

Ascetic Eating Practices and Torah Study in the *Pesaqim* of R. Moses of Evreux and His Circle

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Abstract

Scholarship has noted that the Tosafists Moses b. Shne'ur of Evreux and his brother Samuel (d. c. 1255) endorsed a number of ascetic and pietistic behaviors that are similar to those found in *Sefer Ḥasidim* and other texts of the German Pietists. A manuscript collection of rulings compiled by a student of Evreux, either Isaac b. Joseph or Perez b. Elijah of Corbeil, includes an unusual ascetic eating practice of R. Moses that differs from those of several other European rabbinic scholars (and texts) at this time. This study proposes that Moses of Evreux was influenced by the thinking of an important earlier Tosafist in adopting this ascetic practice as a means of focusing more deeply and devotedly on Torah study. A careful reading of the section of the rulings in which this practice appears provides further evidence for this suggestion, and analogous eating behaviors in both northern and southern France in prior periods are identified and analyzed.

Sefer Kol Bo, a late thirteenth-century Provençal halakhic compendium, records a series of “things that will bring a person to the fear of sin, composed by R. Moses of Evreux (*devarim ha-mevi'im ha-'adam lidei yir'at het 'asher katav ha-Ra"m me-Evreux*)”¹ that is also found in R. Moses' name in the parallel compilation, *Orhot Ḥayyim*.² Ephraim

- 1 See *Sefer Kol Bo*, ed. D. Avraham, vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 2009), 219-20, at the end of section 66, following a copy of penitential work by Eleazar of Worms, *Sefer Niqra Moreh Hattai'im ve-Niqra Sefer ha-Kapparot*. On *Sefer Moreh Hattai'im*, see Ivan Marcus, “Ḥasidei Ashkenaz Private Penitentials: An Introduction and Descriptive Catalogue of their Manuscripts and Early Editions,” *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, ed. J. Dan and F. Talmage (Cambridge, MA: 1982), 57-58, 69-74.
- 2 See *Sefer Orhot Ḥayyim le-R. Aharon ha-Kohen mi-Lunel*, ed. Y. D. Shtizberg (Jerusalem: 1956), fol. 228b (*'inyanim 'aerim bi-teshuvah*); and see also my *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit: 1992), 76. On the provenance of Aaron ha-Kohen and the nature of his compilation, see Judah Galinsky, “Of Exile and Halakhah: Fourteenth-Century Spanish Halakhic

Urbach discussed the *Kol Bo* material at the conclusion of his treatment of the talmudic interpretations and methods of the Tosafist study hall associated with Evreux, which was headed by Moses b. Shne'ur and his brothers, Samuel and Isaac, during the second quarter of the thirteenth century.³

Moses of Evreux's instructions begin with the need to avoid anger and haughtiness, and to conduct one's worldly affairs and interactions with humility. They then continue:

And be careful to engage constantly in Torah study to the extent possible in order to fulfill it (*ve-havvei zahir la'asoq ba-Torah tamid ka'asher tukhal 'al menat le-qaymah*). And when you rise to take leave of the book (*ve-ka'asher taqum min ha-sefer*), seek the opportunity to fulfill what you have studied and review your deeds night and day so that all your days will be [suffused with] repentance. Remove all extraneous thoughts from your heart during prayer...and contemplate in your heart the words [of prayer] before they leave your mouth. Indeed, this should be done for every sphere of activity. In this way you will not come to sin, including with regard to eating and drinking.

R. Moses concludes with a warning to avoid associating with frivolous people (*lezanim*), as well as additional recommendations for proper and effective prayer.⁴

Several studies (including two of my own) have identified a range of pietistic tendencies associated with the rabbinic leadership of Evreux, and have considered the extent to which these tendencies were influenced by the German Pietists.⁵ By looking more closely at

Literature and the Works of the French Exiles Aaron ha-Kohen and Jeruham b. Meshullam," *Jewish History* 22 (2008): 81-96.

3 See E. E. Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot* (Jerusalem, 1984), 1:484-85. Another significant formulation attributed to Moses and Samuel of Evreux (on the prerogative of a rabbinic student to argue with his teacher's interpretations and decisions) is recorded in *Orhot Hayyim*, fol. 64b (*Hilkhot Talmud Torah*). See my "Rabbinic Authority and the Right to Open an Academy in Medieval Ashkenaz," *Michael* 12 (1991): 233-36.

4 On the relationship between Moses of Evreux's formulations in this text and the so-called *Iggeret ha-Ramban*, see my *Jewish Education and Society* (Detroit: 1992), 174-175 (n. 69).

5 See Israel Ta-Shma, *Kneset Mehqarim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: 2004), 111-119; my *Jewish Education and Society*, 74-79; my *Peering through the Lattices: Mystical,*

another type of religious behavior affected by Moses of Evreux and his circle, the present study seeks to highlight an aspect of their piety that has gone largely unremarked.

An unusual eating practice attributed to R. Moses is found in a section of *pesaqim* (halakhic rulings) on religious and moral comportment associated with Isaac b. Joseph of Corbeil (d. 1280) or Perez b. Elijah of Corbeil (d. 1297), both of whom studied with the Tosafists of Evreux. This practice is recorded in ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 and ms. Paris BN heb. 407: “And R. Moses would cut his meat into very thin pieces so as not to taste the flavor of the choice meat.”⁶

This culinary practice appears to reflect one of the broader aims of Moses of Evreux as formulated in the list featured in *Sefer Kol Bo* and *Orhot Ḥayyim*: a person should carefully consider what he eats, ostensibly in order to avoid becoming too fully sated, and perhaps to escape the larger pitfall of gluttony. At the same time, however, R. Moses’ intention to limit his enjoyment of the meat’s taste betrays an ascetic dimension not reflected within those instructions. However,

Magical and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period (Detroit: 2000), 26-27; 59-68; Haym Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: *Sefer Ḥasidim* I and the Influence of *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92 (2002): 470-71, 481-84; J. Galinsky, “The Impact of *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* in Northern France,” *Jewish History* 34 (2021): 155-75; and below, n. 22.

- 6 See ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 (IMHM #17556), fol. 165v; and ms. Paris Bibliotheque Nationale (BN) heb. 407 (IMHM #27901), fol. 236d: הרה"ר משה היה מזהיר את כל אדם שלא לטעום טעם בשר חשוב מזהיר הבשר דק דק שלא לטעום טעם בשר חשוב (reproduced below in the Appendix). Cf. H. S. Sha'anani, “Pisqei Rabbenu Perez ve-Aḥerim be-‘Inyanei Oraḥ Ḥayyim,” *Moriah* 17:9-10 (1991): 12, sec. 15; my *Peering through the Lattices*, 62, 91; H. Soloveitchik, *ibid.*, 481, 491; and Simcha Emanuel, *Shivrei Luḥot* (Jerusalem: 2006), 202 (n. 66), 203-4. Isaac of Corbeil and Perez of Corbeil studied under R. Moses’ brother, Samuel b. Shne’ur of Evreux, and perhaps also with R. Moses. In any case, they were well aware of Moses of Evreux’s teachings and cited them. See, e.g., Isaac of Corbeil, *Sefer ‘Ammudei Golah (Semaq)*, ed. Constantinople (1510), *miṣvah* 153 (and the introduction in that edition: *ve-zeh ha-gadol ha-R. Yizḥaq ba’al ha-ḥotem mi-Corbeil hayah ḥasid gadol, talmid shel gedolei Evreux*); *Haggahot Rabbenu Perez*, *miṣvah* 11:3; E. E. Urbach, *Ba’alei ha-Tosafot*, 2:571, 576; I. Ta-Shma, *Knesset Meḥqarim*, 2:114 (n. 9); *Tosafot Evreux ‘al Massekhet Sotah*, ed. Y. Lifshitz (Jerusalem: 1969), editor’s introduction, 23-24, 30, 33; and *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez le-Massekhet Bava Me’zi’a*, ed. M. Hershler (Jerusalem: 1970), editor’s introduction, 9-10. On the similarities and connections between *Tosafot Rabbenu Perez* and *Tosafot Evreux*, see *Tosafot Yeshanim ha-Shalem ‘al Massekhet Yevamot*, ed. A. Shoshana (Jerusalem: 1994), editor’s introduction, 24-26; Ta-Shma, *Knesset Meḥqarim*, 2:113 (n. 7); *idem*, *Sifrut ha-Parshanut la-Talmud*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: 2000), 112; and my *Brothers from Afar: Rabbinic Approaches to Apostasy and Reversion in Medieval Europe* (Detroit: 2021), 60-62, 177-79.

as we will see shortly, other northern French Tosafist texts posited a link between this type of eating behavior and engagement in intensive Torah study, a goal that is prominently featured by R. Moses in the *Sefer Kol Bo/Orhot Hayyim* listing. We will show that this connection is discussed in the section of *pesaqim* mentioned here.

Self-denial, not as a form of asceticism per se but as a means towards meaningful Torah study and other spiritual pursuits, was discussed by a number of European rabbinic figures. Solomon b. Abraham ibn Aderet (Rashba) of Barcelona (d. c. 1310) received a question concerning an arrangement made between a Torah teacher and his (mature) pupil, which stipulated that the student would serve the teacher; in return, the teacher would give him private instruction. Failure to live up to this agreement by either side meant that the one who broke the agreement, which was created through a mutual oath, would be prohibited to eat meat or drink wine for an unspecified period.

Rashba's response deals largely with the manner by which such an oath can be nullified according to Jewish law. However, in outlining the basis for such a nullification, Rashba notes that "one who afflicts himself cannot properly undertake Torah study and its reasoning (*she-'ein ha-mesaggef 'azmo yakhol la'amod 'al ha-Torah vеха-sevara*)."⁷ Rashba supports his view with a statement by the Amora Rav Sheshet (*Ta'anit* 11b; see also *Eruvin* 40b), that "the rabbinic student who occupies himself with fasting has let a dog eat his portion," although Rashba also notes that individuals react differently to the effects of food denial. "Some feel sated even when eating only bread and water, while for others, the absence of a full meat diet is considered insufficient." In these situations, individuals behave according to "the strength of their own nature." Rashba further notes that while Resh Laqish is among those Amoraim (*Ta'anit* 11b) who considered one who fasts on a regular basis to be a pious individual (*hasid*), he asserts within this same talmudic discussion that "a Torah scholar is not permitted to undertake fasting because he [weakens himself and] thereby diminishes the work of heaven (*melekhet shamayim*)."⁷

7 See *Teshuvot ha-Rashba*, 3:319. Cf. *Sefer Hasidim* (*defus Parma*), ed. J. Wistinetzki (Frankfurt: 1924), 49-50 (secs. 66, 68); 381 (sec. 1555); Eleazar of Worms, *Sefer Roqeah*, ed. B. S. Schneerson (Jerusalem: 1967), 100 (sec. 210); *Sefer Rabiah*, ed. A. Aptowitz, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: 1983), 602-03 (sec. 853); *Pisqei ha-Rid 'al Massekhet Ta'anit* (11b), ed. A. Y. Wertheimer et al. (Jerusalem, 1971), 176; *Pisqei ha-Rid le-*

Sefer Ḥasidut, which was likely composed in northern France c. 1225 and adopts modified forms of the pietism found in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, maintains “that staying away from foods is a great boundary to preserve the fear of heaven (*yir’at ha-Shem*), since being sated with foods can lead to improper thoughts. Thus, a person who has before him dishes of fish or meat or other delicacies (*mi-she’ar ma’adanim*) should not avoid eating them entirely but rather, as a manifestation of *yir’at ha-Shem*, should not fill his stomach with them so that his desire is fully sated.”⁸ This approach is reminiscent of the advice given by the Amora R. Ḥiyya (*Gittin* 70a), that “a meal you are truly enjoying should be a meal from which you pull your hands away.”⁹

Jonah b. Abraham of Gerona (d. 1263) cites Rabad of Posquieres (d. 1198) as recommending this same type of restraint in his brief treatise *Sod ha-Teshuvah*. A person ought not eat or drink his fill of meat and wine and should thus avoid indulging his desires. However, he should not abstain from these foods entirely; instead, he should leave something remaining when the food is still before him, “as a sign of respect for the Creator (*yaniah likhvod ha-bore*).”¹⁰

Massekhet Nedarim (10a), ed. A. Lis (Jerusalem: 1977), 435; and *Arba’ah Turim* (with the *Beit Yosef* commentary), *Orah Ḥayyim*, sec. 571. Rashba’s responsum, according to the text, was addressed to “Mudela in Navarre.” My colleague Prof. Benjamin Gampel has suggested that the location involved was in fact Tudela; the letters *tet* and *mem* in their printed forms are easily interchanged. The sagacity of this suggestion is supported by the fact that Rashba sent at least seven other responsa there (1:379, 1165; 3:12, 40, 120, 185; 4:264).

8 See *Sefer Ḥasidim* (*defus Bologna*), ed. R. Margoliot (Jerusalem: 1957), 62-63 (sec. 12); *Sefer Ḥasidut* has been identified as the first portion of this edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, through section 152. Cf. *Sefer Gematri’ot le-R. Yehudah he-Ḥasid*, ed. D. Abrams and I. Ta-Shma (Los Angeles: 1998), 32 (fol. 4v); and my *Peering through the Lattices*, 35, n. 2. On the nature and provenance of *Sefer Ḥasidut*, see H. Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism,” 455-465; and J. Galinsky, “The Impact of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz in Northern France” (above, n. 5).

9 See *Gittin* 70a (noted by Margoliot, *ibid.*). Cf. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot De’ot*, 4:15.

10 See ms. Parma de Rossi 189 (IMHM #13095), fol. 260b; ms. Hamburg hebr. 80 (Cat. Steinschneider 187; IMHM #919), fol. 37a; and ms. Oxford (Bodl. Cat. Neubauer) 2343 (IMHM #21407), fol. 27b: והגדר הר"ר אברהם בן דוד הגדר וכן אומ' רבי' מה שאסרה תורה אך בעת מאכלו לפניו ועודנו תאכל לניח לכבוד הגדול והמופלא מניעת המאכלות. וכן פירש דבריו אל יעכב עצמו לגמרי שלא יאכל בשר ולא ישתה יין כל עיקר כי דייך מה שאסרה תורה אך בעת מאכלו לפניו ועודנו תאכל לניח לכבוד הגדול והמופלא מניעת המאכלות. See also *Ba'alei ha-Nefesh leha-Rabad*, ed. A. A. Buchwald (Bnei Brak, 2011), 170-71 (*sha'ar ha-qedusah*); *Orhot Ḥayyim*, fol. 228a; and my *Peering through the Lattices*, 66 (n. 90). *Sefer ha-Yir'ah/ Ḥayyei 'Olam*, which has

Unlike these other rabbinic formulations, however, Moses of Evreux's practice, which sought to diminish the full flavor of the meat by cutting it into thin strips, was undertaken prior to eating and did not entail leaving behind or pushing away food. The essence of such an approach can be found in an earlier northern French Tosafist formulation. The Talmud (*Ketubot* 104a) describes Rabbi Judah the Prince's thoughts and actions toward the end of his life. As he was about to pass away, Rebbe extended his ten fingers toward the heavens and declared, "Master of the universe, you know that I toiled in the study of Torah with my ten fingers, but I did not enjoy [pleasures] with even the smallest finger."

The standard *Tosafot* to tractate *Ketubot* and the *Tosafot ha-Rosh* (both of which originated with the *Tosafot* of Samson b. Abraham of Sens, *ha-Rash mi-Shanz*, d. 1214) adduce a similar (albeit unidentified) midrashic teaching that appears to reflect a passage in *Midrash Eliyyahu Rabbah/Tanna de-Vei Eliyyahu*. It cites this talmudic passage as its source: "Even before a man prays that Torah should enter his body, he should pray that delicacies (*ma'adanim*) do not enter his body." These *Tosafot* passages suggest that eschewing the pleasure of delicacies makes a person's Torah study more focused and efficacious — the message that R. Judah the Prince, the leading rabbinic sage of his generation, had sought to impart.¹¹

been attributed to Rabbenu Yonah of Gerona (who was also a student of Evreux) or to a R. Isaac Ḥasid, writes simply *ידיה צנוע באכילתו*; see ms. Parma de Rossi 189 (IMHM #13095), fol. 256v. Cf. James Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 118-20; Roger Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes Toward the Environment* (Oxford: 1988), 75-78.

- 11 See *Tosafot Ketubot* 104a, s.v. *lo neheneti 'afilu be-'ezba' qetanah* (and Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, 2:625-27, 713 [n. 74]); *Tosafot ha-Rosh 'al Masskhet Ketubot*, ed. A. Lichtenstein (Jerusalem: 1999), 733; *Tosafot Ketubot* 106a, s.v. *haynu*; *Midrash Tanna de-Vei Eliyyahu* (Bnei Brak: 2017), 401-2. Cf. Baḥya ibn Paquda, *Ḥovot ha-Levavot, Sha'ar ha-Perishut*, ch. 7 (Jerusalem: 1954), 252-53; and see I. Ta-Shma, *Knesset Meḥqarim*, vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 2010), 133-42, for a Hebrew translation of this work produced in southern France. On the overall relationship of *Tosafot ha-Rosh* to the *Tosafot* of Samson of Sens, see Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, 2:586-99; I. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Parshanit la-Talmud*, 2:80-82; *Ḥiddushei ha-Ramban le-Massekhet Ketubot*, ed. Ezra Shevat (Jerusalem: 1993), editor's introduction, 34-37; and J. Galinsky, "Ha-Rosh ha-Ashkenazi: *Tosafot ha-Rosh*, *Pisqei ha-Rosh*, *Yeshivat ha-Rosh*," *Tarbiz* 74 (2005): 396-400. Samson b. Ṭadoq, *Sefer Tashbez* (Lemberg: 1858), fol. 50a (sec. 535, *dinei ḥasidut*), attributes the (midrashic) passage to an unidentified geonic responsum (*teshuvat ha-Geonim*).

As students of Samson of Sens (and his brother, Isaac b. Abraham of Dampierre,¹² Riḏba), Moses of Evreux (and his brother Samuel) were likely familiar with this interpretation and the perspective it reflected.¹³ Although the *Tosafot* texts make no indication that Samson of Sens or his colleagues undertook any actual practices in this regard, it is reasonable to suggest that Moses of Evreux, an active thirteenth-century Tosafist who valued and espoused a range of religious practices that required intense personal discipline, adopted an eating practice — denying himself full enjoyment of the taste of meat—in order to enhance his own Torah study, as modeled by the saintly behavior of Rav Yehudah *ha-Nasi*.

Although the majority of the substantial collections of halakhic *pesaqim* issued by both Isaac and Perez of Corbeil were intended for all those who sought to observe Jewish law,¹⁴ a number of *pesaqim* attributed to Rabbenu Perez by name contain halakhic practices specifically directed to his students, as indicated by the terms *ha-baḥurim shelo*, *le-baḥurav*, *le-talmidav*.¹⁵ This would also seem to be the

12 See Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, 1:4-7981; *Tosafot Evreux 'al Massekhet Sotah*, ed. Lifshitz, editor's introduction, 20, 29; and Shalem Yahalom, "Ha-Tosafot le-Pereq 'Arvei Pesahim: Zihui ha-'Orekh u-Meqorotav," *'Ale Sefer* 26/27 (2017): 74.

13 The manuscript from which *Tosafot ha-Rash mi-Shanz 'al Massekhet Ketubot*, ed. A. Lis (Jerusalem: 1973) was published (ms. Cambridge Add. 508.1, IMHM #16801) ends at *Ketubot* 100b; see the editor's introduction, 1; and cf. Benjamin Richler, "Kitvei ha-Yad 'al Tosafot 'al ha-Talmud," in *Ta-Shma: Mehqarim be-Madda'ei ha-Yahadut le-Zikhro shel Yisra'el M. Ta-Shma*, ed. A. Reiner et al. (Alon Shvut: 2012), 2:802. See also the *Avot* commentary in *Maḥzor Vitry*, ed. S. Hurwitz (Jerusalem: 1963), 559, on the passage in the sixth chapter that Torah knowledge is acquired by diminishing pleasure (*be-mi'ut ta'anug*): (אִיב כח: יג), רכתי' ולא תמצא בארץ החיים (אִיב כח: יג); the commentary attributed to Rashi on *Sanhedrin* 111a, s.v. *deqa hayyef* (where this verse in the book of Job is also cited): חופף ראשו וימערן בעצמו בשעה שהיה לו ללמוד תורה; and cf. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Talmud Torah*, 3:12. Avraham Grossman, *Ḥakhmei Ashkenaz ha-Rishonim* (Jerusalem: 1995), 413-416, attributes the *Avot* commentary to Jacob b. Samson, a student of Rashi, while I. Ta-Shma, "Al Perush Avot shebe-Maḥzor Vitry," *Qiryat Sefer* 42 (1967), 507-8, maintains that Rashbam, among others, also contributed to this commentary. On the authorship of the Rashi commentary to *Pereq Heleq*, see the literature cited in Grossman, *ibid.*, 217 (n. 278).

14 On this corpus and its manuscripts, see S. Emanuel, *Shivrei Luḥot*, 198-211.

15 See Emanuel, *ibid.*, 208-29, and below, nn. 34, 37. There are far fewer references to students within the *pesaqim* of Isaac of Corbeil as compared to the *pesaqim* of Rabbenu Perez, suggesting perhaps that R. Isaac did not teach in a high-level *beit midrash* or involve himself in the compilation of *Tosafot* to the extent that

address for several of the behavioral and pietistic guidelines found in the section of ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 under discussion here. In addition to the eating practice attributed to Moses of Evreux, the following related strictures are recorded there: one should not enjoy a meal to which he is invited by his neighbors if it is not for the purpose of a *mizvah* (*she-lo lehenot mi-se'udat ha-reshut kemo hazmanat shekhenav 'im lo li-devar mizvah*), although this passages goes on to specify that being invited by one's Torah teacher (*hazmanat rabbo*), or to a meal offered during a festival period (on *Rosh Hodesh* or *Hol ha-Mo'ed*), is considered to be a "*mizvah* meal" in which a Torah scholar may participate. In addition, one should not laugh too heartily or frivolously (*she-lo lemale piv sehoq min ha-lev*), nor stroll aimlessly (*she-lo le-tayyel be-hinnam*).¹⁶ Finally, one should not overly enjoy worldly pleasures during the week, except in order to maintain the strength of his body. This ostensibly refers to food consumption, since it connotes a fairly public act, as we shall see in a moment. The implication is that such pleasures may be enjoyed on the Sabbath, when partaking in finer foods is encouraged.¹⁷

This last instruction then adds that these efforts may be dispensed with in the presence of others in order to avoid ridicule (*u-bifnei rabbim muttar pen yehashev le-la'ag*). This formulation suggests that as with the first instruction, which delineates those meal invitations that can be accepted and those that should be avoided by a Torah scholar or student, this directive is also directed more

Rabbenu Perez did; see Emanuel, *ibid.*, 211. Isaac of Corbeil did compose *Tosafot* to tractate *Yevamot*; see my *Brothers from Afar*, 10, n. 20. And a passage in the introduction to *Sefer 'Ammudei Golah*, ed. Constantinople, reports that for several years, Isaac managed to finish the study of the entire Bible and Talmud each year, whether or not the students were able to join him fully in this endeavor (וכמה שנים עברו עליו שהיה שונה בכל שנה ושנה שיתא סדרי וד' ועשרים, הן עם התלמידים הן בלא תלמידים. כי מה שלא היו התלמידים מספיקים ללמוד הוא היה חוזר בפני עצמו (עד שכל שנה היה חוזר שיתא סדרי ועשרים וארבע). However, no students of R. Isaac are known to us.

16 On the connotations of this phrase and activity, cf. *Sefer Hasidim* (Parma), ed. Wistinetzki, 89 (sec. 278); 194 (sec. 770); 206 (sec. 815).

17 See ms. Cambridge Add. 3127, fol. 165v (and ms. Paris BN heb. 407, fol. 236d), cited below in the Appendix: שלא ליהנות מן העולם דרך תענוג בחול כ"א לקיים חיווך. גופו ובפני רבים מותר פן יחשב ללעג. Cf. H. Soloveitchik, "Piety, Pietism, and German Pietism," 481.

narrowly to the rabbinic elite and their students.¹⁸ In ms. Paris BN heb. 407, the very next passage records the practice by Moses of Evreux to cut his meat into thin pieces, that serves as a striking example of his own avoidance of culinary pleasures; it begins with a conjunction (*ve-ha R. Mosheh hayah meḥatekh ha-basar daq daq*) which indicates that this passage as well was directed to the elite.

However, in ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 (as displayed below in the Appendix), an additional instruction, *she-lo lifrosh min ha-Torah* (lit. not to separate oneself from the Torah), is found between the instruction not to enjoy one's food overmuch during the week and R. Moses' eating practice. Given the demanding nature and unified goal of the two passages that surround this instruction, as well as the conjunction with which the passage about R. Moses begins in this manuscript, it is difficult to imagine that the teacher is simply reminding his devoted students to avoid straying from the teachings of the Torah in the broader sense — especially in the midst of a nuanced discussion about cultivating behaviors of self-denial. Rather, the author's intention here is to inform his elite (albeit youthful) readers that even a dedicated student of Torah may be distracted from his studies by culinary and other readily available pleasures. Indeed, this phrase may well be intended to connote that by staying away (*lifrosh*, in the sense of *perishut*) from indulgent eating practices, the dedicated student of Torah will avoid being separated from substantive Torah

18 A gloss of Rabbenu Perez to *Sefer Tashbez*, fol. 25a (sec. 310) perhaps comports with the meal invitation guidelines under discussion here. Where additional fruits were brought to one's table only after the blessing on an initial fruit had been made, Meir of Rothenburg ruled that each subsequent fruit required its own blessing (due to *heset ha-da'at*; the decision to bring out additional fruit had not yet been made when the first fruit was being eaten). On the other hand, Maharam held that only one *berakhah 'aharonah* is needed for all of the fruits that the individual had consumed. Rabbenu Perez adds another caveat: "But when a person is eating in the house of his friend, for example at the meal celebrating a circumcision or on Purim, one blessing over all fruits (and wines) is sufficient, even if the additional wine has not yet been brought to the table. For this depends on the intent of the host (*lefi she-talui be-da'at ba'al ha-bayit*), who means from the beginning to provide this additional food and drink for his guests" (and there is no *heset ha-da'at*, as per *Berakhot* 42a, regarding food provided by the home of the exilarch). It is suggestive that Rabbenu Perez chose to make his point about these two *mizvah* meals rather than an invitation to a *se'udat ha-reshut* at a friend's home, although it is possible that these two kinds of *se'udat mizvah* were highlighted because of the expectation that the host will be especially generous at these meals.

study (*she-lo lifrosh min ha-Torah*), precisely as suggested by the *Midrash Eliyyahu Rabbah* passage noted by *Tosafot Ketubot* (104a). The use of the verb form *lifrosh*, which is often associated with self-denial, is thus completely intentional.

Moreover, after two brief instructions about not embarrassing one's fellow or calling him by unflattering nicknames, Cambridge Add. 3127 continues with several formulations about the extent to which a person must be committed to daily if not constant Torah study. To be sure, the term *'adam*, which is employed at this point in the guidelines for the first time, perhaps indicates that, although Torah study is still the focus, the target audience has been widened to include those who are not at an elite level of achievement.¹⁹

The instruction which follows in this manuscript is that one should not unduly afflict himself (*ve-'ein le'anot nafsho*): "And if he has sinned, he should go and study more (*ve'im ḥata yelekh ve-yilmod yoter*) because the Torah provides expiation (as per Proverbs 16:6, "through kindness and truth sin is expiated; and kindness and truth refer to Torah)." This formulation suggests that although the guidelines imparted here are not intended principally as acts of penance but rather as guidance for the maintenance of substantive Torah study, such Torah study can also help to provide penance. The text cautions again that a person should not cause himself excessive suffering through fasting or other forms of self-denial. A person should do only what he is able to withstand so that his endeavors, in Torah study and perhaps more broadly, and certainly in the performance of *mizvot*, do not become compromised.²⁰

These *pesaqim* then go on to indicate that it is appropriate to fast two or three times every twenty-four weeks (a pace that yields two or three fasts a year), in imitation of the practice of the *'anshei ha-ma'amad*, who were assigned to fast twice a year and read selected biblical texts as the daily sacrificial order was performed in the Temple on behalf of the Jewish people (*Ta'anit* 26a), adding that "the holy R. Isaac (of Corbeil) was accustomed to fasting once a month." During these fasts, one should confess and fully repent, express regret for negative actions and recount them to a *rav*, ask forgiveness from

19 See ms. Cambridge Add. 3127, fol. 165v-166r: אדם חייב להיות כשכיר יום להיות זהיר ביום. שאם תבטל תלמוד תורה בלילה... וחייב לעשות מדברי תורה קבע ומכל דבר אחר עראי לבר מן המצוות שהן חובה עליו בגופו וכו'.

20 See ms. Cambridge, Add. 3127, *ibid.*: ואין לו לאדם ליצטער בעיניו לא בתענית ולא בעינוי נפש רק כפי היכולת כדי שלא יבא לידי ביטול עסקיו וכל שכן מצוותיו.

God, and donate to charity. If it is not possible to fast once a week, one should regularly set aside charity or abstain from eating certain foods.²¹ Ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 then resumes its presentation of a more typical assortment of halakhic rulings (by Isaac of Corbeil) in various areas of Jewish law.

These last few passages about fasting reflect the influence of the German Pietists, whose possible impact on Evreux and his students has been noted.²² The fasting and self-denial in this portion of the text indeed serve mainly as forms of penance. However, as we have seen, the acts of self-denial found prior to these last passages in the section relate to students of Torah in ways that the writings of the German Pietists do not: as stimulants or co-requisites for deep and committed Torah study.

Although there are some instructions at the very beginning of these moral guidelines, prior to those concerning self-denial and Torah study, which ostensibly apply to non-scholars as well (such as not gazing at women or Christian religious objects, not doing something that is hateful to one's fellow, not dealing dishonestly with people or their money, not sully the honor of parents and rabbinic scholars [*hakhamim*], and not mentioning or swearing in the name of Heaven irresponsibly), there are a number of other ethical regulations in this portion of the *pesaqim* that would also have been especially relevant to budding and experienced Torah scholars: not to pursue honor, not to do frivolous things or actions that are an affront to the Torah and its students (*ve-lo lignai shel ha-Torah ve-lomdehah*); not to be suspicious of seemingly proper people; and not to establish dominion over another (*lo litol serarah 'al 'ish*) unless done for the sake of Heaven.²³

Linking ascetic practices to intensive Torah study, as in the group of *pesaqim* found in ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 (and less expansively in ms. Paris BN heb. 407), is reminiscent of the description

21 See ms. Cambridge Add. 3127, *ibid.*: רבא ותן הימים יתודה וישוב בתשובה שלמה ויתחרט במעשיו הרעים ויספרם לרב ויאמר כזאת וכזאת עשיתי. ויבקש מאת השם מחילה מהם...ויפריש מה שירצה...וטוב שלא לאכול יום אחד בשבוע. ואם לא יכול להתענות, טוב שיתנדב ויפריש מידי יום ביום בקביעות.

22 See *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Margoliot, 135 (sec. 97), and 204 (sec. 225); H. Soloveitchik, "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism," 459-60, 492-93; Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz* (Philadelphia: 2014), 72-76; and above, n. 5. On Isaac of Corbeil's espousal of a variety of teachings and practices of the German Pietists, see my *Peering through the Lattices*, 81-92.

23 See ms. Cambridge Add. 3127, fol. 165v; and Soloveitchik, *ibid.*, 490-91.

provided by Benjamin of Tudela, nearly a century earlier, about what he encountered in the rabbinic study hall at Lunel. In describing the religious behaviors of Asher b. Meshullam of Lunel, a late twelfth-century Provençal thinker and talmudist (whose extensive commentaries on the Talmud have unfortunately been lost, and who had affinities with both philosophy and mysticism), Benjamin writes: “He separated himself from mundane things and immersed himself in study, poring over books day and night, fasting and not eating meat (*she-piresh me-‘inyanei ha-‘olam ha-zeh ve-‘omed ‘al ha-sefer yomam va-laylah u-mit‘aneh ve-‘eino ‘okhel basar*).” In light of these practices, Benjamin of Tudela refers to him as R. Asher *ha-parush*. From Benjamin’s description, it appears that Asher’s asceticism was linked to his desire to spend every moment immersed in Torah study, unconcerned and undeterred by what was happening around him in the physical world; there may also have been a mystical dimension here, as was true of other contemporary Provençal rabbinic figures characterized by similar epithets (*ha-nazir*, *he-ḥasid*, and *ha-qadosh*).²⁴

A number of other sources and possible influences should also be considered when assessing the eating behaviors associated with the Tosafist study hall of Evreux and its students. In addition to a passage in tractate *Nedarim* of the Talmud Yerushalmi (8:5, fol. 40b), which maintains that the Amora R. Yoḥanan accepted or extended a personal fast until he was able to finish an interpretation of a complete talmudic periscope (*hareni be-ta‘aniti ‘ad de-ḥasal pirqi, ‘ad de-niṣḥal parshateh*), passages within *Hekhalot* literature and its derivatives refer to the adjuration of the *Sar ha-Torah* (and to achieving *petiḥat ha-lev*) following a series of ascetic preparations and rituals, which allowed the adept to remember everything that he had studied while achieving great clarity in his thinking and analyses.²⁵

We can also identify potential role models from among earlier rabbinic figures in northern France. Menaḥem of Le Mans, who lived

24 See Moshe Idel, “Qeta ‘Iyyuni le-Asher b. Meshullam mi-Lunel,” *Qiryat Sefer* 50 (1975), 149-53; idem, “Sarid mi-Perush R. Asher mi-Lunel li-Berakhot,” *Qoveṣ ‘al Yad* 11 (1985): 79-88; Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Qabbalah* (Princeton: 1987), 231-31; Isadore Twersky, *Rabad of Posquieres* (Philadelphia: 1980), 27-29, 251-52; Ta-Shma, *Knesset Meḥqarim* 4:159-61; and Ram Ben-Shalom, *Yehudei Provence: Renaissance beṢel ha-Knesiyyah* (Ranaana: 2017), 377-81.

25 See Michael Swartz, *Scholastic Magic* (Princeton: 1996), 25-26, 43-50, 157-66, 209-29; Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood* (New Haven: 1996), 45-46, 59-71; and my *Peering through the Lattices*, 140-42, 236-40.

into the eleventh century, was eulogized by his son, R. Elijah *ha-Zaqen*, as “the father of all Israel for the Talmud that he taught (*’avi kol Yisra’el be-talmudo she-ribbez*),” and as “the holy one, whose bodily holiness was one of self-denial and self-abnegation (*ha-qadosh, guf qadosh, guf ha-me’unekh ve-guf ha-mesaggef*).”²⁶

As recorded in the *Tosafot* of his son Elhanan, Isaac (Ri) b. Samuel of Dampierre (d. c. 1190), the leading northern French Tosafist during the late twelfth century, regularly accepted personal fasts upon himself.²⁷ He also asked his teacher and uncle Rabbenu Tam whether a person who undertook a series of fasts without accepting them during the afternoon of the previous day was in fact credited with these fasts.²⁸ The standard *Tosafot* to tractate *’Avodah Zarah*, which were redacted in the study hall of Rabbenu Perez, cite the more lenient view of Rabbenu Tam, but conclude by noting Ri’s conduct, suggesting that this was the preferred approach.²⁹ Similarly, in his *Sefer Mizvot Qatan*, Isaac of Corbeil cites Rabbenu Tam, affirming that a fast undertaken by an individual need not be declared beforehand in order for it to be effective; however, he then notes that he heard (*ve-shamati*) that Ri always made a formal acceptance during his afternoon prayer on the day before the fast was to take place. As far as I can tell, Rabbenu Perez and Isaac of Corbeil are the only northern French Tosafists (aside from Ri’s son) to record Ri’s position.³⁰

26 See A. Grossman, *Hakhmei Zarefat ha-Rishonim*, 83–84.

27 See *Tosafot* R. Elhanan (ben ha-Ri) *’al Massekhet ’Avodah Zarah* (34a), ed. A. Y. Kreuzer (Jerusalem: 2003), 231: *יש לאדם להחמיר ולקבל כל תעניותיו בתפילת המנחה בשומע תפלה. ואפי’ בשבת רגיל ר’ לקבל התענית בא-להי נצור לשוני כשרוצה להתענות באחד בשבת*

28 See *ibid.*, 230: *וכבר שאל ר’ לר”ת על אחד שעשה כמה תעניות בלא קבלה מאתמול אם הפסיד כל תעניותיו וענהו כי יפה*. Cf. *Teshuvot u-Pesaqim le-Ri ha-Zaqen in Shitat ha-Qadmonim ’al Massekhet ’Avodah Zarah*, ed. M. Y. Blau, vol. 3 (New York: 1991), 234–35 (sec. 120, *leshon Rabbenu Elhanan*); E. E. Urbach, *Ba’alei ha-Tosafot*, 1:238; and my *Peering through the Lattices*, 42–43

29 See *Tosafot* *’Avodah Zarah* 34a, s.v. *mit’anin le-sha’ot*; and Urbach, *Ba’alei ha-Tosafot*, 2:654–56.

30 See *Sefer Mizvot Qatan*, *mizvah* 96, ed. Constantinople, fol. 87b; and cf. the glosses of Rabbenu Perez *ad loc.*, sec. 2. *Tosafot ha-Rash mi-Shanz* [in *Shitat ha-Qadmonim ’al Massekhet ’Avodah Zarah*, ed. Blau, vol. 2 (New York: 1969), 107] presents Rabbenu Tam’s view, but makes no reference to the position or practice of his teacher Ri. Note also that Rabbenu Perez provides guidance in his *pesaqim* for an individual who has undertaken his own personal fast and is leading the prayer service (*ve-’od ’omer keshe-yahid mit’aneh ve-hu ’azmo shaz*). He should quietly recite the *’anenu* prayer in his personal *’amidah*, as is usual on the afternoon of

Although Ri of Dampierre was familiar with magical techniques and mystical teachings and texts, including the *Hekhalot* corpus, and he even had some affinities, if not direct contact, with Judah the Pious,³¹ Ri does not comment about why he undertook these individual fasts or their purpose.³² However, Ri was also the first Tosafist to describe how learned students in northern France slept in their clothing during the weekdays in the study hall, only loosening their shoes, reflecting their dedication to their studies.³³ Although the historicity of this description has been challenged, another of Rabbenu Perez's *pesaqim* contains the following parallel description from his period, which serves in large measure to confirm Ri's report: "And Rabbenu Perez ruled that yeshiva students (*baḥurim*) who don their *tallit qatan* at the beginning of the week and do not take it off the entire week (except for the Sabbath) are not [otherwise] required to remove the *tallit qatan* in order to make a [new] blessing over it."³⁴ The similarity between Ri's depiction of these arduous study routines and conditions and that of Rabbenu Perez is surely not coincidental. In

a fast day. However, when he repeats the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* prayer during the *hazarat ha-shaz*, he should recite 'anenu again, in an undertone (*be-naḥat*), during the blessing of *shomea' tefillah* (rather than as the separate blessing added to the repetition of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* on a public fast day). See ms. Paris BN heb. 407, fol. 236d (=Sha'an'an, "Pisqei Rabbenu Perez," 12, sec. 9).

31 See my *Peering through the Lattices*, 191-95; my "Judah he-Ḥasid and the Tosafists of Northern France," *Jewish History* 34 (2021): 177-98; and my "'The Patterns and Implications of Tosafist Citations from *Hekhalot* Literature,'" in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought in Honor of Moshe Idel*, ed. A. Bar-Levav and R. Margolin (2021; in press).

32 Ri was also in direct literary contact with Asher b. Meshullam of Lunel (R. Asher *ha-Parush*). See, e.g., *Tosafot Berakhot* 11b, s. v. *she-kevar* (and *Tosafot R. Yehudah Sirleon*, ad loc.); *Tosafot Bava Qamma* 64a, s.v. 'amar; and 64b, s.v. *me-hekha*. The author of *Sefer ha-Manhig*, Abraham b. Nathan of Lunel, studied with Ri of Dampierre and transmitted R. Asher's questions about various talmudic and halakhic issues to his teacher. See E. E. Urbach, *Ba'alei ha-Tosafot*, 1:237-38; I. Ta-Shma, *R. Zerahyah ha-Levi Ba'al ha-Ma'or u-Bnei Hugo* (Jerusalem: 1993), 165-66; and Pinchas Roth, "Ma'aseh be-Halshanah ki-Neqamah: Qeri'ah Ḥdashah bi-Teshuvot Ri ha-Zaqen le-R. Asher mi-Lunel," *Shenaton ha-Mishpat ha-'Ivri* 29 (2016-2018), 154-57.

33 See Moses of Coucy, *Sefer Mizvot Gadol, lo ta'aseh* 65, s.v. *veha-qosher* (ed. Y. M. Peles [Jerusalem: 1993], 1:147). See also Barukh b. Isaac, *Sefer ha-Terumah* (sec. 243; Barukh was a student of Ri); and cf. Isaac b. Moses, *Sefer Or Zarua'*, ed. Y. Farbstein (Jerusalem: 2010), 2:114 (*hilkhot Shabbat ve-'Eruvin*, 114, sec. 84:12), which likely reflects his experiences in the study hall of Ri's student, Judah Sirleon of Paris.

34 See S. Emanuel, *Shivrei Luḥot*, 208 (and n. 93).

short, the ascetic practices and values espoused by the northern French Tosafist Isaac of Dampierre could easily have made their way to the Tosafists at Evreux and to their students during the mid-thirteenth century, along with Samson of Sens's interpretation of the pious eating behavior of the leading Tanna and Torah scholar Rav Yehudah *Ha-Nasi*, who sought to avoid all delicacies (*ma'adanim*).

A similar form of ascetic behavior associated with prayer is endorsed by Rabbenu Perez in a gloss to *Sefer Tashbez*. The Talmud (*Berakhot* 10b) prohibits eating or drinking substantial beverages prior to prayer; these are considered by the Talmud to be haughty behaviors, since one has not yet accepted the yoke of heaven prior to prayer. *Sefer Tashbez* notes that the German Tosafist and halakhic authority Rabiah (d. c. 1225) ruled that it was permissible to drink water prior to the morning prayers because drinking water does not display or reflect any degree of haughtiness (*ki mai ga'avah shayakh be-mayim*). Rabbenu Perez, however, comments on Rabiah's ruling that he believes that one should not be allowed to drink even water prior to prayer because this causes the individual to be sated, which does reflect an aspect of haughtiness.³⁵

The extent to which the widespread asceticism at this time within Christian society impacted these developments among the Tosafists of northern France is also worthy of further consideration, as is the provenance of the so-called *Sefer Huqqei ha-Torah*, which contains a blueprint for establishing a high-level, advanced talmudic study hall that includes several notable ascetic or even quasi-monastic practices.³⁶ The term *perishut* figures prominently in this text, although in this context it mainly denotes the separation of the academy head from his wife and family during the week (and, of course, the separation of the students from the teacher's family as well). Study halls during this period in northern Europe were typically located within the home of the academy head, and *Sefer Huqqei ha-*

35 See *Sefer Tashbez*, fol. 17b (sec. 203, at the beginning of *dinei tefillah*: מיהו נראה (דאפילו מים אסור לשותות דכיון דממלא נפשו ממה שהוא צריך אחר שנתנאה קרינן ביה). For his part, Isaac of Corbeil in his *pesaqim* permits drinking water before prayer (agreeing with the view that *'ein ga'avah be-mayim*), adding the practical consideration that it is better to drink water before prayer than to feel thirsty during the prayers; see Emanuel, *Shivrei Luhot*, 205.

36 See R. Ben-Shalom, *Yehudei Provence* (above, n. 24); Haviva Pedaya, *Ha-Shem v'ha-Miqdash be-Mishnat R. Yizhaq Safi Nahor* (Jerusalem: 2001), 21-26; my "A Monastic-like Setting for the Study of Torah," in *Judaism in Practice*, ed. L. Fine (Princeton: 2001), 191-202; and above, n. 10 (end).

Torah clearly advocated a greater degree of separation, preferably by maintaining a separate *beit midrash* facility that housed only the students.³⁷ In this connection, it is also worth noting a passage found in the *pesaqim* of Rabbenu Perez, that it was his practice not to speak with any woman who was not his wife in a separate room in his home (even if the door was open), except in the presence of one of his students.³⁸

However, the ascetic tendencies and practices highlighted in the present study are not related to sex, nor are they centered on penance or the avoidance of sin in the manner of the German Pietists. Rather, a circle of northern French Tosafists in the late thirteenth century sought to deepen the study of the Divine word for themselves and their students by advocating diminished involvement in culinary and other mundane pleasures.³⁹ They may have taken their cue in this regard from earlier Tosafists and other European rabbinic predecessors, but they developed their own distinct modes of expressing and transmitting these values.

Appendix

Ms. Cambridge Add. 3127 (fol. 165v) Ms. Paris BN heb. 407 (fol. 236d)

שלא ליהנות מן העולם דרך תענוג בחול	שלא להנות מן העולם דרך תענוג בחול
כ"א לקיים חיזוק גופו ובפני רבים מותר	לכוונת תענוג כ"א לקיים חיזוק גופו
פן יחשב ללעג.	ובפני רבים מותר מן יחשב ללעג.
שלא לפרוש מן התורה.	

והר"ר משה היה מחתך הבשר דק דק	והר"ר משה היה מחתך הבשר דק דק
שלא לטעום טעם בשר חשוב.	שלא לטעום טעם בשר הטוב.

37 See my *Jewish Education and Society*, 66-67, 104.

38 See S. Emanuel, *Shivrei Luhot*, 209: ועוד שהרב לא היה מדבר עם שום אשה בבית אחד או בחדר אחד ואפי' הפתח פתוח ויש בני אדם הדרים באותה דירה אם לא יהיה עמו בחדר בחרור אחד ואפי' עם חמותו.

39 Cf. Michael Satlow, "‘And on the Earth You Shall Sleep’: Talmud Torah and Rabbinic Asceticism," *The Journal of Religion* 83:2 (2003): 204-25 (thanks to Dr. Judah Galinsky for this reference); Elliot Wolfson, "Martyrdom, Eroticism, and Asceticism in Twelfth-Century Ashkenazi Piety," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. J. Van Engen and M. Signer (Notre Dame, 2001), 171-220; and Yishai Kiel, "Toratam ha-Musarit—Datit shel Ḥasidei Ashkenaz: Bein Sagfanut ve-Ḥushaniyyut," *Da'at* 73 (2012): 85-101.