

Part II

Introduction:

The statistical success in Genesis of a list of word pairs compiled according to pre-established rules, indicates that expressions composed of letters at equal intervals (ELSSs) have been intentionally encrypted in this text.

On the other hand, by compiling a list of word pairs without pre-established rules it is possible to create the appearance of "success" in any text. One can achieve this simply by presenting one's "successes" and suppressing one's failures. Therefore, there would be absolutely no significance to the "success" of a list composed in this way in *War and Peace*.

Bar Natan and McKay (BNMK) are perfectly aware of this, therefore they claim that even within the pre-established rules there exists:

"enough choice to generate comparable significance levels in *War and Peace*."

In other words, they claim that within the framework of the rules which were established before our *first* list was compiled, there was enough latitude for us to manipulate the *second* list of names to achieve an artificial "success" for the experiment. They claim that they did just this in *War and Peace*.

They attempted to base their claim on a list of names which they first publicized through the Internet on Sept. 20, '97 in their article: "Equidistant Letter Sequences in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*."

It is clear that BNMK invested considerable effort in the preparation of a list of names which would succeed in *War and Peace* and fail in Genesis. It was an effort which involved searching for many sources, and a great amount of computer time to make the calculations. This list was prepared over the course of many months, and what they published was not the first version of the list. They try to justify their selections by a set of 24 assertions (section 2.1 in their article) and by the considerations mentioned in section 2.2 (ibid). They claim to have prepared their list:

"by purposefully constructing our own list of appellations, staying within the WRR-stated rules or breaking them by about as much as they did."

As we shall see, their claim to have carried out their manipulations **within** the rules established in our paper is laughable and without foundation. Their entire exercise consists of nothing other than flagrant and unjustifiable breaking of the established rules mentioned above. Therefore their attempt to illustrate the latitude which supposedly exists within the framework of the rules, is an utter failure.

On the contrary, it is precisely the utter failure of their efforts which can serve as solid evidence against their claim that within the established rules there remains "enough choice to generate comparable significance levels in *War and Peace*."

In section B1 we present a detailed 24 point rejoinder to all of their assertions. We recommend that the reader examine them. He will be surprised to discover just how

baseless their claims are.

To summarize, it can be seen from our responses that:

1. They did not succeed in finding a single illustration of a name which was included in the list compiled by Prof. Havlin through any deviation from the rules. Therefore there is no justification for their many erasures of names from the list.
2. They did succeed in finding 5 names (including one doubtful example) which Prof. Havlin omitted from the list (the doubtful name is indicated by two asterisks *-*):

*רב חבי"ב, הרב חבי"ב, הרב החבי"ב, (see Assertion 6 and the response thereon),
 בנבנשתני (see Assertion 7 and the response thereon), and
 יעקב לוי (see Assertion 14 and the response thereon).

Of these five names, two do not appear in Genesis at all as ELSs, so that their omission had no effect whatsoever on the results.

It turns out that the addition of the three remaining names would have improved the results!

The reader will recall that in the original experiment, which was carried out upon the second list prepared by Prof. Havlin, the statistics P1 and P2 served as the measure of probability (the experiment using permutations was suggested at a later date). This is the form in which the results were presented in the "Blue Preprint."

In the original experiment the best result was P2, whose value was:

$$P2 = 0.00000000201.$$

With the addition of the 3 names mentioned above we receive the result:

$$P'2 = 0.0000000013,$$

in other words, the results improve by a factor of 1.5!

3. All the other names which they add to the list consist of deviations from the rules:

- 8 are unpronounced abbreviations (see responses 3, 11, 13, 16, 21).
- 3 names deviate from the spelling rules (see responses 4, 8, 18).
- 4 names are variations which are not mentioned in the Responsa database -- see the section "Professional Judgment"-rule (f)(1) in Havlin's report (see responses 11, 13, 17).
- 2 names deviate from rule (b) in Havlin's report (see response 5).
- 1 name deviated from rule (c) in Havlin's report (see response 20).

Please note that in our responses we bring examples to demonstrate that Prof. Havlin used these same rules already in the compilation of the first list.

Far more astounding is the fact that they added another 8 names which are complete fabrications:

- (1) הראב"ד שני, ראב"ד שני -- see response 1.

- (2) יהודה סג"ל -- see response 10.
 (3) מימונגיל -- see response 12.
 (4) יצחק לוי, and מהר"י לוי -- see response 14.
 (5) חעלמא, שלמה חלמא -- see response 24.

(Concerning (3) and (5), BNMK were not the original fabricators of these “appellations.” These “appellations” were invented by somebody else, but without any basis.)

The conclusion which emerges from our 24 responses is that Prof. Havlin clearly chose his names a priori, without the slightest bias:

- In section 2 above we saw that the few names which Prof. Havlin omitted, which should have been included according to the rules, were left out despite the fact that their inclusion in the list would have improved the results. See responses 5, 11 and 21 for more examples of this kind.

- Several of the names which BNMK proposed including in the list do not appear as ELSs in Genesis at all: יהודה סג"ל (response 10), בנבנשתי (response 7), מימונגיל (response 12), מהר"י חגיו (response 13), and יצחק לוי (response 14). Therefore, their inclusion or exclusion has no effect on the results of the experiment.

If Prof. Havlin had any advance information concerning which names would appear as ELSs in Genesis (as BNMK insinuate), he should have included these names in order to preempt potential criticism to the greatest extent possible.

In section B2 we will deal with the issue of which personalities should have been included in the second list, based on the length of their entry in Margalioth's Encyclopedia. There, too, we will see that BNMK's alterations are incorrect.

B1. Assertions and Responses:

Assertion 1:

Concerning R. Avraham b. Yitzchak: BNMK claim to have found the expression הראב"ד השני (the second Ra'abad) mentioned in the book Shem HaGedolim. Therefore they added the following combinations (the full expression הראב"ד השני is longer than eight letters and could not be included in the experiment):

- (i) ראב"ד שני
- (ii) הראב"ד שני

The Response:

A. The expression הראב"ד השני is not an appellation of R. Avraham. It is used neither in the written literature, nor in oral discussions. In the Responsa database, for example, this expression does not appear at all.

BNMK encountered this construction in the bibliographic work *Shem HaGedolim* by the Chida (= Chaim Yosef David Azulai). Chida discusses a number of personalities who were all known by the acronym ראב"ד. He organizes them chronologically, and in order to distinguish between them he refers to the earliest one as "the first Raavad," to the next one as "the second Raavad," etc. Obviously these do not thereby become appellations of the personalities involved, any more than the numbers before biographical entries in an encyclopedia become part of their names.

B. BNMK then compounded their bibliographical error with mistakes in grammar. In fact, both of their additions are based on grammatical errors:

In their first case they seem to have extrapolated that if the expansion הראב"ד השני exists for הראב"ד, the parallel expansion of ראב"ד, without the definite article, must be ראב"ד שני. This is simply a mistake in grammar. Even without the article before the proper name, one must still retain the article before the ordinal number - השני ראב"ד (as in Henry the Eighth of England - השמיני הנרי). Unsurprisingly, the expression ראב"ד שני does not exist anywhere, not even in *Shem HaGedolim*.

In the second case, הראב"ד שני they invented a form which Hebrew grammar simply does not allow. Needless to say, this "appellation" is not to be found anywhere.

(This response was based on the Sept. 20th '97 draft of BNMK's article. The second "appellation," הראב"ד שני, was subsequently removed from their list. It does not appear, for example, in the October 18th draft. Someone seems to have done them the kindness of pointing out this gross error, thus sparing them further embarrassment).

Assertion 2:

Concerning R. Avraham HaMal'ach BNMK assert that the term המלאך ("the angel") is an adjective, not a surname. It was applied, so they say, to a number of rabbis, and does not by itself indicate R. Avraham.

They also assert that it is inconsistent to use the title HaMalach for R. Avraham, and not to use the similar designation HaChassid ("the pious") for R. Yehudah HaChassid (they refer to the fact that in our paper we did not use the expression HaChassid on its own, but only as part of the combination "R. Yehudah Chassid" or "R. Yehudah HaChassid").

They erase, therefore, the term המלאך from the list.

The Response:

A. It is obviously correct that the term Malach is an adjective, not a surname.

B. Concerning their claim that this title was applied to a number of different rabbis: One must make a clear distinction between an expression used by one rabbi to describe another in a specific instance, versus an epithet which is identified with a certain personality. For example, as an incidental usage we would expect to find the adjective "angel" applied under two kinds of circumstances:

- (i) When a certain rabbi's given name happens to be the same as one of the angels (Rafael, Gavriel, etc.), thus inspiring the use of this epithet.
- (ii) Or when an author is referring to his mentor (in keeping with the Talmudic dictum that one should learn from a teacher who resembles an angel).

A survey of the Responsa database confirms this expectation. There are about 5 uses of type (i), and one usage of type (ii). There are no further uses of this term.

By contrast, concerning Rabbi Avraham the Encyclopedia Hebraica refers to him already in the heading of his entry as "R. Avraham who was called Malach." He was consistently referred to in this way, not merely in a passing instance by a specific author. His given name was not the same as one of the angels, nor was it only his disciples who referred to him in this way.

Margalioth explains in his Encyclopedia (under the heading "R. Abraham HaMalach") how he earned this title as a result of "the great admiration for him on the part of all the Tzaddikim of the generation, who bestowed upon him the title "HaMalach").

C. The epithet "HaChassid" is too common. Many scholars who were renowned for their piety merited to be known by this title. A survey of the Responsa database reveals approximately 1370 uses (by contrast with 6 for the term "Mal'ach"). That is why it is impossible to use the title "HaChassid" by itself. It can only be used in a context in which the bearer is also identified. On the other hand, in the literature of the Chassidic movement one can easily identify any reference to "HaMal'ach" as an allusion to R. Avraham, the son of the Maggid of Mezeritch.

From all of the above it should be clear that there is no basis whatsoever for BNMK to erase the term המלאך from the list.

Assertion 3:

Concerning R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, author of Maasei HaShem they write that the appellation מעשי יי-הו-ה (with the name of God written out in full) is neither written nor pronounced. Therefore they erase it from the list.

In its place they add the expressions מעשי ה' (using the common abbreviation for the Tetragrammaton – ה') and בעל מעשי ה' ("the author of Maasei H"). They explain that these appellations are "widely used."

The Response:

A. The designation מעשי יי-הו-ה is not a variant. This is the original title of R. Ashkenazi's book. BNMK make a serious error when they assert that the Tetragrammaton is "never written or pronounced." On the contrary, this name appears in the Torah an enormous number of times, and of course it is "pronounced" (that is to say, unlike some of the acronyms discussed elsewhere, it is a proper name which was meant to be pronounced and has a specific vocalization). There are simply Halachic limitations concerning the circumstances under which it may be pronounced.

B. It is precisely because of the sanctity of this name that the variant מעשי ה' (using the abbreviation) was invented. The letter ה is used here in place of the holy name. It is simply a stand-in which is not pronounced. Therefore Prof. Havlin was conforming to the rule of not including unpronounced designations when he omitted the forms מעשי ה' and בעל מעשי ה', and once again it is BNMK who have deviated from the rules by their substitution.

Assertion 4:

They claim that according to our paper, "grammatical orthography" (k'tiv dikduki, a standard Hebrew spelling convention in which no extra letters are added) is to be used only with regard to Hebrew words. Therefore it should not be applied to the name "Oppenheim," which derives from the German or Yiddish. They quote from our paper that, "Yiddish is written using Hebrew letters; thus, there was no need to transliterate Yiddish names." On this basis they erase the form אופנהיים, and add in its stead אופנהיים, noting that in the Responsa database the first form is found only once, whereas the latter form appears more than 50 times, and that Margalioth himself uses the form אופנהיים.

The Response:

A. There is a subtle misrepresentation of the position stated in our paper. The original quote reads, "For words in Hebrew, we always chose what is called the grammatical orthography . . ." Note that we specifically say "words in Hebrew," not "Hebrew words" - that is, any word which has been rendered into Hebrew, even if derived from a foreign language, is to be written in grammatical orthography. The only expressions which do not fall under this rubric are words deriving from languages which themselves use Hebrew characters, such as Yiddish and Ladino, because these languages do not need to be rendered into Hebrew. This rule was followed consistently in the construction of both published lists regarding all foreign names (for example, in the first list the name אייבשיץ appears rather than אייבשיץ).

B. The name "Oppenheim" is of German derivation, not Yiddish, therefore it was transliterated according to grammatical orthography exactly as the rules stipulate. In this form, and only in this form, does it appear in the index to the Encyclopedia Hebraica, and in the heading of the relevant entry. The Encyclopedia Hebraica is consistent in its use of grammatical orthography for its entries, whereas anyone examining Margalioth's Encyclopedia will immediately notice that he is not particular about adhering to grammatical orthography.

C. Concerning the forms which appear in the Responsa database, it is well known that the responsa literature commonly uses *k'tiv malei* (an orthographical style in which extra letters are added for clarity in pronunciation), and even *malei d'malei*. There are even responsa that use Yiddish, Ladino, and other languages. For this reason it comes as no surprise that the *k'tiv malei* form אופנהיים appears much more frequently than the

grammatical orthography form אופנהיים, and it is pointless trying to establish the correct spelling according to grammatical orthography based on this source.

From all of the above it should be clear that Prof. Havlin acted consistently in using the form אופנהיים and not אופנהיים.

Assertion 5:

BNMK admit that certain "pronounced" acronyms have attained the status of words, for example "the Rambam" for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. They claim, however, that our paper contains inconsistencies regarding "the use of acronyms that did not attain the status of a word."

They assert that while we did use א"יח הע"ר, בעל הלק"ט, הראב"י, הריעב"ץ, etc., we ignored such acronyms as מהר"א, מהר"ם, מהר"י, הרב ז"א, and others. They claim that they "have done the same," omitting הריעב"ץ, and adding מהר"א and המהר"א (they note that the last acronym appears very often in the Responsa database, and also in Shem HaGedolim, therefore its omission from our list is "especially questionable").

The Response:

A. We are happy to learn that BNMK finally admit that there is a difference between an acronym which is pronounced and an ordinary abbreviation or set of initials which is not pronounced. Yet they continue to confuse the issue of being pronounced with the issue of being common. When we say that an expression is "pronounced" we mean that the letters have a specific vocalization, regardless of how common the expression is. The acronyms הרמב"ם and הראב"י have exactly the same status: they are both pronounced. The only difference between them lies in their prevalence -- הרמב"ם is much more prevalent.

B. Therefore there is no justification for their claim that הראב"י, הריעב"ץ, בעל הלק"ט, א"יח הע"ר were included in violation of the rules. All of these acronyms are pronounced.

C. There is also no justification for their claim that the expressions הרב ז"א, מהר"ם, מהר"י were omitted in violation of the rules:

(i) הרב ז"א - This acronym is not pronounced (and anyone familiar with the usage of the abbreviation ז"א in the Kabbalistic literature will understand immediately why this acronym cannot be pronounced). In any event, a survey of the Responsa database reveals that most references to הרב ז"א refer not to the author of זרע אברהם, R. Avraham Yizhaki, but to the author of זרע אמת, who is not one of the personalities on the list.

(ii) מהר"ם - This acronym is indeed pronounced, but it does not refer to any personality on the list. For example, in the Responsa database this acronym is used to refer to the author of Sfat Hayam, the Maharim of Brisk, etc.

(iii) מהר"א - This is also pronounced. But Prof. Havlin has already explained (see his

report, in the chapter "Professional Judgment," sec. B) why he decided not to use this acronym. It is used to refer to many different personalities, and not specifically to R. Chaim Abulafia. For similar considerations Prof. Havlin omitted the acronym הרִיבִּישׁ for the Baal Shem Tov from the first list. Had he included it it would have dramatically improved the results:

You will recall that in the original experiment which was carried out for the first list the statistics P1 and P2 served as the measure of probability. This is how the results were reported in both the "White Preprint" and the "Blue Preprint."

The best result was originally $P1 = 0.000000001334$.
 If we were to add הרִיבִּישׁ we would receive $P'1 = 0.00000000412$.
 In other words, the results would have been better by a factor of 3.24!

D. On the basis of their faulty assertions, BNMK claim to be doing "the same" as we did, when in fact they are doing something different altogether: They erased a legitimate acronym (הרִיבִּישׁ) with no explanation at all, while adding in its place two expressions which do not deserve to be included.

Assertion 6:

They note that Prof. Havlin in his report acknowledged having omitted the appellation הרב חבִּיב (for personality #11 on the list). They add it in. They then removed the definite article and added the form רב חבִּיב, as well. Finally, they added the form הרב החבִּיב to the list.

The Response:

A. This case merely serves to demonstrate that Prof. Havlin indeed constructed the lists in an a priori manner. Had he desired to improve the results he would have been sure to include these appellations in the list:

Taking P1 and P2 as the measure of probability (see Response 5), the best result without these expressions was $P2 = 0.00000000201$.

If we add in these expressions we receive $P'2 = 00000000719$.

In other words, the results improve by a factor a 2.8!

B. Concerning the form רב חבִּיב, it is doubtful whether this is a valid form: It appears a single time in the Responsa database in the Responsa Yosef Ometz, 104, after he had been mentioned a number of times as הרב חבִּיב. The omission of the definite article in this one instance may simply have been a slip of the pen.

Assertion 7:

BNMK assert that both בנבנשת and בנבנשתי are used to refer to R. Haim Benbenest, and they note parenthetically that the latter form is 3 times more common in the Responsa

database. Since Prof. Havlin "chose" the term *בנבנשת*, they permit themselves to "choose" *בנבנשתי*, and to erase *בנבנשת* from the list.

The Response:

A. The original form of the family name of R. Haim Benbenest is unquestionably *בנבנשת*. See the Encyclopedia Hebraica at his entry, and at the entry for the family Benbenest. This is how both he and his brother R. Yehoshua and others in the family signed their names.

B. It is true that the variant *בנבנשתי* exists, and that Prof. Havlin omitted it on the basis of his judgment. But this case only serves to illustrate that Prof. Havlin acted in good faith, and that his considerations were purely professional, because the appellation *בנבנשתי* does not appear as an ELS in Genesis at all, and would not have affected the outcome. Had Prof. Havlin actually operated as they have suggested - intentionally selecting the most successful names - then he should have used both forms in this case and spared himself unnecessary criticism.

C. Therefore, their assertion that they are proceeding in the same manner as Prof. Havlin is ridiculous. They omit the original name and include only the variant, and they admit to doing so not on the basis of professional considerations but only to manipulate the results.

D. Incidentally, the "information" which they supply the reader parenthetically is mistaken: *בנבנשתי* does not appear 3 times more frequently in the database. The real ratio is 1:1.

Assertion 8:

Regarding the name *כפוסִי*, BNMK assert that we should have used the form *כאפוסִי*, as well, since it also appears in the Responsa database. They paraphrase our paper as saying that "in such cases" we take both forms, with and without the *א* as a mater lectionis, whereas in this instance we used only *כפוסִי*. Therefore they say, "we allow ourselves to make the opposite mistake." They remove *כפוסִי*, and add *כאפוסִי*.

The Response:

A. In our paper we state that "the letter *א* is often used as a mater lectionis," and that in such cases we take both forms. In other words, where it is grammatically appropriate to use the mater lectionis we take both forms. In the word *כפוסִי* the accent is on the *פ*, not on the *כ*, therefore it is grammatically incorrect to use the mater lectionis. *כפוסִי* is the correct form, and it was with this form that R. Capusi, in fact, signed his name, as is attested to, for example, by Chida in *Shem HaGedolim* (a source which BNMK are found of citing).

The fact that in the Responsa database the form *כאפוסִי* also appears says nothing.

The responsa literature is not always particular about the subtleties of grammar.

It is interesting to note that in Assertion 13 BNMK themselves paraphrase our statement more accurately, "where א is used as a "mater lectionis" It is strange that here they paraphrase us in a way which is misleading.

B. Therefore BNMK's statement that they allow themselves to "make the opposite mistake" is itself predicated upon an error: No mistake at all was involved in the omission of כאפּוסי, whereas they "err" purposefully in deleting כפּוסי from the list.

Assertion 9:

Concerning the appellations בעל נס and בעל הנס they claim that these titles are usually associated with R. Meir Baal HaNes, and not with R. Haim Capusi. Most of the references to בעל הנס in the Responsa database refer to R. Meir, and they did not find the form בעל נס associated with R. Haim Capusi at all, despite the fact that, according to them, this personality is mentioned frequently in the literature.

Since Prof. Havlin himself rejected certain appellations because they were more closely associated with another personality, they do the same by erasing בעל הנס and בעל נס.

The Response:

A. As Prof. Havlin mentions in his report, the responsa literature is not the most appropriate source to look for appellations of R. Haim Capusi, since his main Torah output was not in the realm of Halacha. Contrary to the assertion of BNMK, his name does not appear frequently in the Responsa database (there are only 22 references, which is not a lot. For comparison, his contemporary and academic adversary, the Radbaz is referred to by this one appellation more than 8500 times!).

B. It is true that the combination "R. Meir Baal HaNes" is more common than "R. Haim Capusi Baal Hanes," but R. Haim Capusi is also known by the appellation "Baal HaNes" alone, whereas R. Meir is generally not. See the Encyclopedia Judaica at his entry, where it mentions that R. Haim Capusi's synagogue is referred to as "the Synagogue of Baal Hanes." In this same source you can find the appellation בעל נס, as well.

Assertion 10:

The 15th personality on the list is R. Yehuda Chassid Segal. BNMK assert that Prof. Havlin neglected to include the appellation יהודה סג"ל, which they believe to be this personality's given name plus his family name. They claim that in the "Blue Preprint" we "always take appellations of this form when it is available."

Therefore they add יהודה סג"ל to the list. They also refer the reader to Margalioth.

The Response:

A. סג"ל is not this Rabbi's last name. BNMK brought no source to indicate otherwise. In Margalioth's Encyclopedia one finds the combination ר' יהודה חסיד סג"ל, but not יהודה סג"ל.

B. If one examines the "Blue Preprint" he will discover that, contrary to the assertion of BNMK, we did not "always take appellations of this form." We took them where there was a justification; for example, in the case of the Maharil (23 on the list). There we use the combinations יעקב סג"ל and מהר"י סג"ל because they are well documented both in the Responsa and elsewhere.

C. In any event, the appellation יהודה סג"ל does not appear as an ELS in Genesis, and its omission would not have affected the results.

Assertion 11:

For מהר"י ט (19 on the list), BNMK added the following appellations: הר"י טראני, הר"י טרני. Their rationalization for all these additions: "This puts the Maharit in a similar status with the Ya'abez."

The Response:

A. The abbreviations ר"י טראני and ר"י טרני are not pronounced. That is why they were not included in the list, just as the abbreviations ר"י עמדין and ר"י עמדן for the Ya'abez were not included (and just as ר"י קארו, for example, was excluded from the first list as an appellation for personality 19).

B. BNMK make a fundamental error here and in Assertion 16. Out of linguistic and bibliographical ignorance they assume that the appellation הר"י טרני is simply the abbreviation ר"י טרני with the addition of the definite article, when in fact, as is commonly known, ר"י טרני is short for רבי יוסף טרני, whereas הר"י טרני stands for הרב רבי יוסף טרני.

(See, for instance, the Even Shushan Dictionary in the section on acronyms, where he explains that ר"י (23 on the first list) stands for רבי יצחק אלפסי, whereas הר"י, with the definite article, stands for הרב רבי יצחק אלפסי).

C. The variants הר"י טראני and הר"י טרני do not appear in the Responsa database. Regarding הר"י עמדין, it does appear in the Responsa database. Below, in response 15, we will explain the use of the form עמדן in addition to עמדין, and that the Ya'abez was also a prolific author outside of the field of Halachic Responsa, so the sources for his appellations are not restricted to the responsa literature

However, if Prof. Havlin had included these two appellations in the list the results would have improved from $P^2 = 0.00000000201$ to $P^2 = 0.00000000186$.

D. From all of the above it should be clear that there is no justification for BNMK's additions.

Assertion 12:

BNMK report that they have added the name מימונגיל for R. Yaakov Beirav (21 on the list). They claim that this is "his last name by his own testimony." Their source is the book Responsa of R. Yaakov Beirav, and an article by Grinhut (sic).

The Response:

A. We present here the relevant passage from the responsum of R. Yaakov Beirav (first printing, Venice 1665, responsum 1): "Says the author, Yaakov who is called Bei Rav, [of] the exiles in the exile of Castile, from the town of Maqueda in the kingdom of Toledo, of (or "to") the family of בני מימונגיל."

This is the only source in which the term מימונגיל is mentioned, and its meaning is unclear: Is this a place name, or perhaps the name of the family's patriarch?

Note that the passage was copied somewhat defectively, and that at least one word is missing: "of the exiles, etc." It is not entirely clear what is meant: One could understand that R. Yaakov Bei Rav was among the exiles who were exiled from the town of Maqueda to the family of בני מימונגיל.

And even if one were to insist that this is some sort of surname, the name should be written בני מימונגיל, and not just מימונגיל.

B. But the story does not end here. Gruenhut (the correct spelling), on whose article BNMK base themselves, also relies on this sole reference, but his version of the text reads מיאנגיל. Furthermore, see Or HaChaim, by R. Chaim Michal (an authoritative bibliographic text), no. 1069, p. 496, who has the reading מרמראן!

C. The assumption that this appellation is R. Yaakov's surname is based on pure guesswork, not on proof. On the other hand, evidence does exist that the appellation בירב, with which R. Yaakov consistently signed his name (and which appears dozens of times as his signatures in his responsa as well as on other documents), was his family name - for his descendants were also called by this name (for example, among his descendants was another R. Yaakov Beirav, who is also mentioned in the Encyclopedia Hebraica and by Margalioth).

D. Let the reader be informed - the name מימונגיל does not appear at all as an ELS in Genesis, and its inclusion would not have affected the results.

Assertion 13:

BNMK claim that the name of (22) ר' ישראל יעקב חאגיו (on the list) can also be written without the ך as a mater lectionis: חגיו. They mention that this is how he appears in the

Encyclopedia Hebraica, whereas Prof. Havlin used only the form חאגיו, in violation of the relevant rule in our paper. They claim that the appellations ר"י חגיו and מהר"י חגיו (both of which they say appear in the Responsa) were therefore improperly omitted from the list.

They permit themselves to "make the opposite mistake," by adding ר"י חגיו and מהר"י חגיו, and deleting חאגיו.

The Response:

A. It is correct that if no other information were available, both forms, חאגיו and חגיו, should have been used. However, as Prof. Havlin explained in his report, from R. Moshe Hagiz's words in his preface to his father's work Halachot Ketanot, it seems clear that they specifically wrote their name חאגיו. (See the end of the same work, where the author, R. Yaakov Chagiz, signs this way, and the son also writes his father's name there with this spelling).

Recall that Prof. Havlin is himself an expert of the first rank - whenever felt he had a solid proof, he preferred that to an article by a colleague.

B. The appellation ר"י חגיו is not pronounced. It is merely an abbreviation (see Response 11). Furthermore, despite BNMK's claim to the contrary it does not appear in the Responsa.

C. Prof. Havlin had no knowledge about our measuring method, therefore he prepared the list of appellations without regard for their length. Yet even according to BNMK's allegations, Prof. Havlin would have had no interest in omitting the name חגיו. Because it consists of only four letters, it would not in any event have been included in the experiment, which required expressions of 5-8 letters. The appellation מהר"י חגיו (as well as הר"י חגיו, if you will) does not appear as an ELS in Genesis at all!

On the other hand, regarding R. Yosef of Trani (19 on the list) Prof. Havlin included the form מטריני (without the mater lectionis), despite the fact that this caused the results to be poor by a factor of 1.5! (Obviously he had no way of knowing this).

In other words, Prof. Havlin clearly did not have had prior knowledge about the "success" or "failure" of any particular expression - we see that in this single issue of whether or not to use the mater lectionis, on one occasion he included the form which omits the mater lectionis despite the fact that its inclusion had a deleterious affect on the results (in the case of מטריני), and he "inexplicably" did not include this form on an occasion when including it would have spared him unnecessary criticism without affecting the results at all (in the case of חגיו)!

D. In light of the above, BNMK's statement that they "allow [themselves] to make the opposite mistake" by consciously erasing a correct name seems rather bizarre. Their addition of the name ר"י חגיו, as we have seen, also turns out to be without justification.

Assertion 14:

BNMK discovered that regarding the Shach (31 on the first list) Prof. Havlin included both the form שבתי כהן and שבתי הכהן.

Therefore they did "the same thing:" Regarding the Maharil (23 on the second list) they added לוי יעקב on top of הלוי יעקב, and מהר"י לוי in addition to הלוי מהר"י. Similarly, regarding R. Yitzhak Horowitz (25 on the list), they added יצחק לוי in addition to הלוי יצחק.

The Response:

A. BNMK continue here their practice of inventing appellations. R. Shabbetai Cohen, known by his acronym as the Shach, is in fact referred to as both שבתי כהן and שבתי הכהן.

He is referred to as שבתי הכהן in the heading of his entry in both Margalioth and the Encyclopedia Hebraica. He is referred to as שבתי כהן in the index to Encyclopedia Hebraica, and in several citations there (see the entry for R. David Halevi, p. 86; see the entry "Vilna," p. 165; and elsewhere). The same is true of Margalioth (see the caption under the Shach's picture, facing p. 1089; see the entry for R. Yehoshua Heshil of Cracow, p. 705; and elsewhere).

Also in the Responsa database he is referred to as ר' שבתי כהן.

Nevertheless, it is totally unjustifiable to extrapolate from his case that for every Cohen or Levi both forms should be used. On the first list, for example, R. David HaLevi (the Taz) was always referred to as דוד הלוי, not דוד לוי. Therefore each case must be examined separately to determine which forms should be used.

B. The appellation לוי יצחק is never used to refer to R. Yitzhak Horowitz, and should therefore be omitted.

C. Regarding the Maharil, we do sometimes find him referred to as לוי יעקב (the ratio of occurrences of לוי יעקב versus הלוי יעקב in the Responsa database is 1:5). In this instance perhaps it should have been included.

The acronym לוי מהר"י, however, is never used for the Maharil, and should therefore be omitted.

Assertion 15:

A. BNMK reject appellations based around the spelling עמדן for the Ya'abez (24 on the list). They justify themselves by the fact that Prof. Havlin did not include the appellation מולן in the list alongside the spelling מולין for the Maharil (23 on the list), despite the fact that this form is more frequently used in the Responsa than עמדן.

Furthermore they claim that the Ya'abez himself was not pleased with the fact that the name "Emden" had been associated with him by any spelling, nevertheless they retained the spelling עמדין.

The Response:

A. The ratio of appellations which incorporate the spelling עמדן in the Responsa database, versus those which incorporate the form עמדין is the same (1:6) as the ratio of appellations incorporating מולן versus those incorporating מוליך.

However, the Ya'abez was a prolific author outside of the field of Halachic responsa, as well. Therefore sources for his appellations are not restricted to the responsa literature. This is how the spelling עמדן came to be used, for example, in the heading of his entry in the Encyclopedia Hebraica. In Margalioth the heading does indeed use the spelling עמדין, but the form עמדן appears elsewhere in this same source.

B. A man may be referred to by a name he has chosen for himself, or by one which others have conferred upon him, even if it is not to his liking. Therefore this section of their argument (which does not appear in the original draft of BNMK's article) is entirely irrelevant.

Assertion 16:

BNMK claim that we were inconsistent in our use of the definite article ה. They cite as an example the fact that in our paper the forms הר"י עמדן, and הר"י עמדין appear, but not the forms ר"י עמדן and ר"י עמדין. They claim to have "fixed" this mistake, and to have "allowed [themselves] to make a parallel mistake," by omitting the appellation המהרש"ש for R. Shalom Shar'abi (31 on the list).

The Response:

A. As we have already discussed at length in our response to Assertion 11, BNMK make two errors. First, they assume that הר"י עמדן is simply the expression ר"י עמדן with the addition of the definite article. This is incorrect (see our response there).

They err a second time in assuming that the expression ר"י עמדן (or ר"י עמדין) is pronounced. This is also a mistake; these are nothing more than abbreviations. (See the Response to 11 where we note that Prof. Havlin followed the same rules in making the first list).

B. On the basis of these two errors they "allow themselves" to make a third error: the omission of a correct appellation from the list. Clearly their arguments deserve to be dismissed.

Assertion 17:

They claim that the family name of R. Yitzchak Horowitz (25 on the list) is written both in the Encyclopedia Hebraica and in Margalioth: הורוביץ. Therefore they substitute this spelling for the spelling הורוויץ.

The Response:

A. Here BNMK simply provide the reader with misinformation, on the basis of which they wrongly alter the list once more.

In the Encyclopedia Hebraica there is a special entry for the famous Horowitz family (v. 13, pp. 939-940). There the encyclopedia sets down the main spellings of the family name as any of the three: הורוויץ, הורוביץ, or הורויץ, and it does not indicate a preference among them. All of these options are used by Margalioth, as well. For example, in the index he uses the form הורוויץ for all members of the family, including R. Yitzchak Horowitz.

B. In cases like these the responsa database can be of service:

R. Yitzhak Horowitz is not mentioned in this source even once with the spelling הורוביץ, whereas the form הורוויץ does appear. In all, the Horowitz family name appears there some 200 times as הורוויץ, and only in a few isolated instances as הורוביץ or הורויץ. Thus the preference seems to be clear.

C. Once again we see that their claims unfounded, and their attempts to change the list are invalid.

Assertion 18:

BNMK entitled this assertion: "The Krochmal Story."

A. They claim to have suspected an irregularity regarding קרוכמל, the surname of R. Menachem Mendel Krochmal (26 on the list). This prompted them to begin searching through the literature.

B. They searched through the Responsa database and did not find the name "Krochmal" associated with R. Menachem Mendel, despite the many citations of this authority.

C. They note that although the name "קרוכמל" serves as the heading for his entry in Margalioth's Encyclopedia, they could find no explanation for the source of this name.

D. In the Encyclopedia Hebraica they found no entry for R. Menachem Mendel, although he is mentioned twice in the index. Examination of the text at the citations provided no additional information.

E. In the works by this authority they found his name written מנחם מענדל and מנחם מענדיל, but no קרוכמל.

F. In a eulogy over him they found that only his given names, and the name of his works were mentioned.

"So where," they ask, does the name קרוכמל come from?"

G. They found one bibliographical reference work which mentions the name קראכמעל in association with one of his books, while in the biography of R. David Oppenheim they found the spelling קראכמאל. They also encountered the spellings קרוכמאל and קרוכמעל, although they do not recall where, because in their heroic effort to thumb through the pages of so many books they no longer had the strength to jot down the citation.

H. They claim that the form קרוכמל did not exist in the 19th century. Their next step was to investigate how the name was written in the first half of the 17th century.

I. At this point they received advice from two "wise men." The first wise man referred them to the book תקנות היהודים במדינת מעהרין (a book about Jewish enactments in the State of Moravia), which was where R. Krochmal served as chief Rabbi. The second wise man suggested that they look in the footnotes. One note (on page 111) the wise man examined himself. This led him to an article by Marx, which contains a letter written by a relative of R. M. M. Krochmal, written only a few dozen years after his passing. There the name is found spelled קראחמאל!

J. They relate that the drama continued the following day on a different continent. There a note on page 102 of the same text was examined, which led to two articles about R. M. M. Krochmal: One was an article by Shmuel Aba Haradsky (sic). The other was an article by David Kauffman. They report that both of these articles use the spelling קראכמאל, and that the second article cites a source for this name. He traces it to a dayan (Rabbinical judge) of an earlier period, R. Yonah Krachmals (קראכמאלש) of Cracow, the birthplace of R. Menachem Mendel. A copy of R. Yonah's tombstone can be found in the book Ir HaTzedek, by Yechiel Matityahu Zonz (sic), page 180. The spelling in this source is קראכמאלש.

K. They conclude that the original spelling of the name "Krochmal" was קראכמאל, therefore they erased the name קרוכמל from the list and replaced it with קראכמאל (which, if it were Hebrew, would be transliterated "Krachmal").

L. By doing so they claim to have replaced a "new" spelling with an "old" one, whereas in the case of Horowitz they chose to replace an "old" spelling with a "new" one. An inconsistency? -- Why not? They have a right to be inconsistent to exactly the same degree as Prof. Havlin was -- so they claim.

[In their recent version, they added at the end of this assertion, that Krochmal is a Yiddish name. Therefore it should be written קראכמאל.]

The Response:

Surely the reader must be awe-stricken by this dramatic tale of how BNMK succeeded through their linguistic sleuthing in uncovering an irregularity (smelling of conspiracy) in

the selection of the name קרוכמל.

The reader will be twice as awe-stricken to discover that not only is there no basis to their assertions, but that in the course of their narrative they expose the enormity of their ignorance. To make this clear we will respond point by point. We will entitle our response: "The Ignorance Story."

A. BNMK never explain why they suspected that something was amiss regarding the name קרוכמל in the first place. As we will see, this is precisely the spelling which appears in the encyclopedias.

B. They claim that they were unable to find the name קרוכמל mentioned in the Responsa database. It is a pity they were unaware of the trivial fact that major Rabbinical authorities are rarely referred to by their family names in the responsa literature. For example, the Maharasha (34 on the first list) is mentioned about 4000 times by this acronym, but only seven times by his family name. The Bach (16 on the first list) is also mentioned thousands of times, but only 15 times by his family name.

Therefore it comes as no surprise that the name "Krochmal" does not appear, despite the fact that his major work, Tzemach Tzedek, is mentioned hundreds of times.

C. They admit that the name קרוכמל serves as the heading for his entry in Margalioth's Encyclopedia, but they could find no explanation for the source of this name. How is this fact relevant to the investigation at hand? Was Prof. Havlin supposed to have researched the derivations of the names? The fact is that the name which appears is קרוכמל.

D. But it is not only Margalioth who uses this spelling: They mention that

R. Menachem Mendel is cited twice in the index of the Encyclopedia Hebraica, but that an examination of the text at these two citations led to "no further clues." -- Let the reader not be misled: In the index itself, and in the two entries cited in the index the only spelling which appears is קרוכמל.

E-F. In his responsa Tzemach Tzedek R. Menachem Mendel Krochmal signs his given name a handful of times. The vast majority of responsa are without any signature at all. In the eulogy over him he is again mentioned only by his given name and by the name of his works. This was common practice regarding a great many major Rabbinical personalities throughout the ages, for example, R. Heschel of Cracow. It was unnecessary to add any other identifying appellation. This does not indicate the slightest irregularity, as is well known to anyone versed in the literature.

G-H. BNMK found their way to a Yiddish transliteration of the name Krochmal, and it did not even occur to them that this was, in fact, nothing more than a transliteration.

I. We were especially touched by the part about the two "wise men."

The first wise man, you will recall, referred them to the book Jewish Enactments of the Province of Moravia. BNMK forgot to mention the small fact that the spelling קרוכמל occurs in this source exactly 20 times, and no other spelling appears at all! -- Or

perhaps the author of this work was also part of the conspiracy, together with the Encyclopedia Hebraica, Margalioth's Encyclopedia, and other sources?

The second wise man found a footnote which led them to an article by Marx, containing an autobiography of a relative of R. Krochmal. There he found only one mention, which used the spelling קראחמאל.

An Israeli reader will be reminded of a joke which was popular in Israel forty years ago: Why do the police make their rounds in pairs? -- Because one of them knows how to read and the other how to write.

If BNMK already decided to use two wise men -- one who knew about this source and another who knew to look in the footnotes -- they should have hired a third wise man who knew how to evaluate what they have read. The author himself, Marx, notes that the author of the biography was a simple person, whose writing is poor. This is clearly an understatement, as any Hebrew reader would attest to. In the very sentence where the gem קראחמאל appears, it is also mentioned that he was the "author of the responsa of (sic!) [the book] Tzemach Tzaddik (sic!)." (the book *is* the responsa, and it's name should be Tzemach Tzedek).

If these grammatical and spelling mistakes are not enough, a few lines earlier he writes: "He died in Poland before the bad years and the destructions (spelled חרבוות rather than חורבוות) came, which occurred in Poland (spelled this time פולניא rather than פולניא)." Obviously from such a flawed document one can draw no conclusions at all.

J. They then found their way to an article by Shmuel Aba Haradsky (sic). Again they saw the spelling קראכמאל, and they still did not suspect that this was simply the Yiddish transliteration, in which the letter ך was substituted for a ן (an "oh" sound), and an ן for a segol (an "eh" sound).

The same misunderstanding caused them to transliterate the author's name as "Haradsky," rather than correctly as "Horodezsky" (see for example the Encyclopedia Judaica). This same article was published 10 years later in Warsaw. This time the surname of R. Menachem Mendel is written קרוכמאל, and the author's name appears on the opening page in German: Horodetzky.

In any event, they might at least have noticed that in the very sources they examined, including the article by Marx, wherever the name appears in Latin letters it is always spelled "Krochmal" and not "Krachmal!"

They also cite a second article, that of Kauffman. What they forget to mention is that in Kaufman's opinion the name Krochmal derives from the German.

On the other hand, they do follow him to the grave of R. Menachem Mendel's early relative to trace the origin of the name.

Unfortunately, from the date on the tombstone it seems that this "early relative" died 8 years after R. Menachem Mendel Krochmal died (by the way, the name is "Zunz," not "Zonz." The name Zunz is well known in the field of Jewish bibliography).

K-L. They claim to have replaced a "new" spelling with an "old" one, when in fact what they have done is to replace the Hebrew spelling with the Yiddish. Therefore there is no justification for this substitution, and of course, they have failed to show any inconsistency in the application of Prof. Havlin's rules. (By the way, in the case of

Horowitz, also, they were not substituting a "newer" spelling for an "older" one, as we explained in response 17, and as can be learned from the letter of Prof. Menahem Cohen, who himself writes הורוויץ, when using this name, even in the 20th century).

To sum up: There was no place for suspicion in the first place. The name "Krochmal" was written in our paper according to the correct Hebrew spelling, whereas BNMK tried (through their ignorance) to replace it with a Yiddish spelling.

[In a later version, published about two months after the first version, and after I wrote this response and related it to many people, they added to their assertion that Krochmal is actually a Yiddish name.

It is abundantly clear that this new assertion is ad-hoc and is intended to justify their big mistake retroactively. Please note section 'J' above where the source which they themselves bring indicates that the name Krochmal is of German origin. Also from the same section above it is clear that they do not distinguish between Hebrew and Yiddish transliterations (they write האראדעצקי as Haradsky)].

Assertion 19:

BNMK claim that the family name of R. Moshe Zacut (their spelling for personality 27 on the list) should be written זכות, rather than זכותא or זכותו. They base their argument on the fact that this is how he signs his name in his book Kol HaRemez, and in addition they recommend that we see Aba Applebaum's biography of him, Margalioth's Encyclopedia, the Encyclopedia Hebraica, and Shem HaGedolim by the Chida. Therefore they erase the appellations משה זכותא, זכותו, זכותא, and משה זכותו from the list.

The Response:

A. It is intriguing that when BNMK write the name of this personality in Latin letters they write "Zacut," despite that the fact that both the Encyclopedia Hebraica and the Encyclopedia Judaica use the form "Zacuto." In the article by Marx which they cited in Assertion 18 the form "Sacuto" is used.

B. Furthermore, following BNMK's advice, we decided to see Aba Applebaum's biography. To our astonishment we discovered that already on the title page the subject is referred to as "Zacuta" in Polish and "Zakuto" in German. In the second chapter (pp. 4-5) we learn that this personality was known as ר' משה זכותא, and that he was a scion of the illustrious "זכותא (Zacuta)" family. BNMK tell us we can rely on this source.

C. The Chida himself uses the form זכותו elsewhere in his writings, for example in Birkei Yosef (Orach Chaim 581). The form זכותא may also appear in this source, but we did not survey the entire text. According to BNMK we can trust the Chida, as well.

D. BNMK neglected to mention that the forms זכותא and זכותו are mentioned in the

Responsa database.

E. There are signatures of the form זכותו in the Letters of R. Moshe Zacuto, and the correspondence to him often addresses him by this name. In the title page of Kol HaRemez - Sefer HaTikunim (with a commentary by the Kabbalist R. Yaakov Kopil) we find the name ר' משה זכותא. This is also the form used in the approbations to the books. These are just a few examples.

F. From all of the above it should be clear that there is no justification for the proposed erasures.

Assertion 20:

BNMK write that great rabbis are often called after their books. Therefore they add the appellation הון עשיר for R. Ricchi (30 on the list). They note that this appellation appears frequently in the Responsa database, while the name ישר לבב does not appear at all, even in the form which they believe to be the correct one, יושר לבב.

The Response:

A. We recommend that the reader examine sec. C of the chapter "Professional Judgment" in Prof. Havlin's report. There the concept that "often great Rabbis are called after their books" is explained thoroughly.

B. In that same report it is explained that the Responsa database cannot give an accurate picture regarding a Kabbalist like R. Immanuel Hai Ricchi, whose main productive output was not in the realm of Halachic responsa (he was in the main a Kabbalist, who wrote deep Kabbalistic works, including Kabbalistic commentaries to the Scriptures). His most important works, by which his reputation was established, were Mishnat Chassidim, and an abridged edition which was widely disseminated: ישר לבב. See Encyclopedia Hebraica, Margalioth's Encyclopedia, and Encyclopedia Judaica. Since these are Kabbalistic works there is no reason to expect them to be mentioned in the responsa literature.

On the other hand, it is perfectly natural that his book הון עשיר, in which he explains the wording of the Mishna, should appear there, and indeed it does. However, contrary to BNMK's assertion, it does not appear "often." It is mentioned only 28 times, of which 16 references are made by the same author.

C. The appellation בעל הון עשיר appears exactly twice in the Responsa database. Both references are in the responsa Yehuda Ya'ale, by R. Yehuda Assad. It is very instructive to discover that R. Yehuda Assad in his discussion of R. Ricchi's words, expresses himself thus: "The saintly genius in the book הון עשיר on the Mishna, he is בעל סי משנת חסידים (the author of Mishnat Chassidim . . ." (Part I, Orach Chaim, 1). Elsewhere, R. Yehuda Assad writes: "בעל משנת חסידים (the author of Mishnat Chassidim), o.b.m., in his book הון עשיר" (Part I, Yoreh De'ah 193). Only after he has introduced him in this way

does R. Yehuda Assad allow himself to refer to him as the בעל הון עשיר (the author of Hon Ashir) as a short form (Part I, Yoreh Deah, 196).

To cite a similar example: R. Chaim ben Atar (9 on the first list) is generally known by the name of his commentary Or HaChaim. When he is mentioned in connection with one of his other works he is referred to as follows: "The great author of Or HaChaim in his book Pri Toar . . ." (responsa Yeshuot Malko, Yoreh Deah 16). Another author writes: "The holy genius, the author of Or HaChaim, o.b.m., in his book Rishon Letzion . . ." (responsa Tzitz Eliezer, Part 15, 35). See Prof. Havlin's report for other examples, in section (c).

In these examples one can readily see which book was considered the author's principle work after which he came to be known. When he is referred to by the name of another of his works, it is nothing more than a shorthand way of referring to the content of the book itself ("the author of Such-and-Such says . . ." or "HaRav Such-and-Such says . . ." rather than saying "it is written in the book Such-and-Such . . ." (In this latter usage the expression הרב הון עשיר appears in the Responsa database 5 times, all of which involve discussions of the content of this book).

D. By contrast, the expression בעל משנת חסידים appears 9 times in the Responsa database.

E. Contrary to the claim of BNMK, the appellation ישר לבב ז"ל does appear in the Responsa database (in the responsa Rav Pe'alim, Part III - Sod Yesharim 13). Nevertheless, this was not Prof. Havlin's source, see paragraph B above.

F. Regarding their comment that the "correct form" is יושר לבב, R. Ricchi borrowed the name ישר לבב from a verse in Psalm 119, as he himself notes in his Introduction. The "correct form," as it appears in the verse, is ישר לבב, and this is how it appears in our paper.

G. From the above it should be obvious that their addition was thoroughly unjustified.

Assertion 21:

They write that "the story of the appellation אי"ח העי"ר (of Immanuel Hai Ricchi) . . . is particular telling."

Here is their story:

A. They were unsuccessful in finding any reference to this appellation, and "nobody we asked could tell us what it meant."

B. When they asked Doron Witztum about it, he explained that R. Ricchi used this designation in his signature in some of his books, and that it is an acronym for אני חי, הצעיר עמנואל ריקי (which they render - "I'm alive, the young Immanuel

Ricchi").

C. They consider the inclusion of the acronym אי"ח העי"ר to be "extremely silly" because: "It is a signature; not an appellation. Nobody should refer to Rabbi Ricchi by this name other than himself."

D. They emphasize a second time that they found no mention of this acronym in the sources, and that they were unable to find anyone who could decipher it!

"In particular," they add, "it is not pronounced."

E. But this is not the end of the drama. They discovered a version of R. Ricchi's signature with a different permutation of this acronym: אהעח"ר, which expands to אני הצעיר עמנואל חי ריקי (which they render - "me the young, Immanuel Hai Ricchi"). They claim that this acronym makes much more sense in Hebrew than the former, and is even mentioned in the dictionary of acronyms.

F. Therefore they consider it more reasonable to include this latter acronym in the list of names, so they erase אי"ח העי"ר and replace it with אהעח"ר.

The Response:

Here again, we respond point by point:

A-B. The appellation אי"ח העי"ר as R. Ricchi's signature can be seen, for example, in at least one of his books in the National Library in Jerusalem. This acronym is mentioned in an article by R. Avraham Shisha HaLevi (HaDarom, 5732, p. 246), along with an explanation. R. Ricchi, who was a Kabbalist, "attached great significance to signatures of this kind, especially to the fact that the five letters of this expression are precisely those which cannot receive a dagesh (a diacritical mark which doubles the value of the letter) in the Hebrew language. In the form אי"ח העי"ר - I am 'Chai,' the young Immanuel Ricchi" - he alludes to both of his given names, "Chai" and "Immanuel."

C. We believe that there is indeed special significance to the name by which a person refers to himself. At the end of Assertion 15 BNMK imply that there is no significance to appellations by which others refer to a person; here they dismiss an appellation by which someone refers to himself. What's left?

D. The next complaint is particularly bizarre: If they do not even know the meaning of אי"ח העי"ר, how do they know that it is "not pronounced"? Of course it is pronounced! אי"ח is pronounced Ach -- like the Hebrew word for brother, and העי"ר is pronounced Ha'er -- "the one who is awake," so that the entire phrase reads, "the brother who is awake." It is a play on a passage from Song of Songs (5:2): אני ישנה ולבי ער, קול דודי דופק פתחי לי אחתי -- "I am asleep but my heart is awake, the voice of my beloved knocks, 'Open up for me, my sister . . .'" (This verse is written as an allegory; 'my beloved' is referring to G-d, and 'my sister' is referring to the Jewish people. The Hebrew for 'my

sister', אחתי, has the same root as 'my brother' - אחי).

E. It is true that R. Ricchi also uses a different signature: אהעח"ר. It does not make more sense or less sense. It is simply a different acronym, and R. Ricchi used both. It is unclear whether this form is pronounced or not. A variation of these same 5 letters is used as the mnemonic to remember the letters which cannot receive a dagesh - אהחע"ר. This latter acronym, which has no connection to R. Ricchi, is pronounced (see the Even Shushan Dictionary, the section on acronyms). Because it is unclear whether the acronym אהעח"ר is supposed to be pronounced, it was not included in Prof. Havlin's list.

F. From the above it follows that there is no basis for erasing the appellation אי"ח הע"ר from the list. On the other hand, if they could prove that אהעח"ר is to be pronounced, we would include it in the list.

Please note, if we were to include this appellation, it would only improve the results - the acronym אהעח"ר is in fact more successful than the one we used:

The best result for the second list using אי"ח הע"ר was: $P2 = 0.00000000201$.

If we replace אי"ח הע"ר with אהעח"ר we receive: $P'2 = 0.0000000016$.

Using both forms we receive: $P''2 = 0.0000000012$.

Assertion 22:

They claim that the appellation מזרחי for R. Shar'abi (31 on the list) is more closely associated with one of the "Rishonim" (the 'early sages'). Therefore they erase this appellation. They claim further that this name (which means "the Oriental") is not the family name of R. Shar'abi, but relates to him in the same way that the expression "Ashkenazi" relates to other personalities, where Prof. Havlin decided not to use it.

The Response:

A. The appellation מזרחי is indeed the family name of R. Shalom Mizrachi. He signed his name שלום מזרחי דידיע שרעבי. This is also how his name is written on his tombstone. See also the Encyclopedia Hebraica. In the Responsa he is also referred to as ר' שלום מזרחי שרעבי. Note that the name "Mizrachi" is positioned before the name "Shar'abi" (by contrast with R. Yitzchak Luria Ashkenazi). His descendants were also called "Mizrachi" and this is the name which appears on the tombstones of his wife and son as their family name. Furthermore, he was not a Sefardic Jew dwelling among Ashkenazim (a common rationale for such an appellation in cases where it is not a family name). From all of the above it is clear that "Mizrachi" was indeed R. Shalom Shar'abi's family name, and that it cannot be compared to the term "Ashkenazi" in reference to certain other personalities. See Prof. Havlin's report, the end of sec. B.

B. Therefore, even if the name מזרחי is shared by another scholar, it was necessary to include it in the list, because a man's given and family names are too intimately associated with him to be omitted.

C. Furthermore, they are in error when they identify R. Eliyahu Mizrachi as one of "the Rishonim." He, in fact, belongs to the period of the "Acharonim" (the later scholars).

Assertion 23:

BNMK claim that in the Encyclopedia Hebraica, Margalioth's Encyclopedia, Shem HaGedolim, and in the Responsa database the appellation Sar Shalom is never found associated with R. Shalom Shar'abi. They found at least 7 other personalities who were called by this title, who are mentioned "extensively" in the Responsa, and several of them precede R. Shalom Shar'abi. Therefore the appellation Sar Shalom does not identify Sar Shalom (sic!), and they erase it from the list.

They assert that Prof. Havlin did "the same in similar situations."

The Response:

A. It is true that there are other rabbis who are referred to by the name Sar Shalom in the Responsa. The most famous of them is R. Sar Shalom Gaon, mentioned in the Responsa database some 150 times. The name "Sar Shalom" is his first name. There are altogether about 40 references to other rabbis with the first name of "Sar Shalom." This is a relatively small number of references, and cannot be called "extensive" (for comparison, the Rambam is mentioned approximately 100,000 times).

B. What is unique about the appellation Sar Shalom in connection with R. Shalom Shar'abi is that it is not his given name, nor is it his family name. It is an epithet (meaning "Prince of Peace") which was conferred upon him by other scholars throughout the generations, particularly students of the Kabbala, which was the field in which R. Shalom was most productive.

Thus we find this appellation attached to his name at the beginning of his book *Nehar Shalom* (printed at the end of *Etz Chaim*), and in the approbation of R. Yedidya Abulafia. This is how Maharit (alGazi) refers to him: "Our mentor the pious Rabbi Sar Shalom, o.b.m." This is how R. Chaim Palache refers to him in his book *Tochachat Chaim*, and this is how R. Aharon Ferreira refers to him in the preface to his book *Kapei Aharon*. R. Chaim Shaul Duwayk HaCohen and R. Eliyahu Le'egimi wrote a book called *Sar Shalom* about intentions in the prayers, which treats of R. Shalom's opinions. See also the introduction of R. Chaim Shaul Duwayk HaCohen to the book *Otzrot Chaim*.

The famous R. Yosef Chaim of Baghdad (the Ben Ish Chai) composed a special poem for the anniversary of R. Shalom's passing, which resembles the song *Bar Yochai*, is sung on the anniversary of the death of R. Shimon bar Yochai, except that it revolves around the epithet Sar Shalom in place of Bar Yochai. See also the book *Divrei Shalom*, by the grandson of R. Shalom, in the section *Kuntras HaMinhagim*, where he refers to R. Shalom as Sar Shalom.

2nd. (As Prof. Havlin wrote in his report, the great Kabbalist Rabbi Shalom Shar'abi is not expected to appear in the responsa database. In any case, in the responsa *Rav Pe'alim*

of R. Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, which is included in the Responsa database, the abbreviation ש"ש הרב is mentioned several times, which may stand for "Sar Shalom" rather than "Shalom Shar'abi").

D. Therefore, there is no justification for erasing the appellation Sar Shalom.

Assertion 24:

BNMK claim that "Chelma" is the last name of R. Shelomo, head of the Rabbinical court of Chelm (32 on the list), and that it can be written either חלמא or חעלמא.

They base themselves on Margalioth's Encyclopedia, and on R. Shelomo's biography, R. Shelomo Chelma, Author of Merkavot (sic) HaMishna by Abraham Brik (there is a mistake here - R. Shelomo's work is called Merkevet HaMishna). Therefore they add חעלמא and חלמא שלמה to the list.

The Response:

A. Avraham Brik claims (in an article published in Sinai, v. 61, 5723) that R. Shelomo always signed his name חעלמא שלמה. He bases this assertion on R. Shelomo's signature in Pinkas Arba Aratzot (by Y. Halperin), p. 360. However, the signature as it appears there actually reads:

הקטן שלמה בהרב מהור"ר משה ז"ל החונה בק"ק חעלמא יע"א בהמ"ס מרכבת המשנה ("the young Shelomo son of the Rabbi . . . Moshe, o.b.m., who is encamped in the holy community of Chelm . . . author of Merkevet HaMishna").

In no source does he sign using the formula quoted by Brik.

The author of Pinkas Arba Aratzot refers to him as

ר' שלמה בן משה מזמושטש, אב"ד חעלמא, בעל מרכבת המשנה ("R. Shelomo b. Moshe . . . head of the court of Chelm . . .").

B. In Margalioth's Encyclopedia the term חלמא does not appear as either a family name, or as an appellation for R. Shelomo.

C. Therefore, in Prof. Havlin's opinion "Chelma" by either spelling is not R. Shelomo's family name. They are simply two forms of writing the name of the town of "Chelm." It follows then that it should not be added to the list.

B2. Their changes in the list of the sages:

To arrive at their artificial success, it did not suffice BNMK to erase correct appellations and to include 'appellations' that broke the rules. They also changed the list of the sages itself. However the changes which they introduce does not fit within any rule whatsoever!

Please remember that in our second list we included only those sages in Margalioth's Encyclopedia of Great Men in Israel whose entries are between one and a half and three columns and contains either their date of birth or death (day and month).

In Document 2, Bar Hillel and Bar Natan report that they did their own check of the length of the entries in the Encyclopedia. According to their check, they claim that we omitted two sages (Rabbi David Ganz, Rabbi Meir Eisenstat), and added three sages (Rabbi Aharon of Karlin, Rabbi Yehuda Ayash, Rabbi Yehosef HaNagid). In this document, we reply that our choice was a priori, however it wasn't done by counting the number of lines, as they did. We report there that we did re-run our experiment, incorporating their changes, and that the results significantly improve.

Regarding Section 2.2 in BNMK's report, they omit some sages and add others, not following our original list, not following their own suggestion (above), and in fact not following any rules whatsoever. BNMK may want to claim "but they broke the rules just as much as we did", but there is one important difference. Our choice was to our *detriment*, and their choice was to their *benefit*!