

## APPENDIX A: TEXT OF THE SAV

(From Bin-Gorion 1: 414-416)

A tale is told of our Rabbi Simeon the Great, who was descended from the House of David and lived in a certain city called Mayence, where he married a woman who belonged to one of the finest families in the land. Our Rabbi Gershom heard it and also went to Mayence, and when our Rabbi Gershom came to our Rabbi Simeon the Great, they greeted each other with great courtesy and they studied Torah together.

Now our Rabbi Simeon the Great had a little son at that time whose name was Elhanan, but he was stolen from him, and they made a priest out of him. Finally he became so great that he became the pope. By reason of the great wisdom in his heart kings and dukes and rulers gathered to take counsel with him, and he gave each and every one of them counsel according to his wisdom. Finally, because they used to ask so much counsel of him, he called his attendants, those priests who had appointed him to be the pope, and he said to them: "How is it that all these kings and dukes and rulers come to take counsel of me, yet there is not a single one of them who has ever told me that he is my father or my mother or my kinsman or of my family? Was I born from the stone that I have no kinfolk in the world? Now I want you to know that if you do not tell me, I shall slay you all." And he began to think in his heart that there was no substance to Jesus of Nazareth.

"Our lord!" they answered, "since you have required us to tell you, then we can inform you that you were a Jew and the son of one of the greatest men among the Jews. You were stolen when you were a little boy, and it is God who has decreed all this greatness for you to have most of the kings of the peoples of the world come and ask your counsel, and it appears to them that you have taken the place of Jesus of Nazareth. But as for the great man from whose stock you come, he dwells in Allemania (Germany) and his name is Rabbi Simeon the Great." "Send for him," he told them, "and bring him to me, but for no money in the world should you desist, and let him be here that selfsame day."

So the great men of Rome sent to Rabbi Simeon in Allemania to come to the pope on the day that had been set for him. Rabbi Simeon the Great was exceedingly startled, for he feared that there might be some false charge on the part of the pope in that he was sending for him.

Yet finally he picked himself up and came to the pope. When the pope saw him, he summoned him into the chamber and saw that he was taken aback by him. Then he said: "Have no fear but answer me truly what I ask you." "Yes, indeed," said he; and the pope asked: "How many sons have you?"

Then he gave him the names of each one of the sons and daughters whom he then had. And the pope said to him: "Did you have any other child?" At this the rabbi was silent, for he feared that he might demand that he should be brought before him. At length the pope said to him: "Why are you silent? Tell me the truth!"

And then Rabbi Simeon told him: "My lord, I had one little son, but he was stolen when he was still a little boy, and I do not know where he is or whether he is alive or dead, because I have not seen him since then."

"Do you remember," the pope asked him, "whether he had any marks on his body?" And he answered: "He had these and these marks on his back and these on his hand."

Then the pope understood that he was indeed his son, because he had those very signs and marks, and he said: "Father, father, I am your son, here on me are the marks you said!"

At this our Rabbi Simeon the Great was so startled that he could not say anything. But the pope removed his robes and showed him the marks and said: "Father, father, what can I do to be assured of the World to Come? For I know that the teachings of Jesus are void and nothing." And his father said to him: "You have profaned the name of the Holy and Blessed One in public, so now hallow His Name in public, and I take it upon me that you will merit the World to Come."

"What shall I do?" he asked his father. And he answered: "Summon all your rulers and kings and dukes and bishops and then hallow the Name of the Holy and Blessed One!"

He did so. He purified himself and went up to the top of the tower and cried: "Hearken all of you why you have been summoned together! Hitherto I did not wish to reveal it to you, but now I shall make it known to you that there is no reality to Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a woman like any other man, and therefore there is no hope for your latter end because of your belief in him."

"Has he gone crazy?" said the priestly counselors. But he said to them: "You think that some spirit of lunacy has entered into me. Upon my soul, it is the spirit of God that is in me, and you are fools!" Then the priests took counsel together to slay him for fear he might

lead the people away from their falsity. When he saw this, he leaped to earth from the tower, saying: "Heaven forbid that those polluted ones should slay me because I believe in the God of my father!"

As soon as his father Rabbi Simeon the Great heard that he had hallowed the Name, he offered praises and thanksgiving to the All and Ever Present. And he set the name of his son in the *Yotzer* hymn of the second day of the New Year: "O King, Your utterance is faithful and true." There he wrote in disguised form the name of his son Elhanan.

## APPENDIX B: TEXT OF THE SSV

(From David "Notes" 96)

And I received from the pupils of Rabbi Leon De Moriali of blessed memory, and from Rabbi David Ibn Yahya, my grandfather of blessed memory, and from a wise old man in Salonika, that it is a tradition among them that one of the Rashba's sons was stolen from him when he was five years old. And the child was taken to the house of a great lord in Spain whose name was not known, and the lord loved him and sent him to their seminary, and the lad grew up very learned, and his wisdom was renowned throughout the world. And things turned out in such a way that he went to Rome, and because of his great wisdom was made a great dignitary. And after some time the Rashba had to go to Rome to speak to the dignitary about public matters. When he was at the court, before he began speaking . . . his face changed and he almost fainted and was unable to speak. . . . And the dignitary did not speak of it, and after a while ordered the people around him to leave. Then the dignitary said to the Rashba, "Come near to me," and he drew near and he asked him, "Why was your face changed, and why are you unable to speak?" But the Rashba did not know what to reply, and was ashamed, for he really did not know the reason. Finally, after the dignitary persisted with his questions, the Rashba revealed to him that many years before his five-year-old son had been stolen from him, and he had never found out what had become of him, and that the memory of the lad was always engraved on his heart. When the dignitary heard the old man he was filled with pity, and asked him if the boy had had any distinguishing marks, knowing himself that he was a child of the Hebrews, and had been stolen from his father's house in infancy. Then the rabbi said that his son had a certain mark on his right shoulder. And the dignitary got down from his throne straightaway, and kissed him and embraced him, saying, "My father, my father, I am he!" And he took off his shirt and showed him the mark. Then the son asked his father for a remedy for his affliction. The old man replied that the remedy for water is fire, and neither of them spoke of it again. Then the dignitary fulfilled all his father's wishes, and also gave him delicacies to take home, and he went. During the next few days, he decided to repent, and to redeem his soul by undergoing all the forms of death decreed by a court of law (*mitot bet din*). He ordered a sharp sword, its point uppermost. And the heralds announced

that the dignitary would preach in public on a certain day. On the appointed day people came from far and wide to hear him preach. And the dignitary ascended the pulpit and preached. In the middle of his sermon he wound a rope around his neck and threw himself into the fire, and pierced himself with the sword, and was burned and died there. Afterwards his servants took his ashes and put them in a copper urn and called it "the Ashes of the Heretic," as it is called to this day; and I saw it in Rome.

## APPENDIX C: EXCERPTED TEXT OF THE LSV

(From David "Notes" 87-92)

. . . [T]he great Rabbi Solomon ben Adret of Barcelona . . . had a son . . . and the youngster went every morning and noon to the synagogue, as is the custom of the Jews, and passed by the door of the abomination, and there was a priest, one of the foremost of the place. He saw the youngster two or three times, liked him, and so he stole him and dressed him in priests' garb. . .

[Eventually the boy rose to the papacy. He inquired as to his origin and was told his family was dead, but he did not believe this.]

And the members of the community of Barcelona sent representatives to the pope, to ask him to ease the distress brought upon them. . . . And the lot fell to Rabbi Solomon, the father of the pope, and Rabbi Solomon went and fell at the feet of the pope his son. And as he spoke to him [Rabbi Solomon] saw in his face a mark he had had before he was stolen from him, and tears flowed from his eyes straightaway — not that he recognized his son, but that he thought, "My son who was stolen from me had such a mark," and he thought that his son was dead. And the pope saw him weeping and kept silent. . . . And he said to him, "I wish to know why you wept when you spoke to me." Rabbi Solomon tried to evade answering and said that there was no reason for it. . . . The pope replied, "Know that I really wish to hear the truth," so Rabbi Solomon, seeing that this was so, told him what had happened. . . . "And as I was talking to you I saw that you had a mark like my son had, and I remembered him, and that is why I cried. . . ."

[The pope dismissed Rabbi Solomon, requesting that he return later. Then] he called for his personal priest, who was brought to the pope's court, and the pope said to him, "God knows how many times I have asked you about my family, and you evaded the issue. Now the time has come, and I want to know the matter, without any doubt. . . ." [When the pope learned that he was the kidnapped son of a great Jew, he became excited. The Rashba returned later that night as the pope had requested, and the pope questioned him further.] The pope realized that [the Rashba] was his father, and he fell at his feet and wept and said to him, "I am your son and you are my father!"

. . . The son said to his father, "How can I redeem my soul?" His father answered, "My son, you know that until now you have exalted their faith publicly. Henceforth you will have to do the opposite, so that the Lord may bless you and lead you on the path to righteousness." . . . After that he assembled all the people — men, women, and children — and instructed that a great furnace be built in the market-place at the appointed time, and he stood and preached eloquently against their faith, saying first of all, "Because I strengthened your faith in the past, I condemn myself to death by burning," and he threw himself into the furnace and was burned.

## APPENDIX D: TEXT OF THE LAV

(From Gaster 410-418)

R. Simeon the Great, who lived in Mayence on the Rhine, had three large mirrors in his house in which he saw all that had happened and all that was going to happen. He also had at the head of his couch a spring, whose waters issued from his grave in the cemetery. R. Simeon had a young son named Elhanan. One day the *Sabbath Goyah* came in, as usual, on the Sabbath, to light a fire in the stove, and when she left she took the child with her. The servant who was in the house did not take any special notice, thinking that the woman would bring the child back, and the other people of the house had gone to the synagogue. The Christian woman took the child and had him baptized. She thought she had thereby offered up a sacrifice to God, for in olden times they attached great importance to the baptism of Jewish children. When R. Simeon the Great returned home the maid was not in, for she had gone after the woman but could not find her, so he found neither the maid nor the child. Suddenly the maid appeared, crying bitterly. When R. Simeon asked her why she was crying, she replied: "My dear rabbi, alas, the *Sabbath Goyah* took the child away and I do not know where she has gone." They searched everywhere, but could not find him. The child had completely disappeared. The father and the mother mourned bitterly for the child, as one can well imagine. R. Simeon fasted day and night, but the Lord concealed from him the place where the child had gone.

The child passed from hand to hand until he fell in to the hands of the priests, who brought him up, and he became a great scholar, for he had the intellect of his father, R. Simeon the Great. The lad went from one university to another until he came to Rome. There he learned all languages, and became a cardinal in Rome. His fame spread far and wide, his praises were sung everywhere, he was very much respected and he was handsome besides. Then the Pope died, and the young man, being very bright and master of many languages, became Pope. He remembered, however, that he had been a Jew and that he was a son of R. Simeon the Great of Mayence. Yet he remained among the Christians, as one may well imagine, considering that it went well with him and that he was held in high esteem.



One day he said: "I must make an effort to bring my father from Mayence to Rome." So he wrote a letter to the bishop of Mayence — for as he was Pope all bishops were subject to his commands — and ordered him to forbid the Jews to keep the Sabbath or to circumcise their sons and to forbid the Jewish women to take their ritual baths. He thought that the Jews would send his father R. Simeon to him to ask for a revocation of the decree, and so it was.

When the letter of the Pope reached the bishop, the latter immediately informed the Jews of the decree. And when the Jews made urgent representations to the bishop, he showed them the letter of the Pope and said that he could not help them, but if they wished to present their case they must go to Rome and see the Pope.

The poor Jews, finding themselves in this terrible position, did penance and prayed and gave charity. Finally they decided to send R. Simeon the Great and two other rabbis to Rome to intercede with the Pope, in the hope that God would perform a miracle for them. In the meantime they circumcised their children secretly, for they had obtained permission from the bishop to do it in secret. Then the rabbis journeyed to Rome to see the Pope. As soon as they arrived, they informed the Jews there of their arrival and explained the situation to them. When they heard of it, they wondered greatly, for they said that within the memory of man they had never had a Pope who was kinder to the Jews than this one. He could not live without Jews. He often had Jews visiting him secretly and occasionally played chess with them. Moreover, they had not heard anything about the decree and could not believe that it came from the Pope. The bishop himself, they thought, was responsible for it. But R. Simeon showed them the letter of the Pope with his seal on it, and they were convinced and said: "This must be a punishment for some great sin of which you Jews in Germany are guilty.["] Then the Jews in Rome also did penance and prayed and gave alms and the *Parnasim* of the Roman community went to the cardinal, with whom they were on friendly terms, and asked him to intercede in their behalf. The cardinal replied: "This letter was written by the Pope's own hand and addressed to the bishop of Mayence. I am afraid I cannot do much for you." Nevertheless he promised to do all that he could and told them to prepare a petition, and he would see that it got into the hands of the Pope, and would do his best to help them.

The Jews prepared a petition and gave it to the Pope. When the Pope saw the petition, he knew what the situation was and ordered the Jews to appear before him in person. R. Simeon came to the chief cardinal, who presented them to the Pope, saying: "These are the

Jews from Mayence, who are anxious to see you and speak to you." The Pope replied: "Let the oldest of them appear before me." R. Simeon the Great was the oldest among them and his appearance was like that of an angel of the Lord. As soon as he entered the room, he fell upon his knees. The Pope was playing chess with one of the cardinals. When the Pope saw R. Simeon, he was very much frightened and told him to rise and take a seat, until he had finished the game. He knew his father, but the father did not recognize him. When the game was finished, the Pope asked R. Simeon what he wished. R. Simeon replied amid tears and was about to fall down again on his knees before the Pope, but the Pope would not allow it. he said: "I have now heard your petition, but strange reports have reached me from Mayence, which caused me to give the order in question." Then the Pope began a talmudic discussion with R. Simeon and almost vanquished R. Simeon in the dispute. The latter was greatly astonished to find such a great intellect among the Christians. They spent almost a half day together, and then the Pope said to him: "My learned man, I see that you are a great scholar, otherwise the Jews would not have sent you as their advocate. Now I have Jews who come every day to play chess with me. Will you not also play a game with me? You will not lose anything by it."

Now R. Simeon was an adept at chess. There was none like him in the whole world, and yet the Pope checkmated him. The rabbi was greatly astonished, and they began to talk again about religion, and R. Simeon was astonished at the keen mind of the Pope. Finally, after further complaint and entreaty by R. Simeon, the Pope sent all the cardinals away and fell on his neck with tears in his eyes and said: "My dear old father, do you not know me?" The father replied: "How should I know your royal grace?" The Pope said: "My dear old father, did you not lose a son once?" When R. Simeon heard this, he was greatly frightened and said, "Yes." The Pope replied: "I am your son Elhanan, whom you lost through the fault of the *Sabbath Goyah*. What sin of yours was responsible for it or what the reason was I do not know, I think it was the will of God. I issued the decree in question for the purpose of bringing you to me, as has actually happened. Now I wish to return to my faith, therefore I will annul the decree." And he gave him letters to the bishop of Mayence, revoking the decree. Then the son said to his father: "Can you advise me how I can atone for my sin?" The father replied: "You need not worry, it was against your will, for you were only a child when you were taken away from me." Then the Pope said: "My dear father, all the time that I lived among Gentiles I knew that I had been born a Jew and yet, as you see, the good circumstances in which I was kept

me from returning to my faith. Do you think that I shall be forgiven for that?" (R. Simeon could tell from the way in which he played chess that he was of Jewish descent.) Then the son said to his father again: "Return home, in the name of the God of Israel, and take the letter to the bishop and say nothing further about me. I will be with you in Mayence soon. But before I return to my faith, I wish to leave behind me as a memorial something that will benefit the Jews.

R. Simeon went to the Jews of Rome and showed them the letter by which the decree was annulled, and they rejoiced greatly. R. Simeon and his companions then went home and brought the letter to the bishop, and they all rejoiced. R. Simeon told his wife of his adventure and that the Pope was their own son. When she heard this she wept bitterly, but R. Simeon said to her: "Do not grieve, we will soon have our son with us." The Pope then wrote a book against the faith, locked it in a vault and gave orders that every candidate for the papacy should read the book. It would take too long to tell what is written in that book.

Soon after, taking much wealth with him, he went to Mayence and became a good Jew again. In Rome they did not know what had happened to the pope. R. Simeon commemorated his story in a poem recited on the second day of the New Year which begins: "Elhanan my son." Therefore do not think that this is mere fiction, nay, it really happened as is described here. Some say that R. Simeon knew his son by a move he made in chess. He had taught him that move while he was still young, and he made that move on the day when they were playing together. He knew then that he was his son. May the Lord forgive us our sins through the merits of R. Simeon. Amen. Selah.

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