek. 48:34. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 11r), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 7r), and EH 48 A 21 (8) do not include chapter or verse numbers.

37 EH 48 D 38 refers to Ps. 21, rather than Ps. 22, which appears to be an error by the copyist.

38 EH 48 D 38 again refers to Ps. 21, rather than Ps. 22, which appears to be another an error by the copyist.

39 Isa. 53:8.

y que vivieron mucho, alargando días, cosas tan diversas de la verdadera declaración y aplicación que los cristianos le dan.⁴⁰ La verdadera declaración es que habla por el pueblo de Israel el denominado aquí por siervo de Dios, título suyo tan ordinario en la Sagrada Escritura, donde dice que, “Los reyes cerrarán ante él la boca, / porque verán lo que nunca les fue contado / y entenderán lo que jamás habían oído,”⁴¹ como se dice en todo el capítulo precedente: “¿Quién ha creído a nuestro anuncio / y sobre quién se ha manifestado el brazo de Jehová? / Subirá cual renuevo delante de él, / como raíz de tierra seca. / No hay hermosura en él, ni esplendor; / [95v] lo veremos, mas sin atractivo alguno para que lo apreciemos. / Despreciado y desechado entre los hombres, / varón de dolores, experimentado en sufrimiento; / y como que escondimos de él el rostro, / fue menospreciado y no lo estimamos. / Ciertamente llevó él nuestras enfermedades y sufrió nuestros dolores, ¡pero nosotros lo tuvimos por azotado, como herido y afligido por Dios! / Mas él fue herido por nuestras rebeliones, / molido por nuestros pecados. / Por darnos la paz, cayó sobre él el castigo, / y por sus llagas fuimos nosotros curados. / Todos nosotros nos descarriamos como ovejas, / cada cual / se apartó por su camino; / mas Jehová cargó en él / el pecado de todos nosotros. / Angustiado él, y afligido, / no abrió su boca; / como un cordero fue llevado al matadero; / como una oveja delante de sus trasquiladores, / enmudeció, no abrió su boca. / Por medio de violencia y de juicio fue quitado; / y su generación, ¿quién la contará? / Porque fue arrancado de la tierra de los vivientes, / y por la rebelión de mi pueblo fue herido. / Se dispuso con los impíos su sepultura, / mas con los ricos fue en su muerte. / Aunque nunca hizo maldad / ni hubo engaño en su boca.”⁴² Toda esta plática, dice el profeta, que harán los reyes del mundo viendo la prosperidad de Israel. Y el mismo profeta acaba diciendo que “Jehová quiso quebrantarlo, / sujetándolo a padecimiento. / Cuando haya puesto su vida en expiación por el

40 Isa. 53:10.

41 Isa. 52:15.

42 It is significant that Mortera uses the verb “hermollecer” (to blossom or to sprout) in his rendition of the second line of Isa. 53:2, “que hermolleciese un tronco viejo” (“Like a tree trunk out of arid ground”). The verb “hermollecer” does not appear in either the rendition of 53:2 in the *Biblia de Ferrara* (348) or the first (1602) edition of the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (fol. 211), which both employ “subirá” (will come up) and which both employ “raíz” (root) rather than “tronco” ([tree] trunk). The reason for the difference is that on this occasion, as on many occasions throughout his corpus of polemical texts, Mortera is summarizing and paraphrasing his biblical source.

pecado, / verá descendencia, vivirá por largos días / y la voluntad de Jehová será en su mano prosperada.”⁴³

El salmo también habla del pueblo de Israel en el cautiverio y dice: “Dios mío, clamo de día y no respondes,”⁴⁴ término tan usado del profeta Isaías, 49:15, cuando dijo: “¿Se olvidará la mujer de lo que dio a luz, / para dejar [96r] de compadecerse del hijo de su vientre? / ¡Aunque ella lo olvide, yo nunca me olvidaré de ti!”⁴⁵ Este mismo phrasis usa aquí el salmista en nombre del pueblo y sus trabajos. Y con esta regla queda claro el salmo.

DÉCIMA PREGUNTA — ¿Qué pueblo ha de recibir y obedecer el Mesías si el de los judíos, o de los gentiles?

Todos lo han de recibir y obedecer. Las profecías están llenas de estos testimonios. Sobre esto, traeremos algunos. Decía Bilham: “Lo veo, mas no ahora; lo contemplo, mas no de cerca: Saldrá estrella de Jacob, se levantará cetro de Israel, y herirá las sienes de Moab y destruirá a todos los hijos de Set,” porque de Seth hijo de Adán procedió todo el género humano.⁴⁶ El profeta Isaías, 60, verso 12, dice que “la nación o el reino que no quiera servirte, / perecerá; del todo será asolado.”⁴⁷ El salmo 72:8 dice: ¡Dominará de mar a mar, / y desde el río hasta los confines de la tierra!,” y abajo, “Todos los reyes se postrarán delante de él; / todas las naciones lo servirán.”⁴⁸ Daniel, capítulo 7, verso 13, hablando del Mesías [96v] capitán de la quinta monarquía dice después de la destrucción de las cuatro monarquías: “Miraba yo en la visión de la noche, / y vi que con las nubes del cielo / venía uno como un hijo de hombre; / vino hasta el Anciano de días, / y lo hicieron acercarse delante de él. / Y le fue dado dominio, gloria y reino, / para que todos los pueblos, / naciones y lenguas lo sirvieran; / su dominio es dominio eterno, / que nunca pasará; / y su reino es uno que nunca será destruido.”⁴⁹ Y de este modo muchos profetas muestran que el Mesías será venerado, y recibido de todos los reinos del mundo, y de todos sus pueblos.

⁴³ Isa. 53:10.

⁴⁴ Ps. 22:2.

⁴⁵ Isa. 49:14–15. EH 48 D 38 refers to Isa. 49:12. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 13r) refers to Isa. 49:9, EH 48 E 41 (fol. 8v) refers to Isa. 49:14, and EH 48 A 21 (9) refers to Isa. 49:14–15.

⁴⁶ Num 24:17.

⁴⁷ Isa. 60:12.

⁴⁸ Ps. 72:8 and Ps. 72:11, respectively.

⁴⁹ Dan. 7:13–14. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Dan. 7:13.

ONCENA PREGUNTA — *¿Por qué pecados tiene Dios ha tantos siglos arruinado, y en tan largo destierro y cautiverio a la república de los judíos?*

Aunque los judíos no se confiesan a hombre sino a Dios bendito forzosa cosa es confesar nuestros pecados por honra y justificación de la justicia divina. Y también porque son notorios de la boca de todos los profetas. Y así se puede ver Ezequiel, capítulo 16, verso 48, donde particularizando los pecados de Israel, dice: “Vivo yo, dice Jehová, el Señor, [97r] que tu hermana Sodoma y sus hijas no han hecho como hiciste tú y tus hijas.”⁵⁰ Cessa luego la admiración del largo cautiverio. Pues es, el trueque de una total destrucción, como se ejecutó en Sodom, por pura piedad divina, así lo testifica el profeta Isaías: “Si Jehová de los ejércitos / no nos hubiera dejado un resto pequeño, / seríamos como Sodoma, semejantes a Gomorra.”⁵¹ Ni haze dificultad contra estos decirse que ya en la restitución del cautiverio de Babilonia se había perdonado estos pecados. Y porque por otros cometidos en el segundo templo, padecemos este largo cautiverio. Porque la redención de Babilonia fue una visita para ver si con la comodidad del reino y templo pudiesen desfallecer los graves pecados de adulterios, homicidios e idolatrías que debían. Y ellos en lugar de pagar las deudas viejas acrecentaron otras de nuevo. Y para que no quedase lugar a nadie de imaginar lo contrario, hizo cautivar el Señor las diez tribus, por mano de Salmanasar, a tierras incógnitas de nosotros cerca de 600 años antes de la destrucción del segundo templo. Y aún hoy no han vuelto a su tierra y señorío, todo esto ordenado [97v] con particular y divina providencia para que nadie pudiese aplicar la causa de aquel cautiverio a algún pecado particular cometido en la caza segunda. Porque las diez tribus que no se hallaron en ella, padecen cautiverio más largo que el nuestro 600 años, queda luego quieto en esta pregunta cualquier ánimo o amigo de la virtud o de la verdad, y sin pasión, viendo claramente que los pecados del pueblo llegaron a tal término que si cualquier otro pueblo lo hubiera cometido, siendo éste a quien el Señor empeñó su palabra con juramento que nunca acabaría, ya fuera exterminado de la memoria de la gente. No es luego cosa de admiración que el castigo total se vuelva en un cautiverio como se hace a un delincuente que merece muerte que por misericordia concediéndole la vida le meten en prisión de largos años.

50 Ezek. 16:48.

51 Isa. 1:9.

DOCENA PREGUNTA — ¿Cuáles y cuántos son los artículos principales de su fe?

Los artículos y fundamentos de nuestra fe son trece.

El primero, creer que hay un solo Dios, causa de todas las causas, [98r] que todos dependen de él, y él no depende de nadie.

Segundo, que este Dios es uno, y que su unidad es purísima y perfectísima, y que no sufre ningún modo de división imaginable.

Tercero, que este Dios no es cuerpo ni forma que informa ningún cuerpo, ni sujeto a ningún accidente a que está sujeto el cuerpo.

Cuarto, que este Dios es eterno, que no tuvo principio ni tendrá fin, y todas las demás cosas tuvieron principio a fuerzas de él.

Quinto, que a este Dios sólo se debe de honrar, servir y obedecer y no a otro ninguno ni fuera de él para ser intercesor entre nosotros y él.

Sexto, que se ha de creer que este Dios comunica su espíritu y manifiesta su voluntad a hombres sabios y virtuosos. Todos los que a su sabiduría le parece, y estos son los profetas.

Séptimo, que el mayor de todos los profetas fue Moisés, por cuya mano dio el Señor la Ley en el monte de Sinay.

Octavo, que toda la Ley, desde la primera letra hasta la última, fue dada de Dios bendito a Moisés. Y así la tradición y declaración de ella que se conservó en la congregación de Israel. [98v]

Noveno, que la Ley que dio el Señor por mano de Moisés. Y traducción de ella es eterna, sobre la cual no se puede acrecentar ni menguar cosa alguna.

Décimo, que Dios sabe las particularidades de las acciones humanas y sus pensamientos y no se le encubre nada.

Onceno, que Dios bendito da premio a los que observan su Ley, y castiga a los transgresores. Y que lo esencial del premio está en la gloria de las almas, la eterna vida, y lo esencial de la pena es el tajamiento del alma y el infierno.

Doceno, que Dios ha de enviar un redentor de la casa de David y descendencia de Selomo excederá en honra a todos los reyes del mundo que lo anticiparon. Y se cumplirá toda la felicidad que profetizaron los profetas.

Treceno, que Dios hará resucitar a los muertos en el tiempo que determinará su sabiduría divina.

Y estos son los artículos de nuestra santa Ley, de los cuales penden muchos ramos, que no toca aquí el tratarlos.

[99r] *Trece pregunta — ¿En qué fundan los hebreos las esperanzas tan largas de su Mesías?*

Pues, pregunta eso debe de estar muy remoto de la Sagrada Escritura, pues no hay pliego en ella donde no estén firmes y claros los fundamentos de la palabra divina irrefragable en que se funda nuestra esperanza. Y todavía se pregunta en qué se fundan las esperanzas tan largas, debiera de considerar que por más siglos que pasen, no puede faltar la palabra divina a los que verdaderamente son sus fieles. Y pudiera acordarse de lo que dice Isaías, capítulo 40:8: La hierba se seca y se marchita la flor, / mas la palabra del Dios nuestro permanece para siempre.”⁵² Cuánto y más que esta largueza de tiempo, no nos halla descuidados, porque de antes nos lo advirtió el Señor para que no nos admirásemos. Dice el profeta Hosea, capítulo 3, verso 4: Porque muchos días estarán los hijos de Israel sin rey, sin príncipe, sin sacrificio, sin estatua, sin efod y sin terafines. Después volverán los hijos de Israel, buscarán a Jehová, su Dios, y a David, su rey; y temerán a Jehová y a su bondad al fin de los días.⁵³ Jeremías, en sus Lamentaciones, viendo la dilación de este cautiverio: “¿Por qué te olvidas completamente de nosotros / y nos abandonas por tan largo tiempo? / Haznos volver a ti, Jehová, y nos volveremos; / renueva nuestros [99v] días como al principio.”⁵⁴ Y sobre todo es cosa de consideración no advertir quién esto pregunta que los cristianos preguntan y dicen que todo el mundo esperó el Mesías en cerca de 400 años. Que tantos pasaron desde el pecado de Adán hasta el tiempo que ellos dicen que vino su Mesías, cuya esperanza fue para salvación de las almas que dicen que se perdían hasta su venida. Afuera de los judíos justos, que iban al limbo, y reprueban a los judíos esperarlo cerca de 1600 años para reducirlos a sus tierras y bienes antiguos. Esperanza y tiempo, bien diferente de los suyos, mas todo esto anteveio? Anterior? la sabiduría divina cuando dijo por boca del salmista 89: “Señor, acuérdate del oprobio de tus siervos; / oprobio de muchos pueblos, que llevo en mi seno, / porque tus enemigos, Jehová, han deshonrado, / porque tus enemigos han deshonrado los pasos de tu ungido.”⁵⁵ Y esta

52 Isa. 40:8. EH 48 D 38 and EH 48 E 41 (fol. 11v) refer to Isa. 40:6. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 17r) refers to Isa. 40:7. EH 48 A 21 (12) refers to Isa. 40:8.

53 Hos. 3:4–5. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Hos. 3:4, although Mortera’s inclusion of “&ª” (etcetera) after the initial words of Hos. 3:5 (“Después volverán los hijos de Israel”) indicates that the quotation should include the complete biblical verse.

54 Lam. 5:20–21.

55 Ps. 89:50–51.

pregunta y semejantes, que demuestran nuestra larga esperanza es la propia que aquí se dice, “porque tus enemigos han deshonrado los pasos de tu ungido,” diciendo que tanto tarda en venir, y como quien acaba [100r] suspirando, acaba el salmista diciendo: “¡Bendito sea Jehová para siempre! / ¡Amén y amén!”⁵⁶ como decir, “alabado sea el Señor por todo.”

PREGUNTA 14 — ¿Qué bien esperan de él en esta vida, los que mueren antes de su venida?

Esta misma pregunta hizo el profeta Isaías, capítulo 26:13, al Señor, diciendo: “Jehová, Dios nuestro, / otros señores fuera de ti se han enseñoreado de nosotros; / pero nosotros nos acordaremos de tu nombre, / solamente del tuyo. / Muertos son, no vivirán; / han fallecido, no resucitarán; / porque los castigaste, / los destruiste y desvaneciste todo su recuerdo.”⁵⁷ Como si dijera, “Señor pasamos muchos males, y en los mismos males y miserias acabamos y morimos. ¿De qué modo luego gozaremos en esta vida de los bienes que has de hacer a tu pueblo si los muertos no resucitaran?” Le respondió el Señor: “Tus muertos vivirán; / sus cadáveres resucitarán. / ¡Despertad y cantad, / moradores del polvo! / porque tu rocío es cual rocío de hortalizas, / y la tierra entregará sus muertos.”⁵⁸ He aquí los bienes que esperamos. Confiamos en la promesa divina, los que mueren antes de la venida del Mesías. El mismo coloquio forma el profeta Malachai 3:14:, [100v] diciendo en nombre del Señor, hablando con el pueblo: “Habéis dicho: “Por demás es servir a Dios. ¿Qué aprovecha que guardemos su Ley y que andemos afligidos en presencia de Jehová de los ejércitos?”⁵⁹ Responde el Señor: “Entonces os volveréis y discerniréis la diferencia entre el justo y el malo, entre el que sirve a Dios y el que no le sirve,” y todos los versos que dicen y siguen adelante “os volveréis discerniréis la diferencia entre el justo y el malo.”⁶⁰ Y queda con esto resuelta otra pregunta.

56 Ps. 89:52.

57 Isa. 26:13–14. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Isa. 26:13.

58 Isa. 26:19.

59 Mal. 3:14.

60 Mal. 3:18.

PREGUNTA 15 — En el juicio final, ¿de qué le servirá su Mesías y después en la otra vida? Pues que él y ellos todos han de morir y se ha de acabar el mundo.

Como imagina él que pregunta qué los judíos creen de su Mesías, lo que creen los cristianos dan en muchas dificultades. Pero después de entender que la salvación del Mesías no es espiritual sino corporal como dijimos en la propuesta quinta, queda respondida su pregunta que en el día del juicio, ni en la otra vida no hay necesidad ninguna del Mesías, y lo que se dice aquí presupone que el mundo se ha de acabar.⁶¹ No es caso tan averiguado que no tenga muchas pruebas [101r] en contrario, pero no es cosa de fe, y sólo Dios sabe lo que será.

PREGUNTA 16 — Si tienen los judíos en este tiempo el texto hebreo de la Santa Escritura en su antigua verdad y pureza.

Para responder a esta pregunta bastaba solamente ver que todas las biblias hebreas que se hallan en todo el mundo no difieren entre sí en un solo punto, ni sílaba, prueba clarísima de su verdad. Porque siendo el pueblo de Israel esparcido por todo el mundo, sujetos a diferentes naciones, sus biblias son unas mismas siempre sin alguna discrepancia. Y porque no puede haber ninguna duda sobre este caso, traeré testimonios de autores gravísimos de los mismos cristianos que lo publican, entre los cuales dice Agustino, página 15 y 13 en el libro de la *Ciudad de Dios*, que no se puede creer que los judíos hayan contaminado en ningún modo los libros Sagrados. Y traen prueba de esta verdad muchas razones.

Primera porque parece imposible que conviniesen todos en una misma voluntad y intención mala estando esparcidos en todas [101v] las partes del mundo, sin hallarse ninguno que tal enormidad y sacrilegio como era adulterar las cosas sagradas. Además de esto, hallándose todos los originales hebraicos antiguos y modernos conforme en todo, y por todo, habiendo sido escritos en varios tiempos y diversas regiones, arguye pureza. Ni menos se debe presumir que quisiese un pueblo tan sin cuento, que no tiene en su cautiverio, otro bien sino la posesión de los sagrados libros, falsificarlos por satisfacer a la mala voluntad y rencor que podían tener contra una nación, o pueblo. Estas son las palabras de Agustino. Esto mismo afirma Jerónimo en el libro de las *Cuestiones hebraicas* y Beda en el texto de las *Edades del mundo*. Y Tomás de Aquino absuelve la *Epístola* capítulo 9 de *Pablo a los*

61 The copyist repeats the phrase “que el mundo” (that the world) in EH 48 D 38 (“que el mundo que el mundo”).

Romanos. Y Alejandro de Ímola, en sus *Consultas*, defiende la misma verdad. Y Agustino nos llama tesoreros antiguos de los sagrados libros en su *Exposición de los salmos*, salmo 40. Y así lo confirma en el libro 18 de la *Ciudad de Dios*, capítulo 43, que la confición de la parte vale más que cien testigos.

PREGUNTA 17 — [102r] *Si es lícito a los judíos interpretar la sagrada escritura y seguir el sentido que les parece libremente.*

Cuando el Señor bendito dio la ley en el monte de Sinai, dijo a Mosheh después de haber oído el pueblo la voz del Señor los 10 mandamientos del decálogo que dijese que volviese a sus alojamientos y que él se detuviese allí para aprender la voluntad divina para instituir en ella al pueblo, como se dice en el Deuteronomio, capítulo 5:30–31: “Ve y diles: Volveos a vuestras tiendas. Y tú quédate aquí conmigo; yo te diré todos los mandamientos, estatutos y decretos que les enseñarás.”⁶² De allí estuvo Moisés en el monte cuarenta días y cuarenta noches, en cuyo tiempo le enseñó el Señor la declaración de la ley que llamamos ley mental, que él enseñó al senado de Israel, y en particular a Jehosuah. Y así de tiempo en tiempo se fue conservando de padres a hijos la tradición y ley mental que manda el Señor con pena de muerte, diciendo: “Cuando alguna cosa te sea difícil en el juicio, entre una clase de homicidio y otra, entre una clase de derecho legal y otra, y entre una clase de herida y otra, en negocios de litigio en tus ciudades; entonces te levantarás y recurrirás al lugar que Jehová, tu Dios, escoja. Acudirás a los sacerdotes levitas y al juez que haya en aquellos días, y preguntarás. Ellos te enseñarán la sentencia del juicio. Y harás lo que indique la sentencia que te dicten los del lugar que Jehová escoja, cuidando de cumplir todo lo que te manifiesten. Procederás según las instrucciones que te den y el juicio que te pronuncien; no te apartarás ni a la [102v] derecha ni a la izquierda de la sentencia que te dicten. El hombre que proceda con soberbia, no obedeciendo al sacerdote que está para ministrar allí delante de Jehová, tu Dios, o al juez, ése morirá.”⁶³ Y esta tradición hoy es recibida en la Mishná, y en el Talmud, y conforme a ella es necesario declarar la Sagrada Escritura y no de otro modo. Y la verdadera sucesión de esta tradición de generación a generación tenemos exactamente en diferentes autores que quien fuere curioso lo podrá ver en su lugar con que se ha respondido.

⁶² Deut. 5:30–31. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Deut. 5:31.

⁶³ Deut. 17:8–12.

PREGUNTA 18 — ¿Quién tiene autoridad de dispensar en las observancias de la ley, y castigar los transgresores?

Por los versos citados en la respuesta precedente, se ve quien tenía autoridad para dispensar en las encomendanzas de la ley donde se dice, “te levantarás y recurrirás al lugar que Jehová, tu Dios, escoja,” que denota el senado grande de Israel, compuesto de 71 senadores, a la imitación de Mosseh, y los 70 viejos que asistían en el Templo del señor.⁶⁴ Por ellos dice: “no te apartarás ni a la derecha ni a la izquierda de la sentencia que te dicten.”⁶⁵ Este senado a cualquiera profeta conocido por verdadero, tenido por verdadero, tenía autoridad [103r] para poder dispensar por tiempo limitado en todas las encomendanzas de la ley excepto en prohibición de la idolatría y dependencia que en tal caso tenemos expresa obligación de matar a quien tal nos dijere, como consta del Deuteronomio, capítulo 13. A este senado y a los demás que en las ciudades de Judea había tocaba castigar los delincuentes y transgresores de la ley, cada cual conforme su delito, como largamente se dice en el Talmud en el tratado de Sanhedrin. Mas después que por nuestros pecados fuimos cautivos de nuestras tierras, y esparcidos por diversas partes, y cesó la profecía y el senado grande, nadie tuvo autoridad para dispensar en ningún caso de las encomendanzas de la ley, salvó en aquellos que nos dejaron escritos en la Mishna y en el Talmud aquellos gravísimos varones, dejándonos por ejemplo lo que sucedió en sus tiempos. Y a tocante al castigo de los transgresores de la ley, excepto la pena de muerte, la cual no es permitido por nuestra ley ejecutar fuera de nuestra tierra, todas las demás ejecutan jueces electos por la congrega de Israel en todos los lugares del esparcimiento, y conforme la autoridad que le conceden los príncipes a quienes están sujetos.

[103v] *PREGUNTA 19 — Los hebreos que se han vuelto cristianos, viviendo y muriendo como tales, si serán salvados o condenados, por haber en dejado la ley de Moseh.*

Habiendo deliberado de responder por términos modestos, y no escandalosos, no responderé largamente en esta pregunta, por no exceder de este presupuesto. Y solo trasladaré dos versos de la Sagrada Escritura, palabra por palabra, que muestra la eternidad del firmamento del Señor con su pueblo en cuanto hubiere generaciones. Deuteronomio 29, versos 14–15, diciendo, “Y no solamente con vosotros hago yo este pacto y este juramento, sino con

⁶⁴ Mortera again quotes from Deut. 17:8.

⁶⁵ Mortera again quotes from Deut. 17:11.

los que están aquí presentes hoy con nosotros delante de Jehová, nuestro Dios, y con los que no están aquí hoy con nosotros.”⁶⁶ El segundo para mostrar la pena eterna que promete Dios a la alma que quitare su firmamento y lo dejare, diciendo en Números 15, versos 30–31: “Pero la persona que haga algo con soberbia, sea el natural o el extranjero, ultraja a Jehová; esa persona será eliminada de en medio de su pueblo. Por cuanto tuvo en poco la palabra de Jehová y menospreció su mandamiento, esa persona será eliminada por completo y su pecado caerá sobre ella.”⁶⁷ Y este poco basta para lo mucho que se puede decir.

PREGUNTA 20 — [104r] ¿Qué justa causa excusa los hebreos que se vuelven al judaísmo después de haber recibido y profesado la fe católica y cristiana?

Con más razón pudiera preguntar, ¿con qué justa causa forzaron los tiranos los ánimos libres de los judíos, con tantos miedos y sobrefuerzos, a recibir la fe cristiana, cuyas tiranías fueron tantas, y tan espantosas? que de ellas se puede componer un grande libro. Mas basta decir que el obispo Osorio, en el primero de sus 12 libros de las oraciones de Don Manoel, rey de Portugal, llama violencia lo que usó con los judíos, indica injusticia facinorosa y cruel, ¿que lugar queda luego de preguntar con qué justa causa se excusara, volviendo los hebreos, cuando se manifiesta una fuerza tan grande que les fue hecha para creer lo que no creían, y que amasen lo que aborrecían? ¿y con cuánta razón pudiera preguntar alguno qué justa causa excusa a los hebreos dejar la ley de sus padres, que para siempre recibió de la boca del mismo Dios, criador universal, dada con tanta solemnidad en el monte de Sinaí, confesado de todos los pueblos y naciones por verdadero privilegio que no goza ninguna de las otras que profesan hoy [104v] en el mundo? Pues no son confesadas sino de sus observantes solamente, con qué excusa, dejando la ley⁶⁸ que sus padres observaron tantos siglos sin intervención alguna. ¿Con qué excusa tomaron sobre sí los ritos y fueros nuevos que no les enseñaron sus padres? Aquí sí que era el argumento. Aquí cabía la pregunta, y no lo

66 Deut. 29:14–15. EH 48 D 38 refers to Deut. 29:14. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Deut. 29:14, and Mortera writes that he will quote two verses (“dos versos” [fol. 103v]). The biblical quote corresponds to Deut. 29:13–14 in the *Jewish Study Bible* and the *Biblia de Ferrara* (177). The quote corresponds to Deut. 29:14–15 in the *Biblia Reina-Valera* (fol. 66v in 1602 edition).

67 Num. 15:30–31. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Num. 15:30.

68 EH 48 C 09 (fol. 23r), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 16r) and EH 48 A 21 (20) contain the phrase “la ley” (the law), which was omitted by the copyist in EH 48 D 38.

que hizo, para que cuando no⁶⁹ procediesen todas las cosas referidas, claro estaba la respuesta de esta pregunta, con muchos ejemplos de la escritura, como de Ytro, de Ruth, de Nahaman, que siendo gentiles, y conociendo la verdad del Dios de Israel, se convirtieron a él, como lo harán todas las gentes, como dice el profeta Jeremías, capítulo 16:19–20: Jehová, fortaleza mía, fuerza mía / y refugio mío en el tiempo de la aflicción, / a ti vendrán naciones / desde los extremos de la tierra, y dirán: ‘Ciertamente mentira heredaron nuestros padres, / una vanidad sin provecho alguno. / ¿Hará acaso el hombre dioses para sí? / Mas ellos no son dioses.’”⁷⁰ Y así queda muy claro no tener esta pregunta ninguna duda.

PREGUNTA 21 — *Si se pueden salvar los judíos que no se circuncidan, ni guardan [105r] la ley en las tierras donde no se les permite, haciendo antes contra ella, y contra sus conciencias, confesando en todo el cristianismo, adorando imágenes, oyendo misas, y negando ser judíos, siéndolo en su corazón.*

De esta suerte de gente que en la pregunta se propone hay dos clases: la primera es la que recibe⁷¹ en los Reinos donde no solamente se le impide la observación de la ley, más aún se les cierran los puertos, impidiéndoles la salida. Estos tales son culpados delante el Señor, pues no procuran, aunque con riesgo de su vida, salir a puertos libres, porque expresamente manda el Señor: “Amarás a Jehová, tu Dios, de todo tu corazón, de toda tu alma y con todas tus fuerzas.”⁷² Donde se ve que todas las cosas debemos de dejar por el amor divino. Y ejemplo de Hananiah, Misael y Azaria, en Babilonia. Muestra esta verdad que se ofrecieron al fuego vivos por no humillarse al ídolo. Y todavía, siendo él misericordioso, y largo de furores, considerando la flaqueza humana, y los grandes respetos que a estos perseguidos en aquellas tierras, metiga su rigor, y [105v] los favorece, viendo sus ánimos dispuestos a servirlo, con la experiencia lo tiene mostrado a muchos.

Segunda clase de este género son aquellos que habitan en reinos donde no se les impide la salida, y libremente sin ningún impedimento, pueden,

⁶⁹ EH 48 C 09 (fol. 23r), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 16r) and EH 48 A 21 (20) contain the term “no,” which was omitted by the copyist in EH 48 D 38.

⁷⁰ Jer. 16:19–20. EH 48 D 38 refers only to Jer. 16:19.

⁷¹ EH 48 C 09 (fol. 23r), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 16v) and EH 48 A 21 (18) contain the verb “reside” (resides), while the incorrect verb “recibe” (receives) is an error by the copyist of EH 48 D 38.

⁷² Deut. 6:5.

ir⁷³ a donde mejor les parezca. Y estos tales son totalmente abominados del Señor, y aparejados para perdición porque son verdaderamente adoradores del oro. Siendo así, que por puro interés de acumular hacienda, engañan, o piensan engañar a Dios, por amor del mundo, y al mundo por amor de Dios. Y piensan estos, que teniendo el corazón bueno con el Señor, tienen satisfecho a su obligación, y no ven que expresamente dice el Señor en la ley en el Deuteronomio 30:14, “Pues muy cerca de ti está la palabra, en tu boca y en tu corazón, para que la cumplas,” donde también expresamente dice⁷⁴ que para observar la ley es necesario publicarla con la boca, y creerla en el corazón, y hacerla con acto.⁷⁵ Y mejor les era el no tener conocimiento de la verdad, que tenerlo, y fingirlo contrario, porque entonces pudieran tener alguna disculpa, que no tienen, sabiendo lo que les [106r] conviene. Esto enseña el profeta, Isaías, capítulo 26:10, diciendo: “Se mostrará piedad al malvado, / pero no aprenderá justicia, / sino que en tierra de rectitud hará iniquidad / y no mirará a la majestad de Jehová.”⁷⁶ Debían de considerar cuán grande ingratitud usan con su criador que los sacó del fuego de Sedóm, y ellos, como la mujer de Lot, en lugar de seguir el camino que deben, y ponerse en salvo, miran atrás y quedan en medio del camino, hechos estatuas de sal, engañándose en la prosperidad de los bienes, no sabiendo las condiciones divinas que publica el psalmista 92:7: “Cuando brotan los impíos como la hierba / y florecen todos los que hacen maldad, / es para ser destruidos eternamente.”⁷⁷ Y Selomoh dice, Proverbios 1:32: “Porque el desvío de los ignorantes los matará, / la prosperidad de los necios los echará a perder.”⁷⁸

Puédese añadir a estos una tercera clase, pues se parecen en el fingimiento a las primeras, y son aquellos del pueblo de Israel que, siendo cristianos en su corazón, por el temor de tormentos, y recelo de perder la vida, confiesan ser judíos, no lo siendo. Da Dios un desengaño para que puedan conocer la verdad, si tuviesen [106v] entendimiento, haciendo una consecuencia de la poca verdad que asiste en aquel tribunal de Inquisición, donde se vierte tanta sangre inocente. Pues ven expresamente, que forzosamente

73 EH 48 C 09 (fol. 24r) and EH 48 E 41 (fol. 17r) contain the verb “ir” (go), EH 48 A 21 contains the reflexive form “irse” (18). EH 48 D 38 contains “y,” which is an error by the copyist.

74 EH 48 C 09 (fol. 24r), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 17r) and EH 48 A 21 (18) contain the verb “dize” (says), which was omitted by the copyist in EH 48 D 38.

75 Deut. 30:14.

76 Isa. 26:10.

77 Ps. 92:7.

78 Prov. 1:32.

les hicieron confesar contra su conciencia lo que no eran, por estos tales, dice el profeta Ezequiel, capítulo 20:32: “Y no ha de suceder lo que habéis pensado. Porque vosotros decís: ‘Seamos como las naciones, como las demás familias de la tierra, que sirven al palo y a la piedra.’ Vivo yo, dice Jehová el Señor, que con mano fuerte y brazo extendido, y en el ardor de mi ira, he de reinar sobre vosotros.”⁷⁹ Estos son los que con “mano fuerte” del tormento, y con “brazo extendido” de prisiones, y con “ardor de mi ira” de recelos de la vida, confiesan ser judíos, y que el Dios de Israel es su Rey. Y si después no se niegan lo que dijeron, porque saben el castigo que merecen.

PREGUNTA 22 — ¿Qué se han hecho de aquellos diez tribus que llevaron cautivos los asirios? ¿Dónde están y que se ha hecho de ellos?

Bastantemente satisface a las dos partes el profeta Isaías 27, verso 13, diciendo: “Acontecerá también en aquel día, que se tocará con gran trompeta, [107r] vendrán los que habían sido esparcidos en la tierra de Asiria y los que habían sido desterrados a Egipto, y adorarán a Jehová en el monte santo, en Jerusalén.”⁸⁰ Llamándoles perdidos en la tierra de Asiria “los que habían sido esparcidos en la tierra de Asiria,” muestra ser imposible que sepa ninguno lo que se⁸¹ hizo de ellos porque si tal conocimiento se alcanzase no se pudieran llamar “esparcidos.” Y pues las Sagradas Escrituras los llama así esfuerza que estén encubiertos hasta que determine la sabiduría divina y infinita que sean manifiestos. Del mismo modo estuvo Joseph en Egipto, encubierto 22 años sin saber de él hasta que Dios lo hizo revelar a los suyos. Y diciendo “adorarán a Jehová en el monte santo, en Jerusalén” satisface a la segunda pregunta que dice lo que se espera de ellos, pues claramente promete el profeta que volverán a encorvarse en Jerusalem al Señor. Lo mismo dijo el profeta Oseas, capítulo 1:11: “Se congregarán los hijos de Judá y de Israel, / nombrarán un solo jefe / y se levantarán de la tierra, / porque grande será el día de Jezreel.”⁸² El profeta Ezekiel, en el capítulo 37, largamente escribe [107v] la redención de los diez tribus a Jerusalén, y que se sujetará otra vez al reino de David, a quien no obedecieron desde el día que se rebelaron contra, como se puede ver en el dicho lugar.

⁷⁹ Ezek. 20:32–33. EH 48 D 38 refers to Ezek. 20:32.

⁸⁰ Isa. 27:13.

⁸¹ EH 48 C 09 (fol. 25v), EH 48 E 41 (fol. 18r) and EH 48 A 21 (19) contain the correct third-person reflexive pronoun “se” rather than “si,” which is a copyist error on EH 48 D 38.

⁸² Hos. 1:11. EH 48 D 38 refers to Hos. 2:2, which corresponds to Hos. 1:11 in the *Biblia Reina-Valera*.

Pregunta 23 — Si confiesan los judíos el pecado original con que todos nacimos, y si no, por qué lo niegan.

Los judíos niegan el pecado [de Adán] original, con grandísima razón porque el asiento del pecado es en el alma y las almas todas no preceden de Adán sino de Dios su Criador.⁸³ Luego las almas de los sucesores de Adán no pudieron pecar en Adán querecida el pecado en el alma. Es cosa clara, porque el pecado es un vicio cometido de la alma, y del entendimiento. Y la Sagrada Escritura dice, “esa persona será eliminada por completo y su pecado caerá sobre ella,” donde se ve que el pecado asiste en el alma, y que las almas, y que las almas sean criados de Dios, sin intervención alguna de medianero.⁸⁴ Lo dice el profeta Isaías, capítulo 57:16: “pues decaerían ante mí / el espíritu y las almas que yo he creado.”⁸⁵ Esto rectifica Ezekiel 18, verso 4: [108r] diciendo: “todas las almas son mías: como el alma del padre, así el alma del hijo es mía. El alma que peque, ésta morirá.”⁸⁶ Queda luego la consecuencia clara que las almas de los sucesores de Adán no podían pecar en él. Bien confiesan los judíos que todo el género humano se sujetó a las penas del pecado de Adán, las cuales siendo corporales alcanzan a todos sus hijos en el cuerpo, como hijos de él, del modo que sucede a un esclavo. Que todos sus hijos lo son naciendo de padre esclavo hasta el tiempo que promete el Señor que volverá el mundo a su primera perfección. Dicho por el profeta Isaías, capítulo 25:8–9: “Destruirá a la muerte para siempre, y enjugará Jehová el Señor las lágrimas de todos los rostros y quitará la afrenta de su pueblo de toda la tierra; porque Jehová lo ha dicho. Se dirá en aquel día: “Destruirá a la muerte para siempre, / y enjugará Jehová el Señor las lágrimas / de todos los rostros / y quitará la afrenta de su pueblo / de toda la tierra; / porque Jehová lo ha dicho. / Se dirá en aquel día: ‘¡He aquí, éste es nuestro Dios! / Le hemos esperado, y nos salvará. / ¡Éste es Jehová, a quien hemos esperado! / Nos gozaremos y nos alegraremos en su salvación.’”⁸⁷ Amén.

[108v] Blank

83 In EH 48 D 38, “[de Adam]” (Adam’s) is in brackets on fol. 107v.

84 Mortera again quotes from Num. 15:31.

85 Isa. 57:16. EH 48 D 38 refers to Isa. 57:12. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 26v) and EH 48 A 21 (20) refer to Isa. 57:16. EH 48 E 41 (fol. 19r) refers to Isa. 15:17.

86 Ezek. 18:4.

87 Isa. 25:8–9. EH 48 D 38 refers to Isa. 25:10. EH 48 C 09 (fol. 26v) refers to Isa. 25:8. EH 48 E 41 (fol. 19r) and EH 48 A 21 (20) do not contain chapter or verse numbers.

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