

**CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?**

1. Describe the role of Israel Jacobson in the founding of the Reform Temple in Berlin.
2. Describe the circumstances of the founding of the Reform Temple in Hamburg.
3. What were the significant differences between the Reform Temple of Berlin and its counterpart in Hamburg?
4. How did the initial reformers justify their reforms in the light of rabbinic opposition?
5. When was an organ first used in a synagogue service?

This and much more will be addressed in the ninth lecture of this series:

**"Eleh Divrei Bris: The Hamburg Temple  
and the Response of the Torah Authorities".**

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

**This lecture is dedicated to the honor and merit of the Elchonen Family.**

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE  
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XVIII Lecture #9

ELEH DIVREI HABRIS:  
THE HAMBURG TEMPLE AND THE RESPONSE OF THE TORAH AUTHORITIES

I. Excerpt From the Constitution of the “New Israelite Temple Association in Hamburg”

Since public worship has for some time been neglected by so many, because of the ever decreasing knowledge of the language in which alone it has until now been conducted, and also because of many other shortcomings which have crept in at the same time - the undersigned, convinced of the necessity to restore public worship to its deserving dignity and importance, have joined together to follow the example of several Israelite congregations, especially the one in Berlin. They plan to arrange in this city also, for themselves as well as others who think as they do, a dignified and well ordered ritual according to which the worship service shall be conducted on Sabbath and holy days and on other solemn occasions, and which shall be observed in their own temple, to be erected especially for this purpose. Specifically, there shall be introduced at such services a German sermon, and choral singing to the accompaniment of an organ.

Incidentally, the above mentioned ritual shall not be confined to services in the temple; rather it shall apply to all those religious customs and acts of daily life which are sanctified by the church (synagogue) or by their own nature. Outstanding amongst these are the entrance of the newly born into the covenant of the fathers, weddings, and the like. Also, a religious ceremony shall be introduced in which the children of both genders, after having received adequate schooling in the teachings of the faith, shall be accepted as confirmants of the Mosaic religion.

II. The Hamburg Temple Prayer Book

A. Kabbalas Shabbos - Service for the Eve of the Sabbath

**Traditional Siddur**

Psalms 95, 96, 97, 98, 29

*Lecha Dodi*

Psalm 92

Psalm 93

Mourners Kaddish

*Barechu*

*Ma'ariv Aravim*

*Ahavas Olam*

*Shema* - 3 paragraphs

*Emes Ve'emunah*

*Hashkiveinu*

**Hamburg Temple 1819**

German version of *Ma Tovu*, without the first sentence.

German Hymn

Psalm 92 (Hebrew)

-

Half Kaddish (Hebrew)

*Barechu* (Hebrew)

German version of *Ma'ariv Aravim*

German version of *Ahavas Olam*

*Shema* - 3 paragraphs (Hebrew)

German version of *Emes Ve'emunah*

German version of *Hashkiveinu*

<i>Veshomru</i>	German version of <i>Veshomru</i> with a newly composed introduction
Half Kaddish	Half Kaddish (Hebrew)
Amidah - The Seven Berachos	German version of the Seven Berachos, containing no other “dogmatic” change than the substitution of “redemption” for redeemer ( <i>go’el</i> ) in the first benediction
<i>Vayechulu</i>	<i>Vayechulu</i> (Hebrew)
<i>Birchas Me’en Sheva</i>	<i>Birchas Me’en Sheva</i> (Hebrew)
Full Kaddish	Full Kaddish (Hebrew)
<i>Bameh Madlikin etc.</i>	German Hymn
<i>Kiddush</i>	<i>Kiddush</i> (Hebrew)
<i>Aleinu</i>	-
Mourner’s Kaddish	Mourners Kaddish with a newly composed introduction (Hebrew)
<i>Yigdal</i> or <i>Adon Olam</i>	German version of <i>Adon Olam</i>

## B. Shabbos Morning Service

### Traditional Siddur

*Adon Olam, Yigdal*  
Morning *Berachos*  
*Elo-hai Neshamah*  
*Berachos*  
*Vihi Ratzon*  
*Yehi Ratzon*  
*Le’olam Yehe’* and *Ribbon Kol Ha’olamim*  
*Aval Anachnu, Shema, Attah Hu*

Biblical and Rabbinic passages dealing with the sacrifices.

*Kaddish D’Rabbanan*  
Psalm 30  
Mourners Kaddish  
*Baruch She’amar*  
I Chronicles 16:8-36, Scripture verses  
Psalms 19, 34, 90, 91, 135, 136, 33, 92, 93,  
*Yehi Chevod*  
Psalms 145-150  
I Chronicles 29:10-13, Nehemiah 9:6-11  
Exodus 14:30-31; 15:1-18  
*Nishmas*

*Yishtabach*  
Half Kaddish  
*Barechu*  
*Yotzer Ohr* and *Hakol Yoducha*  
*E-l Adon*

### Hamburg Temple 1819

German Hymn  
-  
German version of *Elo-hai Neshamah*  
-  
German version of *Vihi Ratzon*  
-  
German version of *Ribbon Kol Ha’olamim*  
German version of *Aval Anachnu, Shema, Attah Hu*  
-  
-  
-  
German version of *Baruch She’amar*  
-  
-  
-  
German version of Psalm 148  
-  
-  
German version of *Nishmas* followed by a German Hymn  
*Yishtabach* (Hebrew)  
Half Kaddish (Hebrew)  
*Barechu* (Hebrew)  
*Yotzer Ohr* and *Hakol Yoducha* (Hebrew)  
-

<i>Keduasha d'Yotzer</i> <i>LaE-l Baruch</i> <i>Ahavah Rabbah</i>	<i>Keduasha d'Yotzer</i> (Hebrew) <i>LaE-l Baruch</i> (Hebrew) omitting <i>Or Hadash</i> <i>Ahavah Rabbah</i> (Hebrew) omitting Return to Zion
<i>Shema Yisrael</i> 3 paragraphs <i>Emes Viyatzev, Al HaRishonim</i>	<i>Shema Yisrael</i> 3 paragraphs (Hebrew) <i>Emes Viyatzev, Al HaRishonim</i> (Hebrew, with German choral parts)
<i>Ezras Avoseinu</i>	<i>Ezras Avoseinu</i> (Hebrew, with German <i>Mi Chamochah</i> )
<i>Tzur Yisrael</i> Amidah - The Seven Berachos	<i>Go'alenu</i> (Hebrew, as in the Sefardic rite) Amidah - The Seven Berachos (Hebrew) Traditional text unchanged, except that Musaph Kedushah is used, and the paragraph <i>v'lo nasato</i> is emended to <i>uleyisrael amecha nesato</i> .
Full Kaddish Torah Service	Full Kaddish (Hebrew) Torah Service (Shorter than in traditional rite.)
Reading of Haftarah <i>Yekum Purkan</i> etc.	- -
Prayer for the Government Psalm 145	Psalm 145 (Hebrew) German Hymn, Sermon Prayer for the Government German Hymn
Half Kaddish Amidah - The Seven Berachos	Half Kaddish (Hebrew) Amidah - The Seven Berachos (Hebrew) No prayer for restoration of sacrifices.
Full Kaddish <i>En Keloh-enu</i> <i>Pittum HaKetoress</i> etc. <i>Kaddish d'Rabbanan</i> <i>Aleinu</i> Mourners' Kaddish	Full Kaddish (Hebrew) - - - -
<i>Adon Olam</i>	Mourners' Kaddish with newly composed introduction. (Hebrew) German version of <i>Adon Olam</i>

### III. The Opinion of Rabbi Akiva Eiger

#### A. The Role of the Talmud in Jewish Life

לבי דינא רבא דק"ק המבורג:

מכ"ק הגיעני לנכון וינועו אמות מספים מקול הקורא, כי קמו שם אנשים אשר הרימו יד בדברי אבותינו שבתלמוד, והחדש בדו מלבם לעשות להם סדר תפלות כחפצם מדלגים כל ברכות השחר המפורשים בתלמוד ברכות דף ס' מדלגים כל פסוקי דזמרה, ואין אומרים רק מזמור הללו כו' ואף לא מזמור תהלה לדוד, אשר אמרו חז"ל ברכות דף ד' כל האומר מזמור תהלה לדוד שלש פעמים בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא. ואין מפטירים בנביא נגד מתניתין ערוכה במגילה דף כ"א. גם

משמטים בלי להזכיר על שפתם בנין ירושלים וקיבוץ גליותנו. הא! כל השומע תצילינה אזניו ויקרע סגור לבו על זה. הלא זה הוא הריסת ועקירת הדת ר"ל כי הנוגע באפס קצהו על אחת מני אלף נגד דברי רבותינו שבתלמוד יפול כל התורה והמפקקים על דברי התלמוד בוודאי הוא קרקפתא דלא מנח תפילין גם מחללים שבתות, כי מהיכן ידעו מהו ענין הנחת תפילין ומנין להם שיהיה ד' פרשיות בד' בתים, ושיהיה מונח במקום שמוחו של תינוק רופס ולא בין עינים ממש, ומהיכן ידעו מהו מלאכה אסור בשבת ומנין ידעו שהדלקת נר בלי טורח ויגיע כלל, בכלל מלאכה וזדונו בסקילה וכתת ושגגתו בחטאת, וכן בכל מצוה עשה ולא תעשה אי אפשר לידע אופניה ופרטיה אם לא על פי יסוד דברי רבותינו הקדושים. וזה יסוד אמונתנו בתורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה. והמה אחודים וצמודים יחד ולא יתפרדו ומי מישאל שאינו מאמין בזה הוא אפיקוריס כאשר כתב הרמב"ם רפ"ג מהלכות מרים. ר' עקיבא איגר, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת י

To the great Bais Din of Hamburg:

I received the report from the prestigious men of sanctity "and the posts of the door moved at the voice of he who cried," (Isaiah 6:4) for there arose men who lifted up their hand against the words of our forefathers [the authors] of the Talmud and, on their own, fabricated a new prayer book in which they skipped all of the blessings of the morning, which are specified in the Talmud (Berachos 60b) and skipped the entire *Pesukei d'Zimra* (passages from Psalms) with the exception of Psalm 148. They don't even say Psalm 145 (*Ashrei*) regarding which our Sages in Berachos 4b, "Anyone who says Psalm 145 three times a day is assured of meriting Olam HaBa, the World to Come." In addition they don't recite a passage of the Prophets at the conclusion of the Torah reading (Haftarah) which is contrary to a clearly expressed Mishna in Megillah 21a. They also avoid mentioning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the ingathering of our exiles. Woe! Anyone who hears this will feel his ears being tingled and the depths of his heart being torn asunder. Behold this is an undoing and uprooting of the religion, may G-d protect us, for if one takes the liberty of merely eliminating a seemingly minor part of the words of our Teachers of the Talmud, the entire Torah will fall apart. Those who criticize the words of the Talmud are certainly in the category of "karkafta d'lo manach tefilin" - a person whose head is not adorned with tefilin (who will suffer in Gehinnom) and also such a person will inevitably desecrate Shabbos. For how would they know what the nature of adorning tefilin is and how would they know about the four sections of the Torah in the four compartments? And how would they know that the tefilin should be placed on the head right near where cranium of a newborn is soft and not actually between the eyes? And how would they know the nature of the *melacha* (work) which is forbidden on Shabbos. How would they know that lighting a lamp, which entails no effort at all is included in *melacha* (work) and the penalty of such a violation is stoning or a premature death (*karass*) and the bringing of a sin offering if it was done by mistake. Similarly the details of every single mitzvah, both positive and negative, can only be known through the foundations of our holy Teachers. This is the foundation of our faith in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. These are both tightly intertwined together and cannot be separated. Any Jew who doesn't believe in this is considered to be an Apikorus (heretic), as the Rambam writes at the beginning of the third chapter of Hilchos Mamrim. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Eleh Divrei HaBris, 10**

#### B. Prayer in the Vernacular

ברוכים אתם לד' כי היטבתם לעשות לאזור חיל, וכרזוא קרו בחיל לאסור להתפלל מתוך סידר הנדפס בשינוי נוסחאות. ודרך כלל שלא לשנות שום נוסחא מנוסחאות המסודרות וקבועות לנו מאבותינו דור דור עד משה רבינו ע"ה עיין מג"א ריש סימן תפ"ח ואף שלא להתפלל בקבוע בציבור בלשון אחר כי אם בלשון הקודש, ואף שהדין שהתפלה בכל לשון, זהו באקראי בעלמא אבל לקבוע כן בבית הכנסת הקבועים לציבור הם מלהזכיר וחלילה חלילה מלעשות כן. ואחרי שאנשי כנסת

הגדולה תקנו התפלה בלשון הקודש צח ונקי מי יודע עד היכן כוונתם מגיע בכל תיבה ותיבה בנגלה ובנסתר ואם קצתם אינם מבינים לשון הקדש ולא הרגילו בניהם בה, זהו בעצמו רע ומר מאוד לבזות לשוננו הטהור והיפה להשליך אותה אחר גיוס אשר לא ילמדו אותה לבניהם וחרפה היא לנו בין העמים. כי כל אומה ואומה מדברת בלשון עמה ואוהבת לשונה ואנחנו נעזוב לשוננו הקודש? מלמדים בניהם בלשון צרפת לאטין ודומה ועוזבים לשון הקודש אהה! וכי זה חכמתם ובינתם לעיני העמים? ר' עקיבא איגר, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת י

Blessed are you to Hashem for you have done the right thing to gird yourself in battle and announcing that it is forbidden to pray from a Siddur that is printed with a changed liturgy. In general, one should not make any changes in the liturgy which has been established as part of a chain that dates back to Moshe Rabbainu, of blessed memory. See the Mogen Avraham at the beginning of Chapter 488. In addition, one should not pray on a steady basis together with the community in any other language except Hebrew (lit. the Holy Tongue). Even though one is allowed to pray in another language (Sota 32a), this is referring to prayers that are said on a special occasion. But G-d forbid that this should be referring to established prayers that are constantly said in the synagogue. Heaven forbid from doing such a thing. Since the Men of the Great Assembly established prayers in the Holy tongue in a pure and clear manner, who can fathom the depths of their *kavanah* - intention and the meaning implied in each and every word on evident and supernal levels. Now if the reason they are so motivated is because their children are not familiar with the Holy tongue, this itself is a bad thing and extremely bitter i.e. to humiliate our pure and beautiful language and to throw it behind their backs for they don't teach it to their children. This is a source of humiliation for us amongst the nations. Every single nation speaks in its mother tongue and loves their language. We, on the other hand, forsake our holy language and teach our children French, Latin, or something similar. Woe to us! Is this the meaning of the verse, "And this is your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the nations"? **Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Eleh Divrei HaBris, Letter 10**

C. Praying for the Return of the Exiles and the Building of Jerusalem  
גם צריכים אנחנו להתפלל על בנין ירושלים אף שאנחנו יושבים שקטים בין האומות וכי הטה ד' לב מלכים עלינו לטובה. וצריכין אנו להחזיק טובה להם להתפלל בשלומה של מלכות וכמו שאמר הכתוב ירמיה כ"א, אעפ"כ אנחנו מצפים ומתפללים על בנין ירושלים לא בשביל תענוגי ותאוות עולם הזה, כי אם לעבוד את ד' בטהרה בעבודת הקרבנות בהיכל ד' כמ"ש הרמב"ם והיה הטוב ההוא גם לנו גם לאומות ברב שפע והצלחה וכמו שאמר הכתוב (תהלים קי"ז) "הללו את ד' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האומים כי גבר עלינו חסדו ואמת ד' לעולם." ר' עקיבא איגר, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת י

We also should pray on behalf of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, even though we are presently living in peace and tranquility amongst the nations, for Hashem has moved the hearts of the kings in our favor. We have to show appreciation to them and pray on behalf of the kingdom's peace, as it is stated in Jeremiah Chapter 21. Nonetheless, we look forward and pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. This is not in order to experience the pleasures and desires of this world, but rather in order to serve Hashem in purity through the service of the sacrifices in the Sanctuary of Hashem, as is stated in the Rambam. This goodness will be felt by us and also by the nations with great abundance and success, as it stated in Scripture (Psalms 117), "O Praise the L-rd, all you nations; praise Him, all you peoples. For His loving kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the L-rd endures for ever." **Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Eleh Divrei HaBris, Letter 10**

## D. The Organ

גם שלא לנגן בארגעל עכ"פ בשבת ויום טוב אף על ידי נכרי, כאשר גם בחול עדיין אין ההיתר ברור, עיין מ"ש בבאר שבעי סימן ע"ד. טעם שאין אנו מתפללים בפרישת כפים, ומדמה לאיסור דלא תקים לך מצבה יע"ש וזהו הטעם גם בארגעל עכ"פ בשבת ויום טוב וודאי אין להתיר אפילו על ידי נכרי. ר' עקיבא איגר, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת י

In addition, at least on Shabbos and Yom Tov, one is not allowed to have an organ played, even by a Gentile. It is not quite clear if one is allowed to play an organ even on the weekdays. See what the *B'air Sheva* writes in Chapter 74 regarding lifting up one's hands in prayer [which was an ancient form of prayer]. He compares this to the prohibition of (Deuteronomy 16:22), "Neither shall you set you up any single stone [in order to offer sacrifices on it to Hashem *Rashi*]; which the L-rd your G-d hates." [Even though it was beloved by Hashem during the period of the Patriarchs, now it is despised since the idolators made it into an established form of worship for themselves. *Rashi*] You should pay attention to what the *B'air Sheva* writes there. This reasoning should also apply to the use of the organ. In any case, on Shabbos and Yom Tov one is certainly not allowed to have the organ played even by a Gentile. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Eleh Divrei HaBris, Letter 10**

## E. The Silent Prayer

לזה כל דבריכם קיים ומאושרים על אדני האמת ומי שנגע יראת ד' בלבבו לא ילך בדרך אתם וימנע מנתיבתם, וגם על זה ראוי לפקח עיניכם להזהיר על החדשות בטול תפלה בלחש דזהו ג"כ נגד הדין בפורש סוף ר"ה דאין הלכה כר"ג בשאר ימות השנה שאין השליח ציבור מוציא הבק. ידידכם א"נ דש"ת הנאנח על רוב הפרצה. הקטן עקיבא גינז מא"ש כ"ז טבת תקע"ט ר' עקיבא איגר, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת י

All of your statements are correct and are firmly based. Anyone whose heart is touched by the fear of Hashem should not walk in the way with them; and should refrain his foot from their path (Proverbs 1:15). In addition, it is proper to pay careful attention and admonish them from instituting the abolition of the silent prayer [and rely solely upon the Chazan's rendition of the Amidah]. This is also against the *halacha* as it is stated at the end of the tractate Rosh Hashanah, for we do not rule like Rabban Gamliel [who maintains that the Chazan's rendition frees one of the obligation of praying the Amidah in silence] throughout the year and therefore the Chazan cannot free one from his obligation of personal prayer if he can do so himself. Your faithful friend who seeks your welfare and who is bemoaning the state of the great breach. The insignificant Akiva Ginz, 27 of Teves 5579. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Eleh Divrei HaBris, Letter 10**

## IV. The Opinion of Rabbi Eliezer Fleckes (Author of the Teshuva MaiAhava)

. . . אוי לאותו דור שכך עלתה בימיו! אוי לאוזן השומעת, כי גברו כל כך פריצי הדור ואפיקורסת אשר בדו מלבם מנהגים ומאסו בתורת ד' ומנהגים שנהגו אבותינו ואבות אבותינו בכל המדינות ובנו במה לעצמם להדפיס תפלות כרצונם כאלו התורה הפקר היא וכאלו הרשות לכל אדם להתפלל כרצונו . . . ובאמת הם חסרי אמונה וכל כוונתם אינה אלא לקנות שם בין האומות שיאמרו שהם חכמים יותר משאר ב"י. אבל באמת אינם לא עברים ולא נוצרים. ומה שמנגנים בכלי שיר (ארגעל) בשבת קודש, איסור גמור הוא לנגן אפילו ע"י נכרי בשום כלי זמר. והמנגנים בקהלונתנו בכלי זמרים בקבלת שבת, המנהג פה שמחויבים המזמרים להסיר ולסלק מידם כלי זמר חצי שעה קודם ברכו . . . פראג ד' טבת תקע"ט לפ"ק. דברי אלה הרבנים הגאונים בי דינא רבא דק"ק פראג: הקטן אליעזר פלעקש, הקטן שמואל סג"ל לנדא, הקטן ליב מעליש, אלה דברי הברית, אגרת ה'

. . . Woe to that generation that such a thing should come about in their days! Woe to the ear that hears about it, for there are so many rebels in this generation and [so much] heresy. On their own they created their own customs and rejected the Torah of Hashem and the customs by which our forefathers and the forefathers of our forefathers conducted themselves in all of the countries [in which Jews are situated]. They made for themselves their own *Bameh* (private altar) to arbitrarily publish prayers on their own, as if the Torah was open territory and as if anyone had the power to pray in the manner of their choice. . . . The truth is that these people are lacking in faith and their whole intention was only to acquire a name for themselves amongst the nations so that they can say of them that they are wiser than the rest of the Jewish people. The truth is that they are neither Jews nor Christians. And regarding that which they [in Hamburg] play a musical instrument (organ) on the holy day of Shabbos, they are in violation of a clear prohibition, even if it would be played by a Gentile. The custom in regards to those musicians who play musical instruments in our congregations [in Prague] at *Kabbolas Shabbos* (the Reception of *Shabbos*) is that they are required to remove any instrument from their hand a [full] half hour before the recitation of Borechu. . . . Prague, the fourth of Teves 5579. This is the statement of the Rabbanim, the Geonim, of the Great Bais Din of Prague: The insignificant **Eliezer Fleckeles**, the insignificant **Shmuel Segal Landau**, the insignificant **Leib Melish**, **Eleh Divrei HaBris 5**

#### V. The Opinion of HaRav Moshe Sofer Regarding the Organ and Its Use in Prague

. . . והיותר נראה לפע"ד שהיה חוק של עובדי כוכבים הקדמונים להכניס כלי זה דוקא בבית עבודתם ולא היו משמשים בכלי זה לשום שמחה אחרת, ומשום הכי נאסר במקדש משום בחוקותיהם, שהיה כלי זה מיוחד להם כבר קודם בית המקדש ואם כן נאסר לנו מדין תורה. ועיין פירש"י (בתובל קין) [ביובל] תופש כנור ועוגב לע"ז. ואם כן הוי כנור ועוגב כמו מזבח ומצבה על פי מ"ש הרמב"ן פרשת שופטים בפסוק ולא תקים לך מצבה.

ואבותינו ספרו לנו שבימי קדם היה עוגב בפראג בבית הכנסת "על תנאי", והזכיר זה בספר או"ן עמוד י"ז אלא שם העיד שקר שיהודי מנגן בליל שבת עד חצי שעה כלילה. ד' יצילנו! (עיין מכתב ה' מדיינא דק"ק פראג) עיין שם פ"ב דשבת שאפילו שופר לא היו מטלטלים אחר התקיעה ששית. גם אנו מקובלים שפסקו נגינתם בפראג טרם אמרם מזמור שיר ליום השבת ומכל מקום אמת שבפראג השיר היה להם בעוגב, גם שגו מהנגון המיוחד להם, אבל בכל שארי בתי כנסיות שבעיר גדולה לא-להים הלזה לא עשו ככה וגם זו משנתקלקלה שוב לא תקנוהו ובכל מקום מושב בני ישראל לא שמענו ככה. וכבר כתב הש"ך בח"מ ס"י ל"ז דלענין מנהג בכל כיוצא בזה הוא לא ראינו ראיה ברורה שקבלו עליהם הדבר לאיסור. . . תשובת חתם סופר, אלה דברי הברית אגרת י"ב

. . . What seems to me more correct, in my humble opinion, is that there was a custom of the ancient idolators to only use this instrument [as part of the service] in their temples. They did not use this instrument for any other joyous occasion. Consequently, it was forbidden to use this instrument in the *Bais HaMikdash*, [the Holy Temple,] because of the prohibition (Leviticus 18:3), "nor shall you walk in their ordinances," as this instrument was solely designated for this purpose, even before the construction of the *Bais HaMikdash*. If so, it is forbidden for us to use by Torah law. See Rashi's comment to Genesis 4:21, regarding Jubal (Yuval); he was the father of all who handle the harp and pipe (organ). [Rashi comments there that he designed these instruments to be used to accompany the idolatrous service.] Consequently, the harp and pipe [or organ] are similar to the [many stones] altar and single stone altar, according to the commentary of Ramban in Parshas Shoftim on the verse (Deuteronomy 16:22), "Neither shall you set you up any single stone altar; which the L-rd your G-d hates."



Our fathers told us that in a previous time there was an organ in the “Altneu” synagogue in Prague. This is mentioned in the work *Ohr Nogah* p. 17. He testified falsely, however, that the Jews of Prague played on this instrument a full half hour into the night. May G-d save us from such a thing! (See above in the letter sent by the Holy community of Prague.) Now look at the second chapter of the tractate *Shabbos* wherein it states that they didn't move the shofar [which was used to warn of the approach of Shabbos] after the sixth blow of the Shofar, [which was quite close to the onset of Shabbos]. We also have a tradition that they stopped playing the instrument before they said: *Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbos* (Psalm 92). But in any case, it is true that in Prague they played an organ and they were struck by its special musical effect. In all of the other synagogues in the great and G-dly Prague, however, they did not do so. And, in addition, when the organ broke down [in that one synagogue], they didn't bother fixing it. Furthermore, wherever Jews have created communities, we have never heard of such a practice. The *Sifsei Kohen Choshen Mishpat*, at the end of Chapter 37 writes that in any similar circumstance where we never witnessed such a thing, it is a clear proof that the [communities] accepted it upon themselves as something which is forbidden. **Rav Moshe Sofer, Eleh Divrei HaBris, Letter 12**

#### VI. The Retraction of R. Aharon of Chorin

. . . וזה העתק מסוף אגרתו של הרב דאראד וחזרתו אשר הודה ולא בוש: “אמנם עתה שמעתי כי גם בברכות ותפלות יתנו מגרעת לא יתפלל על קבוץ גליותינו אשר אמונה זו עיקר ויסוד תורתנו הקדושה ומשנים נוסחאות התפלות, אני קורא עלי והמכשלה הזאת תחת ידיך. על כן אומר אני ברבים: שכל דברי באגרת קנאת האמת (נוגה צדק) בטלים ומבוטלים ובר מן דין לא אדון אני בדבר ולהורות וחכמי ישראל גאוני הזמן להם המשפט ודעתי נגד דעתם כאין ואפס נחשבו. כה דברי הבא על החתום פה אראד יום ב' יג שבט לסדר מזבח אדמה תעשה לי וזבחת עליו עולותיך ואת שלמיך. הקטן אהרן חארינער” ואחר שהודה ובטל כל דבריו הנאמרים באגרת קנאת האמת כאשר חכמים יגידו ולא כחדו והאמת עד לעצמו והאריכות אך למותר. . . . הקטן משה סופר מפ”פ דמייץ. אלה דברי הברית אגרת כ”ב

The following is copied from the end of the letter of the Rav of Arad in which he retracted from his previous statements. He admitted that he was wrong and wasn't embarrassed to do so: “However now that I have heard that they have abbreviated the *Berachos* (benedictions) and *Tefilos* (prayers) and don't pray for the ingathering of our exiles which is an essential article of faith in our holy Torah and, in addition, they have changed the liturgy, I refer the verse (Isaiah 3:6), ‘And this ruin be under your hand,’ to myself. Consequently, I publicly state: All that I have written in the pamphlet, ‘*Kinas HaEmes*,’ [which was published in *Noga Tzedek*], to be null and void. Besides that, I am not qualified to speak or make a ruling in this matter. It is for the Sages and present *Geonim* of Israel to do so as they have the power of judgement and my mind in comparison to theirs is infinitesimal. I am signing to these words in Arad on Monday the thirteenth day of Shevat before the Shabbos when we are reading from the Torah (Exodus 20:21): An altar of earth you shall make to Me, and shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings, and your peace offerings (Parshas Yisro). The insignificant Aharon Choriner.

Now after he admitted his error and annulled all of his statements that were made in the pamphlet, ‘*Kinas HaEmes*,’ [which was published in *Noga Tzedek*], as wise men [honestly] state and don't deny (See Job 15:18), the truth testifies for itself and any elaboration is unnecessary. . . . The insignificant Moshe Sofer of Frankfort d'Main. **Eleh Divrei HaBris Letter 22**