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Preface and Acknowledgements

Throughout my academic career, I have devoted part of my research to nineteenth-century codes of Jewish law. My challenge included the fact that nobody else had endeavored to tackle these works, offering me little material to work with besides the text itself. The first result of my studies was my book *The Method and Meaning of the Mishnah Berurah*, dealing with one of the main works of Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen (popularly referred to as the Ḥafetz Ḥayyim), the *Mishnah Berurah*. I followed this book with my volume from 2009 *The Boldness of a Halakhist*, which was concerned with Rabbi Yeḥiel Mikhel ha-Levi Epstein's *Arukh ha-Shulḥan*. I was favored by the Lord to discover a missing manuscript from this text and published along with it an additional manuscript from this author's homilies. I recognize that, after my books were published, others have written excellent monographs on these topics, including Professor Benjamin Brown's work on the *Mishnah Berurah* and Rabbi Eitam Henkin's book on the *Arukh ha-Shulḥan*. Following the pattern I used for analyzing these modern Eastern European codes, I then turned to the first popular code since Rabbi Karo's *Shulḥan Arukh*. I am referring to Rabbi Avraham Danzig's *Ḥayei Adam*, the theme of this book.

I would like to acknowledge individuals and organizations that were of valuable assistance in bringing this work to completion. First and foremost, my gratitude goes to my colleague and friend Professor Herb Basser whose assistance and guidance and input were invaluable. I would also like to thank him for permitting me to include his encyclopedia insert in this work. I would also like to thank my colleagues who permitted me to share my thoughts and insights into *Ḥayei Adam*-Dr Israel Singer, Dr. Julie Joseph, Professor Benjamin Brown, Professor Nissan Rubin, Dr. Lynn Visson, Rabbi

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I would like to thank the National Library of Israel who has offered me the manuscript of the *Hayei Adam* with handwritten comments of Rabbi Avraham Danzig. I would especially like to give my sincere thanks to Touro College for twice awarding me a Touro College Presidential Research Development Grant that permitted me to pursue my research for this volume. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the preparation and publication of this monograph from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

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Introduction

The *Ḥayei Adam*, an abridged code of Jewish law, was written by Rabbi Avraham Danzig (1748–1820) and was first published in 1810. This code spread quickly throughout Europe, and the demand for it required a second edition, which the author printed with substantial revisions in 1818. A record of changes, some of which were discarded in the process, can be found in a manuscript in the archives of the National Library of Israel.¹

I approach the study of the *Ḥayei Adam* by viewing it as a literary work as well as a substitute legal compendium. I posit that my analysis of this code will express the views and agenda of its author and will also shed light on the social order of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century European Jewry. It will also demonstrate the significance of Rabbi Danzig's work for the present-day Orthodox Jewish community, as it highlights the relevance of *halakhah* to each generation and its social, economic, and political changes. Rabbi Danzig does this monumental task while not compromising the basic principles put forward by Rabbi Yosef Karo's² *Shulḥan Arukh*, Rabbi Moshe Isserles's³ gloss, and its leading commentaries. Rabbi Danzig writes lucidly in his introduction (on the title page of the first edition of the *Ḥayei Adam*) that his rulings in the code were based on early and latter rabbinic texts. He specifically identifies the *Taz*,⁴ *Magen Avraham*,⁵ and the *Eliyahu Rabba*⁶ as primary sources (in addition to

1 Number 4*187. Also see Hillel Katznelbogen, "Hagot v'tikunim la-sefer Ḥayei Adam me-tzem kitve yad shel ha-mehaber za'l," *Tevunot* (Tishrei 2018).

2 Also referred to as Beit Yosef, following the name of his commentary on the *Tur Shulḥan Arukh*, 1488–1575.

3 Known as the Rema, c. 1530–1572.

4 Rabbi David ha-Levi Segal, 1586–1667.

5 Rabbi Avraham Abale Gombiner, 1634–1682.

6 Rabbi Eliyahu Shapira, 1660–1712.

the *Shulḥan Arukh*) for his halakhic decisions,⁷ and states that these multiple rabbinic sources also helped him to deal with questions he was asked or questionable rules (*sefekot*) with which he was confronted. Rabbi Danzig's introduction begins in this way:

Sefer Ḥayei Adam: Part 1, *Orah Ḥayyim* in Which We Explain The Commandments a Person Must Fulfil and Live by Them [אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם—Leviticus 18:5]

All the laws of the *Shulḥan Arukh* are explained according to the comments of the *Taz*, the *Magen Avraham*, and *Eliyah Rabba*. We have elucidated the laws they derived in both general terms and in detail, including their fine points. All the laws are explained with regard to their reasons: if a Torah law, then the appropriate verse is given, and if a rabbinic law, then the reason why it was enacted. We also identify a stringency, a custom, or a pious deed. Apart from this, there are the novelties the author discovered in the works of the *Rishonim* that were never noticed until now. There are also new laws, which the author elucidates either through intensive inquiry or by resolving enigmatic and doubt-riddled issues. All this is settled through recourse to the presentation of introductory materials, further proposals, and finally, through proofs based on the [Babylonian] Talmud, the Jerusalem [Talmud], and the writings of legal decisors, both *Rishonim* and *Aḥaronim*. Everything is methodically accomplished by presenting definitive rulings based on the decisions of the Rema, and other *Aḥaronim*. In those places where there are alternate opinions in the *Shulḥan Arukh*, the present author renders a proper ruling according to the set rules of the decisors. Likewise, the present author proffers decisions regarding issues for which the *Aḥaronim* hold divergent views by offering clear proofs for the vast majority of such cases. In rare instances, the author deals with divergent rulings by analyzing the law and arriving at a reasoned decision, taking care to explain his thinking on the matter. In all other cases, the author has set down his analysis in the second section, *Nishmat Adam*. He indicates these references using large block letters in the

⁷ For a discussion on the meaning and scope of *halakhah*, see Chaim N. Saiman, *Halakhah: The Rabbinic Idea of Law* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2018), 17–28.

text, so that the reader may easily locate the appropriate detailed analysis applicable to this ruling. There is scarcely a law or opinion in the *Shulḥan Arukh* that has been omitted in the entire *Orah Ḥayyim*. Everything is explained so elegantly that there is no need for the reader to engage in comparative research. For each topic I have provided the source in *Shulḥan Arukh*, and where I have incorporated material from elsewhere, I have also duly recorded those references. It is obvious that such references also serve to indicate the source in *Shulḥan Arukh* of related rulings in the given section.

In other words, Rabbi Danzig was not only attempting to summarize Jewish law but also to adjudicate; he can be considered a *posek* (a halakhic adjudicator). Amongst his rulings we find unique and creative decisions. For example, in *klal* 68 of book 1, which I discuss in chapter 6, the rabbi discusses the necessity of correct intention during the performance of *mitzvot* such as prayer. If one performs the *mitzvah* in the standard way without specific intention to execute it, the *mitzvah* is considered an acceptable form of intent, a variable required for various prayers. Other rabbinic authorities define intent as having some level of conscious intention. This halakhic initiative shows the makings of a *posek*, or halakhic decisor.

I posit that Rabbi Avraham Danzig can be acknowledged as an independent thinker, not only as a result of his halakhic actions (as we saw above) but for other reasons as well.⁸ For the majority of the rabbi's adult life he worked as a businessman, and as such had the opportunity to travel throughout Western and Eastern Europe. We do not know whether it was

8 These considerations are based on what is found in the works of Rabbi Avraham Danzig's biographers. There has been a limited number of scholarly publications written on Rabbi Avraham Danzig or his writings. See Mordechai Mayer, "Rabbi Avraham Danzig and His Works" [Hebrew] (Master's thesis, Bar Ilan University, 2000); idem, "Rabbi Avraham Danzig: His Unpublished Literary Enterprise" [Hebrew], *Sidra: A Journal for the Study of Rabbinic Literature* (2003): 41–52; and his extensive bibliography of scholarly works that refer to Rabbi Danzig; Benjamin Brown, *The Lithuanian Musar Movement: Personalities and Ideas* [Hebrew] (n.p.: Moden Publishing House Ltd., 2014); David Shlomo Shapiro, "Ha-mazkir ba'al Ḥayei Adam et Kant?," *Ha-Do'ar* (New York, (November 3, 1967), 767; and Mordechai Kosover, "Ha-mazkir ba'al Ḥayei Adam et Kant?: He'ara li-he'ara bibliografit," *Ha-Do'ar* (New York, November 1969), 2nd ed., 29. The views of these writers are best summarized in Mayer, "Rabbi Avraham Danzig"; Ḥayyim Tchernowitz (Rav Tza'ir), *Toledot ha-poskim* (New York: Jubilee Committee, 1947), vol. 3, 274–285; and A. Y. Goldrett, "Al ha-sefer Ḥayei Adam u'mechabro" [Hebrew], *Sinai* 71, no. 56 (Av-Elul 1972): 270–293.

always for business or other reasons that he visited places such as Leipzig and Berlin (Germany), Lezno (Poland and Germany), or France,⁹ but this offered him the opportunity to become acquainted with the various cultures of Jewish communities and especially with the halakhic behavior of the Jewish laity. Thus, Rabbi Danzig's primary agenda as reflected in the *Hayei Adam* was, as he understood it, to meet the religious needs of the Jewish laymen. The first edition of the *Hayei Adam* was published in 1810, after he had lost his business. In 1803, an explosion in the courtyard of his residence destroyed his merchandise. Rabbi Danzig describes this in book 2, *klal* 155. Only in 1813 did Rabbi Danzig receive a position in the Jewish community as a *moreh tzedek* (a religious functionary). The rabbinic community rejected Rabbi Danzig's *Hayei Adam*, for how could a person who did not spend his entire life in the study of Torah write a code of law? As discussed above, Rabbi Avraham Danzig spent most of his adult life not engaged in the Torah as a means of earning a livelihood, and thus the rabbinic authorities rejected him as a real Torah scholar.¹⁰ Rabbi Danzig did not see this as a deterrent. He understood that there was a great need among the lay Jews for this type of document, and therefore presented them with it.

An additional factor that angered the rabbinic world was the organizational structure of the *Hayei Adam*. Rabbi Danzig felt that the traditional organizational structure, used by the *Shulḥan Arukh*, of specific chapters (*perakim*) with their designated topics (that followed configuration of the *Tur Shulḥan Arukh*) was not the correct way to educate laymen. He therefore introduced the *klal* (plural *klalim*) that were grouped according to their spheres of applicability, without proper references to the places where these laws appeared in the *Shulḥan Arukh*. In these *klalim*, he collected and selected laws from various chapters in the *Shulḥan Arukh*, as well as additional laws that do not appear in *Orah Hayyim*, but rather in other parts of Rabbi Karo's code. To reject the accepted structure of the earlier codes required a self-determining attitude and even boldness from the author of the *Hayei Adam*.¹¹ In the title page of the 1810 edition, he explains,

9 See Mayer, "Rabbi Avraham Danzig," 11, who cites the sources for these visits.

10 Ibid., 67–70, lists and discusses the rabbinical rejection of the *Hayei Adam*.

11 In his introduction to the *Hokhmot Adam*, Rabbi Danzig's code on the laws of *Yoreh De'ah*, the author brings an approbation from Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin and the *Havat Da'at* who ask him to follow the traditional chapters of the *Shulḥan Arukh* to make it easier for rabbinic scholars to follow.

It is well known that the laws presented in the *Shulḥan Arukh* are scattered over many places. Whoever is not an expert in the entire *Shulḥan Arukh* with its commentaries will not easily locate the entire ruling. In this book, each discussion of a relevant law is gathered together in its proper location, so that each law has been organized into its own *klal* (chapter). Furthermore, when he searches the charts that cross-reference the *Shulḥan Arukh*'s paragraphs, he will easily find what he is looking for.

Rabbi Danzig was willing to make changes from the traditional structure of a Jewish code to best serve the abilities and comprehension of his fellow Jew. He broke from the terminology used by earlier codes of law calling his chapters *klalim* rather than *perakim*. Then he picked what he considered important to include in the *klal* that would be relevant for his reader. This angered many of the traditional rabbinic authorities who rejected any form of change from the established legal codes.

If we further examine the title page of the first edition, Rabbi Danzig's purpose becomes very clear. These reasons continue to elucidate his independent thought while he was fulfilling his agenda. He writes:

There are many advantages to this book:

1. The first benefit is that even a boy of thirteen can study and understand nearly all the laws of the *Shulḥan Arukh* in a short period of time, whereas an experienced student [without having read this book] will take some years of effort to do so.
2. Heads of households, for whom the burden of earning a living is heavy, can read this book during their periods of rest. That is because the language is easy to understand and everything is clearly and completely explained, so that the person who wishes to delve in it will not have to compare subject to subject.
3. [This book is advantageous] even for those heads of households who study the Talmud and its major commentaries daily, because the *Shakh* has written in *Yoreh De'ah* that they fulfill their requirement for Torah study with it. [Such Jews] are obligated to study halakhic rulings but have no time to study the *Shulḥan Arukh* and

its commentaries as well in order to quench their thirst and to know all the laws in their true sense and reasoning like experienced Torah scholars.

4. [This book is advantageous] even for those who study the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Since it is well known that the rationale for a law is not given in the *Shulḥan Arukh*, nor whether it constitutes a Torah or rabbinic law, [the *Shulḥan Arukh*] is like a sealed book. It therefore requires extraordinary effort to study the words of the latter [halakhic authorities] which are also obscure. Thus, when a person reads this book, he will properly understand the words of the *Shulḥan Arukh*.
5. Those who study the commentary *Magen Avraham* know that his statements are very profound but also contain many typographical errors. In this book, [the reader] will find rest and satisfaction and will understand *Magen Avraham's* enlightening words.
6. Even seasoned Torah scholars and rabbis will find [in this book] novel legal interpretations, so that when a halakhic question arrives, they will mostly be able to find [the answer] in this book. The author discusses [the issue] and shows the sources from which he derived the law. One who wishes to disagree with his conclusion may do so, but [even so] his analysis will have been rendered easier. The author has nearly exhaustively explored each doubtful area that may arise in any of the laws from any of the sections of the *Orah Ḥayyim*.
7. It is known that the laws of the *Shulḥan Arukh* are scattered in many places. One who is not fluent in all [sections of] the *Shulḥan Arukh* and the latter [halakhic authorities] will not easily find the law. In this book, each and every law is found in its place. From each and every law, a rule will be made for this matter. When [the reader] searches in the table of contents, he will easily find that which he seeks.

I hereby admonish anyone who has the ability to understand the *Shulḥan Arukh* properly not to rely upon me for actual guidance until he also examines the *Shulḥan Arukh*.

An additional factor that reflected the personality and thinking pattern of Rabbi Danzig was the fact that he wrote and published an abridged code. This type of action threatened the authority of the rabbinic leadership. In the nineteenth century, for a Jew with a question on Jewish law, the only resource was the local rabbi. A popular code written for the educated laymen would, for many basic legal questions, serve as a source of *halakhah* and *pesak*, thus infringing both on rabbinic authority and on the organizational structure of the Jewish community as a whole.

A further examination of the first 1810 edition of the *Ḥayei Adam* reveals that it did not include the author's name. On his lengthy and somewhat convoluted title page, it is nowhere to be found. Later, in his introduction, he informs his reader,¹²

It is not proper to judge who the author of this book is, but rather what is written within it, since from a small caterpillar comes our silken apparel and from the *ḥilazon* (snail) comes out rare purple (*tekhelet*) the choicest expensive color (dye). . . . I did not compose this work to use it as a spade to dig with (to gain profit). It is known that from the large printing expenses, hopefully I will break even; I am clearly not looking for fame, and I did not even record my name as this book's author.

Not to detract from the modesty of Rabbi Danzig, but I believe he was motivated by additional considerations. As discussed above, working as a businessman, he understood that the Eastern European rabbinic world would not readily accept him or his works since he did not devote his entire life to the pursuit of Torah study. Therefore, if he sought acceptance and success of his work, his name would only serve as a deterring factor. Only after the publication of the 1810 edition and the widespread success of the *Ḥayei Adam* did he publicly reveal, in the second introduction, in which he printed his name, that he had authored the *Ḥayei Adam*. At this point there was no need for concern regarding the success or sales of the code. It had achieved its goal, and therefore there was no reason not to include his name.

The same line of reasoning also discouraged Rabbi Danzig from including approbations (*haskamot*) in the *Ḥayei Adam*, though the standard practice was for any rabbinic volume to include approbations from

¹² This topic is discussed at length in Goldrett, "Al ha-sefer Ḥayei Adam," 120.

leading rabbinic authorities. The more famous or revered the rabbi writing the *haskamah*, the greater its acceptance by the rabbinic world and hence by the Jewish community. Rabbi Danzig addresses this issue in the introduction to the first edition of the *Hayei Adam*, writing,¹³

Behold, my mind had been set on not acquiring any approbations, as it was not my intention in any event to embellish myself because I am aware that there is nothing in me that can be embellished. However, the essence of this composition is for the youth and the laymen, and I know that the first thing they look at is the [book's] approbations. I therefore obtained approbations, but only from [a few of my local] people and companions in our community . . . and also it was not my desire to print their [actual] quotes but only their signatures, for it is not my desire that they [the readers] should rely upon me since I have already warned regarding this.

To include approbations would raise red flags for this author. His anonymity would be threatened, since the approbations are addressed to the author and often refer to him by name in the body of the *haskamah*. Furthermore, since—as he correctly noted—laymen first look at the approbation page, he would need to seek out leading rabbinic authorities throughout Europe for letters of approval. As I discussed above, this was not a path Rabbi Danzig believed would benefit the success of his work. Instead, he simply offered his readers a list of official rabbinic figures and leading scholars, hoping that this would suffice to satisfy his readers' appetites. This approach clearly succeeded, for when he republished his work for a second time and included his name, he felt no need to add approbations. But that time, the *Hayei Adam* spoke for itself.

The considerations that I have discussed all point to an independent thinker, a man who believed in the purpose of his work, and even when confronted by challenges that would deter most rabbis, was steadfast in maintaining his beliefs. From youth to rabbi, the Jewish populace embraced his work for purposes of study and *pesak*. Study groups throughout Europe were organized to learn *Hayei Adam*. On the other hand, only upon the publication of Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen's (1838–1933) *Mishnah Berurah* do we find the *Hayei Adam* included among the works cited in books of Jewish law (see chapter 7).

13 See *ibid.* for a discussion of approbations in the *Hayei Adam*.

I feel it important to emphasize that, although in specific areas and in regard to particular issues Rabbi Danzig expressed his individual thinking, he was loyal to the traditional established rabbinic law. His work would not have passed the test of the layman if the *Hayei Adam* were not in accordance with the *Shulḥan Arukh* and its classical commentaries.

It must also be recognized that, like most authors, Rabbi Danzig had both an explicit and an implicit agenda or message in his code. I would identify this implicit agenda as *musar*, or what is often termed ethics, in which the individual Torah Jew must seek a higher level of Jewish conduct than that required by *halakhah*. As I have argued throughout this book, the primary concern of the author of the *Hayei Adam* was towards laymen. Thus, straightforward legal decisions would not suffice, since spiritual needs also had to be addressed. We therefore find that not only was *musar* included in the actual rules, but that these extralegal materials filled up entire sections such as those we find prior to the laws of Yom Kippur (book 2, *klal* 144), or in the introduction to the *Hayei Adam*. I discuss this in detail in chapter 6.

Rabbi Danzig understood the external threats to his community from such movements as Hasidism, the Jewish Reform movement, and the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*). The years 1772 through 1815 represented the major times of conflict between the Hasidim and their opponents, the *Mitnagdim*. During these years, Rabbi Danzig lived in Vilna, a major center of the anti-Hasidic movement, which was led by the Vilna Gaon, a relative of Rabbi Danzig, whose son married the Gaon's granddaughter. It is not surprising that the author of the *Hayei Adam* was considered to be among the opponents of Hasidism. Hagiographical stories about Rabbi Danzig show his involvement in the Vilna Gaon's anti-Hasidic activities. I suggest that beginning with the opening statements, the text of the *Hayei Adam* also demonstrates Rabbi Danzig's concerns regarding the dangers that the Hasidim posed for Jewish society and its *weltanschauung*. Furthermore, there are those who argue that the primary purpose of Rabbi Danzig in authoring the *Hayei Adam* was to oppose the *Shulḥan Arukh ha-Rav*, written at the same time by the Hasidic leader Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady.¹⁴ Although it is highly unlikely that Rabbi Danzig saw this work, this once

14 See Mayer, "Rabbi Avraham Danzig," 17–19, wherein Mayer discusses Rabbi Danzig's involvement with this conflict and various hagiographic parables.

again demonstrates the attempt to place Rabbi Danzig at the center of this struggle. See chapter 5, in which I offer examples and discuss this situation.

As stated, for the majority of Rabbi Avraham Danzig's adult life, he earned his living as a businessman. His work required him to travel to both Central and Western Europe. His travels gave him firsthand knowledge of *Haskalah* and of the Reform movement, which was burgeoning and growing as a part of Jewish trends in these countries. In Eastern Europe, these new movements had not yet taken root, and only became popular after Rabbi Danzig's death. I suggest that, aware of the threats posed by these movements, Rabbi Danzig was concerned that they were not only an issue for Western Europe, but also that they would have their impact on the rest of Europe (see chapter 2).

It will become clear in this work that the *Hayei Adam*, which is basically an abridged code of Jewish law, in fact offers the reader much more than that, and in so doing goes beyond the bounds of merely a Jewish code of law.

In concluding this introduction, I would like to add an additional methodological consideration. Paul Connerton, in his book *How Societies Remember*,¹⁵ explicates the approach of the social scientist to research. He writes,

Historians are able to reject something explicitly told to them in their evidence and to substitute their own interpretation of events in its place. And even if they do accept what a previous statement tells them, they do this not because that statement exists and is taken as authoritative, but because it is judged to satisfy the historian's criteria of historical truth. Far from relying on authorities other than themselves, to whose statements their thought must confirm, historians are their own authority; their thought is autonomous vis-à-vis their evidence, in the sense that they possess criteria by reference to which the evidence is criticized.

Historical reconstruction is thus not dependent on social memory. Even with no statement about an event or custom that has reached the historian by an unbroken tradition from eyewitnesses, it is still possible for the historian to rediscover what has been completely forgotten. Historians can do this partly

15 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 13–14.

by the critical examination of statements contained in their written sources, where written sources mean sources containing statements asserting or implying alleged facts regarding the subject in which the historian is interested, and partly by the use of what are called unwritten sources—for example, archaeological material connected with the same subject, the point of describing these as unwritten sources being to indicate that, since they are not texts, they contain no ready made statements.

In other words, there is room for speculation when research is based on a written text. What Connerton wrote for historians can also pertain to other social scientists, such as social anthropologists. In my work, I approach the text of the *Hayei Adam* searching for the author's message. There is little empirical proof to substantiate all my arguments, and in some cases I turn to speculative analysis, but I do not deviate from the historical and social reality and permit its factors, as well as the text itself, to serve as the basis of my suggestions.

My colleague, Professor Herb Basser, wrote an insert to *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*,¹⁶ which, I believe, will offer the reader further insights into the life and writings of Rabbi Danzig as well as to the period in which he lived and wrote.

Codification of Jewish Law—Modern Period

In the nineteenth century, even as Jews were granted citizenship in European countries, political anti-Semitism increased. Through policies of religious repression and secularization, many governments embarked on programs to sever Jews from their traditions and to assimilate them into the general society. The rabbinic leadership in Eastern Europe sensed that the mind-set that had sworn loyalty to the *Mishneh Torah*, the *Tur*, and the *Shulhan Arukh* was on the verge of disappearing. Poverty and hardship cut deeply into Jewish societies that, through faith and obedience to rabbinic leadership, had weathered bad storms in the past. As the face of Europe changed, seemingly without a place for the Jew in modern society, Jewish responses varied. The growth of Hasidism was one response; the attempt to build a

16 H. Basser, "Codification of Jewish Law," in *Encyclopedia of Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green (Leiden, Netherlands, and Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), vol. 4, 1668–1671. I thank Brill for permission to reprint this insert.

Jewish homeland, another. As always, an absorption in the vision of self-power and the picture of an orderly society had strong appeal. Thus, while many Jews looked for greener pastures that could be reached by emigration, assimilation, or modernization, others sought the refuge of the well-regulated lifestyle that was a Jewish Kingdom on earth. Zionism had appeal for some, but for many the life of faith and tradition still held promise.

Jews had recovered from the repression of Islam and the collapse of the Gaonate in the twelfth century and recovered from the strength of Christendom's armies in the fourteenth century. Again, they recovered from the collapse of Spanish Jewry in the fifteenth century. Each time, they produced a new legal code. Now in the nineteenth century, with the collapse of the rabbinic authority in the wake of new political and social structures, a new crisis loomed. As a result of economic factors, Jews left the well-governed Jewish life of the *shtetl* in search of a more open life in the city. In the urban setting, they found a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish lifestyles, free from previous social pressures. Secularism, socialism, and communism were all temptations for the economically deprived Jew. In addition, the application of steam power to machinery meant that paper and printing became cheaper and more broadly accessible.

The challenges of technology encroached into Eastern European Jewish life, but this technology also provided the means to meet the new challenges. The response to the transitions once again was a renewed activity in collecting the laws of the past and re-presenting them anew. The new halakhic works, for the most part, did not seek innovative ways to pave the future. They demonstrated that mastery of Jewish law still could lead to the vision of God's halakhic dimension. If anyone was convinced that these laws were antiquated, they could see firsthand that the most eminent authorities of the day still lived in the halakhic world. For the authors of these works, it was a way of affirming the eternity of the lifestyle that defined them. More than serving the needs of communities, such works served the needs of their authors. This was their way of coping with adversity and threats from without and within.

Between 1810 and 1907, we find a fresh interest in Eastern Europe in writing popular codes. Together with *Hayei Adam* (Vilna, 1810) by Rabbi Avraham Danzig (1748–1820), we note *Kitzur Shulḥan Arukh* (1864) by Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried (1804–1886); *Arukh ha-Shulḥan* (1884–1903) by Rabbi Yeḥiel Mikhel Epstein (1829–1908); and *Mishnah Berurah* (1894–1907) by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838–1933).

Each writer incorporated local customs and approaches to legal problems that suited their constituencies, so their readers had no need to consult any further work. These authors preserved the legacy of the past in simple form but still incorporated the spirit of the *Shulḥan Arukh* of Rabbi Yosef Karo. They increasingly wrote bare-boned codes in language that the average student might be expected to know—usually indicating their sources in brackets.

The *Ḥayei Adam*

Born in 1748 in Danzig (Poland and Germany), Rabbi Avraham Danzig studied with Rabbis Yosef Liebermann and Yeḥezkel Landau (*Noda bi-Yhudah*). After his marriage, Rabbi Danzig relocated to the city of Vilna, the home of the famed Eliyahu (Gra). He served from 1794 to 1812 as *dayan* (rabbinic judge).

Though Rabbi Danzig published numerous works, his fame came from his *Ḥayei Adam*, which presents the essential teachings of legal decisors on the rules of *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Orah Ḥayyim*. On the cover page of the first edition of the *Ḥayei Adam*, which was published anonymously, Rabbi Danzig stated his intended readership and his purpose in writing this work as follows:

1. The first benefit is that even a boy of thirteen can study and understand nearly all the laws of the *Shulḥan Arukh* in a short period of time, whereas an experienced student [without having read this book] will take some years of effort to do so.
2. Heads of households, for whom the burden of earning a living is heavy, can read this book during their periods of rest. That is because the language is easy to understand and everything is clearly and completely explained, so that the person who wishes to delve in it will not have to compare subject to subject.
3. [This book is advantageous] even for those heads of households who study the Talmud and its major commentaries daily, because the *Shakh* has written in *Yoreh De'ah* that they fulfill their requirement for Torah study with it. [Such Jews] are obligated to study halakhic rulings but have no time to study the *Shulḥan Arukh* and its commentaries as well in order to quench their thirst

and to know all the laws in their true sense and reasoning like experienced Torah scholars.

4. [This book is advantageous] even for those who study the *Shulḥan Arukh*. Since it is well known that the rationale for a law is not given in the *Shulḥan Arukh*, nor whether it constitutes a Torah or rabbinic law, [the *Shulḥan Arukh*] is like a sealed book. It therefore requires extraordinary effort to study the words of the latter [halakhic authorities] which are also obscure. Thus, when a person reads this book, he will properly understand the words of the *Shulḥan Arukh*.
5. Those who study the commentary *Magen Avraham* know that his statements are very profound but also contain many typographical errors. In this book, [the reader] will find rest and satisfaction and will understand the *Magen Avraham*'s enlightening words.
6. Even seasoned Torah scholars and rabbis will find [in this book] novel legal interpretations, so that when a halakhic question arrives they will mostly be able to find [the answer] in this book. The author discusses [the issue] and shows the sources from which he derived the law. One who wishes to disagree with his conclusion may do so, but [even so] his analysis will have been rendered easier. The author has nearly exhaustively explored each doubtful area that may arise in any of the laws from any of the sections of the *Orah Hayyim*.
7. It is known that the laws of the *Shulḥan Arukh* are scattered in many places. One who is not fluent in all [sections of] the *Shulḥan Arukh* and the latter [halakhic authorities] will not easily find the law. In this book, each and every law is found in its place. From each and every law, a rule will be made for this matter. When [the reader] searches in the table of contents, he will easily find that which he seeks.

I hereby admonish anyone who has the ability to understand the *Shulḥan Arukh* properly not to rely upon me for actual guidance until he also examines the *Shulḥan Arukh*.

Another text he published, *Hokhmat Adam* (Vilna, 1810), covers the laws in the section *Yoreh De'ah* of the *Shulḥan Arukh*. He also prepared an addendum titled *Binat Adam*, an in-depth discussion of his adjudications.

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