

Parisian Sanhedrin: 1806

Questions asked by Napoleon:

1. Are Jews allowed to marry several wives?
2. Does the Jewish faith permit divorce? And is an ecclesiastical divorce valid without the sanction of civil court or valid in the face of the French code?
3. May a Jewess marry a Christian, or a Christian woman a Jew? Or does the Jewish law demand alliances between Jews only?
4. Are the French in the eyes of the Jews their brethren or their enemies?
5. In either case, what duties does the law prescribe for the Jews toward the French who are not of their faith?
6. Do those Jews who are born in France and who are treated as French citizens regard France as their native country, and do they feel themselves obligated to defend it, to obey its laws, and to submit to all regulations of the civil code?
7. Who appoints the rabbi?
8. What police jurisdiction have the rabbis over the Jews? And what judicial authority do they possess?
9. Does their prestige rest simply upon usage?
10. Are there trades which the law forbids the Jews to practice?
11. Does the Jewish law interdict usury, the practice of usury with their co-religionists; and
12. Does it prohibit or allow usurious practices with Gentiles?

Reprinted from Plaus, The Rise of Reform Judaism