

THE ACCOUNTS OF JEWISH TRAVELLERS TO PALESTINE  
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1. | Introduction.  | pp 1-10   |
| 2. | ג'לגל' ג'לגל' ג'לגל'   | pp 15-25  |
|    | The Account of Gedalia of Semiecs.                           |           |
| 3. | The Letter of Mordechai de Lattes concerning Abraham Rovigo. | pp. 26-30 |
| 4. | /11'X ג'לגל'   | pp. 37-47 |
|    | The Account of Simcha ben Joshua Haas of Salaciecs.          |           |

APPENDIX.

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Translation of Mordechai de Lattes letter.                     | pp. 48-68 |
| Prayer of the Chassidim composed by Menahem Mendel of Vitebak. | p. 69.    |

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

## INTRODUCTION.

Palestine has always occupied a unique position in the heart of the Jew. Early in Biblical times we find the Patriarch Jacob expressing his love for the Land: "Bury me with the bones of my forefathers" (Gen. 49.29) "When your mother will die bury her next to me," says Tobit (tobit 4,5). This love was not quenched when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. On the contrary, this love grew stronger in the heart of the Jew.... Every corner, every tree recalled unto him the sufferings of his people. Every rock and stone aroused his spirit with the desire to build once more a Jewish home and to restore the glory that once was Zion's. As a result each generation produced great and famous men who could no longer contain themselves. Overcome by this love for the Land of their forefathers, they left their homes and families comfort and peace to pray at the graves of the Saints and Prophets. They faced much hardship of travel and inconvenience but finally succeeded in reaching their goal.

Among the pilgrims we find many who have left their travels in poetry. Others have left us interesting stories concerning the places they visited. Coupled with these stories, are accounts of the condition of the land and of the people as well as directions for traveling to Palestine, which would inform their brethren dispersed throughout the four corners of the earth as to the conditions of the country. The majority of these stories are found printed in the form of letters

1. Eisenstein - Preface to his היסטוריה של ארץ ישראל
2. Jehuda Halevy -- הקדמה לפרשת השבוע

## HISTORY

The proximity to Turkey and to the city of Saloniki, the headquarters of the Sabbatian sect, lent particular intensity to the sectarian movement in Poland; the main center of the movement came to be in Podolia. The agitators and originators of these sects were recruited partly from among the obscure masses, partly from the Kabbalists, the end of the seventeenth century, a Lithuanian Jew by the name of Zadok, a plain, ignorant man, who had been an innkeeper, began to prophesy that the Messiah would appear in 1695. About the same time a more serious propagandist of the Messiah Idea appeared in the person of Chayim Malach. Having resided in Turkey, where he had come into contact with the Sabbatians, Malach returned to Poland and began to muddle the heads of the Jews. He secretly preached that Sabbetai Zevi was the Messiah, and that like Moses, who had kept the Israelites in the desert for forty years before bringing them to the Promised Land, he would rise from the dead and redeem the Jewish people in 1706, forty years after his conversion.

Chayim Malach's propaganda proved successful, particularly amongst the Jews of Podolia and Galicia. He was soon joined by another agitator, Jehudah the Saint from Shidlitz. Having studied Practical Kabbala in Italy, Judah the Saint returned to his native land and began to imitate the studious "Yeshiva bachurim" into this hidden and forbidden wisdom. He soon won to him many adherents, who

1. Dubnow's History of Jews in Russia and Poland pg. 208

2. Ibid pg. 208

3. In Polish it is called Sabbetai Zevi, or share this file. (Dubnow - Ibid footnote pg. 208)

called themselves the "Hasidim," the Pious Ones. The members of this sect engaged in Ascetic exercises; In anticipation of the Messiah, they made public confession of their sins and inserted mystical prayers in their liturgy. Hayim Malach in joining this sect, brought over many of his Sabbatian followers. The number of these Hasidim became so large, that the Orthodox Rabbis became alarmed and began to persecute them. Under the effect of these persecutions, the leaders of this sect started propaganda for a mass immigration towards Palestine, there to welcome in triumph the approaching Messiah.

Many Jews were carried away by this propaganda. In the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, a troop of one hundred and twenty pilgrims started on their way under the joint leadership of Jehudah the Saint and Chayim Malach. The emigrants travelled in groups by way of Austria, Germany and Italy, stopping in the various cities, where their leaders, dressed, after the manner of penitent sinners, in white shrouds delivered fiery exhortations, in which they announced the speedy arrival of the Messiah. The lower classes and the women were greatly impressed by the speeches of the vigorously ascetic Judah. On the road the Polish wanderers were joined by other groups of Jews, desirous of visiting the Holy Land, so that the number of travellers reached 1300 souls. One party of emigrants, led by Chayim Malach was dispatched with the aid of charitable Jews of Vienna, from that city to Constantinople. Another party, headed by Jehudah the Saint travelled to Palestine by way of Venice.

The eighteenth century was an important one for Palestine. The Palestinian settlement, which had been greatly decreased by the oppression of Ibn Faroukh was filled in a short time due to the untiring efforts of the "Shluchim" or emissaries sent by the various institutions in Palestine; to collect money for their support. The zeal of these men aroused the desire in the hearts of many to leave their own lands and to settle in Palestine. Especially did this desire to go to Palestine become enhanced through the publicization of the various debates concerning Sabbethai Zebi and his followers. This heresy served to strengthen the belief in the coming of the Messiah even in those who did not believe in Sabbethai Zebi. Also, a group of Russian Jews under the leadership of Jehuda the Saint of Shidlitz, left for Palestine towards the end of the 17th century.

When this group arrived in Jerusalem, they immediately set about erecting for themselves homes, relying upon the promise made to them by their German brethren. They even went so far as to reopen the Synagogue of Maimonides, as well as to borrow much money at a high interest rate. However, this money was forthcoming in the amounts necessary for the community to maintain itself. The interest kept rising and at one time they were threatened with the expulsion by their creditors unless they sold their houses and paid back their debts. Nevertheless, people were found in Austria who tried to help them with their difficulties. A group of Austrian Jews headed by Samson Wertheimer, Court Jew of Leopold I and Joseph I of Austria tried to gather pledges in order to pay off this debt at once as well as to strengthen the community so that they would never fear utter dissolution. But this plan came to naught. Samson Wertheimer lost all of his fortune and the plan could not be carried out. In 1711, the creditors tore down the homes built by this group as well as the Synagogue. The heads of the community had to flee in order to save themselves.

In general, the conditions improved, for in the interim, the government ceased giving the far-off provinces to officials to deal with as they saw fit. The government itself set about ruling these places with a watchful eye. On account of this, political conditions improved so much that the numbers of Jews in the four principal cities, Jerusalem, Acre, Hebron and Haifa, increased. With the help



of the emissaries, who from time to time went about collecting funds, the Yeshivahs grew in number, and their Rabbis became known throughout the four corners of the Earth, even the study of the Kabbala, which had dwindled after the death of Isaac Luria, began to blossom forth once more.<sup>1.</sup>

About 1747, the Ashkenazic community was once more organized. Five years later, 1752, we find a small thriving community with famous men as its leaders.<sup>2.</sup> R. Hayim Yeruham of Vilna, R. Abraham Gershon Kitzover, brother-in-law of the Besht and others. This community was nevertheless a very small one and for some unknown reason it disappeared after twenty years. Those that remained became associated with the Sephardic community and received their support from them.

The Chassidim, followers of the Besht, and not of Judah the Saint, who settled in Palestine in 1703, left a more substantial settlement in Palestine. Although the founder of the movement, Israel Baal-Shem made three attempts to get to Palestine, something always cropped up to detain him. In fact, at one time, he almost succeeded, getting in fact, as far as Constantinople, but had to turn back. Nevertheless, many of his followers did go there, settled and left behind them a colony which exists until the present day. There were many reasons for their going to Palestine foremost of which was the desire to hasten the Redemption.<sup>4.</sup>

The first of the Hassidim to go to Palestine was Menahem Mendel of Vitebak. His life in Hordek, Lithuania, had been devoted to the

1. De Lattes' letter on Abraham Rovigo in the Appendix.

2. Luncz -- 0'64-17, Vol XI, pg. 39

3. Please respect copyright; do not save, print, or share this file.

4. Horetsky 117-011, Jewish Institute of Religion pg. 65



teaching of Hassidism which he had learned from his teacher Dor Ber, the Magid of Mesritz. Among his pupils were many who were later destined to become famous; Israel Politsker, Abraham Ha Kohen Kolisher and Shneur Zalman of Ladi, founder of "  $\tau \ddot{\alpha} \pi$  " chassidism and author of " $\chi \psi \eta$ ". Menahem Mendel was a center of a controversy between his disciples and their opponents "

" in the town of Vitebsk. The feeling between these two groups ran so high that Menahem Mendel was put into "  $\alpha \tau \eta$  " by the Mithnagdim who caused him no end of trouble. He made many overtures for peace, but to no avail. As a result, he and his followers decided to leave Europe and settle in Palestine. In the month of Adar, 1767, he and his followers, Israel Politsker, Abraham Kolisher, and others, numbering some 300 men, women and children, left Lithuania and set sail for Palestine. After much hardship and danger, they arrived in Palestine in the month of Ebul, 1767. They went to Safed where they began their community.

Safed since the days of the Inquisition, had become the center of Kabbala and mysticism. Near Safed, in Meron was the tomb of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai<sup>1</sup>, purported to be the founder of Kabbala and author of the "  $\gamma \alpha \lambda \lambda \alpha$  ". Here, too, dwelt at one time, the great Kabbalists Isaac Luria and his pupil Hayim Vital, Moses Cordovero, Solomon Alkabez, Joseph Karo, ~~Moses~~ Alsheikh, Elijah Vidas and many others. The Chassidim looked upon this city as one of the holiest in the Holy Land - "the beauty of Safed is greater than

1. <sup>And</sup> cf. pg. 68

that of any other city in Palestine. To this place came Menahem Mendel and his followers and dwelt. They found there many good houses, which were placed at their disposal. The city was very big, and many opportunities presented themselves to them in the way of making a living. However, there was one difficulty, they could not understand the speech of their fellow Jews and could not make themselves understood. Although there were many varieties of food to be found in the city, yet everything was dear, due to the locusts and a war that was going on. Their funds, soon became depleted causing much starvation. As a result, Menahem Mendel chose Israel Polisker to return to Europe for funds. One can imagine the grief that was his when called upon to leave the dwelling place of his desire and hope. Nevertheless, his Rabbi had chosen him for this holy work and he must obey. Israel Polisker did go and succeeded in raising enough money to support the community for a long time. In honor of the support received from Europe for the Holy Land, Menahem Mendel and his disciple composed a special benediction.

If the Baal Shem did not merit the right to go to Palestine, his great grandson, Nahman, grandson of his daughter Feige did. Nahman of Bratslav was born in Nisan 1772, the very year that the Magid Dov Ber died. It was at a time when Chasidism was at its lowest ebb. Chasidim were driven from city to city, and their teachings banned. It was Nahman's duty to restore it to its former glory, a task which he eventually accomplished.

1. Letter of Israel Polisker in 1767 in Hordetsky--
2. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

To Nahman, Palestine became the object of his deepest love and veneration. "To understand Chasidism one must breathe the air of Palestine." He lived and breathed Palestine, his thoughts were of Palestine and many of his "bon mots" were of the land. "The absolute fountain of wisdom and reason is found in Palestine." "There a man can attain to the highest degree, to be like Him, praised be His Name" "Whosoever wishes to be a true Jew, must go to Palestine." "Palestine and the Torah are one."

Surrounded by turmoil and strife, Nahman felt that there was only one place for him to go, in order to revive his drooping spiritual and physical powers. That place was Palestine. Immediately after Passover, in the 18 day of the month Iyar, 1798, he left for Palestine in the company of a group of Ashkenazic and Sephardic travellers. He travelled incognito, dwelling in Constantinople for a time, ragged and dirty, so that no one would recognize him. However, on Rosh Hashonah Eve of that year, 1798, he arrived at Haifa. He was cordially received by the children of those Chassidim who had come to Palestine with Menahem Mendel of Vitebak and invited to take up his residence in either Safed or Tiberias. He refused, explaining that he wanted to be left alone for the High Holy Days promising them, however, that he would soon after return to them. He returned after Succoth and took up his residence in Tiberias. This city had become the center of Chassidism in Palestine under the leadership of Menahem Mendel of Vitebak and his disciple Abraham Kolisker who was still living when Nahman arrived there. Babbi

3. Minkin--Romance of Hasidim pg: 247

4. Ibid pg. 247

Abraham showed him great honor upon his arrival and placed at his disposal every means at his command.

The effect of his visit was overwhelming. He felt himself swept away by an emotion he had never felt before. Chassidim came to him, eager for a new and refreshing word from the descendant of the Baal Shem, but his emotions proved too strong for words. He was once asked to give an interpretation of a certain passage in the Torah, but he was so overcome with emotion, that the words stuck in his mouth. He dwelt there throughout the winter, giving himself over completely to the study of the Kabbala, and visiting the grave of Simeon ben Yohai from time to time. Here amongst the Kabbalists of renown, he found what his soul most desired, here he felt its essence and drank it in as a thirsty traveller drinks cool and refreshing water.<sup>2.</sup>

After an absence of less than one year, Nahman returned to his native land. He did not want to leave, feeling all the time that in Palestine alone could he dwell, only there could one find that exalted spirit, that flits and hovers between the two worlds. But his heart was given over and bound to the Chassidim he left behind him in the Diaspora, those young and eager souls who had flocked to him to be guided and inspired by some new teaching, some new interpretation. He, himself felt, that he was destined to awaken in them a new life of Chassidism, and believed in his power to do so. As a result, he returned.

Physically, he returned, spiritually, never. He brought with

1. *Shin'ei Tora* pg. 8a

2. *Winkin-- Romance of Hasidism* pg. 244

him the land, the air and the secret of its holiness. Upon returning he exclaimed, "My only place is Palestine. Whenever I travel it is for the sake of Palestine. All the strength and energy, and life that I possess is because I have been in Palestine." He even went so far as to command his disciples to forget everything that he had taught them before going to Palestine.<sup>1</sup> He looked upon Palestine as the great source from which Israel drew upon for its strength and inspiration in the Diaspora. "Whoever wants to be a true Jew, must travel to Palestine. Although there may be many hindrances, let him get rid or ignore them and go there." His pupils in all of his sayings a symbolical love for Palestine. They once asked him if meant by his utterances, Palestine, symbolically. He became enraged and replied to them: "My meaning is Palestine literally, and actually, its streets and houses."<sup>2</sup>

In his book of prayers, *שמונה עשרה*, are many beautiful prayers among which is this gem, uttered before his departure for Palestine. "Make me and Thy people Israel worthy in the abundance of Thy mercy, that we may, sincerely, genuinely and earnestly yearn to go to the Land of Israel, and grant me the resolution to realize this craving of my heart. Thou alone knowest how great is my need of the Land, because of the distractions and confusions and imperfections which beset my life and remove me far from Thee. Therefore, my heart yearns and hungers for the land which is the source and fountain of our holy faith."

1. *שמונה עשרה*, pg. 153

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

No greater love for the country, with the exception of that prince in Israel, Jehuda Halevi, than Rabbi Nahman felt for Palestine, had any man. It was a mystic love which was bound up with the tenderest ties of his ecstatic heart. He had no sooner come back, when he longed to return to Palestine, but the condition of his health and the circumstances in which he was involved, prevented him from carrying out his wish.

Soon after a community of Habad Chassidim, followers of Shneur Zalman of Ladi, was founded at Hebron. In 1795, there came to Jerusalem, Safed and Tiberias a large group of disciples of the Vilna Gaon, R. Menahem Mendel, R. Israel of Shklov and R. Saadiah. They<sup>1.</sup> founded a settlement which remained until the present day.

In 1799, the political as well as the religious life of the community became endangered. At that time, Napoleon I went to Palestine and had already conquered a large part of the land, the coastal towns of Acre, Haifa and Joppa and almost reached Ramalah. He intended to conquer Jerusalem in a short while. At this time, it was whispered about that the Jews were united with the French against the Turks. This was false, but it made the Jews very uncomfortable. The Chief Rabbi Yom Tob Algazy appeared before the government and offered the aid of his community in digging ditches and strengthening the fortresses. It is recorded that the Chief Rabbi himself aided in the work. He spoke to his people and aroused them to work with greater energy and zeal. The weak and the aged he sent to the Wailing Wall to pray for the safety

1. Lunce --- Q' 477, Vol XI pg. 40



of the community. The community was spared, for that night Napoleon left Ramalah and returned to Jerusalem.

This period although visited by many thousands of pilgrims as well as permanent settlers is a poor and slim one in its writers of note. Our accounts are very spare although greatly diversified. In the period of 100 years, only five diaries of travellers have been left us, although at the end of this time, scholars, Jewish as well as non-Jewish outside of Palestine, became interested in the knowing of the land.

The books written on this period are:

1. *ספר היצחק* by Simcha benPesack from Bregasse.  
This book is not available in the United States, but is mentioned in R. Bobricht's "Bibliotheca Geographica Palastina" and by L. Zunz in "Biography of Palestine" appended to the English Translation of Benjamin of Tudela by A. Asher.
2. *ספר היצחק* by Gedalia of Semiecz--found in an Article by Zalman Rubashov in *א/בש* Vol II and treated in the thesis.
3. The letter of Mordechai de Lattes to Modena concerning Abraham Rovigo and his settlement in Jerusalem. This letter is printed in *א/בש* Vol VI in an article by Dr. Jacob Mann of the Hebrew Union College and treated in the thesis.
4. *ספר היצחק* by Joseph Sofer. This book is not available in the United States at present, but is translated in part in German by Dr. Kurt Wilhelm in his book



"Wege Nach Zion."

5. *דברי סימחה בן יושע* by Simcha ben Joshua. This book was first printed in Horodno, no date available. It was found in the *דברי יוסף בן יצחק* of J. D. Eisenstein, who prints it with certain deletions which he claims are plagiarisms from an earlier book by a Karaite David Jemachel. This book is treated in the thesis.

It is the plan of the author to examine these diaries and to give an accurate account of the travels of these men. The literature both primary and secondary will be examined and all scholarship made available insofar as possible. Also, the various movements towards Palestine, of which these men were a part will be discussed. The accounts will be arranged according to various aspects, economic, social, educational and political. Their motives for travel and the routes they took will also be treated. Each traveller and his account will be treated separately.

ה'תק"ט א"ש י"ג

The Account of Gedalia of Semiecz.

Gedalia of Semiecz was one of the disciples of Jehuda, the Saint who left Poland in 1699 with their wives and children and went to Palestine. Their course took them through Hungary and Germany. The prime motive for their journey was to bring about the advent of the Messiah through fasting self-castigating and bathing in the snow, praying weeping and shouting in Jerusalem.<sup>1.</sup> To the credit of Rabbi Jehuda it must be stated that he was successful in winning to his cause many people from Hungary, Moravia, Germania and Holland. Filled with hope, these Returners reached the walls of Jerusalem in 1701, after half of their number had died on the way due to sickness and oppression. On the Third day of their arrival, their leader took sick and died, he who was to have received the Messiah personally. Astonished and bewildered, many of his followers fled homewards. Only a small group remained, in spite of the persecutions inflicted upon them by the Jerusalem Rabbinate, who looked upon them as a Sabbatian<sup>2.</sup> sect.

As these persecutions increased, this group had to send forth its own emissaries to collect charity and to disprove the charges made against it. One of the emissaries was the author of the Book "Shaalul Shelom Yerushalaim. The book was a result of the many questions

1. ש"ת"ק pg 461 Vol II
2. " pg 462 Vol II

asked of him as he went about the cities of Europe collecting alms for the support of his brethren. In this book he set forth the impression of the Land during his stay there.

This book was first published in Berlin in 1716. And contains sixteen pages. Only two copies of this book exist today. One exists in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England. It was there that Moréts Steinschneider found it and translated it into German besides describing the movement. It is to be found in the "Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina Vereins" III (1880) pg. 226 ff. The other copy exists in the Rosenthal Library in Amsterdam. This copy was the one used by Zalman Rubashov in his article on in the *א/בש* (1922) pg. 461 ff. The author makes use of the article by Zalman Rubashov. There is, a very good history concerning these *ד'ת"ק* by S. Krauss in the Memorial Volume of H.P. Chajes pg. 51 ff. This book and its author also mentioned by Dr. Richard Gottheil in his article on "Jerusalem" in the Jewish Encyclopedia, as well as by Samuel Klein in his book on Palestine.®

The above references are made in connection with the arrival of Jehuda the Saint in Palestine and in his description of conditions and customs in Jerusalem in the eighteenth century. The book is also mentioned by A.M. Luncz in his book *א/בש*, Vol XI, page 47 In the introduction to his treatment of Mordechai de Latte's letter to ~~Mordechai~~ concerning Abraham Rovigo in *א/בש* Vol. VI, Dr. Jacob Mann refers to this book in his footnotes on pp. 60, 62, 63.

1. pp. 218, 219, 220 *תולדות הישוב היהודי בארץ ישראל*  
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Other bibliography on Gedalia and the followers of Jehuda

the Saint are:

הולדוץ המקובלים השוגרים והחסידי כהנא

Vol. I Odessa - 1913 - pg. 120

נחמא - שמואל יוסף Warsaw-1886--pg. 212

Jerusalem is a big city and has many market-places as well as a great population. There are many religious sects residing there due to its importance to the three great religions. However, it is ruled over by the Turks who are in the majority due to their religious alliance with the Arabs. The Christians in the city suffer just as much as the Jews, and have to pay taxes as well as the Jews. The only exempt persons are the lame and the blind, as well as the poor person who receives charity. A concession is made to the Jews concerning the collection of taxes, namely, taxes are not collected on the Sabbath and Festivals. As a result, the Jews walk abroad without<sup>1.</sup> fear and with great pride on these days. However, on the rest of the days, they would hide in their homes or in the homes of friends until the collector had left the city.

The community had to pay 500 Thaler per annum as their tax, besides this they had to pay an annual poll tax of two pieces of gold for every male over fifteen. If any individual was too poor to pay this official would have him seized and the community would be forced to redeem him. In order to be sure of his taxes, the Pasha would send his servants through the streets of the city in order to search for those who had not fulfilled their obligations. These taxes were collected in every city except Hebron, which was considered holy - because of the Machpalah and therefore exempt.

The streets of Jerusalem are very narrow, affording passage for only one horse or camel at a time. The beasts of burden are the mule and the camel while the horse is used only to ride upon and then only by the Turks and Arabs. The Jews and Christians must ride on mules.

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Soon after their arrival the group set about building about forty homes for themselves, and to remodel the old Ashkenazic Synagogue. They also built stone pits with which to catch rain water to be used for drinking purposes. These houses were built in the great courtyards of Jerusalem owned by the Turks who leased them to the Jews. The houses are constructed with flat roofs so that the rain could be caught on them and then passed through a drain leading to a cistern. The rain descends in the Winter months only, and must be stored away to be used in the Summer months. Sometimes, sufficient rain does not fall. As a result, fast days are decreed and much prayer is offered at the Wailing Wall. Even the waters of Shiloah near Jerusalem have been abandoned because they had become salty, although at one time they had been used for drinking purposes. Now the Arabs bathe in it.

The houses in Jerusalem lack stoves with which to keep their inhabitants warm during the Winter months. There are only baking stoves and these few indeed. Also window panes are missing. In the Winter these are boarded with smooth planks. In order to keep warm, big pots of copper or earthenware are filled with burning coals and used to warm the room as well as the dwellers therein. Snow is seldom found in Jerusalem, although in the year 1706, it did snow for the week in the month of Shevat. This snow when melted, became a source of salvation for the proceeding months had brought a drought to the country.

In general, the people are very economical about their food and in their daily lives due to the hardships of earning a living.  
an  
It was impoverished community and continually in debt. They had

very little food to eat even on the Sabbath. Although on this day they would make extraordinary sacrifices in order that the Sabbath would be celebrated in a manner befitting its sanctity. No mere chickens would satisfy them but doves had to be served as well as the "Chalmut" meal. This "Chalmut" was cooked in great ovens located in the market place, each family having its own pot in the oven. But in general, their lot was hard. First of all, there was a difficulty in understanding their neighbors, the Sephardim speaking Spanish, the Turks speaking Turkish, and the Arabs, Arabic. As a result their dealings were carried on in sign language. This also resulted in a serious state of unemployment. The only business that they could engage in was that of making wine, but even that proved futile, for the Moslems were forbidden to drink wine.

Not only were the Ashkenazim hurt by unemployment but the Sephardim just as well. They could not trade unless they travelled in great caravans. This was necessary because of the bandits who lurked on the highways. Furthermore, the leaders of these caravans would not stop on the Sabbath. Also, the trip to Constantinople was too great and too hazardous due to the ocean travel. However, some Jews had food stores and managed to eke out a living from them. But the storekeepers had to have Turkish partners to aid them in case of an attack by the Arabs or Turks. There were a few Jews from Morocco, who looked and dressed like the Arabs and talked their language. They travelled around selling whatever they could and buying barley and wheat. These they sold to the Jews in Jerusalem who used them to make bread.



Their bread was made of wheat and barley, for nothing more suitable grew in the land. One found in Palestine, many varieties of beans, much larger than those outside the country. They are not eaten whole but ground just as the wheat on account of the worms found in them. After they are ground, the worms are removed.

1. Most of the grinding is done in a mill worked by horses who push the millstones around. However, when pressing oil, camels are used instead of horses. Through irrigation, gardens may bloom during

2. the hot summer months. Sowing is done in the early winter and the first harvest takes place about Passover. Sometimes the crop is so good that there may be a double sowing and reaping in one year.

3. There are many fruits found in Palestine that are not found in the Diaspora notably, the carob.

The Jewish section of Jerusalem was divided into two camps; the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic. At this time (circa 1700) the Ashkenazic community was very small and very poor. When Rabbi Jehuda died, the Sephardic community had to bury him, the Ashkenazim being without a Chevra Kadisha of their own, - Rabbi Jehuda was buried in a Sephardic plot in the new cemetery. There were two cemeteries in Jerusalem. The older one lies to the south of the city and contains only caves without any markings on them or any information as to the people buried there. As a result very little is known about the people buried there. The other is a more recent one and is located on the Mount of Olives. There are found graves with stone monuments. No one may be buried there without the written permission of Kadi, who places a burial tax on the estate of the deceased. If the deceased man was poor there is no tax. The funeral procession follows the pall-

1. pg. 5b

2. pg. 6a

3. pg. 14a

4. pg. 3a

bearers to the gate of the city. There the Hazan chants the Kaddish. The procession then leaves the corpse which is then carried in a litter to the cemetery. At the cemetery, the pall-bearers march around the body seven times chanting prayers. Then a grave is hewed out of the soft rock and the body is lowered into it. Earth from this mountain is sent to people outside of Palestine to be sprinkled on their graves. There are on Mount of Olives a great many graves of holy men. These graves may be visited by paying a tax to the Kadi who has supervision over the sacred graves as well as over everything else.

The Sephardim dress in a manner similar to the Arabs except that their turbans must not be green, or white. However, on the Sabbath, they wear white turbans mixed with some other color. They are permitted to wear white garments on the Sabbath but put on over these white garments a long black cloak except on the Sabbath preceding Tisha Bav, when the Sephardim are dressed all in white.

The Ashkenazim are dressed all in white every Sabbath. The Jews wear very high hats and must wear blue sandals. Jew or Christian may wear any color garment except green, which is permitted to Moslems, only. As a result, the Jew and Christian suffer from the attacks of the Moslem youngsters. The Christians sometimes are able to bribe the officials against those rules for they receive much money from the outside. This is often impossible for the Jew who received very little from his coreligionists in the Diaspora.

The Wailing Wall is situated near the top of Mount Moriah, on the site of the former Temple. On the ~~west~~, where the Holy of

Holies was situated, stands a Mosque, the Mosque of Omar and no one but a Moslem may approach it. Here dwells the Kadi who was well disposed towards the Jews and let them carry on near the Wailing Wall as much as they desired for the Jews were not allowed to approach the Wailing Wall except on Tisha B'av and then only through a special gate.

The bath in Jerusalem is a beautiful one, with many rooms. Although it is a bit expensive, many people go there because of the very fine hot water and steam baths. However, there are many attendants who have to be tipped. Should one attempt to wash and clean himself without their aid, these attendants would raise a hue and cry, sometimes injuring the person. At one time people refused to go to these baths on account of these evils but returned when the outrages had subsided.

In 1703, the people of Jerusalem, rebelled against the vile practice of the Pasha, refusing to open the gates of the city for him. He could not attack the city because the city was considered holy even for the Moslems. However, he surrounded it and let no one in or out of the city. This caused a general famine in the city. The Pasha went away, but returned the next year. He and two other men were allowed to enter the city to collect taxes. This was repeated every year until 1707, when the people sent a message to the Sultan, explaining that their action was prompted by the corrupt dealings of the Pasha. In 1707, a strong army descended upon the city which had been divided by civil war against Nakib the Governor. But Nakib surrendered and order was once more restored.

At one time, a new Kadi was appointed to rule over the city. He was a very harsh man, and passed very stringent law against Jew and Christian alike. He forbade the wearing of white clothes and ordered the killing of all dogs. He then ordered the Jews and the Christians of the city to drag the carcasses outside of the city. This became so onerous that many of the inhabitants refused to leave their homes. They were, however, forced out of their homes by the economic necessities of life--and subjected to much humiliation. The Kadi also imprisoned the Sephardic Nasi, because he had visited the grave of Samuel without having received his permission. So bad was he that even his own people rebelled against him. But he apologized for his actions, blaming his adviser who had ill-advised him. The people did not accept his apology and stoned his house. He fled from the city and was never heard from again.

Hebron is a day's trip away from Jerusalem. This trip must be made with a strong guard because of the bandits who lie in ambush on the road. (In Hebron the Megillah is read on the 14th and 15th days of Adar, because of insufficient knowledge as to the location of the original city.) Many sacred graves are found there, especially the Machpelah of the Patriarchs. Here too, a fee must be paid for merely praying near it, because no one is allowed to enter, not even the Moslems. There are two interesting stories connected with Hebron. One, concerns a Pasha who lost a golden vessel in the Machpelah. He sent an Arab to retrieve it, but the Arab died. After sending a number of Arabs, who were hauled up dead, he sent down a Jew who recovered the vessel for him. The

other story is about the poor man who arrived on Yom Kippur Eve so that Hebron could have a Minyan. This man was supposed to have been the Prophet Elijah.<sup>2</sup> From that time on, all travellers who spent the night in Hebron, be they rich or poor were fed from community funds. However, many of these visitors would donate money to keep the coffers filled.

There is no wall around Hebron, as there is around Jerusalem. Neither is there ever any water shortage there due to flowing water. The houses of Hebron are built just as the house of Jerusalem, the same rocks and the same flat roofs. A rich Turk from Jerusalem, once tried to build a water-carrying system from Hebron to Jerusalem, but this plan was frustrated by another Turk who was jealous of this man.

Hebron is situated between Jerusalem and Egypt and is a stopping off place, as a result, there are markets in Hebron where all manner of foods and goods can be bought.

The remnant of Jehudah the Saints group lasted for quite some time after the death of their leader although the suspicion of heresy clung to them for a long time. They tried everything within their power to dispel these suspicions even banishing one of their group, Hayim Malach, for having openly espoused the Sabbathian Heresy. They later were joined by a group of Kabbalists from Italy and Poland under the leadership of Abraham Rovigo of Modena and jointly founded a school<sup>3</sup> for the study of Kabbala.

2. pg. 11a

3. pg. 12a

cf. Authors account of Abraham of Rovigo pg.



This account of Abraham Rovigo comes to us from a letter written by Mordechai de Lattes to Modena. We have nothing more concerning de Lattes. The letter, reprinted in Vol. VI. pp. 59-84, is the original one which was sent to Modena, and it was from Modena that the Jewish bookseller, David Frankel of Vienna got it. It is now found in the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. It was written in 1702. In all probability, de Lattes sent more letters to Modena, but at the present time, they have not been found. This letter is treated by Dr. Jacob Mann in an article, המכתב למוזיאון פדוה.

Three pages of this letter are the only ones in existence.

At the head of this group which went to Jerusalem stood  
3.  
Abraham Rovigo. Very little is known about this Kabbalist. It  
is to be stated, however, that while in Jerusalem, he was not  
satisfied with what he found there. The plight of the Ashken-  
4.  
azim, as well as the conditions met with by his own group dis-  
appointed him. He set sail for Europe, a heartbroken man, in 1706,  
5.  
in order to collect funds for his "Yeshivah" with Chayim Hazan.  
He did not return to Palestine, and in the 29th day of Kislev 1713,

- 1./115 Vol. VI. pg. 70

2. Ibid pg. 59

3. Ibid pg. 65

3. Ibid pg. 65  
4. *ibid* ed. Rubashov, pp. 481 ff.

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1.  
he died.

The man who received Abraham Rovigo when he came to Jerusalem was Jehuda Loeb Cohen. Rovigo dwelt in his home until he found one for himself. He is mentioned as one of the ten scholars chosen for the Yeshivah. He was the son of Rabbi Ephraim Hakohen of Offen, author of "ד' 79 א" printed in Sulzbach 1688-9. On the 18 of Siven 1684, he left his home and reached Jerusalem in 1685. He remained in Jerusalem a full year and then returned to Europe when he heard that Offen had been freed from the rule of the Turks. While in Offen he caused his father's book to be printed and then returned to Jerusalem. It is difficult to determine whether Jehuda Lieb Cohen was in Jerusalem for fourteen years, but we do know that he returned once more to Europe at some unknown time, this time as an emissary for the collection of funds for the Ashkenazic community in Jerusalem. In 1702, he set sail for Jerusalem in the company of Abraham Rovigo.

Mordechai Ashkenazi is the author of the book "ד' 71 א" 1702. Much is not known about him except that he left his home to complete his studies in Italy. He became Abraham Rovigo's outstanding student of the Kabbala. He lived only three weeks after his arrival in Jerusalem, dying from the plague that decimated the city.

1. According to E. Carmoly "ד' 71 א" Vol II, pg. 113, Rovigo had been in Jerusalem before 1702. In 1700 he went to Europe to collect funds and after five years he returned to Palestine where he died. Even Frumkin, pg. 101 claims that he made two visits to Palestine, but adds that he died in Europe. According to our account, we find that he did not come to Jerusalem until 1702. After a few years he had to leave the country, but there is no proof from our source that he had ever returned.



Very little is known about the rest of the people who went to Jerusalem with Abraham Rovigo. We shall try to give a short biographical sketch of the ten scholars selected to study in the Yeshivah of Abraham Rovigo.

1.

1. Chayim Hazan the son of Rabbi Joseph Hazan. His father, Rabbi Joseph, was one of the people who left Smyrna after the earthquake in 1688 and settled in Jerusalem. Rabbi Chayim wrote a book of sermons on the Pentateuch which he called "ש"ן חיים" printed in Venice in 1693. In 1712, he was chosen to become one of the ten students in the Yeshivah of Abraham Rovigo, and later, because of the hardships which befell the Jews of Jerusalem, he left with Abraham Rovigo for Europe in order to collect funds for the maintenance of the Yeshivah. After many years together, Rovigo and Hazan parted, Rovigo returning to his birthplace in Italy, Hazan going to Poland. He died in the city of Mir, Lithuania, while collecting funds for the aid and support of the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

2. Rabbi Joshua, the son-in-law of Jehuda the Saint was another student of Abraham Rovigo. He came to Jerusalem in 1700 together with his father-in-law and his followers. He was one of the few men who helped Abraham Rovigo to establish his Yeshivah. His name appears on the letter sent to Breslau from Jerusalem, appealing for help for the Ashkenazim who had assumed obligations

1. Frankin *ד'לשון חכמים* Vol.II pp. 102-103

which they could not fulfill. He was forced to leave Jerusalem on account of the hardships and took up his residence in Mannheim, Germany, in the home of Asher Laemmle. At the home of Laemmle was a study hall in which ten scholars studied continually, similar to the Yeshivah of Abraham Ravigo. However, these scholars were suspected of heretical Sabbatian learnings by Jacob Emden, especially Rabbi Joshua who had but recently returned from Jehuda<sup>1</sup> the Saints sect in Jerusalem. He writes: "In Tammuz 1725, a group of witnesses testified in Mannheim against those who dwell in school (Asher Laemmle) as being evildoers, and haughty persons. They are the remnant of the sect of Rabbi Jehuda the Saint that boils in its own blood because of its abominations and desecrations.

----- The instigator of all this is Rabbi Joshua, son-in-law of Rabbi Jehuda, who has feigned repentance and has cast himself in front of the Synagogue to be trampled upon, but the worm is still in his hand." That is, he has not repented. Emden perhaps was a little too hard on Rabbi Joshua and his colleagues. Who knows but that the willingness of Rabbi Joshua to humble himself may have been a result of the oppressions of the Jews in Mannheim.

3. Rabbi Nathan Nata Mannheim, Rabbi and Chief Dayan of the Rabbinical Court in Hagenan and author of "אור חיים" in collaboration with his friend Rabbi Jacob of Vilna. The book was printed under the title of "אור חיים" and appeared in Frankfort-on-Main 1709. In the preface to his book, Rabbi Nathan tells of the tranquility and peace in his home in Hagenan, and his attraction

1. Jacob Emden -- Please respect copyright; do not save, print, share, or repost this file.  
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to the sect of Jehuda the Saint. After the death of the leader, many of the pilgrims scattered, some returning to their original homes, others going to different countries. He, however, remained in Jerusalem and became one of the scholars in the Yeshiva of Abraham Rovigo. His name also appears among the signatures on the letter sent to Breslau with his colleague Rabbi Joshua. On account of the hardships which the Ashkenazic Community experienced, he too was forced to go to Europe for funds. He went to Mannheim and went to study in the Yeshivah of Asher Laemmle, who also helped him publish his book. He and Rabbi Joshua, son-in-law of Jehuda the Saint were reunited in this Yeshivah.

4. The last of these ten scholars about whom we have some knowledge, is Moses of Semiecz, brother of Gedalia, the author of the book " *Q'lehu' d'lehu' d'lehu'.*" Both he and his brother were instrumental in driving out of their sect, Chayim Malad, the Sabbatian. According to Gedalia, Moses had been a famous man in Poland, but the reason for his fame is not known.

The other five men (Jehuda Leeb Cohen having been treated before) were rather obscure and very little is known of them except that they were students of Abraham Rovigo. They are, Zanvil of Kalicz, Leeb of Opozno, Joseph of Biala, Solomon of Lukow, Mordecai de Lattes of Modena.

The "Aliyah" to Palestine by Jehuda the Saint and his followers in 1701, was echoed by a similar pilgrimage on the part of an Italian Kabbalist, Abraham of Rovigo of Modena. It is doubtful whether Jehuda the Saint, who was in Italy in 1678, did influence Rovigo, but in his voyage to the Holy Land Jehuda the Saint did pass through Italy, the account of which has been treated above. After the death of the Saint, his community became divided, many of them becoming converts to the other two Faiths. The better part of this group remained steadfast to the religion of their forefathers to it. To this group came Abraham Rovigo and followers, in the spring of 1702.

Abraham Rovigo was a wealthy Kabbalist who lived in the town of Modena. As was the wont of every Kabbalist, Abraham was interested in the advent of the Messianic Era. His home in Modena had always been open to every scholar, and in particular to every Kabbalist. At times, his generosity led him to welcome men who were Sabbathians secretly, but he is not to be reckoned as a member of the sect. Moses Hagis, known for his anti-Sabbathian fanaticism has nothing but praise for Abraham Rovigo.

When the news of Rabbi Jehuda, the Saint's pilgrimage to Palestine reached his ears, Abraham Rovigo decided to go there himself. He sent his outstanding pupil, Mordechai Ashkenazi to arrange for his voyage and to buy a house for him in Jerusalem. But Rovigo's enemies slandered him before the Pope causing him a temporary delay. Even his trusted pupil failed to carry out his mission and returned. The reason for the slander and the trial are not to be found, but we know that Abraham

was freed. As soon as he felt free to leave, he gathered his disciples about him and set sail on January 26, 1702. There were with him 25 people including the Pregnant daughter-in-law of Abraham Rovigo, and the pregnant wife of Mordechai Ashkenazi, as well as many children. It took them seven weeks in getting to Jerusalem.

The route taken by Abraham and his band was indeed a difficult one. They were also forced to suffer many hardships due to the pregnant women but they were determined to reach their goal and let nothing interfere with their desire. The company travelled from Modena to Leghorn where they were forced to wait until the Master, Abraham Rovigo, would join them. He had been detained by the Pope on account of the slander charge and had to remain behind until acquitted; This he did on the advice of the influential men of the city who counselled him not to flee but to stay behind and await judgement. On the 26th of January, 1702, he joined his group and they set sail. The voyage was indeed a difficult one due to the many storms that they encountered which made the ship rock and causing many of them severe cases of seasickness. However, when the sea was calm, they enjoyed themselves thoroughly on the deck of the boat.

They passed the Kingdoms of Sicily and Malta and Candia and through the Golforde Mare to Cypress. From Cypress the band had intended to head straight for Saida, but there arose a great storm which forced them out of their course. They were then obliged to go to Alexandria in Egypt in order to reach port before the advent of the Sabbath. However, when the storm



subsided, the captain changed his mind and the course and headed straight for Saida. But they were not destined to reach this port, for, during the night a violent wind arose which broke the main mast, and almost drowned the captain of the ship. The next morning the storm abated and the band in the ship found themselves in the harbor of Acre, on the northern coast of Palestine.

As soon as the ship was noticed by the inhabitants on the shore, a number of small ships set out, in one of which were the customs-inspectors of the city. They came alongside and boarded the ship seeking to collect the duty from the passengers. They were informed by the captain that the ship had been blown into the harbor by a great storm and that the passengers had no desire of disembarking. As a result, they were exempted from paying the duty. However, a number of French merchants, seeking their trade personally invited them to come ashore. An invitation was also extended to them by the Agha, the Turkish mayor of the city. Three of the group then went ashore. Nowhere in the account of Mordechai de Lattes, the historian of the group is there any mention made of any Jews in the city of Acre, as well as in the cities of Haifa and Jappa. Evidently, there were no Jewish settlements there in the year of their arrival, 1792. However, they were treated with great respect and honor, Abraham Rovigo being invited by the Agha himself to come to his house and to partake of his hospitality.

The ship remained at Acre for about nine days. While there,

they heard of an open rebellion taking place in Jerusalem  
 (note)  
 against the Pasha. They selected one of their number to  
 go to Jerusalem to investigate the rumors and to secure  
 guides, camels and mules for the travellers as well as  
 watchmen to guard them over the route. It was a three-day  
 trip from Acre to Jerusalem, through Jappa without returning  
 to Saida. From Acre they proceeded to the harbor of Joppa  
 which was a difficult one to enter on account of the many  
 rocks there. They were forced to leave the boat on the  
 Sabbath, because the captain was afraid that a strong wind  
 would blow his ship against the rocks and smash it to bits.  
 A number of small boats set out from the shore and took the  
 passengers ashore. In Joppa, as in Acre and Haifa, there were  
 no Jews to receive them. They were, however, very well received  
 by the Turkish officials of the town who took care of all their  
 needs, supplying them with camels, mules, guides and watchmen  
 for the road. However, when their baggage was being inspected  
 at the customs-house, the officials reverted to type and were  
 not above receiving bribes. Nevertheless, the entry of Abraham  
 Rovigo and his disciples into the Holy Land was a pleasant one,  
 a fitting retribution for the stormy voyage on the water and a  
 deceitful ship captain.

Transportation was not an easy matter. Horses could not  
 be obtained for only the Turks and the Arabs were permitted to  
 ride on them.<sup>1.</sup> The only means of transportation were the donkey  
 and the camel. The camels and the few horses permitted to them  
 were used in transporting their household wares, while the men,

1. cf. pg. 8. Please respect copyright; do not save, print, or share this file.  
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women, and children rode on the donkeys. This caused one of the pregnant women, the daughter-in-law of Abraham Rovigo much discomfort. As a result, the Arabs fashioned for her a litter slung between two donkeys in order to make her burden a little lighter. The other women rode on the donkeys without any trouble at all. Besides the difficulties with transportation, the Arabs continually troubled them for more money, or else they threatened they would leave. Not knowing what to do, they were forced to accede to their demands. But they eventually reached Jerusalem.

The Jews of Jerusalem according to this account were very hospitable. How different was the treatment accorded to Abraham Rovigo from the reception Jehuda the Saint and his group had received from the same Jews. The former was welcomed with an open hand, while the other was almost put under a ban. People came to Abraham Rovigo's house all during the day and for a large part of the night to pay their respects to this wealthy man, who had come with his entire fortune to settle in their city.

It is customary for the Parnasim of the three great synagogues to invite an honored guest to the service on Friday night and ask him to return the following day to be called to the reading of the Torah. There was a definite procedure and tradition in the carrying out of this ritual. First the guest had to attend the Sephardic Synagogue at first, the Talmud Torah the next Sabbath and the Ashkenazic Synagogue the last. Although these synagogues differ slightly in their rituals they all agree on one thing, that is, that every one must donate to the

upkeep of the Synagogue according to his financial means. After the service it is customary to visit the home of the guest and to bring him delicacies, and bid him welcome.

The great purpose and mission of Abraham Rovigo was to establish a school for the study of the Kabbala in Palestine. His will was "to be privileged to dwell in the House of the Lord, the rebuilt Jerusalem for the length of our days, and to increase Torah amongst the many and to fulfill the word of the Scripture. For from out of Zion I shall go forth and the word of God from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3)". Accordingly, during the intermediary days of Passover, Abraham Rovigo and Isaiah, the son-in-law of Rabbi Jehudah the Saint busied themselves with the task of choosing scholars to attend the school. They would be provided for and maintained as long as they were scholars in this school devoted to the study of Kabbala in the main. There were many men in Jerusalem who desired to avail themselves of the opportunity set before them. It was decided to choose them by lot. Those chosen had to sit in the study hall and to pray on week-days with the break of dawn, as extremely pious men do (Berachot 2:3). "They must cry and weep during their prayers and confess with broken hearts their sins and give thanks unto God, until the very Heavens are pierced." After the prayers have been concluded the scholars must turn to the study of the Zohar and the writings of the great Kabbalist, Isaac Luria, while they were still wrapped in Talith and Tephilin until mealtime. After the meal, they studied Gemora, Poskim and Reshith Hochmah until the evening. The opening of this Yeshivah for the study of the

/ויש אברהם  
THE ACCOUNT OF SIMCHA BEN JOSHUA HAAS.

The author of the book " /ויש אברהם " (Love of Zion) or as it is more commonly known " לילא הן יתא יתא ," Simcha ben Joshua Haas, ~~Joshua Haas~~<sup>W.H.</sup> was born in Dobrowitz, Bohemia 1710, He was a preacher in Brahilov and later the father-in-law of Solomon Dubnow. In 1765 he left Brahilov and set sail for Palestine. He arrived at Acre and proceeded from there to Safed where he dwelt for seven months. While there he wrote his impressions of the country "for all those who desire to travel to Erez Yisroel. It seems from his writings that there was a more specific reason for his having written the book. On his way to Palestine, from Poland, Simchah stopped off at the home of a wealthy Jew in Leghorn. In gratitude, for the hospitality that had been shown him, Simchah

1.

sent him this book.

2

He was a prolific writer. In his book "Netiach shel Simchah" as a parting thought he writes the following: "The eventual goal for every Jew must be a trip to Palestine. Everyone who travels to Palestine receives a new spirit, the purest air being in Safed where one can actually fathom the depths of the Torah's Wisdom." Hebrew also comes in for a share of glory, "Whoever dies and is buried in Hebron is assured of attaining the World to Come without any delay." The above quotations were taken from some of his works written while still in Europe and clearly demonstrate the love he bore for the Land of Israel. So great was his love and so overpowering his longing, that when his wife refused to go with

3.

him, fearing the sea-voyage, he promptly divorced her. She, how-

ever, regretted her action and later remarried him and went to Palestine with him. However, after seven months, they returned to Palestine, due to insufficient aid. He returned to Poland and became the town preacher ( ) of the town of Brahilov. In 1768, on Passover Eve, he passed away in the town of Brahilov, where he was buried.

There have been many accounts of Simcha Haas and his work " /י'י' ל'נ'ח . " The account given here was the one written in the " /י'י' ל'נ'ח " of J. D. Eisenstein, (pp 237-251). In the introduction to the book, there is a brief account of the authors life and his works. The introduction also makes note of the fact that the work contains many plagiarisms from the account of the Karaite traveller David Jemschil.

The author is mentioned in M. Steinschneider's list of authors in A.M. Luncz's " /י'י' ל'נ'ח ", vol. IV, pg. 4, Jerusalem 1886, and is treated by A.M. Luncz in the same volume in a comparison between the " /י'י' ל'נ'ח " and the work of David Jemschel pg. 137 ff, who shows it to be plagiarized.

Other bibliography on this book is:

1. Jewish Encyclopaedia - Article on Haas, Simcha C. Josua, Saloma, Vol. VI by Kayserlin.
2. R. Rohricht - Bibliotheca Geographica Palaestinae, pp. 322 (#1480)
3. Encyclopaedia Judaica - Article on Haas, Simcha b. Josua, b. Saloma, Vol VII, by Dr. H. Brody.
4. L. Frumkin-- /י'י' ל'נ'ח Vol. III pg. 81
5. I. Benjacob -- /י'י' ל'נ'ח pg. 18 (#358)

The book "Ahavath Zion" has many chapters taken from the  
 1.  
 account of the Karaite traveler, Samuel ben David Yemshel and  
 it is not sure whether he was an intentional plagiarist or  
 whether he should be blamed for trying to use someone else's  
 work in order to enhance his own. It is known that Simcha was  
 never in Jerusalem, Shechem, Hebron or Egypt. All references  
 to the above places were taken from the Karaite's work. In  
 order to fool the Karaites, he erased the dates used by Samuel  
 ben David changed the word "Rabbinites" to "Our brethren the  
 Children of Israel, as well as the Afternoon Prayer ( אֶרְבֵּי  
 עֶרְבַּי) to אֶרְבֵּי אֶרְבֵּי) and other changes, which he  
 2  
 cleverly affected in order to deceive future readers. The book  
 was first printed in Gradua (N.D.)

On the 26th day of Iyar 5524 (1774) Simcha left his city of  
 Salaciecz, near Brody, Galacia and went from there to Wallachia  
 and Galatz on the Danube, which are situated in what is the present  
 day Roumania. From there they went to the seaport of Bagez where  
 they met with two great Hassidic Rabbis ~~who~~ bound for Palestine,  
 Nahman Hordenker and Mendel of Primishla (perhaps Primishlan).  
 At Bagaz they were forced to wait for a favorable tide which would  
 carry their ship over the sand bar. While waiting, they were  
 severely bitten by mosquitoes who worked feverishly to make the  
 lives of our pilgrims extremely miserable. A favorable tide Saving  
 set in, the band set sail for Constantinople. While in Con-

1. Yenschel, according to Luncz -- אֶרְבֵּי Vol XI is the abbrev.  
 אֶרְבֵּי אֶרְבֵּי אֶרְבֵּי
2. Eisenstein "אֶרְבֵּי אֶרְבֵּי" pg. 238



Constantinople they had the opportunity of studying the conditions of the Jews there. Not knowing any Turkish was no hindrance for them because both groups knew sufficient Hebrew to carry on an intelligent conversation. They found out that the Jews enjoy some civil cases between Jew and Jew. There were also many Jews who held high official positions, one of these being Levi, son-in-law of David Zanash who was the assistant to the Vizir in charge of the Mint. From Constantinople they set sail for the Island of Rhodes, and from there to Jappe.

Interesting indeed is the method used by the Arab boatmen in ferrying the passengers from the boat to the dry land. Their methods closely resemble the tactics used by their descendants who are still actively engaged in the same trade. They grabbed the people who were going ashore and almost threw them into boats as if they were so much pieces of baggage. For this the passengers had to pay what was in the estimation of a huge sum of money. The Arabs were a democratic group, not only grabbing those who wanted to go ashore, but also those who wanted to remain on the boat. In order to escape this murderous gang, Simcha and his friends had to hide in one of his cabins, lest they be carried away. At this port, many Sephardic Jews left the ship, affording the remaining group much freedom to observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in a dignified manner on the high seas.

From Joppa, they arrived at Acre. In the interim of some  
1.  
sixty years, Jews had come to this city and settled there. They



are Sephardic Jews and consider themselves residents of the Holy Land. As a result, they observe only the first day of the Festivals. The thirty-five families residing there, are very poor, their chief income being derived from the farming of the land. There are a few Jews engaged in the making of jewelry and silk threads. The travellers were well taken care of, however, by the head of the community, Nassim, who had porters carry the luggage of the travellers to his house. There they were put up for the night. The hospitality of the community was of a very high type and gave these pilgrims much pleasure. After Succoth, they left for Safed.

Safed once was a thriving city of about 7000 Jews, who were actively engaged in plying their trade. In 1759, an earthquake had taken place and many Jews were killed, others had moved away so that when Simcha arrived there in 1774, he found only forty families. In the process of rebuilding the city, the survivors, both Jew and Arab worked side by side, resulting in a strong band of friendship and creating peace and harmony in the city. Before the earthquake, there had been seventeen synagogues in Safed, but only two remained in any serviceable condition, the Synagogue of Isaac Luria and a small synagogue belonging to the Greek Jews. The Synagogue of Isaac Aboab, author of "Menorath Hamaor" was still in ruins when Simcha came to Safed. It was repaired later on.

The Jews of Safed were engaged in many trades, Jewelry manufacture, silk weaving, coppersmiths and silversmiths. They

1. Simcha gives the date as 1769, but he is in error cf. /" 67 . u

2. Einstein 113057 214.7 117514  
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seem to thrive on these trades, for many of them live in beautiful homes. Despite the fact that they were actively engaged in their crafts, these men found ample time to study, almost all of them being well versed in the Bible, Talmud and Post - Talmudic Literature, virtually a colony of Rabbis. Simcha tried to enter the business of making Tephillim and Mezuzahs, but was dissuaded from doing so by the people of the city who told him that he would be unable to take these with him when he left the place, due to a ban on the exporting of Scrolls, Tephillim or Mezuzahs from Safed. As a result of this ban, the two Synagogues contain many Scrolls, which cannot be sent outside of the city. However, few are ever used, and there many which have never been opened. Jews are also engaged in the pack trades, going around the country amongst the Arabs, with a mule to carry their merchandise, which they received from Acre. There is some farming done outside of the city, where grain and wheat are raised. The owners of these farms have a mill which they operate for the benefit of the Jews.

The pots and pans used in the kitchen are made exclusively from copper. There are no earthenware utensils whatsoever, in Safed. If anyone wanted any earthenware dish he would have to pay a large price for it. Simcha's wife wanted one and determined to get it at all cost. She was successful after a long and arduous search, being obliged to pay a high price for it, due to its rarity. The coins of Palestine are for the most part in silver, Spanish silver coins being the most common. These coins were brought there by the Sephardic Jews who came to settle there

after the expulsion in 1491, and were still being used by their descendants some three hundred years later. Gold is also used but not as extensively as silver.

In Safed lived an interesting Syrian Jew, Hacham Ephraim Dayan who claimed to have been a direct descendant of the Davidic dynasty and therefore endowed with great powers. Indeed, he claimed to have negotiated with the Sultan who had followed his advice because of his lineage. Another person, by the name of Shem Tov claimed direct descent from Rabbi Simson ben Yohai, but laid no claims to his powers of working wonders.

Safed is well known for the graves of the holy and scholarly men who lived and worked and died there. Isaac Luria, the great Kabbalist, Moses Cordovero, Moses Alsheikh, Solomon Alkabez, author of the "דברי חיים" Joseph Kardon whose tombstone is written "Joseph Karo, author of the "דברי חיים / הלכות," all lie buried there. There is one grave in Safed which is supposed to be that of the prophet Hosea. To this grave, the scholars would go every Tuesday to pray. The whole cemetery is overcrowded, literally, with famous graves. Here, too lie buried the Ten Martyrs of Hadrian's oppressor. The cemetery however, is not an isolated piece of ground, for just outside the gates is a vast field on which grows much wheat. This field is owned by Jews, who also owned the mills which grind the wheat into flour.<sup>1.</sup>

Curious indeed, are the customs and ceremonies of Safed. Wedding feasts, although celebrated for the customary seven days, were not as sumptuous as would be expected. There were, however,

1. cf. above account.

served fruits, vegetables, limes, a chicken or two, wine and cakes. These parties are attended exclusively by men. Nowhere is there any mention of the bride, who usually would be present for the recitation of the Seven Benedictions. Many of these weddings are performed on one of the three festivals in utter disregard of the prohibition against celebrating two joyous occasions simultaneously.<sup>2.</sup>

The birth of a child, presumably male, is also an occasion for much rejoicing with drum and cymbal. These instruments were the only ones in use, the harp, flute and the violin., being unheard of. On the day of the birth, the mother is dressed in her best clothes and is permitted to sit amongst the women who come to visit her. They must have been a very hardy people to be able to accomplish this on the very first day. On the eighth day, the child was brought to the Synagogue for circumcision, clothed entirely in silk. "The mother herself brought the child," just as if she were bringing a child to be sacrificed at the Temple." The whole town accompanied the family to the Synagogue singing "Hodu." As soon as the child entered the Synagogue, the candles were lit. With the father acting as Sandek, the child was initiated into the Abrahamic Covenant and then carried home, followed by the people singing appropriate hymns.

It was the custom of the Jews in Safed to pray Friday afternoon, in the Greek Synagogue. This was a custom started by Isaac Luria, who after the service would go to the grave of Simon ben

2. א' / מ' 273 / אהה נחמא

Yohai in Meron, accompanied by his disciples. As soon as they had finished "Mizmor Shir l'Yom Hushabbos -- they returned to the Synagogue. This custom was retained and continued after the death of Isaac Luria.

When anyone dies, the body is brought to the Greek Synagogue for the Eulogy. The man who delivers the eulogy walked in front of the litter, no coffins were used at the time, and recite certain pertinent psalms. At the cemetery, the litter is placed by the side of the grave while the Mourners march around it seven times, reciting the "Yayehi Noam." On the Sabbath of the "Shivah" it was customary to make a banquet at which time the people assembled to study and to say Kaddish.

The grave of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai is just outside of Safed in the village of Meron. It is customary to light candles at the grave and to read the Zohar. Beside the grave is a place reserved for the cooking of meals by travellers, who come from very great distances to pray and eat at the grave of this great scholar. The people of the village were very hospitable, giving much food and comfortable quarters to the travellers. Near the grave of Rabbi Simeon, is the grave of Rabbi Yohanan, the shoemaker, surrounded by a stone wall. No one ever enters the gate because of a story that an enormous snake guards the grave of this great scholar and saint against trespassers.

Purim is celebrated two days, the Megillah being read on both days. However, on Shushan Purim, the benediction is omitted. Instead of sending gifts to the poor and needy on Purim, the chief Rabbi went from door to door in the town, on the Fast of Esther,



in order to collect money for the Passover relief. This was done because of an earlier Purim when the non-Jews became jealous of this charity giving, while they were being excluded from it.

Outside of the city is a cave containing many boxes. During the rainy season, these boxes were filled with water so that when the dry season arrived, the boxes would be used for irrigation purposes. A tragic event occurred in Safed while Simcha was there. Rain, which should have appeared early in Kislev had not descended. This left an indelible impression in the mind of Simcha. It was the first time that he had ever heard the Shofar blown during the fast. The people then went up to the grave of Joseph Karo and prayed for deliverance from the draught. After much fasting and praying, some rain did fall but not enough to counterbalance the damage already done. However in Adar, the rains did come, in torrents. So heavy was the downpour, that when Rabbi Gedaliah of Statanov died, his burial service had to be curtailed and hastened due to the torrential rains.

Tiberias was also visited by Simcha in order to bathe in its warm waters. Surrounding the city, on three sides, is a stone wall built in 1651, the west side being open. The city was sparsely inhabited by Jews and Arabs, the houses were few and far apart. The Arabs ruled the city with an iron fist taxing the Jews heavily. To the south of the city were the famous springs, used even today for health purposes. They were located at the foot of the mountain,



APPENDIX.

## LETTER OF MORDECHAI DE LATTES

האישבא הקורא יאברהם דמיא וחבריה בירושלים בשנת ה'תש"א

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(1)

May a favorable sign and good fortune be our lot and the lot of our group who go and sit on the threshold of our holy city, Jerusalem. Men, Women, and children who have placed the soles of their feet on the road. May the Grace of God be with them, to deliver them and redeem them from all anxiety and distress, plague and pestilence. May He spread the Tent of His peace over them.

Our Master, Rabbi Jehuda Leeb Cohen of Jerusalem was our Eye and true guide over the road we travelled. Our Master Rabbi Abraham Rovigo and his wife. The exalted Rabbi Raphael, his son and his wife Esther, his two sons, two daughters and his mother-in-law, Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi, his wife, two sons and a daughter. Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi followed us from Leghorn and came with us to Acre. The Exalted Rabbi Samuelchen Ashkenazi (note probably Samuel) who came with us from Modena, Joseph Melli of Cento who came with us from Bologna, Moses Lopez Pereyra who came with us from Leghorn. Madame Abigail,<sup>2</sup> the widow of Elijah Malach waited for us at Leghorn and joined<sup>3</sup> our party there. German Jewish mid-wife taken by the Exalted Rabbi for thus did the people of Leghorn counsel him; to take her, lest, God forbid, she be needed on the way, for his daughter-in-law. She was more of a nuisance than a help, for she ailed more on the boat than anyone else. Bila, the daughter of Kolonymous Malach

1. / pg 71.

2. The name Malach seems to have been a favorite amongst Kaballists and Sabbatians--Haim Malach, Abraham Malach the Hasidic Rabbi

3. Abraham Rovigo.

3.  
served as hand-maiden to Samuelchen's wife. Solomon of Formigne,  
servant of Samuel Ashkenazi replaced Mazarati, servant of the  
Exalted One of Smyrna whom he took at Leghorn to serve him as  
a guide and Mordechai de Lattes.

On the fifth day of the week of Vayara, the 26 day of the  
4.  
month Tebeth, we travelled from Leghorn at nightfall, but our  
Exalted One did not come with us on account of the investigation,  
for thus did the influential men of the city counsel him, not  
to fear the mob, for they decreed that he should remain behind  
in Leghorn until an answer would come. Therefore, it was nec-  
essary to conceal this matter. Later on, at night, he came in  
a small boat, accompanied by three of the most influential men  
of the city, at about 10'clock in the night. We all rejoiced  
at his coming. The boat was sailing in front of a good wind  
the night and Friday. All of us were distressed and troubled  
by the sea. From the motion of the boat, we did not eat, nor  
drink until Friday night. On Saturday the boat began to sail  
smoothly because there wasn't so much wind. Then we began to  
go out on deck to enjoy the air and the sea. In those two days  
we covered much ground, passing the Kingdoms of Sardinia and  
Corsica, almost two hundred miles.

Sunday of Parashath "Bo" there was no wind, and the ship  
began to rock, causing us much distress, especially those who  
3. Knew Turkish well, served as interpreter  
4. January 26, 1702.

observed the fast of the New-Moon Eve, causing them to vomit as formerly. The next day the wind returned and we sailed well. The same happened on the third day. In the morning the sailors caught a fish heavier than two hundred pounds called a Dolphin, which they killed, skinned and cut up into small bits while we laughed at this slaughtering, because the sailors told us that they (the dolphins) bring about bad times. Wednesday, was a quiet day, and the rocking of the boat caused us much distress, but on the sixth day, the wind returned, and we passed the Sabbath in peace. By that time, we had passed the kingdoms of Sicily and Malta, and from there to Caudia. The sea grew larger and larger for it is nearly seven miles without any sight of land until Cyprus. This sea is known as Gollode Mare.

Sunday and Monday we sailed on peaceful waters, and we were surprised that we were able to travel most of the way without anguish, fear or distress. Thus did the captain and his sailors who swore that all the days of their lives have they never sailed on such peaceful waters. They didn't even see such calmness even in the Summer. But on Tuesday, the Lord caused a great wind to blow on the sea, causing the ship to rock, and to sway, causing us in turn much discomfiture the whole day. The velocity increased so much on Wednesday Evening, 10th of Shevat, that we thought the ship would burst apart. The wave grew higher and higher, entering the boat. Fear and trembling siezed us, we got up and offered up

many prayers and petitions, and made vows, each according to his strength just as we had been commanded to vow in times of distress. We also vowed that when we would be in Jerusalem we would learn the first night of our arrival. The storm continued the next day, we did not eat nor drink, almost all of us, during the two days of the storm due to the great sorrow. We must say that we "swayed and shook like drunkards (Psalms 107:27). Thursday the storm subsided a little and we began to eat. On Friday, the boat sailed on calm waters. We had a good wind, but we could not go from Cyprus to Saida as we had thought, but we thought it would be better to go to Alexandria, which we were able to reach before the Sabbath. Although our desire was to shorten our voyage and at first we fled from the idea (of going to Alexandria) while we were in Leghorn, due to the suggestion of the people there who did not want us to go to Alexandria, nevertheless, we decided to go there and rest a while. This was so, because on Thursday night, a great weakness and fainting spell came over the wife of Raphael Rovigo, who almost became dangerously ill, and they thought that, God forbid, her child would die inside of her; she was in great pain that night. After that she lay for a long time on the bed of pain.

Even the captain agreed with us, but when the captain saw that the wind was with him, he headed towards Saida. We sailed all of Saturday and Sunday, expecting to arrive at Cyprus any hour. Sunday, the 14th day of Shevat, towards evening, a storm

arose, and the sea boiled over. Then our hearts actually died within us, and we offered up the Mincha prayer with crying and wailing, and although we do not say Tahana on the eve of a holiday, we offered up certain Tahananim, Selihoth and Bakashoth with many tears. And after that we saw with our eyes that the Lord heard voices of our petitions for the sake of our ancestors. We strengthened ourselves in order to be happy on the 15th day of Shev'et (Chanisho Oser-New Year for fruits) although there was a slight storm that day. Towards evening we were encouraged by the report that we would enter the port of Safa any morning. In the middle of the night, the storm increased in ferocity, accompanied by much rain. The sailors were confused and hurried to turn the sail towards the wind causing the tallest mast of the three on the ship to be broken. The captain almost fell into the sea and died, but he was saved by a rope which held him fast to another mast. But he was wounded in the leg, causing him to be distressed for many weeks after that.

On Tuesday, we found ourselves outside the harbor of Acre. They lowered the anchors and tied up the boat there. The captain then said to us. "Know that surely a miracle was performed for you, if the mast had broken in middle of the sea, God forbid, we could not have been able to get along." Soon many Turks in small boats came alongside our boat in many groups. Their eyes came out of their heads in order to see our faces, as well as



the women and children who were hidden. Particularly, the Arabs, many of whom had black, as Ethiopians, and who jabbered in their speech. Our faces blanched and we were frightened. This happened the first three days of our stay in the harbor. The Turkish custom guards came to find out whether we wanted to enter the city with our wares. The captain informed them that we had arrived there through an accident and did not desire to enter the city. As a result, we were exempted from the tax. A few French merchants paid us the honor of a visit. When they asked us to enter the city, they told us that we would not have to pay a large tax; about three Piastres, the value of one Ducat. Therefore four of our comrades entered the city, Meyer Askenazi, Raphael Rovigo, Moses Lopez Pereira, and Raphael, the servant. We were detained there nine days, while the four comrades mentioned above, came from and went into the city, especially Raphael, the servant. They brought to them many presents, and through this they made many friendships, as for instance the Agha (note), who is head of the Turks in the city as well as the Dragoman known as the Meturgaman and the French Consul. The Agha also wanted our Master (Abraham Rovigo) to enter the city without paying any duty. He went to his house and was greatly honored by having the son of the Agha accompany him to the ship and two gentiles who warned him not to take any money with him because the thing becomes well known, as well as many other things for our benefit.

1. The Agha is the Turkish mayor of the city.

The captain also entered the city to see if he could fill his ship with merchandise, as well as to find a large tree in order to make a new mast. And said, for his own gain, that he had to wait in Acre a long time for his mast. Then we heard this we decided on Wednesday the second day after our arrival there to send a messenger to Jerusalem, for they said that in three days he would be able to bring us back an answer whether there was any suspicion of danger on the road from the Arabs, who were accustomed to lie in wait on these roads, especially since we heard that there was a fight between the Pasha of Jerusalem and themselves. Also (it was decided), that we send to Jajja, men, camels and watchmen, for we perceived that it was better to shorten our voyage for Jajja was one day's journey from Acre, and from Acre to Saida is about the same distance. That day, a French ship arrived, and our captain paid the other a visit, for they knew each other. But when our captain saw the other fill his ship with grapes after his arrival, while he did not fill, the evil eye entered into him, and he changed completely. At first he had been a righteous and good man, as well as his sailors, about twenty, all of them serving our needs, but now, he actually regretted having taken us in his boat. He looked about for an excuse to get rid of us. Then he heard that we had sent for a messenger to find out about the welfare of the

(note) Probably the rebellion against the Pasha mentioned in Chasdu Shel in Yerushelaim.

city, and to show us the way which we were to travel, he began to pour out his bitterness and told us that he desired to proceed without waiting for an answer from the messenger, which he had sent. All this was on Wednesday before the evening.

Thursday morning, Yehudah Cohen, argued with him about this matter, and argued thusly. As long as there was an agreement between them, it being written in the contract that he was obligated to carry us to Saida, and there he was to wait four or five days, until we had sent a messenger and had received his answer which would lead us to Jappa. And now, instead of having to wait at Saida, we would wait in this place (Acre). He agreed to wait five days and no more. But his only desire and counsel was that we stay where we were and to enter the city; for he said, "I see that this woman (the wife of Raphael) is in great danger and you are weary and fatigued from the sea. It is better for you to rest here a month or two, in the meanwhile, the woman will give birth, and ye will go your way in peace, in another ship, to Jappa. Or ye may go with a caravan from here to Jerusalem. And how can ye find it in your hearts to place yourselves in danger as well as this woman, and ye do not recognize the miracles performed by your God," These words and others of the same kind, he spoke in order to arouse the hearts of everyone, going to every one individually in order to influence him. But his advice was for his own benefit. He even said that we are causing him a great loss because other mer-

creants are preceding him in entering the harbor, and first come  
 come first served. Moreover, he had heard from many authoritative  
 persons that the harbor at Jappa is very difficult to enter into  
 on account of the many rocks in it, causing many of the ships  
 entering the harbor to become shattered. He tried everything  
 in his power to influence us, whether good or evil, to take us  
 to Saida if we did not desire to remain in Acre. In short,  
 we decided that night that we would wait until Saturday night  
 and then set sail.

On Friday, week of "Jethro," 19 of Shevat, God brought about  
 a storm which caused great waves, beginning about midnight. All  
 that day, the wind increased in its velocity, so that the boat,  
 although anchored on all four sides, as is customary when in a  
 harbor, almost broke. So strong was the wind, that the ship crashed  
 into another nearby. We thought that we had become greatly  
 endangered. The sailors ran about in confusion trying to sep-  
 arate the two ships, but could not because of the raging sea.  
 Our boat began to break up from the top. We cried out in prayer,  
 and with a great wailing. "He who answered Abraham etc., He  
 who answered Isaac etc., He who answered Elijah at Mt. Carmel  
 (which we were shown in the distance, about 4 miles) May he  
 answer us. At that time, the captains of both boats were not  
 in their boats and when they saw the wind, they left the city  
 for their ships, almost dying from fright. Especially, our  
 captain, who almost bit off his hands and ate his flesh. Then

God saw our distress and gave the sailors strength to separate the ships. They then tied up our ship and made it fast. This was before noon. The rest of the day, the storm continued its ferocity, until twilight; then our eyes saw that with Sabbath came rest, for until then it was impossible to stand or sit in one place for it was feared that the boat would be overturned any moment.

Then the captain became angry and gritted his teeth. He spoke against His Excellency, Our Master behind his back, saying that he wanted to endanger his wife and family, and of the group by desiring to go on the sea in such a time. But he could not speak with him because he was forced to wait until Saturday night, and even he was forced to admit. We shall see the Great miracle wrought for you for if ye had been in the midst of the seas in this storm there would have been no hope for our lives. But you are not mindful of this miracle performed by God for you, but we must not rely upon miracles because miracles do not happen every moment, and we are obliged to save ourselves from any danger we see. "All this he shouted at us for he wanted us to leave the boat and remain at Acre, or at least to go to Saida and wait there till the arrival of another boat in order to cast the burden off him. But we paid no attention to him for our journey was still three days away. But Maier Ashkenazi, one of our Company listened to him and went ashore and remained in Acre, because he was afraid of taking his money to Jappa, only through Saida. He did not want to continue with us.

All Saturday, there was no favorable wind either for  
 (note)  
 Jappa or Magillah 7b - (note ) on Saida. The captain had  
 no courage to speak for he saw that this was from God (In  
 truth he was one of the righteous of the nations of the  
 world and believed in God's Providence). We thought that  
 all of this was for our benefit in order to await the reply  
 of our messenger whom we had sent. We therefore forbade him  
 with words and money until he consented to wait until Monday,  
 perhaps then, will the messenger return, when we had sent on  
 Wednesday and whose letter will tell us how to travel, whether  
 there is any danger etc. But when on Sunday and Monday we  
 had favorable winds, the captain kept his word and did not  
 sail, but on Tuesday he wanted to sail, but he could not for  
 an unfavorable wind kept him back. The next day, he became  
 enraged, and was angry the whole day because of the days which  
 he let pass. Even we became embittered of the eight days wait  
 without success and we did not know what to do since our mes-  
 senger did not arrive. There were many sides and opinions  
 taken what course we should pursue, since in our letter we had  
 asked them to send us camels, and guards to Jappa according to  
 our needs. And if the messenger had fulfilled his mission,  
 perhaps these people were waiting for us at Jappa, how then  
 could we go to Saida and tarry there? We would then be forced  
 to incur further expenses (in order to pay) for the men who were  
 waiting for us. But if the messenger did not fulfil his mission

(note) Captain quoting the Talmud.



(what could we do in Jappa). We would have to wait in Jappa a few days until we would find camels, horses, donkeys for ourselves, our wives, children and our property. The inhabitants are wicked and dangerous so that God had illumined our minds, and we decided to leave a part of our fortune with an English merchant in Acre. For we were told that it is better not to take all that money with us. We knew from this that every moment of waiting is a good one, as we shall later see.

Nevertheless, we maintained our position to go from there to forcing the captain, against his will, to take a competent guide in order to take us to Jappa, for thus was it in our contract. But he revenged himself against us by saying that if no favorable wind blew, he would take us to Haifa, a place near Mt. Carmel and there we would remain until a wind would come.

2. Even this was a bad place according to a report. Nevertheless, we cast ourselves upon God and prayed that He influence the captain to take us to our destination. We tried to receive a letter of the Agha of Acre to the Agha of Jappa. We got the letter as well as a gift for the Agha, a new garment. On Wednesday, of "Mishpatim," the 29th of Shevat, two or three hours before nightfall we set sail. We sailed all night. The next morning we were in Haifa. We wept there when we remembered Zion, for we were only three-days travel away from Jerusalem.

1. In those days, in all probability, there were no Jews in Jappa.

2. Even as it is, there are no Jews.

But the wind was so strong that we could not land for two days. We saw with our eyes Mount Carmel which was not very far, and we were distressed because we could not enter there. On Friday, before evening, our captain got into a small boat and returned to Acre. (We gave him a letter (to the Englishman) asking the Englishman whether our messenger had returned). He returned Saturday night, and still persisted against taking us to Jappa. He stormed and railed against us. When we saw that we were in his power and that he could, God forbid, to cause us damage, we decided to give him the privilege to take us wherever the wind would take him to Saida or Jappa. The condition remained thus, depending upon the condition of the sea.

On Saturday, Mishpatim, the 23rd of Shevat, with the rise of dawn, we set out our journey, our eyes were lifted up unto the Lord our God, so that he have compassion upon us and lead us along the path of goodness and straightforwardness, for we were actually like the blind who walk in the darkness. And the Lord heard our pleas and sent a favorable wind which took us to Jappa in peace and not in distress. We still dreaded reaching Jappa on the Sabbath, lest the captain force us to leave the boat on the Sabbath (he fearing to remain on the boat in this harbor, lest a strong wind shatter his boat) causing us to desecrate the Sabbath. God performed a miracle for us by not sending a strong wind resulting in very little speed for the boat. Towards evening, the strength of the wind increased, and

we saw a boat which had been ahead of us, fall behind. That night, after Havdalah and prayers, the boat approached the harbor and the captain lowered the anchor. He did not want to enter the harbor just as he had done in other places on account of the danger. Immediately, the governor of the city sent a boat out to see us with a number of Turks, to see who the people in the boat were and to stake us speedily into the city. The captain in great confusion aided by his sailors, bade us leave the ship, and to take all our money with us. Rabbi Yehudah Hakohen and Raphael Rovigo then went ashore accompanied by the servant Raphael. They entered the city and brought the letter to the Agha who rejoiced in receiving them for he was pleased by the good news contained in the letter. When he found out that we brought a present, he sent them to a house to sleep while we remained on the ship until the morning. In the afternoon, the captain began to raise a hue and cry, and ordered the ship cleared. He sent up all the boxes on deck. In the midst of all this confusion, many articles were lost causing a slight damage. Small boats approached in order to take these articles to the city. In the morning, the men, women and children were actually thrown off the boat onto the dry land in confusion and we entered the city at dawn; We placed our money in the customs house.

In the meanwhile, the Agha commanded his dragmen to seek camels, horses and donkeys for us, which was so done. These

Then we paid customs, fourteen arpayoth per person and brought the present to the Agha as well as many delicacies, some of which were also given to the dragmen. We were not obliged to open our boxes, for bribery blinds the eye. We then took thirty-six camels and horses to carry our burden and twenty-eight donkeys to ride upon. We rode on the donkeys, men, women and children as well as the dragmen and four men whom we had invited to guard us on the way. We travelled well, for the day was a good one, neither hot nor cold, except the wife of our Master, Rebekkah, who greatly feared riding, and the mother-in-law of Raphael Rovig Simhah and her daughter Esther, who was pregnant, and whose heart was in her mouth. The mule drivers had to hold them up every time they cried out. But the wife of Mordechai Ashkenazi, although she too was pregnant, and was very sick on the boat, who from the moment she left it was almost dead from the rolling of the ship, but when she reached the dry land her spirit revived. She went joyfully saying that she had no fear at all (although it was difficult for men to ride on the donkeys because of their broad backs) for on all the stages of the journey, whether in the wagon or in the boat she was in pain, but while riding on the donkey, she was not in pain at all. Thus, we reached Ramlah at the evening, having travelled upon this road in peace for five hours, except that one donkey kicked his master in the leg, causing him great pain and forcing him to lie in bed many days after we had reached Jerusalem. He, however, strengthened

himself and insisted on attending the Synagogue, especially on the Sabbath.

That night after we had reached Ramlah, the dragoman sought for us a house where we could rest. The house was very inconvenient due to a lack of sufficient space. We thought of leaving the next morning, but we were unable to do so, for they (the Moslems), were celebrating a festival for three days and we were unable to find donkeys or camels, for a great lord had detained all of these beasts of burden. But we sent, twice, camels waded with our treasure to go before us. This was for our benefit, not to bring all of this money with us, because of their evil looks. Although we were distressed in remaining there on the Eve of Rosh Hodesh Adar, as well as the first two days of the month, after the completion of five full weeks of traveling, we arose before dawn, and set out as one man on donkeys, except the two women, Rebecca and Esther, for whom the dragoman, on seeing their plight while riding, found wooden chicken coop, which was used to carry grapes. He broke it into two halves and made a bed out of it, on which they could recline leisurely. Thus they travelled while the other women rode on donkeys. Then the dragoman presented to us an Arab, strong and mighty, on a horse, who would watch us on the road. He would stand in the breach against any Arab who would come against us from any side of the road. Thus we travelled the whole day with no delay fit any place. The sun was very warm. Nevertheless, we did not descend from

the donkeys and travelled about for four hours straight on the road which led into the high mountains. In truth, we saw many miracles and wondrous deeds performed for us the whole day by the Lord who saved us from the wolves, <sup>(note)</sup> who followed us continuously asking and desiring money and exaggerating the whole time. When the caravan was in a group, they would be afraid, but if one should fall behind, then would the Gentile stutter, or exaggerate or brandish his sword, until he was forced to give four or five Parashes. <sup>(note)</sup> These mule-drivers were not enough, whose custom it was to do this, but also the Arabian watchman, who had worked for our benefit, twice pressed us and desired money and raised an evil hue and cry. He wanted to smite Rabbi Yehuda Cohen who did not hasten to him because he wanted money. But God saved him as well as all of us from the Arab.

Towards dusk we saw in the distance the joy of our eyes, The Holy City. Then many men and women came to us, young men, old men and wise men. We entered, crying for joy into Jerusalem <sup>(note)</sup> near the twenty-third hour. All of us sound and healthy, except that we were tired and fatigued, especially the women and children who hardly ate or drank, and the sun had beaten down on them. Our master and his family entered the house of the Rabbi Jehuda Cohen. There on Thursday night and Friday,   
 (note) Arabian-mule-drivers--Mann  
 (note) A small Turkish coin--Mann



many of the great Rabbis and Heads of the Academies came to welcome him. Practically the whole day, people were coming and going while he sat on a bed because of his leg injury. But when the Sabbath arrived he forced himself to get up in order to attend the Sephardic Synagogue for thus is the custom that the wardens and sextons bring a gift of incense and wine, a fitting gift with which to be honored, and invite him to go to their synagogue. The heads of the synagogue of the Talmud Torah do likewise on the second Sabbath, and on the third the Ashkenazic Synagogue. They agree in one thing, that is, that every one must donate according to his ability. On the Sabbath, after the Synagogue, many groups of people came to welcome him (note) At mealtime, each one of them brought a gift, one a cup of wine, another a silver plate full of a variety of delicacies or fruits, in order to fulfil the obligation of "entertaining guests."

In truth, it was a great joy to watch how all of them welcomed and received a sage. But our joy was not complete for on Monday night of Tezaveh, birth pangs seized the wife of Mordechai Ashkenazi and she miscarried a five month old male and died. The whole town claimed that she died of a plague. The people in the house of Mordechai fled as from a burning house. But when women were found to prepare her for burial, they testified that they found no marks of a plague on her body. Then a German Jewess entered his house in order to cook for him and his children.

(note) The writer being an Italian used Italian watch which reckoned from evening to evening, therefore the 25th hour would be 5 o'clock in the evening.

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(note) Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion

After Purim, she became ill and died in three days. Then it was suspected that the plague was in the house. Then a number of Jews and Gentiles died, as well as a scholar who used to eat in his house. No one wanted to enter Mordechai's house. Moreover everyone tried to avoid going near his house. Even he became sick, and on Monday of Va akhel, 20 of Adar, his daughter Bona died and his two sons became sick. On Tuesday he also died. We could not visit him for we were warned against entering the house. And if we entered the house, no one would have wanted us in his home. Then we found out that he was sick we did not contemplate visiting him or to send a message by messenger. But when we found out that he had died, our hearts sank within us and we mourned his death. Especially, our Master, cried and wept, and many rebuked him for this was no time for keeping sorrow in one's heart. Nevertheless, his heart was sore and distressed whenever he remembered him. Perhaps the righteous one was taken to atone for the generation. And it was shown thus, for after his death the plague ceased. May it be Thy will to save us from every distress, and anxiety, plague, pestilence, and sword, and may we be privileged to dwell in the house of the Lord, the rebuilt Jerusalem, for the length of our days, and to increase Torah amongst the many and to fulfil the Scripture as it is written "For from Zion (note) shall the Torah go forth and the word of God from Jerusalem Amen it be so.

The seventh night of Nisan the wife of Raphael Rovigo became ill and gave birth to a son who was circumcised the day before Passover.

(note) Isaiah 2:3

The preceding night ~~we~~ studied until morning when we prayed in the study room. Immediately, the circumcision began. The Mohel was the baby's grandfather, our Master Abraham, the Sandak was the great scholar, Raphael Mordechai Malki, and the baby was called David Hai. A small feast was arranged because of Pass-over Eve for the scholars, who studied that whole night. Nevertheless there was much rejoicing.

During the intermediary days of Passover, our Master Abraham, busied himself with the scholar Isaiah, son-in-law of Rabbi Yehudah the Saint, to examine and choose scholars to attend the lectures concerning the living God--for there were many who desired to do this. It was decided to choose them by lot. Ten were chosen to sit in the study house and to pray during the week, every morning, just as the pious ones do. They must shout and weep during their prayers and confess with broken hearts until the very heavens are pierced, especially at this time when the victims of the plague are increasing. Perhaps God will look down and see and withhold the plague from his people Israel, from the Holy Land, and from the many pious ones, who have died in this world. Immediately after prayer, in holiness and purity, in Talith and Tephillin, on their heads they chose to study the Zohar and after that the writings of Isaac Luria (Ari) until the mealtime. After the meal they studied Gemara, Poskim, and Reshith Hokhma until the evening. The opening of the Veshivah took place on the Sabbath Rosh Hodesh Iyar 5463 (1703). May it be His Will that they be privileged to learn and to teach to preserve and to do in this chosen land of ours

May He Redeem us and Save us from evil plagues and death  
and May He send us our true Messiah and build the House  
of our Holiness and beauty Amen, may it be so.

These are the names of the ten men chosen for the Yeshiva.

Rabbi Hayim Hazan -- An Egyptian Rabbi.

Rabbi Isaiah--Son-in-law of Rabbi Jehuda the Saint

Rabbi Jehuda Leeb Hakohen Ashkenazi of Ofen, Hungary

Rabbi Neta -- Rabbi and Dayan of Hagenau, Alsace

Rabbi Zanvid of Kalisz, Galicia

Rabbi Leeb -- of opozno, Poland

Rabbi Joseph of Biala, Poland

Rabbi Moses of Samiecz, Grodno

Rabbi Solomon of Lukow, Poland

Rabbi Mordechai de Lattes de Modena.

on previous page.

(note) called Ari --Abraham Rosh Yeshibah--because he had founded one  
in Jerusalem.

(Note) The Vatikim read the at break of dawn p- 9b.

and

Abraham Kolisher

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב אשר אהבן פנים ושלמה  
 הוא יברך ויטמור וינצור ויגדור את כל אחד מילדיו המסידים  
 בטובת שגורם שלמנו בין הגוים ובין הממון ובין מדינות ומדע  
 וכל איש ואיש אשר יגלו צדק נבנה חסד ושלום הככה מלאכה  
 וגפולת מאת ה' אלהים הציון כי שלם ה' הככה צדק וחיים  
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 ועל הנהגת כל אשר לך משה בלל ילדיו אהבה ואמון

אמן

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