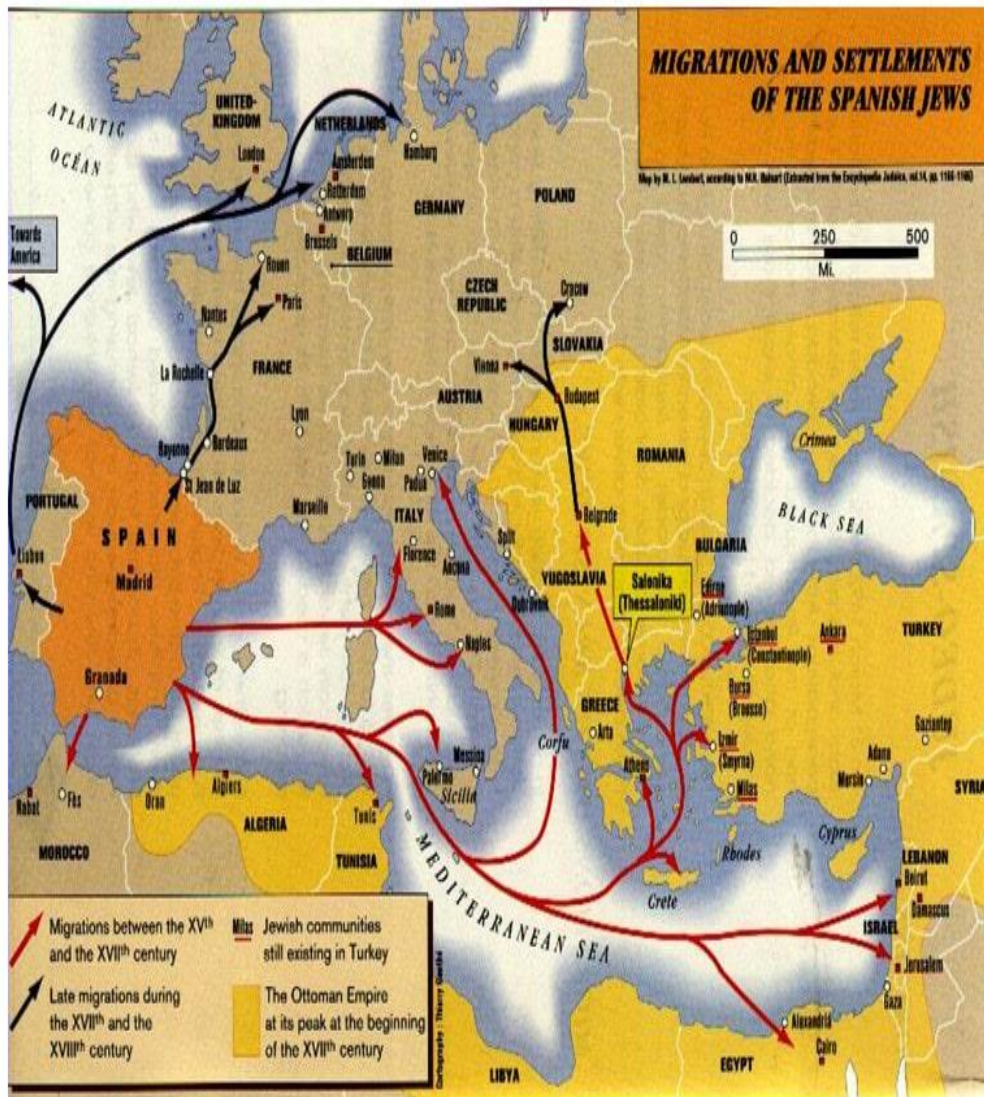


# FROM THE ASIA MINOR JEWISH DIASPORA SHABBATEAN LAST LINE OF FALSE MESSIAH

by **David Lee Burris**

Since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain (1492), there had been a widespread diaspora of Spanish speaking Jews in the countries around the Mediterranean of Spanish speaking Jews.



**Dead Savior.** One of the biggest surprises in the Bible is the kind of Messiah God sent to save Israel. Jews expected a warrior. Someone like King David, only better. A leader who would free them from oppressors, restore Israel's lost glory, and even create a heaven on this earth.

**“In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together... a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm... The earth will be filled with people who know the Lord”** (Isaiah 11:6,8-9).

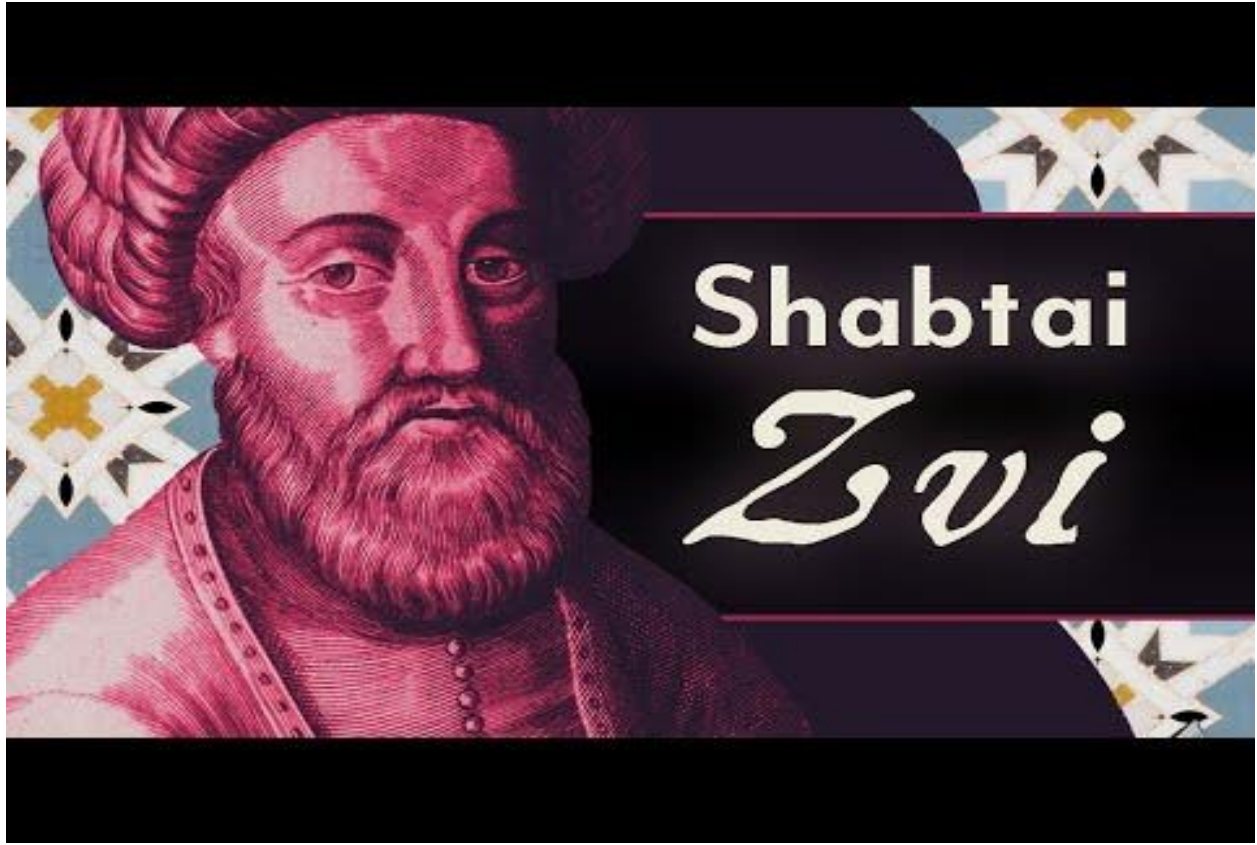
Jesus won't be that kind of Messiah. They'll get an executed rabbi on a stone slab. New Testament writers point to Isaiah 53 and say that this should have come as no surprise.

Isaiah describes the suffering and death of Jesus with such theological and historical accuracy that the words read more like history than prophecy. Yet a surviving copy of Isaiah's book, found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, dates to 100 years before Jesus. There's no way it could be history passed off as prophecy.

In what many Christians have come to call the Suffering Servant passage, the Prophet Isaiah describes Jesus as a servant-minded Savior who gives his life for others:

- ✚ **“Despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.”**
- ✚ **“Pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins... He was whipped so we could be healed.”**
- ✚ **The Lord laid on him the sins of us all.”**
- ✚ **“Led like a lamb to the slaughter... he did not open his mouth.”**
- ✚ **“He had done no wrong.”**
- ✚ **“He was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave”**  
(Isaiah 53:3,5-7,9). – *The Complete Guide To The Bible*, page 188





# **Beginnings of Messianic Murmurs**

**The 1600s were a time of terrible suffering for the Jewish people. In Eastern Europe, entire communities were wiped out by Cossacks and others led by Ukrainian leader Bogdan Chmielnicki.**

**Not surprisingly, terrible suffering of the Jewish people heightened messianic aspirations, with Jews grasping at any idea that might bring an end to their travails. Consequently, the time was ripe for impostors to make messianic claims. As such, the messianic fervor started by Shabbatai Zevi and his followers became the greatest and most pernicious false messianic movement in Jewish history since the time of Bar Kochba.**



## **SHABBATAI TZEVI (1626-1676)**

Shabbatai Tzevi was born on *Tish 'a be-Av* (the day of the destruction of the Temple) which - according to tradition - is the day the Messiah is born. He was born in the Turkish city of Izmir.

**Born in Turkey in 1626, Shabbatai Zevi claimed to be born on Tisha B'Av, the date of the destruction of both Temples and traditionally believed to be the birthday of the Messiah. At a young age, he displayed great brilliance and became an accomplished Talmudic and Kabbalistic scholar. Between 1642 and 1648 he lived in semi-seclusion and began to display character traits that psychologists describe as manic-depressive. As Shabbatai also exhibited periods of normal behavior, his followers explained his irrational moments as Divine inspiration.**

**Shabbatai's mental condition matches what we now call *bipolar disorder*, or *manic depression*.**

**He went through lengthy periods without sleep and during which he saw and heard things that others did not see or hear. This also came with feelings of grandiosity. During other times he would be depressed and in bed for weeks.**



**At this time, Shabbatai began violating Jewish law, explaining his actions by saying that according to Kabbalah his sins were actually righteous deeds. When reciting blessings, for example, he often pronounced the name of God literally, which is forbidden.**

**According to halacha, the Divine Name Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay must be read Aleph-Daled-Nun-Yud, and one who reads it as written forfeits his portion in the World-To-Come. Shabbatai also ate forbidden fats, chelev, claiming they elevated the Divine sparks embedded in the animal. Because of these actions, the rabbis of Smyrna, his hometown, expelled him in 1654.**



# **The Birth of a Cult**

**After expulsion, Shabbatai visited several Jewish communities in the Mediterranean area, his great charisma causing him to attract numerous followers. There, Shabbatai further transgressed halacha by celebrating the holidays of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot all in one week, and by coining a new blessing Mattir Asurim, praising God for permitting what is forbidden.**

**Shabbatai also married a Torah scroll under a wedding canopy, with a full nuptial celebration. Expelled once again, he visited Jerusalem, where he attracted further adherents by exhibiting normal behavior and displaying his great scholarship.**



While in Cairo, Shabbatai was told about a young beautiful woman called Sarah. She had become an orphan during the Chmielnicky revolt. When Sarah was about 6 years old, she was found by Christians and brought to a convent. At the age of 16, she had escaped from the convent and made it to Amsterdam, and later to Livorno (Italy) where she had survived through prostitution. The remarkable thing was that she had felt that she was to become the bride of the Messiah, soon to appear. Shabbatai sent for her in Livorno and married her in Cairo.

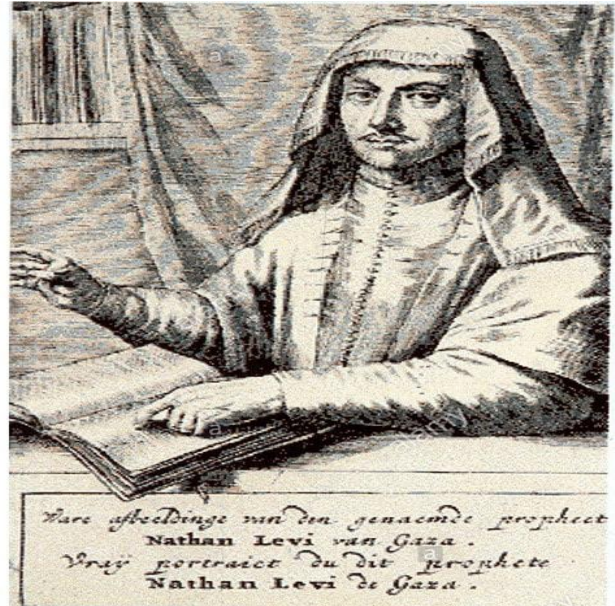
**In 1664, he married Sarah, a woman of ill repute, justifying his behavior by comparing himself to the Prophet Hosea, who was commanded by God to do something similar.**

# Messiah Fervor Spreads

In 1665, Shabbatai Tzevi again leaves for Israel and travels through Gaza.

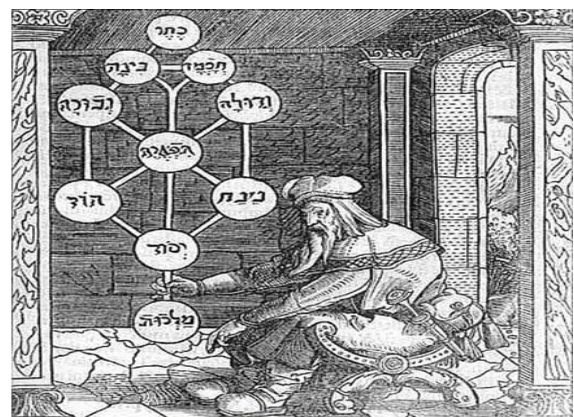
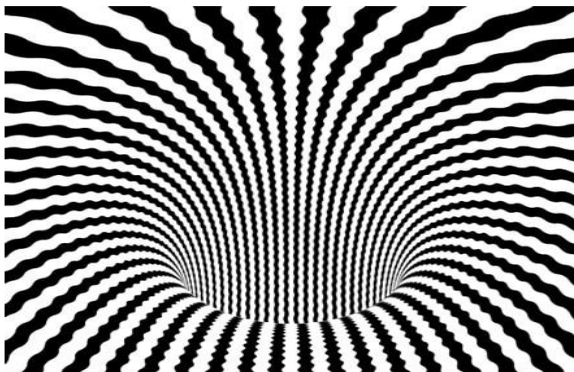
There he meets Nathan Benjamin Levi (better known as Nathan of Gaza).

Nathan had declared himself to be the resurrected prophet Elijah, sent to announce the coming of the Messiah.



**The Shabbatean messianic movement began in earnest in 1665, when Shabbatai Zevi met Nathan of Gaza, a young scholar who suffered from delusions. Nathan convinced Shabbatai to make Messianic claims, with Nathan adopting the role of Elijah the Prophet, whom Jewish tradition believes to proclaim the arrival of the Messiah.**

On the night of Shavu'oth, during a night of study, Nathan goes into a trance and declares to the rabbis of Gaza who were present, that Shabbatai Tzevi was the Messiah.





**Nathan ecstatically prophesied the imminent restoration of Israel and world salvation through the bloodless victory of Shabbetai, riding on a lion with a seven-headed dragon in his jaws. In accordance with millenarian belief, he cited 1666 as the apocalyptic year.**

**This heretical movement, unfortunately, spread quickly, causing countless Jews in Eretz Israel and the Sephardic Mediterranean lands to sell their possessions in anticipation of the triumphant journey to the Holy Land. From the Mediterranean basin, the hysteria spread to Holland and Germany, where assimilated Jews repented, and **descendants of conversos** returned to their Jewish roots. Benedictions for the Messianic King were even recited in many synagogues. In 1666, excitement heightened when Zevi abolished the fast days of 17 Tammuz and Tishah B'Av, declaring them instead to be days of joy. In Turkey, Shabbatai captivated people when he slaughtered the Korban Pesach, roasted it in its fat, and eating it.**

There in jail, on the Eve of Pesach, Shabbatai does yet another extraordinary thing. He has a Pesach lamb prepared as a sacrifice (which is forbidden outside of Jerusalem) and he and his followers eat the forbidden fat. This was done with a special blessing: *"Mattîr Issûrîm"* (Blessed is He who allows what was forbidden).





**These sins, punishable by karet (spiritual extinction), were explained as capturing the inner essence of the Torah. Strong, reasonable rabbinic opposition was swept aside in the frenzy, with those showing disbelief in the so-called Messiah hounded and reviled.**

**Letters were sent to the different Jewish communities all over the world announcing the coming redemption.**



**People en masse abandoned their businesses. People sold their homes and estates. Synagogues inserted special prayers for the Messiah. In Amsterdam a prayer book was printed with Shabbatai's portrait.**



**One courageous rabbi, the Rabbi Jacob Sasportas of Amsterdam, fearlessly spoke out against the messianic craze, stating that the true Messiah would not deviate one iota from the Torah and the halacha.**

**From Western Europe, the movement swept into the Ashkenazic heartland of Poland and the Ukraine, where the bloodied and battered Jews eagerly embraced the heresy. Even great rabbis were caught up in the atmosphere of anticipation – so much so that entire communities became followers of Shabbatai Zevi.**

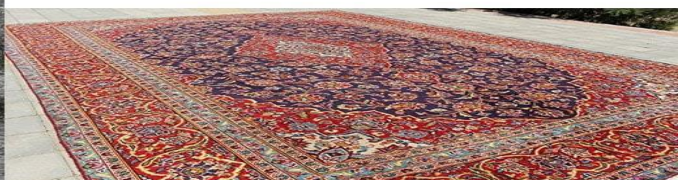
**On Rosh haShana, Shabbatai was officially declared the Messiah in synagogue. Horns were blown as if for his inauguration, the followers present shouted “Long live our King, our Messiah!”.**

**Shabbatai received the title Adonénu, Malkénu Yarūm Hodō (Our Lord and King, may his Glory Rise).**



**Thomas Coenen (a Dutch Protestant minister who lived in Izmir), wrote in his “*Vain Hope of the Jews*”:**

**“The messiah walked in front, carrying a silver-plated fan in his hand. When he passed houses of Jews, they reverently spread tapestries on the ground.**



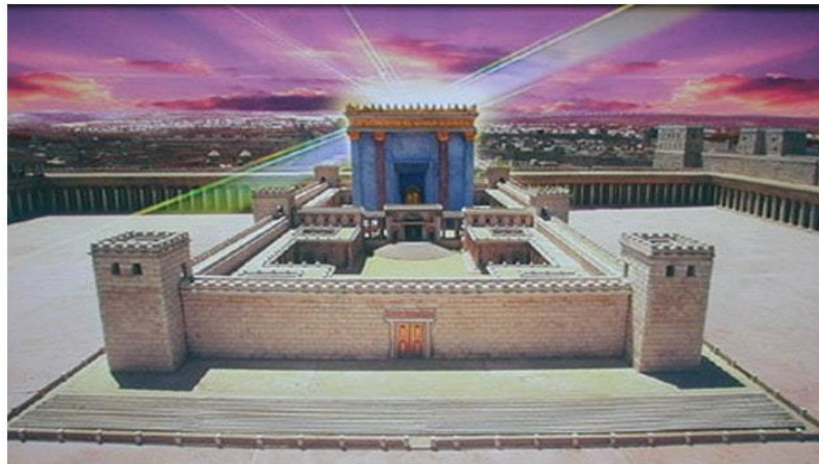


## **The End of Shabbatai Zevi**

The ingathering of the diaspora will not take place at that time.  
Rather, the Jews will enjoy high status in their present localities.

Nor will our splendid Temple be then rebuilt.

But the rabbi [Shabbatai] will reveal the place of the altar and offer sacrifices, and [reveal] the ashes of the Red Heifer. (...)



Then, Nathan of Gaza prophesied that Shabbatai Tzevi would go to Istanbul, put the Sultan's crown on his head and take control over the nations of the world.





**Concerned by a possible threat to his rule, the Turkish sultan arrested Shabbatai in February 1666. However, Shabbatai was placed in comfortable surroundings and permitted to receive visitors.**



Once it happened that they encountered the city guards who, seeing them as properly behaved company, against their custom just let them pass. Greatly astounded by the politeness of the Turkish guards, the Jews interpreted it, in the absence of miracles that should confirm the mandate of the true messiah, as a miracle in itself: as if the fan in his hand was like Aron's staff with which he wrought miracles."



In 1666, Shabbatai indeed goes to Istanbul, but once he arrives, he is arrested and imprisoned. His followers manage to bribe the guards and turn the prison into a virtual palace with a throne, beautiful carpets, an entire court entourage, audiences and lavish meals.



**In September, having heard that Shabbatai wanted to depose him, the sultan offered him the choice between conversion to Islam or death.**



The Turkish Sultan Mehmet IV gives Shabbatai three choices:

- 1) *A Divinity Trial*; arrows would be fired at Shabbatai and if he is who he claims to be, then the arrows would bounce off
- 2) If he refuses, he would be impaled, or...
- 3) He could convert to Islam

**Renouncing Judaism, Shabbatai took the name Aziz Mehmed Effendi. The sultan gave him a pension and eventually sent him to Albania, where he died in 1676.**

On September 16, 1666, Shabbatai embraces Islam, puts on a turban, is given the Muslim name Mehmed Effendi, and receives an honorary title as “doorkeeper” with a comfortable salary.



محمد أفندي



**Nonetheless, Shabbatai keeps receiving followers and teach them. He tells them that this was God's plan, and through this, he would bring thousands of Muslims to Judaism.**

**At the same time, he tells the Sultan the opposite, namely that he will bring Jews to Islam, and he is given official permission to preach in synagogues.**



**When the news of his conversion comes out, a shock goes throughout the Jewish world.**

**Former followers do penitence for their mistake and transgression.**





Later, about 300 Jewish families follow him and convert to Islam as well. These converts are known in Turkish as **Dönme**.



**Their deepest hopes cruelly dashed, Jews everywhere reacted to the news of Shabbatai's apostasy with shock and disbelief. Nathan tried to explain that Shabbatai's seeming conversion was all part of the messianic plan, but this outright lie was not believed. Yet, Nathan never followed his master into Islam but remained a Jew, albeit excommunicated by his Jewish brethren.**

**Many Jews retreated within themselves, finding solace in the eternal truths of the Torah. Others turned away from Judaism, discarding their Torah observance. Fearing a backlash from the government, rabbis, especially in Turkey, foreswore any previous support of the campaign. In religious life, a movement against the study of Kabbalah began to take hold. Nevertheless, spinoff Shabbatean messianic movements appeared from time to time, although none had the effect of the original craze.**

### **The Sabbatean Line Of False Messiahs Continued For Over A Century:**

- [Barukhia Russo](#) (1695–1740), successor of Sabbatai Zevi.
- [Mordecai Mokia](#) (1650–1729), ("the Rebuker"), another follower of Sabbatai Zevi who remained faithful to him, also pretended to be a Messiah. His period of activity was from 1678 to 1682 or 1683. He preached at first that Sabbatai Zevi was the true Messiah, that his conversion was for mystic reasons necessary, that he did not die but would reveal himself within three years. Going a step further, he declared that he was the Davidic Messiah. Shabbethai, according to him, was only the Ephraimitic Messiah and therefore could not accomplish the redemption of Israel. He spoke of Messianic preparations, which he had to make in Rome, and hinted at having perhaps to adopt

Christianity outwardly. He then went to Poland, where he is said to have become insane.

- [Jacob Querido](#) (died 1690), son of Joseph Filosof, and brother of the fourth wife of Sabbatai Zevi, became the head of the Shabbethaians in Salonica, being regarded by them as the new incarnation of Zevi himself. He pretended to be Shabbethai's son and adopted the name Jacob Tzvi. **With 400 followers converted to Islam in 1687, following the [forced conversion of Zevi himself](#), forming a sect called the [Dönme](#) (in [Turkish](#): "Apostates")**. He himself even made a [pilgrimage to Mecca](#) (c. 1690). After his death during the pilgrimage his son Berechiah or Berokia succeeded him (c. 1695–1740).
- [Miguel \(Abraham\) Cardoso](#) (1630–1706), He became a prophet of the Messiah, and when the latter later embraced Islam he justified this treason, saying that it was necessary for Messiah to be reckoned among the sinners in order to atone for Israel's idolatry. He applied Isaiah to Shabbethai, and sent out epistles to prove that Shabbethai was the true Messiah, and he even suffered persecution for advocating his cause. Later he considered himself as the Ephraimitic Messiah, asserting that he had marks on his body, which were proof. He preached and wrote of the speedy coming of the Messiah, fixing different dates until his death.
- [Löbele Prossnitz](#) (Joseph ben Jacob) (?–1750). He taught that God had given world dominion to the "pious one." Such a representative of God had been Sabbatai Zevi, whose soul had passed into other "pious" men, into Jonathan Eybeschütz and into himself. Another, Isaiah Hasid (a brother-in-law of the Shabbethaian Judah Hasid), secretly claimed to be the resurrected Messiah, although publicly he abjured Shabbethaian beliefs. Although, in time proven a fraud he attained some following amongst the former followers of Sabbatai, calling himself the "Messiah ben Joseph."



# Sabbatian Frankism

One of the most hidden aspects of the history of the last 350 years is the impact of the Shabbetaian Messianic movement. It was led by Shabbetai Tzvi starting June 6, 1666 (6666). Tzvi convinced, perhaps, half of world's Jewry at its peak that he was the true messiah. A vast Sabbatian movement promoted the Messianic ambitions of Tzvi, who only recognized the sacred book of Kabbalah, the Zohar and rejected the Torah and Talmud.

Sabbatai Zevi  
(1626 - 1676)

Jacob Frank  
(1726 - 1791)



@Cosmic Consciousness  
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After a forced conversion to Islam by the Sultan, the cult died down. The Sabbatian Luciferian phenomenon was kept alive through the centuries with great help.

In the 18th century, Jacob Frank reintroduced Sabbatianism to Europe en route to America and Palestine.

Then, Jacob Frank, one of history's nastiest men, encountered the Sabbatian Dönme while he was a traveling salesman in Turkey in 1750. He refined the concept of the Messiah, declared himself so, and urged members of the movement to sin as the means to salvation. It was called the "cult of the all-seeing eye."

The Frankist "believer" had an inverted, deceptive belief system. One must not appear to be as they really are. The last belief justified its followers' pursuit of the double lives they led. One could appear to be a religious Jew on the outside and, in reality, be a Frankist. The Dönme officially converted to Islam but remained (hidden) crypto-Jews. Similarly so, the many Frankists who officially converted to Catholicism.

The great majority of Frankists who outwardly appeared to embrace Judaism integrated themselves into the Jewish community. Despite the fact that they were all outwardly religious, they still cherished as their goal "the annihilation of every religion and positive system of belief," and they dreamed "of a general revolution that would sweep away the past in a single stroke so that the world might be rebuilt."

