

# Torah Study and Truth in Medieval Ashkenazic Rabbinic Literature and Thought

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In a well-known passage in his commentary to *ḤEruvin* 13b, R. Yom Tov b. Abraham al-Ishvilli (Ritva, d. c. 1325) interprets the talmudic phrase characterizing the halakhic debates between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, 'these and those are the words of the Living God' (*elu ve-elu divrei E-lohim ḥayyim*), by citing an earlier rabbinic discussion in northern France. 'The Rabbis of northern France asked how is it possible that both [views] are the words of the Living God, since one prohibits and one permits? They answered that when Moses ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah, he was shown for every [halakhic] aspect [of the Torah] forty-nine ways to prohibit and forty-nine ways to permit. Moses queried the Almighty about this [how the halakhah should be determined], and He indicated that this [the final halakhic ruling] would be given to the scholars of Israel in every generation, and the decision would be theirs'. Ritva concludes that this is the correct exoteric interpretation (*nakhon hu lefi ha-derash*) of the talmudic passage in *ḤEruvin*, and adds that an esoteric explanation can be found within mystical thought (*u-ve-derekh ha-emet, yesh ta'am sod ba-davar*).<sup>1</sup>

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1 *Ḥiddushei ha-Ritva Ḥal Massekhet ḤEruvin*, M. Goldstein ed., Jerusalem 1974, pp. 107-108. In the initial introduction to his *Yam shel Shelomoh* (to tractates Baba Qamma and Ḥullin), R. Solomon Luria (Maharshal) cites unnamed kabbalists to this effect, without reference to the Ritva passage. According to Maharshal's formulation, the forty-nine distinct channels allowed all of those who stood at Sinai to apprehend the Torah's laws and teachings according to his own level of understanding, and the contents of these channels constituted the sounds that were both 'heard and seen' at Sinai. Cf. M. Raffeld, 'On Some Kabbalistic Elements Underlying the Halakhic Teaching of R. Shlomo Luria' [Hebrew], *Daat* 36 (1996), pp. 21-23, and Y. Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity* [Hebrew], Jerusalem 1990, p. 361. Both Raffeld and Elbaum note that Maharshal explicitly cites a kabbalistic interpretation found in *Ḥiddushei ha-Ritva* to a passage in tractate Sukkah 28a. Maharshal refers later in his introduction to the remarkable efforts made by the

The discussion cited by Ritva appears in fact in *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* to <sup>c</sup>Eruvin.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the Tosafist, R. Perez b. Elijah of Corbeil (d. 1298) notes that this interpretation is to be found within the earlier *Tosafot* of (his teacher) R. Yeḥiel of Paris, who had located it in an unnamed midrash. The most likely source for R. Yeḥiel's interpretation is a passage in Midrash Shoher Tov to Psalms 12:7 ('the expressions of the Almighty are exceedingly pure expressions'), in which early Palestinian Amoraim describe how even youngsters in the days of David and Saul and Samuel could present forty-nine different analyses of whether a substance was ritually pure or impure, and that this ability was retained by the Tannaim R. Meir and Somkhus (Symmachus) b. Joseph.<sup>3</sup> The Talmud in <sup>c</sup>Eruvin 13b, just prior to its characterization of the arguments of Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, makes similar statements about R. Meir and Somkhus. R. Yeḥiel of Paris was suggesting then that the more than one legitimate halakhic truth implicit in the conflicts between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel may best be understood against the even larger number of halakhic truths that were established at Sinai, a backdrop to which the talmudic *sugya* itself was alluding.

*Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* raises, however, a discreet problem with this approach. The theoretical possibility of multiple solutions for questions or issues generated by halakhic reasoning and interpretations can be ongoing as far as new questions that arise; the majority view of

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Tosafists of northern France (*ḥakhmei ha-Zarefatim Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*) to resolve or remove contradictory and conflicting passages and rulings within the talmudic corpus through their use of dialectic: עשאוהו ככדור אחד ... עד שנראה לנו כאחת מבלי סותר ומבלי עוקר ... ונמצא מיושר התלמוד ומקושר gave you the wisdom ... to analyze ... and to declare a *sherez* pure in forty-nine ways' in a responsum to R. Moses Isserles, preserved in *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Ramo*, A. Siev ed., Jerusalem 1971, no. 6, p. 28; *Teshuvot Maharshal*, no. 6, p. 64; and below, n. 22.

2 *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* <sup>c</sup>al Massekhet <sup>c</sup>Eruvin, S. Wilman ed., Bnei Brak 1980, p. 16 [= H. Dickman ed., Jerusalem 1991, p. 48]. On the significant usage of *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* by Ritva throughout his talmudic commentaries, see my 'Between Ashkenaz and Sefarad: Tosafist Teachings in the Talmudic Commentaries of Ritva', in: E. Kanarfogel ed., *Between Rashi and Maimonides: Themes in Medieval Jewish Law, Thought and Culture* (forthcoming).

3 On this midrashic passage and its variants, see H. Mack, 'Shiv'im Panim la-Torah: le-Mehalkho shel Bittui', in: M. Bar-Asher ed., *Sefer Yovel li-Khvod R. Mordekhai*

the sages of each generation can be the halakhic determinant, with conflicting approaches or positions remaining nonetheless 'true'. There are, however, arguments that were voiced in the past for which actual practice has determined that one view was apparently more correct than the other. For example, there were two quite disparate opinions expressed about the dimensions of the altar in the Temple (Zevaḥim 60a), each of which presented a scriptural derivation in support. Since we know what the decision actually was with respect to the construction of the Temple's altar, how does the other view retain its status as a *bona fide* and still accurate 'word of the Living God'? The sages of succeeding generations can no longer determine which position should be followed, since there was only one altar and its size had already been fixed. *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* concludes that, nonetheless, the definition of truth or correctness is determined by whether each position had established itself on the basis of scriptural (or other) proofs, so that it could be chosen, at least in theory, as a viable halakhic position. The determinant of what is a 'word of the Living God' is its effective interpretation of underlying biblical verses or other sources (that could be verified by the body of scholars of the generation). This determination is not affected by the issue of which interpretation had in fact been chosen at a particular point and time.

The noteworthy extent to which these leading Tosafists of the thirteenth century sought to affirm and to highlight the possibility of multiple truths as the result of thorough Torah study and analysis, and to stress the need to pursue those truths, irrespective of their applicability (a goal or program that did not escape the attention of the leading Spanish talmudist Ritva), had recognizable antecedents in medieval Ashkenaz. Indeed, Rashi asserts that even when several Amoraim entered into a halakhic dispute, each arguing the merits of his view and each drawing upon appropriate comparisons to establish the authenticity of his perspective, 'there is no degree of falsehood present (*ein kan sheqer*), and such a dispute can be characterized as one in which all the various positions represent the "words of the Living God"'.<sup>4</sup> In his commentary to *Hullin*, Rashi explains that when the

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*Breuer*, Jerusalem 1992, v. 2, pp. 452-53. See also below, n. 14.

Talmud inquired about the halakhic propriety of an act that took place during the initial conquest of the land of Israel, it did so simply because truth, or true Torah knowledge, must always be sought, even when no ongoing halakhic conclusions can be derived from this analysis or interpretation for any future event. 'We must always strive to arrive at the truth (*zerikhim anu la'amod 'al ha-emet*), even if the point (at which the final halakhic determination must be made) has passed'.<sup>5</sup>

*Tosafot ha-Rosh* (which is grounded in the relatively early *Tosafot* of R. Samson of Sens [d. 1214] and reflects the teachings of R. Samson and his teacher R. Isaac of Dampierre, known as Ri) offers a slightly different perspective on the *sugya* about the conquest of the land of Israel, which is even closer to the formulation found in *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez*. The Talmud would not launch an inquiry into a completely unnecessary issue (*be-davar she-ein bo zorekh*). Rather, in this instance (as in another in tractate Yoma) the talmudic discussion seeks to properly interpret the underlying biblical verses, an appropriate goal in and of itself. In addition, *Tosafot ha-Rosh* proposes an unrelated case of a vow for which the detailed discussion of the biblical verses in the passage in *Hullin* might again become relevant.<sup>6</sup>

The *Tosafot* commentary to tractate 'Eduyyot 1:5, attributed to the leading tosfist teacher in northern France during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, R. Samson of Sens, refers to the notion of an

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in which two Amoraim argue about what an earlier Amora said. In this case, one of the views may well be incorrect, and is therefore not a true position of Torah law, since they are arguing about the transmissional accuracy of a statement, rather than disputing a matter of reason. Cf. A. Sagi, *Elu va-Elu*, Tel Aviv 1996, pp. 41-43; and J. Fraenkel, *Rashi's Methodology in his Exegesis of the Babylonian Talmud* [Hebrew], Jerusalem 1980, pp. 23-32.

5 Rashi to *Hullin* 17a, s.v. 'she-hikhnisu Yisrael!': דרוש וקבל שכר הוא שצריכין אנו לעמוד על האמת ואע"פ שכבר עבר אז הפצתי לעמוד על: אדין צבית ליצבא (found within Daniel's dream narrative), as: האמת. Cf. below, n. 21.

6 *Tosafot ha-Rosh 'al Massekhet Hullin* 17a (s.v. 'ba'ei R. Yirmiyah'), S. Wilman ed., Jerusalem 1973, p. 20. This passage is reproduced in *Perush ha-Rosh le-Hullin*, ad loc., sec. 23. See also the position of Rabbenu Tam in *Tosafot* to Sanhedrin 17a [= *Tosafot* to 'Eruvin 13b], s.v. 'sheyode'a'. On the relationship between *Tosafot ha-Rosh* and *Tosafot Rash mi-Shanz*, see E. E. Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, Jerusalem 1980, v. 2, pp. 586-98; and I. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Parshanit la-Talmud*, Jerusalem 2000, vol. 2, pp. 78-85.

open-ended revelation in explaining the mishnaic convention of citing the minority view in many disputes. Although the law is usually decided according to the majority, a subsequent court (of Amoraim) could decide to rule according to the minority view. The majority had not concurred originally with this view, 'but when another generation arrives and the majority [at that time] accepts this view, the law will be established according to them. For the entirety of the Torah was given to Moses, including [all] the reasons (*panim*) to render impure [=to prohibit], as well as all the reasons to render pure [to permit]. And they asked him: At what point will we be able to clarify [and then decide] between the various possibilities? He responded that although the majority [in each generation] must be followed, "these and those are the words of the Living God"'.

This passage would also appear to adumbrate the tosfist texts cited by Ritva and discussed above. Its attribution to Samson of Sens, however, is far from certain.<sup>7</sup> Presuming that there is nonetheless a significant degree of Ashkenazic material in this commentary, this passage fits well with the Ashkenazic rabbinic approach that we have seen to this point. Moreover, a verified (albeit lesser known) formulation of R. Samson in his somewhat polemical response to R. Meir ha-Levi Abulafia (Ramah) during the early phase of the Maimonidean controversy makes a similar point. R. Samson writes: 'The Mishnah,

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7 Although R. Samson did author a commentary to 'Eduyyot, the one published in the standard editions of the Talmud is not his. See Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, v. 1, p. 297; M. M. Kasher and Y. D. Mandelbaum eds., *Sarei ha-Elef*, Jerusalem 1979, p. 307; *Sanhedrei Gedolah le-Massekhet Sanhedrin* vol. 6 (*Liqutei Tosafot Shanz*), Y. Lifshitz ed., Jerusalem 1974, pp. 26-29; Y. Sussman, 'Perush ha-Rabad le-Massekhet Shekalim', in: E. Fleischer et. al. eds., *Me'ah She'arim: Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, Jerusalem 2001, pp. 169-170. Lifshitz argues that this commentary, which refers to both Rambam and Rabad, is nonetheless of Ashkenazic provenance, and was probably composed by the German-born (and trained) R. Asher b. Yehiel (Rosh). He also notes the view of M. Hershler that it may have been associated with *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez*, while Sussman suggests that its author was perhaps a student of Samson. For ideological analyses of this comment to 'Eduyyot (in conjunction with the Ritva passage), see M. Halbertal, *People of the Book*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 63-64, 161-62 (nn. 38, 40); M. Rosensweig, 'Eilu ve-Eilu Divrei E-lohim Hayyim: Halakhic Pluralism and Theories of Controversy', in: M. Sokol ed., *Rabbinic Authority and Personal Autonomy*, Northvale, N.J. 1992, pp. 106-18. See also A. Sagi, *Elu va-Elu*, pp. 113-14.

Talmud, Sifra, Sifrei and Tosefta did not transmit to their successors finalized legal decisions (*pisqei halakhot*), but rather included the views of those who rendered impure and pure, those who prohibited and permitted. Since the reasons for these and those were all given by one shepherd, one who ponders them is rewarded for [the study of] all of them. Moreover, a later scholar can sometimes see what was hidden to an earlier authority ... for there is a student who can see what his teacher does not see. The effect of his words can sharpen his teacher [*maḥkim et rabbo*], and focus his teaching [*me-khavven et shemu'ato*]. This formulation by R. Samson clearly accords with the possibility of multiple truths in Torah study, and the need to actively seek those truths.<sup>8</sup>

Several disparate *Tosafot* passages must also be considered in the context of this discussion. The Talmud in tractate Shabbat 63a stresses that 'two scholars (*talmidei hakhamim*) who engage each other (*hamadgilim zeh la-zeh*) in halakhah are (nonetheless) loved by the Almighty, as it says (Song of Songs 2:4): *He will manifest his love for me (ve-diglo 'alai ahavah)*'. Rashi interprets the unusual word *madgilim* in the sense of *degel*, as a flag or a mark of gathering or encampment. These scholars, despite the absence of a teacher, agree to come together and to work out any difficulties in understanding the material at hand between themselves (*ve-navin bein sheneinu*). The Almighty loves them for this, despite the fact that they may not arrive at the proper interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

*Tosafot* passages to 'Avodah Zarah 22b (which, according to some

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8 See J. Brill ed., *Kitab al Rasa'il*, Paris 1871, pp. 131-32. On the implications of this comment (and other related ones) for intellectual freedom during the Tosafist period, see my 'Progress and Tradition in Medieval Ashkenaz', *Jewish History* 14 (2000), pp. 287-92. See also Y. Silman, *Qol Gadol ve-lo Yasaf*, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 145-46; Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, v. 2, p. 679; and below, n. 17.

9 *Tosafot* to 'Avodah Zarah 22b, s.v. 'rigla' understands Rashi somewhat differently. Scholars were indeed being gathered together to assist one another in discussion, but in large number (*maqhilim qehillot ba-rabbim*). If so, *Tosafot* asks, why does the Talmud need to indicate that the Almighty loves them, for this is obvious? Rather, according to *Tosafot*, their coming together must have occurred in a far less felicitous fashion (as the interpretation of Rabbenu Tam in the next note suggests). Cf. J. Fraenkel, *Rashi's Methodology*, p. 22; I. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Parshanit la-Talmud*, vol. 2, p. 95, n. 2.

readings includes a phrase with a form of the word *madgilim*) address the linguistically related *sugya* in tractate Shabbat, and R. Jacob Tam (d. 1171) is cited as offering a more pointed interpretation of this case. Rabbenu Tam maintains, following *Sefer ha-ʿArukh*, that the word *madgilim* connotes that the two scholars in question were working to a large extent at cross-purposes. They had not come together with genuine cooperation in mind, but rather to forcefully engage or even to outdo each other in study. We have three versions of Rabbenu Tam's interpretation. The first, preserved in *Tosafot R. Elhanan* to ʿAvodah Zarah, notes that they are arguing or verbally jousting with each other in an aggressive way (*she-mitvakḥim zeh ʿim zeh*), thereby contradicting (or even denying) each other's Torah interpretations (*u-makḥishin zeh et zeh be-divrei Torah*). Nonetheless, the Almighty still loves them (since they are engaged to some extent in the study of Torah), 'even though they will not be able to arrive at the truth (*ve-af ʿal pi she-einan yekholim laʿamod ʿal ha-emet*)'.<sup>10</sup>

*Tosafot R. Samson of Sens* to ʿAvodah Zarah records two significant nuances in the formulation of Rabbenu Tam. For Rabbenu Tam, these two scholars were literally trying to trick each other or even to lie to each other (*she-meshaqrin zeh la-zeh ba-halakhah*), in addition to their aggressive styles of argumentation that attempted to deny the words of the other. Second, according to this version, these tactics will specifically prevent the scholars from arriving at the proper halakhic conclusions that emerge from the underlying talmudic text (*ein yekholim laʿamod ʿal sugya de-shmaʿata*).<sup>11</sup> The standard *Tosafot* to ʿAvodah Zarah first cites R. Tam's linguistic interpretation that the key word in question in this passage connotes a *shaqran*, one who spreads falsehood, and then records a shorter version of Rabbenu Tam's interpretation of the *sugya* in tractate Shabbat: 'Rabbenu Tam explains that they contradict each other (*makḥishim zeh la-zeh*) and cannot therefore ascertain the main

10 *Tosafot ʿal Massekhet ʿAvodah Zarah le-Rabbenu Elhanan b. Rabbenu Yizḥaq mi-Dampierre*, D. Frankel ed., Husiatyn 1901, pp. 48-49. R. Elhanan died a martyr's death in 1184, and he edited these *Tosafot* circa 1182. See below, n. 13.

11 *Shitat ha-Qadmonim ʿal Massekhet ʿAvodah Zarah*, M. Blau ed., New York 1969, p. 75.

point (*ve-einam ʿomdim ʿal ha-ʿiqqar*). Nonetheless, the Almighty loves them'.<sup>12</sup>

*Tosafot R. Elhanan* and *Tosafot Shanz* were both composed nearly a century before the standard *Tosafot* to ʿAvodah Zarah, and represent the most complete and accurate versions of Rabbenu Tam's formulation.<sup>13</sup> What emerges from Rabbenu Tam's interpretation is that the ultimate goal of Torah study is to ascertain the truth of the Torah, which may be defined essentially and ascertained by a proper understanding and analysis of the relevant talmudic (as well as biblical and rabbinic) texts. In the case at hand, had the scholars been studying together in a more typical and civil fashion, their study would have been defined as proper, truthful study, despite the fact that they might have argued and proposed conflicting views. It is only an inordinately contentious or undermining type of study that will inherently result in non-truthful, inconclusive results. Even here, however, the participants are still embraced by the Almighty to an extent, because they are engaged in some form of Torah study, despite the negative dimensions of that study. For Rabbenu Tam, attaining the truth of Torah is the main and (easily) achievable goal of study, at least for those who can be considered *talmidei hakhamim*.<sup>14</sup>

*Tosafot* based comments on the talmudic phrase, *ein elu ela divrei neviʿut* (these [rulings] are akin to words of prophecy), cite R. Isaac of Dampierre as having lauded certain figures of the talmudic period (such as Somkhus and R. Yehoshua b. Levi) for possessing a form of

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12 *Tosafot* to ʿAvodah Zarah 22b (above, n. 9). Cf. *Tosafot* to Berakhot 17a, s.v. 'ha-ʿoseh'.

13 See Urbach, *Baʿalei ha-Tosafot*, v. 2, pp. 654-57.

14 Cf. Silman, *Qol Gadol ve-Lo Yasaf*, p. 146, n. 11; and Urbach, v. 2, p. 741. It is perhaps suggestive that the verse from Song of Songs 2:4 cited by the talmudic passage in Shabbat to show that even these terribly aggressive scholars will not be rejected despite the fact that their Torah study has itself missed the mark, is cited by a passage in tractate Soferim 16:6 and elsewhere as a source for the notion that the Torah received by Moses includes forty-nine ways to render impure and forty-nine ways to render pure, since the word *ve-diglo* [*ʿalai ahavah*] has a gematria value of forty nine. This passage is reproduced in *Mahzor Vitry*, S. Hurwitz ed., sec. 527, p. 719. On this passage see H. Mack (above, n. 3), p. 453, and below, n. 31. For Rabbenu Tam's veneration of tractate Soferim as an important (post-talmudic) source for proper customs, see Urbach, v. 1, pp. 74-75.

Divine inspiration or intuition (*ruah ha-qodesh*). This allowed them to understand laws and legal constructs that were based on distinctions that were too fine to be understood through standard modes of thought and logic (*ein hokhmah ka-zu she-mevin le-haleq kol kakh sevara mu<sup>c</sup>etet*). These *Tosafot* passages intimate, however, that normally speaking, reasonability is an absolute criterion for Torah study and interpretation.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, a parallel *Tosafot* passage suggests that in formulating scholarly interpretations, appropriate reasoning and reasonability must always be present.<sup>16</sup>

This notion is also reflected in a comment of R. Samson of Sens, found at the end of a responsum sent to (his teacher) R. Hayyim Kohen (who was a leading student of Rabbenu Tam): 'Such reasoning is the product of one's imagination (*davar ha-badui meha-lev*), and does not appear to be so at all. And the outstanding scholar (*he-hakham yafeh*) such as R. Hayyim, who intended to permit this from [the talmudic ruling of] R. Joshua, and through his great casuistry and

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15 See *Tosafot* to 'Eruvin 60b, s.v. 'ein elu ela divrei nevi<sup>2</sup>ut', and *Tosafot ha-Rosh*, S. Wilman ed., Bnei Brak 1979, p. 52. Rashi, for his part, adds that there must have been a tutorial tradition to support these views that allowed them to be presented without appropriate explanation. Cf. *Tosafot* to Bekhorot 45a, s.v. 'asu divreihem'; *Hiddushei ha-Ritva le-Baba Batra* 12a, s.v. 'ein elu', and s.v. 've-nitna la-hakhamim': 'Sages (*hakhamim*) are able to comprehend with their intellects much that the natural intellect (*koah ha-sekhel ha-tiv<sup>c</sup>i*) cannot comprehend'. See also *Hiddushei ha-Ramban*, ad. loc.; A. Y. Heschel, 'Al Ruah ha-Qodesh Bimei ha-Benayim', *Sefer ha-Yovel li-Khvod Alexander Marx*, New York 1950, Hebrew section, p. 179; and cf. Ibn Ezra to Eccl. 7:3, s.v. 'tov'.

16 *Tosafot* to Baba Batra 12a, s.v. 'amar R. Yose'. Cf. the so-called commentary of Rabbenu Gershom, ad loc., and to Bekhorot 45a. It is not surprising that those Tosafists (and Spanish talmudists) who were more inclined toward *torat ha-sod* (such as Ri, Ramban and Ritva) allowed for the possibility of 'divinely inspired' opinions as a viable, if limited, phenomenon, while those who were not at all inclined toward *torat ha-sod*, such as R. Samson of Sens, discounted completely the viability of these opinions. See the next note, and my '*Peering through the Lattices*': *Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period*, Detroit 2000, pp. 12, 191-95, 217-218. Similarly, certain Tosafists were prepared to accept the possibility in their day (albeit to a limited degree) of valid halakhic rulings that were ratified through dream experiences, just as some Tosafists held that the heavenly *bat qol* was given a level of halakhic credibility within the talmudic period. For now, see *Peering through the Lattices*, pp. 164-65, 216-17, 228; *Tosafot* to Yebamot 14a, s.v. 'R. Yehoshua'; *Tosafot* to Baba Mezi<sup>c</sup>a 59b, s.v. 'lo ba-shamayim hi'; *Tosafot* to Pesahim 114a, s.v. 'de-amar'. I hope to return to this theme in a separate study.

broad knowledge (*me-rov pilpul gadol u-beqi'ut*), these are nothing but words of prophecy and Divine inspiration'.<sup>17</sup>

It should be noted, however, that the requirement of demonstrated reasonability in tosafist thought extends only to the presentation of legal or halakhic arguments, and does not necessarily include the providing of reasons for the commandments, *ta'amei ha-mizvot*, in the philosophical or even the logistical sense. Although proper halakhic reasoning was a *sine qua non*, it was not necessary to have a full understanding of the reasons behind the precepts. Thus, R. Hayyim Kohen, who, in the passage just cited, was undoubtedly concerned with providing proper reasoning in the formulation of his halakhic ruling (R. Samson's reservations notwithstanding), is elsewhere completely unconcerned with the seemingly irreconcilable dimensions of various biblical precepts. Rashi interpreted Deut. 21:18 that a 'wayward son' (*ben sorer u-moreh*) is put to death at a young age because of the likelihood that he will commit murder at a later time. The question raised in various tosafist Torah commentaries is that the form of capital punishment for murder is beheading by the sword whereas the punishment prescribed for the *ben sorer u-moreh* by the Torah, is death by stoning. Two similar answers are suggested. First, it is likely that the *ben sorer u-moreh* will commit murder while also involved in the desecration of the Sabbath, and the willful desecration of the Sabbath is punishable by stoning. The second explanation is that since the *ben sorer u-moreh* will lead a depraved life, he will undoubtedly become involved in all kinds of capital offenses including murder and adultery and other abominations that altogether carry with them all four forms of capital punishment. Thus the Torah selected the most stringent or extreme of all of these potential punishments, stoning.

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17 See *Teshuvot Maimuniyyot le-Sefer Shoftim*, no. 20. Cf. Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, 1, p. 274; and I. Ta-Shma, 'Halakhah and Reality - The Tosafist Experience', in: G. Nahon ed., *Rashi et la culture juive en France du Nord au moyen âge*, Paris 1997, pp. 315-321. Rabiah also criticizes his judicial colleagues with the phrase, 'we do not have the ability to create the things from our hearts (*ein be-yadenu levadot devarim me-libenu*), without prooftexts and without support, by offering excuses'. His concern, however, seems to be the absence of appropriate supporting texts, rather than any faulty or conflated reasoning. See *Sefer Rabiah*, E. Frisman ed., Brooklyn 1983, vol. 4, pp. 140-41.

In response to this exegetic stratagem, R. Ḥayyim Kohen notes (particularly according to the first solution) that even if the *ben sorer u-moreh* committed murder on a weekday, his punishment would nonetheless still be stoning. Moreover, in R. Ḥayyim's view, one may not quibble or tinker with the divine commandments in this way because 'there is no [rational] reason for the commandments (*ein ta'am la-mizvot*)'. Thus, for example, while the person who persuades another to commit idolatry is punishable by stoning, one who beguiles and seduces an entire city into doing so is punishable by beheading, a less harsh form of capital punishment. As R. Ḥayyim then remarks, 'who can give a reason for this'? Indeed, the particular violations of food and drink that one must commit in order to be stoned as a *ben sorer u-moreh* are simply a Divine decree and are thus not subject to logical analysis.<sup>18</sup> To be sure, R. Joseph b. Isaac Bekhor Shor of Orleans (who, like R. Ḥayyim Kohen, was a tosafist student of Rabbenu Tam) does offer reasons for several commandments in his Torah commentary. These are, however, broad statements about the benefit of certain commandments, with particular emphasis on the sacrificial rite and related precepts, and do not represent a consistent ideological approach toward the reasons for the commandments.<sup>19</sup>

18 Ms. Florence (Laurenziana), Plut. II.20 [IMHM no. 20365], fol. 251v: פר"ש שמה: וכי' למה מיתתו בסקילה כיון שנהרג ע"ש סופו וסופו להרוג אלא אפי' הרג אינו אלא בסייף ועתה שלא הרג יהא מיתתו חמורה. וי"ל שמא יהרג ויחלל שבת בהריגתו נמצא כי דינו בסקילה כיון שחלל שבת וזה דוחק. לכן נ"ל כיון שאנו רואים שיוצא לתרבות רעה וסופו להרוג ולנאוף ולעשות חלולים ויהיה מחוייב ד' מיתות, נאמ' ביבמות מי שחייב ד' מיתות או ב' מיתות דיינינן ליה בחמורה ולכך נסקל. ור' חיים כהן או' על תי' ראשון שאף אם היה עתיד להרוג [שלא בשבת], דינו של בן סורר בסקילה ואין לפקפק למצות השם כי אין טעם למצות כדאמ' גבי מסית איש לע"ז בסקילה ומדיח כל העיר אינו אלא בסייף שהיא קלה ומי יודע לתת טעם בדבר גם זה בן סורר באכילת טרטימר בשר ושתיית חצי לוג יין נסקל וגזירת המקום הוא. It should be noted that this manuscript is an expanded version of the tosafist Torah commentary, *Da'at Zeqenim*. In ms. Bodl. 2344 (an expanded version of *Pa'aneah Raza*) the first interpretation is attributed to R. Solomon of Chateau-Landon; see *Perushei ha-Torah le-R. Ḥayyim Paltiel*, Y. S. Lange ed., Jerusalem 1981, p. 597, n. 30.

19 These are collected in S. A. Poznanski, *Mavo 'al Ḥakhmei Zarefat Mefarshai ha-Miqra*, Warsaw 1913, pp. 67-68. Although Bekhor Shor's approach to the reason for the sacrifices as a means of achieving expiation and providing an incentive to avoid sin is in line with the (later) view of Nahmanides and against that of Maimonides (see his commentary to Ex. 31:1; Lev. 2:13; 17:7), his approach to *'eglah 'arufah* (to provide a 'voice' to the murder) approximates the Maimonidean view against that of Nahmanides. Poznanski notes that Rashbam

At the same time, *Tosafot* texts were also careful to offer a parallel definition of truthful Torah study (*limmud shel emet*) for non-scholars or aspiring students, who were not necessarily in a position to arrive at real or significant halakhic or interpretational truths (*la'amod 'al ha-emet*). Truthful study in such a situation is defined by *Tosafot* as any study in which the teacher is not imparting erroneous material to the student. If, however, the teacher taught in a mistaken fashion (*she-limdo shibbushim*), the chance to study in a truthful manner would be vitiated (*nitbattel lo limmud shel emet*). Educational instruction of this wrongful nature is to be considered, in halakhic terms, a loss that cannot be recompensed (*peseda de-lo hadar*).<sup>20</sup> According to this formulation, the definition of *limmud shel emet* is any study that is not inherently incompetent or misleading. The particular conclusion reached is unimportant at this point, because many conclusions can be ultimately considered *torat emet*. The only issue for this type of student is whether the material is being taught or presented with competence.

The search for truth in the study of Torah and in the determination of Jewish law, and the likely and welcome possibility of multiple truths being discovered, are the cornerstones of all of the *Tosafot* passages and texts that we have discussed to this point.<sup>21</sup> The rabbinic

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also provides a number of reasons, but these are invariably for polemical purposes. Cf. my *Peering through the Lattices*, pp. 159-67; and J. Fraenkel, *Rashi's Methodology*, pp. 83-94. On the relative absence of reasons for the commandments in Ashkenazic rabbinic thought (and the concomitant notion that the commandments are fundamentally a divine decree, *gezerat ha-Makom*), see for example D. Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 356-58; J. R. Woolf, 'Maimonides Revised: The Case of the *Sefer Miswot Gadol*', *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997), pp. 185-203; J. D. Galinsky, "'Ve-Lihyot Lefanekha 'Eved Ne'eman kol ha-Yamim": Perek be-Haguto ha-Datit shel R. Mosheh mi-Coucy', *Daat* 42-43 (1999), pp. 13-31. It should be noted that R. Hayyim Kohen was a grandfather of R. Moses of Coucy. Reflecting his Ashkenazic background, R. Asher b. Yehiel vehemently rejected the applicability of philosophical reasoning or logic for deciding a matter of inheritance law, against the approach of his student and colleague, R. Israel b. Joseph of Toledo; See I. Ta-Shma, *Ritual, Custom and Reality in Franco-Germany, 1000-1350* [Hebrew], Jerusalem, 1996, pp. 79-93.

20 *Tosafot* to Baba Mezi'a 109b. s.v. 've-sofer mata' [= *Tosafot* to Baba Batra 21b, s.v. 've-sofer mata']. Cf. *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, Baba Mezi'a, sec. 242, citing a responsum of Rabbanei Zarefat. Rashbam, in his commentary to Exodus 2:2, characterizes one who offers an incorrect interpretation as a 'liar' (*meshaqqer*).

21 Although this approach to Torah study does not appear to have been different for

characterization of the forty-nine aspects or channels that were operant at the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai constitutes an early textual and conceptual paradigm for this approach. An Ashkenazic chronicle of the late thirteenth century, preserved by R. Solomon Luria in one of his responsa, attributes to either R. Simeon b. Isaac ha-Gadol, a leading talmudist and mystical adept (and member of the wealthy and pious Abun family) active in Mainz *circa* 1000 or perhaps even to R. Abun himself, who was Simeon's grandfather, the ability to interpret each letter of the Torah in forty nine ways using mystical methodology (*be-sodei sodot*).<sup>22</sup> Although there were Tosafists who were familiar with various kinds of mystical views as we have noted, it appears from the variety and the scope of the texts adduced that the tosafist notion that a legitimately received or derived Torah or rabbinic interpretation represents one truth out of many possible ones, is a fundamentally exoteric dimension of the precept of Torah study.

As Hananel Mack has demonstrated, the concept of the seventy faces of the Torah (*shiv'im panim la-Torah*) as a model for multiple sources of Torah interpretation originates in sources that are semi-mystical, such as *Otiyyot de-R. Aqiba* and the Hebrew Book of Enoch (3 Enoch). Moreover, most of the usage and discussion of this concept in the medieval period was linked to figures and works of Spanish

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the Tosafists and rabbinic scholars in Germany, virtually all of the sources that discuss these concepts in a programmatic fashion (cf. Rabiah, above n. 17) are from Tosafists in northern France. There are, however, additional reflections of these notions in German sources. R. Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, who studied with Tosafists in both northern France and Germany, uses the phrase *ve-eini yakhol la'amod 'al ha-emet*. See his *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, *Hilkhot 'Erev Shabbat*, sec. 6, and cf. above, n. 5. Similarly, his teacher Rabiah, *Teshuvot*, D. Deblitzky ed., Bnei Brak 2000, sec. 1011 (end), asserts that 'it is worthy to investigate thoroughly in order to ascertain the truth (*la'amod 'al ha-emet*)'. In context (*Teshuvot*, pp. 234-41), however, this investigation may refer to the disposition of a borrower rather than to the larger pursuit of truth by a rabbinic judge within his judicial ruling. Cf. R. Ḥayyim Eliezer b. Isaac, *Or Zaru'a*, *Responsa*, Jerusalem 1960, no. 65; *Tosafot* to 'Avodah Zarah 68b, s.v. 'tashma'; *Sefer ha-Yashar le Rabbenu Tam*, S. Schlesinger ed., Jerusalem 1974, sec. 140, p. 105; sec. 471, p. 282.

22 See *Teshuvot Maharshal*, no. 29; A. Grossman, *Ḥakhmei Ashkenaz ha-Rishonim*, Jerusalem 1981, p. 87; idem., *Ḥakhmei Zarefat ha-Rishonim*, Jerusalem 1995, p. 85; and cf. above, n. 1. On the nature of this chronicle, see my *Peering through the Lattices*, pp. 23-24, n. 13. For R. Simeon's mystical proclivities, see pp. 131-136.

esotericism, including R. Azriel of Gerona and the *Zohar* (and Ibn Ezra and Ritva, who were certainly familiar with this genre as well).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Nahmanides should also be added to this group.<sup>24</sup> Gershom Scholem has discussed the importance of this concept for the Spanish Kabbalists of the late thirteenth century, suggesting that its main significance lay in the inclusion of theosophic interpretation as part of the inner meaning of the Torah text, in consonance with the zoharic conception of the four levels of scriptural meaning that added and ultimately privileged *sod* over the methods of *peshat*, *remez* and *derash*.<sup>25</sup>

Although *Otiyyot de-R. Aqiba* and 3 Enoch were available in medieval Ashkenaz,<sup>26</sup> the only Ashkenazic rabbinic figures identified by Mack who cite the tradition of *shiv'im panim la-Torah* are R. Simeon b. Isaac ha-Gadol, who refers to it in one of his liturgical poems, and R. Avigdor Katz of Vienna, who mentions it in his commentary to the Song of Songs. It should be noted that both of these figures were associated with the German Pietists, R. Simeon as part of their mystical chain of tradition from the pre-Crusade period, and R. Avigdor toward the end of their formative period.<sup>27</sup> Moreover,

23 H. Mack, 'Shiv'im Panim la-Torah' (above n. 3), pp. 454-60.

24 See Nahmanides' commentary to Genesis 8:4. Cf. *Mishpat ha-Ĥerem leha-Ramban*, preserved in *Kol Bo*, sec. 148, fol. 111b: *ha lamadnu she-kammah panim shel emet la-Torah*. To be sure, Nahmanides was unusual among contemporary kabbalistic exegetes in his commitment to *peshat* and in his tendency to link and even to equate *peshat* and *sod*. See for example B. Septimus, "'Open Rebuke and Concealed Love' - Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition", in: I. Twersky ed., *R. Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in his Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, Cambridge MA 1983, pp. 17-18, 22, n. 41; and D. Berger, 'Miracles and the Natural Order in Nahmanides', in: *ibid.*, pp. 112-13, n. 19. Although Ramban was thoroughly familiar with Spanish *peshat*, his great debt to northern French talmudic and biblical exegesis may have played a role in his using *sod* methodologies for *peshat* purposes as well. See my 'On the Assessment of R. Moses b. Naḥman (Nahmanides) and His Literary Oeuvre', *Jewish Book Annual* 54 (1996-97), pp. 66-80, and below, n. 36.

25 See G. Scholem, 'The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism', in his *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York 1965, pp. 60-65.

26 See, e.g., my *Peering through the Lattices*, p. 151; *Sefer Ḥasidim*, J. Wistinetzki ed., Berlin 1891, secs. 304 (end), 1512, 1858; E. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, Princeton 1994, pp. 223-24.

27 For R. Simeon see for example *Perushei Siddur ha-Tefillah la-Roqeah*, M. Hershler ed., Jerusalem 1992, v. 1, pp. 228-229; and A. Grossman, *Ḥakhmei Ashkenaz ha-Rishonim* (above n. 22). For R. Avidgor see my *Peering through the Lattices*,

R. Eleazar of Worms himself refers to this concept twice in his prayer commentary, once in his discussion of the text of the Shema prayer (*lefi she-tivharu ba-Torah ha-nidreshet be-shiv'im panim*), and once in his discussion of the *tahanun* prayer.<sup>28</sup> R. Eleazar's version of this prayer contained the verse (Psalms 25:14): 'The secret of the Almighty is vouchsafed for those who fear Him, He will inform them of His covenant (*sod ha-Shem li-yere'av u-berito le-hodi'am*)'. R. Eleazar explains that the Almighty reveals His secret lore to those who fear Him by informing them of the various layers of wisdom (including the esoteric teachings) within the Torah. He concludes by noting that the *gematria* of the word *sod* equals seventy, which reflects that the Torah may be explicated according to seventy different aspects (*nidreshet be-shiv'im panim*).

Like the *Zohar* and other kabbalistic teachings, the German Pietists invested the precept of Torah study, not to mention the Torah itself, with theosophic valence and meaning. Uncovering its secrets became a fundamental part of the precept of Torah study.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, R. Avigdor Katz's comment on Song of Songs 2:4, 'I have been brought to the house of wine', follows very closely both the methodology and the conclusion of R. Eleazar of Worms. According to R. Avigdor, this verse connotes that the Jewish people were brought to Mount Sinai where they received the Torah that can be interpreted according to seventy facets (*panim*), as reflected by the *gematria* of the Hebrew word for wine, *yayin* (=70).<sup>30</sup> R. Avigdor then adds that this is also the meaning of the phrase in Psalms 25:14, 'the secret of the Almighty (*sod ha-Shem*) is vouchsafed for those who fear Him' (as well as the *gematria* equivalent of the word *sod* within it).

For R. Avigdor, as for R. Eleazar of Worms, it is the possibility of

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pp. 107-110, 221-227.

28 See *Perushei Siddur ha-Tefillah la-Roqeah*, v. 1, p. 294; v. 2, p. 398.

29 See for example E. Wolfson, 'The Mystical significance of Torah Study in German Pietism', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 84 (1993), pp. 43-78, and below, n. 35.

30 Cf. Rashi to Sotah, 21a, s.v. 'le-khabbot', and the passage from *Bereshit Rabbati* cited by H. Mack, 'Shiv'im Panim la-Torah', p. 458, which associates the *gematria* of wine and the seventy faces of the Torah on the basis of Genesis 49:11, *kibbes ba-yayin levusho*.

achieving an esoteric understanding of the Torah that is most prominent in the notion of the seventy interpretations. As noted earlier, the very verse in Song of Songs discussed in this way by R. Avigdor is interpreted by others as a source for the notion of multiple halakhic truths. Each teaching of the Torah can be understood in forty-nine different ways leading to rulings of impurity and purity.<sup>31</sup> R. Avigdor does not focus, however, on this more exoteric dimension of the possibilities and goals of Torah study and analysis. Rather, his focus is on uncovering the esoteric aspects of Torah interpretation.

What emerges from our discussion is that the notion of *shiv'im panim la-Torah* reflects principally the sublime completeness of the Torah and the fact that every part of the Torah can be broken down into numerous different and distinct aspects, including the various levels of esoteric interpretation. The notion of 'forty nine faces of the Torah' (*mem tet panim la-Torah*), however, refers invariably to the way the Jewish people received and experienced the truth of the Torah at Sinai (through forty nine different channels) and concomitantly, to the varied and pluralistic ways by which they would be able to interpret the halakhic possibilities and truths of the Torah. The Tosafists and other Ashkenazic halakhists, whether or not they were personally inclined toward mystical studies and conceptions, tended to favor this latter model. Those who were more inclined toward (kabbalistic) theosophy in particular (including the Spanish Kabbalists and the German Pietists) typically embraced the model and phrase of *shiv'im panim la-Torah*.<sup>32</sup>

Irrespective of the precise textual origins and ideological bases for pursuing multiple levels of meaning, the late Israel Ta-Shma has noted that the main goal of talmudic interpretation in Western Europe during the high Middle Ages was to seek a kind of enhanced *peshat*, one that fully pursued the halakhic ramifications of the talmudic *sugya* well

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31 See the sources cited in *Perush Rabbenu Avigdor Katz le-Shir ha-Shirim*, S. A. Wertheimer ed., Jerusalem 1981, p. 17, n. 6, and the passage in tractate *Soferim* (and its variants), above, n. 14. Cf. the passage from R. Azriel of Gerona cited by Mack, p. 458.

32 Ritva and Maharshah appear to embrace both these models. See above, nn. 1, 22-23, and cf. W. Kolbrenner, 'Hermeneutics and Dispute in the Rabbinic Tradition', *AJS Review* 28 (2004), pp. 283-285.

beyond its simple reading. Moreover, in the medieval Jewish mindset in general, and especially within medieval Ashkenaz, *peshat*, *derash*, *remez* (and perhaps even *sod*) were equally valid ways of ascertaining and presenting the truths of the Torah, given the possibility of multiple interpretations inherent within the Torah itself, on matters of Jewish law and beyond. As opposed to the rules of modern interpretation, Ashkenazic rabbinic scholars believed that truth could be revealed quite effectively by non-*peshat* approaches as well.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, a fundamental aim of dialectic, as practiced by both Tosafists and Christian scholars during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was to reach conclusions that were carefully tested, broad-based, and unequivocal. In a word, dialectic was meant to minimize the possibility of error.<sup>34</sup> In non-tosafist circles as well, R. Judah he-Ḥasid (whose full corpus of biblical interpretations took a variety of approaches and forms, ranging from *peshat* to *sod*) was not above suggesting both a *notariqon* and an *at-bash* methodology to clarify points of interpretation within Rashi's Torah commentary.<sup>35</sup>

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- 33 I. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Parshanit la-Talmud*, v. 1, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 16-21. Thus, Rashbam and other Ashkenazic figures could engage in 'enlightened' *peshat* and additional forms of critical biblical interpretation while maintaining their roles as leading talmudists. Cf. H. H. Ben-Sasson's review of Urbach's *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot* ('Hanhagatah shel Torah') in *Behinot be-Biqqoret ha-Sifrut* 9 (1956), pp. 39-53; Isadore Twersky, 'Religion and Law', in: S. D. Goitein ed. *Religion in a Religious Age*, Cambridge, MA 1973, pp. 69-82; I. Ta-Shma, *Knesset Mehkarim*, Jerusalem 2004, vol. 1, pp. 273-301; and Rashi's introduction to his commentary on Song of Songs.
- 34 I. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Parshanit*, v.1, p. 90. Ta-Shma notes that those Christian scholars who pursued strategies of strong textual interpretation, as well as those who were more comfortable with less textually focused allusions or intuitive interpretations (akin perhaps to *remez*) sometimes claimed a form of heavenly authority or origin for their interpretations. See Ta-Shma, pp. 100, 108, and cf. above, n. 16. See also *Sefer ha-Yashar le-Rabbenu Tam (Ḥiddushim)*, sec. 600; *Sefer Rabiah*, V. Aptowitz ed., vol. 1, Jerusalem 1964, sec. 391, p. 441; *Teshuvot Maharam b. Barukh mi-Rothenburg*, M. A. Bloch ed., Budapest 1895, no. 947.
- 35 See *Perushei ha-Torah le-R. Yehudah he-Ḥasid*, Y. S. Lange ed., Jerusalem 1975, pp. 70 (Ex. 1:7), 173 (Nu. 12:6). On the variety of biblical commentaries penned by Judah he-Ḥasid and his student Eleazar of Worms, see for example my *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages*, Detroit 1992, ch. 6; Ivan Marcus, 'Exegesis for the Few and For the Many', *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 8 (1989), pp. 1-24; *Sefer Gematriot of R. Judah the Pious*, introductions by D. Abrams and I. Ta-Shma, Los Angeles 1998; and Y. Dan,

Although there is no shortage of penetrating biblical *peshat* interpretations and talmudic dialectic to be found within medieval Ashkenaz, other significant methods and interpretative techniques were also employed (often by the same rabbinic figures). Intellectual well-roundedness was a function of the pursuit of truth, and these Ashkenazic scholars believed that truth could best be achieved if it was pursued along multiple interpretative and disciplinary paths. We should not be surprised to learn that the Tosafists were involved in quite a number of variegated disciplines (some of which have received scant attention in modern scholarship), including sustained biblical interpretation beyond the well-known *peshat* school of the twelfth century, the writing of *piyyut* as well as *piyyut* commentary, a range of esoteric studies, and systematic inquiries into matters of faith and belief, in addition to their talmudic and halakhic studies.<sup>36</sup> Even as the truth of the Torah is manifest in multiple interpretations, it is also manifest in multiple disciplines or approaches to Torah study and thought. Thus, while the Tosafists were fundamentally talmudocentric, they were deeply involved with other disciplines as well, as they searched for the truths of the Torah and the Jewish legal tradition.

In addition to the considerations from within the body of rabbinic literature and thought that impacted the Tosafists, a broad-based search for truth and knowledge was under way in medieval Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in precisely the same geographic area in which the Tosafists of northern France flourished. Stephen Ferruolo has argued that the various masters and faculties of the cathedral schools in Paris, and the diverse and sometimes antagonistic disciplines that

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*‘Iyyunim be-Sifrut Hasidei Ashkenaz*, Ramat Gan 1975, pp. 44-57.

36 My forthcoming book, *The Intellectual History of Medieval Ashkenazic Jewry: New Perspectives* (Wayne State University Press) calls attention to and establishes the patterns of involvement for all of these disciplines and genres. Among other kinds of works, the thirteenth century witnessed the development of large-scale compilatory Torah and biblical commentaries. These include the ones ascribed to the Tosafists, *Perushei Ba‘alei ha-Tosafot ‘al ha-Torah* (which represent a range of interpretational methods; cf. above, n. 18), as well as those collections that were more narrowly focused on forms of *peshat* exegesis. See for example S. Japhet, 'The Nature and Distribution of Medieval Compilatory Commentaries in Light of Rabbi Joseph Kara's Commentary on the book of Job', in: M. Fishbane ed., *The Midrashic Imagination*, Albany 1993, pp. 98-130.

## Torah Study and Truth

they represented, came together by the early thirteenth century to form the nascent university at Paris in order to 'advance their mutual search for wisdom and truth' on the basis of common intellectual methods and aims. Many of these masters had come to Paris in the last quarter of the twelfth century from other leading cathedral schools such as those at Chartre, Laon, and Rheims. These scholars came together ultimately because they believed that the pursuit of all possible forms and levels of truth was best undertaken from the vantage point of multiple disciplinary perspectives.<sup>37</sup> There may have been issues of professionalism and autonomy at stake for these masters that contributed to their amalgamation and were not applicable to the Tosafists and to their study halls. Nonetheless, the desire to seek the truth along multiple lines, in a collaborative fashion that would help to eliminate mistakes, diminish the possibility of weak reasoning, and allow for the probing of all available texts and sources, appears to have been a common goal of these rabbinic scholars of northern France and their Christian counterparts in the cathedral schools and universities.

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37 S. C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100-1215*, Stanford 1985, pp. 101-103, 125-128, 163-166, 270-271, and esp. 310-311. Cf. P. Ranft, 'The Role of the Eremitic Monks in the Development of the Medieval Intellectual Tradition', in: E. Rozanne Elder ed., *From Cloister to Classroom: Monastic and Scholastic Approaches to Truth*, Kalamazoo 1986, pp. 80-90; and E. Kearney, 'Scientia and Sapientia: Reading Sacred Scripture at the Paraclete', in: *ibid.*, pp. 111-120.

