INTRODUCTION

The Life, Worldview, and Legacy of Rabbi Elia Benamozegh

Rabbi Elia Benamozegh was born in 1823 in Livorno, Italy.[1] The Benamozegh family boasted many important rabbis and scholars who were illustrious members of Moroccan Jewish society in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Elia's mother, Clara Coriat, was also descended from a long line of famous rabbis that went back at least as far as the sixteenth century. For example, Clara's father was Rabbi Abraham Refael Coriat, who took up positions in Mogador (Morocco) and later in Livorno.[2] Elia evidently took pride in his esteemed heritage:

> *This is the tradition to which I have the honour of belonging; it is an uninterrupted one whose roots are to be found in the Maghreb (North Africa). Fathers acquired merit for their sons and study has never fallen silent in their mouths.*[3]

Tragedy struck early in Elia's life with the death of his father when he was merely three, leading him into the guardianship of his uncle Yehuda Coriat, a respected Kabbalist. This tutelage under Yehuda's wing was movingly recounted by Elia in his autobiography, as he described *"long winter nights when uncle would read the Zohar with me, from start to finish, sometimes twice together, by the dim light of a candle."*[4]

Elia's formative years in Livorno, a bustling nexus of trade, exposed him to a tapestry of Jewish traditions, seamlessly blending Italian, North African, Spanish, and Franco-German influences.

As he ventured into adolescence, Elia found himself at a crossroads between economic survival and his scholarly inclinations. His work engagements, first with a Tunisian

---

[1] Historical records indicate that the Jewish community first settled in Livorno in the latter part of the 16th century. This was a period when Ferdinand I de Medici (1549-1609), serving as the Duke of Tuscany, extended an exceptional privilege to the Jews of Livorno, allowing them the freedom to practise their faith openly—a rare allowance for that era. The initial Jewish settlers in Livorno primarily comprised Sepharadi Jews, who had been expelled from Spain and subsequently resided in the Balkans, as well as those who had been forcibly converted to Christianity (known as '*anusim*'). These individuals relocated from Spain or Portugal to Livorno, seeking a safe haven.

[2] Much of the information presented in this brief biography is thanks to the outstanding research of Alessandro Guetta in his *Philosophy and Kabbalah: Elijah Benamozegh*, translated into English by Helena Kahan. If any quotes here are not sourced, they are to be found with full citations in that wonderful book.

[3] His introduction to Rabbi Abraham Coriat's *Berit Abot.*

[4] Autobiography of E. Benamozegh, in Nahum Sokolow's *Contemporary Jewish Writers' Memorial Book.*

merchant and later in a warehouse, epitomised the strife of a burgeoning intellect striving to reconcile the mundanity of warehouse life with his fervour for Torah and the sciences – realms he deemed as bearing God's fingerprints. Despite the stifling confines of his work environment, Elia's resolve to pursue knowledge remained unshaken, as evidenced by his clandestine studies, which even his manager seemed to tacitly endorse through engaging conversations:

> *I felt as though I were under house-arrest. How many times I laid aside the ledgers to take up instead my Torah and science books. I am grateful in memory toward my manager, who often entered unannounced, catching me in the very act of hiding my books. But never once did he reproach me: on the contrary, he took the opportunity to converse with me on these subjects.*[5]

In 1841, after years of balancing work and study, the 18-year-old Elia became Rabbi Elia. Five years later, he was appointed as a Rabbi and a Professor of Theology at Livorno's esteemed Rabbinical College. His responsibilities grew, as he was appointed *Dayan* (judge) in the local Beth Din.

Rabbi Benamozegh also went on to establish a prominent publishing house, producing a diverse range of works including Jewish prayer books, rabbinic books from previous generations, and his own legal and philosophical writings. He wrote a commentary on *Targum Onkelos*, two defences of the Kabbalah, a commentary of Psalms, more than one introduction to Judaism, a presentation and defence of the Oral Law, a presentation of the metaphysics of Judaism, numerous critiques of the emerging Jewish reform movement throughout his works, and much more. He wrote in, and spoke, Italian, French, Spanish, English and, of course, Hebrew. His works, carefully integrating various sources and disciplines, was a testament to his conviction in a singular, underlying truth amidst the complexities of human existence.

Em LaMiqra: A Torah Commentary for the Perplexed

Central to Rabbi Benamozegh's distinguished literary legacy is his magnum opus, *Em LaMiqra.* This unique commentary on the Torah is an amalgamation of Talmudic erudition, esoteric Kabbalistic wisdom, and scientific and philosophical rigour. In a manner reminiscent of Rambam's seminal *Guide for the Perplexed*, this voluminous exegesis of all Five Books of Moshe offered an intricate, contextualised, and historically nuanced explanation of various Torah verses, rituals, and terms. In many ways, *Em LaMiqra* emerged as the quintessential *Torah Commentary for the Perplexed*.

[5] Ibid.

A few hundred years earlier, Rambam had only dreamt of having the wide array of knowledge and resources available in Rabbi Benamozegh's time to elucidate many areas of Torah. He wrote:

> *The chronicles of those [ancient] days are hidden from us today. If we knew them and were cognisant of the events that happened in those days, we would know in detail the reasons for most things mentioned in the Torah.*[6]

Armed with a comprehensive mastery over diverse disciplines – encompassing science, philosophy, linguistics, archaeology, philology, ancient history – Rabbi Benamozegh embarked on a mission to defend the sanctity of the Torah in an era where its Divine origins was under scrutiny by both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars, at a juncture when the Bible was losing its standing as the pillar for moral, theological, and scientific discourse. Rabbi Benamozegh's publication of *Em LaMiqra* was set against the backdrop of intellectual challenges posed by proponents of biblical criticism, archaeology, and nascent scientific discoveries. This intellectual confrontation, he believed, was an imperative duty for Jewish scholars:

> *Scholars need to hasten to reach the bottom of things. I mean to say, to get beneath the skin and draw out the sparks of the light of truth and holiness, by bringing back to the source of running water all the fragments of truth that have fallen into the well of the abyss.*[7]

His commentary on the Torah was one focused on comparativism and contextualisation. This approach insists on interpreting Biblical narratives within the broader historical landscape of ancient civilisations, enriching understanding through a comparative analysis of content and style with surrounding myths and rites. Rabbi Benamozegh saw comparativism as a fundamental tool in his commentary and interpretation, employing it to elucidate obscure passages and rituals by incorporating related insights from the surrounding culture of the Torah. He did not consider this methodology revolutionary,

---

[6] Rambam, *Moreh HaNebukhim,* 3:50. Also note Rabbi Herschel Schachter's informal comments about using developing fields such as archaeology to extract insights that enhance our understanding of *"problematic verses in Tanakh":*

> *A lot of the non-traditional commentary works on perush ha-milot, and on peshuto shel miqra, which is very important. We're not sure about the meaning of a great deal of Biblical words, and we follow the principle, 'kabel et ha-emet mimi she-omro' [we accept the truth, regardless of the source]. If someone has a suggestion, we would be happy to listen—and some of the suggestions of the non-traditional scholars are gevaldig!...For instance, archaeology is discovering practices that existed years ago in the days of the Tanakh, and based on these findings, we can understand problematic verses in Tanakh. It is certainly a miṣva to understand the peshuto shel miqra, and to know what the verse is talking about." (From "Torah is Not Just a Collection of Dinim: An Interview with Rabbi Herschel Schachter," by Ari Lamm, Yeshiva University Commentator Newspaper, November 5, 2007.)*

[7] *Limmude HaShem,* 327

and nor was it. Instead, he viewed it as a continuation of a tradition of intellectual openness and curiosity, traits he attributed to the Sages of the Talmud:

> *Our Sages followed these natural philosophers, as is their way in all matters of human wisdom, to seek shelter in the shadow of the wisdom of their times.*[8]

This broad-mindedness was particularly admirable as it manifested in an eagerness to learn from even those cultures and nations that had historically been oppressive to the Jewish people, as did our Sages.[9] He held to his convictions steadfastly, despite the scepticism of the *"mitḥasdim aḥaronim"*, some of his seemingly pious contemporaries.

Indeed, Rabbi Benamozegh's scholarly endeavours in *Em LaMiqra* encountered all too familiar opposition from rabbinic factions in Aleppo (Syria) and Jerusalem.[10] He was strongly vilified and censured for establishing linkages between the Torah and ancient religious rituals and texts, and for bringing in 'external' sources such as science, philosophy, and history. This was unfortunately not a new critique, nor a unique confrontation. The annals of Jewish history testify to a longstanding rabbinical tradition which perceives no contradiction between God's Word (Torah) and God's world (science, philosophy, history, etc.) – a tradition equally acquainted with the ignominies of book burnings and controversies, often instigated by the less enlightened. *(Regrettably, such controversies persist even in contemporary Jewish discourse).*

After all, many within the Geonic-Sepharadi tradition, and more recently the Ashkenazi tradition, have endeavoured to *"accept the truth, from whomever says it"*[11], harnessing the finest disciplines the world has to offer in order to elucidate our knowledge of God and His Torah.[12] In the words of the twelfth century Rabbi Ya'aqob Anatoli (who also faced similar opposition for similar reasons):

> *What branch of human wisdom is there that can be ignored in our efforts to arrive at a fuller knowledge of God?*[13]

---

[8] *Em LaMiqra,* Vayiqra 12:2

[9] *Em LaMiqra*, Bereshit 94b

[10] For a detailed presentation of the context of this controversy, see Professor Yaron Harel's book, *Intrigue and Revolution: Chief Rabbis in Aleppo, Baghdad, and Damascus.* He describes how the intellectual and cultural revolution in Europe profoundly affected these and other Jewish communities, leading many laypeople to abandon traditional practices. Rabbis responded to these changes with varied approaches, ranging from total isolation to conscious integration.

[11] See Rambam's foreword to his *Shemona Peraqim.* Also stated in a similar form earlier by his fellow Andalusian, Rabbi Shelomo ibn Gabirol (see his *Mibḥar Peninim).*

[12] For a thorough analysis and presentation of this topic, see the introductory chapters of *Ideas: Bereshit* by Sina Kahen.

[13] *Malmad haTalmidim*, Vaet'ḥanan, p. 159b

In this continuum, Rabbi Benamozegh now found himself in the position of defending his Torah commentary against allegations of sacrilege, through a compelling and moving letter[14] to these dissenting rabbis, thereby championing the honour of an intellectual rabbinical tradition that he was a formidable custodian.

Nevertheless, *Em LaMiqra* received a highly positive reception in many Sepharadi circles, including the esteemed and established Jewish communities of Greece and Turkey.[15] Notably, the Chief Rabbi of Izmir (Turkey) and renowned Kabbalist, Rabbi Ḥayim Palache (1788-1868)[16], emerged as one of Rabbi Benamozegh's formidable allies, extending support to his rabbinic colleague amidst the tumult. His personal correspondence with Rabbi Benamozegh not only affirmed their intellectual camaraderie but also provided strategic counsel to navigate the contentious rabbinic landscape. Rabbi Benamozegh refers to Rabbi Palache and their correspondence in his autobiography:

> *I must acknowledge the marvellous Rabbi, full of honour for God, excellence and holy one of Israel, with the crown of God on his forehead, mighty, holy and pure, both saintly and humbly, whom I love as my own soul – who will let me lie beneath his feet in the world to come? I mean the holy Rabbi Hayim Palache, of blessed memory, who stood as a banner to the nations in the city of Izmir and its environs. When he heard of the protests against me and was invited to collaborate with the protestors, that righteous man was not willing. On the contrary, since he knew me better than any of them he wrote me a personal letter which I have in my possession as testimony. When I wrote to him that I was working on this response he replied congratulating me and gave me two pearls…*[17]

Modern Responses to Modernist Critiques

Rabbi Benamozegh's methodology in *Em LaMiqra* is emblematic of a delicate balance between traditionalism and anti-dogmatism. He eschewed interpretations of the Torah predicated on unsubstantiated premises. Through a contemporary historical, scientific, and philosophical lens, he unpacked and enriched Biblical verses and Talmudic narratives alike. Rabbi Benamozegh's extensive scholarship, encompassing fields from natural sciences to comparative philology, primed him for this task. For a Philosopher-Kabbalist of the

---

[14] The full English translation of this letter will be published in an upcoming book by Da'at Press.

[15] For an overview of the positive responses to *Em LaMiqra* in Sepharadi and Ashkenazi Orthodox circles, see Isaac Molcho, *Treasures of the Sephardic World in Recent Generations.* Recently, none other than Rabbi Meir Mazuz (the leading authority of Tunisian Jewry and *Rosh Yeshiba* of the famed *Kisse Raḥamim*) wrote: *'Rabbi Benamozegh was a great philosopher, he competed with Ibn Ezra and Shadal and everyone else, until the sages of Aleppo confiscated his book for nothing…He wrote very beautiful commentaries on the Torah.'* (*Bayit Ne'eman*, Edition 339, Footnote 2)

[16] Also known by his seminal legal work, *Qaf HaḤayyim*

[17] *Ṣori Gil'ad*, part 13, HaLebanon, 3 July 1872 p. 7, downloaded from the Historical Jewish Press website, founded by the National Library and Tel Aviv University. English translation kindly provided by the formidable Simon Montagu.

nineteenth century, taking words seriously entailed their justification through a scientific prism. In this vein, Rabbi Benamozegh often presented 'modern' rebuttals to 'modernist' critiques, employing contemporary methodologies and contemporary concepts to fortify and advocate for Tradition. This was a distinctive trait of Sepharadi[18], and more recently Ashkenazi, scholars who have not only engaged with but also integrated the prevailing intellectual currents of their times. This generational task to re-present and re-package the eternal wisdom of Torah through contemporary language is most fittingly described by a recent Sepharadi scholar of the same ilk, Rabbi Dr Jose Faur:

> *Eternity of the Torah cannot be perceived as a mere dogma to be maintained by the fiat of faith and confession. It is a demand and a challenge to discover the significance of the Berit (Covenant) within the specific context of the present historical situation. This dynamic concept of the Eternity of the Torah finds expression in a form of religious humanism that is peculiar to the Sepharadi tradition. The distinctness of the Sepharadi tradition rests on its ability to adapt the key symbols of the general culture to the specific context of Judaism.*[19]

Harmonising Torah and Science

Rabbi Benamozegh expressed a profound concern regarding the separate study of Torah and science, positing that an individual engaging in their isolated examination, bereft of seeking an integrative synthesis, brings himself to doubt. This, he states, emerges upon the individual recognising the surface-level discrepancies between the two fields, which will result in the inevitable rejection of the one that is perceived as less substantiated within the prevailing paradigms of 'social discourse' - namely, the Torah.

This ethos, advocating for an unbreakable symbiosis between Torah and science, was upheld by many Sepharadi scholars of the time, most notably the illustrious Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Ḥazan (1808-1863). Rabbi Ḥazan, known for his roles including that of Chief Rabbi in Italy and Egypt, and recognised for his profound legal responsa[20], asserted:

> *Separating science and religion is a Western characteristic, and a mortal sickness.*[21]

For Rabbi Ḥazan, akin to Rabbi Benamozegh, this Western lens of dichotomising and categorising had influenced certain corners of Jewry, rendering science as sterile and

---

[18] …with plenty of precedence in the Talmud, and especially the later Geonim. For more on the formative years of Sepharad and the distinctive traits of their tradition, see the introductory chapters of my *Ideas: Bereshit*. For more on the Sepharadi and Ashkenazi scholars who continued that tradition post-expulsion, see Jacob Schachter's, *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?*

[19] Rabbi Dr Jose Faur, *Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Ḥazan: The Man and His Works,* p. 5.

[20] *Kerakh Shel Romi,* which has since been extensively cited by leading Rabbinic scholars and *poseqim*, including the former Sepharadi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Obadya Yosef.

[21] *She'erit HaNahala*, 35

religion as weak. This, he believed, ultimately cultivated a materialistic society devoid of intrinsic moral principles.[22]

In Rabbi Benamozegh's response to the dissenting rabbis of Aleppo and Jerusalem, he remarked upon the deficiency of scientific literacy amongst the less erudite Jewish communities of his time, who, in the absence of such knowledge, gravitated towards superstition and fallacy. He metaphorically expressed this sentiment, stating,

> *The old adage has it that nothing is worse than the slave who is suddenly set free. Because light blinds those who have never seen it, if they are not accustomed to it gradually. Thus they were abandoned by the Torah because they failed to study it in a state of purity. And if they had previously been educated in the paths of the Torah, with reliable texts and teachers, they would not have turned to charmers and sorcerers.*[23]

Science is thus compared to *"light"*, and Torah study without its harmonious accompaniment of science is defined as *"impure"*. Rabbi Benamozegh's *Em LaMiqra* was a vaccine to solve this disease. His dissenters mistook the vaccine for the illness, and rejected it violently.

Evolving Understandings

A prime example of Rabbi Benamozegh's ability to harmonise the realities of the world (science) with the realities of The Word (Torah) is his analysis of a burgeoning discovery of his time - Darwinian evolution.[24] Commenting on this major discovery of his time, Rabbi Benamozegh writes:

> *Recently, researchers wanted to explain that those days [of creation] were not literal but were one thousand years or more. There is nothing new under the sun, for I have seen that Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote this (Ozar Neḥmad, 215:2), saying that each day was a thousand years; and, who knows, maybe this was what our Sages meant when they said: This means that there was an order of time beforehand [i.e. before creation].*[25]
>
> *All the labours of Darwin and his followers will only succeed (if at all) to prove that many of the species that we now regard as distinct species in their own right, have been, over the course of the generations, no more than Varietês ['variants'] of other species, and that through the continuous changes from one generation to the next they have acquired their own distinct morphologies and names… The reason that these scientists hold such views is their lack of belief in the action of any force above the forces presently active among*

[22] *She'erit HaNahala*, 12

[23] *Ṣori Gil'ad*, HaLebanon, Year 8, no. 17

[24] Since the world and the Torah are both creations of God, any surface-level contradictions between them would naturally require further investigation to find the inevitable harmony within them.

[25] *Em LaMiqra,* Bereshit *1:5*

> *living things, which could instantaneously produce new creatures… And if they did succeed in proving that the majority of the species are nothing more than variations and strains from other species, they would still be compelled to acknowledge that in the beginning there existed a few species which did not develop from other species, but which gave rise [to all the other species].*[26]

Rabbi Benamozegh addresses this topic in detail in numerous places[27], but I will attempt to summarise his key points.

While acknowledging the scientific evidence that the earth was much older than a literalist reading of the Torah would suggest, and the development and variation within biological species, Rabbi Benamozegh rejects the notion that new species arise solely from these variants or that all species descend from a few ancestors. Instead, Rabbi Benamozegh interprets Darwin's concept of 'natural selection' as a process leading to stable, permanent species, suggesting an inherent *"internal rationale and cause"* that ensures the survival and inheritance of beneficial traits. He critiques Darwinian reliance on natural forces alone, positing a *"force above the forces"* that instantaneously creates new life forms, thereby addressing the (still) unresolved scientific question of life's origin. Rabbi Benamozegh concludes that both scientific and Torah perspectives implicitly support the existence of a superior, creative force responsible for the inception of all species, asserting that this force would logically extend its influence to create all forms of life, aligning with a Divine purpose rather than being limited to a few ancestral species. In his view, the apparent alignment of Darwinian theory with the concept of a creative force upholds the coexistence of scientific understanding and Torah tradition, emphasising a harmonious integration of natural processes and Divine intervention.

Although he disagrees with some Darwinian claims that lacked empirical evidence, he does so on scientific grounds. At no point was Rabbi Benamozegh disrespectful to Charles Darwin or his discoveries, and any differences did not prevent him citing the authority of Darwin when convenient![28] Therefore, Rabbi Benamozegh's humble approach to the developing field of evolutionary biology was at once thoroughly scientific and deeply theistic.

---

[26] *Em LaMiqra,* Debarim, folios 87b–88a

[27] See *Em LaMiqra* (Debarim, folios 87b–88a), and *Israel & Humanity (Book Two: Man).* For a thorough overview of this topic, see Rabbi Dr. Jose Faur's, *The Hebrew Species Concept and the Origin of Evolution: R. Benamozegh's Response to Darwin*, *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 63, 3, 1997, pp. 42–66.

[28] For example, in his commentary on Bereshit 1:27 *("And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them"),* Rabbi Benamozegh cites both ancient and modern scientists and scholars, from Empedocles to Charles Darwin, in agreement that at the beginning all animals were hermaphrodite, that is, both *"male and female"*.

Living Legacy

Rabbi Benamozegh died on February 6, 1900. His tombstone fittingly commemorates him as:

> *The last representative, and prince, of a whole family of scholars.*

He was at once an expert in the various scientific discoveries of the *physical* world, while also an ardent defender of disciplines that sought to understand the *meta-physical world* (philosophy and Kabbalah). He was at once a traditional critic of reformist Jewry and a *Dayan* unabashedly upholding the sanctity of Revelation, while being a modern visionary who believed in the evolving progress of humankind. Ultimately, Rabbi Benamozegh did not subscribe to a Western worldview that incorrectly perceives the world in simple categories and oppositions.

In the penultimate section of his defence letter addressing his dissenting rabbinic counterparts, Rabbi Benamozegh movingly articulates his plight with poignant eloquence:

> *Alas, gentlemen! I will tell you what this situation resembles: an old man had two wives, one young and one old, who hated each other like Hannah and Peninah. With the passage of time his hair began to whiten; the young wife pulled out his grey hairs, and the old wife pulled out the dark, each so that he would be more like herself. And he, poor man, ended up bald. It is the same for me: science and faith are closely connected. They proceed together, but there are many people who see my fear of God as imbecility, or see my science as mere vanity, and my books as the stinking flesh of dead animals. And my petty self among them, neither impious nor a scholar, belong half to the devil, and half to the good Lord.*
>
> *To one man, I am a pious fool, to the next a heretic; I am called a scholar, but not a 'Ḥakham', and sometimes a plain herds-man, and a dresser of sycamore-trees; here they don't believe Europe suits me, and advise me to go to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, but there they refuse to let me enter the sanctuary, and send me back outside among the scholars of the nations. And I, for my part, remain as though hanging in air; neither rebel nor recognised writer, heretic nor believer, infidel nor Kabbalist, philosopher nor rabbi, blasphemer nor orator, I am not assimilated or awaiting the Messiah, neither Shammai nor Hillel, nor day nor night.*[29]

Indeed, Rabbi Benamozegh was unique in his ability to unify so many ideas of two generally distinct schools of Jewish thought that emerged since the appearance of the Zohar in thirteenth century Ashkenaz. On one hand, there is the domain of his beloved

[29] *Ṣori Gil'ad*, HaLebanon, no. 48: 352

Kabbalah[30], often perceived as a cryptic and exclusionary doctrine, which has often served as a ligament to superstitious thought and practice.[31] On the opposite flank lies the realm of philosophy and science, acclaimed as the quintessential instruments through which humanity seeks to fathom reality within the confines of human intellect. In his own words, *"to recognise the relationship between Kabbalah and philosophy, you only need to have a pair of eyes and an acquaintance with both disciplines."*[32] Few rabbis have managed to reconcile these ostensibly incompatible paradigms as convincingly and profoundly as Rabbi Elia Benamozegh.

In the end, one can principally glean three fundamental tenets from his teachings: the rejection of blind faith, a drive to harmonise God's Word with God's world, and an unwavering conviction in the advancement of humanity. These principles ultimately epitomise the core of a Sepharadi tradition that Rabbi Benamozegh meticulously preserved and propagated.

Samuel Colombo, one of Rabbi Benamozegh's students, succinctly encapsulated his teacher's philosophy in a sentiment that provides us with an eternally relevant signpost to navigate our own relationship with the past, present, and future:

> *Look at the past firmly and steadily and at the same time explore progress, which is making such rapid strides. Far from adoring only one or the other, look for a formula to understand them in real harmony.*[33]

May this book inspire us to embrace this timeless challenge in our era. Let it encourage us to deepen our knowledge of the Torah and all aspects of worldly wisdom, as we pursue our primary goal of knowing God, following in the footsteps of Rabbi Benamozegh.

◆

Sample from *Vayiqra in Context: A Scientific and Kabbalistic Commentary of Leviticus by Rabbi Elia Benamozegh*, available at Amazon or www.daat.press

[30] I highly recommend reading the heartfelt and fiery correspondence between Rabbi Benamozegh and his (anti-Kabbalah) Italian colleague, Shadal, on the controversial origins of the Zohar and the general legitimacy of the Kabbalah in our recently published book, *Letters on Kabbalah* (edited by J.J. Kimche).

[31] While Rabbi Benamozegh strongly viewed the Kabbalah as a tradition paralleling the Oral Law, he was aware and critical of the misuse of it. For example, he was opposed to Ḥasidism, which he perceived as a decline into superstition from the true essence of Jewish theology.

[32] *Nir Le David*, Introduction, 6b

[33] In Yosef Colombo, *Vivere Per Un'idea*