

A STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE DOCUMENTS ON THE  
SABBATIAN MOVEMENT, CONTAINED IN THE INJANE SABBATAI ZEVI.

Rabbinical Thesis.

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## Introduction.

No attempt will be made in this thesis to give a complete picture of Sabbatai Zebi and his followers. Instead, we will give a systematic presentation of the contemporary letters and documents concerning the Sabbatians, as printed in the "Injane Sabbatai Zewi," edited by Freimann. Since several of the documents in the "Injane Sabbatai Zewi" follow neither a chronological nor a subject sequence, we deem it unwise to comment on all these documents in the order in which they appear in the book. Only those documents which deal with a particular episode, or with one personality, will be considered independently. The other documents will be studied piecemeal and the component parts thereof will be included in the appropriate divisions and subdivisions of this thesis.

The material in "Injane Sabbatai Zewi" does not shed much new light on the history of Sabbatianism inasmuch as most of the documents were known and used by modern historians. However, these word pictures, which were painted so vividly by contemporaneous characters in this drama which gripped the imagination of world Jewry, is of great interest to us. They portray for us the indomitable faith of the innumerable believers in Sabbatai Zebi, their Lord, king, and Messiah, as well as the vituperative hatred which his duped followers had for him and his faithful adherents, when the hopelessness of Sabbatai's messianic pretensions was exposed.



The documents in "Injane Sabbatai Zewi" written by Sabbatians offer new material in the form of legends, Cabbalistic speculations as to the nature and the time of the arrival of the Messiah, and in the elaboration of the personality and character of several post-Sabbatain leaders such as Joseph of Tyre and Rabbi Hoschel, who are rarely mentioned in other sources. "The Injane Sabbatai Zewi" adds greatly to our knowledge of the Sabbatian festivals, and the many changes which they inaugurated in Jewish liturgy, traditions, and customs. The anti-Sabbatian documents in this book are of course more objective, but at times the prejudice of the writers is clearly manifested by the readiness with which they accepted rumors of the devilry of the Sabbatians as historical fact.

Our aim in analyzing the documents "Injane Sabbatai Zewi" is not the hope of a logical or sequential reconstruction of the history of Sabbatianism, but rather to study the historical value of these documents.

#### Contents of "Injane Sabbatai Zewi."

"Injane Sabbatai Zewi" is a collection of contemporaneous documents about Sabbatai Zebi and his followers. These documents include historical events covering a period of about seventy-five years, from 1650 to 1725. The book was edited by Aaron Freimann, and was printed in Berlin in 1912. It contains the following documents.

1. עצב נאמן 220. A polemical work directed against Abraham Michael Cardoso. The book was written by Elijah Hakohen, and was printed in 1707, one year after the death of Cardoso.<sup>1</sup>

2. פרשת נאמן 1705. A history of Sabbatai Zebi and the prophet Nathan from 1685 to 1676.<sup>2</sup> The author, Baruch ben Gerschon of Arezzo was an ardent believer in Sabbatai Zebi and his prophet Nathan. This history is unauthentic and very biased. In the introduction to his book, the author states that his purpose in writing the history is to refute the former inadequate accounts of Sabbatianism, which presented conditions in a false light. He states that his book is unnecessary for those who already believe in the holy faith of Sabbatai Zebi, because they are continually pious in their faith and need no encouragement. He does not even hope to convert the 'unbelievers' whose obstinacy prevents them from believing in God's anointed one, Sabbatai Zebi. However, Baruch ben Gerschon expresses the hope that his history will bring back many of the former believers in Sabbatai Zebi, who now doubt the efficacy of his faith due to an inadequate understanding of the divine plan. This document instead of being a historical account of Sabbatianism is an extollation and glorification of Sabbatai Zebi, and Nathan the Prophet.

3. 213 /2 פתח נאמן. An account of Joseph of Tyre by Baruch ben Gerschon of Arezzo.<sup>3</sup>

4a. ל"ה' 3"ע מ"ל פ' ע"ל. This document was copied from a manuscript in Jews' College in London. It includes a letter denouncing Sabbatai, several stories and legends about Sabbatai, and cabbalistic speculations concerning the nature of the messiah and the time of his arrival.<sup>4</sup>

4b. ל"ה' 3"ע מ"ל פ' ע"ל. This document was copied from several manuscripts in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The author is most probably Benjamin Cohen Vitali of Reggio, one of the greatest Cabbalists in Italy. Most of the material in this document is new. Many liturgical changes introduced by Sabbatai, that are not mentioned in other sources are cited in this document. It also includes miscellaneous information about Sabbatai and Nathan, stories and legends, and much gematria. In addition to poems, and piyutim written in honor of Sabbatai, the document has a long account of the mysterious character, Rabbi Hoschel.<sup>5</sup>

5. ל"ה' 3"ע מ"ל פ' ע"ל. The document describes Sabbatai's following in Amsterdam. It includes prayers, and poems written by members of the Amsterdam community in honor of Sabbatai, and letters about Sabbatai. The document also has a complete account of the Amsterdam controversy about Nehemiah Chiya Chayon.<sup>6</sup>

These documents will be discussed in greater detail in the body of the thesis.

## Legend of Documents.

SMK - 200 ג'ר'ן א'ר'ןZLY - 1225 / ר'ר'ן י'ר'ר'ןJT - מ'ר'ר'ן מ'ר'ר'ן / 213LSC - ר'ר'ר'ן ר'ר'ר'ן 3"ר'ןSOD - ר'ר'ר'ן ר'ר'ר'ן / ר'ר'ן מ'ר'ןMGL - מ'ר'ר'ן ר'ר'ר'ן 3"ר'ן

## Chapter 1.

## Activities of Sabbatai Zebi through his conversion.

The document ZLY gives us very little information concerning the early years of Sabbatai Zebi. The document is in agreement with the conventional reports of his handsome appearance, and his attractive manner.<sup>7</sup> Sabbatai was quite a peculiar child. He did not crave the companionship of his fellow-students, but secluded himself and assumed an air of great piety and holiness. He was introduced to Jewish studies at a very early age, and showed great diligence in his zeal to master the Torah. However,<sup>8</sup> Graetz is not even willing to admit that Sabbatai showed great proficiency in his Jewish studies. It seems that the account in ZLY is the more authentic in this instance, for it agreed with the Emden account,<sup>9</sup> which states that as a child Sabbatai was taught in the Beth Hamidrash, and had so completely mastered the Mishna, Bible, Talmud, and all the commentaries thereon, that he no longer had any need for a teacher in these subjects. We must give some credence to this statement of Emden, for if we judge his writings correctly, then it is certain that he would not say anything that was to the credit of Sabbatai unless it were true.

ZLY does not give us the motives for Sabbatai's Messianic leanings, and the fascination which the Cabala and the Lurianic mysticism had for him. We are given a glimpse of his messianic dreams and hopes, at a time when this vague aspiration must have befuddled the mind of this ascetic youth.<sup>10</sup> It is related that in the midst of his studying Torah with the Hakamim,

*He was a "hasid" -  
He was sincere, but it  
Emden's account is  
his own story.  
Sabbatai's story  
is more genuine  
than Emden's.*

*Emden's account is  
He only says that he  
was a "hasid" -  
Sabbatai's story  
is more genuine  
than Emden's.*



Sabbatai began to weep copiously. When the Hakamim asked him, why he was crying, he responded, "I know that I am the Messiah, and it is against my will that I perform strange acts against the Lord and against His Torah, and therefore I cry."

It is possible that the writer of ZLY felt that the activities of Sabbatai from the time he left his native city, Smyrna, until he reached Jerusalem, were of little importance, or he may have intentionally omitted this trying period in which Sabbatai was hounded and persecuted both in his own community, and in those he visited prior to his journey to Jerusalem. It seems incredible that Baruch ben Gerschon believed that Sabbatai travelled directly from Smyrna to Jerusalem, for it was common knowledge at the time that Sabbatai made many stops for a protracted period before arriving in Jerusalem. At any rate, Baruch ben Gerschon merely states,<sup>11</sup> that from Smyrna Sabbatai went to Palestine, and he gives us the impression though he does not say so explicitly, that Sabbatai left Smyrna of his own free will. However, the author of ZLY may be alluding to Sabbatai's return<sup>12</sup> to Smyrna, for De la Croix says, that Sabbatai returned to Smyrna for a second time, after he had been driven from Constantinople in 1659, and remained in Smyrna until 1662, in which year he voluntarily betook himself to Jerusalem where he is supposed to have stayed for three years. It is improbable that he returned to Smyrna a second time for he was under the ban there. If he did revisit his native city, then he could only have done so secretly. Cuenqui, who had Sabbatain leanings, wrote an exalted biography of Sabbatai, in which he unconsciously betrays



his hero-worship for Sabbatai. In his biography, he states that the Zebi family was so perturbed at Sabbatai's strange conduct and heretical actions that they sent him to Jerusalem in order that the family would no longer suffer shame on his account.<sup>13</sup> Emden disagrees with the Cuenqui account and alleges that Sabbatai neither left Smyrna voluntarily, nor through family persuasion, but that Sabbatai was driven from Smyrna by the Jewish community.<sup>14</sup> Emden further<sup>14</sup> more states, that at the age of twenty-four (1650) Sabbatai revealed himself as the Messiah to one of his pupils, assured him that he will redeem the Jews from exile, and later started to pronounce the ineffable<sup>15</sup> name publicly. For this heresy the Rabbis of Smyrna wanted to have him killed, and in order to save his life Sabbatai fled to Salonica.<sup>15</sup> Graetz is in essential agreement with Emden concerning this incident,<sup>16</sup> for he says, that Sabbatai was still in Smyrna in 1650. Only later were his activities known to more people and to Rabbi Joseph Eskapha, his former teacher who began to persecute him. As soon as his Messianic pretensions became known, despite his pious and mystical life, the college of Rabbis with Eskapha at their head laid him and his followers under a ban.<sup>17</sup> Coenen reports,<sup>18</sup> that Eskapha thought it wise to kill Sabbatai, but no one had the courage to do so, and he was therefore excommunicated instead, and forced to leave Smyrna, from whence he went to Salonica, We need not in this thesis concern ourselves with the honorable reception that Sabbatai received in Salonica, and his ensuing sojourns ere he reached Palestine, inasmuch as ZLY does

not even mention them. Suffice it to say, that many historians have elaborated at great length on the activities of Sabbatai Zebi during this period.<sup>19</sup> Graetz, after examining many conflicting accounts, concludes that it is however certain that Sabbatai first went to Salonica, the Cabbalistic city par excellence, then to Constantinople, and finally to Alexandria and Cairo by way of Athens and Morea.<sup>20</sup>

The document ZLY gives us no idea as to the length of time that Sabbatai stayed in Jerusalem. It merely tells us that Sabbatai studied Torah assiduously there, that his piety, faithfulness, and asceticism won the respect and admiration of the Palestinian Jews, and as a result he was delegated to journey to Egypt to solicit funds for the needs of the Palestinian congregations.<sup>21</sup> Both Emden and Graetz substantiate the reports of Sabbatai's model behaviour during the first part of his stay in Jerusalem. Emden says that Sabbatai achieved fame in Jerusalem as a scholar and became renowned as the greatest Cabbalist of his time. After he had been in Jerusalem for a few years, he told his disciples that he was the messiah.<sup>22</sup> The Emden account is somewhat confused for in one place he says that Sabbatai lived in Jerusalem for two years,<sup>23</sup> and another reference speaks of a time when Sabbatai had been in Jerusalem from thirteen to fourteen years.<sup>24</sup> Graetz informs us,<sup>25</sup> that at first Sabbatai did not offend the Jerusalem community in the least, but rather gained their confidence and admiration, due to his pious way of living, his severe asceticism, and his pleasing and attractive manner,--

that in due time he gathered a circle of followers who had faith in him.

The document ZLY does not tell us anything about Sabbatai's trip to Egypt, whether he was successful in collecting money for the Jerusalem community or not. The document merely states,<sup>26</sup> that he returned to Jerusalem. Graetz is of the opinion that Sabbatai had been in Cairo before he was sent there by the Jerusalem community, and states, that if we accept the dates in the majority of sources, then Sabbatai was in Jerusalem from 1662 to 1665, and in Cairo from 1660 to 1662.<sup>27</sup> During his first trip to Cairo, Sabbatai entered the Cabbalistic circle of Raphael Joseph Chelebi, and seems to have won his confidence to such an extent that he felt safe in partially revealing his messianic plans to Chelebi.<sup>28</sup> Sabbatai immediately received from Chelebi the sum required for the ransom of the community at Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> Though Sabbatai was successful in collecting the money, his mission evoked some opposition among the Jews in Jerusalem. The author of ZLY states that the Hakam Hayim, of Jerusalem, who did not believe in Sabbatai, went to the judge, denounced Sabbatai, and demanded a reckoning of the funds collected by him in Egypt. But when Sabbatai appeared before the judge, the judge was overawed by his majestic presence and instead of questioning him concerning the distribution of the funds,<sup>30</sup> paid him great homage. According to the account in Graetz,<sup>31</sup> Sabbatai's distribution of the money brought him into open conflict with the Rabbinate of Jerusalem. It grieved the Rabbis, who had hitherto been the

distributors of alms, that a layman presumed this function; but they were mostly vexed at Sabbatai because he distributed the money only among his own followers.

The document LSZ contains an interesting letter which a Jerusalemite Jew, Abraham Cohen, wrote to Chelebi, the banker of the Sultan.<sup>32</sup> This letter is not dated, but it was probably sent to Chelebi in 1665 before Sabbatai visited Chelebi in Egypt to collect funds for the Jerusalem community. We assume that the letter was written at this time because the author states that within a year and a few months Sabbatai will wrest the crown from the Sultan, and make Turkey and all other kingdoms tributary to him. The prediction of a year and a few months,<sup>33</sup> agrees with Nathan's prophecy which was made in 1665, and which was generally accepted in Jerusalem. It seems to us that the author of the letter would not have written it at a time after Sabbatai's conversion, when world Jewry had given up hopes of seeing their messianic expectations realized. The letter was no doubt written to Chelebi to prepare Sabbatai for a welcome reception by Chelebi. Abraham Cohen writes Chelebi that Sabbatai will gain world dominion peacefully, and that he will not kill any Christians except in Germany. However, the rebuilding of the Temple will not follow immediately after Sabbatai's conquest of the world. Sabbatai will first devote four or five years to restoring the sacrificial institution, and then he will go to the Sambatyon. In the meantime he will deliver the kingdom into the hands of the Turks and he will command them to be kind to the Jews, but within three



months the Turks will rebel against the Jews and cause them much distress, from which no Jew will be exempt. In the seventh year the messiah ben David will come, as hinted in the Biblical phrase אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, which refers to Sabbatai. Then Sabbatai will return from the Sambatyon, and all the nations and kings will bow down to him. On that day the exiles will be gathered from all over the world and they will witness the resurrection in Palestine. Forty years later, resurrection will take place in other lands.

This letter is not found in other sources. Though it is written by an ardent Sabbatian, it is of interest, for it shows the unquestioned faith which many believers of Jerusalem had in Sabbatai.

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#### STORY OF SARAH, SABBATAI'S WIFE.

Sarah was born in Germany of Jewish parents. She was kidnapped by Christians, who converted the young girl, and placed her under the tutelage of a very wealthy Christian woman, who had an only son. When the son and the girl attained a marriageable age, the woman made plans for their marriage to one another, so that all her wealth and possessions might remain with them. She accordingly fixed a date on which the two would be married by the cardinal of the city. The day before the marriage was to take place, the father of the girl (had died two years previously) appeared to her in a dream and said, "Woe unto you and unto your soul! What have you done?" When the girl heard her father's voice, she wept and replied, "Father, what can I do, since I am

in their power and have no freedom whatsoever?" The father ordered Sarah to steal away from her guardian's home and go to the cemetery. As soon as Sarah awoke she followed the instructions related to her in the dream. In the morning she was found in the cemetery, dressed in a distinctive garb, on which was written in clear script, "She will be the wife of the Messiah." She was taken from city to city until she reached Egypt, where she stayed for a while, and there she achieved the reputation of being a successful clairvoyant. While in Egypt, she spread the belief that she was destined to be the wife of the Messiah. The renowned Jew, Raphael Joseph Chelebi, had the utmost faith in her predictions and offered to help her consummate the marriage between her and her beloved, the Messiah. Sarah insisted that it was imperative that she go to Jerusalem where her messianic spouse was awaiting her. Chelebi acquiesced to her wishes and sent her to Jerusalem, escorted by an upright and faithful Jew. Sarah met Sabbatai in Jerusalem. Although they had never seen one another before, their messianic hopes must have had a magnetic effect upon them, for they realized that they were divinely appointed mates--and the marriage ceremony took place immediately amidst great pomp in Jerusalem.

This account in ZLY has all the earmarks of a legend, and though it makes pleasant reading, and concurs in a few respects, (Sarah's dream, her visit to the cemetery, and her messianic consciousness) with other accounts, we cannot consider this tale as anything but a romanticization of an alluring episode, spun by the fertile mind of some imaginative writer. Cuenqui and



De la Croix report unanimously that on his business voyage to Cairo, Sabbatai married his messianic spouse Sarah, who because of her eccentricity had inspired him with trust and confidence. Emden speaks of her as the daughter of Meir, a Rabbi in Poland. The Emden story differs from the account by Baruch ben Gerschon not only concerning the place of birth of Sarah, but in the manner of her disappearance. Emden speaks of her as an orphan because of the Cossack massacres of 1648. This account states that she was taken from her parents when she was six years old, and placed in a convent where she stayed until she was sixteen years of age. She is said to have been completely isolated in this convent for she was never permitted to leave it. The details of Sarah's dream follow the account in the document ZLY, with the added revelation that in Egypt, she will marry a man Sabbatai Zebi, the Messiah of David, the righteous redeemer of Israel, who will come to meet her and there fulfill her glamorous fantasy of a messianic union. After the father had revealed the name of her brother, Samuel ben Meir of Amsterdam, the dream was completed. True to the dream, the next morning she was found in a cemetery by a group of Jews who had come there to bury a deceased member. She narrated her dream to them, and gave as proofs the marks which she had on her body as the sign of the departed spirit of her father. We are bewildered at such a story and wonder whether we ought to relegate it to the class of a tale from the "Arabian Nights," but Emden asserts that the whole story is testified to by men of truth in Amsterdam. We are certain, however, that Sarah is a real character and that she did marry Sabbatai. If

we are to accept the incidents in her life prior to her marriage as historical, then it seems that the account of her marriage in Cairo, at the house of Chelebi, is more plausible than the Zly account of her marriage in Jerusalem. Graetz attempts to remove the mystic element from this union, and postulates the theory that this marriage was a connivance on the part of Sabbatai and some of his followers to increase the credulity of the masses in Sabbatai's Messiahship. Graetz claims that it is possible that Moses Pinheiro (to whom Sabbatai had first revealed his messianic consciousness) who was living in Livorno had given Sarah information about Sabbatai, and had spoken to Sabbatai about Sarah. This eccentric, lascivious woman confirmed Sabbatai's messianic fantasies and by her behaviour<sup>and</sup> won for him many followers. He was recognized through this woman in the eyes of Chelebi and his circle as the Messiah, and he returned to Jerusalem convinced of his<sup>37</sup> godly mission.

It might not be amiss at this point to speculate concerning the sexual maladjustment of Sabbatai. The writer of ZLY states that Sabbatai refrained from marital relations with his wife until<sup>38</sup> his conversion to the Mohammedan faith. Though<sup>39</sup> the Zly account<sup>40</sup> does not mention his two previous marriages, Graetz, and Rycaut would lead us to believe that Sabbatai was not attracted to the female sex in the early years of his manhood. Rycaut reports that Sabbatai married a very beautiful woman, but that either due to his impotence, as was pretended, or due to her finding disfavor in his eyes, she was divorced from him. Again, he took a second

wife, more beautiful than the first but the same cause of discontent raising a difference between them, he obtained another divorce from this wife also. With regard to Sarah, we know that she was not undersexed, for the Dutch source of Gallati calls her<sup>41</sup> a hussy and an unrestrained woman; Coenen somewhat milder says that Sabbatai married a Polish woman of whom it is said that she<sup>42</sup> is not altogether immaculate. The Gallati source adds that ~~she~~ because she was destined for the Messiah, she was not permitted to marry and therefore by special dispensation she was free in the meantime to pursue her amorous exploits outside the bonds of civil matrimony. To be most conservative, we would say that there was some maladjustment in Sabbatai's sex life, and we need not strain our imaginations much to assert that there were certain irregularities in his sex life. Graetz says that there are vague reports that Sabbatai practiced pederasty,<sup>43</sup> and this report is<sup>44</sup> confirmed by Emden who quotes a witnessed instance of the above.

However, let us not be too quick to condemn Sabbatai, for we must remember that all kinds of rumors were rampant about this greatest of the pseudo Messiahs, and that these rumors were not always confirmed. Moreover, Emden entertained a venomous hatred for Sabbatai, and Graetz to a lesser extent shows his disdain for Sabbatai throughout his account of this man.

## NATHAN AND SABBATAI IN PALESTINE.

Sabbatai, on his return to Palestine, found a staunch ally in the person of Rabbi Nathan of Gaza,<sup>46</sup> of whom we shall speak in greater detail later. Though Nathan was just a young man of twenty-two years, (in 1665) he wielded great influence in his community of Gaza, for he had quite a reputation as a clairvoyant and people from many lands came to consult him. The ZLY document does not state whether Sabbatai had made the acquaintance of Nathan prior to his trip to Egypt. ZLY tells us that Nathan prepared the Hakamim of Gaza for Sabbatai's triumphant return to their city. It was through Nathan's influence that the people of Gaza received Sabbatai with great honor upon his return to their city. During the festivities, Rabbi Nathan made the benediction over the wine, and then declared, "May God bless our Lord, our King, the Messiah Sabbatai Zebi." Evidently Sabbatai felt that the moment was not yet opportune to publicly proclaim himself as the Messiah, for he cried out in a loud voice to Rabbi Nathan, "Be silent." However, Nathan was determined to convince the people of Gaza that Sabbatai was the Messiah. He swore and testified to a vision which he had, in which he heard a herald in the heavenly seat announcing, "Behold, your saviour, Sabbatai Zebi has arrived! In another year and a month the kingdom of the House of David will be seen and established."<sup>46</sup> Graetz claims, that Cuenqui, in contradiction to most of the sources, reports that Sabbatai only after his return from Cairo to Jerusalem, became acquainted in Gaza with his Elijah, Nathan. He further argues that since

*Handwritten notes:*  
 Nathan was a young man  
 of 22 years in 1665  
 He was a clairvoyant  
 and many people came  
 to consult him.

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 Nathan was a young man  
 of 22 years in 1665  
 He was a clairvoyant  
 and many people came  
 to consult him.



Cuenqui lived at this time and in Palestine, his story deserves preference. This theory is supported by D'Arezzo who also has Sabbatai become acquainted with Nathan after his return to Pales-  
<sup>47</sup>time. Since the document ZLY does not state whether Sabbatai knew Nathan before his return to Gaza, it does not of course aid in this controversy. But Graetz's viewpoint is very puzzling. First, even though Cuenqui was a contemporary of Sabbatai, and lived in the district of Gaza, it is surprising that Graetz should give preference to any of his statements. It seems to us after a careful reading of the Cuenqui document, as given in Emden's  
<sup>48</sup>שנין ופנין, that the account is greatly exaggerated, and that parts of it are merely the ravings of an ardent Sabbatian, whose writings have little historical validity. Secondly, after a careful perusal of the Cuenqui document, we fail to see the statement which Graetz quotes, that Sabbatai only after his return from Gaza to Jerusalem became acquainted with Nathan. Of course it is possible that Graetz had another edition of the Cuenqui document which may have given his version. Though Emden  
<sup>49</sup>admits that his document was partly burned, the portion which speaks of the above incident was not damaged. It is evident that a Sabbatian would prefer to believe that Nathan had not met Sabbatai prior to his revelation that Sabbatai was the Messiah, and thus make his prophecies the more genuine. Rycaut's account of this incident seems to be the most probable one. He reports that Sabbatai met Nathan in Jerusalem, and communicated to him his course of life and his intentions to declare himself the Messiah.

This design met with Nathan's approval, and since the Jewish tradition made it essential that Elijah precede the Messiah, Nathan thought no man so proper to act the part of the prophet as himself. Therefore, as soon as Sabbatai had declared himself the Messiah, Nathan discovered that he was his prophet, and declared that since the Messiah had arrived, nothing but joy and triumph ought to dwell in the homes of the Jews. He also wrote to all the assemblies of the Jews to persuade them to the same belief.<sup>50</sup>

Graetz, Emden, and other historians give a mass of detail concerning the activities of Nathan and Sabbatai in Palestine, but the document ZLY is scant in this respect. It does however give several interesting episodes which exemplify the manner and the means which Nathan used to publicly proclaim his mystic revelations that Sabbatai is the Messiah. Nathan proved conclusively that the spirit of prophecy was not dead, as the following incident will indicate.<sup>51</sup> On Shabuoth, he called for an assembly to study Torah all night. Suddenly, Nathan found himself the subject of a mystic trance which left him in a lethargic, semi-conscious state. At the stroke of midnight, Rabbi Nathan lost his drowsiness, paced excitedly about the room, and recited the whole Massekhta Ketubot by heart. Then, supernatural powers began to absorb his personality, and he skipped, danced, jumped about the room, and climaxed his gyrations with the 'dance of the seven veils.' However, this dance was not completed, for ere he had a chance to strip himself of his undergarment, he took a great leap and fell face downwards on the floor. The Hakamim immediately



ran to his assistance, but found him unconscious. A physician who happened to be in the study circle examined Nathan, and pronounced him dead. In a short time a very faint voice was heard in the room. The Hakamim could not trace the source of this sound, and in a last effort, they removed the veil from the face of the 'dead man' and behold, a sound issued from his mouth, and though his lips were not moving, he said, "Take caution, my beloved children. My Messiah is Sabbatai Zebi." With the help of his comrades, Nathan was able to move about again and resume the normal activities of a living man. When asked concerning what had happened to him, Nathan responded that he did not know, and <sup>52</sup> assumed a bewildered air when the event was narrated to him. Darezzo confirms the unnatural mode of Nathan's prophesying, and says that Nathan prophesied like a madman with mouth foaming and <sup>53</sup> almost besides himself.

The ZLY document gives a story of Rabbi Nathan assembling scholars for study. He remained in one room by himself, and the Hakamim studied in another room. Before leaving the group, Nathan instructed the Hakamim not to eat during their session. In a short while Nathan returned and told the group that he was greatly disappointed with them for they had not heeded his instructions, whereupon one of the scholars admitted that he had unconsciously been eating a cluster of raisins that was in his knapsack. An hour later, Nathan returned and informed them, that one of their members had had a seminal emission, and so it was. <sup>54</sup> On account of these and similar evidences of clairvoyant powers, <sup>55</sup> Nathan was greatly respected and honored by the group.

Nathan testified that he had read in a very old book that in the year 1626, a son will be born to Mordecai Zebi, and he will name him Sabbatai--that people will come from many countries to Gaza to seek repentance for their sins through him.<sup>56</sup>

The ZLY document states that Sabbatai received many letters from people of distant lands, asking him to clear them of their sins. One community in order to test the genuineness of Sabbatai's visionary powers sent a long list of names and included among them, the name of a dead person and that of a child who was still a suckling, and therefore could not have sinned. However, Sabbatai's answer to the community indicated that he knew that they had included the names of a dead person and of a very young child, and therefore they were convinced that the reports of his mystic powers were true. Through similar incidents his fame soon spread throughout the Turkish empire.<sup>57</sup>

These fantastic tales in ZLY cannot, of course, be taken literally, but they are of great historical significance, because they definitely indicate the naivete with which the Jews of that time eagerly grasped and accepted all kinds of messianic rumors. They also show that during Sabbatai's stay in Palestine, a widespread belief in him as the Messiah, and in Nathan as his prophet, was developing throughout the Jewish communities of the world. The great following which Sabbatai and Nathan had in Palestine, and the world influence which they wielded is substantiated by Rygaut who states<sup>58</sup> that Nathan was bold enough to prophesy that one year from the twenty-seventh of Kislev, the Messiah was to appear before the Grand Signor, and take his crown from him.

Sabbatai preached repentance to the Jews of Gaza, and obedience to himself as the Messiah. This so affected the Jews of the community that they gave themselves up wholly to their prayers, alms, and devotions; and to confirm this belief the more, dispatches were sent from Gaza to acquaint the Jews in foreign lands of the wonders of the Messiah. The rumor of the Messiah had flown so swiftly and gained such a welcome reception, that many communities sent letters to Gaza and Jerusalem in which they spoke of the deliverance of the Jews and the expiration of their term of servitude by the appearance of the Messiah.

JOURNEYS OF SABBATAI AFTER HE LEFT PALESTINE----HIS RECEPTION  
BY WORLD JEWRY.

The document ZLY states that from Gaza, Sabbatai travelled to Smyrna, and omits the account of his triumphant entrance into Aleppo, prior to his visit of Smyrna. De la Croix reports that Sabbatai first stopped at Aleppo and was jubilantly received in this community because the people were already enthusiastic about their Messiah, due to Nathan's correspondence, and propagandistic activities. Sabbatai's arrival in Smyrna is dated, the month of Kislev, in the year 1686 in the document ZLY. The ZLY account of Sabbatai's reception in Smyrna agrees with the other sources except in one detail, namely, the antagonism of his brother Elijah. Sabbatai was received with great honor by the Jews of Smyrna, and many Jews from distant lands came to pay him homage. His reputation had even penetrated the non-Jewish world, for it was not unusual for non-Jews to visit him and express their confidence in him as the Messiah. While in Smyrna,



Sabbatai stayed at the home of his brother Elijah, who had no faith in Sabbatai as the Messiah of Israel. Moreover, he was afraid that due to his brother's messianic pretensions, all the Jews of the community of Smyrna would suffer at the hands of the Turks. He is said to have stated that it would be better for Sabbatai to die than to have all of Israel perish. Therefore, he made an attempt to kill Sabbatai, but Sabbatai merely stared at him, and Elijah became powerless, and was glued to the spot. Graetz indicates that Elijah did not oppose Sabbatai but actually prepared the way for a welcome reception in his native city by joining his brother Joseph in distributing money among the poor.<sup>62</sup> Emden would even make Elijah an ally of Sabbatai, for he states, that while Sabbatai was in Jerusalem, his brothers Joseph and Elijah told the Jews of Smyrna that Sabbatai was the Messiah, that he had performed many wonders in Jerusalem and would soon return to Smyrna and give definite evidence of his miraculous powers. Furthermore, he states that Sabbatai had kept up a secret correspondence with his brothers, while he was in Jerusalem and had given them full instructions for preparing the community for his arrival.<sup>63</sup> As a result, the credulous people of Smyrna implicitly believed the statements of Sabbatai's brothers, and eagerly awaited the arrival of the Messiah in Smyrna. Though we question the complete veracity of the account in Emden's book, we cannot accept the ZLY document account of Elijah's attempt to kill Sabbatai, because its intimation of Sabbatai's hypnotic powers makes the account sound legendary. Besides, we

might expect the members of the Zebi family to at least be as enthusiastic about accepting Sabbatai as the Messiah, as the rest of the people of Smyrna.

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Sabbatai's heretical actions such as pronouncing the Ineffable Name, breaking with the dietary laws, and performing acts contrary to the Torah brought him to the attention of world Jewry, and aroused the ire of many of the pious Jews. But in the course of time Sabbatai imposed his will on many of his followers, and through the forcefulness of his personality, he convinced many faithful Jews that his violations of traditional customs in Judaism were the result of divine revelation. One of the synagogues, whose members did not believe in Sabbatai closed its doors to him. When Sabbatai was refused admission to a Sabbath service, he returned in great anger, battered down the door of the synagogue with an axe and entered. He immediately assumed the leadership of the congregation and told the congregants that they were exempt from prayer on that day, and had to recite only the Shema. Then, he took a Pentateuch out of his pocket and said that he was holier than the Sefer Torah. Sabbatai climaxed the morning service by dividing the kingdom of the earth among the leading members of the congregation, proclaiming his brother Elijah as King of the Turks, his brother Joseph as the Emperor of Rome, and the other kingdoms he divided among various members of the congregation. On the morrow, those who did not believe in him denounced him to the judge of the city, but this judge was overawed by Sabbatai's presence, and the defamers of the Messiah were forced to flee from the city. Emden and Graetz speak in

greater detail of Sabbatai's division of the kingdoms of the world,<sup>65</sup> and Graetz gives the names of the twenty-five intimate disciples of Sabbatai (including Sabbatai's two brothers) to whom he distributed the crowns and kingdoms of the world. These disciples were so certain that in due time they would actually have dominion over the kingdoms ceded to them that Abraham Rubio, a beggar, who was elected as king over one of the provinces, refused to sell the rights to his imaginary kingdom at any price.

Sabbatai received world wide attention because of his deeds and because of the enthusiastic and frenzied acclaim with which<sup>66</sup> he was received as the Messiah by Jews all over the world. His secretary, Samuel Primo, and his devoted follower and prophet, Nathan of Gaza acted as excellent press agents, and flooded the Jewish communities the world over with messages concerning the appearance of the Messiah and his wonderful doings. Wherever Sabbatai went, his appearance was heralded, and great celebrations were held in his honor. All semblance of normality left the Jews who faithfully believed in him. The masses were in a frenzy. Some of the people actually envisioned the promises of the Messiah, Sabbatai Zebi, and prepared themselves for the exodus to the holy land. Stores were closed, business was stopped, and all commercial transactions were suspended in anticipation of that great gala day when the Messiah would reveal himself and his kingdom. Many Jews submitted themselves to ascetic exercises in order to speed the redemption. The ZLY document states that such a complete repentance had not been practiced in Israel since the days of Mordecai and Esther.



Others indulged in festivities in honor of the Messiah. In Smyrna, Sabbatai dressed in royal garb paraded through the streets of the city with a following of five hundred Jews, who jubilantly proclaimed "Long live our King! Long live our Lord, the King!" More than one hundred and fifty prophets in Smyrna prophesied that Sabbatai was the king and the Messiah. In the ZLY document, the names of several of the prophets and prophetesses, and the text of one of the prophecies is given.<sup>67</sup> The prophecy gives us an indication of the state of mind of the people during this time, for the prophecy is no doubt a spontaneous utterance--as evidenced by its incoherence, the unrelated Biblical quotations, and the ecstatic phrases.

The ZLY account of Sabbatai's glorious reception in Smyrna, and the unprecedented festivities, and repentances performed in that city and in all cities throughout Turkey is in no wise exaggerated. As a matter of fact, this account is conservative, when compared to the reports of Graetz, Emden, and Rycaut. The first document in Emden's שני חלקים states that when Sabbatai came to Smyrna, his believers bowed and prostrated themselves before him, and honored him more than they would have honored a king. Wherever he went he was followed by hundreds of Jews who revelled at the possibility of kissing the feet of the anointed one, and being near him.<sup>68</sup> The prophetic mania of the people is also not exaggerated in the ZLY document, for Graetz states that there were more than four hundred men and women who prophesied concerning the nascent empire of Sabbatai.<sup>69</sup> Even infants who could hardly pronounce a single word began to

repeat and pronounce clearly the name of Sabbatai, the Messiah, and the son of God. Those who were more advanced in age spoke of the redemption of Israel and of the visions which they had of the scion of Judah and the triumph of Sabbatai. Graetz also gives the reports of eye witnesses who claim that these prophets trembled violently while prophesying and continued in such a state until they fell powerless, and then they would declare that Sabbatai Zebi was the Messiah and the king of the Jews, that he would surely lead the Jewish people into the promised land, and that ships would appear from Tarshish in order to conduct them to Jerusalem. As soon as they had completed their prophecies, they returned to consciousness and did not know what they had said to the great astonishment of the Christians, who saw this daily and listened to it. The first document in א/כס"ב א"ז/ב gives a dramatic description of the manner in which the Jews prophesied.<sup>70</sup>

Rycaut's description of the wild acclaim with which the Jews accepted Sabbatai Zebi as the Messiah is even more vivid.<sup>71</sup> This contemporary and most accurate source informs us that the Jews throughout the Turkish empire were greatly excited about Sabbatai. "No trade or course of gain was followed; every one imagined, that daily provisions, riches, honor, and government were to descend upon him by some unknown miraculous manner." We are told that the self imposed fasts of the people were far beyond human endurance,-- that many fasted for seven consecutive days, others buried themselves in their gardens, covering their naked bodies with earth, their heads only excepted, until their

bodies were stiffened with the cold and moisture; others would allow melted wax to be dropped upon their shoulders. "But the most common manner of mortification was to prick their backs and sides with thorns and then give themselves thirty-nine lashes. All business was laid aside, none worked or opened shop, unless to clear his warehouse of merchandise at any price; whoever had superfluous household materials sold it for what he could get, but not to Jews for they were interdicted from all bargains or sales under pain of excommunication."<sup>72</sup> "In this manner things ran to a strange height of madness amongst the Jews of Smyrna, where there appeared such pageantry of greatness, that no comedy could equal the mock shows they presented."<sup>73</sup> "Millions of People were possessed when Sabbatai first appeared in Smyrna and announced himself to the Jews as their Messiah....it was strange to see how this fancy took, and how fast the report of Sabbatai and his doctrine flew through all parts of the world inhabited by Jews... that in all places from Constantinople to Buda (which it was my fortune that year to travel) I perceived a strange transport in the Jews, none of them attending to any business, unless to wind up former negotiations, and to prepare themselves and their family for a journey to Jerusalem; all their discourses, their dreams and the disposal of their affairs tended to no other design but a reestablishment in the land of promise."<sup>74</sup>

We are amazed at the hilarious activities of the Jews at this time, and we no doubt wonder whether the Turkish officials allowed them to continue their activities unimpeded. The ZLY document reports that the Turks saw and heard the activities of



the Jews and did not hamper them in the least, but instead prostrated themselves to the ground before Sabbatai and paid him homage.<sup>75</sup> This statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration, and we must agree with the accurate account of Rycaut, which states that the Jews were not molested by the Turks because the Jews bribed the Turks not to report their activities to the sultan.<sup>76</sup> Graetz also supports this view by quoting Christian sources which state that the messianic madness which raged in Smyrna was endured by the Turkish officials because of the large sums of money paid to them by the Jews. De la Croix adds that the Cadis apologized to the Turks by saying that the Jews were more numerous than they, and that if steps were taken against them, it would cause a revolution in the village which his authority could not appease.<sup>77</sup>

Baruch ben Gerschon's account of Sabbatai's trip to Constantinople in 1666 is untenable and does not agree with the other accounts.<sup>78</sup> Sabbatai journeyed from Smyrna to Constantinople by boat. A great storm arose at sea and everyone thought that the boat would be wrecked, but we are told that Sabbatai miraculously averted this catastrophe by placing one of his feet on the mast of the boat, whereupon a pillar of fire appeared and almost instantly guided the people to their destiny. However, Sabbatai's freedom was but temporary, for as soon as he entered Constantinople, the leading Jews of the city, reported to the Vizier that Sabbatai was a self appointed Messiah in whom they did not believe and as a result Sabbatai was incarcerated in the royal prison for two days and one night. Then, the Vizier asked that Sabbatai



be presented before him and the Mufti. When presented, Sabbatai refused to bow before them, but was not rebuked for his audacity. The Vizier asked Sabbatai what language he spoke and Sabbatai answered that he was conversant with all languages. He then began to speak four or five languages to the Vizier, who was so well pleased with his conversation, <sup>79</sup> that even though he merited death, the Vizier commanded that Sabbatai be brought to the royal prison where he remained in peace without being molested by the Turks. Jews were given permission to visit Sabbatai in prison, and a royal order was issued that no Jew be harmed who visited him. About this time the Vizier had to leave Constantinople in order to terminate the long war in which Turkey was engaged. In order to make sure that Sabbatai would not escape during his absence, the Vizier decided to remove him to another prison. He therefore sent for the leaders of the Jewish community and told them that evil would befall the Jews who came to visit Sabbatai, and therefore he wished to transfer him to a well fortified castle in Gallipoli where distinguished prisoners were kept. Sabbatai's detention in Gallipoli was of a mild sort. He lived in prison in regal splendor, and received world wide homage from both Jews and non-Jews. His personal appearance while in prison was more becoming to a monarch than to a prisoner, for he was dressed in royal garb with a white robe trimmed with sable, and he sat on a rug of silk and gold. While in prison, Jews from all over the world came to visit him, to speak to him, to prostrate themselves before him, and to kiss his hand, - for his fame as the Messiah of Israel had spread throughout the world. Only

Italy did not send representatives to visit the "messiah, which seems to indicate according to the ZLY account that Italy did not have much faith in Sabbatai as the <sup>80</sup>messiah.

The only detail of Sabbatai's trip to Constantinople with which all the sources are in agreement is that Sabbatai journeyed to Constantinople by boat. Rycaut reports that the wind proving northerly as is common in the Hellespont, the vessel had not yet arrived in Constantinople, though it had left Smyrna thirty-nine days previously. In the meantime the news reached Constantinople that the "messiah would be there within a few days, and all the people arranged to receive him with the same joy and impatience which marked his visits to other cities. The Vizier, who had already heard of the disorder and madness which Sabbatai had aroused among the "ews, was at that time in Constantinople. He therefore dispatched two boats to meet the vessel on which Sabbatai was travelling and commanded that Sabbatai be brought <sup>81</sup>back and made a prisoner at the port.

The ZLY document seems to be more accurate than the other accounts in regard to Sabbatai's reception by the Jews in Constantinople. It is very possible that the leading Jews of Constantinople feared the political consequences of Sabbatai's trip to Constantinople, and therefore reported him to the Vizier as a pseudo-Messiah.

Baruch ben Gerschon's history presents an entirely different picture of Sabbatai's imprisonment by the Vizier than do most of the sources. Here the author gives evidences of his Sabbatian tendencies for he distorts the facts and makes a definite

attempt to extol Sabbatai and to show his fortitude before the mighty Vizier, who had the power to judge whether Sabbatai merited death or not. Rycaut is more authentic on this question.. He states that when Sabbatai was brought to the port, he was committed to the most loathsome and darkest dungeon in town, (not the royal prison as is stated in ZLY) there to remain in further expectation of the Vizier's sentence. "The Jews were not at all discouraged at this ill-treatment of their prophet, but rather confirmed in their belief in him; which consideration induced the greatest among the Jews to make their visits and addresses to him with the same ceremony and respect in the dungeon."<sup>82</sup>

According to Graetz, Sabbatai was put in chains and brought to Constantinople. His miserable treatment on his arrival and his denial of his messianic role are established by almost all the sources. According to De la Croix he was put in prison because of debts. By means of bribery of the prison warden Sabbatai was treated with more consideration later, and this improvement of his imprisonment increased the messianic confusion in Constantinople.<sup>83</sup>

The ZLY document agrees with Rycaut in regard to the reason for the removal of Sabbatai to Abydos and the manner of his detention there. However, Rycaut in listing the countries which sent representatives to visit Sabbatai, mentions Italy, and therefore differs with Baruch ben Gerschon who stated that Italy did not send any visitors to Sabbatai.<sup>84</sup> Rycaut is also correct in this contention.

# TIMID OPPOSITION---VIGOROUS SUPPORT OF SABBATAI.

The belief in Sabbatai was so universally accepted that it took undaunted courage to oppose him and to insinuate that he was a false Messiah. Two of Sabbatai's strongest opponents were the Rabbis Aaron Lapapa and Solomon Algazi, These two Rabbis and five laymen wrote a letter to the community of Constantinople, denouncing Sabbatai.<sup>85</sup> This letter was answered and signed by twenty-four Hakamim of Constantinople who showed their steadfast faith in the Messiah, Sabbatai Zebi.<sup>86</sup> In the letter they reprimand the two Rabbis for their evil association with the other five men, but they give the two Rabbis a chance to mend their ways. The five co-signers were excommunicated without further ado, but they were not so peremptory in their action against the two Rabbis. The elders of Constantinople in their reply to the opponents of Sabbatai refer to them as evil men, who speak ill of Sabbatai, the Messiah of God, the Holy One of Israel, the beloved of Adam. The Rabbis are told that it is their duty to persecute all who defame Sabbatai. If they persist in blaspheming the Messiah, they will be hounded and persecuted and put in chains. However, if they repent of their misdeeds, the elders will be gratuitous enough to forgive them. Evidently, the Rabbis were not willing to repent, for we are informed,<sup>87</sup> that Aaron Lapapa remonstrated and was speedily deposed by Sabbatai, compelled to leave Smyrna, and replaced by Hayim Benveniste, a former opponent of Sabbatai, who now used his Rabbinical office to preach in Sabbatai's behalf and to publicly proclaim him as



the Messiah who would soon reveal the kingdom of God. Graetz reports that Solomon Algazi and some members of the Smyrna Rabbinate were nearly stoned to death by a multitude of believers, and were obliged like Aaron Lapapa to leave the city in haste.<sup>88</sup>

The document ZLY contains another illustration of the unswerving loyalty of the people to Sabbatai and the futility of opposing him, as shown by the treatment of a man in Venice, who spoke against Sabbatai.<sup>89</sup> The people of the community were so enraged against this faithless unbeliever of the Messiah, that they almost beat him to death even though it was the Sabbath. Sabbatai, when informed of this affair by Venetian Rabbis who visited him at Abydos, commissioned his secretary, Samuel Primo to write to the Venice community commending the people thereof for the act. He not only promised to reward the people of Venice with riches and honor, but he said that there was no greater sanctification of the Sabbath than defending his holy name, even though the act might incur death to the offending party. Sabbatai no doubt welcomed such opportunities to make himself known in the foreign communities, for in the letter he instructs the Venetian Jews to circulate this letter in the streets and market places.<sup>90</sup>

#### SABBATIAN FERVOR IN AMSTERDAM

It is interesting to note that the messianic fervor had penetrated the community of Amsterdam, and that in this community we find Jews as ardent in their belief in Sabbatai as were the Jews of Turkey. The number of believers in Amsterdam increased

daily. Especially significant is the fact that it was the educated group that led the Sabbatian movement in Amsterdam. The document MGL contains two letters written by Jews of Amsterdam to Sabbatai Zebi. These letters are of great historical importance because they give us a clear insight of the certitude with which Holland Jewry awaited the coming of the Messiah. The first letter was written by a group of students who attended a Yeshibah<sup>91</sup> in Amsterdam. The letter begins with a eulogy to Sabbatai, "the light of Israel, the man who was raised above all to establish the fallen House of Israel. Our eyes shall see the king in his beauty and glory. He is our lord, the king, the teacher, the righteous Sabbatai Zebi. His seed shall live forever, before the heavenly father." The rest of the letter is written in the same laudatory style and shows the invincible faith of the writers in the "Messiah. The students acknowledge their insignificance and apologize for their audacity in writing to the lord, the Messiah of the God of Jacob. They express the eager impatience with which they await the time when he will ascend the throne of his kingdom, and the hope that the "Messiah will remember his humble servants, who beg of him that their souls may be precious to Sabbatai, 'the holy one of God, the king who is above all praises,--he is our king, he is our saviour, Sabbatai Zebi, and his kingdom shall endure forever.'<sup>92</sup>

The second letter in the document MGL is written in the same laudatory style and is a testimony of their belief and submission to Sabbatai.<sup>93</sup> Each paragraph of this letter ends with the word לְעוֹלָם, and in one of the paragraphs there is an

acrostic for Sabbatai Zebi. This letter is without doubt the one to which Graetz refers,<sup>94</sup> because it bears the same date which Graetz gives, the 24th of Ellul, 1666. Graetz states that this letter was written by Benjamin Mussafia, and signed by him and two other members of the school. However, in the MGL document, which is an authentic copy of the original, has the signatures of fifteen students of the Yeshibah בן ציון בן ציון in Amsterdam. Mussafia may have been the writer of the letter for his name heads the list of signers.

#### SELF GLORIFICATION AND DEIFICATION OF SABBATAI.

It is interesting to note the exalted appellations and the superhuman qualities ascribed to Sabbatai Zebi. Throughout the ZLY document, Sabbatai's messianic dignity is maintained by referring to him as the 'annointed king,' the 'most holy king,'<sup>95</sup> etc. Very often לפניו פ'י<sup>96</sup> is affixed to his name, which shows they thought of him as royalty, for this phrase is used only for kings. In a letter signed by Sabbatai, he calls himself, 'the Lord of Peace,' 'Father Israel,' 'the groom who comes out of the canopy,' 'the husband of the beloved and precious Torah,'<sup>97</sup> 'the Messiah of Jacob,' 'the Lion of Eloi and the Deer of Eloi.' In the letter written by Primo to the community of Venice, Sabbatai is referred to as 'the Lord of all the world,' 'the one who will redeem your souls and your bodies, who will revive your dead, and will save you from the yoke of servitude to the government, for who can attain the heights of the 'Shin Daleth Yodh,' לפניו פ'י. He is our Lord. He is our Redeemer, the

annointed king, the Messiah of the God of Israel." These references in ZLY are not exaggerated in the least for all the sources agree that Sabbatai was generally accepted as the Messiah, that superhuman qualities were ascribed to him, and that he was practically deified by his believers. The first document in the \_\_\_\_\_ מכתב מן ה'תקל"ח states that the Sabbatians claimed that Sabbatai revived the dead, healed lepers, and by merely<sup>98</sup> breathing was capable of throwing adversaries to the ground. Graetz reports that Samuel Primo sent letters all over the world with the signature, \_\_\_\_\_ אני ה' משיח<sup>99</sup> ה'תקל"ח.

Even business transactions would often include the name of Sabbatai Zebi as a seal of final approval to the deal. In the ZLY document, a letter describing a commercial transaction between several Jews in Constantinople, is reproduced.<sup>100</sup> The letter contains no reference whatsoever to Sabbatai Zebi or of his activities. But at the end of the letter we find the following word acrostic for Sabbatai Zebi:

עלמיו קיבו תפארתו יגדל קדושתו יעלה. This would lead us to believe that it was a common practice in those days for the Jews to associate Sabbatai with every phase of their life, and that a reference to his name in a letter or document would ascribe to it an inexplicable spiritual significance which would make that document more binding. It is also possible that the name of Sabbatai was used as a seal by the believers in a manner similar to the use of the insignia of a fraternal order to-day.



## SABBATAI'S CONVERSION.

The ZLY document gives neither the details of Sabbatai's conversion to Mohammedanism, nor the events which led up to it. There is not even an intimation in this account of the important part Nehemiah played in exposing Sabbatai to the Turkish government, and thereby bringing about a collapse of the world-wide Sabbatian movement. The account in ZLY tells us that Poland sent many representatives to visit Sabbatai at Abydos, among whom were Rabbi Isaiah and Rabbi Leb.<sup>102</sup> Sabbatai received these Polish delegates with marked attention and he asked them if there was a prophet in their land, to which they responded that there was not. Sabbatai informed them that the prophet Nehemiah lived in Poland, told them exactly where they would find him, and instructed them to request Nehemiah to present himself before Sabbatai. When they arrived in Poland they located Nehemiah, who informed them of their mission before they had a chance to recount it to him. Nehemiah then spoke in glowing terms of Sabbatai, compared him to an angel, and said that there was no other person like Sabbatai. Before the Rabbis Isaac and Leb left Nehemiah they asked him if troublous times would preceed the messianic age, and he answered, "Those troubles you have already suffered are sufficient."<sup>103</sup> But he refused to tell them when the redemption would take place. It seems improbable that the Rabbis Isaiah and Leb did not know of Nehemiah Cohen, for according to Graetz and Rycant, Nehemiah was a famed scholar who was known throughout Poland.<sup>104</sup> The author of the first document in Emden's שו"ת אגרות calls Cohen

the greatest scholar in Germany and Poland.<sup>105</sup> Baruch ben Gerschon may have purposely omitted the complete controversy between Nehemiah Cohen and Sabbatai Zebi, for as an ardent Sabbatian, he would not relish the task of dwelling at length upon the incident which caused the ruin and downfall of the Messiah. Graetz, Emden, and Rycaut give complete and descriptive accounts of Nehemiah's visit to Sabbatai and his subsequent activities in Turkey and Poland.<sup>106</sup>

In the month of Ellul, 1666 the Sultan commanded that Sabbatai be brought before him. When the Turks and Christians heard of this they thought that Sabbatai would be killed and that all the rest of the Jews in the kingdom would be destroyed; for there was a royal decree that all Jews of Constantinople were to be killed. Sabbatai, dressed in regal splendor, presented himself before the Sultan and greeted him affably in Turkish. Sabbatai immediately accepted the Mohammedan faith in the king's presence, and the king rewarded him by giving him the title Mehemet, and commanded that he be given a large daily allowance as a pension. The news of Sabbatai's conversion spread quickly to world Jewry. Sabbatai pleaded in behalf of his fellow-Jews before the Sultan and as a result the royal decree to destroy the Jews of Constantinople was revoked, and not a Jew was harmed.<sup>107</sup> Again, we note the author's predilection for omitting details which would reflect unfavorably upon Sabbatai. Full details of Sabbatai's willing submission to the sultan and the readiness with which he accepted Mohammedanism are given by Graetz, Rycaut, and the first document in           <sup>108</sup>

It is difficult to fathom a man's mind and determine what his thoughts are. Therefore, one can only conjecture concerning the motive which led to Sabbatai's apostasy. Did he convert to save his own life, or did he feel that he could save Israel from the wrath of the Sultan by professing Islam? Emden reports that some people say that Sabbatai intervened for the Jews of Turkey, and that others credit the mother of the Sultan with appeasing the king's wrath against the Jews; Emden himself is noncommittal on the subject.<sup>109</sup> Rycaut, however, declares that Sabbatai's only concern was his own safety. "Sabbatai, now being reduced to his last extremity was not in the least doubtful as to his course of action, for to die for what he was assured was false was against his nature, and the death of a madman. Sabbatai replied with much cheerfulness, that he was contented to turn Turk and that it was not out of force, but of choice, having been a long time desirous of so glorious a profession, he esteemed himself much honored."<sup>110</sup>

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER ONE.

1. Aaron Freimann, Injane Sabbatai Zewi, (Berlin, 1912) pp. 1-40.
2. Ibid. pp. 43-68.
3. Ibid. pp. 73-78.
4. Ibid. pp. 81-92.
5. Ibid. pp. 93-108.
6. Ibid. pp. 111-138.
7. Jacob Emden, Torath Ha-Kna'oth, (Lemberg, 1870) p. 35; also Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, (Philadelphia, 1898) Vol. V. p. 118.
8. Ibid.,
9. Emden, op. cit., p. 3.
10. Freimann, op. cit., p. 45.
11. Ibid.
12. Heinrich Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, (Leipzig, 1882) Vol. X. p. 470.
13. Emden, op. cit., p. 35.
14. Ibid.
15. Emden, op. cit., p. 4.
16. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 469.
17. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 122.
18. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 469.
19. Emden, op. cit., p. 4. Sabbatai greatly honored in Salonica. Due to his messianic activities he was ordered to leave the city. He went to Italy. From Italy he went to Alexandria, then Cairo, and then to Palestine.
20. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 470.
21. Freimann, op. cit., p. 45.
22. Emden, op. cit., p. 4.
23. Ibid., p. 45.
24. Ibid., p. 4.



25. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., pp. 126-27.
26. Freimann, Injane, p. 45.
27. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 472.
28. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 124.
29. Ibid., p. 128.
30. Freimann, op. cit., p. 48.
31. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 471.
32. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 84-85. This letter was found in the library of Jews' College in London. This letter, not cited in other sources. Though it is a fantastic letter it is of historical importance because it shows the unquestioned faith of some of the Jews in Jerusalem in Sabbatai.
33. Freimann, op. cit., p. 46.
34. Ibid., pp. 45-6.
35. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 472.
36. Emden, Torath, p. 5.
37. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 473.
38. Freimann, op. cit., p. 46.
39. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 119.
40. Sir Paul Rycant, THE HISTORY OF THE TURKS, BEGINNING WITH THE YEAR 1679, BEING A FULL RELATION OF THE LAST TROUBLES IN HUNGARY, WITH THE SIEGES OF VIENNA AND BUDA ETC., UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR 1698 and 1699. (London, 1700.) p. 174.
41. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X. p. 473.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., p. 483.
44. Emden, op. cit., p. 54.
45. Freimann, op. cit., p. 45.
46. Ibid.
47. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 473.
48. Emden, op. cit., pp. 33-45.

49. Emden, Torath, p. 33.
50. Rycaut, History of Turks, p. 174.
51. Freimann, Injane, p. 47.
52. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 474.
53. Ibid.
54. Emden, op. cit., p. 39.
55. Freimann, op. cit. p. 47.
56. Ibid., p. 47. This reference is extremely interesting for it no doubt refers to the Yachini forgery. Cuenqui's report of it in Emden, Torath, p. 37, is in accordance with the statement in ZLY. Cuenqui states that Nathan told Sabbatai that he had a book which started with Sabbatai and ended with the year 6000, telling of future happenings. Sabbatai ordered him to bring the book to him. He then tore out the first page which spoke about him, and he told Nathan to bury the page in the cemetery, and then unearth it and reveal it to everyone. This page soon became widely known. It reads--"A son was born to Mordecai Zebi in 1626, whose name was Sabbatai." Cuenqui said he could not remember the rest of the contents of the page. Graetz (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X. p. 474 states that this script must have played an important role in the relation between Sabbatai and Nathan, but we cannot believe that Nathan had duped him with it. The truth of the matter is that Sabbatai had detected in Nathan an eccentric Cabalistic youth and through this alleged old apocalypse, which was forged by Yachini, he inflamed the imagination of Nathan, and from that time on, Nathan acknowledged Sabbatai as the true redeemer.
57. Ibid., p. 48.
58. Rycaut, op. cit., p. 174.
59. Emden, op. cit., p. 27.; also Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V. p. 132.
60. Freimann, op. cit., p. 48.
61. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 476.
62. Ibid.
63. Emden, op. cit., p. 6.
64. Freimann, op. cit., p. 48.
65. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol X., p. 484; also Emden, op. cit., p.28.

66. Freimann, Injane, p. 49.
67. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
68. Emden, Torath, p. 6.
69. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 478.
70. Emden, op. cit., pp. 9-10. This account tells us that many people became prophets, men, women, young men and girls, even little children would prophesy in Hebrew and Aramaic. The prophets would fall to the ground, gesticulate with their hands and feet like apoplectics. Though their styles of prophesying differed, they always achieved the same result, viz., that Sabbatai is the "messiah". In Constantinople there were over eight hundred prophets, and several hundred in Adrianople. It is interesting to note the marked similarity between these prophets and the Nebiim as illustrated by Saul's actions in I Sam. 19:24; also their similarity to the ecstatic actions of the dervishes.
71. Rycaut, History of Turks, p. 176.
72. Ibid., p. 177.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 174.
75. Freimann, op. cit., p. 49.
76. Rycaut, op. cit., p. 176.
77. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 485.
78. Freimann, op. cit., p. 50.
79. The ZLY account is no doubt a myth. Both Emden and Rycaut inform us that Sabbatai could not speak Turkish and needed an interpreter when he was before the Sultan. Emden, op. cit. p. 18; Rycaut, op. cit., p. 181.
80. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 52-3.
81. Rycaut, op. cit., p. 178.
82. Ibid.
83. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 485.
84. Rycaut, op. cit., p; 178.
85. Freiman., op. cit., p. 53.

86. Freimann, Injane, p. 54.
87. Emden, Torath, p. 8; Graetz, (Ger. Tr.) Vol. X., p. 477.
88. Graetz, (Eng. Ed.) Vol. V. p. 144.
89. Freimann, op. cit., p. 55.
90. This incident referred to in Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p.150
91. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 111-12. This letter is in the Amsterdam library. It was signed by all the students. Sabbatai never received the letter.
92. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol V., p. 155--mentions this letter. He says that Abraham Gideon Abudiente was the leader of the students. In the letter in the MGL document Abudiente is the first to sign and therefore is probably the leader of the group.
93. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 112-13. This letter in the book  
'22 Jan. 1713.
94. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 155.
95. Freimann, op. cit., many such references in pages 45-70.
96. Ibid., p. 55 and throughout ZLY document.
97. Ibid., p. 56.
98. Emden, op. cit., p. 14.
99. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) VolX., p. 475.
100. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 51-52.
101. Ibid., p. 53.
102. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 487; Emden, op. cit., p. 15. Both these books refer to this visit to Sabbatai.
103. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 53-54.
104. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 487; Rycaut, op. cit., p. 181.
105. Emden, op. cit., p. 17.
106. Ibid., pp. 10, 17, 26; Rycaut, op. cit., pp. 180-81; Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., pp. 487-88.
107. Freimann, op. cit., p. 58.
108. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X. p. 488, Emden, op. cit., pp. 16,17, 26, Rycaut, op. cit., p. 181.



109. Emden, Torath, p. 84.

110. Rycaut, History of Turks, p. 181.

## Chapter II

## LITURGICAL AND CEREMONIAL CHANGES INTRODUCED BY SABBATAI AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

So certain were the people of the messianic proclamations of Sabbatai that they practically deified him and accepted him as their Redeemer. This attitude is shown in the prayer<sup>1</sup>, which was said in his honor, and at which people would rise when his name was mentioned. The unquestioning faith with which his followers accepted him is clearly indicated by the following insertion in the prayer: "Our Lord, our king, the holy Rabbi, the Sultan, Sabbatai Zebi, the anointed of the God of Jacob, may his glory be extolled. Kings, and all peoples, and nations shall obey him. His government is an everlasting one. It shall not be uprooted. His horn shall be exalted with honor, and the crown of God shall be upon his head. His name shall shine before the sun, and all nations shall be blessed through him. Our eyes shall see and our hearts shall rejoice in his holy temple and in his glory." The sanctuary of the Lord thy hands have established and let us say amen." Though Graetz does not quote any of the prayers, he states that many prayers for Sabbatai were given in the synagogues with great lavishness.

## SABBATAI CHANGES NATURE OF TISHA BE'AB.

Sabbatai decreed that any land that acknowledged him must convert the fast of the ninth of Ab into a joyous festival. Many lands conformed to his wish, and as a result the saddest day in

the Jewish calendar was changed to a day of celebration. However, some communities hesitated before making such a drastic change in a tradition which had existed for so long a time in Judaism. <sup>3</sup> The ZLY document states that the people of Constantinople, a city in which Sabbatai had a great following, were in a dilemma in regard to the observance of Tish'a Be'Ab. They did not know whether it was permissible to observe the day in accordance with Sabbatai's wishes, and as a result the people of the community met at a special service to determine whether to comply with Sabbatai's decree. It was finally decided to resort to the Mishnaic procedure of casting lots to determine the mode of observing the day. Two notes were put in a ballot box; on one was written א'ש'א and on the other ש'א'ב was inscribed. Then, a young lad was asked to draw out one of the slips. He did so three times and each time he drew the slip which had ש'א'ב written on it. Others prayed to a certain great Rabbi to appear to them in a dream (עין אלה), and in each case the answer was ש'א'ב. As a result the ninth of Ab was observed with much pomp and festivity in Constantinople in the year 1666.

In Salonica, a community of 60,000 Jews, they were also in doubt as to how to observe Tish'a Be'Ab, and as a result they sent a courier to Gallipoli to tell Sabbatai that if he would not perform a miracle, then they would not convert the ninth of Ab into a festival. Sabbatai answered the messenger saying, "The miracle which I give you is--that without any sign or miracle you will make it a holiday." And so it was, for the

community of Salonica celebrated this fast day with greater festivities than they celebrated the joyous festivals of the year. The ZLY document also states that the day was also celebrated in Adrianople, Sofia, Smyrna, and other cities by making a festive occasion of it, celebrating it with choice meats and pleasing drinks, with many candles and lamps, and with music and songs.<sup>4</sup>

The ZLY document contains a letter which Sabbatai wrote to the community of Sofia, explaining the reason for the unprecedented celebration of Tish'a Be'Ab.<sup>5</sup> Sabbatai stated that the feasting and rejoicing was in honor of his birthday. He tells them to follow the laws of the festivals, and other things of like nature for the observance of this day. He also informs them that studying the Torah and conversing with Christians is permitted on this day. Sabbatai even ordered a special ritual for the day, in which he attempted to propagandize the fact that he was the divinely appointed Messiah, as shown by an excerpt of one of the prayers:<sup>6</sup> "And thou hast given us in love, O Lord, joyous festivals and holidays, and this day of conciliation, the day of the birth of our king, our anointed Sabbatai, your servant, and your first born son, through whom we commemorate our coming out of Egypt." After this prayer, Deuteronomy I-III:17 was recited, five men being appointed for the reading thereof as on a regular holiday. The prophetic reading for the morning shall be Jeremiah XXXI. Then read the Musaf for festivals. When the Torah is returned, instead of the Shema, read in a loud clear voice the forty-fifth psalm; then read the following psalms: XCVIII, CXXXII, CXXVI, and the Hallel, and finish with a full



benediction. Throughout the service a joyous atmosphere should prevail, and special significance was to be given to the festival by singing a Kiddush for Yom Tob with a ל'דור. This day shall be a remembrance unto you for everlasting generations, and a perpetual covenant between me and Israel. Heed my words carefully and you will eat the good of the land, and your souls shall delight in the fatness thereof. Hearken unto me and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you. In characteristic fashion, Sabbatai signed this letter: David, son of Jesse, fearful to the kings of the world, the man that was raised above every blessing and praise, the anointed of the God of Jacob.

The above prayer, the liturgical innovations, and Sabbatai's ordinances are cited by Rycaut,<sup>7</sup> whose translation so closely follows the prayer in the ZLY document that there is no doubt that both he and Baruch ben Gerschon used the same source material. The few differences are of a minor nature. The Rycaut account states that the letter was written to Smyrna, and not to Sofia as ZLY indicates. According to Rycaut, Sabbatai wrote that it was unlawful for the Jews to converse with Christians on Tish'a Be'Ab, but the ZLY account says that it is lawful to do so. Rycaut names the same psalms with one exception: instead of psalm XLV, Rycaut has psalm XCV. The first document in ל'דור also agrees with ZLY account of the nature of Tish'a Be'Ab, and cites a prayer quite similar to the one in ZLY.<sup>8</sup> We can therefore be quite certain that the ZLY document gives us a true

picture of the method in which Tish'a Be'Ab was observed in the various communities of Turkey in the year 1666.

### FAST OF TAMMUZ.

Similarly, Sabbatai decreed that the Fast of Tammuz should be declared a joyous festival, for on that day the Messianic consciousness had come to him for the first time. <sup>9</sup>

### OTHER SABBATIAN FESTIVALS. <sup>10</sup>

The document SOD lists the following Sabbatian festivals:

Third of Tishri (Fast of Gedaliah)

Tenth of Tebeth--a holiday.

Twenty-fifth of Ellul--a celebration for the announcement in the heavenly Yeshibah of Sabbatai's messianic glory. <sup>11</sup>

Seventeenth of Sivan--day when the kingdom of Sabbatai was inaugurated. <sup>12</sup>

Twenty-first of Sivan--Sabbatai was annointed by Elijah. <sup>13</sup>

Twenty-sixth of Sivan-- דגדג פיד מר פסח <sup>14</sup>

Twenty-second of Tamuz-- a festival of lights.

Twenty-third of Tamuz--- a holy Sabbath.

Twenty-sixth of Tamuz--- a week day which Sabbatai converted into the Great Sabbath. <sup>15</sup>

Special prayers were written for Sabbatai Zebi, and these prayers were recited with much fervor and devotion in many synagogues. The document MGL contains two <sup>16</sup> שני prayers, which were written in Amsterdam in 1666. Both these prayers are of great interest and importance to us, not only because they give us an actual reproduction of prayers that were recited for Sabbatai in Amsterdam, but they also give us the opportunity of apprehending the inner nature of the Sabbatian movement, and the superhuman pedestal which Sabbatai occupied in the minds of the people.<sup>17</sup>

The document SOD contains a liturgic song, written in honor of Sabbatai Zebi, in which he is mentioned several times as the Messiah, and is greatly exalted. This song has the congregational refrain שני and שני.<sup>18</sup>

The MGL document has an acrostic for שני,<sup>19</sup> and a Piyut written for שני.<sup>20</sup> This Piyut is extremely interesting due to its ingenious poetical construction. The author uses שני as a musical refrain in the poem, and insinuates that Zebi, is the שני. The poem is quite daring in its exaltation of the Messiah, for the last stanza insinuates that the "Messiah Sabbatai Zebi is the equal of God. In the poem are found indications of the name of Sabbatai's prophet, Nathan, and the place of his birth, the name of Sabbatai, his attributes, the place of his birth, and a reference to the returning of the tribes.

LITURGICAL CHANGES AND CEREMONIAL INNOVATIONS OBSERVED BY SABBATAI. 21

The document SOD cites interesting deviations from tradition used by Sabbatai and his followers. The author of the document mentions the fact that the Cabbalists used substitute names for God in their mystic speculations, and he states that it is a sin to use these names for anyone but Sabbatai.

Sabbatai and his disciples had a great love for the psalms, and they considered the reading of the psalms more important than the reading of the Mishna.

Instead of reading the Shema before retiring, Sabbatai said it should be read immediately after sunset.

In the Rosh Hashonah service, Sabbatai would begin his prayers before sunrise, for he believed that after sunrise the gates of heaven commence to close, and as a result the possibility of prayers being answered are lessened. On Yom Kippur, one could start his prayers either before or after sunrise, for on that day the gates of heaven remain open.

In the לילה ראשון, instead of הוא יצאנו ממצרים Sabbatai would say הוא יצאנו ממצרים; and instead of הוא יצאנו ממצרים he would read הוא יצאנו ממצרים; instead of הוא יצאנו ממצרים he read הוא יצאנו ממצרים; and for the הוא יצאנו ממצרים he substituted הוא יצאנו ממצרים. Through these changes Sabbatai clearly indicates that the messianic era era is no longer an unfulfilled hope, but that he is the Messiah and that the Messianic era is a living reality.



The fourth ד'תקל"ח of Sabbath (after Haddalah) he would celebrate joyously until midnight, and then say זוהו חג המשיח 'This is the feast of the Messiah.'

Though it was the custom to read the Sedra of the week twice in the original script and once in the Targum, Sabbatai would read it by paragraphs, because of the uncertainty of the verse divisions in the Bible.

He would not say the שמונה עשרה daily before the קריאת התורה because it was too sacred a prayer to be read every day.

Every morning before the קריאת התורה and קריאת התורה Sabbatai would say אליהו וזרעו יאמרו ואלוהינו יאמרו.

In the שמונה עשרה for the Musaf for Sabbath and the festivals instead of שמונה עשרה he would say שמונה עשרה; and שמונה עשרה instead of שמונה עשרה.

In the prayer which begins אשר עשה לנו he added the word אשר עשה לנו and read it thus:

אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו

In the 'Ahabah' prayer, instead of reading אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו, he would read אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו; and אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו.

Before the Tahanun Sabbatai would not say the verse beginning with אשר עשה לנו, but would start with אשר עשה לנו.

On Friday night when Sabbatai entered his house he would say אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו אשר עשה לנו: 'Peaceful and blessed Sabbath.' Then the thirty-first chapter of proverbs, followed by a Pizmone of

Ari, then psalm XXIII, and finally the Kiddush. This procedure is still followed by many observant Jews.

Before Kiddush at night, Sabbatai declared that we should say שנינו שנינו, and in the morning שנינו שנינו.

The liturgical and ceremonial changes noted in this chapter are very important, not only for their significance, but because to our knowledge they are not quoted in other sources, with the exception of those which have been so designated.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO.

1. Freimann, Injane, p. 56.
2. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 477.
3. Freimann, op. cit., p. 56.
4. Ibid., p. 57.
5. Ibid., pp. 57-8.
6. Ibid.
7. Rycaut, History of Turks, p. 179.
8. Emden, Torath, p. 13.
9. Freimann, op. cit., p. 57; Emden, op. cit., p. 8.
10. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
11. Emden, op. cit., p. 75--gives the 14th of Sivan for the holiday
12. Ibid., p. 75.
13. Ibid., gives the twenty-fourth of Sivan for this day.
14. Ibid., gives the twenty-third of Tamuz for this day.
15. Ibid., pp. 14-5 a detailed description of the manner of celebration of this day, but this account states that it was celebrated on the 24th of Tamuz. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V. p. 152 gives the 23rd of Tammuz as the day.
16. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 113-15.
17. The first שני is a copy from a book in the Livraria Montezinos in Amsterdam; the second is a copy from a ms. in the Bibliothec Rosenthal in Amsterdam, and it is also in שני which was arranged by שני.  
(This note in Freimann, op. cit., p. 114.) From hearsay it is known that Isaac Aboab, a friend of Elvira composed a שני for liturgical purposes in an Amsterdam congregation. It is almost certain that he is the author of the first שני.  
Second שני is by Solomon Elvira. (This information in note in Injane, pp. 115.
18. Freimann, op. cit., p. 104.
19. Ibid., p. 115.

20. Freimann, Injane, p. 115. These poems are also found in the Amsterdam library. They are also in ms. form in the library of the congregation ש"ס פ"ד in Amsterdam, amongst a collection of poems by Solomon Elvira. They were written in 1666.
21. Ibid., pp. 93-94.



## Chapter III.

## ACTIVITIES OF NATHAN AFTER SABBATAI'S CONVERSION.

The document ZLY does not give us a complete account of the activities of Nathan after Sabbatai's conversion. However, the few scattered accounts of Nathan's travels give us a general picture of the role he played in continuing Sabbatianism, even though the Messiah himself had fallen into disrepute. Nathan<sup>1</sup> was in Gaza when he heard of the conversion of Sabbatai Zebi. Instead of being disheartened at the news of the apostasy, he accepted it as part of the divine plan, and he immediately concocted a reason for Sabbatai's acceptance of Mohammedanism. Sabbatai had accepted Islam, for it was necessary for him to select the sparks of holiness from Mohammedanism before he could prepare the world for the kingdom of the Almighty. It was for similar reasons, Nathan stated, that Abraham had married Hagar, the Egyptian; Jacob, the daughters of Laban; and Moses the daughter of Jethro. Nathan immediately departed from Gaza with twenty-five faithful disciples to visit Sabbatai, to bow before him and pay him the homage which was his due. While on his journey he met the pious Cabbalist Benjamin Halevi, and his son Solomon, and after a lengthy conversation with them, he convinced the Halevis that Sabbatai was still the Messiah and that he would undoubtedly reveal himself in the near future. The Halevis were so impressed with Nathan's arguments that they wrote a letter to their community telling the people therein not to be misled by the false rumors about Sabbatai, the king and the Messiah. They implored the people to remain unshaken in their faith in

Sabbatai, for his conversion was the result of a heavenly decree which could not be committed to writing. The letter ended with the statement that Nathan the Prophet has clearly proved this to us.<sup>2</sup>

The ZLY document does not mention Nathan's visit to Damascus, where he made his headquarters for a while. Graetz reports that when Nathan heard of Sabbatai's apostasy he betook himself to Damascus and from this city he directed his correspondence and secret propaganda to the various communities, asking them to fortify themselves in their faith, for Sabbatai's apostasy was beyond human comprehension.<sup>3</sup> Both Emden and Rycaut quote the letter which Nathan sent from Damascus to the believers in Aleppo.<sup>4</sup> In this letter, he tells the people to be courageous even though they had heard strange things about Sabbatai, for all his acts are miraculous and wonderful. In the near future it will all become clear. In the meantime, it behooves them to await the salvation of the true Messiah.

Nathan's journeys from Damascus to Adrianople are likewise omitted in the ZLY account.<sup>5</sup> The ZLY document next speaks of Nathan when he is in the vicinity of Adrianople.<sup>6</sup> When the Hakamim of Adrianople heard of Nathan's nearness to their city, they feared that he would again arouse a Messianic fervor among the people and as a result endanger their lives. They therefore sent four or five of their representatives to meet Nathan, and to warn him against entering the city. In order to make his entrance to the city the more difficult, the communities of Adrianople and Aleppo excommunicated Nathan, and therefore

compelled him to change his planned itinerary. Both Emden and Graetz agree with the account in the ZLY document.<sup>7</sup>

In 1668 Nathan journeyed with Samuel Gandor to Corfu. He only remained there a few days, and while he was there he received a letter from Joseph Zebi, the brother of Sabbatai, who lived in Zante.<sup>8</sup> Graetz mentions Nathan's visit to Corfu, and he states that from there Nathan directed his correspondence to the city of Zante.<sup>9</sup> The ZLY document reproduces Nathan's answer to Joseph's letter.<sup>10</sup> In this letter Nathan calls Sabbatai ה'ר 2020. It is interesting to note that the numerical equivalent of this phrase equals 23 126. Nathan reiterates his belief in Sabbatai Zebi, and states that Sabbatai did not profane himself by donning the turban. He attempts to prove from the Talmud that the true redeemer will be degraded and persecuted because of the sins of Israel. He claims that the conversion of Sabbatai is analagous to that of Esther, who through her conversion brought about the redemption of her people. The real reason for Sabbatai's conversion cannot be revealed for it is a divine secret which only a chosen few can understand. The letter ends with a cheerful note, in which Nathan states that soon all of us will witness that which our ancestors have not been privileged to experience,--the coming of the Messianic age.<sup>11</sup>

Nathan travelled from Corfu to Venice. According to Graetz,<sup>12</sup> Nathan arrived in Venice during Hal ha-Moed of Passover in the year 1668. When the Hakamim of the community heard of his arrival, they issued a warning to the people saying that they would excommunicate any man or woman who would admit Nathan

to his home. The Rabbi of Venice, Samuel Aboab, visited Nathan and urged him to leave the city, for he feared that a misfortune would befall the community if Nathan persisted in remaining there, but Nathan responded that he was following the will of God and that he would not be instrumental in bringing harm to any Jew in Venice. Shortly after Aboab's visit to Nathan, two high government officials happened to see Nathan, and they were so favorably impressed with him that they invited Nathan to visit them. Nathan stayed at the home of one of these men for two days and one night, and was very graciously entertained by his host. Then, the two officials presented Nathan to the Jews of the community of Venice and forced them to allow Nathan to remain in the city. On the second day of Passover, the Jews of the community forced the following confession from Nathan. "Though I formerly stated that I saw a heavenly vision similar to that of Ezekiel, and though I prophesied that Sabbatai Zebi is the Messiah, I erred. The vision has no reality whatsoever, and I agree with the Rabbis and Gaonim of Venice that everything which I prophesied about Sabbatai is false and is of no value." But since Nathan was forced by mere strength to revoke his words, he deceived his inquisitors by the manner in which he signed the confession. Instead of writing אני אומר he wrote אני אומר.  
(אני אומר - אומר) insinuating that he was absolutely forced

to sign this document. This same confession is recorded in

13

אני אומר without the variation of a word, but this account would lead us to believe that the confession was not obtained through compulsion. This account states that



Aboab was chiefly responsible for the confession, and also names the three witnesses to the confession of Nathan.

Even though the ZLY document was written by a Sabbatian, in this instance his account is the more accurate one. We know that Nathan was hounded and persecuted during his travels after he left Damascus.<sup>14</sup> We are also informed that Nathan continued preaching Sabbatianism after this confession, and it would therefore seem incongruous for him to make this confession of his own free will.

Graetz says that from Venice Nathan went to Livorno.<sup>15</sup> The ZLY document gives his intermediary sojourns before he arrived in Livorno.<sup>16</sup> Nathan was put on a small boat at night with Samuel Gandor and a third man from Venice. They were sent to a certain individual in the Il Finale di Modona with instructions that he escort them as quickly and as secretly as possible to Florence, Italy. When they arrived in Florence, the Christians mocked them and shouted, "This is the Jewish Messiah," but they were allowed to ride safely through the town. They continued their journey safely via Bologna to Livorno. Nathan dwelt peacefully in Livorno for quite some time, passing his days studying Torah with the Hakamim. From Livorno he went to Rome,<sup>17</sup> and then he returned to Livorno. Nathan finally left Livorno to go to Ancona where he stayed for three weeks and had secret conferences there with several Sabbatians. Then, he went to Ragusa, a town in southern Sicily, and from thence he returned to Turkey. The ZLY document correctly claims that it is evident that Nathan travelled for missionary purposes, and not to

escape his persecutors as his opponents claimed.

While enroute to Turkey, Nathan wrote a letter to Caleb, the priest, telling him that he knows that Caleb was shocked by the news of his confession in Venice.<sup>18</sup> In the letter he defends his action and says that he did not declare his prophecies false. He merely stated that at this time he did not have the power to perform a miracle--that his activities in the city would not cause grief to any Jew in the city, and that he was travelling to fulfill the will of his Possessor. But they compelled him to revoke his own words and to confirm theirs, and they threatened him with death if he did otherwise. However, through the aid of faithful friends<sup>19</sup>, escaped and continued and continued on his journey ever mindful of his mission to announce the nearness of the messianic era.

Nathan went to the land of Morea, and from there he went to Saloniki where he was greatly honored. From Saloniki he went to Adrianople and was hospitably received there, even though he had been excommunicated in that city previously. Then he went to \_\_\_\_\_ ד'תקל"ב where he dwelt many days.<sup>19</sup> The ZLY document is very accurate concerning Nathan's travels and the places he visited, but there is no doubt that this document was written by one who was sympathetic to the Sabbatian movement, for he has an apologetic tone when he speaks of something discreditable to Nathan, and an unconscious admiration for Nathan is reflected throughout the document.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE.

1. Freimann, Injane, p. 58.
2. Ibid., letter written in 1667.
3. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol., X., p. 491.
4. Emden, Torath, p. 21.
5. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 491.
6. Freimann, op. cit., p. 59.
7. Emden, op. cit., p. 22; Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 491.
8. Freimann, op. cit., p. 59.
9. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 491.
10. Freimann, op. cit., pp. 59-61. Letter written 25th of Shebat 1668.
11. Ibid., p. 61.
12. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 491.
13. Emden, op. cit., p. 51. Samuel Aboab was chiefly responsible for this confession. This report also gives the names of the witnesses to the confession: Samuel Aboab, Jacob ben Moses Halevi, and Solomon Reuben, son of the Gaon Nehemiah.
14. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 161.
15. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X. p. 491.
16. Freimann, op. cit., p. 62.
17. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 491.
18. Freimann, op. cit., p. 62-63.
19. Ibid., p. 63.

## Chapter IV.

## SABBATAI ZEBI AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

The material in ZLY concerning the activities of Sabbatai Zebi after his conversion is important, because it narrates incidents not found in other sources. However, it lacks the historical perspective shown in the works of Emden and Graetz. Baruch ben Gerschon in his history makes no attempt to show the demoralizing effect of Sabbatianism upon world Jewry, nor the sudden change of heart which Israel manifested towards their apostate Messiah. The author was either unaware of Israel's burning hatred for this man who had duped them (which is highly improbable) or he was tactful enough as a historian to consciously present a point of view that would be consistent with the exaltation of the Messiah. In שׂוֹרְקֵי אֲזַל we are given an idea of the bitter hatred of the Jews towards their Sabbatian brethren.<sup>1</sup> When the Jews realized how fortunate they were to escape persecution and possibly massacre by the Turkish officials due to the political significance of the messianic movement, they evinced an intense hatred towards those Jews who had compelled them to believe in Sabbatai. Fortunately, the wise and unifying policy of the Rabbis made a speedy reconstruction of world Jewry possible. They used that most effective weapon, excommunication, to bring about harmony in the camps of Israel. They publicly proclaimed that they would excommunicate anyone who harmed a Sabbatian, and they effectively preached the policy of reconciliation towards those who had erred, but were willing to again



follow the true faith of their fathers.

After Sabbatai's conversion, his wife Sarah gave birth to a son.<sup>2</sup> Sabbatai himself circumcised the boy, and named him Ishmael Mordecai. Later the pair was blessed with a girl. No doubt these births ought to silence those who questioned the virility of Sabbatai, but despite the reported birth of these two children some authorities are still skeptical concerning this issue. The unreliable Cuenqui document<sup>3</sup> also reports the birth of Ishmael and his circumcision by Sabbatai in the king's palace.

Shortly after his conversion, Sabbatai induced his brother Elijah and his eldest son to become converted to Mohammedanism. Many other Jews also followed Sabbatai's example and accepted Islam.<sup>4</sup> Many Jews still maintained their belief in Sabbatai, and he received messengers and letters from all over the world, some of the letters coming from places so distant that it took sixteen months for them to reach him. Sabbatai was often seen at the mosque praying, and some of his visitors would join him in prayer and later become converted. The belief in Sabbatai still persisted in various circles throughout the world, for the messengers would tell Sabbatai that prophets in their land were still prophesying that the advent of the Messiah was near. Sabbatai would not commit himself, but in order to appease the visitors he would give them a signed letter that they had found the man about whom the prophets in their country prophesied.

It seems that Judaism was too deeply ingrained in Sabbatai to permit him to forget it completely. Though we are told that

he used to visit the mosque almost every day to pray, he could not have done so with full sincerity; for at the same time he observed many Jewish practices. It is reported that while he was in Adrianople he used to wear Tzitzith, and put on phylacteries--that he studied with the Hakamim, prayed in the synagogue and observed all the Mitsvos as previously.<sup>5</sup> This vacillating policy of observing Judaism at one time and Mohammedanism at another is also mentioned by Rycaut and the author of the first document in מלחמת המדינה.<sup>6</sup> The latter document reports that Sabbatai and his disciples instead of saying יְהוָה יְהוָה would say יְהוָה יְהוָה.<sup>7</sup> Sabbatai's dual life must have had a disquieting effect upon him, for we are told in a letter<sup>8</sup> written by Solomon Katz in 1672 to his brother, that he stayed with Sabbatai in Adrianople for about eight weeks, and that Sabbatai suffered from insomnia, and could not sleep for more than two or three hours at a time. This letter is quite important, for it indicates that Sabbatai still had ardent followers even among the Rabbis. Katz, as late as 1672, refers to anti-Sabbatians as heretics or unbelievers. If we are to give credence to this letter, then Sabbatai was again gathering a large cohort of believers in him as the Messiah, for Rabbi Katz ends the letter by stating that our master is being recognized by more people every day. He publicly proclaimed himself, even before the Turks, as the Messiah of Israel. Solomon Katz pleads with his brother to faithfully believe in our King, our Lord, the Messiah, Sabbatai Zebi, for this faith is greater than the whole Torah. He cleverly proves his point by showing that the numerical value of יְהוָה equals יְהוָה.

P'qil "AN / 5018 of Sofia still believed in Sabbatai despite his conversion, and upon the death of Sabbatai's wife Sarah, he consented to allow his daughter to marry Sabbatai. But this union was evidently contrary to the divine will, for before the nuptials could take place the bride and her brother<sup>9</sup> died.

Sabbatai and a group of converted Jews left Adrianople for Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> Several Jews of that city who wanted to wreak their vengeance on Sabbatai for his apostasy reported to the governor that though Sabbatai was a convert, he observed many Jewish customs and attended services at the synagogue. Sabbatai admitted the truth of these charges when brought before the governor. Though the governor pronounced the death penalty on Sabbatai for this act, he did not take final action before getting the consent of the Sultan. The Sultan instead of complying with the sentence gave orders to revoke the judgment and to give Sabbatai his freedom. When the governor heard of Sabbatai's liberation by the king he was enraged, and he told the king that such leniency would encourage similar action on the part of other converted Jews. As a result, the king had Sabbatai banished to Dulcigno, where he stayed until his death. Graetz states that Sabbatai displeased the king because of his constant association with Jews, and as a result his allowance was forfeited and he was banished from Adrianople to Constantinople. Later he was<sup>11</sup> banished to Dulcigno.

Sabbatai wrote to Joseph Philosof, the head of the Saloniki Yeshibah, asking for his daughter in marriage.<sup>12</sup> Philosof was removed from the office of president of the Yeshibah, and was no

longer supported by it because he approved of this match. <sup>13</sup>

Almost to the end Sabbatai maintained the belief that he was the Messiah. He may have become slightly demented before his death, for he sent a messenger to the believers in Sofia, and told them that if they will obey his instructions he will make them wealthy, and they shall be privileged to see the salvation of God. In a letter he wrote to 1727 4011, Joseph Carillo he says come to me for God has made me Lord over Egypt. You and your friends the rabbis, Abraham and Isaac, shall witness the salvation of the Lord. It seemed that Sabbatai believed in himself as the divinely appointed Messiah and continued to delude himself with visions of the day when he would reveal himself to the world and bring about the messianic kingdom on earth. <sup>14</sup>

In Tishri, 1676, Sabbatai called for his brother Elijah and his wife and told them that he was going to die on Yom Kippur at the time of Neilah, and he left instructions with them that he should be carried to a cave by the sea. He also said that on the third day after his death the prophet Elijah would visit the cave. Of course everything ensued as predicted by Sabbatai. When his brother approached the cave three days later, he was astonished to see it empty, and was even more bewildered over <sup>15</sup> the phosphorescent glow which permeated the cave.

There is no doubt that the author of the ZLY document discussed above was an ardent Sabbatian, and as a result was more interested in giving us legends about Sabbatai than he was in recording historical fact. His constant reference to Sabbatai



as 151311 and the repeated additions of 1912 P12' to his name substantiate this claim. His concluding paragraph is an admission in itself. He states that this is a brief history of the deeds of our Lord, Sabbatai Zebi, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, and the Rabbi Nathan Benjamin, the true and righteous prophet.

The MGL document contains a song written in derision of Sabbatai Zebi and Nathan the Prophet, which presents a radical difference from the Piyutim and prayers which almost deify Sabbatai. This song of ridicule against Nathan and Sabbatai after his conversion clearly demonstrates the quick change of heart of the Jews of Amsterdam toward their former Messiah and his prophet Nathan.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR.

1. Emden, Torath, p. 20.
2. Freimann, Injane, p. 63.
3. Emden, Torath, p. 42.
4. Emden, Torath, p. 20--similar report.
5. Freimann, Injane, p. 64.
6. Emden, Torath, pp. 25, 45-6; Rycaut, History of Turks, p. 184.
7. Ibid., p. 19.
8. Freimann, Injane, p. 65.
9. Ibid., p. 66.
10. Ibid.
11. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 165.
12. Freimann, Injane, p. 67.
13. Graetz, (Eng. Tr.) Vol. V., p. 165.
14. Freimann, Injane, p. 68.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., pp. 116-17. This song is in the Livraria Montezinos in Amsterdam. The poem is written in seven stanzas. The language of the poem is a curious mixture of Hebrew and Turkish.

## Chapter V.

## NEW MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION IN THE INJANE SABBATAI ZEVI.

In the           '23 '120 '118          , the LSC document records a very interesting letter written by an ardent believer in Sabbatai in response to a letter written by the following violent opponents of Sabbatai and other Sabbatians: Hayim Benveniste, Solomon Algazi, Solomon, son of Abraham the priest, and

<sup>1</sup>  
 וְהַיִּים בֶּנְבִנִּיסֵּט, וְסוֹלוֹמוֹן אֶלְגָּזִי, וְסוֹלוֹמוֹן בֶּן אֲבִרָהָם הַכֹּהֵן. The above opponents had previously warned the writer of this letter of the blasphemous activities of Sabbatai from his early days until his conversion. They also spoke against Nathan Benjamin, and stated that many Hakamim had declared that they had heard Nathan admit that his vision did not concern Israel. They also concluded that Nathan's dreams and visions were all false, for no prophecy of his had ever been fulfilled. The writer of the letter admits that Nathan's visions were of a personal character and did not concern Israel. Since the writer's principle motive is to answer the questions asked of him about Sabbatai, he does not linger long in his defense of Nathan but proceeds to give his theory of how the Messiah will be revealed, and what the nature of the Messiah will be.

He states that some people believe that the Messiah will not be born of woman, because the Talmud and Zohar refer to him as sitting in Paradise or in the heavenly Yeshibah. However, the author of the letter asserts that the birth of the Messiah is not miraculous but follows the usual physiological laws, and

that the Talmud and "ohar refer to the spirit of the Messiah and not to the Messiah himself. It is through the spirit of the Messiah that he will be able to redeem the Jews and perform all the miracles pertaining to the redemption. He gives further proof that the Messiah is a mortal being by postulating an interesting theory which is akin to the belief in the spiritual evolution of the Messiah. There is a potential Messiah in every generation, if the generation is meritorious. Were it not for the fact that the writer has Sabbatai Zebi in mind as the Messiah, we might assume from this statement that he envisioned a messianic era from the collective spiritual efforts of a generation zealous in its efforts to bring about a reign of righteousness. He characterizes the true Messiah by the following outline:

- (1). The Messiah will be born of woman.
- (2). After his revelation he will be a פ'י'ו' י'ר'ו,  
accursed, blasphemed, and disgraced before rising to his exalted estate.
- (3). His strange actions and words will cause the Israelites to stop believing in him, but the Messiah will remain pious because it is the will of God.
- (4). He will forcibly become profaned from a state of holiness. This no doubt refers to the conversion of Sabbatai.
- (5). His revelation will be brought about by an unrecognized prophet. (Most probably Nathan.)
- (6). It is incumbent upon us to believe in him even before his genuineness is established.



We note that the incidents of Sabbatai's messianic career would easily permit him to fulfill all the conditions in this definition of the Messiah. But the author leaves little to the imagination, for immediately after defining the Messiah he says, and now let us see if Sabbatai is the Messiah, and what his right to the dignity of this office is.

The writer names 1680 as the year of the redemption. He then describes the mythical kingdom of the Sambatyon, each of the ten tribes and its insignia, and finally a king by the name of Joseph who is said to be the Messiah ben Joseph.

He then states that Sabbatai did not die, even though most people believe that he did. There is a similar statement in the ש"ס"ו, ה' ת"ת that many great Hakamim believed in Sabbatai after his death and said that he was the true Messiah. They believed that Sabbatai still lived, but that he was hidden, and that he had disappeared from human sight. Others thought that he would remain hidden in the vicinity of the בית שמש<sup>2</sup> until he was prepared to reveal himself to the world.

Despite the fact that the author previously had announced that the redemption would take place in 1680, he writes near the close of his letter, that the redemption of Israel is known only by God. Therefore, the Messiah himself does not know whether he is the true redeemer, whether he is the Messiah ben David, or the Messiah ben Joseph. This is part of the divine plan, for the Lord does not want the people to be too certain that everything in his vision pertained to Sabbatai, but the future was revealed to him only with reference to the Messiah ben David.

But Nathan's vision about Sabbatai going to the Sambatyon may be true. He ends the letter by saying that Sabbatai has not yet revealed himself, and again by saying that Sabbatai is still living.

The LSC document has another letter not quoted in other sources, which indicates that Sabbatai still had zealous adher-<sup>3</sup>ents even after his conversion. The writer of the letter states that on the night of Passover in the year 1668, God's holy spirit hovered over the true Redeemer, the great, pure, and holy Sabbatai Zebi, and commanded him to redeem Israel at that time, but Sabbatai answered: "I will redeem them only in accordance with my first agreement with You, that Israel experience no suffering prior to the redemption; otherwise, I would prefer delaying the redemption." To which God answered, "You are more merciful than I am for My children. However, since you wish it, I will redeem Israel of one-half of its sufferings, and burden you with them instead." Sabbatai responded to the holy spirit by saying, "It is better that my glory be profaned, that through this profanation the glory of Israel may be increased. From the day I left Judaism and wandered among the nations, I attracted many non-Israelites to the faith of Judaism. When Israel sees the tens of thousands of people who were added to Judaism, they will completely repent and alter their ways." Then the Lord gave Sabbatai the key of resurrection, and Sabbatai blew over the bones, and immediately one man arose, mounted Sabbatai on a lion and said to the lion: "Bring him to Moses, who now dwells on the other side of the Sambatyon, and tell Moses that Sabbatai is in

such haste, because this is not the redemption of Egypt, but the mighty redemption in which I will gather Israel from the four corners of the earth, and that it is necessary for him to help in the redemption."

The author ends the letter with the following beautiful allegory: On the seventh day of Passover, God invited our Lord, Sabbatai, the "messiah, to a great feast at which twelve thousand angels, and the patriarchs were present. In the midst of the feast the Lord asked this question. What shall we do with a child who is healthy and well formed but kicks violently in his mother's womb? The patriarchs answered, we must weaken the strength of the child, soften him, and decrease his size until he stops kicking. Sabbatai's face became pale when he heard these words, for he understood that God referred to Israel who was kicking and profaning His glory. He therefore said, Shall we not ask the mother of the child if she is willing to suffer her travail in order that her child may be beautiful and praiseworthy?" When the patriarchs understood that Sabbatai referred to Israel, they blessed Sabbatai and said, "Blessed be thou, the father of the multitude. Blessed be thou, faithful shepherd."

A portion of the document SOD was written by <sup>Nathan</sup> נחמן מברסלב / נחמן and David Yitschaki in 1672.<sup>4</sup> This account is somewhat confusing, but is of interest since it offers material not found in Graetz or in נחמן מברסלב. There is no continuity or logical sequence in this document. It presents at length isolated incidents in the lives of Nathan, Sabbatai, and other Sabbatians.

Though much of the material in this document is nonsensical, we will attempt ~~we will attempt~~ to outline a few of the events narrated by the authors. The document begins with the statement that when Moses Pinheiro was in Livorno, he investigated the prophecies of Nathan Benjamin. Nathan was at that time absorbed in the study of Rabbinic literature, but a 'soul' came to him and began to teach him the wisdom of the Cabala. At times the soul appeared in the form of a pillar of fire, and at other times in the guise of a person. Pinheiro asked Nathan if he knew what 'soul' it was, and Nathan said that he did, but he was not willing to reveal the identity of the soul because he did not wish to exalt himself thereby. One time the 'soul' appeared to him while he was praying, and though he lost consciousness for twenty-four hours, his eyes remained open and he seemed to be aware of everything roundabout him. He told Pinheiro that he saw everything through the light which God created on the first day. Then, Nathan swore and testified that he found the book of Abraham (probably refers to the forgery of Abraham Yachini) which contained the vision of Abraham and the benediction with which he blessed Isaac. Nathan told Pinheiro that he studied Cabala with Sabbatai for six years, and that Sabbatai would make the most difficult passages appear simple.

Nathan also speaks of a book which he discovered and in which both the past and the future activities of Sabbatai are recorded. This book mentioned Cabalistic customs, of which the following are representative: Do not eat radishes because it stimulates the emanations of evil powers. Garlic drives it away.



Therefore, eat it on Friday night. It is not necessary to wear white clothes on Friday nights. The book states that Sabbatai should not be called שַׁבְּתַי but שַׁבְּתַי instead.

In the document SOD it is stated that sometimes Sabbatai would sign his name שַׁבְּתַי, as the Turks write the name of their prophet, but he would more often use the following changed spelling of the name, [שַׁבְּתַי stating truth].

Sabbatai would also sign his name as שַׁבְּתַי, and he would change the ש to ז, spelling it thus זַבְּתַי, the last two letters of which equal זו, the numerical equivalent for God. The first part of the name, זַבְּ, means mountain, and therefore זַבְּתַי, Sabbatai's name means 'Mount of the Lord.'

The same portion of the document SOD reports a discussion between two Rabbis, in which one of them asked how Sabbatai can be the Messiah, since he is not a descendant of the House of David. The other Rabbi answered that Sabbatai's Davidic ancestry is derived from the verse וְהָיָה זֶרַע דָּוִד וְהָיָה, and he used the following ingenious method to prove his point. The first letters of the first two words, the ו and the ז respectively, represent זו; the second letters of the first two words have the following significance: the ה is an abbreviation of זֶרַע and the ז represents זֶרַע. Therefore, from the first part of the verse we derive זֶרַע זֶרַע. The ו in the first word and the ז in the second word spell זו; the ו in the first word and the last three letters of the second word spell זֶרַע. The reconstructed verse therefore reads וְהָיָה זֶרַע זֶרַע זֶרַע זֶרַע. "Sabbatai Zebi of the seed of David lives eternally!"

The following is also an interesting derivation of Sabbatai Zebi. If we use the last letters of the words in the verse in Ezekiel XX:15, יָבֹשֶׁת וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִזְרְעֵל וְיִזְרְעֵל, and reconstruct them in reverse order omitting the last word, we get יָבֹשֶׁת to which we add the last word of the verse יָבֹשֶׁת.

Several of the stories about Sabbatai in the document written by Reuben Jacob Nagara and David Yitschaki are ludicrous, but we will cite at least one of them to indicate the type of legends that were being circulated about Sabbatai. It seems somewhat presumptuous for us to consider the following account a legend, since the pious יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף of Rhodes testified before Nathan of its veracity, but we will let the story speak for itself. Sabbatai stayed with יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף for a month and studied the Zohar with him. A group of twelve scholars assembled at his host's home, and Sabbatai took the opportunity of convincing this group that he was the true Messiah. He took twelve sticks about a cubit long, and on each stick he wrote the name of one of the scholars. Then he bored a hole in the top of the sticks and tied them together with a string. Sabbatai commanded the sticks to stand up on the table, and go to the individual whose name was written on it, and lo and behold, the string broke, and after the sticks had performed the 'dance of the wooden soldiers,' they playfully scampered along until they found the man whose name was engraved on them. Sabbatai then made the scholars take an oath that they would not reveal what he was about to tell them: that he is going to redeem Israel. First he will go to Palestine, live for a year in the cave of

Simeon ben Yohai, and three years afterwards he will reveal himself as the Messiah of Israel.

The other tale of Sabbatai's journey on an Arabian horse to the wilderness of Sinai is even more fantastic, but we will not burden the reader with a detailed account of the trip.

These and other tales indicate that legends and gospels about Sabbatai were current after his conversion, and these stories were continued after his death.

*See book by Sabbatai  
may have linked  
with the first Ten Tribes legend*

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE.

1. Freimann, Injane, pp. 81-84.
2. Emden, Torath, p. 6.
3. Freimann, Injane, 85-86. This is a copy of a letter written by an unknown writer of a distant country, who stated that he he did not want to reveal his knowledge, but that heavenly promptings forced him to write. He testifies to the truth of the writing.
4. Freimann, Injane, pp. 95-98.



## Chapter VI.

## NEW SABBATIAN PERSONALITIES IN "INJANE SABBATAI ZEVI."

A.

## JOSEPH OF TYRE.

We have already indicated that the conversion of Sabbatai did not completely end the messianic frenzy. In fact, we find organized repercussions of Sabbatianism for at least fifty years after the death of Sabbatai Zebi. Many fanatical disciples of Sabbatai continued the Sabbatian faith, and succeeded in gathering followers in the various countries in which Jews lived. In addition, there are several prominent apostles, or פ'ר'אן, as they are called by some authorities, who preached fantastic Sabbatatian doctrines after Sabbatai's conversion, and continued these preachings even after his death. Joseph of Tyre was such an apostle. It is difficult to determine whether he was an actual historical character, or whether he was merely a legendary figure, inasmuch as the JT document is the only source which mentions him. The account in this document would of course lead us to believe that this man did live, and that he played an important part in continuing Sabbatianism, since it cites many incidents in his life, explains his messianic theories, and also includes <sup>1</sup> letters written by various individuals about Joseph of Tyre. This 'inspired preacher' received his revelation through a Maggid. The nature of the Maggid is not clear, but this source implies that it was something akin to a divine voice, or perhaps a spiritual urge within a man. The Maggid was also capable of physical manifestations and its supernatural powers might be likened

How  
Sabbatai's  
maggid

to the activities of the intermediary powers in Philo's system of the Logos. When Joseph of Tyre was asked to describe his Maggid, he said: "I do not know who is speaking to me. I hear a voice which impels me to speak. All my senses are confounded and I do not know whether I am in heaven or on earth." The Maggid appeared to Joseph, who was an ignorant but god-fearing man, on the evening of Rosh Hashonah 1674 and announced the coming of the Messiah to him. Joseph was bathed by the Maggid with a small flask of water. Every evening Joseph would place this flask at the head of his bed, and this flask would miraculously generate water until the room was flooded. Then Joseph would have a vision in which he would see Sabbatai Zebi in heaven, and a celestial voice would proclaim, Sabbatai is the true redeemer, the Messiah ben David, Rabbi Nathan is his true prophet, and you are the Messiah ben Joseph.

The reputation of Joseph of Tyre spread to the outlying communities and as a result several leading Jews of <sup>Tetuan??</sup> Jen G.C. visited him in order to bolster up their belief in Sabbatai as the redeemer of Israel. Joseph proved to them from the Zohar, from the apocalypse of Daniel, and from the story of creation that Sabbatai is the redeemer, and that the redemption would occur on the eve of Passover in the year 1675. However, the visitors were not yet convinced of the redemption, and they asked Joseph have the Maggid perform a miracle for them. Joseph responded that we need no greater miracle than the fact that, he who was formerly an ignoramus was now a master of Hebrew learning and that he understood the deepest secrets of the Torah. This statement, and his

assurance that neither he nor any of them would be harmed as the result of his publicly pronouncing that Sabbatai was the messianic redeemer, converted many opponents of Sabbatai into faithful adherents. The people again participated in a great repentance in order to hasten the advent of the Messiah.

Joseph of Tyre explained the delay in the redemption of Israel by stating that according to the divine will Israel would have been redeemed ten years previously (1665) but Sabbatai prayed before God to delay the redemption ten years in order to avoid the ד'בן 'ספן (the suffering which the people must endure prior to the Messianic era) and to save the 'unbelievers' from the heavenly decree of death which would certainly have destroyed them were it not for Sabbatai's intervention in their behalf.

With reference to Sabbatai's conversion, Joseph of Tyre proposed a belief similar to that of the idea of the 'suffering servant,' stating that Sabbatai was converted in order that he might take upon himself all the suffering of the people in the ד'בן 'ספן

Joseph of Tyre also states that Sabbatai was converted in order that he might draw the holy sparks out of Mohammedanism. He did not become a Christian for Mohammedanism had already absorbed all the holy radiations from Christianity.

A letter written by a Jew of ליוורנו to his brother in Livorno repeats much of the above information about Joseph of Tyre and gives us further particulars about him, <sup>2</sup> This letter was written on the twenty-fourth of Ellul in 1675, on the second day of Passover. The writer states that the Hakamim asked Joseph why his prophecy that the Messiah would be revealed on the

and his return to the  
the above information  
the above information  
the above information

Sale

first day of Passover in the year 1675 was not fulfilled. Joseph replied that the redemption was again delayed due to the excessive sins of Israel. The letter further informs us that Joseph claimed that he was the Messiah ben Joseph--that his face shone with such brilliance that it was not possible for a man to look directly at him, and that it was necessary for the Hakamim to separate themselves from him a partition when they spoke to him.

When asked the time of Israel's redemption, Joseph responded that it was very near, and that it would undoubtedly occur in 1676. The Maranos in the West placed so much faith in his prophecy that they actually prepared themselves for the journey to Jerusalem.

The date of Joseph's death is not given. Though Joseph of Tyre's prophecy was not fulfilled, the writer of the JT document claims that Joseph was a true prophet, that his prophesies were not a deliberate attempt to mislead the people but were rather due to a somewhat obscured vision of the divine will. The document also states that Israel could not be redeemed until it had repented completely of its misdeeds. Thus far, Israel had repented only of its sins against God, but had not as yet concerned itself with humanitarian ideals. The Messiah will not reveal himself until the Jews have repented of the injustices towards their fellow-men. The writer of the document laments the fact that not even one instance was recorded of a man voluntarily returning a sum of money which he obtained dishonestly. However, he exhorts the people not to despair and not to give up the hope of witnessing the Messiah in their days, for God can shorten the



time of the exile, as he did in Egypt. Faith is absolutely essential for redemption, for it was only through their faith that the Jews were redeemed from Egypt.

B.

RABBI HOSCHEL.

The SOD document in "Injane Sabbatai Zewi" contains a long nine page account of a rather mysterious character called Rabbi Hoschel.<sup>3</sup> Though the account in SOD states that Rabbi Hoschel played a conspicuous role as a post-Sabbatian, and that his renown was almost world wide, his activities, nay--his very existence was unknown to modern historians. The mythical accounts of this man in SOD and his obscurity in Jewish history might lead us to suspect that he was a legendary character. However, the biography of Hoschel (Josua) ben Saul, in the "Encyclopaedia Judaica" coincides in some respects with the SOD account, and we may therefore identify these two personalities as one individual.<sup>4</sup> The<sup>5</sup> scholarly article by Dr. David Kaufmann in the Monatsschrift, clearly establishes the fact of Rabbi Hoschel's existence, and it serves as an excellent and rational supplement to the somewhat exaggerated narrative in the SOD.

The document SOD does not inform us about the authorship of the article on Rabbi Hoschel, but a study of this document and the article by Dr. David Kaufmann causes us to conclude that it was most probably written by Rabbi Benjamin Cohen Vitali of Reggio<sup>6</sup>. The story of Rabbi Hoschel in SOD commences with the information that in Heshvan 1691, Dr. Moses Burgau of Prague, at that time a medical student at Padua, told me (Benjamin Cohen Vitali ?)

that in Vilna there was a man called Rabbi Hoschel, a simpleton with no knowledge of the Torah, but a god-fearing man. He was quite happy at his vocation as a goldsmith, and he gave very liberally to charitable causes. Dr. Burgau said that it was now twelve years since Hoschel began to reveal the secrets of the Zohar. Many Hakamim who investigated his prophecies found them to be true. In 1686, just before Burgau left for Padua, he visited Hoschel and asked him if he would succeed in his work in Italy. He also asked him for פ'JIPJ for his soul, and about the advent of the Messiah. Hoschel did not answer him immediately but told him to come the next day. On the morrow, Hoschel revealed everything to Burgau, and put his prophecies in writing so that Burgau could check up on them. Hoschel refused money for this service, and he exacted a promise from the prospective medical student that he would not reveal any of these prophecies until they had actually occurred. When Burgau was in Modena he stayed at the home of Abraham Ravena, who revealed the secrets of the redemption to him according to former predictions. Since these secrets coincided with the prophecies of Rabbi Hoschel, he showed Abraham Ravena the written prophecy of Hoschel, and left the prophecy with him after he had erased those portions which were not yet allowed to be revealed. The writer of the SOD document copied everything not erased. Most of the prophecy is of little interest to us, for it concerned the personal life of Dr. Burgau. Hoschel prophesied that Dr. Burgau would meet with financial misfortune but with professional success. The prophecy also stated that the present time was that of the

ד'ען יסד, that Israel and the whole world would suffer greatly that this distress would last for a year and then cease.

In the month of Tebeth, 1691, the writer of the document was visited by two Hakamim, Hayim ben Solomon of Kalisch, and Moses ben Isaac of 1667, who studied with him for twenty days. The Hakamim told their host many incidents in the life of Hoschel. They said that at first Hoschel was an ignoramus and an ascetic. In 1667 a revelation came to him in the form of a cloud which entered his mouth. <sup>7</sup> Through this revelation the whole Zohar was made clear, and the Torah with all its secrets was revealed to him and he was informed that this same revelation will come to the Messiah. Hoschel said that he was the spark of Moses and he showed many Cabbalistic proofs for this contention. The two Hakamim testified that Hoschel knew the Zohar so well that he could quote the page and line of any statement in it. Hoschel proved from the Zohar that Sabbatai Zebi is the only Messiah. He compared Sabbatai's conversion to Moses' conversion of the staff into a snake, and he stated that in the time to come when Sabbatai returns to his former greatness, he will change the snake back to the staff. (i.e. go back to Judaism.) Although Sabbatai appears wicked through his conversion, he is really good, for he acted in accord with the divine purpose. He proved this contention through the Zohar, which says that the turning of the staff into the snake suggests the phrase 1821 2161 702 which according to the Sabbatians means that though Sabbatai appears as a 702, he does so for the good of Israel in accordance with the divine will.

The two Rabbis told several other prophecies of Hoschel and many instances of his effectiveness as a clairvoyant. They also said that Hoschel had written four books, and that his fifth book would be studied by the Messiah himself.

In 1691, the writer of the document SOD was visited by Dr. Abraham Uzziel of Zamosc. Dr. Uzziel substantiated the reports of Hoschel's rise from an ignorant man to fame as a great Cabalist. He also stated that Hoschel fled from Vilna with Moses Rivkes (an outstanding commentator of the Shulhan Arukh, who is famous for his Be'Er ha-Gola) to Amsterdam due to the Polish persecutions of the Jews. While on the ship, Rabbi Rivkes busied himself with his book, and Hoschel cried bitterly because of his own ignorance and then fell asleep. During his sleep a complete knowledge of the Torah and the Zohar was revealed to him. When Hoschel arrived in Amsterdam he went to the house of the Parnas of the Ashkenazic community and obtained a Zohar there. The Parnas was so impressed with his knowledge of the Zohar that he asked Hoschel to remain with him until the Polish massacres were ended. Hoschel returned to Vilna when Poland again afforded a measure of safety for the Jew. We must doubt the veracity of the report of the miraculous manner in which Hoschel learned the Torah and the Zohar, as well as the account of his trip to Amsterdam with Moses Rivkes, for Moses Rivkes left Vilna to go to Amsterdam in the year 1655,<sup>8</sup> and in that year Hoschel could not have been more than a mere lad. Moreover, no source gives the date of his first revelation as earlier than 1667. In Vilna Hoschel continued his work as a



goldsmith two or three days a week, and the rest of his time he devoted to study. Soon his reputation spread throughout Poland and at a meeting of the 'Council of the Four Lands' Isaac of Posen demanded that Hoschel come to Posen for an investigation. Hoschel answered all the questions that were asked him very satisfactorily and gave evidence of being a great authority of the Zohar. Then the Rabbis rejoiced and publicly proclaimed that Hoschel was a great man.

Document SOD includes a short letter written by Hoschel in response to some questions that were asked of him. This letter is written in a beautiful Hebrew style, and in the letter Hoschel speculates about the nature of the En Sof.

9

It is through the letter in the SOD document, which was written by Rabbi Benjamin Cohen Vitali of Reggio that we are able to identify Hoschel, for the article by David Kaufmann in the Monatsschrift quotes the same letter and gives us the circumstances which caused Benjamin Cohen Vitali to write the letter. In this letter the writer extols Hoschel greatly, tells him that he heard of his fame from Dr. Burgau, and that he is certain that the divine spirit resides within Hoschel.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX.

1. Freimann, Injane, pp. 73-78.
2. Ibid., pp. 75-6.
3. Ibid., pp. 99-108.
4. Encyclopaedia Judaica, Art. Hoschel (Josua) ben Saul.  
He was a Rabbi in the middle of the 18th century, the grandson of Rabbi Josua Hoschel ben Jakob. The Karaite Rabbi Salomo ben Aaron speaks very highly of Hoschel. There are two historical notes on Hoschel's works: 1. The writing of the Cabbalist Benjamin Cohen of Reggio. (Some people believe that this writing was of R. Hoschel b. Josef of Krakau. Hoschel died Sept. 1749.  
We question whether this is the Hoschel spoken of in the SOD document. The only common reference to this Hoschel and the one in SOD is the writing of Benjamin Cohen.
5. Monatsschrift fur Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums. Vol. XLI, 1897. Art. by Dr. David Kaufmann, Letter of Rabbi Benjamin Cohen Vitali in Reggio about Hoschel in Vilna in 1691. pp. 700-08. He states that Jekuthiel Gordon brought letter of Benjamin Cohen to Hoschel--from Italy to Vilna on his way home from medical school. In this letter he tells Hoschel that Dr. Burgau had informed him of the wondrous powers of Hoschel and that it was his desire to visit him.  
  
Dr. Kaufmann states that this Hoschel was most probably Rabbi Hoschel Zoref who died in 1700
6. Monatsschrift, pp. 700 ff. in Vol. 41.
7. This does not agree with the account of Dr. Burgau who said that Hoschel received his first revelations in 1679, and therefore they may have referred to another Hoschel as note 5 will indicate.
8. S.M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. 1, p. 200; Margolis and Marx, A History of the Jewish People. p. 556.
9. Freimann, Injane, p. 106. Copy of ms. in library of J.T.S.

## Chapter VII.

## ABRAHAM MICHAEL CARDOSO.

Comparatively little has been written about the life of Abraham Michael Cardoso. The most important sources for the activities of this man who continued Sabbatianism very effectively after the death of Sabbatai Zebi are Cardoso's own writings, his correspondence with the Rabbinate of Smyrna, and a polemical work<sup>1</sup> directed against Cardoso, entitled ענין אברהם משה קרדוס. This last source is printed in full in the document SMK in the "Injane Sabbatai Zewi," and it is most important for an understanding of the life and activities of Cardoso and his spirited followers.<sup>2</sup> Graetz recognized the importance of the document SMK and he quotes from it quite often in his notes on Cardoso, which are found in the German editions of his history. However, he omitted many incidents and details, and we will therefore attempt to supplement the material of Graetz in our analysis of the basic source he used for the study of the life of Cardoso.

The document SMK was printed in Constantinople in 1707, one year after the death of Cardoso.<sup>3</sup> In the introduction, the author states that he had carefully observed the activities of the stranger Abraham Michael Cardoso, the traitor, the despoiler, who was immoral in his relations with women, and whose inordinate haughtiness caused him to proclaim himself as a Messiah. His purpose in writing the book was to expose Cardoso as an evil influence in Israel, and to bring to light to those who were sinking deeper into the net of his machinations. This polemic was reedited by Rabbi Yom Tob Roman, who also wrote a short foreword to it.<sup>4</sup>





secrets of the universe were revealed to him.<sup>5</sup> He continued to teach his disciples statutes and ordinances which were incomprehensible to them. Some of his teachings were contrary to Jewish tradition, especially his God concept, which we shall discuss later.

The SMK document gives us a brief but more complete account than Graetz of the early life of Cardoso.<sup>6</sup> Cardoso was a Portuguese Marano, who escaped to Venice and settled there. In Venice he lived the life of a profligate person, writing love songs, and studying occult sciences. All sources agree in calling him a roue, but the author of SMK is especially bitter in his characterization of him, for he says that his pertinacity was as powerful as a rock and his spirit was as undaunted as bronze in the eagerness with which he pursued prostitutes. From Venice he went to Livorno, where he earned his livelihood as a physician. He evidently achieved fame in his profession, for the Duke of Livorno recommended him to the Bey Othman Pascha of Tripoli.<sup>7</sup> Cardoso went to Tripoli and was very successful in his treatment of the Bey of Tripoli. His skill as a physician was soon heralded and as a result he prospered financially because of the large fees he was able to demand for his services. He married in Tripoli and raised a family.

In Tripoli Cardoso became acquainted with the writings of Luria, some of which he attributed to himself, according to the statement of Benjamin Cohen. Here he also came in contact with disciples of Sabbatai Zebi who had become converted to the Moham-  
medan faith. After lengthy discussions with them he produced a

new faith based upon the denial of God. Benjamin Cohen again shows his bias, for in none of the writings of Cardoso is there an intimation of the denial of the existence of God. Perhaps, the author of SMK considered Cardoso's conception of the duality of God tantamount to a denial of the existence of God. Graetz differs with Benjamin Cohen concerning the factor which caused Cardoso to become such an ardent apostle of Sabbatianism. He states that the deep absorption of Cardoso, the dandy and the pleasure seeker, into the mysteries of the Cabala so that he knew how to use its formulae expertly, is a psychological riddle that is not easy to solve. Graetz is not of the opinion that Cardoso's study of the writings of Luria while he was in Tripoli made an ardent Sabbatian of him. He believes that Moses Pinheiro who fled to Livorno while Cardoso was there introduced him to the Cabala and aroused in him a fervent belief in Sabbatai Zebi as the Messiah of Israel. However, Cardoso ~~must~~ have immersed himself in the study of Hebrew literature, for Graetz himself admits that Cardoso's Hebrew style was clear and lucid and that he wrote Hebrew better than many Rabbis of his day.

During his stay in Tripoli Cardoso wrote many circulars to the Hakamim of Smyrna and other important Jewish cities, urging the Jews not to lose faith in Sabbatai. He further asserted that Sabbatai did not sanction his own conversion but that it had been forced upon him by the Sultan. His propaganda and active preaching caused the Jews of the city to fear that Cardoso would succeed in reviving Sabbatianism in Tripoli and elsewhere, and they did all in their power to hinder him. Finally, through the effort of

Isaac Lombroso, a leading Jew of Tripoli, and at a great expense to the community they succeeded in banishing Cardoso from Tripoli. Graetz claims that this happened after the death of Sabbatai, (after 1676) since at this time Cardoso began to assume the role of a Messiah and to publicly reveal himself as such.<sup>9</sup> Herewith began his Messianic adventures which did not end until his death. He and his family were put on a boat by the parnasim of the city and sent back to Livorno. When he arrived in Livorno with his large family, the leaders of the city imprisoned him in order to prevent him from spreading his doctrines and leading the weak people astray with his mad messianic theories. They kept him in prison for only a short time, and then put him and his family on a ship that was going to Smyrna. This city remained faithful to Sabbatai longer than any other city, and as a result it was possible for Cardoso to attract many followers to himself among the Sabbatians in the city. In Smyrna Cardoso announced himself as Messiah ben Ephraim, and set definite dates for the redemption.

Amongst his followers he found one fanatical Sabbatian disciple, Daniel Israel Bonnafoux, an ignorant cantor of Smyrna.<sup>10</sup> Bonnafoux deceived many with his false prophecies and his numerous visions, most of which suggested that Sabbatai was still alive and that he would soon reveal himself to redeem Israel. But the Rabbis of Smyrna delivered him to the government authorities who tortured him and then drove him out of the city.

Cardoso continued prophesying and announcing his visions in Smyrna. He acted strangely. Occasionally, he would lodge in cemeteries in order to receive his prophecies through the



souls of the departed. It is reported that he prayed at the graves of holy Mohammedans, and especially at the grave of the Sultan Ibrahim. He prayed that the Sultan reveal himself to his son Mohammed IV, the reigning Sultan, and ~~command~~<sup>11</sup> him to protect Cardoso and all his Sabbatain followers.

The SMK document states that after much suffering Cardoso went to Adrianople, but the Rabbis of the city gave him a hundred dollars on the condition that he would leave their city. He<sup>12</sup> therefore decided to go to Constantinople instead. Graetz informs us that the Rabbis of Smyrna persecuted Cardoso because of his strange actions, and they warned him that they would kill him if he remained in the city. He and his followers heeded the<sup>13</sup> warning and left for Constantinople. In this city Cardoso formed the friendship of a young Sabbataian, Samuel Galimidi whom he flattered with his attention, and to whom he assigned important missions. He appointed Galimidi as one of his ~~Maggidim~~ to pave the way for the union of the ~~Messiah~~ ben David with the ~~Messiah~~ ben Ephraim. The friendship of Galimidi was fortunate for Cardoso, because Galimidi belonged to a very wealthy family, and he used most of his funds to further Cardoso's activities. In fact he even went into debt because of the great sums he contributed to Cardoso's cause. The SMK document contains a letter written by Cardoso to Galimidi.<sup>14</sup> He begins the letter with a description of a vision he had just experienced in which he clearly saw the words קדוש ונורא in a flame which hovered about him. Then he comes to the purpose of the letter and beseeches Galimidi to send him as much money as he can possibly obtain. He



humorously adds, "Do not give me the excuse that you already are sixteen thousand dollars in debt, for anyone whose credit is good enough to borrow that amount can readily afford to owe seventeen thousand dollars for my sake." In return for the loan, Cardoso promised to absolve Galimidi's debts, to which statement Benjamin Cohen caustically remarks, 'after their children and ancestors have died.' It is related that Galimidi became very ill and that Cardoso attended to him. Shortly after his sickness Galimidi died. The writer Benjamin Cohen states that Cardoso appropriated all his wealth and possessions and was not the least bit moved<sup>15</sup> by the death of his friend.

Cardoso tarried in Constantinople and practiced medicine there. He stayed in this city in the guise of a learned man teaching Torah, and he subtly introduced his messianic doctrines into his teaching. The SMK document states that Cardoso went from Constantinople to Egypt.<sup>16</sup> Graetz adds that Cardoso was not able to stay in Constantinople a long time because Galimidi, his wealthy patron, had spent all of his father's money, and the sudden death of Samuel Galimidi removed the possibility of getting<sup>17</sup> further loans.

In Egypt Cardoso assembled a group of unprincipled men, and he formed them into bands of robbers and stationed them at places of ill repute.<sup>18</sup> However, this is probably an exaggeration, since none of the other sources speak of him as a thief. This statement is undoubtedly another evidence of the prejudice of the author.

Cardoso returned for a second time to Adrianople and stayed

there for three months, until he was again forced to leave due to the active opposition of Rabbi Samuel Primo, and the other Rabbis of Adrianople.<sup>19</sup> The Rabbis summoned him and subjected his books to a strict censorship.<sup>20</sup> In the opinion of the Rabbis, these books stamped him as a heretic, and justified their action in expelling him and his family from the community.

After Cardoso had been driven from Adrianople for a second time he wandered about aimlessly, making most of his stops at the various Greek islands.<sup>21</sup> During his stay in Chio, one of the Greek islands he carried on a very interesting correspondence with Samuel de Paz. His apologetic letters to Samuel de Paz refute the charges made against him that he denied the existence of the true God and had deified Sabbatai Zebi instead. He emphatically stated that he revered Sabbatai greatly as a godly man, but that he did not consider him a deity. His chief argument against his opponents is their misunderstanding and their consequent misinterpretation of his teachings and visions. He reiterates his belief that Sabbatai was a righteous and pious man and that none of Sabbatai's utterances were heretical. The fault lay with those people who perverted his sayings, and accepted his allegorical comparisons of himself to God as literal statements. Graetz refers to the same letters but calls the recipient of the letter Samuel de Pagas, instead of Samuel de Pas.<sup>22</sup>

From Chio Cardoso went to Candia where he continued his Sabbatian propaganda, and he succeeded in gathering about him a group of followers, who avidly awaited the fulfillment of his messianic prophecies.

Cardoso wished to return to Constantinople, but he decided that it was safer for him to visit Palestine. He arrived at Jaffe with many followers, but the people of the community had heard evil reports of the Messiah ben Ephraim and they therefore did not allow Cardoso and his boat load of followers to come ashore. He received similar treatment at Safed, and as a result he gave up all hopes of a friendly reception in Palestine, but journeyed to Egypt instead.<sup>23</sup> In one of the Egyptian cities he was offered the position of community doctor at a salary of two hundred dollars per annum. However, Cardoso was more concerned with gaining followers for his faith than he was in the practice of medicine. The Jews of the community feared that his activities would arouse the ire of the government against them, and for this reason they refused to pay Cardoso his salary. Cardoso was thus forced to continue his travels, and he finally settled in another Egyptian community which was his final dwelling place. In this community he continued his practice of medicine with the help of his nephew Shalom, whom he had instructed in the art of medicine. It happened that they were successful in curing an Egyptian prince who rewarded them handsomely for their service. A dispute arose between Cardoso and his nephew over an equitable distribution of the fees, and in the heat of the argument Shalom stabbed his uncle. Three days later Cardoso died, but before departing from this earth he showed a tenderness of feeling towards his nephew which seems to contradict Benjamin Cohen's characterization of him as an utterly unprincipled person. When asked whether Shalom had stabbed him, Cardoso exonerated him completely, claiming that his murderer was unknown to him.



Benjamin Cohen in the document SMK spares no invectives in describing the activities of Cardoso. There can be no doubt that Cardoso violated the moral code of the day, but we can hardly conceive of one man being responsible for all the villainies and atrocities which Cohen ascribes to him. Moreover, the author could not have possibly obtained authentic information concerning the many intimate episodes in Cardoso's life, unless he accompanied him as a bosom friend on all his journeys. Inasmuch as we have the author's own confession that he hated this man bitterly, it does not seem improbable that he would readily believe and print any uncreditable rumor which Cardoso's many enemies may have circulated. We note that in the whole biography, Cohen does not say anything to the credit of Cardoso, whereas other historians inform us that Cardoso was a very cultured man, a convincing orator, and most probably sincere in his messianic belief. It is possible that a man of his emotional temperament might be swept by the messianic wave which was inflaming the minds of Jewry at this time, and finally arrive at a sincere belief in Sabbatai as the Messiah of Israel.

We will cite just a few of the many crimes and debaucheries which Benjamin Cohen attributes to Cardoso. He took delight in theft, and in oppressing the poor. He did not return pledges. He was an idolater. Though he was often paid in advance for his medical service, he would not attend to the patients, but would spend his time satisfying his lustful nature instead. The author accuses Cardoso of illicit relations with his sister's daughter, and with the daughter of his first wife. Even as a tottering



old man of seventy years of age he experienced greater delight<sup>24</sup>  
in seducing a virgin than a man in his twenties.

The document LSC contains a long letter written by Cardoso<sup>25</sup>  
to a believer. We will not consider the details of this letter  
for it does not give us material not included in the document  
SMK, with the exception of a few fantastic visions of Cardoso  
which are of little interest.

# NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN.

1. Graetz, (Ger. Tr.) Vol. X., p. 492.
2. Freimann, Injane, pp. 1-40.
3. Ibid, Introduction p. IX. Elijah Cohen died in 1729.
4. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
5. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
6. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
7. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 496.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 498.
10. Freimann, Injane, pp. 10ff.
11. Ibid. p. 18; Graetz, Divrai Y'mai Yisroel, translated by Saul Pinchas Rabbinowitz. (Warsaw, 1908) p. 352. Vol. VIII.
12. Freimann, Injane, p. 22.
13. Graetz, (Heb. Ed.) Vol. VIII, p. 352.
14. Freimann, Injane, p. 6.
15. Ibid., p. 22.
16. Ibid., p. 23.
17. Graetz, (Heb. Ed.) Vol. VIII., p. 352.
18. Freimann, Injane, p. 23.
19. Ibid., p. 30. Samuel Primo is not to be confused with the secretary of Sabbatai. This Primo was a leading Rabbi of the city, and a great Malachist and mystic.
20. Ibid., pp. 30-31. Gives a list of the books written by Cardoso.
21. Ibid. p. 35.
22. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 494. Places date of letter 1700
23. Freimann, Injane, p. 36.
24. Ibid. p. 31.
25. Ibid., pp. 87-92.

## Chapter VIII.

## NEHEMIAH CHIYA CHAYON.

In this chapter we will not attempt to give a complete biography of the arch-villain Nehemiah Chiya Chayon, but we will confine our study to an analysis of the letters written about this man, the reprint of which appears in the MGL document of "Injane Sabbatai Zewi."<sup>1</sup> These letters were written in 1713 and 1714 and they refer to a dispute between the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic communities, concerning the reported heresy of one of Chayon's books, which threatened not only to disrupt the unity of the Jews of that community, but to involve world Jewry in this struggle which was an aftermath of the Sabbatain debacle. The letters are of great historical importance because they are authentic copies of the correspondence written by the opposing parties, and of public manifestos which were circulated by the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic communities. However, they do not cast any new light on the subject, because Graetz and Emden studied these epistles, and incorporated the facts therein, in their exposition of the controversy.<sup>2</sup> Graetz used these letters as basic sources in exposing the machinations of Chayon, and he either quotes directly from them or refers to them in the lengthy account of Chayon in his history.

In order to understand the controversy which raged in Amsterdam over the writings of Chayon, it is necessary to review his activities prior to his visit to Amsteerdam. Chayon completed his heretical book 1683 1684 1685 and the two commentaries

to it in Smyrna in the year 1708. He showed the manuscript to several wealthy and influential people of Smyrna, who were so pleased with it that they promised to be his patrons, and to support him in all his undertakings. Due to the respect shown him by these leaders of Smyrna, he was accepted by the community as a holy prophet. Chayon, in his autobiography states that when he left Smyrna he was escorted to his ship which took him back to Palestine by two thousand Jews, who paid him such homage, that the non-Jews present remarked that one so honored must indeed be the Messiah.<sup>3</sup> In Jerusalem Chayon received a hostile reception. For only three weeks after his arrival, the Rabbinate of Jerusalem sent a letter to the Smyrna community in which they denounce Chayon, declare him a heretic, and assign his book to the pyre,<sup>4</sup> even though they had not even taken the trouble to read it.<sup>5</sup> Emden prints a copy of this letter with the names of the signers. Though Chayon's opponents in Palestine did not excommunicate him, they heaped the usual curses of excommunication upon Chayon when they referred to him in the letter. Their chief purpose in writing the letter was to warn the people of Smyrna not to help Chayon in publishing his book. This formal interdiction of the Palestinian Rabbinate caused Chayon to lose the support of his influential patrons in Smyrna. Chayon was thus suddenly reduced to mendicancy. He wandered aimlessly through Egypt and Italy, begging for a livelihood and he received little sympathy from the people. However, in Venice he was more fortunate. He arrived in this city in 1710, and he impressed the Rabbis and the laity



of Venice with his learning and expert knowledge of the Cabala. He showed one of his books 173123 1752 to three Rabbis of Venice, and they evidently did not regard it as heretical, for they gave him a written approval of the book. It seems strange that his book was not opposed in Venice, since it contained the same heresies found in his later writings. The only explanation for the approval of this work is the blind reverence of many of the Italian Rabbis for anything that had a Cabalistic significance <sup>5(a).</sup> If the Rabbis had read this work carefully they could not help noticing the definite theory of the trinity of God as expounded by Chayon. The idea of the trinity constitutes the core of his work. The godhead consisted of three persons, the holy ancient one, the holy king, and the Shechina. This trinity Chayon calls the three bonds of faith, and he states that when we say the Shema we must think of the three and recognize their threefold character as one.

Chayon travelled from Venice to Prague, where he received a friendly reception by David Oppenheim, the collector of the famous Oppenheim library, and Rabbi Naphtali Cohen who had Cabalistic leanings. Chayon artfully gained the confidence of these men and finally ventured to show them his book for their approval. Their confidence in Chayon was so great that they not only approved of the book but recommended it highly although according to their own confession they had merely glanced at the writing. The support of these men enabled him to gain many disciples who listened eagerly to his preachments. He soon became bold and asserted that he was the equal of the prophet Elijah and the

Shechina, - that he could create new worlds and resurrect the dead. He even wrote amulets which he dispensed for considerable sums.<sup>6</sup>

In 1713, Chayon succeeded in having his book מגן עזרא with its two commentaries פירוש and פירוש printed in Berlin. With this work he hastened by way of Hamburg to Amsterdam, arriving there June 30, 1713.<sup>7</sup> His arrival in Amsterdam had a disquieting effect upon the community for from the day he entered until he left Amsterdam, the Jewish community was in a turmoil, and it is at this point that the document MLG continues the story.

The first letter in the document MGL is a scathing public denunciation which the Rabbi and leader of the Ashkenazic community wrote to the leaders of Amsterdam. This letter reviling Chayon was written by Hakam Zebi in 1713.<sup>8</sup> The style of the letter is interesting since parts of it paraphrase the language in Baba Kama, and therefore indicates the Talmudic influence in Zebi's life. The language of the letter leaves no room for doubt concerning the unmingled feelings of hatred and scorn which Zebi had for Chayon. Caustically he remarks that if the ninety-eight curses enumerated in Deuteronomy were to befall Chayon, the punishment would not be sufficient for this heretic.

Hakam Zebi first takes issue with Chayon's claim that, 'if a Rabbi is as faultless as an angel you may learn Torah from him; otherwise you cannot' applies only to the positive and negative commandments, but the speculations about God can be learned from a Yes. Zebi remarks that such reasoning defies the first principles of logic. For if one is not permitted to learn

fundamental precepts from a ye2, how much the more so should one not be permitted to study speculative questions such as the nature of God from a ye2.

Zebi then demanded that Chayon be excommunicated until he turns from his sins and publicly announces that he has sinned and has repented thereof. But if the fools is indiscreet enough to refuse to do so, then he himself is responsible for what may befall him.

Zebi in explaining Chayon's God concept states that he has denied the principle of the unity of God. Furthermore, Chayon reduced his First Cause to an absolute abstract deity without will, intent, knowledge, thought, or action. Therefore the world was not created by the First Cause, nor did He lead the Israelites out of Egypt, nor reveal Himself at Sinai, nor perform any of the other miracles attributed to him. Zebi accuses Chayon of selecting a new God for himself, the Second Cause, to whom he ascribes all the above attributes and qualities, which the First Cause lacks. Moreover, this Second Cause is a Trinity.

In the conclusion of his letter, Zebi makes an ardent plea that the heretic and godless man, Chayon, be punished and that his writings be burned.

#### HAKAM ZEBI'S LETTER TO ALL ISRAEL.

The second letter in the MGL document is a copy of the letter sent by Zebi to the important Jewish communities<sup>4</sup>. He begins with the assertion that the belief in the unity of God is the fundamental precept in Judaism and that for this belief every

Jew must be willing to give his life. Anyone who denies this principle is a heretic and his association with Judaism is automatically severed. He demonstrates at great length and through references to Chayon's book that in the 15 סוף מלכות he has attempted to uproot this fundamental concept of Jewish theology, and has substituted a trinitarian deity instead. Zebi declares that it is his religious duty to expose this deceiver, unbeliever and faithless man to all Israel, and to warn every Jew who has a copy of the book to burn it. In the letter Zebi makes the ridiculous assertion that Chayon is a heretic because he departed from Rashi's interpretation of a Talmudic portion. <sup>10</sup>

He also accused Chayon of being a Sabbatian and he claimed that the text of the book was written by Sabbatai Zebi and that only the commentaries were written by Chayon. Emden partly substantiates this view, for he reports that Chayon admitted in one of his letters that he was not the author of the text of <sup>11</sup>

16 סוף מלכות.

#### LETTER OF NAPHTALI COHEN TO HAKAM ZEBI. <sup>12</sup>

In this letter Naphtali Cohen acknowledges Zebi's letter with the enclosed circular denouncing Chayon. He laments the fact that personal exigencies caused by the earthquake in Prague in 1713 do not allow him to devote all his time and energy to exposing the villainies of Chayon. The letter is an apology for his part in furthering the cause of Chayon through the approbation of his book. Naphtali Cohen states that he was dazzled by Chayon's personality, his scholarly attainments, his deep understanding of the Cabala, and his assumed air of piety. When



Chayon declared his intention of immediately leaving for Safed so that he could spend his declining years in the holy land, Cohen deemed it a privilege to help this pious Jew financially and to enable him to reach Palestine. Chayon then showed him some extracts of his book פ'ת סודות, but of course he was guileful enough to withhold the questionable passages which Zebi later pointed out to Cohen in his letter to him. Later, Chayon's deceptions were revealed, for he stayed in Prague the whole winter instead of a few weeks as he had formerly promised. Chayon was fortunate in gaining the patronage of David Oppenheim and the friendship of his son Joseph who almost worshipped him. Gradually Chayon was able to dispense with Naphtali's protection, and he publicly practiced his many swindles. He prescribed amulets for money, Once he claimed that he brought the י'ב'ב'ב'ב' to his room and that he sat close to Matatoron; another time he said that he had power over Satan and his numerous hosts; that by a word he could destroy worlds and create new worlds, and that he could resurrect the dead and perform other miracles.

Cohen admits that he did not have the courage to denounce Chayon, because Chayon had a large following in the community. Moreover, David Oppenheim, the Ab Beth Din of the city, was not in Prague at the time and he did not wish to take full responsibility for creating schism in the community upon himself. Besides Joseph Oppenheim had accepted Chayon as a bosom companion, took him into his house and smothered him with attention.

In 1712 Chayon went to Vienna. Before leaving Prague he gave an amulet to Joseph Oppenheim's son, and he promised Joseph

that as long as the child wore the charm, the child would be well. But eight days after his departure the child died.<sup>13</sup> Graetz reports that Chayon went to Vienna because leading Christians in that city had promised him financial assistance,<sup>14</sup> which seems to indicate that they welcomed his trinitarianism. He did not stay in Vienna long but travelled through various cities and always announced himself as a prophet from the holy land. In Prosnitz, he induced Lobeke Prosnitz, a former Sabbatian prophet, who had confessed that his prophecies were false and had disbanded his group of followers, to again become an active apostle of the Sabbatian faith. As a result many former believers returned to Sabbatianism.<sup>15</sup>

Cohen said that he met Chayon in a synagogue in Berlin. Again Naphtali Cohen had noble intentions of exposing Chayon, but it seems that his courage failed him for a second time. This time his excuse is that the Berlin community was divided into two groups<sup>16</sup> and that Chayon had the support of the powerful Liebmann group. Moreover, Chayon lived at the home of a Christian, and Naphtali feared that if Chayon were molested, the Christian would bring the matter to the attention of the government. Therefore, in order to avoid all complications, Cohen decided that the wisest procedure was to allow God's retribution take its course.

Naphtali Cohen ends his letter by giving his full approval to whatever action Hakam Zebi may take in the Chayon controversy. He denies having given his written approval to the הנהיגו לידי חזקוני and claims that he did not even know of its existence, but that Chayon merely showed him a few lines of the פירוש חזקוני.

He again apologizes before God and all Israel for his part in furthering the transgression of Chayon, and he admits that Chayon's books should be burned.

17

LETTER OF JUDAH BEN ELIEZER BRIELI OF MANTUA.

Brieli acknowledged the letters of Hakam Zebi, and of Moses Hagiz, and he approved of Zebi's judgment of Chayon's book. He vehemently denounced Chayon and all his followers, using the Biblical curses to show his hatred for the man. Brieli said that he had excommunicated Chayon, and that he had decreed that all copies of his book be burned. He is more vehement in his opposition to Chayon than any of the other Rabbis with the exception of Hakam Zebi. Brieli cursed those who bought the book, and said of those who sold it, 'May their souls mourn forever, and may memories of them be forgotten.' He also stated that the followers of Chayon should be excommunicated until they sincerely repent in public, and forsake their wickedness. Brieli likewise curses those who print the 1071213 1052, and says that this book should also be burned.

18

CIRCULAR POSTED BY SEPHARDIC COMMUNITY IN SUPPORT OF CHAYON.

This circular stated that the Rabbis transgressed in accepting evil reports about Chayon without investigating the matter thoroughly, and without giving him a personal hearing. It rebukes the Rabbis for having overlooked the injunction in the Torah פסוק / י"ב דנ"ב and for accepting the testimony of Zebi who

was biased inasmuch as he was both a witness and a judge in the affair. This circular was later used as a preface to the complete history of the controversy which was written by the leaders of the Amsterdam community and entitled אמר אנשי צד. The complete manifesto is printed in the MGL document of the "Injane Sabbatai Zewi." <sup>19</sup> However it does not contain any material not found in Graetz. In fact, Graetz gives a complete account and an excellent analysis of the אמר אנשי צד. The Sephardic account of the controversy is really a polemical attempt to justify their defense of Chayon, and it is written with a definite bias and a partisan point of view.

This document in MGL begins with an account of the unjustified attack which Moses Hagiz made against Chayon's character, and of his intrigue of Hagiz and Zebi to persecute the apparently innocent stranger, Chayon. Hakam Zebi sent a messenger to the Sephardic congregation with the information that he identified Chayon as Chayon Hoarukh, a man of evil notoriety and a former enemy of his in Sarajevo. Not long after this incident Chayon wrote to Zebi and asked for an appointment with him, so that he might prove to him that he was not Chayon Hoarukh. Zebi received Chayon graciously, confessed to Chayon that he had erred in identifying him as his former enemy, and apologized for having caused Chayon this unnecessary aggravation. Hagiz was greatly vexed when he learned that Hakam Zebi had retracted his original statement about Chayon. He immediately borrowed a copy of Chayon's book, brought it to Zebi and told him that it was a heretical work. They hastily scanned the book, marked a few objectionable



passages, and then they circulated the report that it was a Sabbatian work and merited burning. The Sephardic community felt that this act was due to personal animosity towards the author rather than opposition to the contents of the book.

Chayon vigorously denounced their action and offered to submit his book to any appointed committee and accept any decision that they might arrive at in regard to his book. On the fifteenth of Tamuz 1713, at a meeting of the Sephardic congregation, it was decided to have Solomon Ayllon, their Rabbi, study the book carefully, and pronounce final judgment as to whether the charges of the Ashkenazic Rabbis were warranted or not. But Ayllon did not wish to be burdened with full responsibility in this affair and he therefore suggested that a committee of seven be formed to decide the case. Finally, a committee of seven men of scholarly attainments was chosen, Ayllon being the chairman of the committee. Each member of the committee was given a book by Chayon, with instructions to study it carefully and not to show the book to anyone not on the committee. Zebi and Hagiz made every effort to procure a book, but they were unsuccessful. Since they feared that the committee would exonerate Chayon, they hastily sent out circulars, which were copied not only in Hebrew but in Ladino, to the leading Jewish communities announcing that Chayon's book was heretical. They based their judgment merely on the hasty inspection they had previously given the book which Hagiz had borrowed. But they were so certain of its heresy that they announced the author a heretic, an unbeliever, and a Sabbatian. Hagiz and Zebi excommunicated Chayon, and commanded all those who had a copy of

the book to burn it.

The Sephardin naturally resented the unsolicited intrusion of the Ashkenazic Rabbi in a matter which was being debated by the representatives of their own synagogue. However, they did not wish to take definite action against the Ashkenazic Rabbis until their committee had arrived at a final decision. An announcement was made in the Sephardic synagogue that anyone who had one of the circulars issued by Zebi should bring the circular to the committee, and all members of the synagogue were forbidden to speak of this affair until the decree was determined by the committee. The committee finally decided after more than a month of intensive study that there was not the slightest indication of heresy in the book. They also claimed that the questionable passages cited by Zebi in his circulars were not in Chayon's book. They did admit that the book was Cabalistic in nature, and they therefore would not allow it to be printed in Amsterdam. But, inasmuch as the book was printed in another city and approved by great Rabbis they had no objection to including this work among the other Cabalistic books that were not banned.

Graetz gives an interesting analysis of the actions of the Sephardic community.<sup>20</sup> He states that the opponents of Zebi were justified in their assertion that it was the indomitable pride of Zebi which caused a schism in the Amsterdam community. On the one hand Zebi resented Ayllon's election to the presidency of the committee even though he was entitled to the office by virtue of his being Rabbi of the Sephardic community. On the other hand the Sephardic leaders were not just in refusing to

permit Zebi and Hagiz to make a more detailed investigation of Chayon's book. Thus both groups were robbed of the opportunity of giving definite proof that Chayon's book endorsed a trinitarian concept of the deity.

In the Sephardic account of the controversy, there is a conscious misrepresentation of the nature of the committee. Contrary to the Sephardic account, the men on the committee were not qualified to judge the orthodoxy or the heterodoxy of Chayon's book. Ayllon committed several improprieties in regard to this committee which he later had to justify with falsehoods. The selection of Ayllon's two colleagues, the aged David ben Atar, who had been a preacher in the Sephardic community since 1683, and Samuel ben Aaron Zarfati. But Ayllon placed four men on the investigation committee three of whom lacked an understanding of the problem involved, and who were also altogether ignorant of Hebrew literature. (David Israel Athias, Solomon Abrabanel Sousa, Dr. Solomon de Mesa, and David Mendes da Silva.) He later had to stamp these men as scholars. The committee also falsified its report of the judgment when they decreed that there was nothing heretical in Chayon's works, for a copy of a letter written by one of the Sephardim indicates that the committee executed moral pressure against one of the members who believed that this heretical book ought not to be tolerated. Graetz also reports a letter by an anonymous member of the Amsterdam community to a friend in Mantua stating that his son and three other members of the committee had no understanding of Cabala whatsoever, and that his son was forced to sign the decision which favored Chayon.

The writer of this letter requested that the recipient destroy<sup>21</sup> it. Moreover, Ayllon's tendency to let the book pass uncontested was evident. He showed a weakness towards Sabbatianism by his adherence to this faith in his early years. There is also the possibility that he wished to oppose Zebi and Hagiz because<sup>22</sup> of his wounded pride.

After Chayon was vindicated he challenged Hakam Zebi to a debate, and even offered to resubmit the investigation to any Beth Din but Zebi evaded the challenge. Instead, he and Hagiz sent a special courier to Hamburg to obtain a copy of Chayon's book. After receiving the book they studied it carefully and underlined the objectionable passages. Then they attempted to have the <sup>1</sup>arnasim of the Ashkenazic congregation endorse their excommunication of Chayon. But they did not receive the support of the congregation, for the members knew that his actions were prompted by personal hatred for Chayon. We must also take issue with the Sephardim on this point. The Ashkenazic community had the greatest respect for their renowned Rabbi, but they refused to accede to his wishes, because they did not desire to further the ill feeling between the two groups of Amsterdam.

Zebi also printed the letters (which he said he received) of Naphtali Cohen in response to his first circular; the letter of Judah Brieli of Mantua, (see above) and the letter of Rabbi Gabriel of Nickolsburg, in which he stated that he did not remember approving of Chayon's work; and the letter of Rabbi Jacob Aboab, who claimed that several of the Rabbis denied having given their written approval to Chayon's book. The Sephardim, comment-



ing on these letters, questioned their genuineness and insinuated that they were the fabrications of Zebi. They had the impudence to offer this excuse at a time when they actually had in their possession the writing of Brieli which damned Chayon and his book.<sup>23</sup> However the Sephardim offer a logical objection to the testimony of the authors of the above letters. They claimed that if these men were so bitterly opposed to Chayon's book they should have arisen in righteous indignation against it, without waiting for Hakam Zebi to rouse their ire. They also claimed that these men did not even see Chayon's book after it was printed. But that they based their contentions solely upon the arguments and the testimony of the Ashkenazic Rabbi.

Due to the widespread correspondence written for the purpose of unmasking Chayon, the Sephardic leaders feared that many Sephardim would support Zebi. It was therefore decreed at a meeting of the congregation that any member of their group who read or circulated any of these opposing scripts would be excommunicated.

The document SMK relates that all the above incidents took place in the year 1713. But the controversy continued even in 1714 due to the increased efforts of Zebi and Hagiz. The feeling between the two communities became more bitter than ever. The Sephardim openly accused Zebi of falsifying his letters and of tampering with the text of Chayon's book.

Zebi wrote in one of his letters that David Oppenheim gave his approval to Chayon's book after reading only one page of it. The Sephardim truthfully report that David Oppenheim in several letters to the Ashkenazic community censored Zebi for having

brought about a schism in the community, and advises the Ashkenazim to disregard Zebi's excommunication of Chayon until he has been given the opportunity to defend himself at a Beth Din.

The committee in order to restore peace in the Amsterdam community politely summoned Zebi to meet with them and discuss Chayon's book. Zebi refused to cooperate with them. They therefore commanded Zebi to present himself before the committee on the next day and prove that his letters were genuine, threatening him by inuendo <sup>with</sup> ~~by~~ persecution if he did not heed their order. But Zebi paid no attention to their threats and again refused to see them. He did however, offer to answer any statement of theirs in writing. The committee would not agree to this, for they felt that a written controversy would further increase the strife in the community. Ayllon and the committee then wrote a letter to the Parnasim of the Ashkenazic community asking the members thereof to prevail upon their Rabbi to attend a meeting of the committee. But Zebi was adamant and could not be persuaded to do so. The Sephardim finally realized that their efforts for conciliation with Zebi were hopeless, and they therefore sent him a note practically commanding him to retract his statements about Chayon and to rescind his excommunication of Chayon within three days. Zebi defended himself in writing but refused to accede to the commands of the Ashkenazim. Thereupon the Sephardim called a special meeting, and they agreed to announce in the synagogue that no member of their congregation was allowed to speak to Zebi or Hagiz or to have any relations whatsoever with either of them. Graetz observes that the Ashkenazic community played a pitiful

*at Seph  
organ has  
opposed to Zebi*

24  
role in this affair. Though their Rabbi was persecuted and almost excommunicated they did not rally to his support. Only three members faithfully protested against the unjust treatment of Hakam Zebi.

The manifesto is signed by the following members of the committee:

Solomon ben Jacob Ayllon  
David Aben-Atar  
Samuel ben Aaron Zarfati  
David Israel Athias  
Salomo Abrabanel Cousa  
Dr. Salomo de Mesa  
David Mendes Da Silva.

NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT.

1. Freimann, Injane, pp. 117-38.
2. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., pp. 523-43.
3. Ibid., p. 516.
4. Ibid.
5. Emden, Torath, p. 61.
- 5a. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 519.
6. Ibid., p. 522.
7. Ibid. p. 525.
8. Freimann, Injane, pp. 117-19.
9. Ibid., pp. 119-22. Written in 1713.
10. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 534.
11. Emden, Torath, p. 83.
12. Freimann, Injane, pp. 123-26. Letter written in 1713 while Cohen was in Breslau.
13. Emden, Torath, p. 69,--describes this incident in much greater detail.
14. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 522.
15. Emden, Torath, pp. 69-71. Fuller account of incident.
16. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., p. 523, Liebmann and Magnus feud which affected the whole community.
17. Freimann, Injane, p. 126.
18. Ibid., p. 128. Written in Amsterdam in 1713. This two page circular in Amsterdam library. Also written as manifesto in Spanish. It was sent to Rabbis throughout the world.
19. Freimann, Injane, pp. 128-36.
20. Graetz, (Ger. Ed.) Vol. X., pp. 531-33.
21. Ibid., p. 532.
22. Ibid., p. 533.
23. Ibid., p. 538.