

## **CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?**

1. Describe the reaction of the Jews of Smyrna to Shabbtai Tzvi and his claim of being Moshiach.
2. What was the reaction in Hamburg?
3. What happened to Shabbtai Tzvi after he left Smyrna?
4. Describe Shabbtai's stay in the fortress of Gallipoli.
5. Who was R. Nechemiah Cohen?

This and much more will be addressed in the sixth lecture of this series: "The Enemy Within: The Spread of the Sabbatian Heresy".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind, as you listen to the tape and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This outline and source book was designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE  
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series IX Lecture #6

THE ENEMY WITHIN: THE SPREAD OF THE SABBATIAN HERESY

I. Good Tidings

A.

(1) והכתבים הללו נקראו בפומבי בב"ה הי"ג ותהום כל הקהל בכאן האמבורג במחול וריקוד וכל א' בכלי זמר. והקול נשמע לאומות . . . ושואלים להם על מה אתם הומים בקול . . . והם משיבים להם על ביאת מלכנו משיחנו בלי שום מורא ופחד. וגדל כח ההמיה בריקוד עד שכולם היו רוצים לרקוד ובלבו סדר ריקודם והוצרך הרב מארי דאתרא כמוהר"ר משה ישראל נר"ו לעמוד בבימה ולדרוש ברבים על הריקוד שיהיה בתיקון ובסדר. . . אך זה מוסיף לפרש ולומר שכל העם מקצה באיזמיר נמשכו אחר המשיח מלבד י"א או י"ב אנשים ומכללם החכמים כמוהר"ר אהרן לפ"פ שאמרו לו לנשק ידי משיחם ולא קיבל עליו והחכם כמוהר"ר שלמה אלגזי וחבריו לא קיבלו עליהם גזרת ביטול צום העשירי ורצו לשלוח בו יד ההמון וברח לו חוץ לעיר. ר' יעקב ששפורטש, קיצור ציצת נובל צבי ה:

1) [When] these letters [of the events in Smyrna] were read in public in the synagogue . . . the whole congregation, here in Hamburg, broke out excitedly in dance accompanied by instrumental music. The sounds were [even] heard by the Gentiles . . . who asked them the reason why they were so excited. . . They replied to them, without any fear or trepidation, that it was, "Because of the coming of our king, our Messiah." The enthusiasm and excitement was so great that everyone wanted to join in the dancing, and, as a result, the scene was chaotic. So much so, that the Rav, the local authority, R. Moshe Yisrael, may Hashem protect him, had to go up on the Bima (platform) and lecture to the assembled that the dancing should proceed in a proper fashion. . . The writer of the letter, however, added that nearly everyone in Smyrna, with the exception of eleven or twelve individuals, became followers of the Messiah [Shabbtai Tzvi]. Included in this list of skeptics was R. Aharon Lapapa, who was told to kiss the hand of their Messiah, but refused, and R. Shlomo Algazi. He and his colleagues did not accept [Shabbtai Tzvi's] annulment of the fast of the tenth month ( *Asara B'Teveth* ), and consequently, the masses wanted to harm them. They were forced to flee outside the city. **Rav Y. Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 5b**

2) The Sefardim received most of the letters and immediately rushed with them to their Synagogue [of Hamburg] where the news was read aloud; young and old, the Germans too, hastened to the Sephardic synagogue. The young Portuguese always put on their best clothes and wore green silk ribbons - Shabbtai Tzvi's favorite colors. And thus they all went *b'tof umochol* (with timbrels and with dances) to the synagogue, and, with a joy like the *Simchas Bais HaShoivah* (Festivities of the Water Drawing), they read the letters aloud. **Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln**

B.

ומאותו היום ואילך התקינו לברכו בקול רם בבה"כ וזה נוסח הברכה: הנותן תשועה למלכים וממשלה לנסיכים ומלכותו מלכות כל עולמים הא-ל הגדול הגבור והנורא מלך מלכי המלכים מאין כמוהו מהעדה מלכין ומהקים מלכין הכורת ברית לדוד עבדו לכונן את כסא מלכותו עד עולם הוא יברך וישמור וינצר ויעזור וירומם ויגדל וינשא למעלה למעלה לאדונינו מלכנו הרב הקדוש צדיק ונושע הוא שבתאי צבי משיח אלקי ישראל יורם הודו ותנשא מלכותו ליה יהיב שולטן ויקר ומלכו וכל עממיה אומיה ולישני' ליה יפלחון שלטניא שלטן עלם די לא יעדי ומלכותיה די לא תתחבל קרנו תרום בכבוד ונזר אלקיו על ראשו מלכים יראו וקמו שרים וישתחוו למען ד' אשר נאמן קדוש ישראל ויבחרהו. יהי שמו לעולם לפני שמש ינון שמו ויתברכו בו כל גוים יאשרוהו יראו עינינו וישמח לבנו בבנין בית קדשנו ותפארתינו מקדש ד' כוננו ידיך וכן יהי רצון ונאמר אמן. ר' יעקב ששפורטש, קצור ציצת נובל צבי ה:

From that day on, they instituted the practice of blessing [Shabbtai Tzvi] in a loud voice in the synagogue. The following was the formula of the benediction: He who gives salvation to kings and domain to princes, and whose kingdom will last forever, the great, mighty and awesome G-d, the King who is King of kings, the One who removes kings [from office] and installs kings [in their place], the One who made a covenant with David, His servant, to establish the throne of his kingdom for ever, He will bless, keep, protect, assist, exalt, increase, continually raise up our lord, our king, the holy Rav, the Tzaddik (saint), and saved, **Shabbtai Tzvi, the Messiah (anointed) of the G-d of Israel.** May his majesty be exalted and his kingdom raised up. To him shall be granted dominion, esteem, and kingship. All of the nations, kingdoms and language groups, shall submit themselves to him. His dominion shall continue forever. It shall not be removed or harmed. His horn shall be lifted up with glory and the crown of his G-d shall be on his head. Kings shall see [all of] this and stand up, ministers and prostrate themselves for the sake of Hashem, who is worthy of trust, the source of the sanctity of Israel, and choose him. May his name be forever. May his name be identified with dominion as long as the sun shines and through his name shall all of the nations be blessed. May they praise him. May our eyes behold and may our hearts rejoice in the building of our Temple, the source of our sanctity and splendor. The Sanctuary of Hashem, the work of Your hands. So may it be Your will, and say, "Amen." **Ibid.**

## II. From Smyrna to Constantinople

A. Shabbethai Zebi, having thus fully fixed himself in Smyrna and filled other places with the rumors of him declared that he was called by G-d to visit Constantinople, where the greatest part of his work was to be accomplished. [Shabbethai was expected to overthrow the Sultan and to take Palestine.] In order whereunto he privately shipped himself with some few attendants on a Turkish *saik* [a two-masted sailing vessel] in the month of January, 1666, lest the crowd of his disciples and such, who would press to follow him, should endanger him in the eyes of the Turks, who already began to be scandalized at the reports and prophecies regarding his person . . . **Sir Paul Rycaut (1628-1700), History of the Turkish Empire, from the year 1623, to the year 1677, London 1687**

B. The great Vizier [Ahmed Koprulu], then also at Constantinople, being not yet departed on his expedition for Candia [Crete], having heard some rumors of this man and the disorder and madness he had raised amongst the Jews, sent two boats (whilst the saik was detained by contrary winds) with commands to bring him a prisoner to the Port; where accordingly Shabbethai, being come, was committed to the most loathsome and darkest dungeon in the town, there to remain in further expectation of the Vizier's sentence. The Jews were not at all discouraged at this ill treatment of their prophet, but rather confirmed in their belief of him, as being an accomplishment of the prophecy of those things which ought to precede his glory and dominion. [According to tradition the Messiah is to suffer before being acclaimed.] **Ibid.**

C.

והעמידוהו לפני משנה המלך ושאל אותו מי אתה והשיב שהוא חכם מחכמי ירושלים שבא שליח לבקש מחיית עניי ארץ ישראל ושם נמצא השופט של איזמר שהלך בשבילו להגיד עליו ועל היהודים המורדים. ולקח מהם קנס הרבה ואז השופט הנקרא קאד"י עם החכמים שלהם הנמצאים שם במעמד אמרו לו וכי לא קראת עצמך בשם מלך המשיח והיו היהודים נגררים אחריו ונקנסו בממון אמר להם אני לא אמרתי כלום. והמשנה גזר עליו להוליכו לבית האסורים שם בקוסטנאטינא . . . . תכף אחר ז' ימים למאסרו שמהו בכבלי ברזל ובבית האסורים אחר יותר צר עד שהוא עצמו ביקש מהיהודים שידברו עליו לגביר ונעלה הגאליבי של המשנה בעדו להוציאו משם אל מקום אשר ירצה כי לא יוכל לסבול. קצור ציצת נובל צבי כ:

They stood him before the Vizier and [the Vizier] asked him, "Who are you?" He replied, "One of the scholars of Jerusalem who has come to raise money to sustain the poor of the land of Israel." The [Moslem] judge of Smyrna was present at the session, having come there for the express purpose of giving testimony against him and the Jews that were in rebellion. [The judge] had already extracted an enormous fine from them. That judge, who is called [by the title] "cadi", together with Moslem scholars who were present at that session, said to him, "Didn't you call yourself the Messianic king and weren't the Jews drawn after you, for which they were fined?" He replied to them, "I didn't say anything." The Vizier [then] decreed that he be put in a prison in Constantinople. Immediately following seven days of imprisonment, [the Vizier] shackled him in iron fetters and put him into another prison, which was even more uncomfortable than the first. [It was so bad] that [Shabbtai Tzvi] asked of the Jews that they speak to the chelebi, the very prestigious [Jew] who occupied a high office of the Vizier, to intercede on his behalf that they transport him to [any] place which he desires, for he could no longer bear [the suffering]. **Rav Y. Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 20b**

### III. Gallipoli

A.

ואחר נתינת שוחד למשנה אמרו שטוב הוא להוליכו לחוץ לעיר ולא יבלבל את המון העם בשטותם וכן עשו ושלוהו בי"ב לניסן למבצר גאלפול ושם היה אסור. וקצת מהגבירים בראותם שלא הציל את עצמו נשאו ק"ו מכ"ש שלא יציל את אחרים וחזרו מאמונתם וחשבוהו לחסר דעת. אך ההמון רובם ככולם לא השגיחו על מאסרו, אדרבא גברה אמונתם

באמרם שכבר אמר להם שעתיד לסבול צרות הרבה בעד ישראל להקל חבלי משיח וזו מכללם. ובזה היו נפתים אחריו. וכשהגיע לגאליפול ערב פסח לקח כבש א' ושחטו לשם קרבן פסח וצלאו בחלבו ונתן לבני חבורתו ואכלו כולם ואמר להם שכך רוח ד' דיבר בו וכאלה הרבה. קצור ציצת נובל צבי כ:

After giving bribes to the Vizier, they said that it be best that he be taken outside of the city so the populace will not be [further] excited by this insanity of theirs, and this they carried out. On the twelfth of Nisan, they sent him to the fortress on Gallipoli and he was imprisoned there. Some of the men of importance, seeing that he couldn't save himself, logically inferred that he wouldn't be able to save others as well, and forsook their belief in him. They considered him to be an imbecile. The vast majority, however, were not bothered by his imprisonment. On the contrary, their faith became even greater, for he had already told them that he is destined to bear much suffering for the sake of Israel, in order to lighten the suffering associated with the "birthpains" of Messiah. This was just part of it. Through this argument, they were all seduced. When they reached Gallipoli on the eve of Passover, he took a lamb and slaughtered it for the purpose of a Paschal sacrifice (*korban Pesach*). He roasted it together with its forbidden fats and distributed it to his entourage. They all partook from it. He told them that the spirit of Hashem had spoken through him [to allow this otherwise forbidden ritual]. This is only one example [of his strange conduct]. **Rav Y. Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 20b**

B. In this manner, Shabbethai Zebi remained a prisoner at Constantinople for the space of two months; at the end of which, the Vizier, having designed his expedition for Candia, and, considering the rumor and disturbance the presence of Shabbathai had made already at Constantinople, thought it not secure to suffer him to remain in the imperial city, whilst both the Grand Signior and himself were absent. And he therefore changed his prison to the Dardanelli, otherwise called the castle of Abydos. . . . opposite to Sestos, places famous in Greek poetry. This removal of Shabbethai from a worse prison to one of a better air confirmed to the Jews, with greater confidence, of his being the Messiah, supposing that had it been in the power of the Vizier or other officers of the Turks to have destroyed his person, they would never have permitted him to live unto that time.  
**Sir Paul Rycout**

C.  
ובהיותו שם במבצר בבית האסורים שר האסורים היה לוקח ממון הרבה מהיהודים הבאים לנשק את רגליו. ושלחו לו שם בבית האסורים עשירי עם מקוסטאנטינא ומקומות אחרים בגדי מלכות ומצעות של מלכים כרים וכסתות שלא יותן סגור תחתם באופן שכל היהודים הבאים מקצוי ארץ ורואים את כבודו ומלבושו ומנחות ודורנות הבאים היו נפתים וטועים לומר זה הוא המלך ממשיח ונתקיים דברי דניאל ובשלוה ישחית רבים. והשר המושל בגאליפול נתעשר מהבאים שם מכל מקום רחוק וקרוב אלפי אלפים של יהודים ונותנים לשר כל א' כפי ערכו כדי שיתן לו רשות לראותו בבית אשר הוא שם. וכ"כ היה מוכר להם מזונות הוא ואנשי המבצר ביותר ונתעשרו כולם. והיהודים היו אומרים שבאים לבקר איש א' להים קדוש הוא והיה המושל וחברתו נוהגים בו כבוד בבית אשר הוא אסור שם. וזה היה סיבה

ג"כ להטעות היהודים באמונתם בו. בראותם שאף הגויים נוהגים בו כבוד אמרו שמאת ד' היתה זאת. ובמקומות הללו ג"כ היו תמהים הרבה לומר הגוים והמלך עצמו לא דנוהו למורד במלכות אם לא שהשי"ת הסכים על ידם. ובזה היו ג"כ מקיימים מלכותו. ואם הייתי אומר להם שהמלך לא ידע מזה כלום והמשנה כבר עמד על דעתו וחשבו לחסר דעת והעכו"ם סבורים שזה איש קדוש של היהודים כאשר יש קדשים כ"כ ביניהם ולכן אין זה מהתימא ולא היו מקבלים דברים אלו של טעם והיו מקבלים מה שיאות להם לאמונתם. שם. כא.

While he was imprisoned in the castle, the prison warden would take much money from the Jews, who would come to kiss [Shabbtai's] feet. The wealthy of Constantinople and other places would send to him royal clothing and bedding, pillows and mattresses, more precious than fine gold (See Job 28:15). In this manner, all of those who came [to see him] from every corner of the world and beheld him in all his glory with his exquisite clothing together with all the presents that were given to him, were seduced and mistakenly claimed that he was the Messianic king. It was a fulfillment of the verse in Daniel (8:25), "Through his serenity will he destroy the multitude." The Turkish official who governed Gallipoli became wealthy through those thousands upon thousands of Jews who came from near and far. In order to be able to see Shabbtai in his quarters, the official would take payment from them in accordance with their ability to pay. In a similar fashion, he, together with the guards of the castle, would sell them foodstuffs at exorbitant prices which made them all rich. [Because] the Jews told [them] that they were coming to visit a holy man of G-d, the governor and his men treated [Shabbtai] with much respect while he was in his prison chambers. This [special treatment] was also a cause for the Jews to mistakenly believe in him. When they saw that even the Gentiles treated him with respect, they said that it must be as a result of Divine intervention. In these places [in Europe], as well, the people were astonished that the Gentiles and the king himself did not condemn [Shabbtai to death] as a rebel and concluded that it must be that Hashem supports him. As a result, the populace also supported him. Even if I would have explained to them that this situation was nothing out of the ordinary since the king was not at all aware of his existence and the Vizier had already assessed him to be an imbecile and the Gentile populace considered him to be a Jewish holy man, similar to those [ascetics] which they themselves possess, they wouldn't have accepted this reasonable explanation. They accepted that which promoted their own belief. **Rav**

**Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 21a**

D. With this consideration and others preceding, the Jews flocked in great numbers to the castle where he was imprisoned, not only from neighboring parts, but also from Poland, Germany, Leghorn, Venice, Amsterdam, and other places where the Jews reside; on all whom, as a reward of the expense and labors of their pilgrimage, Shabbathai bestowed plenty of his benedictions, promising increase of their store and enlargement of possessions in the Holy Land. **Sir Paul Rycout**

E.

וקצת חכמי ועשירי אשכנז ופולניא ואיטליה עזבו את ארצם ואת מולדתם והלכו דרך רב ועברו ימים ונהרות בסכנות וצרות רבות ונסעו לארץ הזאת היא ארץ תוגרמה לראות פני המשיח ולעלות עמו לירושלים. מעשה טוביה ד' ט"ו הובא בס' אבן התועים

Some of the scholars and the wealthy of Germany, Poland, and Italy left their homeland and place of origin, traveled great distances, crossing seas and rivers, in dangerous conditions, experiencing many hardships, and journeyed to this land of Turkey in order to greet the Messiah and to go up with him to Jerusalem. **Tobias HaRofeh, Maaseh Toviah p. 15**

F. So great was the confluence of the Jews to this place that the Turks thought it requisite to make their advantage thereof, and so not only raised the price of their provisions, lodgings, and other necessaries, but also denied to admit any to the presence of Shabbethai unless for money, setting the price sometimes at five, sometimes at ten dollars, or more or less, according as they guessed at the abilities and zeal of the person. By which gain and advantage to the Turks, no complaints or advices were carried to Adrianople either of the concourse or arguments amongst the Jews in that place, but rather all civilities and liberties indulged unto them, which served as a further argument to ensnare this poor people in the belief of their Messiah. . . . **Sir Paul Rycaut**

#### IV. Skeptics

A.

ומעשיו רעים אשר עשה באיזמיר בקחתו עמו בעלי זרוע לבית הכנסת של ספרדים בי"ש"ק ולא רצו לפתוח לו ושבר הפתח בזרוע בעלי האלמות וענין ריקודו עם נשים נשואות והתיחדו עם גרושתו הראשונה . . . קצור ציצת נובל צבי כא:

[Among Shabbtai Tzvi's] evil deeds in Smyrna was his taking a group of ruffians with him to the Sefardic synagogue on the holy Sabbath. When they didn't want to open the doors to him, those violent men broke open the doors. [In addition,] he danced with married women and he secluded himself with his first wife, whom he had already divorced. **Rav Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 21b**

B.

(1) כבר נודע . . . שגזר בשטותו על הערים הקרובות והרחקות עד מקום ששלוחי אב הגיעו שיעשו יום משתה ושמחה בט' באב בקידוש על היין ובתפילה ותתן לנו כו' את יום חג מנחמות כו' זמן לידת מלכנו כו' שבתא"י צב"י בנך בכורך ידיך כו' וכך עשו. קצור צנ"צ לב.

It is well known that Shabbtai, in his insanity, decreed for all those cities who received his communication, that they make the ninth of Av a day of festivity and joy. They should make Kiddush on wine and mention the day in the [Musaf] prayer, "*Vatitain lanu . . . ess yom chag menachamos . . . zman laidas malkainu . . . Shabbtai Tzvi bincha bechorecha yididecha.*" His directives were followed. **Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 32a**

(2) מה תאמר כי יפקוד על כל אנשי משמעתו לבטל ט' באב שהוכפלו בו הצרות שאין כח ברוב צבור וב"ד לבטלו ולקבע יום מועד לכל חי ולהתיר בו שבות דרבנן דוקא בקביעות הלל בברכה תחלה וסוף שלא לצורך, ובתפלת מוסף, ולא ידעתי מה קרבן שייך לו, ואיך קוראו חג ומה היא חגגתו? ואיך נאמר בו זמן לידת משיחנו זכר ליציאת מצרים ואדרבא יציאת מצרים זכר ללידתו דנעשית טפלה ואף אם לא תעקר לגמרי. לא אדבר מענין אכילתו גדי מקולס בחלבו בלילי פסחים שבא זכרונו שזה מתמיה כל שומעיו דאף אם אמר לצורך שעה לא נודע לנו ולא הוחזק כאלהו. . . . ואיך אקרא גואל למי שלא הקדים סימן גאולה דגואל וגאולה אזלין כחדא. ר' יעקב ששפורטש, קצור ציצת נובל צבי ט:

What do you say regarding the fact that he commanded all of his followers to cease from commemorating the ninth of Av, the day in which [our national] tragedies repeatedly occurred? [Even] the majority of the community together with the *Bais Din* (the Jewish court of law), do not have the power to annul the Rabbinic prohibitions of the day and to inaugurate it [instead] as a national holiday together with the recitation of *Hallel* with unwarranted *brachos* before and after, and the [establishment of the] *Musaf* (additional-sacrificial) prayer! I have no idea how any kind of sacrifice can be associated with it. How can he call it a *Chag* (a festival). How is it celebrated? How can they recite the words, "The time of the birth of our Messiah, a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt"? On the contrary! The Exodus is a memorial to his birth, for [the Exodus] now has become secondary, even if it will not be entirely eliminated. I will not speak of his eating a *Gidee Mekulas* (a whole roasted kid, similar to the Pascal sacrifice) together with its forbidden fat on the night of Pesach, for which it came as a remembrance. For all those who heard of it were astonished. Even if he stated that it was done to satisfy a temporary need, we have no idea what that need was, nor is he a well established prophet similar to Eliyahu, [who had the authority to do so]. . . . How can I call someone a Redeemer, if he has not shown any of the signs of redemption. The Redeemer and redemption go hand in hand.

**Ibid. 9b**

## V. Conversion to Islam

### A.

"יום [עשירי] לתחיית רוחי ואורי, הוא [כ"ו] לחדש תמוז אדיר שבחדשים, בסדר ויסעו מרתמה ויחנו ברמון פרץ, מנחה היא שלוחה ממני לאיש אמונים, זקן ונשוא פנים, ה"ה הרב ר' דוד לבית לוי בעל טורי זהב, עוד ינוב בשיבה דשן ורענן יהיה, במהרה אני אנקום נקמתם ונחם אנחם אתכם כאיש אשר אמו תנחמנו, על אחת כמה וכמה נחמה כפולה ומכופלת, כי יום נקם בלבי ושנ"ת גאול"י בא"ה (בגמ' שבתאי צבי), נאם דוד בן ישי עליון למלכי ארץ, הגבר הוקם על [כל] ברכה ותהלה, משיח א-להי יעקב אריה דבי עילאי שבתי צבי. הנביא ר' נחמיה נר"ו ימהר לפני בצהלה ורנה." ועל החתום היה דמות נחש עקלתון כזה? כי נחש בגמ' משי"ח שבא לנקום כנחש. קצור ציצת נובל צבי כ:

On this tenth day of the invigoration of my spirit and light, the twenty sixth day of Tamuz, the most majestic of the months, of the *Seder* (weekly Torah portion) "And they traveled from Rithma and encamped in Rimon Peretz", I am hereby sending this present to a man of faithfulness, an elder who is well respected, HaRav HaGaon R. David of the House of Levi, the author of the *Turei Zahav*. May he still bring forth fruit in his old age



and become robust and productive. I will soon take revenge [upon the enemies of the Jews] and will console you as a mother consoles [her children]. It will be an extraordinarily great consolation, "for the day of revenge is in My heart and *the year of My redemption has come* ." (Isaiah 63:4) [The Hebrew numerical value of that italicized phrase, 814, is equal to the numerical value of *Shabbtai Tzvi*] These are the words of David the son of Yishai, the most high of all kings, (see Samuel II 23:1) the man who was raised up on high above all blessings and praises, the anointed (Messiah) of the G-d of Jacob, the celestial lion (see Chullin 59b), Shabbtai Tzvi. The prophet, R. Nechemiah, may Hashem protect him, should speedily come before me, with joy and song. [The signature was in the form of a crooked serpent, "??", for the numerical value of serpent (nachash) is equivalent to Messiah (Moshiach), for he will take revenge like a serpent].

**Rav Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 20b**

B. But to return again to Shabbethai Zebi himself, we find him still remaining a prisoner in the castle of Abydos upon the Hellespont; admired and adored by his brethren with more honor than before and visited by pilgrims from all parts where the fame of the coming of the Messiah had arrived. Amongst which one from Poland named Nehemiah Cohen was of special note and renown, learned in Hebrew, Syriac, and Chaldee, and versed in the doctrine and cabala of the Rabbins as well as Shabbethai himself: one (of whom it was said), had not this Zebi anticipated the design, esteemed himself as able a fellow for to act a Messiah as the other. Howsoever, it being now too late to publish any such pretense, Shabbethai having already prepossessed the office and with that the hearts and belief of the Jews, Nehemiah was contented with some small appendage or relation to a Messiah, and therefore to lay his design the better, desired a private conference with Shabbethai. These two great Rabbins being together, a hot dispute arose between them. . . . And thereupon the dispute grew so hot, and the controversy so irreconcilable, as was taken notice of by the Jews, and controverted amongst them as every one fancied. **Sir Paul Rycout**

C.  
 וברביעי לאלול בהיות במבצר גאלפול בא לבית האסורים שלו חכם א' מפולונאה לעמוד על עיקרן של דברים ונכנס למגדל ושהה עמו שלשה ימים ואחר צאתו מיד המיר דתו. . . . והוגד לנו נאמנה עפ"י מגידי אמת שנמצאו במבצר גאליפול שהחכם מפולוניא שהמיר דתו לשם היתה כונתו בעבור שראה שכונתו היתה לעקור הדת שכבר גזר שלא לעשות יום השבת כי אם ביום שני ולא ביום השביעי והתחיל הדבר מיום ב' כ"ב בתמוז וקראו שבת הגדול וגם היה רוצה להעביר מועדי ד' מזמנם הקבוע ולעשות יום כיפור ביום ה' בשנה זאת וכאלה רבות וכראות החכם הנ"ל שהכל שומעים אליו כל מה שאומר נתירא מלומר אל תשמעו לקולו שהיה שם יותר מחמשת אלפים יהודים הבאים לראות פניו מהלך ארבעים יום ולפעמים נמצאו שם עשרת אלפים יהודים ונתירא שמא יהרגוהו לכן המיר לגלות הדבר כדי שלא תתפשט נגע הצרעת וירעו לנו מצדוק ובייתוס כן כתבו לנו מאיזמיר. . . . זה החכם שהמיר דת הוא נחמיה הנביא ששלח בכתבו בוא יבא אלינו ברנה ובצהלה ומעולם לא היה נביא אלא בפולין היה כמטורף ואומר דברי שגעונות. . . . ולאחר זמן באו אנשים מפולין וראו את ר' נחמיה בפולין ושאלוהו על זה הענין ולא היה משיב להם כלום אבל היה אומר

להם קוּו למשיח האמיתי ולא לזה ולא נתן טעם על המרתו ולא הגיד להם כלום אבל אמרו שהיה מתנהג ביהדות וכשרות וחסידות מרובה ושכל מה שעשה מההמרה לא היה כי אם שלשה ימים לאחר שיצא מהמבצר ותכף שם לדרך פעמיו ובא לארצו. צנ"צ לב

On the fourth of Elul, while he was in the castle in Gallipoli, a scholar from Poland, came to his prison cell in order to ascertain the truth. After being there for three days with him, he immediately converted to Islam. . . . We have heard reliable reports from trustworthy witnesses who were there in the castle in Gallipoli that the reason that the scholar from Poland converted to Islam was because he saw that [Shabbtai's] intention was to uproot the religion, for he had already decreed to observe the day of the Sabbath on the second day of the week (Monday), and not on the seventh day (Saturday). The thing first started on Monday the twenty second of Tamuz, which he called Shabbos HaGadol. He also wanted to change the holidays which were mandated by Hashem from their set time and to make Yom Kippur on Thursday of that year. These are only a few examples. Because that above mentioned scholar saw that everyone was following what ever [Shabbtai] said, he was frightened [to protest and] to tell them not to listen to him, for there were more than five thousand Jews present who had come to see him from within a radius of forty days travel. At times there were tens of thousands of Jews present. He was [truly] afraid that they would murder him. That is the reason he converted so that he would be able to make this thing known [to the Turkish government] so that this plague of leprosy shouldn't spread and make more harm than Tzaddok and Baissus, [the founders of the Sadducees and Essenes]. This is what they wrote to us from Smyrna. . . . The scholar who converted was Nechemia, the prophet, to whom he wrote, "should speedily come before me, with joy and song." He was never a prophet. In Poland, he was considered insane and said irrational things. . . . Afterwards, some men came from Poland and saw Nechemia in Poland and asked him regarding this thing. He didn't respond at all. He did tell them, however, hope for the arrival of the true Messiah and not to that man (Shabbtai). He didn't offer an explanation of his conversion and he didn't tell them anything. They did say, however, that he conducted himself in an upright manner according to Jewish law, with great piety and that the entire period of his conversion lasted only three days, from the time he left the castle. Immediately afterwards, he traveled back home. **Rav Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 32a-b**

D. But Shabbethai, being of greater authority, his sentence prevailed and Nehemiah was rejected as schismatical and an enemy to the Messiah, which afterwards proved the ruin and downfall of this impostor. For Nehemiah, being thus baffled, and being a person of authority and a haughty spirit, meditated nothing but revenge; to execute which to the full, he took a journey to Adrianople, and there informed the chief ministers of state and officers of the court, who (by reason of the gain the Turks made of their prisoner at the castle on the Hellespont) heard nothing of all this concourse of people and prophecies of the revolt of the Jews from their obedience to the Grand Signior. . . . A *chaouse* or messenger was immediately dispatched to bring up Shabbethai Zebi to Adrianople. The *chaouse* executed his commission after the Turkish fashion in haste, bringing Shabbethai in a few days to Adrianople, without farther excuse or ceremony, not affording him an hour's space to take a solemn farewell of his followers and adorers, who now were come

to the vertical point of all their hopes and expectations. The Grand Signior, having by this time received divers information of the madness of the Jews and the pretenses of Shabbethai, grew big with desire and expectation to see him; so that he no sooner arrived at Adrianople, but the same hour he was brought before the Grand Signior. . . . The Grand Signior. . . . declared that, having given public scandal to the professors of the Mahometan religion and done dishonor to his sovereign authority by pretending to withdraw from him so considerable a portion as the land of Palestine, his treason and crime could not be expiated without becoming a Mahometan convert: which if he refused to do, the stake was ready at the gate of the seraglio to impale him. Shabbethai, being now reduced to his last game and extremity (not being in the least doubtful what to do, for to die for what he was assured was false was against nature and the death of a mad man), replied with much cheerfulness that he was contented to turn Turk and that it was not of force, but of choice; having been a long time desirous of so glorious a profession, he esteemed himself much honored that he had an opportunity to own it first in the presence of the Grand Signior [September, 1666]. . . . **Sir Paul Rycaut**

E.

[נחמיה כהן] והגיד לישמעאלים כל הדבר ובאותו יום גורשו כל היהודי' במכות נמרצות ומיד כתבו למלך לאנדרינופולי הכל כמו שהיה בכ"ג אלול באו הרצים במאמר המלך לקחוהו והוליכוהו לאנדרפולי לפני המלך ושאל לו המלך האתה הוא משיח ויען ויאמר לא אדוני אמר לו המלך ולמה היהודים כורעים ומשתחווים לך לשם מלכות ענה ואמר הנביא שבעזה משכני והסיתני לכך והיהודים רוצים להמליכני בעל כרחי אז גזר עליו הריגה ויגש אליו רופא א' מומר שהמיר בעל כרחו מקדמת דנא במאמר המלך ואמר לו יש יכולת בידך לעשות שום נס ופלא ועתה היא העת יען ויאמר אין בידי לעשות שום דבר אז אמר לו דע כי כלתה לך הרעה מאת המלך ואין תקנה כי אם להמיר דתך או תמות אז נפל על פניו ארצה לפני המלך שואל מאתו לחסות תחת כנפי אמונתו ושילך כובעו ארצה וירוק עליו ויבז דת ישראל ויחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא ויקבלהו המלך תחת כנפיו וישנה שמו לרעה ויקרא שמו מחמ"ד קאפיגי ר"ל שומר משוער המלך ונתן ק"ן אשפירוס בכל יום ובזה נח המלך מרגזו. קצור ציצת נובל הצבי לב.

[Nechemiah Cohen] told the Moslems everything. As a result, that day, all of the Jews were beaten and forcibly evicted. They then wrote everything to the king, who was then in Adrianople. On the twenty third of Elul, the runners came at the directive of the king and took [Shabbtai Tzvi] and brought him before the king. The king asked him, "Are you the Messiah?" He answered, "No, my master." The king asked him, "And why are the Jews bowing and prostrating themselves before you as before a king?" "The prophet in Gaza lured me into this and the Jews want to make me king against my will." At that moment the king decreed that Shabbtai be put to death. A certain physician, who had been previously forcibly converted [from Judaism to Islam] through the directive of the king, said to him, "Do you have the power to make some sort of miracle? If you do, now is the time." He replied, "I cannot do anything." [The physician] then told him, "You should know that the king is determined to do harm to you. The only way out is for you to convert [to Islam], or else you will die." [Shabbtai] then fell upon his face, on the ground, before the king. He asked of [the king] to be sheltered under the wings of his faith (Islam). He threw his hat on the ground and spit at it, thereby disgracing the Jewish religion and publicly desecrating the name of Heaven. The king accepted him under his

wing and he changed his name to Mehemed Kapici, which means the keeper of the [palace] gate. The king gave him a [pension] of a hundred and fifty *aspers* per day. With this, the king calmed down from his anger. **Rav Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 32a**

## VI. The Immediate Aftermath

### A.

אבל המומר לא שקט ויוציא הכתבים שכתבו לו הקהלות הטועים אחריו והראה אותם למלך איך היהודים רצו להקימו למלך ואז נתמלא חמה וגזר להשמיד ולהרוג את כל היהודים שבכל מלכותו משבע שנים ולמעלה משבע שנים ולמטה להמירם ונכתבו ונחתמו ספרי האף והחימה ויבואו לפני המלך שני אנשים מחשובי המלכות ויפלו לפני רגליו ויבקשו ממנו להשיב חמתו ולא בשביל חוטא אחד יאבד אומה כזו מה שלא עשו אבותיו וגם אמו של המלך נכמרו רחמיה על עם ד' ובקשה ממנו על הדבר וישמע המלך לקולם וינחם על הרעה וכתב שטר מחילה על הדבר. שם

But the apostate did not rest until he produced letters from the Jewish communities who mistakenly followed him to the effect that they wanted to establish him as their king. and showed them to the [Turkish] king. The king was then filled with rage and decreed that all of the Jews in his kingdom be destroyed, from the age of seven years and above. Those below seven years would be forcibly converted to Islam. Documents, which articulated this anger and wrath of his were written and sealed, [ready to be sent]. Two of the prominent members of the king's court came before him, however, and fell before his feet and begged him to recant. "One sinner is not reason enough to destroy an entire nation such as this, something that was not done by his forefathers." The mother of the king also felt compassion for G-d's people and beseeched him [to relent ]. The king listened to their pleas and retracted his evil plan and wrote [the Jews] a document of exoneration. **Ibid.**

### B.

בכל זאת לא שב אף המומר וחזר ומסר לחכמים שהם הסיתוהו על הדבר וישלח המלך אחריהם להרגם וג"כ בקשו והתחננו עליהם ומחל המלך זולת על המזויף שבעזה ואומרים ששלח אחריו רצים להביאו שהוא היה גרמא לכל זה ולא ידעו איה הוא באמת. צנ"צ לב.

Despite all of this, the anger of the apostate did not subside and he went back [to the king] and informed him of [names of certain] scholars who [he claimed] had seduced him. The king sent [his men] after them to kill them. [The above] also pleaded on their behalf and the king forgave them, besides for the fraud in Gaza. They say that the king sent men after him to bring him, for he was the cause of all of this. But they didn't know where he really was. **Ibid.**

### C.

וגם אשתו הארורה המירה דת עמו. וקודם המרתה היתה כותבת לנשים חברותיה ומבטחת אותם לעשתו להן טובה. וחותמת בשם מטרונה רבקה המלכה. קצור ציצת נובל צבי ג.

His accursed wife also converted with him. Before her conversion, she was writing to her women friends, promising them to do favors for them. She would sign her name, "The Matriarch Rivkah, the queen." **Ibid. p. 3a**

## VII. The Fallout

### A.

ואף גם זאת שבאו השמועות של המרתו עדיין רובא דמינכר מחזיקים באמונתם קצתם מכחישים וקצתם אומרים יש להם סוד. התמיד מטעות ההוא זמן מרובה וקצת מהאשכנזים שהיו יותר אדוקים היו ממאנים להאמין ולא לשמוע דבר רע כמגדו ומכ"ש שהמיר דת לכן אומרים שהוא עלה לשמים וצורתו מדמית להם כאיש מומר ודברים אחרים של הבאי . . . ועכ"ז קצת מהמאמינים בו אבדו תקותם וקצתם עדיין מקוים וחוזרים ומקוים אע"פ שהם מיעוטא דלא מינכר. צנ"צ לב:

Even after the reports of conversion reached us, a decided majority still persisted in believing in him. Some denied the whole report and others [rationalized] that it has a hidden meaning. This error continued on for a long time. Some of the Ashkenazim, who were extremely fanatic, refused to believe or even listen to any report against him, and certainly the report that he had converted. That is why they are saying that he went up to Heaven and his outward appearance is that of an apostate, or other inane explanations. . . . Even so, some of the believers lost their faith and some of the others are still continuing to strengthen their faith. These are [now] a small minority. **Ibid. 32b**

B. The news of Shabbethai turning Turk and of the Messiah to a Mohametan quickly filled all parts of Turkey. The Jews were strangely surprised by it and ashamed of their easiness of belief, of the arguments with which they had persuaded others, and of the proselytes they had made in their own families. Abroad, they became the common derision of the towns where they inhabited. The boys hooted after them, coining a new word at Smyrna ( *poustai!*), which every one seeing a Jew, with a finger pointed out, would pronounce with scorn and contempt; so that this deceived people for a long time after remained with confusion, silence and dejection of spirit. **Sir Paul Rycaut**

C. And yet most of them affirm that Shabbethai is not turned Turk, but his shadow only remains on earth, and walks with a white head, and in the habit of a Mahometan; but that his body and soul are taken into heaven, there to reside until the time appointed for accomplishment of these wonders. And this opinion began so commonly to take place, as if this people resolved never to be undeceived, using the forms and rules for devotion prescribed them by their Mahometan Messiah. Insomuch that the Hakams of Constantinople, fearing the danger of this error might creep up and equal the former, condemned the belief of Shabbethai being Messiah as damnable, and enjoined them to return to the ancient method and service of God, upon pain of excommunication. . . . **Ibid.**

D.

יען אשתקד כולנו כצאן תעינו שיום ט' באב עשינו אותו יום משתה ושמחה בסמכנו על משענת קנה רצוף נתן העזתי אשר שם עצמו לנביא ואנחנו חשבנוהו לנביא אמת שרוח ד' דיבר בו וכי עתה ידענו שהכל שקר וכזב בראותנו כל היעודים שייעד אין גם אחד שנתקיים וכל הקצין שנתן חלפו עברו ורוח על פניו יחלוף. . . . ואנחנו על זאת תהינו מן הראשונים ולפני בוראנו אנו שופכים שיחה אשר נואלנו ואשר חטאנו. לדבר הזה יסלח ד' כי שוגגים היינו כולי האי ואולי ועתה שמוע שמענו שעדיין נמצא ביניכם מחזיקים באמונה זאת והם מזומנים ליום ט' באב לעשות בו כדת אשתקד. . . . ואנחנו נחלץ חושים להנקם מהם. . . . הצעיר חיים בכמהר"ר ישראל ביניבינישת ס"ט. צפור ציצת נובל צבי מ.

Because we were all like wandering sheep last year, we erred in making Tisha B'Av (the ninth of Av) a day of feasting and joy. We relied upon the crushed reed, Nathan of Gaza, a self styled prophet, whom we thought to be a true prophet through whom the Spirit of G-d [really] spoke. Now, we know that the whole thing was a lie and a fabrication, for we saw that not one of his predictions came true. All of the dates that he gave [for the redemption] have already long passed and the spirit which was upon him has fled. . . . We regret our past deeds and before our Creator do we pour our prayers, for we have erred and sinned. May G-d forgive us, for we sinned in error. Now, we have just heard that there still is amongst you those who still persist in this belief. They are ready to celebrate Tisha B'Av as they did the preceding year. . . . We will quickly arm ourselves to avenge ourselves of them. . . . (signed) The insignificant one, Chaim b. Moreinu HaRav Yisrael Beneveneste. **Rav Yaakov Sasportas. Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi p. 40a**

E.

וגם נודע לנו מקוסטאנטינא שהרשע הזה בקש מהמלך שיתן לו שום ממשלה בקצת ארצות והוא יבטיח למלך שכל ישראל יהיו נגררים אחריו ויחזירם לדתו ונודע הדבר לחכמים והחרימו ששום יהודי לא ילך אצלו ולא ידבר עמו לפי שאף אחר המרתו עדיין היו נפתים אחריו ואומר להם כפי דרך הסוד מוכרח להיות כן להכנס תחת הקליפה קצת זמן כמו שהיה לדוד עם אחיש מלך גת והיו נשמעים להבליו וכמו שכתב ג"כ נתן העזת"י לאחיו של שבתא"י. צנ"צ לב:

It is already known to us from [sources in] Constantinople that the evil one (Shabbtai Tzvi) desired that the king give him some dominion over some lands and he promised the king that [if that were so,] all of the Jews would follow after him and he would convert them to his religion. The matter became known to the sages and they issued a writ of excommunication, so that no Jew should go to him or speak with him, for they were still being lured by him, even after his conversion. [Shabbtai] told them that according to the Kabbalah this had to be in order for him to get within the *kelipa* (literally shells - the forces of evil) for a short period of time just as was the case with David who went over to Achish, the king of Gath, and they listened to his empty arguments. Nathan of Gaza wrote to the brothers of Shabbtai in a similar vein. **Kitzur Tzitzas Novel Tzvi 32b**

F. And thus the . . . Jews returned again to their wits, following their trade and profession of brokerage as formerly, with more quiet and advantage than the means of regaining their possessions in the Land of Promise. And thus ended this mad frenzy amongst the Jews, which might have cost them dear, had not Shabbethai renounced his Messiahship at the feet of Mahomet (IV. Sultan, 1648-1687). **Rycaut**

### VIII. Mass Conversion

A. These matters were transacted in the years 1665 and 1666, since which Shabbethai hath passed his time devoutly in the Ottoman court. . . . In this manner Shabbethai passed his days in the Turkish court, as some time Moses did in that of the Egyptians; and perhaps in imitation of him cast his eyes often on the afflictions of his brethren, of whom, during his life, he continued to profess himself a deliverer; but with that care and caution of giving scandal to the Turks, that he declared, unless their nation became like him, that is, renounce the shadows and imperfect elements of the Mosaical law, which will be completed by adherence to the Mahometan, and such other additions as his inspired wisdom should suggest, he should never be able to prevail with G-d for them or conduct them to the Holy Land of their forefathers. Hereupon, many Jews flocked in, some as far as from Babylon, Jerusalem, and other remote places, and casting their caps on the ground, in presence of the Grand Signior, voluntarily professed themselves Mahometans. Shabbethai himself, by these proselytes gaining ground in the esteem of the Turks, had privilege granted him to visit familiarly his brethren, which he employed in circumcising their children on the eighth day, according to the precept of Moses, preaching his new doctrines, by which he hath confirmed many in their faith of his being the Messiah, and startled all with expectation of what these strange ways of enthusiasm may produce. But none durst publicly own him, lest they should displease the Turks and the Jews, and incur the danger of excommunication from one, and the gallows from the other. **Sir Paul Rycaut**

### IX. The False Prophet

דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אין לה לא שינוי ולא גרעון ולא תוספת שנאמר את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אותו תשמרון לעשות לא תוסף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו, ונאמר והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת, הא למדת שכל דברי תורה מצוין אנו לעשותן עד עולם, וכך הוא אומר חוקת עולם לדורותיכם, ונאמר לא בשמים היא, הא למדת שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה, לפיכך אם יעמוד איש בין מן האומות בין מישראל ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שד' שלחו להוסיף מצוה או לגרוע מצוה או לפרש במצוה מן המצות פירוש שלא שמענו משה, או שאמר שאותן המצות שנצטוו בהן ישראל אינן לעולם ולדורי דורות אלא מצות לפי זמן היו, הרי זה נביא שקר שהרי בא להכחיש נבואתו של משה, ומיתתו בחנק על שהזיד לדבר בשם ד' אשר לא צוהו, שהוא ברוך שמו צוה למשה שהמצוה הזאת לנו ולבנינו עד עולם ולא איש א-ל ויכזב. רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ט:א

It is clear and unequivocally articulated in the Torah that the Torah is binding for ever and ever, without any change, without subtraction or addition, as it is stated in Scripture (Deut. 13:1), "You shall guard everything that I command you; do not add to it, nor subtract from it." [In addition] it is stated in Scripture (Deut. 29:28), "Regarding that which is revealed to us, it is for us and our children forever to guard the entire Torah." You are being taught through this that we are required to fulfill the entire Torah for all time. Similarly, it is stated in Scripture (Lev. 3:17; Lev. 10:9; Lev. 23:14; Lev. 23:31; Lev. 23:41; Lev. 24:3; Num. 10:8; Num. 15:15; Num. 18:23), "An eternal statute for all generations." [Furthermore,] it is stated in Scripture (Deut. 30:12), "[The Torah] is not in the Heavens." You are being taught through this verse that a prophet is not allowed to originate anything from now on. Therefore, if a person arises, whether he be from the Gentiles or Israel and performs a sign or miracle and says that G-d sent him to add a commandment or diminish a commandment or to explain a commandment in a way that we did not receive from Moshe, or he states that the commandments which were commanded to Israel were not for eternity and for all generations, but rather they were only commanded to be temporarily binding, behold this person is a false witness for he is coming to contradict the prophecy of Moshe. He should die through strangulation for he has willfully decided to speak in the name of G-d something that he was commanded, for He, may He be blessed, commanded Moshe that this [body of] commandments is binding for us and our progeny for all time. G-d is not like a man to lie. **Rambam, Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 9:1**

#### X. The True Messiah

ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דוד הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצות כדוד אביו, כפי תורה שבכתב ושבועל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחזק בדקה, וילחם מלחמות ד', הרי זה בחזקת שהוא משיח, אם עשה והצליח ובנה מקדש במקומו וקבץ נדחי ישראל הרי זה משיח בודאי, ויתקן את העולם כולו לעבוד את ד' ביחד שנאמר כי אז אהפוך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרוא כולם בשם ד' ולעבדו שכם אחד. רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק יא:ד

If a king from the house of David should arise, who contemplates the Torah and is occupied in fulfilling the commandments, as David, his forefather, according to the Written and Oral Torah, and he forces all of Israel to walk in its ways and to strengthen its breaches, and he fights the wars of G-d, such a person can be assumed to be the Messiah. If he accomplishes this and is successful and [in addition] he builds the Temple in its place and gathers the dispersed of Israel, then that person is definitely the Messiah and he will restore the entire world to serve G-d in unity as it is stated in Scripture (Zephania 3:9), "I will then make a change in all of the nations so that they will all speak with clear expression to pray in the name of Hashem and they will serve Him all together in unison." **Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 11:4**