

Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

A historical and Torah inquiry into a lasting controversy

Ma'aneh Chacham Under Source Review

The Three Oaths and their relation to faith
R. Yoel Kahn's letters and the Satmar critique

יִתְבָּרְרוּ וְיִתְלַבְּנוּ וְיִצְרְפוּ

רַבִּים

Daniel 12:10

Reader edition · Edition 3

ו' תשרי תשפ"ז

Two Letters—and More Than Forty Years of Controversy

A historical and Torah inquiry into an enduring controversy

How do two letters become the focus of a controversy lasting more than four decades? Responses, pamphlets, articles, and critical lectures accumulated around Ma'aneh Chacham, attributed to R. Yoel Kahn. This work has a distinctive place within Beit Midrash YeshivahAI: it follows an entire controversy through its participants, successive texts, and sources.

Historical research meets Torah study: to understand the arguments, we must also know who made them, to whom, and in what context.

For this purpose, we brought together hundreds of pages of source texts and criticism preserved in the research file, alongside summaries of the six audio lectures collected. We organized the arguments, compared wording, worked through difficulties, and tested each conclusion against its evidence. Our own conclusions were also corrected when they did not withstand scrutiny. The contribution of this undertaking is to bring material scattered across books, files, and lectures into a course of study readers can follow and check: from the claim to its source, and from there to the judgment and its limits.

Taking inspiration from Daniel's words, "יִתְבָּרְרוּ וַיִּתְּלֹכְנוּ וַיִּצְרְפוּ רַבִּים" (12:10), we seek clarification and refinement. Metzudat Zion explains the language of whitening as establishing a matter clearly; in context, Rashi and Metzudot discuss calculations of the end. Here we borrow that language for the work of study: distinguishing a source's wording from its interpretation, and a supported conclusion from a claim that needs correction.

Two Chassidic Communities, and a Question Touching the Foundations of Faith

Satmar and Chabad are two Chassidic traditions committed to Torah and mitzvot. They disagreed sharply on the questions discussed here: attitudes toward Zionism and the state it established, participation in elections, drawing Jews who do not observe the mitzvot closer to Torah, and the boundary between disagreement within Torah and denial of the faith. The dispute also concerns similar actions that carry different meanings for each side.

R. Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar Rebbe, set out his opposition to Zionism and the state in Vayoel Moshe and Al HaGeulah VeAl HaTemurah. Central to his approach are the Three Oaths mentioned in the Talmud: boundaries for Israel and the nations during exile. He connects them to the decree of exile and to the question of when human action becomes an attempt to take redemption into human hands. His discussion thus concerns faith, halachah, and communal conduct together.

Chabad, too, rejects replacing Torah with a secular national identity. At the same time, it emphasizes the duty to bring every Jew closer to Torah, safeguard Jewish lives, and assess each action according to its halachic significance. Does drawing a person closer require agreement with that person's worldview? Does voting to strengthen Torah mean identifying with everything the state does? Does interpreting a prohibition differently make the dissenter a heretic? The letters grow out of these questions.

Who Was R. Yoel Kahn?

R. Yoel Kahn was the Lubavitcher Rebbe's chief chozer and one of the foremost exponents of Chabad teachings. A chozer listens to the Rebbe's words, remembers them, repeats them with fellow students, and helps prepare them for writing—a particularly

important role on Shabbat and festivals. R. Yoel Kahn taught Chassidic thought and led the editing of Sefer HaArachim—Chabad. The letters display his method of distinguishing closely related concepts and establishing what a source says and what follows from it.¹

To avoid confusion: R. Yoel Kahn is the Chabad chozer; the author of Vayoel Moshe is R. Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar. “Our Rebbe” in R. Yoel Kahn’s own words in Letter II means the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson. When a title is quoted from a Satmar writer, that writer’s own Rebbe must be identified from the context.

Rabbi Wechter: From the Satmar World to the Study of Chabad Chassidic Thought

R. Abraham Menachem Mendel Wechter came from the Satmar world in New York and was known as a Torah scholar and yeshivah head. Through studying Chassidic thought with R. Yoel Kahn, he became drawn to Chabad and later taught it himself. The transition provoked severe tension; in 5743 Rabbi Wechter was attacked, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe protested the assault. He later moved to the Land of Israel and headed a kollel in Nachalat Har Chabad in Kiryat Malachi. His story illustrates the place of these questions in people’s lives and relations between communities.²

A separate copy of Letter II bears a heading connecting it with R. Yoel Kahn and R. Mendel Wechter. The printed foreword describes a letter written in another person’s name and leaves the recipient unidentified. The historical connection is documented, but we cannot establish that every detail of

1. Chabad.org, biography of R. Yoel Kahn, July 15, 2021; his life documented in photographs, July 16, 2021. The description of his method of analysis in the letters is a conclusion of our study.

2. Hillel Zaltzman, “R. Mendel Wechter and My Father,” family memoirs; the biographical entry on Rabbi Wechter; report on the publication of documentation of the Rebbe’s response in 5743. The sources do not all give identical details about the yeshivah institution in New York.

transmission is identical or that both letters were written to the same recipient.³

From the Letters to Books and Lectures

Letter I mentions 5743 and the Lebanon War, answering a questioner who sought to defend the approach of Vayoe! Moshe. Letter II expands on Chabad's approach, including drawing Jews closer to Torah and the Three Oaths. After years of circulation in copies, printed editions appeared in 5772–5774 with notes and additions. The two letters are the heart of the work; the book also contains editorial layers that are not R. Yoel Kahn's own words.⁴

The critical collection includes Teshuvah Berurah BeInyan Galut UGeulah UShalosh Shevuot by R. Ephraim Tzvi (Hersh) Shmilowitz, the work preserved as Teshuvah BiYesodei HaEmunah, and Ma'aneh Tzemed Sadeh by R. Yitzchak Sabransky. Alongside them, the inquiry considered summaries of six lectures by R. Yirmiyah Kahn—one of the critics, a different person from R. Yoel Kahn. Some texts overlap; the number of files is not the number of independent arguments.⁵

What Did the Study Establish?

We can hear the heart of the debate in the letter itself. After presenting the disagreement over the scope of the oath against rebelling against the nations, R. Yoel Kahn asks, “Who am I to put my head between two great mountains?” He describes this particular dispute as “two positions in halachah” (Letter II, p. 114; our translation). The inquiry asks what supports that distinction and where its limits lie.

3. Ma'aneh Chacham, foreword, printed p. 3; the separate copy entitled “Letter to Wechter” is preserved with the research sources. The heading appears within the copy; we do not have an autograph manuscript—the author's original handwritten text.

4. Ma'aneh Chacham, p. 46: the internal date 5743; p. 2: edition dates; The COL news website, publication report dated 26 Sivan 5773. An internal date does not authenticate every printed addition.

5. Source headings: Teshuvah Berurah, part I, p. 1; Ma'aneh Tzemed Sadeh, p. 1. Corpus scope and audio limitations are detailed in the research edition.

The central distinction withstands examination: disagreement over a halachic definition is not an automatic test of faith. Letter II accepts the Oaths; it does not abolish them. Some criticisms of particular proofs and applications in the letters also carry weight. Establishing the strength and weakness of each argument is the fruit of the inquiry: each source has its wording, each claim its author, and each conclusion its limits.

Reading map: Chapters 1–3 explain the concepts and the disagreement; chapters 4–7 examine the applications and sources; chapter 8 gathers the conclusion and its limits. A glossary and sources follow. For the full discussion and verification record, see the research edition.

Ten Points to Keep in Mind

1. Letter II presents the Lubavitcher Rebbe's position, which R. Yoel Kahn follows, that the Oaths also apply to establishing the state.
2. Violating an oath and heresy are different categories, although they can overlap.
3. In Vayoel Moshe, the Oaths belong to the decree of exile; they cannot be detached from faith.
4. Disagreement over the scope of the Oaths does not by itself make someone a heretic.
5. When the authorities permit immigration to the Land of Israel, does the prohibition remain? Major Torah authorities disagree.
6. The claim that a strict position was meant as a protective restriction must be assessed in each application; the central thesis does not depend on it.
7. Armed resistance is not automatically heresy. What counts as "rebellion" is also disputed; no general permission to rebel follows.

8. Political sovereignty and prophetic redemption are two different questions.
9. Voting, using state services, and joining a governing coalition require separate analysis.
10. R. Yoel Kahn's letters must be distinguished from material added by copyists and editors.

1. What Are the Three Oaths?

The discussion in tractate Ketubbot in the Talmud describes oaths concerning Israel and the nations during exile. This is the early source around which the later debate turns: which actions may the Jewish people take before redemption, and which amount to an attempt to bring it about prematurely by force? The three at the center of this discussion are: that Israel should not ascend “as a wall”; that Israel should not rebel against the nations; and that the nations should not subject Israel to excessive oppression. The first concerns the character of immigration to the Land of Israel, the second the relationship with the rule of the nations, and the third the limits on oppression imposed upon the nations. Identifying the list does not settle the dispute: we still need to determine what each phrase includes and how it applies.⁶

“Ascending as a wall” illustrates why interpretation matters. Rashi explains the expression with the words **בִּיד חֲזָקָה**, “with a strong hand.” Does this mean force directed against the government, or a large collective movement even with governmental consent? This is more than a question of vocabulary. The answer changes the prohibition's scope. We therefore cannot jump from “the Oaths are binding” to the assumption that they permit only one interpretation.

6. Ketubbot 111a, the discussion of the Three Oaths and Rashi's commentary.

The sources do not all explain the mechanism of obligation in the same way. Not every discussion describes an ordinary legal oath, sworn by a person and binding through that act. The sources may speak instead of the decree of exile, a binding command, or an increased punishment. The absence of the mechanism of an ordinary oath therefore does not establish that the Oaths have no practical significance. Both sides of this distinction appear within Vayoel Moshe itself.⁷

2. Faith, Law, and Application

Letter II lists three grounds for opposition to Zionism: defining Jewish nationhood apart from Torah; redemption through our own power rather than through Mashiach; and the prohibitions of the Three Oaths. R. Yoel Kahn calls the first two matters of faith and the third a matter of halachah, Jewish law. This gives us three questions: what exactly does the law prohibit; does the action fall within it; and what significance for faith is attributed to the position or action, on what evidence? Disagreement about the prohibition or its application does not by itself establish disagreement about faith.

In Letter II, R. Yoel Kahn presents, in the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the position he follows: the prohibitions on ascending “as a wall” and rebelling against the nations apply “now as well (regarding the establishment of the state).” “Our Rebbe” here means the Lubavitcher Rebbe; in a quotation from a Satmar writer, the title must be identified by its speaker. The abolition of the Oaths therefore cannot be attributed to R. Yoel Kahn. Nor should a position of Vayoel Moshe that he analyzes in Letter I automatically be treated as his own.⁸

7. Vayoel Moshe, Ma’amar Shalosh Shevuot, sections 75 and 79–80.

8. Ma’aneh Chacham, Letter II, pp. 113–114; p. 100 for the three grounds and his report of accusations. For Letter I, see the research edition, chapters 1–4.

This was not an abstract debate. At the beginning of Letter II (p. 100), R. Yoel Kahn reports hearing “some Satmar adherents” label people heretics for citing halachic authorities against their position. This is his testimony about unnamed people, not an explicit ruling by the author of Vayoe! Moshe. Written arguments must each be examined in their wording and context.

For the author of Vayoe! Moshe, the Oaths belong to the decree of exile: they define what Israel may not do before redemption. He may view a public action as an attempt to seize redemption by human hands, not merely a breach of a technical rule. A halachic disagreement is therefore not automatically heresy, yet an action can have significance for faith. Four concepts address four questions: **the decree of exile**—Israel’s condition; **the Oaths**—what is forbidden within it; **redemption**—what ends it; **heresy**—which truth of faith is denied. Their relationship is itself disputed.

The Chatam Sofer, R. Moshe Sofer, a major authority on Jewish law, adds a useful distinction: something can be a truth that binds us through Torah and the Prophets even while its status as a “fundamental principle,” in the specific sense of a foundation upon which religion depends, is discussed. Saying that the Oaths are not an independent fundamental principle of faith therefore does not cancel their validity. Conversely, their validity does not make every disagreement over their details heresy.⁹

3. What Does Disagreement among Authorities Prove?

Avnei Nezer is a collection of halachic responsa by R. Avraham of Sochatchov. In the responsum discussed here, he says that governmental permission to immigrate and settle in the Land

⁹. Chatam Sofer, Yoreh De’ah 356; accompanying research edition, discussion of fundamental principles and binding Torah truths.

makes immigration a mitzvah; on his reading of Rashi, permission for all Israel is not ascending “as a wall.” He also suggests that general permission may count as pekidah. In a further responsum he stresses “possibly”—not certainly. His argument permitting immigration with permission does not depend on establishing pekidah. Vayoel Moshe disagrees: collective immigration with permission can still be ascending “as a wall,” and permission does not by itself remove the prohibition on forcing the end, bringing redemption prematurely.¹⁰

This is a real dispute among major Torah authorities, but it does not prove that the author of Vayoel Moshe did not mean his ruling. Letter I (section 10, p. 31) objects that his approach would apparently make even the Avnei Nezer a heretic. R. Yoel Kahn raises this as an objection; it is not a quoted Satmar declaration about the Avnei Nezer. That inference is not necessary: the other authority may understand Torah’s requirements and the meaning of pekidah differently without denying a truth of faith.

A halachic responsum must be distinguished from a homiletic passage, which explains the spiritual meaning of sources. In Tzidkat HaTzaddik, R. Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin describes the congregation of Israel—the Jewish people collectively—drawing near through its own initiative. He calls the suitable time “our time, which is the footsteps of Mashiach,” referring to his own era. This challenges a blanket rejection of initiative from below before Mashiach, but does not rule that war or conquest is permitted. Ma’aneh Chacham does not claim that every success proves permission; the passage must not be made to grant permission it never states.¹¹

10. Avnei Nezer, Yoreh De’ah 454:56; 456:1-2. Compare Vayoel Moshe 17 and 86.

11. Tzidkat HaTzaddik, paragraph 46; accompanying research edition, discussion of R. Tzadok, success, and permission.

4. Lemigdar Milta: How Far Can It Go?

Lemigdar milta means erecting a safeguard to stop a breach. Ma'aneh Chacham proposes that some severe language in Vayael Moshe was intended to distance people from Zionism beyond a narrower halachic definition. This could explain how extremely strong language coexists with a halachic dispute. But attributing such an intention to a particular author requires evidence from his words.

Three uses of this argument must be distinguished. It has some force regarding labels of heresy in the discussion of interdependent oaths: a connection is also considered in relation to prayer, while deriving practical permission is another matter. It is harder to treat the classification of immigration of most of Israel, conquest, and government as heresy as a safeguard alone. It is also difficult to treat the prohibition on elections this way, since it is presented as a substantive law and responsibility. Section 118 addresses the opposite direction—permitting a prohibition for a corrective purpose—and does not directly refute the suggestion that an additional restriction was imposed.¹²

The decisive point is that this is a secondary argument. Even if the claim of lemigdar milta is rejected entirely, the distinction between oath and heresy remains. We do not need to prove that the author of Vayael Moshe meant something other than what he wrote in order to explain why a different Torah approach does not automatically become heresy.

5. Defense, Government, and Redemption

Letter II presents, in the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, a distinction between establishing a state and defending the Jews

¹² Vayael Moshe, 79, 83, 118, 141; conclusion after section 185, p. 271. Ma'aneh Chacham I, sections 11–12 and 23; research edition, chapter 15 and appendix 13.

already living there. A prohibition on establishing it does not require abandoning their lives: the duty to protect against mortal danger is considered separately. R. Yoel Kahn acknowledges that the author of Vayoel Moshe also disputes this application, calling it “two positions in halachah.” This describes the dispute; it does not grant general permission for every armed action.¹³

Gittin describes the militants burning food supplies to force war, against the sages’ assessment that they would fail. The accounts also concern danger and failed leadership; their silence is not a halachic ruling. At most, they challenge the claim that an action’s armed character alone establishes a violation of the oath, and the evidence is inconclusive. No general permission to rebel follows. Our inquiry also raised the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: applying the distinction to defense against extermination is our inference, not an explicit ruling in the letter.¹⁴

R. Avraham Galanti’s Zekhut Avot, as quoted in Vayoel Moshe, tells of Jews in Portugal who considered fighting and seizing the government and sought an answer from Heaven. The answer was expressed in terms of the Oaths. The letter raises a difficulty for treating their very thought as heresy; yet asking does not prove permission or, by itself, exclude a significance for faith. The suggestion that they necessarily intended a government subordinate to another king is not supported by the wording. Since the account also concerns seizing government, it cannot by itself determine the law of defense to save lives.¹⁵

¹³. Ma’aneh Chacham, Letter II, from printed p. 113 onward, on the distinction between establishment and defense.

¹⁴. Gittin 56a, and the discussions through 57; research edition, chapter 9 and appendix 8. Historical material about the Warsaw Ghetto is not a source for a halachic ruling.

¹⁵. Zekhut Avot on Avot 1:10, as quoted in Vayoel Moshe 75; research edition, chapter 10 and appendix 7. Galanti’s independent source was not opened in this check.

In Letter I, R. Yoel Kahn seeks to distinguish government dependent on major powers from prophetic freedom. Dependence on aid or an alliance, however, does not by itself negate political sovereignty; the criticism is correct in this respect. This does not make the state the redemption: Vayoe! Moshe itself does not regard it as the prophetic freedom that ends exile. The question remains when a political action is understood as an attempt to seize redemption by human hands. A change of title or slogan does not settle it by itself.¹⁶

6. Why Are Elections a Separate Question?

The discussion here concerns voting for the Knesset, Israel's parliament. The question is not only who will be elected, but what the act itself expresses: participation in a government one must not accept, or a way to influence its decisions for the benefit of Torah and the community? Against this background, Ma'aneh Chacham asks: if every acknowledgment of the state is heresy, how can one use its money, pay taxes, or make use of its institutions? The question shows that recognizing a system's existence is not the same as accepting its worldview. But it does not by itself resolve the question of voting. The author of Vayoe! Moshe also raises arguments about assisting transgressions, representing the voter, and sharing responsibility.¹⁷

Lifnei iver prohibits causing another person to stumble into transgression. The Talmud considers people on opposite banks of a river: one hands the other something needed for a transgression that the latter cannot reach alone. The question is what the assistance enables and whether the transgression can occur without it. Even where the Torah prohibition in its narrower form does not apply, rabbinically prohibited assistance

16. Vayoe! Moshe, Ma'amar Shalosh Shevuot, sections 44 and 83; accompanying research edition, discussion of sovereignty and freedom from foreign rule.

17. Vayoe! Moshe, Ma'amar Shalosh Shevuot, sections 141 and 185; Ma'aneh Chacham, Letter I; accompanying research edition, discussion of elections and public responsibility.

may remain an issue. Thus “one vote makes no difference” does not settle the debate; conversely, not every transgression by a representative can simply be attributed to the voter.¹⁸

R. Yirmiyah Kahn’s criticism, as summarized in the research file, identifies a real gap: Letter I does not systematically answer every argument about responsibility and partnership. The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s letters from 5715 give an explicit Chabad response. Letter 3559 recalls the instruction of the Rebbe Rayatz, R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, to participate in the first Knesset elections and concludes that participation is obligatory. It already distinguishes voting to strengthen Torah from entering a governing coalition, which the Rebbe prohibits. Letter 3677 sharpens the distinction: the voter does not bear responsibility for all legislation, whereas a coalition partner has a different responsibility. This describes the two letters; it is not practical guidance for elections today.¹⁹

The dispute thus concerns the practical meaning of voting and the allocation of responsibility. The Chabad approach offers a substantive response, rather than only a claim that the Satmar prohibition was stated as a deterrent. Making this distinction strengthens the analysis: a different approach can be explained without claiming that the author of Vayoe! Moshe did not mean his ruling.

7. Whose Claim Is It?

There are different levels of confidence in attributing the letters in Ma’aneh Chacham to R. Yoel Kahn: Letter II is also documented in a separate textual witness and provides the stronger anchor. The core of Letter I circulated before the later editions, but early circulation alone does not prove authorship.

¹⁸. Avodah Zarah 6b; Tosafot, Shabbat 3a; Kiddushin 42b. See research edition, chapter 13, on assistance, agency, and responsibility.

¹⁹. Igrot Kodesh, volume 11, letter 3559; letter 3677. The instruction to vote and its distinction from joining a coalition.

Nevertheless, the printed edition passed through copying and editing, and notes and supplementary material were added. Not every heading, note, or conclusion inserted by the editors should therefore be attributed to the author. Confidence in the attribution of the work does not guarantee the same confidence in every printed word.²⁰

R. Yitzchak Sabransky, author of *Ma'aneh Tzemed Sadeh*, is right in part of his criticism of the editors' use of a letter from R. Itzikel of Pshevorsk as though it proved a comprehensive withdrawal of the Satmar prohibition on elections. The letter does not establish that conclusion. The core argument of *lemigdar milta* is documented in an early criticism and therefore predates the later printed editions; this proves early circulation, not who composed it.

Maharal of Prague, R. Yehudah Loew, stresses in *Netzach Yisrael* that the decree of exile must not be changed even under severe torture. Vayoel Moshe applies this to each oath. The accessible text used in the research says “and likewise the interpretation with each and every one,” without “of these oaths”; applying it to every oath is therefore an interpretation, not explicit wording. This limits a proof for a particular duty to surrender one's life, without erasing Maharal's teaching or settling the text's entire history. “Textual witnesses” are manuscripts or printed editions that may attest its wording; websites copying a shared text are not necessarily independent witnesses.²¹

A passage in *Abudraham*, a work on prayers and customs, appears to place the ingathering of the exiles before the coming of the son of David. R. Ephraim Tzvi (Hersh) Shmilowitz cites a letter of the Rebbe Rashab, R. Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, which reconciles it with the order of Rambam, R. Moshe ben

²⁰. *Ma'aneh Chacham*, introductory material to the third edition; for attribution and editorial layers, see the accompanying research edition.

²¹. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael* 24, online transcription; research edition, chapter 14 and appendix 12. The textual variants in the Hartman edition were not directly examined.

Maimon (Maimonides): Mashiach comes first, while the subsequent appearance of David is a later stage in the manifestation of his kingship. His criticism of using Abudraham to prove another order is correct here. It weakens one argument, but does not contradict R. Yoel Kahn’s conclusion, since he accepts Rambam’s order. One proof is weakened without discrediting the whole work.²²

8. The Answer and Its Limits

Ma’aneh Chacham sustains its central demand: distinguish the categories, without making a halachic dispute an automatic test of faith. Letter II presents the Rebbe’s position that the Oaths remain binding; differing sources show that the details of Vayoe! Moshe are not the only Torah approach. Satmar criticism is right to insist on a plain reading where no evidence warrants narrowing his words, and to identify an unanswered argument; but not to attribute abolition of the Oaths or permission based on success alone to R. Yoel Kahn.

A homiletic passage or historical question must not become practical permission, nor criticism of a ruling proof that its author did not mean it. Each source needs its proper weight, each claim its author, and each conclusion its limits. No practical ruling on elections, war, or saving lives in a public setting is issued here. The full criticism, rejected claims, and source status appear in the accompanying research edition.

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²² See research appendix, section 15: Abudraham, the Rebbe Rashab’s letter, and the criticism in Teshuvah Berurah. No new examination of the original letter is claimed here.

Short Glossary

Term	Meaning in This Booklet
Three Oaths	The framework in Ketubbot concerning Israel and the nations during exile.
Ascending as a wall	Collective immigration whose precise definition is disputed.
Decree of exile	The condition ordained by G-d for Israel before redemption.
Heresy	Denial of a binding truth of faith; it is not identical with every transgression.
Lemigdar milta	Erecting a safeguard to stop a breach.
Pekidah (divine remembrance)	Divine favor and a change in the condition of exile, according to context; Avnei Nezer uses pekudah.
Lifnei iver	The prohibition on causing another person to stumble into transgression.
Inference in this study	A conclusion drawn by comparison, rather than an explicit statement in the source.
Atchalta de-geulah	The beginning of redemption; its meaning and identification are disputed.
Homiletic passage	A spiritual explanation of sources; it does not by itself establish practical halachah.
Textual witnesses	Manuscripts and printed editions that may attest a work's wording.

Eight Central Sources

Eight starting points; detailed references and qualifications appear in the notes and research edition.

1. Ketubbot 111a and Rashi

Present the Oaths and the phrase “with a strong hand,” from which the dispute over the scope of immigration begins.

2. Ma’aneh Chacham, Letters I–II

Letter I presents the distinctions; Letter II clarifies the Oaths’ validity and the difference between establishment and defense.

3. Vayoe! Moshe, Ma’amar Shalosh Shevuot

Sets out the Satmar approach and the connection between the Oaths, the decree of exile, political actions, and elections.

4. Avnei Nezer, Yoreh De’ah 454:56

Explains governmental permission for immigration and demonstrates a real dispute over the prohibition’s scope. See also 456: “possibly.”

5. Tzidkat HaTzaddik, paragraph 46

Describes an approach from below at the appropriate time; the homily must not be converted into a ruling on war.

6. Chatam Sofer, Yoreh De’ah 356

Distinguishes a “fundamental principle” from a truth binding through Torah and prophecy, clarifying the relationship between validity and heresy.

7. Igrot Kodesh, Volume 11

Letter 3559 · Letter 3677. Voting to strengthen Torah is distinguished from coalition responsibility.

8. Netzach Yisrael, chapter 24

Explains the decree of exile; textual precision is important for distinguishing Maharal’s words from their interpretation.