

## RETORT TO AN ANONYMOUS CRITIC

Sir, you have (on Aug. 12, 2014) written a very negative assessment of my paper, “About A Fortiori Argument, in General and in Judaism,” which was passed on to me by a third party. The following lines constitute my reply to your two-page essay. I hope you will have the courage and attention span required to read it all.

I do not know who you are, since you did not sign your work, and therefore I do not know what your paper qualifications are. Even so, I can easily see and demonstrate that you are in fact unqualified for the job.

1. Let us to start with go to the crux of the matter, and find out **the level of your personal logical knowhow and skill**. You evidently fancy yourself quite knowledgeable and capable, but I will quickly show you that you are *quite incompetent*.

You claim, in the superior tone of one who is ‘teaching a lesson’, that I “implicitly” appeal to the following semantics: viz. that “P is more R than Q is R; Q is R enough to be S; then P is R enough to be S” means:

“P is R”  $\geq$  “Q is R”; “Q is R”  $\geq$  “S is R”; then “P is R”  $\geq$  “S is R”

Now, I can assure you that I do *not anywhere* and would *never* assume or suggest this *inane* symbolic interpretation of a fortiori argument (or more specifically, of the positive subjectal mood of such argument)! This is *your own moronic concoction*, and I strongly resent your attributing it to me since it is utterly erroneous.

For a start, if the given major premise is “P is more R than Q is R” then its symbolization would be “P is R”  $>$  “Q is R” (and not as you have it  $\geq$ ). This is not very important in the context, but it demonstrates your inattention to detail.

Secondly, the minor premise and conclusion certainly *do not and cannot* mean “(Q is R)  $\geq$  (S is R)” and “(P is R)  $\geq$  (S is R)”, respectively. This is obvious immediately, since S is a *predicate* (of Q, then of P) in the said propositions, whereas you represent it as a *subject* (of R)!

The correct symbolic interpretation of these propositions would rather be (in part): “(Q is Rs)  $\rightarrow$  (Q is S)” and “(P is Rs)  $\rightarrow$  (P is S)”, respectively, where Rs is a *certain threshold value of R required to be S*, as made clear in my own paper. (Here, of course, the symbol  $\rightarrow$  means ‘implies’.)

You claim to have read my essay; but I very much doubt that you have more than very quickly skimmed through it. For if you have read it, how is it possible that you have not even grasped, let alone digested, this central concept of my whole teaching regarding (positive) a fortiori argument, namely that it inevitably depends on sufficiency of possession of the middle term (“is R enough to be”)? This is repeated again and again in my paper, not to mention the book it is derived from. For instance:

It is important to grasp the intent of the word “enough” (or “sufficiently”) in the minor premises and conclusions above detailed. These tell us that the subject has whatever amount of R it takes to merit the predicate; i.e. that the subject has at least the amount of R *required for* the predicate. The word “enough” informs us that there is a **threshold value of R** as of and above which the subject *indeed* has the predicate, but anywhere *before which* the subject *does not have* the predicate; the R-value of the subject is then specified as falling on the required side of the known threshold.

The above shows that your understanding of the text at hand is *nil*. You cannot even correctly formulate a logical sentence; yet you *pretentiously posture* as able to judge the matter at hand from a higher plane! A man cannot learn anything if he does not open his mind and patiently study a matter.

Your claim that a fortiori argument may be symbolized as “P is R”  $\geq$  “Q is R”; “Q is R”  $\geq$  “S is R”; then “P is R”  $\geq$  “S is R” is simply a claim that it is inference from quantitative comparisons, i.e. argument of the form: if  $A \geq B$ , and  $B \geq C$ , then  $A \geq C$ . Not only do I not advocate this in my writings, but I repeatedly warn against it.

What is evident from your effective advocacy of it (or your attribution to me of such advocacy) is that your knowledge of the possibilities of logical argument is limited to a very narrow range. You try to reduce things too complex for your mind to grasp to simple formulas within your intellectual range, refusing to broaden your perspective.

Note also that I said above that “(Q is Rs)  $\rightarrow$  (Q is S)” and “(P is Rs)  $\rightarrow$  (P is S)” is only *part of* the symbolic interpretation of a fortiori argument, because there is also a negative aspect to consider, as I do in my paper (see quotation below). Your account totally ignores this.

As regards your underlying claim that my theory of a fortiori argument is limited to Aristotelian relations (essentially, just the copula ‘is’) – this too is utterly false. In my book (AFL 4.1), I explicitly say that such limitation is not intended:

I have called the first four moods ‘copulative’ because they involve categorical relations indicated by the copula ‘is’ (or ‘to be’). But it should be clear that they could equally well involve other categorical relations; also, negative polarity may be involved and non-actual modalities (can, must, and different probabilities in between) of various modes (de dicto or various types of de re).

And in fact, I give umpteen examples where such variation occurs. Moreover, I do not limit my theory to categorical propositions, but I mention and extensively deal with implicational a fortiori arguments. All this seems to have escaped your notice, no doubt because you have been so intent in finding fault with my work.

2. Moreover, **wishing to appear like a cognoscenti**, you write:

“The paper contains many theoretical errors. For instance, he offers the four valid moods for a fortiori reasoning. Nevertheless, he formulates only syntactic expressions of those moods without their semantics. In the whole text, the author does not define semantics for a fortiori reasoning as such.”

This is of course, nonsense on your part, further proof that you do not know what you are talking about. The *syntax* of the valid moods of a fortiori argument is their outer *form*, the language they are expressed in in everyday speech. Thus, “P is more R than Q is R; Q is R enough to be S; then P is R enough to be S” is the form or syntax of the positive subjectal mood of a fortiori argument. The *semantics* or inner meaning of the forms is their full *interpretation* in more accessible terms for the purpose of *validation*. Thus, the semantics of the positive subjectal form is given in my paper as follows:

- **Positive subjectal** a fortiori argument validation:

The major premise, “P is more R than (or as much R as) Q is,” means:

P is R, i.e. P is to a certain measure or degree R (say, Rp);  
Q is R, i.e. Q is to a certain measure or degree R (say, Rq);  
and Rp is greater than (or equal to) Rq (whence: Rp implies Rq).

The minor premise, “Q is R enough to be S,” means:

Q is to a certain measure or degree R (Rq);  
whatever is at least to a certain measure or degree R (say, Rs) is S and  
whatever is not at least to that measure or degree R (i.e. is not Rs) is not S;  
and Rq is greater than or equal to Rs.

The *conclusion* “P is R enough to be S,” is composed of four clauses:

P is to a certain measure or degree R (say, Rp);  
whatever is at least to a certain measure or degree R (say, Rs), is S;  
whatever is not at least to that measure or degree R (i.e. is not Rs), is not S;  
and Rp is greater than (or equal to) Rs.

These four components are obtained as follows: *the first from the major premise, the second and third from the minor premise, and the fourth from the tabulated quantitative argument* (see below) *which is drawn from both premises*. Here, note well, the “enough R” condition of the conclusion (implied in its second and third components) comes from the minor premise, because it concerns the subsidiary term (S). Here, then, the crucial threshold value of R is  $R_s$ , i.e. the minimum value of R needed to be S; knowing that  $R_q$  equals or exceeds  $R_s$ , we can predict that  $R_p$  does so too.

Note that I say “the major premise *means*” etc. Thus, when you claim that “he formulates only syntactic expressions... without their semantics” and that “in the whole text, the author does not define semantics for a fortiori reasoning as such,” you just show that you are unable to recognize a semantic intent even as it stands right before you!

You further write: “In some cases, he assumes that this semantics is Aristotelian, in some cases it is not. In the Aristotelian syllogistic, relations among terms are interpreted as set-theoretic operations of inclusion, exclusion and intersection among them. The author uses this idea as well...” (here you place your wrong formula already examined above, and continue:) “Probably, he supposes that the relation  $\geq$  is the Aristotelian inclusion (reflexive, antisymmetric, and transitive relations among terms). But evidently it cannot be for different reasons.”

Here, too, you are just strutting around trying to look intelligent, dishing out conventional words you hardly comprehend, attributing to me (let alone to Aristotle) opinions that I have never expressed. Have I ever, would I ever, suppose that “the relation  $\geq$  is the Aristotelian inclusion”? That you even suggest this implies that there is some confusion in *your own* mind regarding the symbol  $>$ .

You also claim that my theory of a fortiori argument depends on elucidation of the relation of quantitative comparison (i.e.  $\geq$ ). In your words: “Then the author concerns the validation of a fortiori argument on 5 pages. However, it has no sense without semantics at all. The relation  $\geq$  is unclear absolutely.”

But as I showed above, this relation (quantitative comparison) is not, contrary to your imagination, the central pillar of a fortiori argument. It is one item among others – see my own analysis above. Furthermore, it is not my role as a logician to elucidate it – I can take it as dealt with and passed on to me by mathematicians, since it is a purely quantitative issue. I would need to address the issue if it was peculiar to a fortiori argument; but it is not (just as predication or implication are not).

And anyway, what do you find so “unclear absolutely” about “the relation  $\geq$ ”? It is simple and obvious enough. You seem to imply that there is some profound secret about it that I do not know – but you do not say what your objection to it is, precisely. You are here again, obviously, just trying to project a flattering self-image and engaging in malicious innuendo.

All this shows again that you do not have *first-hand* understanding of logic, but you have only a smattering of *second-hand* formulas and expressions that you throw around without knowing what they really mean. You think you can fool people with such mimics, but you only succeed in publicizing your own ignorance and moral deficiency.

3. Another thing that needs pointing out is that you seem to imagine that because I avoid modern symbolic logic like you but resort to **ordinary-language logic**, my understanding of logic must be inferior to yours (the very little you have displayed). Quite the contrary is true, I submit. If you take the trouble to actually read the book, or at least Appendix 7 of it, you will see that one of my themes throughout this work is that modern symbolic logic is con game – a means that people who do not understand logic use to give themselves and others the false impression that they do.

*Your essay once again proves my point.* You thought to look skillful with your misinterpretation of a fortiori argument – but all you did was to make manifest your own logical incapacity. If you had reviewed your proposal in ordinary-language terms, i.e. in plain English, you might have been able to see its stupidity for yourself. A Fortiori Logic *was written with the intent to help people like you*. If you want to develop your skills and evolve intellectually, you should make the effort to read it, and to do so with a duly receptive attitude. But, to tell you the truth, I do not think you will ever have *the intelligence needed*. I sincerely mean that. You write:

“From the fact that there is no true semantics it follows that the author formulates the subjectal moods and predicatal moods which are the same in fact, as well as the following Aristotelian propositions: “S is P” and “P is a property of S”. Syntactically, they differ, but semantically, they do not.”

Seeing you write this, I regard you as a lost cause. This sentence of yours by itself convinces that you did not study the paper submitted to you, but merely skimmed through it. If you have truly read it and have not been able to see and grasp *the radical differences* between subjectal and predicatal argument, there is no hope for you. It is not a matter of conversion of “S is P” to “P is a property of S” as you claim – if it were, then subjectal arguments could be reduced to predicatal ones, and vice versa – whereas I have looked into this question rigorously and shown clearly that this is impossible. *You make statements based on no research*, just on the big prejudices in your little head.

Again, just as you see no great difference between subjectal and predicatal argument, you fail to see any significant difference between purely a fortiori argument and a crescendo argument (proportional a fortiori argument). Thus, you write:

“The next section ‘Arguments involving proportionality’ on 6 pages contains several syntactic variations of a fortiori moods formulated in the first section. In my opinion, this section has to be reduced, because it contains much unimportant information for the main topic.”

Clearly, you are unaware of the history of a fortiori argument and the controversy surrounding this issue in the course of that history. You consider something unimportant simply because you find it tedious – i.e. your mind tires easily. But that is not a valid standard of judgment in this context. It is amazing to me that someone like you, who has obviously contributed nothing whatsoever of value to the field of a fortiori logic, but on the contrary misunderstands most of what he reads, offers an “opinion” as to what is “the main topic” and what is “unimportant information”!

4. Let us now take a look at **your reading of a concrete example** of a fortiori argument. You write:

“In order to illustrate the meaning of moods, the author provides some examples. Let us consider one. “Jack (P) can run faster (R) than Jill (Q); if Jill can run fast enough to cover one mile in under 15 minutes (S), then surely so can Jack; and if he can’t, then neither can she”. First, the relation “faster” is not transitive for any distance, because there are stayers and sprinters. And somebody can run faster as stayer but slower as sprinter. Second, the semantics of “S is R” in the form of proposition “fast enough to cover one mile in under 15 minutes” readily differs from the semantics of “P is R” and “Q is R”. In the first case, S from “S is R” is a distance. In the second case, P from “P is R” and Q from “Q is R” are human beings. It is a kind of the logical fallacy called *ignoratio elenchi*.”

I analyze this argument in my book *A Fortiori Logic* (AFL 1.1) as follows:

For example: granted Jack (P) can run faster (R) than Jill (Q), it follows that: if Jill can run (at a speed of) one mile in under 15 minutes (S), then surely so can Jack; and if he can’t, then neither can she. Needless to say, the conditions are presumed identical in both cases; we are talking of the same course, in the same weather, and so on. If different conditions are intended, the argument may not function correctly. The a fortiori argument is stated categorically only if there are no underlying conditions. Obviously, if there are conditions they ought to be specified, or at least we must ensure they are the same throughout the argument.

In your first comment, about the relation “faster” being potentially variable, you are only repeating in other words what I already say in my book, viz. that “the conditions are presumed identical” etc. However, what you are not aware of is that this is just a small forewarning to the reader regarding an issue treated in more detail later, namely the possibility of using a middle term in more than one sense. *For instance*, a bit further down in the same chapter and section (AFL 1.1) I write:

On a formal level, what this means is that if we do not specify or keep in mind the middle term R intended in the major premise, we might easily intend another middle term, say R', in the minor premise and conclusion; in which case, our reasoning (whether unconsciously or deliberately done) would of course be faulty. This often happens in practice, and is one reason some people doubt the validity of a fortiori argument in general. But the problem here is not with the argument as such, but with the use of two middle terms. If we use, explicitly or implicitly, two middle terms, the argument is of course invalid, for it cannot be validated any longer. We could label such practice ‘the fallacy of two middle terms’ so as to remember to avoid it and not be taken in by it.

Thus, what you present as your own critique of my presentation is a possible fallacy that I have already pointed out and explained. Your suggestion is that the middle term “faster” can vary in meaning, i.e. that the “faster” intended for a stayer is different from the “faster” intended for a sprinter. You effectively

accuse me of this fallacy – but I am the one who has discovered it before you! This is *dishonesty* on your part. You pretend to be the teacher while you are in fact the pupil.

As regards your second comment, all it succeeds in doing is to advertise again *your own total mental confusion*. The proposition “S is R” is nowhere to be found in my treatment of positive subjectal a fortiori argument, but is *your own* invention as we saw above (in the symbolic formula you proposed)! So your criticism that the subject S (a distance) is not comparable to the subjects P and Q (human beings) is nothing but a criticism of *your own* misperception of the formalization of a fortiori argument! In my analysis of subjectal argument, S is a predicate not a subject. You only here once again demonstrate your own absurdity, and in no way provide a valid critique of my work!

And you have the gall to accuse me of committing the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*. Really, whatever your name is, what a fool you are – I feel sorry for you.

5. I will now address the following passage in your review, in which **you try to put in doubt my scientific credentials!** That got a bitter laugh out of me, considering your ridiculous lack of learning.

“The paper is written in the way that it is evident that the author is not a scientist. For example, he claims that 80 cases of a fortiori argument are found in Aristotle’s works (p. 4). But is it a subject of discussion which works are Aristotelian in fact and which ones are pseudo-Aristotelian, etc. Are all the cases of a fortiori contained in Aristotle’s Rhetoric or Organon? I know that reasoning by analogy was often used in biological works by Aristotle. How many are a fortiori arguments contained there? Another example of reference that cannot be in any scientific work is the reference to Ramchal’s *Sepher haHigayon* (p. 15). The author claims that the four moods of a fortiori arguments formulated in the paper were first formulated by Ramchal. In this case, it is unclear what scientific result of the author is. Is it only the syntactic formulation of these four moods?”

First, you attack my account of Aristotle’s use of a fortiori argument. If you were really a scholar, you would have simply looked into my book *A Fortiori Logic* before making these comments. In chapter 6 and Appendix 4 thereof, there is *a full description and analysis* of this topic. This original research is based mainly on mechanical search for a fortiori argument expressions in *The Works of Aristotle* (Ed. William David Ross. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1952). The following table summarizes my findings there:

Book in which a fortiori found	No. found
Posterior Analytics	3
Topics	24
Physics	1
On the Heavens	3
Meteorology	1
On The Soul	2
On Sense and the Sensible	1
Parva Naturalia	2
On Memory and Reminiscence	1
History of Animals	10
Metaphysics	4
Nicomachean Ethics	4
Politics	3
Rhetoric	21
14 books	80

Now, these works by Aristotle were all included in a reputed collection, published by Enc. Brit. You will find in W. Windelband’s *History of Ancient Philosophy* (Dover: U.S., 1956), on pp. 236-247, a discussion of which extant works of Aristotle are genuine, doubtful or spurious. All the above are counted by him

among the genuine. Anyway, while this issue could play some role in determining Aristotle's use in practice of a fortiori argument, it makes no significant difference to the point being made in the paper that a fortiori argument in all its forms was frequently used in Greece as well as in Israel. Whether Aristotle wrote 60 or 80 or 100 a fortiori arguments makes no difference to this point.

Therefore, your raising this question at all could only be *in bad faith*. You have raised it only to fake scholarship, i.e. to seem historically savvy. I am willing to bet you have never read any of these works; at most a few lines out of one or two of them. This is easy to tell from your manifest ignorance of logic. It is also obvious from the following phrase, "reference that cannot be in any scientific work," that you have never done any original scientific research yourself. You are constantly in search of external authorities. Well, let me tell you, you need look no further – I am the authority in this field.

As regards your comments regarding my findings on the Ramchal, if you bothered to look at chapter 9 section 10 of my book *A Fortiori Logic*, which you would have done if you were genuinely scholarly, I do not merely *claim* that he listed four moods of a fortiori argument, I *show* it in detail. What is the scientific purpose of doing that, you ask? Well, *A Fortiori Logic* is a book dedicated to tracing the true history of the use and understanding of a fortiori argument, so the discovery that the Ramchal was apparently the first to clearly list all four moods of copulative a fortiori argument is very significant.

However, as regards the syntax, and for that matter the semantics, I show that his understanding was incomplete, because he lacked the crucial factor of a threshold value of the middle term in the minor premise. This and other deficiencies go to show that my own work is in fact significantly more advanced. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the importance of Moshe Chaim Luzzatto's contribution.

To repeat, had you been a scholar, you would have simply looked into my book before speaking. But of course, you are not interested in the facts of the case, are you? You are merely intent on projecting doubt in the value of my work. All you achieve thereby is to show up your own intellectual and moral deficiencies.

6. Now let us examine your brief pronouncements **concerning Judaic logic**. You write, in your usual know-it-all tone of voice:

"the four moods of a fortiori arguments described by the author do not have any sense for *qal vachomer* arguments used in the Talmud. The matter is that the Sages appeal to the a fortiori argument limited by the so-called *dayo* principle. As a result, any reasoning of the form

P is more R than Q is R; Q is R enough to be S; then P is R enough to be S

"P is R"  $\geq$  "Q is R"; "Q is R"  $\geq$  "S is R"; then "P is R"  $\geq$  "S is R"

is not valid for the Sages. There is no analogy with the ordering relation  $\geq$ ."

Here again, ironically, you judge the matter at hand in relation to *your own* erroneous interpretation of my formula "P is more R than Q is R; Q is R enough to be S; then P is R enough to be S" as meaning "'P is R'  $\geq$  'Q is R'; 'Q is R'  $\geq$  'S is R'; then 'P is R'  $\geq$  'S is R'," saying that "There is no analogy with the ordering relation  $\geq$ ." This has nothing to do with my account, but constitutes a criticism of your account!

But anyway, it is untrue to say that the Talmud does not indulge in quantitative analogies (i.e. making inferences based on quantitative sameness or difference), or that a fortiori argument is "not valid" for the Sages. As I show in my books, *Judaic Logic* and *A Fortiori Logic*, and everyone who has studied Mishna and Gemara well knows, the Talmud is replete with quantitative analogy and with a fortiori argument, and the Sages effectively consider such arguments in principle quite valid since they resort to them, even if they raise occasional objections to particular arguments.

You make authoritative statements as if you know something, but you give zero evidence in support of your claims. Where is the scientific research on which you base those senseless denials? Do you think your *mere say-so* has any worth whatsoever? All my statements are based on *detailed rigorous research* which anyone can verify by reading the books or papers I have written and published on this subject. And

I have done a great deal of research—original research that no one else has done. But of course, you are too lazy to look at the evidence before speaking. This is more dishonesty on your part.

7. Having shown your technical and theoretical incompetence in logic, logic history and Torah logic, let me now turn to your pretensions of being a scientist or speaking in the name of science. You write:

“we find not a scientific research in the strict sense, but the excerpts from those books. So, there is no introduction, where the author would formulate his goals, research methodology, etc. There are no conclusions, where the author would say a couple of words about results of his research. There are no connections among sections at all. Scientific paper is a genre that strongly differs from the books distributed for free in the Internet. There must be a good composition with introduction, conclusion, etc.”

Here, you are implying that XXX is a scientific journal with specific standards regarding formal presentation of material, say like *Nature*. First, let me reply that looking at the articles in English in the couple of issues that I have of XXX, I do not see these lofty standards adhered to. To me, this journal is intended to house *thought-provoking* articles addressed to a rather Jewish audience which is intellectually attached both to secular science and to Judaism.

Second, contrary to what you suggest, the paper is not merely composed of “excerpts” from the book *A Fortiori Logic*. As I wrote to the Editor when I submitted the paper to him, it “took me about 12 hours to write” and it was “not a mere cut and paste from my book,” but “an original paper. Some of the material was copied verbatim, but some I rewrote especially.” So here again you are wrong.

Third, you perhaps do not know that I was invited to contribute an article to this publication (XXX). I did not send in an article on my own initiative, in the hope of getting it published and thus being ‘vindicated by my peers’. *I never do this* – precisely because I do not consider people like you, the writer of this scandalous hatchet job you call a review, to be my peers. I know the value of my work independently – I certainly do not need *your worthless confirmation* of it. I am a teacher, not a pupil, for the likes of you. This is not conceit on my part; it is knowledge of fact (as I have proved above).

In any case, the following is what I wrote to the Editor before I started writing the article in question:

As I recall, you proposed an article of about 20-page (XXX sized pages). Are there any other technical specifications I should know about? As regards the content, what I have in mind at this stage (granting space) is simply to:

- give some basic facts about the formal aspects of a fortiori argument, and its history and geography;
- describe the most important a fortiori debate in the Mishna (Baba Qama 2:5), which introduces the 'dayo' principle in Talmudic hermeneutics;
- describe and criticize the Gemara take on this debate, and some later commentaries on it;
- present a brief exposé of research on a fortiori argument in the Tanakh, the Mishna and the Gemara.

On the whole, then, my idea is to summarize the main aspects of my new book, selecting the topics of most likely interest to your readers, i.e. to a religious Jewish audience with a scientific bent of mind.

Please confirm your interest in such an article as here described, so I can start work on it. If you have any requests or conditions, please tell me about them now.

He replied that he approved of this project. As you can see, I did not manage to get all this information into the paper, but had to content myself with much less. Note well my description of the assumed readership. If you are looking for a formal scientific document, the book called *A Fortiori Logic* is it. There you will find ample description of scientific and historical goals, of methodology, of final conclusions. The paper submitted to XXX is not intended to play that role. As I say quite frankly in that paper, it is not possible to summarize the contents of a 700-page book in 20 pages:

The present paper is a very brief guide to that book, highlighting a few of its salient findings. It is of course impossible in the 20 or so pages of the present paper to summarize the 700 pages of the book. I strongly urge readers to study AFL, part 1, regarding formal issues, and AFL, part 2, regarding Jewish matters.

If you want to know what guided my choice of material for the paper, I can tell you. As regards general logic, it seemed most important to me to clearly show the difference between purely a fortiori argument, a crescendo argument, pro rata argument, and mere quantitative analogy, because, having studied the literature from antiquity to the present more thoroughly than anyone else, I found that this was a crucial

problem in people's conception and comprehension of a fortiori argument. As regards Judaic logic, I decided that what needed clarification for readers of XXX above all was the discussion between R. Tarfon and the Sages in Baba Qama 2:5.

All this is of course clearly stated in my paper, notably in the Abstract, which you apparently did not notice:

This paper first details the formal relationships and distinctions between purely a fortiori argument, a crescendo argument (which refers to proportional a fortiori argument), pro rata argument and quantitative analogy. These various forms of argument are often confused, so it is well to clearly describe and explain them. The author then uses these general findings to formally analyze the debate between R. Tarfon and the Sages in Mishna Baba Qama 2:5, in the course of which the important dayo principle is introduced. Thereafter, the author takes a look at the Gemara's take on this Mishnaic passage (in the Babylonian Talmud, Baba Qama 25a-b).

There was and is no reason for me to present this information in the rigid form of a 'scientific paper'. My object was to draw the attention of interested readers to these crucial issues and to stimulate them to further study. I was not and am not interested in narcissistic posturing, contrary to your baseless accusation, where you write:

"this paper is already published as a part of the book A Fortiori Logic (2013) written by the author which is a modification of his old Judaic Logic (1995). Both books are available for free in the Internet. Moreover, the author considers this recent paper in XXX just as an advertisement of his A Fortiori Logic. So, the only idea of the Introduction is that A Fortiori Logic is "a novel, wide-ranging and in-depth study". It has "a great many new theoretical insights". And the paper is "a very brief guide to that book". Such self-estimations that my book is a very good study and please read my guide to that great book cannot be allowed in any scientific paper. This concerns not only usual modesty that is ever expected, but also the fundamental principles of science that any work is reviewed and evaluated rather by others.

A Fortiori Logic is not a mere "modification of" my book Judaic Logic, as you claim, obviously trying to downplay it. A Fortiori Logic makes very many important corrections, clarifications and expansions to Judaic Logic (see AFL 33.1). That both books are available for free in the Internet is proof that my wish is to promote knowledge using today's technology without thought of financial profit – it is ridiculous for you to present this as something with negative implications.

You also accuse me of submitting the paper to XXX as just "an advertisement" for my book A Fortiori Logic. This too is base insinuation on your part – if I mention the book to the readers of the paper, and indeed urge them to read it, it is because the book contains a great deal of valuable information not included in the highlights given in the paper. It would have been wrong for me to give the impression that what is found in the paper covers the subject.

You continue your gratuitous insults, suggesting that I am boastful and lack "modesty" when I say that A Fortiori Logic is "a novel, wide-ranging and in-depth study" with "a great many new theoretical insights". How else could I describe it, if that is the true description of it? It becomes evident that you are actually jealous of this achievement and wish to suppress it by all means possible to you. One may well wonder why. Many people would benefit from this article, even if you don't want to.

Some people rejoice when they see another person achieve something good or great; while others are made to feel small and wasted and they react with malice. What creative work have you done in your life? Are you perhaps a second-rate sophomore student trying to impress someone? Or are you a failed lecturer or professor driven by dreary antipathies he does not understand? I do not know, so I can only guess at your motives. Do I know you? Do you bear a grudge against me? It is interesting that you have kept your identity concealed from me even though I have requested its disclosure.

You start your grotesque 'review' by saying "I strongly recommend to reject this paper for many reasons," and you end it similarly by saying "To sum up, the paper cannot be published in any scientific journal for many reasons: composition, readability, theoretical weakness, etc." What is interesting is that nowhere in the whole of your essay do you give *one word* of praise, or concede *one admission* that anything of value is to be found in the submitted paper, or for that matter in the book it is based on!

Now, isn't that suspicious? One would think that the three long years of research and writing produced *something* good for logic science and history, and for Torah study. But no – you were focused only on

looking for faults. And as I have shown above, the “faults” you have found were only your own – none of the reasons you give for rejection of the article stand up to scrutiny.

What is clear is that you are not driven by reason, by love of truth, by love of scientific knowledge, or even by love of Torah, but by unstated petty personal considerations. Moreover, your knowledge and skill in logic, in science and history, and in Torah, are far below your personal estimation of them. Indeed, I would rate your brief essay as the most vacuous piece of writing I have ever come across; and I have analyzed very many in my career, so that is quite a distinction for you to have earned.

Avi Sion

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## RETORT #2 TO THE ANONYMOUS CRITIC

Sir, I have just received your (untitled, unsigned) reply to my Retort of Sept. 9, 2014 to your earlier “review” of my paper called “About A Fortiori Argument, in General and in Judaism.”

In this new essay, you propose three lame excuses for your preceding tract. Truly, one can apply to you the statement of Proverbs: “*But a scorner heareth not rebuke*” (13:1).

1. To my complaint that your interpretation, of my formula (for positive subjectal a fortiori argument) “P is more R than Q is R; Q is R enough to be S; then P is R enough to be S” as “P is  $R \geq Q$  is R; Q is  $R \geq S$  is R; then P is  $R \geq S$  is R” – all you manage to reply is the lame excuse that “*On p. 7 there is the table... where Avi uses the symbol  $\geq$  in the way I said.*” Does this constitute a credible “*counterargument,*” as you claim?

The fact that I use the relationship “ $\geq$ ” in my work certainly does not mean that I adhere to your moronic interpretation of the said a fortiori argument as “P is  $R \geq Q$  is R; Q is  $R \geq S$  is R; then P is  $R \geq S$  is R.” This interpretation, as I said in my first Retort, has nothing to do with me and is indeed repeatedly disapproved by me. First, because “S is a predicate (of Q, then of P) in the said propositions, whereas you represent it as a subject (of R);” and second, because a fortiori argument cannot be reduced as you attempt to a mere “inference from quantitative comparisons, i.e. argument of the form: if  $A \geq B$ , and  $B \geq C$ , then  $A \geq C$ .” What you have *still today* evidently not yet understood is the significance of the clause “**enough** R to be,” which is the crucial point of my formula.

Moreover, as I state in my first Retort, the fact that I use the relationship “ $\geq$ ” in my work does not make it “the central pillar of a fortiori argument. It is one item among others.” If you actually look at the use of this relationship in the validation process (stated in the original paper and quoted in full in section 2 of my Retort), you will see that it is simply found in:  $R_p \geq R_q$  and  $R_q \geq R_s$ , whence,  $R_p \geq R_s$ , where  $R_p$ ,  $R_q$  and  $R_s$  refer to the quantitative values of predicate R for P, Q and S, respectively. To say this is *very different* from saying as you do that “P is  $R \geq Q$  is R; Q is  $R \geq S$  is R; then P is  $R \geq S$  is R.” The fact that we both use the relationship “ $\geq$ ” does not make these two statements equal.

Furthermore, to repeat, my statement that “ $R_p \geq R_q$  and  $R_q \geq R_s$ , whence,  $R_p \geq R_s$ ” is *only part of* the validation process cited. What you keep failing to notice – which is the reason for my accusing you of lazily skimming over a text you are supposed to carefully read before pretending to comment on it – is that the full validation process involves crucially important **if-then** statements. It is these that clarify the said “enough” clause. It is because you have *not* closely scrutinized these if-then statements that you are able in your initial review to asininely propose that subjectal and predicatal arguments are the same, i.e. that one can convert one to the other. If you compared these statements in the two forms of the argument (both given in the submitted paper) you would be able to see for yourself that such conversion is logically impossible.

This is one of the reasons I have called you utterly incompetent.

Moreover, you are again here trying to suggest that my use of the relationship “ $\geq$ ” constitutes a fault in my work. As I explained in my first Retort, the statement in your initial review where you claim that “the relation  $\geq$  is unclear absolutely” is a ridiculous attempt to discredit a perfectly legitimate use of mathematical concepts in a logical context. There is no shame in my use of “ $\geq$ ” contrary to your insinuations. It is your insinuations which are shameful.

To see the absurdity of your whole approach, *consider a reviewer of a paper on physics submitted to the journal Nature who, upon reading, say, the formula  $x^2 = y^2 + z^2$ , freely “interprets” it as  $2x = 2y + 2z$  (because he does not understand what the square of a number is, and thinks it means multiplied by two), and on top of that he suggests (in a condescending tone, without giving any explanation or even*

*any reference) that the mathematical relations ‘=’ and ‘+’ are “unclear absolutely.”* Do you think such a reviewer would be allowed to retain one moment more his professional credibility? Your ignorance and stupidity are all too manifest.

2. I now turn to your second pseudo-intellectual “*counterargument*,” where you state:

*“Semantics assumes some abstract entities, e.g. trees, sets, etc. with some operations over them. Entities and operations over them are presented as models and semantics is a way of interpretation of propositions (theories) on models. Informal meaning of propositions is not a kind of logical semantics. For example, ‘All S are P’ is not a logical semantics for ‘SaP’, because there are not defined abstract entities S, P, and operations over them to interpret ‘SaP’ on models. Logicians must know what semantics is and which role models play there.”*

Needless to say, I well know that in symbolic logic, a symbolic formula like ‘SaP’ (syntax) may have a number of interpretations, such as ‘All S are P’ (semantics). But I do not deal in the silly artificial abstractions of symbolic logic, which I consider (as I said to you before, and demonstrate repeatedly in my book *A Fortiori Logic*, e.g. in Appendix 7) as a con game. Obviously, in your limited perspective on the field of logic, you think that making an inane statement like that makes you seem knowledgeable; but in fact it only shows up your ignorance once more.

I am not interested in the meanings of symbolic formulas; I deal in ordinary-language logic. I deliberately eschew symbolism as far as possible, regarding it as superficial and misleading. That is why I patiently explained to you in my first Retort that, in my approach to logic, the syntax is the form (the ‘All S are P’ interpretation in your view) and the analysis of the form (which I give in the validation process) is the semantics. For me, the only items needing symbols are the terms (e.g. S and P in ‘All S are P’) or theses (e.g. P and Q in ‘if P, then Q’); I avoid symbolizing relations (e.g. a is ‘SaP’ or ‘P→Q’). You call this “informal” – but this is in fact the traditional meaning of “formal logic.”

To me, any more abstract symbolic formula (such as ‘SaP’ or ‘P→Q’) can only be proposed as a *final* step, after all the logic of a topic has been sorted out. That is why I never in my book propose a reading like “P is more R than S, and (Q is Rs) → (Q is S), therefore (P is Rs) → (P is S)” (as part of the formula for a fortiori argument) – so as to set the example of restraint in symbolization (I propose in in my first retort to you as a reply to your moronic proposal). To do this *at the outset*, before one has understood the subject at hand and sorted out its logic, is utter foolishness, bound to lead to confusion and error.

But being exceptionally unintelligent you cannot understand all this, but are stuck in repeating platitudes you have barely heard and never fully digested. What is worse is that you have the *chutzpah* to lecture your betters as if you know something<sup>1</sup>. You ask: “*Why must I read this book?*” Well, the answer to that is simple: because you are very ignorant and need to make a serious effort to educate yourself. I doubt, however, that you will ever follow this kindly advice.

3. For your third “*counterargument*,” you state, regarding the issue of the number of a fortiori arguments in Aristotle’s extant works:

*The matter is that Avi does not cite works to support his claims. In this case he assumes that anybody must have read his book and found out that Aristotle used a fortiori 80 times. However, he did not cite this place of the book. Even if he did so, it would not be enough. He should have said where a fortiori was found in the Aristotle’s works in the way: Categories 1b10. It is*

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<sup>1</sup> Moreover, you speak about me throughout your reply as “Avi” – this is more *chutzpah* on your part; my name to you is Dr. Sion.

important. If somebody claims in his/her scientific paper that 80, it has to satisfy the reality and to be 80.

In **footnote 4** to my paper, I say clearly: “See AFL appendices 1, 2 and 4 for more details on these findings.” This footnote is at the end of the sentence: “If we look at usage statistics, we find this assertion clearly confirmed,” following which I list the statistics “Of the 80 cases found in Aristotle’s works, **50 are +s, 22 are –s, 5 are +p and 3 are –p.**” If you go to Appendix 4 (section 2), you will there find not only a reference (as you demand) for each and every case, but a full quotation of the case and an analysis of it. Therefore, your claim that I did not cite the place in my book where this is researched is false – more proof of your *totally unconscious* and *dishonest* approach to reviewing texts and to “counterargument.”

Furthermore, remember that your argument in your initial review was that some of the 80 instances mentioned might have occurred in pseudo-Aristotelian works. My reply was that the exact number does not matter – even if some of the books cited were not really authored by Aristotle (although, as I showed, they all probably were, and your criticism was wholly gratuitous), since the reason that I stated this statistic was to show that a fortiori argument *in all its forms* (the positive and negative, subjectal and predicatal moods) was extensively used in literatures from other cultures (in fact, as I show in the book, though do not bother to mention in the paper, in all the main world cultures, including India and China). Therefore, so long as some cases were found in Aristotle’s real works that belonged to these four moods of a fortiori argument, the point would be proved.

Indeed, I describe precisely in the research on Aristotle (and similarly in other researches) how the research was carried out and what the limits of accuracy of its results are. In truth, although I doubt that a case could be made to reduce the number of a fortiori arguments for Aristotle (as you suggest, on pure speculation), I do not doubt that more instances might yet be found. Indeed, I later found a number more, and listed one of them as a sample (see end of Appendix 4). Therefore, here again, contrary to your insinuations, my approach is not all dogmatic but fully open-minded and scientific. But of course, you know that – all you want to do is posture as superior.

So much for your pretentious three “counterarguments.” I note that these replies of yours address *only a small fraction* of the criticisms leveled against you in my first Retort. I take it this means that you were unable to contrive an answer to any of those criticisms you do *not* mention. This is typical of your method of work, that you gloss over anything you do not understand or cannot answer. You try to look savvy, but you are an ignoramus – and not only that, *a fake*.

I think it is very significant that you have to date not dared to disclose your identity to me. What is your name? What are you professionally, a student or a teacher? Tell me, so I can have a good laugh. If you are a teacher anywhere, G-d help your students for you are certainly not qualified to teach logic or any science. I have said this to the Editor, and I have advised him not to ever again use you as a reviewer for XXX. I hope he takes my advice. You simply do not have the qualifications for such tasks.

Avi Sion

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