

THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF HAYYIM JOSEPH
DAVID AZULAI AS REFLECTED IN HIS SEFER
MAAGAL TOV

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

It was a custom among the Palestinian Jews of the eighteenth century to send their most distinguished sons on missions of charity. They who had served their communities best were privileged to wander Europe's length and breadth as collectors for their native institutions.

That men of high calibre should be selected for such arduous tasks, there was good reason. For many centuries Palestinian Jewry was enabled to maintain its existence in the face of adverse political and economic conditions only through the beneficence of its European brethren. The welfare of Palestine declined and prospered in accordance with the ebb and flow of wealth that streamed unto it from foreign shores. It was imperative, therefore, that men of intellectual ability should be dispatched to tend and guard the life-stream of charity.

The experiences of one of these intellectual Palestinian emissaries have been recorded in *נ"ל ש"ח נ"ס* which is the dairy of the noted Cabalist and Talmudist, Hayyim Joseph David Azulai. ⁽¹⁾ In the year 1753, ⁽²⁾ the community of Hebron chose its twenty-nine year old model of piety and learning to be its European philanthropic agent. In this capacity, Azulai traveled from Jerusalem to London and returned via Italy and Turkey to Palestine (1758).

Fifteen years later (1773), he completed a second mission to Egypt, Tunis, Italy, France, Holland, Belgium and back to France and Italy⁽³⁾ (1779). In the last country, he

spent the remainder of his life, never returning to his native soil. Thus ⁽⁴⁾ פ'ק ס'ט'נ' 700 is a record of a quarter-century of travels through Europe and northern Africa by a man well-fitted to represent the Holy Land on a mission of charity.

Azulai's dairy was written originally in two small notebooks. The first (pp. 1-48 in the published book) includes the years 1753-1758 to which are added notes on the preparation for a journey in 1764. The second is an account of the journeys of 1773-1779 to which is appended ⁽⁵⁾ certain reflections on his last years in Leghorn.

Three facts account for the importance of Azulai's dairy. It is in the first place a source of biographical information. A subjective mood prevails throughout the dairy and thus it contains many items of biographical significance. Azulai's mental traits, interests, and habits are well delineated. His prejudices, his superstitions, his learning are all revealed. For Azulai kept no secrets from his diary. In it he indicated his most intimate thoughts. It is therefore of singular biographical importance.

פ'ק ס'ט'נ' 700 is also useful for a study of European Jewry in the last half of the eighteenth century. Azulai was a good observer. He was sensitive to similarities

and contrasts. In his notebooks, he jotted down the differences and likenesses between the various communities. He noted their political, economic and religious conditions, their family customs and their interests in education. He related his difficulties with the civil authorities, the disabilities of Jewish travelers, and scores of other topics which illumine the life of the Jews of the eighteenth century.

To the historian of the Jewish personalities of the eighteenth century, Azulai's account is of special importance. It is replete with names and descriptions of Rabbis, authors, and community leaders, many of whom are unknown in other sources. As an intellectual, Azulai made every effort to meet and converse with people learned in Jewish and secular subjects. One must guard against accepting Azulai's estimate of people as gospel truth. For his egotistical nature perverted his objectivity, at times, made him susceptible to flattery and sensitive to rebuke. Despite this limitation, the diary is indispensable for a study of the Jewish personalities of the late eighteenth century.

This thesis will be concerned primarily with the life and activity of Hayyim Azulai as reflected in the diary *2,6 סדר נדב*. It will also attempt a reconstruction of the life and activity of the Jewish communities through which Azulai passed. It cannot go deeply into the personalities whom Azulai mentions. That is a subject which

would necessitate research far beyond the confines of this study. We shall endeavor here to describe the character and the work of Azulai as indicated in his book of travels and to show the nature of the communities on his itinerary. At times for a more complete picture we will utilize other sources of information. For after all the *PIG* *Yeyu* *dao* is an account of but one - third of the author's life. Furthermore it does not give a rounded sociological survey of countries through which he passed but only gives general indications which must be fitted into the larger scheme gathered from the standard histories.

It is not our intention to have two separate sections one devoted to Azulai's life and activity and another devoted to the nature of the communities through which he passed. This in our opinion would be an artificial method of treatment. We intend to give a general description of Azulai's life and then turn to the account of his travels for further illustrations of his character and for his opinions and information concerning the people and environments with which he came in contact.

CHAPTER II - LIFE AND WORKS

Hayyim Joseph David Azulai derives the family name "Azulai" from the initials of the Hebrew words *לֹא יִקַּח אִשָּׁה זְנוּיָהּ* "They shall not take a woman that is a harlot or profane". (Lev.XXI 7) It is more probable, however, that the name refers to a locality in Morocco or in Spain. For the Azulai family were descended from Spanish exiles who, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, settled in Morocco. ⁽⁶⁾

The Azulai's were noted Cabalists. Abraham Azulai (1570-1643) wrote a number of Cabalistic works: *קריית אברהם*, *זוהר חמה*, *חסד לאברהם*, *העשרים*, *אברהם*. Isaac Azulai (seventeenth century) was the author of the Cabalistic work *פנין*. Another member of the family Abraham Azulai (died 1745) was known as the "illustrious cabalist" because of his commentary on the Zohar (Mikdash Melek). ⁽⁷⁾

Hayyim Joseph David Azulai was born in Jerusalem about 1724 (died 1807), the son of Isaac Zerahiah Azulai who was the great grandson of Abraham Azulai, the author of *קריית אברהם*. The latter had left his home in Morocco and settled in Palestine (beginning of seventeenth century) where the next four generations of his descendants were born. ⁽⁸⁾

Hardly anything is known concerning Hayyim Azulai's childhood and education. He studied under Isaac ha-Kohen

Rapoport, Hayyim ibn Attar, and Jonah Nabon. He was gifted with a retentive memory and a scholarly patience which enabled him at any early age to assemble a compilation of rabbinic passages which dealt with chronological errors. (9)
This compilation called **תאריך** was never printed.

Azulai was a prolific writer. The bibliographical list found in the preface to Isaac Benjacob's edition of **פ'סידה** numbers seventy-one items, some of which are repetitions, however. Azulai's literary activity embraces the entire gamut of rabbinic literature: exegesis, homiletics, casuistry, cabala, liturgics, and literary history. All these are witness of his profound learning, his comprehensive reading, and his critical ability. He was original, however, only in the field of literary history. Herein he noted all historical references and based himself on first-hand sources, Hebrew manuscripts which he examined in the libraries of Italy and France. This literary historical material has been published under the titles **פ'סידה** and **פ'נח** and contains data that might otherwise have been lost. Azulai's critical mind is especially evident in these works, as can be seen in his investigation of the question of the genuineness of Rashi's commentary to Chronicles. (10)

It is stated in his diary that Azulai always carried with him two sets of books: The Talmud and the Zohar. (11)
This is an index of his character. There are two distinct

phases of his personality. He was scientific and at the same time superstitious. He was simultaneously rational and credulous. His diary refers to certain cabalistic recipes which he found in manuscripts, and details the miraculous efficacy of his prayers. (12) Azulai was able to maintain a scientific point of view except in regard to cabalistic doctrines. In this field he repeated and expanded the whole chain of mystical tradition without an iota of critical reservation.

His mystical leanings, nevertheless, did not cause him to stray from the path of traditional Judaism. The Talmud was part and parcel of his personality. In religious matters he was a strict rigorist. Not for a moment throughout the years of his travels did he entertain a single thought of breaking a traditional law. He took every precaution possible to prevent the infraction of the minutiae of the ⁽¹³⁾ *תורה ודבר*.

It must also be said of Hayyim Azulai that he was an extreme egotist. He appreciated his own ability and was forever concerned with his own pleasures and discomforts. He was alert to praise and blame giving undue attention to those who met him with flattery and simulated affection and slighting those who did not meet him more than half-way. Rebukes and failures made him melancholy and retiring. He was outspoken in his criticism of those with whom he differed. He could not tolerate mediocre scholarship and judged

everyone by his own standards. To his credit, it must be mentioned, however, that he possessed a profound love of knowledge and bestowed unending commendation upon worthy scholars.

It is understandable why Azulai was of such a character. The veneration bestowed upon him by his contemporaries was that given to a saint.⁽¹⁴⁾ That he was held in great respect can be seen from the legends printed in Walden's *ענין פ'שיטת פה*. To this day a great many Oriental and Polish Jews undertake pilgrimages⁽¹⁵⁾ to his grave or send letters to be deposited there.

CHAPTER III - TRAVELS 1753-1758

To fulfill his first assignment as emissary of the Hebron community, Azulai was destined to travel from his native country to Egypt, thence across the continent of Europe to London and back again through Italy and Turkey to Palestine.

The record of this journey, as well as the second, does not follow a definite pattern. The Sefer Maagal Tov is not a diary in the strict sense of the word, for it is not a daily record, there being varied frequency of notation, with hiatuses not uncommon, weeks and even months sometimes lapsing between comments. During certain months, on the other hand, the record approximates a day by day account.

Generally the notations concern the following points: the preparations for the journey, the experiences along the way, the weather, the topography, the condition of the villages, the attitude of the Gentiles, the difficulties with the customs officials, and the hospitality of the inns and the admission into the cities. In a city Azulai makes the acquaintance of the Jewish community, and writes a description thereof, sometimes vivid and more often vague, of its leaders and economic, religious, and political conditions. Without fail, however, we learn two things about a community; whether it treated Azulai kindly and whether it responded

to his mission.

When Azulai began his first trip he was but twenty-nine years old. His youth is reflected in the brevity of his comments. The whole journey from Palestine to London and back again is described in forty-eight pages as compared with the one hundred thirty-two devoted to the journey of his later years. With the twenty years that elapsed between the first and second journeys, Azulai's fame had spread throughout the continent. As an experienced traveler Azulai found much to write about among people who received him with honor and at times with veneration. But at twenty-nine he was content to write sparsely and without elaboration. As a result the record of the earlier period is not as rich in historical material as its more expansive sequel.

Of his appointment, duties, and plans as the newly-elected emissary of Hebron, Azulai's diary has nothing to say. It commences straightforwardly with his opening journey from Jerusalem to Hebron in the company of a group of well-wishers.

The opening journey (1753 629) was indicative of the adventure and danger that was to come. At the Tomb of God the Seer ⁽¹⁶⁾ in the vicinity of the Mohammedan village of Halhul, Azulai and his friends stopped to pray. The devotion of the worshipers, however, was interrupted by a

rowdy band of Mohammedans from the near-by village. Though the cause of the altercation is not suggested it might have resulted from the fact that the tomb of Gdd the Seer was also the site of the Mosque of Nebi Yunus. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Fortunately the attention of the would-be attackers was diverted and Azulai and his followers continued their journey to Hebron ⁽¹⁸⁾ in peace.

Azulai tarried in Hebron for two weeks. There is no indication of how he spent his time. Most likely he was occupied with the preparations for his trip to Egypt. Careful plans had to be laid. The land to be traversed was hazardous and overrun with desert robbers. It was therefore necessary to seek the protection of some Arab chieftain who was making the journey to Egypt. A certain Arab sheik promised to escort Azulai as far as Gaza.

Only two days were required to reach Gaza, but Azulai decided to sojourn there until after the Sabbath of Remembrance (⁷¹³³ ⁷¹³³) which day he wanted to celebrate in the company of Jews. Complications developed, however. At Gaza he contracted a sheik to accompany him through the desert to Sultana-Strasse. The Sheik had no inclination to linger and threatened to depart without Azulai. Fortune smiled on Azulai in the guise of personal business which arose to detain the Sheik until Azulai was ⁽¹⁹⁾ ready to go.

Early morning of the Sunday preceeding Purim, the Caravan left Gaza. Trouble lurked at every turn. While

encamping at Deir el-Balat, the caravan was attacked by a band of Arabs, but Azulai's sheik was equal to the occasion. Considered the greatest of the robbers in his own right, he quickly repulsed the invaders. But all was not well. With the victory seventy people were added to the company and it was urgent to break camp on Saturday. Azulai was seized with consternation. How could a pious Jew travel on the Sabbath! He importuned and implored and not without avail. (20)
The journey was stayed. Thus a week passed since the departure from Gaza. The journey was tedious to say the least. Deir el-Balat was only ten English miles from (21)
Gaza!

After the Sabbath rest, the journey was resumed. Gradually the desolate desert land disappeared and the fertile soil of Egypt lay beneath their feet. Villages became more frequent and the traveling more comfortable. The serenity was disturbed only by a slight mishap. Azulai fell off his camel. Unhurt, he arose to bless God for his escape. Like Job's friends, he hoped he had committed no (22)
transgression.

At the village Mit Ghamr, Azulai came upon some Jews. Separating himself from the caravan, he took the opportunity to acquaint himself with the community. It had formerly been a large Jewish settlement with a synagogue (23)
and mikveh but only four Jewish families remained.

After a two day visit, Azulai was ready to leave

and in the company of a group of Gentiles departed for Cairo. Azulai was impressed by Cairo, especially by its ancient synagogues. With reverence he speaks of the synagogue of Maimonides, of the Old Cairo or Fustat where he saw a Sefer Torah supposed to be the Scroll of Ezra, and a synagogue supposedly built by Jeremiah. ⁽²⁴⁾ Of the life and organization of the Cairo Jews, Azulai has nothing to say, though he spent almost a month in their midst. The paucity of notation is probably due to the fact that he was still among Jews who differed little if at all from the Oriental Jews of Palestine.

On Nissan thirtieth, Azulai started northward toward Rosetta, Thebes, and the Mediterranean. At Thebes a band of ruffians threatened to prevent Azulai's entrance into the city, but the entrance was achieved. Azulai stayed in the home of Isaac Probinzali Kunarti. Thebe's outstanding attraction for the visitor was its ancient synagogue hallowed by the tradition that the Prophet Elijah ⁽²⁵⁾ once appeared there.

From a nearby port, Azulai embarked for Italy. The voyage was stormy and perilous, the ship without sufficient provisions. Two months were required to reach Leghorn, the well-known sea town in the province of Tuscany. ⁽²⁶⁾

The visit to Leghorn was not ill-advised. The majority of the Jewish leaders voted to donate a considerable sum to Azulai's mission. Azulai awarded them with his blessings, his compliments, and a two month's sojourn among

them. When he left (1754 25 '798) he was honored with an accompaniment as far as Pisa. From Pisa, Azulai made his way to Florence where he was received in the home of a prominent Florentine Jew, Isaac Galletti. Florence was the type of city Azulai liked. Its governmental and palatial residences, its beautiful gardens and natural museum (27) appealed to his esthetic and romantic sense.

Next on the itinerary was Siena. The Jewish community there was small despite the fact that Siena was a large city. Azulai found lodging with Moses David Gallico. He was impressed by the piety and the sincerity of the Jewish inhabitants. (28) After four days, he was ready to leave Siena. The Parashah for the week was 78 78 "Get thee out". Azulai must have kept that in mind as he rode eastward through the valleys and across mountains toward the Metauro River. To the discomforts of the carriage was added the hostility of the natives. At the entrance of Monte San Savino, a group of craftsmen made sport of the Jewish visitor by pounding on their anvils. Nor was his reception in the Jewish quarter any pleasanter. No one was willing to welcome him. With difficulty he gained lodging in a decrepid house that was poor protection against the cold winds of the winter. At the Synagogue, Azulai released his wrath. "Woe to the generation whose leader you are", he cried to the parnas. The rebuke had the desired effect. (29) Azulai was invited to the parnas' home.

The behavior of the Jewish inhabitants of Monte San Savino is understandable. Visitors were burdens in this poverty-stricken district.

The Jews of Lippiano were more kind to Azulai. The Dell Aquila's, one of the six Jewish families of the city, welcomed him. There he remained four days, reading a collection of sermons that he found in his host's library. (30) After this delay he hurried eastward toward the Adriatic. The poor downtrodden Jews of Urbino did not detain him. At Pesaro, he spent the Sabbath in the company of the grammarian poet Isaiah Aaron Romanin and Solomon Gentilomo. After the Sabbath, he approached the Jews for contributions, but the majority refused to respond. Some promised donations on Azulai's return from Ancona. On his way to Ancona, Azulai stopped at Senigaglia, a port on the Adriatic but here too the contributions were negligible. (31)

The community of Ancona was more liberal. Befriended by a rich Jew, Abraham HaCohen, Azulai was introduced to two of Ancona's leading Jewish citizens, Pappo and Bonsenior who worked tirelessly in his behalf. Through their efforts, generous promises were obtained from the Italian and Sephardic congregations. Like most Jewish communities, Ancona was divided into factions. The Italian and Sephardic congregations were separate and antagonistic to each other. (32)

With the completion of his work in Ancona, Azulai returned to Pesaro (1754 - 14 1805). But the Jews were still in an uncharitable mood, and unwilling to tarry, he accepted their meager donations and proceeded northward to Rimini, Faenza, and Ferrara. The last part of this journey was made on horseback on treacherous muddy roads. Late on the first night of Hanukkah, he arrived at the entrance of Ferrara. After a thorough investigation by the custom officers and the payment of the customary tax, he was permitted to enter the city. Azulai does not say much concerning his stay. He was granted hospitality in the home of a certain Gamaliel. It was ^a quiet visit spent in pilpulistic discussions with the learned men of the city. (33)

Azulai had a similar experience two weeks later at Modena. There he met a number of scholars and wealthy men who welcomed him into their homes. Isaac Sanguinetti and Abraham Hazak were especially hospitable. Azulai's only complaint was that his lodgings were uncomfortable. The most significant revelation concerning his visit to Modena was his difficulty gaining admission into it. As a Jew, he was at first refused entrance and was allowed to enter only after he had contacted one of the leading Jews of the community. (34)

No such difficulty was experienced in entering the near-by city of Reggio, where Azulai remained a week and a half in the home of Abraham Rava. Here Azulai had the

good fortune of perusing certain valuable and rare books
in the library of Israel Basan ($\text{יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּסָּן}$). (35)

Somewhat to the north of Reggio lay Guastalla. Here Azulai stopped for several days, appointed collectors for his charity, left a money box and then proceeded up the river to Mantua. The Rabbi of the community Aaron b. Joseph Baruch (Rabbi of Mantua 1751-1767) extended the hospitality of his home. On the Sabbath Azulai was feasted in the house of Samuel Menahem HaCohen the parnas and leader of the community. Here as elsewhere, Azulai though a visitor entered into the life of the community. He took an active interest in the Sabbath service and attended the funeral of one of the Jewish inhabitants. He remarks that Jacob Raphael Saraval preached in the vernacular an eulogy of three hours' duration. (36)

Verona and Padua were visited next. A very pleasant Sabbath was passed in the latter city in the company of Jacob Forti, called $\text{יַצְרָאֵל פֿוֹרְטִי}$ "the wonder of our age." (37) From Padua Azulai went by boat to Venice where he remained for two months. There his heart was delighted by the discovery of a copy of Abraham b. Mordecai Azulai's commentary on the Zohar. Collection of charity from the Venetian Jews was not easy. Day after day Azulai went about the city seeking contributions, but with each passing day less was accomplished and the people became more adamant. Azulai was quite discouraged especially by

the poverty that he saw among the Jews. Finally it was explained to him that due to the oppression of the government , no contribution could be given without the consent of the magistrate. At last Azulai was forced to see the authorities of the city, and with their consent he was able to secure (38) a considerable sum from the Jewish community.

Venice was the last stop Azulai had to make in Italy. His work finished there (1754 22 7/10) he set out for Germany. The route planned was via Padua, Verona then north to Trent. The journey to Padua was uneventful except for the passing of a royal procession. Outside of Padua, Azulai discovered the loss of a pair of valuable Tephilin and could not rest until they were retrieved by a messenger who found them on the way. The season of Shabuoth approaching, Azulai decided to remain in Verona until the passing of the holiday. With the completion of the holiday, he departed in the direction of Tyrol.

All in all, the journey in Italy had been a pleasant one. With few exceptions the visitor was warmly received and graciously treated. Of course, the general poverty of the Jews was discouraging, especially for a collector of charity. It is striking that there are infrequent references to men of wealth, for Azulai was always proud to note the rich people he met. Striking too is the difficulty which the Jew experienced in travel. At every town he was examined by the authorities and at their mercy for entrance. Special

disabilities were imposed upon the Jew to keep him bound to his lowly lot.

Azulai liked the Italian Jews. He admired their piety and devotion and felt at home in their warm, mystical environment. He was not impressed by their scholarship, but it was comforting to be among Jews who obeyed the minutiae of the law. Especially pleasing was ^{the} affection that the Italian Jews professed for their brethren in Palestine. The bonds between the two were close. Azulai's name was well-known in Italy; his credentials and recommendations were accepted without question, all of which seem to indicate that there was considerable association between Italian and Palestinian Jewries.

In the country that lay to the north for which Azulai was headed, the Jews lived under unfavorable conditions. "Since the Peace of Westphalia, the German empire had become a loose confederation of some three hundred independent principalities and free cities. From certain of these territories the Jews had long been excluded; in others their number was exceedingly small, and in none were they more than tolerated. During the eighteenth century, their residence in any part or place was not a matter of right, but of privilege, for which an annual protection tax was paid. If they traveled from one principality to another or from city to city within the same dominion, they were subjected at every border and at the

gate of every town to a body-tax. In the cities, they were confined to a circumscribed area, often consisting of one narrow street, in which, as in a few of the larger cities, sometimes as many as five hundred families were crowded together... The principal care of the government was that the Jewish population should be kept to a restricted number which should not be exceeded... But even the reduced families had great hardship in sustaining themselves. The Jew was kept from husbandry; he could not own land; he was excluded from the guilds... Socially the Jews were thrown upon their own; they spoke a corrupt dialect; they were the butt of their Christian neighbors. When a Christian walking in the street met a Jew, no matter how cultured, he would cry out: 'Jew, where are your manners?' and off went the Jew's hat in humble salutation."⁽³⁹⁾

To travel in a land where the Gentiles were extremely hostile and the Jews were burdened with political and economic restrictions, was particularly unpleasant for a Jewish collector of charity. Azulai's first experiences in the Holy Roman Empire were disheartening. Desiring to go to Trent where Jews were not allowed, he made plans to reach Trent under cover of the night and to find lodging in an obscure section of the city. But the plans went astray. Azulai was apprehended, brought before a city official, and fined thirteen pieces of gold for his release,⁽⁴⁰⁾ fortunate, indeed, to escape with his life.

Azulai's first real stop in Tyrol was Bozen. There he found a small Jewish community with a synagogue that was frequented and supported by the Jewish visitors to the fair of Bozen. Azulai could not enjoy his stay in Bozen. His experience in Trent had left him "low and crushed of spirit." (41)

It soon became evident to Azulai that travel in Germany would be more difficult than in Italy. It was fortunate that Azulai had with him a Jew of Bozen who knew the German language. Unable to speak the vernacular, Azulai would have been at an extreme disadvantage in this hostile, Christian land, which land, Azulai says, was marked with crosses about every twenty cubits. Everywhere the people were unfriendly. At one inn, the keeper, realizing that his guests were Jews, charged them double rate. The roads were taxed at short intervals. On one occasion the guard demanded an outrageous sum, which Azulai was forced to pay in order to prevent trouble. Had it not been for his experienced companion, the labyrinth of taxes and disabilities would have been too much for the sensitive Palestinian Rabbi. (42)

The disabilities of travel were compensated somewhat by the beauty of the countryside and towns. Innsbruck appealed to Azulai as especially beautiful. The diary records that Innsbruck was the home of Meir Landau and the merchant Gabriel Oppenheim. Unfortunately the notation concerning his visit to Innsbruck is hasty and terse without any (43) illustrative information about the Jews of the city.

As he proceeded to the north, Azulai found the Jews less receptive to his mission. The leaders of the small Jewish community at Pfersee would not accept the emissary's credentials without the corroboration of the neighboring community of Kriegshaber. Arriving at the latter town, Azulai discovered that a messenger from Pfersee had anticipated him with an unfavorable report with the consequence that contributions were received from neither town. Azulai's spirit was shaken; but the cup of trouble had not yet been drained. At Bittenwiesen, he was depressed by the poverty of the Jews and Gentiles. The ugly, delapidated dwellings were not a happy sight for a traveler in quest of lodging. Mean quarters in the inn of an impecunious Jew were the best available. (44)

The climax of hardship was reached at Harburg. Taken into the home of a Jew he had met, Azulai found himself in the company of an unobliging host. Azulai's religious feelings were outraged when the master of the house ate food several hours before the end of a fast day. When the guest asked for a lamp by which to read in his bedroom, he was refused with the explanation that reading in bed was not the custom in that locality. In the morning the host went to the synagogue without Azulai and when the latter made inquiry as to the location of the synagogue, the servant, obviously following the instructions of his master, refused the information and hastened Azulai on his

way. Delaying a while to make better arrangements for travel, Azulai found his baggage tossed out of the house. Evidently, the townspeople of Harburg did not want to be bothered with a Palestinian collector. (45)

A day later (1754 - 30 |'o) Azulai laid his complaint before the Rabbi of Ottingen. Moved to pity by the tale of hardship, the Rabbi furnished Azulai with a letter of recommendation to the various communities of Germany. (46)

The newly acquired credentials had their effect. Rabbi Wolf of Wassertrudingen treated the visitor with great respect. Azulai was able to rest comfortably for the first time since he had left Italy. On the Sabbath he enjoyed an afternoon of pilpul with Rabbi Wolf's son-in-law, Joseph, a dayyon of the province of Ansbach, who is described as "sharp, expert, pious, and modest." When the Sabbath was over and Azulai turned to his business, he was politely told that the communities of that district had made an agreement to refuse all requests from meshullahim. Azulai's persistence, however, netted a small contribution and a letter of recommendation. A man of less persistence would not have been rewarded. The Jews of Wassertrudingen must have been impressed with Azulai's forwardness. It was a custom of the German communities never to lodge an emissary and his servant in the same house. Upon Azulai's arrival in Wassertrudingen, his servant was sent to separate

quarters, but the Palestinian insisted successfully that
(47)
his servant remain with him.

Near Wassertrudingen were several towns - Wittelshofen and Bechhofen. Azulai found a friendly parnas in the first town but in the second he had to deal with a severe parnas who would not accept his credentials. He was treated with similar unkindliness in Ansbach. Told that the principal rabbi of the community, whose consent was necessary for all grants of charity, was visiting in a nearby village Azulai sought him out, but to no avail. The Rabbi doubted Azulai's authenticity. The Jews of Furth were likewise suspicious but after a week's solicitation
(48)
they yielded a small donation.

By the time he reached Bamberg, Azulai's patience was sorely tried; and when the Jews of that city met him with the same suspicious arguments, he was seized with anger. In defense of his honor, he displayed the three hundred documents of recommendation that he had in his possession, coming from the hands of the famous Rabbis of Italy, Spain, and Palestine, and including the seal of one of the Ambassadors of the King of France. Even in this imposing array of signatures, the Jews of Bamberg found a flaw: Why had only one Rabbi signed the recommendation from Venice? Nevertheless the honorary display was convincing and brought the promise of ten florins.
(49)

The people of Ebelsbach, however, were not impressed

by Azulai's aristocratic credentials. Turned away without a perutah and without an offer of hospitality, he was forced to seek lodging in an inn. At Hassfurt, on the otherhand, the Jews were well-disposed toward the Palestinian meshullah. In addition to a liberal contribution of the community, his host a certain Rabbi Moses presented a personal gift of
(50)
one florin.

Azulai was now following the Main river. Schonungen, Schweinfurt, and Niederverrn were all visited. At the last town Azulai came across a boastful pretentious Rabbi who freely offered generous aid. Azulai was led to expect a considerable donation. He was fortunate to receive one-fourth of a florin. At Arnstein, not only did the rabbi of the community not give a personal donation, but he
(51)
prohibited Azulai from collecting in the city.

Between Arnstein and Frankfort which was Azulai's objective lay a number of villages. The diary records only complaints concerning the journey through them. Thungen's leaders gave poor lodging. Klingenberg, Worth, Wallstadt, and Aschaffenburg contributed not at all. The most bitter complaint concerned the Jews of these localities who willfully gave wrong directions. Of the many villages only the people of Heidingsfeld treated him kindly.

The inhospitality of the region necessitated higher expenditures for board and room; but the traveler's expense account computed on the understanding that the communities

visited would sustain a great portion of the expenses, could not stand the added burden. The result was deprivation and hardship. (52)

At Hanau, entrance of which had been achieved through bribes, an overzealous shamash tried to force hospitality upon Azulai. Said the Palestinian, "Let me meet the Rabbi, the Ab Beth Din. It would be an insult to the land of Israel if I should stay with you." (53)

Introduced to the leader of the community and sensing that he was not convinced of his genuineness, Azulai turned the conversation to the subject of a scholarly book which he saw upon a table. Whereupon as soon as it was evident that the visitor was a man of Torah אברהם בן יצחק, the atmosphere was warmed with pilpul, and wherever pilpul was admired, Azulai was welcome. The three days spent in Hanau were enjoyable. It happened that the elders of the community were involved in a serious dispute and when they were called together to consider Azulai's request, Azulai received copious argument and little remuneration. The visit was not a complete failure, however, for certain individuals opened their purses for the representative of Hebron. (54)

There is some confusion in the diary about the itinerary from Hanau. Azulai states that he left Hanau for א"ת (which the editor identifies as Boppard) and having reached there proceeded to Frankfort on the Main.

Such a route is unnatural. Frankfort was but a few miles from Hanau while Boppard was on the Rhine River about forty miles past Frankfort. (55)

To enter Frankfort, one had to undergo a thorough examination at the wharf. Refused admission, Azulai, leaving his baggage at the river and accompanied by several soldiers, went into the city in search of Jews who might be able to influence the officials in his favor. By chance, he met such a Jew, a generous young man by the name of Wolf, who knew exactly what to do in such a case. The Bahur was exceedingly kind. He not only arranged for Azulai's admission, but payed the soldiers who had escorted Azulai, sent for his baggage and found him lodging. Such hospitality was unusual in Germany. At the meeting place of the Jews, Azulai was pleasantly received but was unable to gain their confidence. The reason was perhaps that the whole community was still divided by the Eybeschütz controversy. Azulai describes that quarrel as a "consuming flame". Furthermore according to the testimony of the diary, as a result of the quarrel, many of the regular Jewish officials had been replaced by men unfamiliar with matters of charity. (56) The only recourse was to proceed to Worms to gain the confirmation of the learned Gaon Joshua. (57)

It was a disagreeable journey to Worms. The carriage was laden with freight and the roads were bad. Azulai arrived exhausted and ill. But to meet Rabbi Joshua Falk was

a pleasure. His face had the appearance of an angel of God, and what was more important, he wrote a letter of recommendation for Azulai. An enjoyable Sabbath was spent in Joshua's company. After the Sabbath, Azulai contacted the leaders of the community who promised to send a certain sum to Amsterdam whither Azulai was scheduled to go. (58)

During his stay, Azulai learned a great deal about the Jewish community of Worms. It was an ancient community with a tradition going back to the time of the Second Temple - so Azulai and the people of Worms believed. In its early days, it had had a synhedrion with extensive powers. The city was formerly called *אֶרְמְזָא*, but was renamed Worms after a beast *ר"ר"ו* which had wrought great destruction upon the inhabitants. Rashi figured prominently in the traditions of the community. ^{there} His pregnant mother was supposed to have been saved miraculously from a threatening accident. A room in one of the synagogues was pointed out to Azulai as the room in which Rashi had studied. (59)

The Jews of Worms also told Azulai many details of the Eybeschutz affair. He himself examined several of the pamphlets written in defense and in opposition to the suspected Rabbi. One of the pamphlets quoted a section of Jonathan's writings which, Azulai says, were contrary to Rabbinic tradition *זכריון דאזא נאמא דהו עובא*. The whole affair was to Azulai a *חילוק המורה וחילוק*

הענין

especially since the matter had been brought

to the attention of the Christian world, whose newspapers claimed that "the wise men of Israel were differing with a distinguished Rabbi because he recognized that the Savior had already come."⁽⁶⁰⁾

With the recommendation of Rabbi Joshua, Azulai returned to Frankfort. Equipped with additional credentials from Verona and Vienna, which were accredited by Gentile merchants of Frankfort, Azulai was accepted wholeheartedly by the Jewish community. The acceptance was so complete that Azulai stayed there from 27 2/c to 19/2n (1755). Lodging was provided in the home of a certain Jew and paid for by the community. On the Sabbaths and Holidays, he was honored by aliyot and pesihot. On Succot a Rabbi Reuben presented him a luxurious ethrog. Frankfort must have been a cultured Jewish center. Azulai praised its learning and leaders and bought a number of Hebrew books for his private library. One of Azulai's remarks reveals that the Frankfort Jews were provincial. The large contribution which they donated to Hebron was at first designated for the use of the Ashkenazic Jews of Palestine.⁽⁶¹⁾

Honored with farewell gifts of clothes and provisions, Azulai turned north to the cities on the Rhine. A week was passed in Mainz with Isaac Gundersheim. The rabbi of Bingen, Israel Mengeburg *דוד מנגעבורג* impressed Azulai as a "Godly man." The diary has nothing to say concerning St. Goar, Koblenz, Bonn, Deutz, and Zons. The inhabitants of

Dusseldorf were extremely hostile. Unable to get into the city, Azulai prepared to spend the Sabbath in the hostel of a Gentile. He sent a messenger to the Rabbi of the city with a request for wine for the Sabbath but he came back empty-handed. A second request for a contribution was likewise refused. The Sabbath which began gloomily ended dismally when the innkeeper made Azulai move to a smaller room with shattered windows. A few days later at Mors, Azulai met another unfriendly innkeeper who cast his clothes into the street. A kinder innkeeper was met in Cleve. There the owner of the hostel went to the city authorities, at Azulai's request, in order to get permission to house the stranger in accordance with the law. (62)

On 3 April (1755) Azulai arrived at Nymwegen. There he learned that a catastrophe had occurred in the home of one of his Frankfort friends, Reuben Shear 7th 1st e. A fire had broken out and trapped his wife, daughter, and young wolf. Added to Azulai's grief was the thought that he had left three hundred florins and all his books in Reuben's possession to be forwarded to Amsterdam when he received word from Azulai. (63)

Azulai's fears proved to be groundless. Upon his arrival in Amsterdam, he found his books which had been sent the day before the fire. As to his money, he was assured in a letter from Reuben that the deposit would be

forward as soon as circumstances permitted. (64) Although he stayed in Amsterdam three months Azulai says very little about his experiences. The Jews of the city were kindly and cooperative. Jacob Nunes Henrique, Samuel Bueno de Mesquita, and Samuel b. David Ximenes are applauded for their generous hospitality. It is evident from Azulai's diary that the Jewish community of Amsterdam was distinguished in wealth and learning.

The visit to Amsterdam was marred by two unpleasant incidents. One was a narrow escape from death when Azulai was almost struck by a speeding carriage. The other concerned David b. Raphael Meldola whom Azulai had met in Amersfort. (65) David came to Amsterdam to distribute a book that he had recently written and Azulai discovered that his own collections suffered as a result. There was nothing Azulai could do - except worry ; but when David suggested that they travel through Holland and England together, Azulai became frantic and determined to find some excuse to travel alone. This was accomplished by choosing a day inconvenient for the other. (66)

Azulai left Amsterdam in the company of Isaac Saruko. After short visits at the Hague and Rotterdam, he embarked for England. In England, the Jewish settlement in the seventeenth century was at first a matter of connivance. Though no law forbade their entrance, any other rites except those of the Church of England were illegal. However, this

law was not strictly enforced and the Jews practiced their religion in the open. By the middle of the eighteenth century there were two large congregations in London, the Bevis Marks Synagogue of the richer and larger Sephardic group and the "Great Synagogue" of the Ashkenazim. Some of the wealthiest men of northern Europe belonged to the Bevis Marks Congregation. (67)

Arriving at the bay of Harwich, Azulai found the English officials exceedingly strict. All passengers, Jews and Gentiles, were examined carefully because war with France was imminent. Azulai was worried that the officials would find and confiscate the hundred-eighty gold pieces which he had in his possession. Hidden in his girdle, they escaped the notice of the examiners. (68)

Nearly all of the Jews of England lived in London. The Jews were at first suspicious of the new-comer. Azulai was told that his mission would not be considered because such matters were considered only at the winter Vaad. Azulai thundered with anger. The Jews of London were hypocrites, he said: *קראו קראו /י/*. Furthermore there was a bitter quarrel going on among the Jews, everyone slandering his neighbor. (69) Finally a meeting was arranged at which the emissary was given permission to collect from individuals. No communal donation would be given, however. Azulai was enabled to receive as much as he did through the support of Joseph Salvador, Isaac Del

(70)
Vali, and Pinchas Gomez Seira.

After the meeting, a letter of recommendation came from an important English official who had been contacted by an Amsterdam Jew. Immediately Azulai was showered with respect. People sent invitations and arranged for excursions through the city. On one of these trips, Azulai saw the London Tower which impressed him more than the Jews of London.
(71)

It was the month of Ab before Azulai was ready to leave England and depart for France. Graetz gives the following description of the Jews in France. They numbered "scarcely 50,000 - almost half of whom dwelt in Alsace - under the most oppressive yoke. In Metz, the largest... only 420 Jewish families were tolerated, and in the whole of Lorraine only 180 and these were not allowed to increase. In Paris, in spite of stringent prohibitions, a congregation of about five hundred persons had gathered (since 1740); about as many lived in Bordeaux, the majority of them of new-Christian or Portuguese descent. There were also some communities in the papal districts of Avignon and Carpentras. In Carpentras there dwelt about seven hundred families with their own rabbinate. Those in the best condition were the Jews of Bordeaux and the daughter community of Bayonne."
(72)

The record of Azulai's visit to France is scanty and does not contain much biographical or historical data.

Twenty years later on his second journey, Azulai had a great deal to say of Paris and the other French communities.

Several facts are clearly stated, however: that the Jews of Bordeaux and Bayonne were in the best economic conditions, and that their brethren in the papal state of Avignon lived under oppressive restrictions.

Paris was first on the itinerary . Upon his arrival there, he contacted Jacob Rodriques Pereire, the deaf mute Jew who could write French and Hebrew and who had been honored by the King of France for his work in the field of sign language.⁽⁷³⁾ Through his influence Azulai was shown the city, was introduced to the Director of the Academy of Science, and was given the opportunity of examining Hebrew books in the Paris Library. At the latter place, Azulai tried to examine the Hebrew manuscripts, but he was told that the manuscripts were available only one day a week and if he would return on that day he could have the opportunity. Unable to see the manuscripts, Azulai obtained one of Maimonides' works and read several chapters. Paris was a beautiful city, Azulai writes. The palaces and the gardens⁽⁷⁴⁾ made Paris the most beautiful city he had ever seen.

Only a few days were spent in Paris and then the journey was continued to Bordeaux. When Azulai arrived, the Jewish community was involved in a quarrel concerning the fitness of a certain shochet. Recognizing the learning of their visitor, the Jews asked Azulai to act as arbiter.

After a thorough examination, Azulai pronounced the shochet

יָדוֹן אֶרֶץ. Had he thought otherwise he would not have hesitated to declare his unfitness. For his service Azulai received a handsome donation and the sincere respect of the community. (75)

Waiting in Bordeaux until the passing of Rosh Hashana (1756), Azulai then departed for Bayonne. The people of Bayonne did their best to make Azulai's stay pleasant. They treated him with consideration, gave him a large donation and showed him the sights of the city. On one of his sight-seeing trips, an object was pointed out as a piece of petrified wood. The visitor was unable to believe that such a thing existed and suspected his friends of making sport. To repay them for their levity, he cited the existence of a bird created from a tree. (76) When the friends expressed skepticism, he retorted that he expected the same degree of credence from them as they did from him. (77)

After a month's stay in Bayonne, Azulai made a hurried trip to Avignon, the papal dominion. Not many Jews lived in towns and villages between Bayonne and Avignon. In the latter dominion, the Jews were discontented with the papal rule, but they did not allow their restricted political and economic rights to affect their hospitality. Azulai was well-received and amply remunerated. In the near-by cities of Carpentras and Lille, Azulai was met with the same cordiality. Carpentras, says Azulai, was a town rich

in scholarship. The Jewish community of Cavaillon differed somewhat from the neighboring communities in that their Sephardic customs were modified by certain innovations.

Their Mahzor, Azulai noted, contained piyyutim from ^{7 Jued}
psm. (78)

From Cavaillon, Azulai returned to Avignon. There he witnessed a catastrophe. The swollen Rhone overflowed and inundated the city, even reaching the Jewish section which was situated on a hill. The nervous Azulai reveals his fears for his own safety as he recounts the heavy loss of life and property. (79)

The entries in the diary now become sketchy. Azulai, on his way back to Palestine, tells little of his experiences. The first part of the journey took him through the mountain approaches of Upper Italy. The only incident Azulai records was the taunting which he received from a group of Gentiles at Cuneo. (80)

At Turin the friendly Jewish community honored their visitor by introducing him to the Royal Court. Turin had a good library where Azulai found several Jewish philosophical works that aroused his interest. (81)

Two months were spent at Turin and then the journey was continued through Vercelli, Casale di Monferrato, Alessandria, to Genoa. It was nice to be in Italy again. Everywhere the Jews were friendly and anxious to please the traveler. When he encountered difficulty over the tax

demanding for admission to Casale di Monferrato, the Jews of the city came to his aid. Sabbati Del Vecchio was singled out as one of the important personages of the community. (82)
(83)
Vitali Della Torre was Azulai's host at Alessandria.

After two weeks at Genoa, Azulai left for Leghorn. A stringent examination was demanded before entry. Of this Azulai had but little fear. His prime worry was lest he should meet Jewish acquaintances before he had the opportunity of acquiring fresh garments to replace his worn ones. Azulai records that he was able to avoid any embarrassing encounters. Leghorn was a favorite city of the Palestinian. There he remained a year and a half (until 1757/110) as the guest of Michael Ferrara de Leon. The diary contains little in regard to his experiences at Leghorn. Presumably he was occupied with the writing and publication of his book $\S 51' 789$ (84)
which he says he published in Leghorn.

Constantinople lay next on the itinerary. The best route of travel was by boat around Sicily to the Arcipelago. Because of unsettled political conditions, Azulai's boat was stopped near Smyrna and each passenger was examined. Fortunately, Azulai's money was overlooked. Constantinople (85)
was reached without further difficulty.

Constantinople was an interesting city. Its magnificent churches and palaces were, for Azulai, unparalleled in architectural beauty. It was further distinguished by its ancient cemeteries and the great reservoir which Mahmud I

had built in 1732. Azulai had come to Constantinople at a fortunate time. The Sultan Uthman had just died and was to be succeeded by Mustafa III, the son of Ahmed III. Azulai followed with great interest the pomp and ceremony with which the new Sultan was initiated. (86)

Not much is said concerning the Jewish community of Constantinople. In the eighteenth century the religious, political, economic, and literary condition of the Jews of Constantinople was at a low ebb. The Jewish Encyclopedia states that during the eighteenth and nineteenth century the community could not boast of a single Jew of importance. (87) It is not surprising therefore that Azulai passes over the community with slight interest.

Azulai boarded a boat for Jerusalem the first week of Adar Sheni (1757). The trip was uneventful, except for a brief storm that threatened to endanger the ship. Jaffa was safely reached, however; whence Azulai proceeded to Ramleh and then Jerusalem. Upon his arrival he blessed God for his great goodness in effecting his safe return. (88)

The next entry is dated Sh'vat seven years later (1764). Herein and in a few following entries are contained plans for a journey to Constantinople which did not materialize because of difficult political conditions. (89)

CHAPTER IV - TRAVELS 1773-1779

At the age of forty-nine, Azulai left his native soil never to return. Again as the collector for Hebron he set out to visit the cities of northern Africa and Europe. Much of the route had been traversed on the first journey, but the diary reveals a different person. Twenty years had passed since he was first chosen the Hebron emissary. Now he was at the age when he was beset with worry about his health and the welfare of his grown children. Little things troubled him. He became garrulous and devoted much space to insignificant matters. He became sure of himself. He welcomed opportunities to express his views in the pulpit. Above all, he became exceedingly superstitious and looked upon himself as possessing miraculous powers of healing. The diary of his second journey is a better source of information than the earlier record, for the Azulai at middle-age wrote in greater detail than he did as a young man.

As on his first journey, Azulai went first to Egypt. There was trouble making arrangements for the caravan because of the political unrest that prevailed among the Arabs. One thing is evident from the start. Azulai had not changed religiously. He was still piously intent upon observing the minutiae of the law. At a half-mile from El-Arish he separated himself from the caravan in order that he might observe the Sabbath rest. In the meantime the caravan

traveled onward, Azulai hoping to overtake it by hurried travel Saturday night. On the Sabbath, Azulai was molested by a band of Arabs who demanded a sum of money. Azulai would not pay them on the Sabbath; persuaded them to wait until the night at which time he yielded to their demands. When the sun set, Azulai hurried to overtake the caravan. After an eight hour ride in a downpour of rain, he finally came upon it, but it was just breaking camp to resume its journey. Azulai was exhausted and unable to continue and was forced to stay behind again. Not until a day later at (90) Catieh, did he join the caravan.

The diary becomes defective at this point. The next entry relates the celebration of Passover in the home of a certain rich Jew, Samuel. From the following entries it is learned that Azulai was in Alexandria, waiting for favorable conditions under which to set out for Leghorn. Russia and Turkey were at war and Russian ships in the Mediterranean waters made travel to Italy impossible. Azulai wanted to leave Alexandria urgently. His host Samuel was experiencing a series of misfortunes. First his two granddaughters took ill and after they recovered the grandfather was laid low with a serious sickness. Azulai suffered with the rest of the household. He prayed for the sick and assumed many of Samuel's burdens. But soon he became bewildered and had to find a way to leave. Learning that it

was safe to go to Tunis whence a boat could be taken to Leghorn, Azulai booked passage for Tunis. (1773 22 3 / N A)
The round-about way to Italy necessitated a greater expenditure than Azulai had anticipated. He therefore had to borrow money from a rich Alexandrian Jew. On board ship, Azulai encountered difficulty in fulfilling his religious observances. The unscrupulous captain forbade the use of water for *פ'ק' אס'ג'ו*, As a result for a whole week Azulai was reduced to eating less than *115 N 7 A 3 3 2 2 1 8 2*. Troubled further by the thought of meeting Russian warships and frightened when water had to be bailed out of the weather-worn boat, Azulai turned to the Torah to relieve his anxious mind. (91)

At last the port of Susa was reached *ב 8 ימים*. Unable to leave the ship until permission was received from the government of Tunis, Azulai sent a message to the Jews of Susa requesting food. The Jewish community promptly complied. Four days later the release arrived from the Tunis authorities. The first Jew Azulai met in Susa was Solomon Uzan, an indigent scholar. Azulai refused his offer of hospitality in preference for the home of a richer Jew. Solomon resented the visitor's conduct and informed him of his displeasure. Azulai was unmoved. Moreover he did not like the way food was prepared in that part of the country and after a week's stay proceeded to Tunis. (92)

Tunis had a large Jewish community which was dis-

tinguished by an abundance of scholars. Azulai spent many afternoons conversing with the learned men on matters of halacha. Abraham Teib, a Talmudic commentator whom Azulai calls the greatest rabbi of the generation and Isaac Lombroso⁽⁹³⁾ lived in Tunis. Of the first Azulai says that it was due to his influence that the study of the Tosfot was introduced in Tunis. Before his day only the Gemarah and Rashi were studied.⁽⁹⁴⁾

In his stay at Tunis, Azulai reveals two traits of character. He has now become the inveterate Cabalist who performs all the *ḥasidim* as prescribed by Isaac Luria. Tunis contained many Cabalists, a group of which on one occasion accused Azulai of inexpertness in the Cabala. The visitor finally convinced them of his proficiency. In Tunis Azulai was able to secure a list of Cabalistic formulas. Many of the rabbis were mystically inclined and injected mystical interpretations into their scholarly works. Azulai was informed of a work of this nature and borrowed⁽⁹⁵⁾ it for his own use.

The second trait which Azulai revealed was his intellectual sharpness. The people of Tunis, as the people of the other communities which he visited, recognized and complimented the ease with which he discussed halachic questions.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Azulai had intended to stay in Tunis only until the passing of the fall holidays (1774); but his friendly

hosts would not allow him to leave. Passover was gone before he was able to depart. Azulai thoroughly enjoyed the visit. Everywhere he was warmly received and favored with generous donations. This was to be expected for since the beginning of the eighteenth century the political and economic status of the Tunisian Jews had improved steadily due to the increasing influence of the political agents of the European powers who while seeking to ameliorate the conditions of the Christian residents had to uphold also the cause of the Jews whom Moslem legislation classed with the Christians. Azulai noted with interest the influence of Caid Solomon Nataf at the court. We are told much concerning Caid Nataf who is described as the wealthy, powerful representative of the Jews. (97)

The only unpleasant aspect of Tunis was the etiquette of the Jews. Men and women went about barefoot. At the table, the diners did not hesitate to touch their feet and swallow their food gluttonly. Particularly disconcerting was their habit of smoking and spitting indiscriminately at the table. Azulai was also annoyed by the levity of the women who would grasp and kiss the skirts of his garments as he walked through the streets. He remarked to his hosts that 6 7/16 773 was a lost art in their country. (98)

From the diary we learn a few religious customs of the Tunisian Jews. At the Passover Seder there was a ceremony of passing the matzah plate three times above the heads of the assembled. Women, we are told, sat at a special

(99)
table beside the men. We are also informed that the people
called Scriptures *לוי קדש*, no reason other than
(100)
tradition offered in explanation.

Much of the time at Tunis was spent in working on
a book which was later published under the name *ספר יוסף*.
It was surprising that Azulai was able to work for in the
month of Adar he received the news of his wife's death in
Palestine. Azulai kept this fact a secret. Afraid that his
well-wishing friends would force him to marry, he mourned
privately and did not reveal his secret until he arrived in
(101)
Leghorn two months later.

On 17 *תמוז* 1774, Azulai reached Leghorn, which
was the home of his married daughter Sarah. Azulai's main
task in Leghorn was the publication of *ספר יוסף*.
This involved the raising of funds for the printing and the
securing from the Leghorn Jewish community the right of
publication. Permission was obtained without difficulty,
but the raising of funds was not easy. It was the month
(102)
of Ab before Azulai was ready to continue his travels.

Pisa was visited first. On his trip to Europe
twenty years before, Azulaí had not stayed long at Pisa; but
this time he remained almost three months (until *חשוון* 1775)
because of a report of certain oppressive papal decrees.
Pisa was distinguished by the Torre Tuerta, the Plaza de
Cavallieri, and its salubrious water which was sold far and
wide. Azulai relates that outside of Pisa on the way to

Siena, he saw a "macchina ruinata", which was a terrifying
(103)
military machine.

The people of Siena insulted Azulai by the small-
ness of their contributions. Five piezas and the additional
five granted at Azulai's objections failed to satisfy the
complaining collector. At Florence he was favored with
comfortable accomodations, but difficulties arose when he
was refused permission to collect from the individuals of
the community. Not content with the communal donation, he
persisted until he was allowed to seek individual contributions. (104)

From 24 1603 to 5 1606 Azulai traveled back
and forth between Florence, Pisa, and Leghorn visiting his
daughter and supervising the publication of *Sefer haChofetz*.
The next few months he remained in Leghorn studying night
and day. The diary records that during this period he was
honored as a Sandik and having a child named in his honor. (105)

From Leghorn, he went to Pesaro, Senigallia, and
Ancona on the Adriatic. From Azulai's account of these
travels, we learn that the Jews of Faenza were not allowed
to leave their premises on a Christian holiday. At Ancona,
Pinchas haCohen, a rich Jew, was involved in trouble with
Cardinal Bufalini Giovanni Ottavio. The Jewish community
refused to deal with the Palestinian emissary until the fate
of Pinchas was decided. From the account it appears that
the welfare of the community was bound with the fate of Pinchas.
Fortunately a favorable decision was rendered and Azulai

was able to secure a donation. While in Ancona Azulai took upon himself the task of settling a long standing quarrel that had divided the community for twelve years. Many attempts had been made to bring peace - all unsuccessful; but Azulai's strong will could not be opposed and the breach was healed.
(106)

Almost nine months were passed in Ancona (1776). Azulai records how he was occupied. Most of the day would be devoted to study with frequent interruptions to render decisions on religious and Talmudic problems. Sabbath mornings he would rise early and review certain halachic facts which he needed for his discussions with the learned men after the services. Azulai prided himself on the many *פ'רים* which he brought to the attention of his listeners.

In *תשס"ו* the Ancona community was disturbed by an unhappy affair. Certain Jews dissatisfied with the provisions of a will had appealed to the Pope for redress. When the Pope sustained the original grant, the whole community including Azulai was relieved.

There are not many entries concerning the last few months in Ancona. Azulai was enjoying himself and notes nothing of particular interest. On *א' תשס"ז* amid great honor,
(107)
he departed for Senigallia.

Many things were accomplished in the day and a half spent in Senigallia. All of the details for the collection of charity for Hebron were arranged and peace was effected

(108)
between two quarreling Jews.

In the next week, Azulai visited Pesaro, Rimini, Cesena and Lugo. At Pesaro he performed the ceremony of /1790

/ 27 . Rimini's small Jewish community treated him nicely. Also friendly was the larger community of Lugo. (109)

Ferrara was next on the itinerary. There Azulai stayed two months in the home of Jacob Minerbi. Little of significance is recorded concerning Ferrara. It is stated that the Pope and Cardinal Borghese were invited to settle a dispute that threatened to disrupt the Jewish community. A report came to Azulai from Mantua that a house had collapsed upon a wedding party killing sixty-five people including the bride. One of the outstanding events of the visit was the royal procession in honor of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. Azulai was not well a great portion of the time, but despite his illness he managed to play the part of a Shadchan, procuring an oath from bahur Abraham Bianchini that he would marry within six months. Included among the visitor's accomplishments was another successful attempt at conciliation. Two Jews promised to forget their differences (110) at his request.

As soon as he felt well enough, Azulai went on to Mantua (243/1776). There, he said, the Jews were engaged in constant discussions of Midrash and Talmud in their homes and synagogues. Jacob Saraval, a resident of the community, showed Azulai a prize possession: a Holy Scriptures

and Mishna with a Latin translation. There were many sights to see in Mantua. At the Palacio there were the images, statues, and the "Eco" chamber where a whisper in one corner could be heard in another. Mantua was an industrial city. It had a paper factory which was run by water power, a clothing factory, and a hemp factory. Azulai was fascinated by the dipping and twining of the hemp. (111)

Azulai records that Ab 29 was a local fast day which he observed with the rest of the Jewish community. (112)

Verona was visited after Mantua. Most of Azulai's comments concern the "Arena", a large field surrounded by sufficient steps to accommodate 72,000 people. Nothing is said of the Jewish community at Verona except that Azulai had difficulty in completing his mission there. (113)

Of Padua the city visited next, it is said that it was distinguished by an important medical school. Azulai was given the opportunity to see its zoological collections and lecture rooms. (114)

The New Year (1777) was now approaching and Azulai hurried on in order to spend the holidays in Venice. The notes concerning Venice read like modern tourist literature. They describe the Plaza San Marco, the Rialto, the Banco del Giro, the arsenal, and the library. At the Plaza San Marco, Azulai marvelled at the many stores teeming with fine merchandise, fruits, and food. The Plaza San Marco, says the diary, was merely one of the hundred market places of

Venice. Another attraction of Venice was its famous publishing house founded in the year 1550. (115)

Azulai's relations with the Jewish community were, on the whole, friendly despite his somewhat overbearing behavior. Azulai remarks that he spent the Ten days of Penitence עשרת ימי תשובה . His loneliness is understandable for he would not go visiting on his own accord but waited for special invitations from the rich Jews. Nevertheless after the first week, he received kindly treatment and generous donations. He was honored as a Sandik (116) and with privileges in the homes and in the synagogues.

It was the end of חשוון before Azulai was ready to leave. His goal was now Trieste on the other side of the Adriatic. Azulai chose the land route. Winter snows hampered the journey and extra horses had to be hired. Frequent stops were necessary at inns which took advantage of the hazardous weather to increase their rates. Furthermore Trieste lay in the Hapsburg dominions which demanded high tolls at the border.

Many cities were passed on the way. Azulai mentions the Jewish community of Conegliano which responded generously to his request for charity. At Gradisca lodging was found in the home of Samuel Morpurga. The Jews of Gradisca, we are told, called the Scriptures תנ"ך rather than ספרות

תנ"ך because of the prohibition to use the full name of God in the Galuth. Gorizia also had a Jewish community,

(117)
to which Azulai refers casually.

At Trieste, Azulai encountered unexpected opposition from a Viennese solicitor. Biding his time until his competitor left, Azulai contented himself with social visits with the leaders of the community. On one occasion, Azulai says, the leaders sent a litter to convey him to the synagogue. With the departure of his rival, Azulai completed his business dealings satisfactorily. (118)

The way was now retraced to Venice. A short stop was made at Gradisca to warn the Jews that their shochoet David Morpurga was not qualified to function in that capacity. After he left Gradisca, Azulai began to worry about the high rivers swollen with the winter snows, and the tolls at the Venitian border. To his relief, the fords were crossed without accident and the entrance into the territory of Venice from the imperial country was made with little cost and delay. After a two day stay with the one Jewish family of Chavres a town near Udine, Azulai returned to Venice (19 77/ 17 77).

A few weeks later traveling was resumed this time to the southwest, through Polesine and Ferrara to Modena. At every border the traveler was questioned but allowed to pass without any delay. The city of Modena was reached at night and was closed to all comers. Fortunately, one of Azulai's companions was an acquaintance of a city official whose influence secured their admission. Inside the city,

Azulai went to an inn but a wealthy Jew came there immediately and took Azulai to his home. This was the beginning of a pleasant visit in the company of the distinguished Jews of Modena, who showered their guest with contributions and personal gifts. (119)

After Passover Azulai went to Reggio, Guastalla and Mantua. At the last city he met one of those tribe of people who always caused him trouble - a collector of charity. This time an argument ensued, not over their trade but a point of pilpul. The real cause was, perhaps, his indigestion. Azulai was not well. Every time he would sit down to eat he would have to turn away. Throughout the month of Iyyar the diary pictures a man too sick to appreciate the many kindnesses of the people. On the twenty-fourth of the month he was sufficiently recovered to deliver an hour sermon in the synagogue. (120)

The next day Azulai returned to Guastalla. In the home of rich Joshua Cohen, he became acquainted with three books: *פר'ם ה'ס' ע'ד'ד* a commentary on the Torah; *תורה ו'ס'ה'ן* and a *ה'ס'ה'ן* composed by Mahallel Hallelujah, Rabbi of Ancona. (121)

The small community of Brescello was visited next. Azulai did not stay long, but after his departure, a short distance outside the city his carriage broke down and it was necessary to return to Brescello. This occasioned a delay that caused considerable anxiety. Azulai did not want

to spend the approaching Shabuoth in the small town, but there was no alternative especially when he heard that the river Taro which he had to cross had flooded its banks. (122)

After Shabuoth, Azulai set out for Genoa. The rains made traveling difficult; the roads were muddy and the rivers were high. While fording one of the rivers, the horses became stubborn and refused to move. Azulai and his party were stranded in mid-stream until a group of Gentiles spied them from the banks and rescued them. Outside of Novi the travelers had to leave their carriages and climb a high mountain by foot. Azulai records that in addition to the natural elements, he had to contend with the hostility of the inns. After being refused at one inn at Tortona, Azulai went to another where he endured ridicule at the hands of a group of officers. (123)

Moses Puah extended hospitality to Azulai at Genoa. Despite Genoa's apparent wealth -one Jew showed Azulai a large collection of diamonds and sapphires - Azulai experienced difficulty in his collection; twelve days were required to complete his work. Thereupon Azulai proceeded by boat to Nice. The sea was stormy and aroused Azulai's fears, but the port was reached safely. The people of Nice did not respond readily to the request for charity. Several meetings were required before satisfactory terms were made. (124)

Nice was the last stop in Italy. Unlike his first trip to Europe, Azulai proceeded to France instead of Germany.

He had experienced too much hardship in Germany to attempt a second trip.

The venture into France did not begin auspiciously. First an accident occurred on the river boat which Azulai boarded and his clothes and provisions were soaked. At the French border after the customary delay for inspection, a carriage was hired which broke down after a two hour ride. A new carriage had to be brought from a near-by city. When the journey was finally resumed, progress was slow because of the mountainous terrain. Azulai remarks that the roads lay through lonely forests infested with robbers. Civilization was reached at Brignole, but lodging could not be obtained and Azulai was forced to push onward to Aix. From there it was but a day's journey to Avignon. In Avignon, Azulai was received by Isaac de Monteaux. Azulai noticed certain differences in the customs and prayers of the Avignon Jews. Their precentor was dressed in a white shirt. The congregation was unusually responsive in prayer and would shout the prayers and blessings. After the Sabbath service the members of the congregation went to the home of a woman who had given birth to a son and performed a ceremony which involved taking the son from the mother and placing it into the cradle. (125)

His work unfinished in Avignon, Azulai nevertheless went to Carpentras where some difficulty was experienced in entering the city. He completed his arrangements there and

then returned to Avignon. The people would still not give as much as he wanted. Meeting after meeting was held till
(126)
at length Azulai had to leave the city dissatisfied.

The Jews of Cavaillon were more generous. Azulai describes their synagogue. The men prayed upstairs while the women assembled in the cellar, led by a male chazan in the vernacular. Cavaillon had a small but noisy Jewish community. The streets were filled with the chatter of the women and children. Azulai did not hesitate to reprove their
(127)
unseemly conduct.

During the next few weeks visits were again made to Carpentras and Avignon, and then Azulai left for Nimes. Nimes was an ancient city with Roman palaces and memorable landmarks. Little is said of the Jews of the city. In the same manner the ancient Jewish community of Lunel is passed over, but of Montpellier Azulai says that the people were

P'USNI and P'VINN who were not careful in observing the מצוות
(128)

From Montpellier, he turned south to Narbonne. After a successful day there, he proceeded across southern France to Toulouse. At the entrance of Toulouse the city authorities opened his baggage and questioned him closely before allowing him to enter. The Jews of Toulouse were poor, says Azulai. He refrained from eating meat there because he suspected a certain shochet of inexpertness. On the Sabbath, he led the minyan in prayer and gave them a

long address. He remarks that Toulouse like all the French cities in contrast to the Italian cities was devoid of beauty, (129) despite the fact that it was the capital of Languedoc.

From Toulouse Azulai ventured into the rural countries of Armagnac and Bigarre, passing through L'Isle Jourdain, Gimont, Auch, Mirande, Pau, and Tarbes. Azulai calls these towns 'ס'תתה לר . The first reference to a Jewish community concerns seven indigent families of Peyrehorade. St. Esprit had a large Jewish population many of them people of means. The majority complained of poverty, however, and protested that the visitor was a burden upon the community. As a result the collections were meagre even after considerable exertion.

The learned men of St. Esprit liked philosophical discussions. One Sabbath afternoon, Azulai was questioned in regard to the nature of the soul, reward, and punishment. Azulai remarks that he did well in his answers. On another occasion the conversation turned to the metamorphosis of (130) the soul.

On the first of Heshvan 1778, Azulai departed for Bordeaux. A number of villages were passed before Bordeaux was reached five days later. Lodging was arranged in a public inn but Azulai complained to the Gabai of one of the congregations that his quarters were cramped and near the kitchen. The kindly man thereupon found him a room in the home of Daniel Astruk, which service no doubt prompted

Azulai to call the Gabai a "philosopher" and "gaon".

Azulai was well treated. On the Sabbath he was honored with "pesicha" by a congregation that met on the top story of a public inn. He was appointed to examine the children of the Hebrew school and was astonished with the discovery that the children were taught only Bible.

Bordeaux had several congregations - the Sephardic and the Avignonese. A prominent member of the latter was Jacob Azias who had come from Amsterdam. The best known Jew of the community was the wealthy Abraham Gradis. He was known for his acts of philanthropy to Jews and Gentiles. (131) He was one of the minim who did not believe in the Oral Law and failed to keep the dietary laws. Despite his religious laxity, Azulai paid him a visit. While they were engaged in conversation, they were interrupted by a priest who brought a confession from a certain Gentile who had stolen money from Abraham and now wished to return it. Abraham authorized the priest to divide the money among the poor of his parish. In his conversation with Azulai, Abraham reveals that he owned important business interests in America which had been obtained from a noble unable to pay his debt.

Bordeaux seemed to have many men lax in the observance of the Oral Law. Three such men were Jacob Agevedo and his two sons. Azulai treated them curtly because he heard they had "profaned the Sabbath publicly."

From Abraham Gradis, Azulai brought back an approval

of his mission. But opposition still remained. The greatest objector was Solomon Lupis, who is called a *ש'סא* and whose wife is defamed with the description that she never took a ritual bath. Finally the community issued an ultimatum. "Either accept the donation or receive nothing." Azulai yielded reluctantly.

Before Azulai was ready to leave several incidents of interest occurred. He attended a Jewish wedding where the majority of guests were important Gentiles of the city. An amusing incident took place when Azulai visited a Jewish family and was turned away by a complaining wife. Later the husband came to see Azulai and offered a generous donation. Azulai performed an act of service for the community. Members of the Avignonese congregation asked his aid in seeking the return of their former Gabai who had departed because of a certain dissatisfaction. Azulai, the peace-maker, restored (132) the Gabai to his position.

Preparations were made to depart for Paris on the second of Kislev but a downpour of rain brought a delay. Said the God-fearing Azulai *אזולאי ה'ה'ה' ה'ה'ה' ה'ה'ה'* *ה'ה'ה' ה'ה'ה' ה'ה'ה'*. Five days later Azulai bid adieu to his friends at Bordeaux and headed north. Poitiers was the first big city on the way. There Azulai stopped at a public inn and contacted several Jews of the community. A minyan was assembled in the inn and a service was held, Azulai functioning as the precentor and preacher. After a few

hours at Poitiers, Azulai hurried on to Chatellerault where he wrangled with the innkeeper over the price of a room. The remainder of the journey from Chatellerault to Paris was very uncomfortable. The weather was biting cold and in order to make progress Azulai traveled from early morning to late night. Tired and chilled Azulai would seek shelter in the inns of the villages, but invariably the rates would be high and an argument would ensue and Azulai would spend a sleepless night worrying about his expenditures. The diary at this point is a chronicle of complaint. (133)

Paris was reached on the twenty-second of the month. Azulai sought out David Nakit who had arranged for his lodging. Azulai describes Paris as a city with a population of one million, fifteen miles in circumference with 950 streets. A large bridge spanned the river Seine. Across it men and women could be seen walking at any hour of the day or night. Paris' only blot was its 30,000 harlots. The Jewish community made up of Ashkenazim, Portuguese from Bordeaux, and Avignonese, lived in prosperity and peace. There were some congregations, Azulai says, in which prayer was offered the whole day of Sabbath. There was no settled Jewish community in Paris, however. Most of the Jews were merchants sojourning in the city. (134)

The visit to Paris was most enjoyable. Azulai was in his glory because he was in a capital, in the company of prominent Jews and non-Jews. Azulai tells us about a Jew

who came to see him - a certain Israel Birnal di Balabriga, a master of oriental languages who was an interpreter of the King. Among those who called upon Azulai was a Gentile scholar from the Academy of Science. (135) Another experience of great importance to Azulai was his contact with Lipman Kalmira. (Calan) In his youth he had been a servant, had turned to trade, became rich and was now the Baron de Picquigny, that is the lord of the city of Picquigny which he had bought from the heirs of the lord for a million and a half francs. This Jew's power was further enhanced by his business connections with a mistress of the late Louis XV. (136)

Azulai had many interesting experiences in Paris. One night a Jew offered Azulai a large sum of money if he would secure him a divorce. Said Azulai, "If I were asked to make peace between man and wife, I would do it for nothing, but to drive away a mother, a first wife, was a desecration of God's name." (137)

One day Azulai was astonished with a report about a certain Mordecai Tama who was said to read Voltaire. To Azulai this was an unbelievable evil. (138)

On another occasion a Jew and Gentile came to see Azulai. When they were ready to leave, the Jew asked for Azulai's blessing. Whereupon the distinguished Palestinian blessed both Jew and Gentile. In referring to the incident, Azulai says (139)

The climax of the visit came when an invitation

was extended by a prominent Gentile to see the court of Versailles. His host Monsieur Fabri took him inside the palace. Azulai was struck with awe at the sight of the massive pillars overlaid with gold and extensive galleries crowded with idle princes. Azulai was permitted to enter the sanctum sanctorum, the throne room where the nobles including the King's brothers were stationed in array waiting the arrival of the King. When Louis XVI passed by, Azulai made a blessing for him. A few minutes later a courtier from the King asked Monsieur Fabri what country his visitor represented. When Azulai and his friend made ready to leave the ladies of the court bowed in reverence. From the palace they went to the home of one of the Gentile's friends who lived in Versailles. Azulai was treated with honor, presented with gifts and invited to eat. Eggs were prepared for the Jewish guest who ate them after making the customary blessing. Afterwards Azulai prayed mincha and was ready to depart. Thereupon the Gentiles - a mother and daughter - asked Azulai to bless them. Azulai drew near to them and without placing his hands upon their heads complied with their wish. It was a moment of supreme joy for the Jew. Later he described the incident in his diary:

והוא פלאי תהלות לא יתברך אשר העיד לי מאי
דה מנע האונת מכי חסדים כי אבד עיניו 1700
יתברך ויגדלה לי עז
(140)

Azulai had a similar experience several days later when a noble and lady came to see him. The lady told Azulai

that she was interested in Jews and in their Bible and on many occasions she had befriended Jews in their trouble with the 7510 of Avignon. Upon their departure they too asked (141) Azulai to pray for them.

Not least interesting to Azulai was the library of Paris. There he examined important Jewish manuscripts and (142) saw a Hebrew Bible written in the year 1061.

Were the diary as complete on other occasions as it is in its record of Paris, it would be an invaluable source of information for the life of the Jews in the eighteenth century. Unfortunately the notes on Paris are unparalleled in clarity and completeness in the rest of the diary (with the exception of the stay in Amsterdam).

Azulai left Paris on 12 126 for the Austrian Netherlands. The diary henceforth is a record of the traveler's experiences with the custom officials. At Peronne on the Somme River he was beset with apprehensions lest the officials roughly handle his baggage and confiscate part in the process. The presentation of recommendations from important Parisians, however, exempted Azulai from examination. The entrance into Valenciennes, a fortified city of the French border, also required inspection, but again Azulai's distinguished credentials obviated the difficulty. This time, however, Azulai had to prove that he was not a merchant in order to secure exemption from the trader's tax. In Valenciennes Azulai contacted one of the city officials to whom he brought a

letter of introduction with the request for a recommendation to the commanding officers of Brussels. Upon the departure from the city, the passports had to be presented again, and after an hour's travel, there was another examining station. A short distance farther was the border of the Austrian Netherlands where additional investigation was required. (143)

Mons, fortified with bridges and citadels, was the first town mentioned in the Netherlands. Azulai spent a night in the village of Soignies where an argument occurred with an unscrupulous innkeeper who would not abide by the rate agreed upon. Azulai mentions this as a difference between the German and the French. The French innkeepers asked high prices, but never changed them, while the German innkeepers could not be trusted. (144)

The next day (1778 17²⁶) Azulai arrived in Brussels. Entrance into the city was achieved with comparative ease, whereupon Azulai sought out a Jew who, he thought, would befriend him. The welcome, however, was not forthcoming, and rejected Azulai went to the "Hotel Royal" where a comfortable room was obtained. The inhospitable Jew was met again several days later and wanted to know why the traveler had not come to his home for a meal, to which came the sarcastic response, "Did you invite me?" We learn nothing about the Jewish community of Brussels, except that the two Jews contacted were Ashkenazim.

In a few days Azulai was on his way again bound for

Holland, in the company of an Ashkenazic Jew travelling from Brussels to Amsterdam. The diary records that the journey became quite unpleasant. Azulai complains of the muddy roads, of a treacherous river, of the cost of travel, and of the dishonesty of the innkeepers, but he survived all the hardships to arrive safely at Rotterdam (22 176). There he renewed his friendship with Isaac Goldsmith whom he had met twenty-two years before on his first visit in Rotterdam. The people of the city refused to endorse Azulai's cause. It was explained to him that only five months before, another Hebron emissary had solicited their city, and for this reason they would not even maintain his board and room. Consequently the visit was of short duration and the journey was continued (145) by carriage and boat to Amsterdam.

Azulai stayed in Amsterdam from the end of Tebeth to the middle of Iyyar. His first act there was to look up the Hebron emissary who had caused trouble in Rotterdam. Azulai found him to be an old friend whom he had to forgive. The next few days were passed meeting the leaders of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities. One of the leaders of the Sephardim was Solomon Shalem who upon seeing Azulai for the second time ignored him to his great embarrassment and anger. Azulai's favorite topic of conversation with the leaders was his experience at Versailles. (146)

Azulai has left an illuminating record of his stay in Amsterdam. The Jewish community was prosperous though

a decline had begun in the fortunes of the Sephardic Jews. In an article "Jews in the Netherlands", Herbert Bloom describes the position of the Holland Jews as follows: "The wealth of the Sephardic group reached its height by the second half of the seventeenth century. Holland's glory as a world power then began to wane. With wealth came a desire for luxury and ease followed by political and economic corruption. The rich of Holland turned to grandiose schemes of speculation, and the Jews, especially the Sephardim, plunged like their fellow countrymen headlong into wildcat schemes for quick millions. Crisis after crisis ensued and many a Jewish merchant prince was reduced to poverty.... Toward the end of the eighteenth century the Sephardic community weakened by paupers in its midst, sank deeper and deeper into the slough of poverty.... The Ashkenazic Jew, on the other hand, in the period of inflated speculation was on the whole unable, because of lack of means, to plunge in the stock market. He continued to ply his petty trade and was able to weather the financial crisis. Thus, as the eighteenth century drew to a close, the Ashkenazic community was definitely on the upgrade."⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Azulai's notes bear out this description in part. Azulai visited many Ashkenazic Jews, a fact which indicates that men of wealth must have been found among them. The speculation of the Sephardic Jews is also mentioned. When the news arrived from London concerning the decrease of interest charges great was the

consternation among the Jews many of whom suffered considerable losses. (148) The Jewish investors were in a constant state of unrest because of the American Revolutionary War which threatened to depreciate their investments. (149) Azulai complains of the difficulty experienced in obtaining contributions which must be contrasted with his generous reception twenty-two years earlier. However, there is no mention of extreme poverty such as the above statement indicates. On the contrary, the community, from Azulai's evidence, seemed to be fairly prosperous, but on the downgrade. Concerning their political conditions, Azulai remarks that the Jews had unrestricted freedom and assumed more rights than warranted and acted as if they ruled the country. (150) The Jews were appreciative of their freedom and celebrated certain national holidays along with the general population. (151)

From the diary we learn a few facts about the religious life of the Amsterdam Jews. On Saturday nights the weekly Pentateuch portion would be read from private scrolls in the homes of the rich Jews. Sermons were an important part of the religious service. Many pages of the diary are devoted to descriptions and summaries of the speeches delivered on the Sabbaths and holidays, most of them about an hour long. Azulai was impressed by the excellence of the development and style - especially appealing was the one preached by Rabbi Shalem on the Sabbath preceding Passover on Isaiah 58:7 in which a plea was made in behalf of Azulai's

(152)
mission. One sermon was preached in Portuguese which
was one of the languages current among a certain element
(153)
of the Jews. Most of the sermons utilized Biblical texts
and made abundant use of Midrashic material. The topics
were always religious and concerned the virtues necessary
(154)
for righteous living.

Purim was celebrated with festivity. Delicacies
and gifts were exchanged. Parties and feasts were held.
People went from house to house exchanging greetings and
joining in the singing and dancing. The celebration lasted
over a week and culminated in a noisy parade which was made
(155)
up mostly of the Ashkenazic Jews.

The Ashkenazim and Sephardim seemed to be on good
terms, for the latter participated in the dedication of a
new Ashkenazic synagogue. The synagogue was dedicated with
a definite ritual. The scrolls were carried in procession
from the old place of worship into the new abode where
(156)
special piyyutim composed for the occasion were offered.

Many names of important Amsterdam Jews are included
(157)
in the diary. Among them are Isaac HaCohen Belinfante,
(158)
David de Isaac de Leon, Aaron Capadoce a wealthy banker,
Raphael b, Moses Mendes da Costa, Abraham Texeira, David
(159)
Cohen Azevedo, David Meza, and Rabbi Shalem, leader
of the Sephardim. Azulai also contacted important Gentile
merchants, but their names are not mentioned. On one
occasion he went to the home of a non-Jewish merchant. There

his host and a priest who was present asked questions about
(160)
Jerusalem.

The diary of the stay at Amsterdam reveals several of Azulai's character traits. On the Sabbath Hagadol, he remained in his room alone and fretted because no one had invited him out, despite the fact that the people of Amsterdam had been exceedingly kind to him. (161) Another comment indicates Azulai's amazing superstition. He liked to hear stories and spent one afternoon listening to tales of a miraculous nature. One of these concerned a Gentile who was smitten with blindness when he commanded his servant to burn a barn to rid it of rats. (162)

There was something about Azulai that attracted people. The Jews of Amsterdam would come together just to catch a glance of him. When Azulai emerged from a meeting with the Ashkenazic leaders, he found to his surprise that two hundred Jews had gathered outside to pay him homage. Undoubtedly the figure is somewhat exaggerated but it reveals the adulation with which he was received. (163)

On Iyyar 28 Azulai left Amsterdam amid great honor. A group of two hundred people, we are told, accompanied him to his boat. Azulai's first stop was at the Hague. The diary of his stay records many interesting items: his meeting with Saul b. Isaac Halevi whose wife was said to be a fine Hebrew poet; (164) his contact with the distinguished Jews of the city, among whom were Tubya Boaz, Isaac Levi Leyden,

Isaac de Aaron Suasso, Abraham Cohen Salazar; (165) his dis-
cussions with the people about the Baal Shem Tov; (166) his
account of Samuel Fulak, a miracle worker who roamed the
forests near London; (167) his visit in the richly furnished
home of wealthy Moses de Pinto; (168) his excursions through
the parks and museum of the beautiful city; (169) his meeting
a Gentile who spoke Hebrew; (170) his conversation with a Jew
acquainted with China and its religion in which conversation
Azulai's friend brought forth proof to show that some of the
lost Israelite tribes were in North America. (171)

The most interesting item recorded at the Hague concerns the report of a Rabbi who was negotiating with the Amsterdam Maamad and accepted a position on condition that in matters of religious law he would have unrestricted authority. This Rabbi aspired to be a moral reformer with the specific intentions of improving the character of certain leading Jews of the community. For this task he demanded a yearly salary of not less than one thousand ducats. The application of the Rabbi was rejected in part: The Maamad did not consider it wise to give the Rabbi unlimited freedom, but was willing to assume the financial obligation. To the surprise of all, the offer was refused by the idealistic
(172)
applicant.

Azulai was impressed by the high standard of living in the Hague, and by the great number of wealthy Jews. This

latter point was particularly evident to Azulai when he was invited to the home of Isaac de Aaron Suasso to which the Suasso's and De Pinto's had gathered in honor of the visitor. (173)

In his description of the Hague Jews, Azulai reveals an important characteristic of the Holland Jews. They were beginning to come under the influence of the Western Enlightenment. There is a secular air about them. They speak of museums and foreign countries. They are interested in the American Revolution and are somewhat familiar with the agricultural products of North and South America.

While in the Hague, Azulai received a letter from London Jews who refused to contribute to his charity. This was a great disappointment. He did not intend to go to England and with one stroke his business there was terminated. At the same time he was experiencing difficulty in collecting (174) from the Jews of the Hague.

Several weeks after Shabuoth (1778) Azulai left the Hague to travel through the provinces of Holland to Brussels. First he returned to Rotterdam where, we are told, he learned of an important personage by the name of Erasmus. Azulai had not heard of this Dutch humanist. He was fascinated by a story that Erasmus, unable to read or write before the age of thirty, became one of the leading scholars (175) of Europe.

Azulai was surprised by the changed attitude of the Rotterdam Jews. When he was there during the previous

winter no one paid him any attention, but this time he was warmly received and rewarded munificently.

Included in his notes at Rotterdam is a man's expression of gratitude for a blessing by Azulai which had brought good fortune. There is also a reference to the efficacy of Azulai's prayers in aiding barren women. (176) It is evident that Azulai believed himself to possess miraculous powers, though he confessed that his powers were not due to his own righteousness but to the merit of his fathers (177) 108
אזולאי אומר כי אבותיו היו לו כח להשיג טובה.

From Rotterdam, Azulai went to the provinces of Zeeland, Brabant, and then to Brussels. An important Jew of Brussels, Azulai says, was Philipp Nathan. (178)

Azulai was now ready to return to Leghorn. Almost six years had passed since his departure from Palestine and at last Azulai was homeward bound. Many interesting notes are recorded concerning the return to Italy. At Paris Azulai again visited his prominent Gentile friend, Monsieur Fabri, who admitted that he worshipped "the God of Israel" and upon Azulai's advice assumed the responsibility of reciting the Sh'ma and observing the minimal commandments. (179) There is another reference to Azulai's supposedly miraculous powers. This time it concerns none other than Marie Antoinette! He had prayed for her during his last visit and we have the testimony of Monsieur Fabri that his intercession had produced fruits. (180) Another item of interest in regard to Paris

is a young Jew's confession of immoral relations with Gentile girls. Azulai's ears tingled at the knowledge of "the seed of Israel wallowing in mire."⁽¹⁸¹⁾

The journey was delayed at Lyons first voluntarily because Azulai wished to postpone the unpleasantness of dealing with custom officials at Turin, and then involuntarily when he was taken sick and had to seek the services of the best doctor of the city.⁽¹⁸²⁾ Azulai tells us that the synagogue at Lyons did not possess an ark. The Scroll was kept on an open bench. Azulai initiated donations for the acquisition of an ark.⁽¹⁸³⁾

After passing through Savoy which in Azulai's description was a country of impoverished villages,⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ he approached the long apprehended Turin. There it was his good fortune to encounter two prominent Jews who secured his admission without examination. This was an extraordinary occurrence in as much as "even Gentiles and ambassadors were subject to inspection."⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

An incident in Turin exalted Azulai in the eyes of the Jewish community. Bearing a letter from the French court, Azulai was granted an audience with the Prime Minister of the State, an occurrence which highly pleased the Jews of Turin. But something even more remarkable transpired. The French Ambassador, informed of the visitor's contact with the French nobility, called to pay his respect. Azulai⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ left Turin in possession of a passport from the King.

The passport served him well. A group of troublesome Gentiles
(187)
at Chivasso were awed into good behavior at its sight.

There are merely a few more comments about the remainder of the journey to Leghorn. The Jews of Casale are lauded for their rich scholarship. It was said to have more than seventy scholars, headed by such men as Isaac Pinze and Abraham Luzzatto. From Casale a messenger was dispatched to Moncalvo with request for a donation. The next day a small contribution was received which was acknowledged by a return message: "Individuals of Moncalvo," wrote Azulai, "I am grieved at the hardness of your hearts." The carping reply was undeserved by the Jews of Moncalvo who were in
(188)
straitened economic conditions. It seems from Azulai's remarks that the economic position of the Jews of northern Italy was becoming worse. At Alessandria (della Paglia) the donations were too meagre to accept. Another comment at Alessandria mentions Elihu b. Raphael Solomon Levi, the
(189)
Rabbi of the community and author of the work 'גנצני'.
Leghorn was reached 1778 28 *Si/le* and Azulai was received
(190)
with rejoicing and blessing among his friends and family.

The journey now completed, the diary comes to a close with a few notes covering the years 1779-1885. The only comment of significance concerns Azulai's second marriage
(191)
in the year 1779. The remainder are of little moment and are the thoughts of an aging father on the state of his
(192)
health and the welfare of his sons.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

For Western Europe the eighteenth century was a period of political, social, and intellectual agitation. It was the "age of reason" which attacked the irrational inequalities of the "Old Regime" and looked forward to the intellectual Utopias of the future.

Hayyim Azulai was untouched by this social ferment. Traveling through Europe, he was unconscious of the great changes about him. Like the majority of his brethren, he lived "within the four ells of the Halacha." Aware of Voltaire and Erasmus he ignored their implications for his occupation with the words of the Law.

Azulai was the prototype of the Jewish way of life. Skilled in the knowledge of the Torah, rigorous in the observance of the commandments, and permeated with a love of tradition, he exemplified the pre-emancipation Jew at his best. Within the confines of the "Law" he found all the forces, spiritual and social, necessary for an abundant enjoyment of life.

The eighteenth century was the last era in which the Sefer Maagal Tov could have been written. No man of a later generation than Azulai's could have found the rich Jewish life described in the diary. For even the age-long protective covering of the Jew could not resist the onslaught of the new era. The Jew emerged from the ghetto

leaving behind the Shulchan Aruch and his distinctive ways which were cumbersome burdens in the outside world. Did he err in so doing? Did he exchange pure gold for tinsel? The Sefer Maagal Tov has much to say in favor of an affirmative answer.

NOTES

1. The transliteration follows that of the Jewish Encyclopedia.
2. The J.E. says 1755 basing itself on Joseph David Sinzheim's eulogy of Azulai. (Vol. II, p. 376) The diary, however, carries the date 1753. (p. 1)
3. David Sinzheim's eulogy states that Azulai left Palestine three times on his missions, in 1755, 1770, and 1781. (J.E. Vol. II p. 376) But the diary mentions only two departures (1753 and 1773) and preparations for a third journey which did not materialize. (1764) (pp. 47, 48, 49)
4. At the end of the diary there are a few additional notes on Azulai's sojourn in Leghorn. The entries are meagre and uninformative, the last one being in 1794, thirteen years before his death.
5. Aaron Freimann, Sefer Maagal Tov, introduction, pp. IX-X, Berlin, 1921.
6. J.E. II p. 375.
7. J.E. II pp. 375-376
8. J.E. II p. 375
9. J.E. II p. 375
10. J.E. II p. 376
11. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 167
12. See above p. 70
13. See above p. 12
14. See above p. 67
15. J.E. II p. 376
16. See B. Bathra 15a: Gad the Seer and Nathan the prophet continued the Book of Samuel (from XXVIII, 3); see also II Samuel XXIV, 2
17. Baedeker, Palestine and Syria, p. 112
18. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 1

19. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.2
20. Ibid., p.2
21. Baedeker, op. cit., p.121
22. Sefer Maagal Tov,p.2
23. Ibid., p.3
24. Ibid., p.3
25. Ibid., p.3
26. Ibid., p.4
27. Ibid., p.5
28. Ibid., p.5
29. Ibid., p.5
30. Ibid., p.5
31. Ibid., p.6
32. Ibid., p.6
33. Ibid., p.7
34. Ibid., p.7
35. Ibid., pp. 7-8
36. Ibid., p.8
37. Ibid., note 9, p.8
38. Ibid., p.9
39. Margolis-Marx, History of the Jewish People, pp.589-590
40. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.11
41. Ibid., p.12
42. Ibid., p.12 ✓
43. Ibid., p.12
44. Ibid., p.13
45. Ibid., pp.13-14

46. Ibid., p.14
47. Ibid., p.15
48. Ibid., pp.16-17
49. Ibid., p.18
50. Ibid., p.19
51. Ibid., p.20
52. Ibid., p.20
53. Ibid., p.21
54. Ibid., p.21
55. Ibid., p.21
56. Ibid., p.22
57. The full name is not given but there is no doubt that Jacob Joshua Falk is meant, famous for his commentaries on the Talmud.
58. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.23
59. Ibid., p.24
60. Ibid., p.24
61. Ibid., p.25
62. Ibid., p.26
63. Ibid., P.27
64. Ibid., p.28
65. J.E. Vol. VIII, pp. 452-453
66. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.29
67. Margolis-Marx, pp.643-644
68. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.30
69. See "Jacob Kimchi and Schalom Buzaglo" in Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England, Vol. VII, pp.272-290.

70. See Gaster, History of the Ancient Synagogue, pp. 113, 136, 148
71. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 31
72. Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. V, pp. 435-436
73. First teacher of deaf mutes in France; born in Spain 1715, died in Paris 1780; parents forced to adopt Christianity, Jacob himself being baptised; after father's death, mother fled to Bordeaux and became a Jew; Jacob invented an arithmetical machine which brought him an eight-hundred pound pension from the King; was devoted to the welfare of the Jews of Southern France, Portugal, and Spain. (See J.E. IX, p. 597).
74. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 34
75. Ibid., p. 35
76. J.E. II, pp. 340-ff.
77. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 37
78. Ibid., p. 38
79. Ibid., p. 39
80. Ibid., p. 40
81. Ibid., p. 40
82. See J.E. XII, p. 404
83. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 41
84. Ibid., p. 42
85. Ibid., p. 42
86. Ibid., pp. 43-44
87. J.E. IV, p. 239
88. Sefer Maagal Tov, p. 46
89. Ibid., pp. 47-48
90. Ibid., p. 50
91. Ibid., pp. 52-53

92. Ibid., p.54
93. J.E. VIII, p.153
94. Sefer Maagal Tov, pp.55-56
95. Ibid., p.61
96. Ibid., p.56
97. Ibid., pp.56-66
98. Ibid., p.56
99. Ibid., p.62
100. Ibid., p.87
101. Ibid., p.61
102. Ibid., pp.66-67
103. Ibid., p.68
104. Ibid., p.69
105. Ibid., p.70
106. Ibid., pp.71-72
107. Ibid., pp.73-74
108. Ibid., p.74
109. Ibid., p.76
110. Ibid., pp.77-79
111. Ibid., pp.80-81
112. Ibid., p.81
113. Ibid., p.82
114. Ibid., p.83
115. Ibid., pp.84-85
116. Ibid., p. 86
117. Ibid., p.87
118. Ibid., p.88

119. Ibid., pp.90-92
120. Ibid., pp.93-94
121. Ibid., p.95
122. Ibid., p96
123. Ibid., p.97
124. Ibid., pp.98-99
125. Ibid., p.100
126. Ibid., pp.101-103
127. Ibid., pp.105-106
128. Ibid., pp.107-108
129. Ibid., p.109
130. Ibid., pp.110-112
131. J.E. VI, pp.63-64
132. Sefer Maagal Tov, pp.113-117
133. Ibid., pp.118-119
134. Ibid., p.120
135. Ibid., p.121
136. Ibid., p.122
137. Ibid., p.121
138. Ibid., p.122
139. Ibid., p.123
140. Ibid., p.124
141. Ibid., p.124
142. Ibid., p.122
143. Ibid., pp.125-126
144. Ibid., p.126
145. Ibid., pp.126-127

146. Ibid., pp.128-129
147. Contemporary Jewish Record, Vol II, No.1, Jan.1939,p.28
148. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.139
149. Ibid., p.140
150. Ibid., p.139
151. Ibid., p.133
152. Ibid., pp.142-143
153. Ibid., pp.145-146
154. Ibid., pp.133,145,146,159
155. Ibid., pp.138-139
156. Ibid., p.141
157. J.E. II, p.660
158. J.E. VIII, p.1
159. J.E. II, p.368; ibid., VIII, pp.529-530
160. Sefer Maagal Tov, p.145
161. Ibid., p.143
162. Ibid., p.140
163. Ibid., p.150
164. Ibid., p.153
165. Ibid., pp.154-155
166. Ibid., p.155
167. Ibid., p.155
168. Ibid., p.155
169. Ibid., pp.154-156
170. Ibid., p.161
171. Ibid., p.155
172. Ibid., p.157

173. Ibid., p.158
174. Ibid., p. 158
175. Ibid., p.159
176. Ibid., p.160
177. Ibid., p.163
178. Ibid., p.161
179. Ibid., p.162
180. Ibid., p.163
181. Ibid., p.165
182. Ibid., pp.167-168
183. Ibid., p.168
184. Ibid., p.170
185. Ibid., p.171
186. Ibid., p.173
187. Ibid., p.174
188. Ibid., p.174
189. Ibid., pp.175-176
190. Ibid., p.177
191. Ibid., p.177
192. Ibid., pp.178-180

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and from 12.15 to 1.15

Handwritten notes

10.15 to 11.15

11.15 to 12.15

12.15 to 1.15

1.15 to 2.15

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