



Socio-political Challenges of Marginal Religious Groups:

The Sabbatean Movement as a Case Study

By

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the believers who stood by their convictions like the ancient philosopher Socrates, Jesus, Muslim Sufi religious scholar Hallaj-e Mansoor and believers of minority movement such as the Sabbateans in Judaism and the Ahmadi Muslims, who have often been victimized because of their marginal beliefs and faith. What is hoped for is respect towards one another's faith, not adoption, but a disposition that invites mutual understanding.

Jesus

“If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also”.

Bible, Luke 6:29

Prophet Muhammed (Pbuh)

“Teach others and make things easy, behave with tolerance and patience”.

Sunan at Tirmidhi, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi

“An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind”.

*Mohandas Gandhi - "An Eye for an Eye Only Ends up Making the Whole World Blind"- Classroom Poster
(Poster Envy)*

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

“Peace at Home, Peace in the World!”

Atürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri, Vol, IV. (1917-1938) p, 551, Ankara

Desmond Tutu

“God is Not a Christian. Nor a Jew, Muslim, Hindu...”

*Carlton Pearson, 2011, God Is Not a Christian, Nor a Jew, Muslim, Hindu...: God Dwells with Us, in Us,
Around Us, as Us*

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Abstract

Minority religious communities, like the Sabbateans, have often been labelled and marginalised by mainstream religions. At times, their leaders have been labelled as ‘false messiahs’ by society or the state. To what extent do states play a role in facilitating the integration of diverse groupings? This question is particularly topical in the 21st century context of cross-border migrations, but also a perennial question facing society, as minority religious movements developed throughout history.

The study focuses on one of the minority movements in Abrahamic religions, Sabbateanism. It analyses the development of the Sabbateanism by controversial Jewish Rabbi, Shabbetai Tzvi in the Ottoman Empire. Tzvi attracted many followers, but also received criticism from orthodox Jews and others, especially when he converted to Islam. The thesis analyses how the movement evolved during Tzvi’s life, and after his death, and what may have urged his followers to hide their religious identities. It then compares this movement with other controversial minority movements, such as Crypto-Christianity and the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam. This comparison offers insight into the minority groups’ challenges, and into the reasons that they have been labelled as ‘heretical’ in Islamic, Christian and Jewish societies.

In terms of methodology, the study draws on unique archival materials from Turkey and Israel, dating back to the 17th century. The thesis traces Turkish-Jewish relations prevailing in Asia from the 7th century onwards, to contextualise the Ottoman state’s approach towards Tzvi and his religious movement. It then analyses the State policies towards Sabbateanism and other minority groups.

The study critically examines these instances in world history when minorities have been labelled as heretical and some are still labeled as such, even though “tolerance” and “respect” are considered the hallmark of modernization.

The study shows that Ottoman rulers developed an elaborate system to accommodate non-Muslim (Dhimmi) societies within the Islamic state. This is perhaps what inspired Toynbee, who was otherwise critical of the Ottoman Empire, to describe it as close to ‘Plato’s ideal state’. This said, the research findings prompt critical reflections on the role of state policies in Ottoman times and beyond, and the effects of religious and national identities on the assertion and flourishing of minority groups.

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First of all, I am grateful to Almighty (God) for the good health and well-being that were necessary to complete my dissertation, which aims to bring a new dimension to the understanding of minority religious movement like Sabbateans or the Ahmadiyya Movement in world history. I would like to express my special thanks to particular people who have always assisted and supported me during my doctoral studies at the University of Cape Town. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Azila Talit Reisenberger for offering a conducive and nurturing space within the Hebrew language and literature department for me to conduct this research. I appreciate her continued support for my PhD, study and related research and for her motivation and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me at all times.

Writing a doctoral thesis regarding hidden religious groups is a much longer process than writing about other social subjects because the material one uses might surprise the writer, as was the case in this study. Having finally written the last sentence to this dissertation, looking back, the process has been enriching and the end result was quite different from what I had expected at the beginning. I came to realize that the literature in this field differs in some ways from the lived experiences of marginal believers. This led to the exploration of different avenues in the thesis to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of Sabbateans and Ahmadi Muslims. Because of these religions' hidden identities, it was difficult to access information for the purposes of conducting the research for this study.

During this study, I was able to visit many countries and meet renowned scholars who helped me better understand the data in this field in various languages. I conducted research in places such as Izmir in Turkey, where Shabbetai Tzvi was born and where he declared his Messiahship in the 17th century. As the birthplace of Shabbetai Tzvi, Izmir still has traces of this secret religious sect, and therefore, it is possible to find Hebrew and Ottoman documents regarding Sabbateanism in Izmir. During my stay in Izmir, I studied archival materials at the "Izmir Municipal Library and Archive" (APKAM) and uncovered interesting documents about my research topic. I also interviewed some families who have surnames which indicate that they may be following the Sabbatean tradition, after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi.

At the end of October, I flew to Istanbul to collect more archival materials from the Ottoman State Archive. Firstly, I visited the ISAM library (Centre for Islamic Studies) in 29 Mayıs University and collected more important sources. I also met some academics such as Prof Naim Guleryuz who is the Head of the Jewish Museum in Istanbul and Dr Mehmet Bilgin from Marmara University to discuss this particular topic. Mehmet Bilgin provided me with rich documents and encouraged me to mention other secret beliefs in the Anatolian territory during the Ottoman era. During our conversation, another scholar and linguist Bahattin Sezgin inspired me to consider family names and titles in the Sabbatean community. I had the opportunity to gather recent publications on the topic from Istanbul.

On the 5th of December, I left for my next destination, Tel Aviv, Israel. My key interest in Israel was to learn more about the Sabbateans there, as well as meet academics and find several Ottoman documents that had been left untouched because of the language barrier. I met with Prof Jacob Barnai, who is one of the most well-known academics in this field. Prof Barnai encouraged me to use Ottoman Archival documents, which most of the scholars in this field cannot use because they have not been translated to English. At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I visited the Gershom Scholem collection which contains a variety of materials about the Sabbatean movement from the past to the present. The Head of the collection, Dr Leshem Zvi, assisted me in accessing important files with regard to the subject. I also read some Turkish manuscripts which were sent to Israel by Jewish Rabbis from Greece during the Second World War. At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I also met Prof Yaron Ben Naeh and we discussed the Sabbatean movement in both Muslim and Jewish communities. Prof Yaron suggested that I also search for court cases (Qadi's records) taking place during the emergence of the Sabbatean movement in Ottoman Anatolian towns in Turkey.

Finally, I got the opportunity to meet the members of another marginal group in Haifa, the Ahmadiyya Movement. According to the Ahmadiyya congregation in Haifa, Israel is the only country in the Middle East where Ahmadiyya Muslims can openly practise their Islamic faith. Similarities between these two different marginal communities made me more aware of what more I could discover regarding minority religious beliefs in Islam and Judaism. My academic trip was very useful and inspiring. It enabled me to re-focus and re-structure my dissertation. I am grateful to the Postgraduate Funding Office for believing in me and in the significance of my studies at the University of Cape Town.

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I thank Majied Hargey from the Ahmadiyya community who has always shared his knowledge with me regarding his religious congregation and Ahmadi's view on particular subjects. I also thank Mr. Mirza Mansoor who is the current Imam of Ahmadiyya Mosque in Cape Town, and who shared his valuable knowledge with me during my studies in South Africa.

For any errors or inadequacies that may remain in this work, the responsibility is entirely my own.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO SABBATEANISM, AS A MARGINAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

1.1 Introduction

Analysing marginal and controversial religious groups like Sabbateanism in Judaism or Ahmadiyya in Islam requires an inter-religious understanding of different faiths, so as not to prejudice the believers of marginal movement in any way. In some cases, scholars analysing religious beliefs have been influenced by their own religious thoughts and norms, bringing these biases into their research knowingly or unknowingly. As a result, some minority religious groups (movement) in Abrahamic religions like Islam, Christianity and Judaism have often been regarded as “heresy”, or “*zendeqa*” in Islam. This view also generally applies to the messianic movement of Shabbetai Tzvi in Jewish history as well as in Ottoman Islamic history. This chapter presents the problem statement in relation to the social representation of minor religious groups like Sabbateanism and the Ahmadiyya Movement of Islam and interrogates some myths that further undermine minority faiths through history.

1.1.1 Background

What is the story behind the hidden or ‘Crypto’ religious movement of Sabbateanism? It began when an Ottoman Jewish citizen, Shabbetai Tzvi, proclaimed his messiahship in Izmir, one of the largest cities in Asia Minor in 1666. The year 1666 was actually designated by the Judaic scriptures such as the mystical Judaic text Kabbalah, as the messianic year, when a Messiah would bring light to the world.¹ Some Jewish followers were awaiting their redeemer’s arrival in line with the Kabbalistic thought.

According to Scholem, Shabbetai Tzvi was born in the culturally diverse city of Izmir on the ninth of Av 5386 in the Jewish calendar (August 1626).² His birth coincided with the day commemorating the demolition of the first and second temples. Although Shabbetai Tzvi’s family came from the Morean Peninsula, they had Spanish ancestry and had probably lost their wealth as a result of banishment or forced migration from Spain.³ Shabbetai was the second of Mordecai Tzvi’s three sons. Both his elder brother Elijah and the younger brother

¹ Avram Galanti, *Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetaycılarının Gelenekleri* (Istanbul: Zvi Geyik Yayınları, 2000) 33.

² Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676* (USA: Princeton University Press, 1973), 104.

³ Sidney Mendelssohn, *The Jews of Asia, Especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London: BiblioBazaar, 1920), 11.

Joseph followed their father's profession and became commercial agents.⁴ Shabbetai was different from his siblings since he was only interested in religious texts and became a young Rabbi in his twenties.⁵

His religious movement began when Tzvi proclaimed his messiahship for the first time in Izmir in 1648.⁶ From this date to his second declaration in 1666, Tzvi remarkably established his reputation in his surroundings in Ottoman society. The ambassador of the British Empire in the Ottoman State residing in Constantinople writes from there that a new Messiah was born to a Turkish Jewish family.⁷ Tzvi arrived in Constantinople in 1666 and informed the Sultan through the Grand Vizier that he desired an audience with him.⁸ Tzvi was of the belief that the messianic expectation across the Abrahamic religions, known as *Nehemiah* in Jewish tradition, might also appeal to the Turkish authorities, and that he could inform them about his Messianic activities.⁹ After proclaiming his messiahship in 1666, Shabbetai Tzvi divided the world into thirty eight parts, selecting faithful adherents, who were assigned larger portions of territory in which they would operate.

Once these important details were ironed out, he left for Istanbul, accompanied by some of his followers.¹⁰ Thereupon, in February 1666, for reasons that will be discussed later, he was arrested and imprisoned after his boat was intercepted by authorities en route to Istanbul.¹¹ Circumstances were such that Shabbetai Tzvi converted to Islam.¹² Shabbetai Tzvi was hence called Aziz Mehmet Effendi. His conversion to Islam has been mostly misinterpreted by scholars. Without any objective analyses, Tzvi was immediately labeled as a heretical figure from a religious point of view and a manic depressive from a psychological point of view. This automatically made him a controversial and suspicious character in Ottoman society. More importantly, some historians were influenced by the society of the time, which negatively affected their studies on the Sabbatean Movement. For instance, the term “*Dönme*”, which is a derogatory word in Turkish literature has been used to label this religious group. However, it possibly mis-represents the Movement from a religious

⁴ Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messaih 1626-1676*, 108.

⁵ Joseph Kastein, *The Messiah of Izmir Sabbatai Zevi*, (Newyork: Viking Press, 1931), 142.

⁶ Orhan Koloğlu, *İttihatçılar ve Masonlar*, (İstanbul: Eylül Yayınları, 1991), 21.

⁷ Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messaih 1626-1676*, 155

⁸ Kastein, *The Messiah of Izmir Sabbatai Zevi*, 228.

⁹ *Ibid*, 275.

¹⁰ Mendelssohn, *The Jews of Asia, Especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. 18.

¹¹ Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messaih 1626-1676*, 126.

¹² Kastein, *The Messiah of Izmir Sabbatai Zevi*, 283.

perspective.¹³ The circumstances of Tzvi's conversion will be further elaborated on in Chapter four.

Since that time, Shabbetai Tzvi's movement has been viewed as a marginal sect by the followers of majority religions. Elkan Adler remarks that,

When Shabbetai Tzvi returned to the city in 1666, heads of oriental Jews and others lived in Salonica. I saw Donmes smoking outside their open shops on Saturday but was assured that they were Crypto-Jews and practised all they could of Judaism at home. I spoke to one of them in Hebrew and he evidently understood though he protested he was a Turk [Muslim].¹⁴

Certainly, Adler was not the only eye witness of these members of the Sabbatean movement at that time.

There are still numerous misconceptions about the life of Shabbetai Tzvi. For instance, according to Turkish writer, Fırat, "There are Kurdish Dönmes, Laz Dönmes, Albanian, Arab, Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Dönmes" which shows how some writers misappropriated the term Donme, to apply to converts of any faith, rather than Sabbateanism.¹⁵

Other authors sought to provide reasons for the emergence and flourishing of the Sabbatean Movement. According to renowned Jewish Ottomanist Lewis, the appeal of Shabbetai Tzvi's movement was linked to the Jewish massacre in Russia.

The Jews of the Ottoman Empire never had to face anything like the Khmel'nitsky massacres. They were, however, profoundly affected by one of its indirect consequences. In 1648, the year when the Khmel'nitsky massacres began, a young Jew in Izmir, a student of the cabbala called Shaptay Sevi, proclaimed himself to be the awaited Messiah. There had been many false messiahs during the centuries of Jewish exile. None was so well heralded, nor so widely accepted as Shaptay Sevi. The Shabtay Sevi affairs had a tremendous impact. It left a double legacy on the one hand, discouragement verging on despair among the Jews, on the other, reinforcement, of rabbinical authority among the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶

On the other hand, Scholem noted that Tzvi's messianic declaration was based on the popularity of Lurianic Kabbalah in the seventeenth century. From this perspective, Scholem rejected hypotheses about the Jewish massacre as the reason for the messianic expectation of

¹³ Ilgaz Zorlu, *Evet, Ben bir Selanikliyim*, (Istanbul: Zvi Geyik Yayınları, 1999), 48.

¹⁴ In the middle of sixteenth century, the Jewish suburb of Salonica was destroyed by a great fire. There were eight thousand houses and eighteen synagogues that were decimated in the process. Mendelssohn, *The Jews of Asia, Especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. 29.

¹⁵ Melik Fırat. 'Pis Yahudi' *Özgür Ülke*, 30 July 1994.

¹⁶ Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti -Semites, an inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice*, (London: W.W. Norton& Company, 1989), 64.

Shabbetai Tzvi.¹⁷ Another reason for the survival of the Sabbatean movement could be the Ottoman tolerance towards minority groups in society. The 17th century historian of Shabbetai Tzvi, the British Consul of the Ottoman Empire, Paul Ricaut noted that ‘Mohametanism’:

Judges it best policy to make profers [sic] of truce and peace between Christian and its own profession: and therefore in all places where its arms were prevalent and prosperous, proclaimed a free toleration to all religions but especially. In outward appearance courted and favoured the Christian drawing its tenants and doctrines in some conformity to that rule.¹⁸

As seen above, religious tolerance towards minority groups was mentioned even by European travelers at the time.

After Tzvi’s conversion to Islam, the Ottoman State bestowed him with gifts usually offered to other converts. This gesture was also misunderstood by some scholars. In one of the most popular books on the Sabbatean Movement, Kastein who notes,

What really happened thereafter? Their Messiah had been crowned. And that was why the Sultan had straightaway placed him at the head of a great army, which he would lead into Poland to avenge the martyrdom of hundreds of thousands of their co- religionists.¹⁹ At the time, the Sultan also wished to honor and reward him, as such, he solemnly appointed him a door keeper for the palace (*Kapıcı Otağı*). The official who filled it was paid a large salary and wore a special white silk uniform which the Sultan ordered to be given to “Aziz Mehmet Effendi”.²⁰

However, this information seems to be unfounded according to Ottoman archival sources. Firstly, Tzvi was not appointed as a door keeper for the palace but only received the pension of a door keeper. Secondly, Tzvi received a special white silk uniform and salary like all other converts because he embraced Islam. Namely, these were normal gifts for all who converted to Islam; they were said to be “honored by the glory of Islam.”²¹ As such, unlike what Kastein stated in his book, there was no special treatment for Tzvi from the Ottoman Sultan.²²

¹⁷ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, (London: Random House, 2001), 28; Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676*, 1.

¹⁸ Paul Ricaut, *The History of present State of the Ottoman Empire, containing the maxims of the Turkish polity*. (London: Pauls Church, 1686), 187.

¹⁹ Kastein, *The Messiah of Izmir Sabbatai Zevi*, 283, 296.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 293.

²¹ Marc David Baer, *Honored by the glory of Islam: conversion and conquest in Ottoman Europe*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 11.

²² Ocak Ahmet Yaşar, 1995, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar, Mülhidler*, p. 178, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul.

Such misunderstandings were compounded by the fact that scholars had limited access to Ottoman archival documents due to the language barrier. According to Scholem, official Turkish documents about Shabbetai Tzvi had disappeared from the Turkish archives.²³ This created an aura of mystery regarding Shabbetai Tzvi and his movement. Briefly, due to incomplete information about the movement, on the one hand some scholars exaggerated his religious leadership, on the other; orthodox Jews attacked Tzvi and labeled him as a “False Messiah”.²⁴ Furthermore, they fabricated some stories about him to damage his image in public. For instance, there were tales by Western writers about Shabbetai Tzvi’s erotic mysticism though this may have been made up.²⁵ Shabbetai Tzvi’s sex life has been also negatively criticized by some scholars.²⁶

As explained in chapter five, these allegations and the labelling of Sabbateanism as heresy, threatened to damage his image and destroy his messianic proclamation.²⁷ In terms of his marital life, Shabbetai Tzvi had never expected to have a wife. Women played no part in his emotional and spiritual life. His spiritual and other needs were adequately satisfied within the sphere of mysticism.²⁸ Furthermore, it was said for instance, that “the Turks tried to kill him and fell upon him with drawn swords, and that he put them all to flight with a small stick, a flimsy tale to be told of a man whom at one time many hundreds of thousands had acclaimed with joy as the fulfiller of their destiny”.²⁹ In 1666, many news articles were published in Europe regarding the judgment of Shabbetai Tzvi and his brutal death in the Ottoman palace.³⁰ In actual fact, Tzvi died from sickness in his fifties, in Ulcinj, Albania.

In light of the above misgivings, in order to understand Shabbetai Tzvi’s religious messages for the Jewish people, religious scriptures in all Abrahamic religions must be well examined in the religious context. For instance, in the New Testament, Jesus says, “*I am Jesus and my brothers are the apostles, I am the light of the World*”.³¹ Shabbetai Tzvi made similar statements about his followers. This kind of identification with Jesus and his apostles

²³ Scholem, 1973, p 843, 876.

²⁴ Ibid, p 843.

²⁵ Ibid, p 880.

²⁶ Kastein, 1931, p. 132.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 143.

²⁸ Ibid, p.119.

²⁹ Ibid, p.323.

³⁰ Afyoncu Erhan 2013, *Sahte Mesih, Osmanlı belgeleri ışığında dönmeliğin kurucusu sabetay sevi ve Yahudiler* p.145, Yeditepe Yayınları, İstanbul

³¹ Holy Bible, John, 9:5 Also see, John 14:6

is unprecedented in the history of Sabbateanism, yet his statements were criticized.³² Writers analyzing his messianic thoughts unfortunately did so from the perspective of the majority group, rather than from that of his followers.

At present, Tzvi's conversion to Islam and his religious movement must be re-understood in terms of their contemporary aspect in Tzvi's time, with a view not to defend his messiahship, nor to disregard his religious movement.³³ Due to the various misinterpretations of Tzvi's religious movement, there is still a substantial gap in Sabbatean studies. These misconceptions must be corrected with a new approach in the light of the untouched Ottoman archival documents. This is one of the purposes of this research.

1.1.2 Aims of Study

This thesis attempts to examine the marginal religious movement in Judaism and Islam, particularly Messianic movements such as the Sabbatean movement in Judaism and the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam. This study especially questions what made them marginal, extreme, and even heretical religious movements from a socio-religious perspective. The thesis also aims to analyse how an Islamic State managed to treat marginal movement under one umbrella with religious tolerance. If it were possible to operate in unprejudiced ways in the seventeenth century in the Ottoman Empire, why it is so difficult to show respect to such minority beliefs like the Ahmadiyya movement in the 21st century?

1.1.3 Main Research Questions

I would like to re-analyse the religious sect of Sabbateanism from a socio-political and religious perspective in order to respond to these particular questions:

1. What makes Sabbateanism a 'heretical' religious sect?
2. Are all minority movement marginal or heretical movements?

Secondary Questions:

Secondary questions:

1. Taking the example of Sabbateans, how did the Ottoman State treat all minorities?
2. How did the Ottoman Constitution show regard towards minority groups?
3. On what grounds do Messiahs get labelled as 'false Messiahs'?

³² Kastein, 1931, p.250.

³³ Şişman Cengiz, 2015, *Suskunluğun Yüki*, (Çev. Ahmet Demirhan) p. 108, Doğan Kitap, Istanbul

4. What was the source of Ottoman tolerance?
5. What are the events that led to the perception that Sabbateanism is heretical?
6. How are the sentiments towards the Sabbateans similar to those towards other minority religious groups?
7. What are the conditions that might enable equal treatment and tolerance towards minority religious groups?

1.1. 4 Definition of key terms

For the purposes of this dissertation, some technical terms in the religious literature will now be defined.

Sabbateanism is a concept originating from the name of Shabbetai Tzvi, who founded the Sabbatean movement of Judaism. Initially, Sabbateans were a group of Crypto-Jews in the Ottoman Empire who converted to Islam, but who apparently retained their previous religious beliefs. Their descendants still practise to this day, but secretly. Members of the sect have been referred to by different terms throughout history. Another common term used for Sabbateans is *Mohammedan Jews*. This said, the primary sources in the Ottoman literature use the term *Avdeti* instead of Sabbateans, *Mohammedan Jews* or *Dönme*.³⁴

Dönmes The term “*Dönme*” is generally accepted in society, especially in Turkey and the Western World. However, this term does not offer an accurate depiction of Sabbateans, as discussed below. The thesis rejects the term “*Dönme*”³⁵ for its negative characterization of Sabbateans as untrustworthy and disloyal, and proposes the term *Mohammedan Jews*, coined and used throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire, to be used side by side with the more accurate description: Sabbateans.

Mohammedanism is a term that was mistakenly equated with Islam in some scholarly texts and in the public sphere. *Mohammedan* refers to a follower of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). *Mohammedanism* was first used in the English language was in 1663.³⁶ Prior to that, the term *Mahometan* was used, as far back as 1529. The term *Mohammedanism* cannot be a substitute for Islam, because the religion of Islam does not belong to Prophet Muhammad as he was a messenger who brought the divine message from God (Allah).

³⁴ Zorlu, 1999, p. 74.

³⁵ Even some Turkish writers have chaotically used this negative term in their studies. See, Keyder Çağlar 1987, *State & Class in Turkey, a study in Capitalist Development* p. 65, Verso, London

³⁶ Gibb Sir Hamilton, 1969, *Mohammedanism: an historical survey*, p. 1, Oxford University Press. UK.

Prophet Muhammad even explained this in his farewell sermon before he died that he is only a messenger of this religion. As such, calling the Islamic religion *Mohammedanism* would be an inaccuracy according to Qur'anic teachings.³⁷ Therefore, in one way or another, the Western World misinterpreted Islam as *Mohammedanism* and its believers as *Mohammedans*. For instance, when Ricaut mentioned the Ottoman Empire in his book, he mistakenly referred to it as a *Mohammedan* State, which shows the general understanding of the Christian world about Islam as the religion of Muhammad.³⁸

This misconception regarding the term *Mohammedanism* came from Kalimah al Shah-adah in Arabic as 'ash-hadu 'an laa'i-laa-ha 'il-lal-laa-hu WA 'ash-ha-du 'Anna **Mu-ham-ma-dan** 'ab-du-hoo war a-soo-luh' which means: "I testify that there is none worthy of worship besides Allah and I testify that Muhammad is Allah's worshipper and messenger." In the Arabic version, the word *Mohammedan* is misrecognised as the name of the religion by the Western World and this misconception continues.³⁹ Based on this common understanding of Muslims by the Western world, Sabbateans were also referred to as *Mohammedan Jews* in eighteenth century books.⁴⁰ The thesis title refers to *Mohammedan Jews* in order to interrogate the term. The term *Mohammedan Jews* suggests the followers' status as an in-between religious group, because it is commonly held that Sabbateans practise as Muslims on the outside, and practise as Jews secretly. However, this misconstrues their religious identities as followers of Shabbetai Tzvi.

Messianic thought or Messianism is the belief in a Messiah, who will serve as a redeemer for a particular religious faith. The concept of Messianism originated in Judaism, and first appeared in the Torah, in which a Messiah is a king or High Priest traditionally anointed with holy oil. Messianism is most commonly found in Abrahamic religions. In 1666, some Muslims, Jews and Christians believed that the messianic age was approaching and they expected a redeemer. This is when Shabbetai Tzvi came forth with his messianic ideas and gathered followers.

Just like in Christianity and Judaism, there is also Messianism in the Islamic tradition. It is called Mahdiship and is actually influenced by Abrahamic religious thought. Similar to

³⁷ Qur'an, Surah Ali Imran, 3:19 "indeed the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam" and also Surah az Zumar, 39:22

³⁸ Ricaut, 1686, p.174.

³⁹ It is clearly indicated in the Quran that ... The masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke anyone with Allah. And in another verse, Prophet Muhammed said that "I only invoke my Lord and do not associate Him with anyone" See, Surah Al-Jinn. 72:18 and 72: 20

⁴⁰ Rycout, 1686, p. 6.

Kabalistic theories, many Muslims use the *abjad* system (abjadiyyah means accounting) to determine the time when Mahdi al Murtaza, namely the redeemer would arrive.⁴¹ *The Abjad system* also provided Muslim with the spiritual knowledge to use the Islamic calendar like the Jews who used the Kabbalah.⁴²

Heresy is any belief or theory that departs from the norm in a given religious faith. A heretic is someone who deviates from the mainstream beliefs. Heresy needs to be distinguished from *apostasy*, which refers to the abnegation of one's religion, principles or cause, and *blasphemy*, which refers to the use offensive words or the performance of any action against God or sacred things. This thesis analyses marginal movement to define and even interrogate what are perceived as controversial beliefs. As its starting point, the thesis prefers to use the term “marginal” despite society’s reference to these movements as heretical or heterodox movement or religious faiths. The term, *marginalism* (according to majority) does not refer to extremism or heresy in the faith. For this reason, this term is preferred in the thesis.⁴³

Zendeqa means heretical beliefs in Arabic or the act of renouncing the mainstream faith of Islam. This expression initially appeared around 260 AD during the time of the Persian Empire, since the official acceptance of the Mazdeism into the Empire. As an adjective, the term, “*Zindiq*” refers to the person who has heretical thoughts that go against Islam.⁴⁴

Kafir means one who rejects the divine authority. The Arabic term, ‘*Kafir*’ is derived from the word ‘*kufr*’ and in Hebrew ‘*kofer*’ which means to conceal or to reject. A number of religious leaders have provided quotes from the Qur’an saying that Allah asks the believers to kill infidels or non-believers (Kafirs) but these leaders sometimes misinterpret this term, and create confusion about non-believers in Islam. For instance, if an infidel rejects a particular doctrine, system, or principle in the religion, this makes the claimer *mushrick* which is also known as *shirk* (polytheism).

However, on several occasions throughout history, some religious authorities in Islamic states have labelled several Muslim leaders as *Kafirs* and sentenced him to death by

⁴¹ Gezici Aytakin, 2015, *Dünyayı Yöneten Gizli Örgütler*, p. 376, Tutku Yayınevi, Ankara

⁴² Akad Melih Ülkü, 2013, *Ezoterizm ve Batınlık Doktrinler Tarihi*, p. 83, Nokta Yayınevi, İstanbul

⁴³ Cross, F.L.; Livingstone, E.A., eds. 1974, "Heresy". *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2 ed.). p564, Oxford University Press, UK.

⁴⁴ Lewis, Bernard, 1993, *Islam in history: ideas, people, and events in the Middle East*, p. 287. Open Court Publishing, Chicago.

hanging. The criteria for what counts as ‘*Kafir*’ comportment can be also changed according to *Salafist* or *Hanafi* scholars. However, the Qur’an does not allow anybody to label someone else *Kafir* unless he admits that he is a non-believer.⁴⁵ In the Ottoman literature, *Kafirs* have sometimes been represented as unkind and uncompassionate to humankind, and infidels have been perceived as people who torture others, who do not help the needy, who commit adultery, lie, steal and kill.⁴⁶ Among conservative Muslim scholars, the term ‘*Kafir*’ has been abused to label many reformist theologians. In history, the great Muslim scholar Imam Ghazali was labeled as *Kafir* in Baghdad. Similarly Imam Bukhara judged Imam Hanafi as *Kafir* due to his reformist fatwas (religious jurisprudence) such as the translation of the Qur’an into Persian. At present, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Pakistan is labelled as a heretical sect of Islam and its followers are called *Kafir* by mainstream Muslim Ulama.⁴⁷

1.2 Methodology

A comparative historical methodological approach has been used to reveal some misunderstood subjects in the Sabbatean Movement from the past to the present.

Other than the comparative historical method, oral history and comparative history have been used in the research of this thesis. Some Sabbatean people in Turkey were interviewed to better understand their religious and social experiences, mostly from a sociological and historical perspective. Many Ahmadi Muslims were also interviewed in order to explore similarities as well as the social pressures they face and their struggles in Pakistan, South Africa and other states. These interviews shed light on the fact that Ahmadi Muslims prefer to live in countries like Canada and Israel where the state and society do not interfere with the religious practices of Muslims.

On the other hand, because Sabbateans are recognised as “heretical” in Jewish society in Israel, they prefer to hide their religious identity. This is also true of Sabbateans in other parts of the world. This made it a challenge to identify them, therefore their family names and titles were used as identifying factors.

⁴⁵ Quran Surah Ali 'Imran (3:151)

⁴⁶ In South African context, *Kafir* is a derogatory term which goes back to colonial time period in history. Black natives used to be called Kafir by Dutch and British colonialists. See, Mathabane Mark, 1986, *Kaffir Boy; The true story of a black youth's coming of age in Apartheid South Africa*, Macmillian, Newyork.

⁴⁷ Maulana Muhammed Ali, 2014, *The Religion of Islam*, p. 90 The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore) U.S.A

1.1.6 Limitations of this study

As mentioned, the first limitation was limited access to information about Sabbatean practices. Sabbateanism as a hidden sect might be an accurate statement. Fortunately, I was able to interview two Sabbatean individuals who provided absolutely unique information for my research. Despite oral data, it is not possible to fully grasp the religious rituals and principles of the Sabbatean Movement. However, members of the Ahmadiyya Movement did not mind to provide information about their religious identities for research purposes.

1.1.7 Materials

In this thesis, a variety of materials have been used and analysed to reveal issues facing minority religious groups like Sabbateans or Ahmadis. Primary sources and unique archival documents in Hebrew and the old Turkish (Ottoman Language) have been used in the dissertation. Ottoman archival documents bring a new dimension to this study in terms of comparing minority groups from the Ottoman period to the present days. Some archival documents have been gathered from the national library of Israel in Jerusalem. Secondary sources and verbal history also provided remarkable data which is carefully analysed in the thesis.

In this study, hundreds of Ottoman archival sources were translated into English to better illustrate Ottoman Jewish relations in the Ottoman territory, which is necessary to understand the beginnings of Jewish presence in Anatolia. As mentioned, Shabbetai Tzvi came from one of those Jewish families who immigrated to Turkey from Spain in 1492. Important correspondences were issued in the Ottoman language. According to Professor Avram Galante, the Ottoman judicial system allowed Shabbetai Tzvi to pursue his Messianic thoughts in society.⁴⁸ Indeed, how did the Ottoman State recognise the minorities in its territory? What is the reality behind this religious understanding towards Sabbateans? These issues will be explored in the following chapters.

Tzvi's life, challenges, arrests and death, all happened in the Ottoman territory, and are recorded and registered in the Ottoman archives.⁴⁹ These documents show that all events

⁴⁸ Galante, 2000, p. 48.

⁴⁹ Ottoman State Archives, BEO, No: 79695 /1063 10/Ş /1315 (Hijri) Edirne Hapishanesi'nde mahpus olan Musevi Sabatay oğlu Hayım'ın afv-ı aliye mazhariyeti.

about the Sabbatean Movement were recorded by Ottoman authorities during their time.⁵⁰ To date, researchers have ignored many of the archival materials because they could not understand the Ottoman language in which parts of this history were recorded.

Through this research, I will attempt to address this gap by using precious primary sources from Turkey and Israel.⁵¹ There are more than a thousand Ottoman archival documents in the Turkish State Archives in Istanbul which are relevant to this topic. I maintain that it is only possible to understand all the historical processes after analysing these archival sources.

1.3 Literature review of studies on Shabbetai Tzvi

The literature review in this dissertation not only presents previous studies, areas that have previously been analysed but also what has been neglected in the field.

One of the challenges in the analysis of the socio-religious impact of the Sabbatean movement has been the issue of access to archival resources in the field, especially those offering eastern perspectives. While some books on the Sabbatean movement in the Western world were first published in the 1800s, the first books published in the Ottoman society were only seen in the 1900s. The language barrier also meant that the books published by the Ottoman Empire or present day Turkey seldom made it to the European bookshelves. Still, even in Turkey, the number of books on the topic is quite scant because of the secrecy around the Sabbatean topic. It is often argued that one of the primary reasons for this is because the Sabbateans lived as a hidden sect in Turkish society.

Contrary to popular belief that the Ottoman Empire may have marginalised the Sabbateans, historical evidence points to the fact that the Ottoman Empire sought to protect Sabbateans as its citizens. This was until the emergence of modern Turkey, when due to a rise of separatist sentiments, there was a general suspicion of any minority groups including the Sabbateans.⁵² In fact, that period also saw a rise in the negative perception of conservative

⁵⁰ Fındıklılı Silahtar Mehmet Ağa, 1928, *Silahtar Tarihi (1628-1723)*, T.T. Enc Külliyyatı, Istanbul: Râşid Mehmed Efendi, 1282, *Raşit Tarihi Metni 1-1630*. (Vol, 1.) p. 637. Devlet Matbaası, Istanbul.

⁵¹ For this thesis, unique sources have been used from the Prime ministry archives in Istanbul that became one of the richest Ottoman archives in the world in 1931 when it acquired millions of Ottoman documents from Turkey.

⁵² For instance, the Armenians and Kurds called for independence from the Turkish State, and later the Jewish community tried to establish a separate state. The negativity towards the said group resurged with the decline of the Ottoman State and the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic. Ottoman intellectuals and writers blamed others whom they have perceived betrayed the state, in the final great campaign like the Balkan and the First World War. In this circumstance, mostly conservative Ottoman authors partially wrote about the Ottoman

Jews and Muslims towards Sabbateans. On the whole though, socially there was a fair degree of multicultural and religious understanding, which played a crucial role in creating conducive conditions for all Turkish citizens to live together under the same umbrella without distinguishing any particular groups in society.

The religious movement of the Jewish Messiah, Shabbetai Tzvi, in the seventeenth century has been under debate by scholars until the present day. However, the subject still contains a remarkable gap in terms of identifying an appropriate approach to analyse this marginal religious sect in Judaism. Since the beginning of the Sabbatean movement to the present, in several works, Shabbetai Tzvi has been a subject matter for authors of different nationalities. Their texts were produced in diverse languages such as Russian, French, Persian, English, Greek, Armenian, Hebrew, and German, but most importantly in Turkish. It is because when this movement emerged in Izmir in Turkey, it firstly and naturally affected Turkish society, be it positively or negatively, and impacted on the Turkish public sphere. In addition, correspondences between local rulers in Izmir and the current Turkish government in the capital of the Empire, Istanbul, were written in Ottoman Turkish and therefore required a close inspection from a Turkish perspective using Turkish sources.

Between 1623 and 1667, Paul Ricaut, wrote a history book, entitled *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* and, as a contemporary of Shabbetai Tzvi, he mentioned the latter and his religious movement. Based in Izmir, Ricaut had the opportunity to observe these religious events first hand, and observe the context and social climate in which they occurred. According to Ricaut, when Tzvi converted to Islam, it shocked the Jewish society, and became a subject of a hidden messianic movement for the Muslim community in the Ottoman Empire. In spite of this opportunity, Ricaut considered this event from a Christian point of view, which could be seen as an inaccurate approach to the examination of another religious sect. This said, his book contains important contextual information and will therefore be used in this thesis.

Jews and Sabbateans without separating them from each other. Certainly, the Western World also contributed to this literature, either in a novelistic or scholarly way but mostly without referring to Turkish sources. These publications created a particular understanding of the Jewish Messiah as a marginal figure in Western society rather than as a religious messiah, one of many in the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Likewise, Ottoman contemporary historians, Abdurrahman Abdi Pasha and Silahtar Mehmet Effendi mentioned Tzvi's movement in their work.⁵³ Abdi Pasha wrote his book in 1682 and offered the first full-fledged Ottoman narrative of the Sabbatean movement was mentioned by an eyewitness Abdi Pasha who was an official historian and secretary of the confidential matters of Sultan Mehmet IV "*Sır Katibi*". As a result, Abdi's Pasha's story can be considered a first person Sultanic narrative of the Sabbatean affair, more so than any other historical account.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Abdi Pasha called Tzvi "a Rabbi from the Ottoman Jewish community in Izmir" and never judged his messiahship in a negative way.

Similarly, Raşit Pasha not only noted this event in his book, *Tarih-i Raşit*, but also explained how the Shabbetai Tzvi movement had grown day by day. Raşit Pasha gives an eyewitness account that illustrates how Shabbetai Tzvi had converted to Islam in Edirne palace in front of the Sultan Mehmet IV.⁵⁵ These sources are very valuable historical accounts for the study of the Sabbatean movement since they are the first Ottoman sources regarding the subject, which might also give insight into the initial perceptions of the Messianic Movement within the Ottoman society. However, it must not be forgotten that these works were written by conservative Muslim Turkish scholars and therefore observations they made could sometimes be biased particularly when analyzing another religious movement with its own religious values.⁵⁶ This said, one notes that the derogatory term *Dönme* was not used yet in the Ottoman society to designate the followers of Shabbetai Tzvi.

French, British and German sources of the time also mentioned the name of Shabbetai Tzvi as Shabbetai Sevi, Sabatay Zevi-Sebi-Levi in books and journals. However, Turkish sources in the seventeenth century, like the historical chronicles of Raşit Effendi, Abdi Pasha, or Fındıklılı Mehmet Effendi preferred to not mention the name of Shabbetai Tzvi, opting instead to refer to him as "Jew", "well-known Rabbi" or "famous Jew (Yehudi)" in the records. Fındıklılı Mehmet Effendi wrote about Tzvi's movement in his book *Silahtar Tarihi*, however, this work is very similar to Abdi Pasha's book *Vekayiname*.

⁵³ Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, 1648, *Abdi Paşa Vekayinamesi*, Köprülü Kütüphanesi No, 216, p. 214; Silahtar Mehmet, 1928, p. 432.

⁵⁴ Derin Cetin, 1993, *Abdurrahman Pasa vekayinamesi Tahlil ve Metin*, (unpublished PhD thesis, Istanbul University) p.39 Istanbul

⁵⁵ Rasit Paşa, 1865, *Tarihi Rasid*, Vol. 1, Devlet Matbaası, p. 133, Istanbul

⁵⁶ Şişman Cengiz, 2012, *Cortijo De Sevi as Lie De Memoire, The past , present and future of Sabbatai Sevi's House*, Vol.10 p. 61, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies.

In the eighteenth century, a remarkable study was conducted by a prominent Ottoman historian, Kâmil Pasha, who was the official historian at the Ottoman palace. Kâmil Pasha mentioned Tzvi's name for the first time as Sapatay Levi in his book, *Tarih-i Siyasi*.⁵⁷ In the seventeenth century, Sabbatean terms began to make their way into dictionaries in Europe. Linguist Francisco Meninski mentioned the following term in a German-Turkish dictionary as "Donme reversus, converses, desertor, apostate," and described it.⁵⁸ Then, Ottoman linguist Mehmet Esad Effendi included the term *dönmek* in his dictionary and explained it as *ilhad; irtidad* namely, apostasy⁵⁹. Another Ottoman writer Ahmet Rıfat also mentioned Dönmes and gave a short definition about the community without any analysis.⁶⁰

The first book about Shabbetai Tzvi's movement, called *Dönmeler: Hanyos, Koyegos, Sazan* was published in Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul in 1919. In the pages that follow, the author makes mention of different ethnic groups such as the Gypsies, Zoroastrians (*Mecusi*), Jews and Christians among Sabbateans. Beside that, this book looks like a general radical Turkish view with regard to its criticism and exaggerated statements on the Sabbatean people.

According to the author, Kapancı and Karakaş merchants are untrustworthy and he mentions that the Yakubi group was robbing the Turkish state. Further, he mentions how Sabbatean women changed the fashion of women under the Ottoman Empire resulting in them dressing up like European women instead of conforming to Muslim customs. The author argues that the Ottoman Empire is declining because of the Sabbatean people. He asserts that all infidelity belongs to the Sabbatean movement and that Salonica is the most important city for this foundation. However, other than these controversial statements, the author provides no evidence to substantiate his claims.

Binbaşı Sadık Bey then wrote a response to *Dönmeler*, entitled *Dönmelerin Hakikati*. These two books were considered as the first Turkish secondary sources of Sabbatean Studies.⁶¹ *Dönmelerin Hakikati* was published in Istanbul and as the book title it means actualities of Dönme people, namely Sabbateans. In his foreword, Sadık Bey explained how Shabbetai Tzvi constructed his image with his innovative ideas and impacted his society.

⁵⁷ Kâmil Paşa, 1909, *Tarih-i Siyasi-yi Devlet-i Aliye-yi Osmaniye*, 1832-1913. p. 39, Matbaa-yı Ahmet İhsan, İstanbul

⁵⁸ Franciscus Meninski, 1680, *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcica-Arabicae-Persica*, p. 344, Vienna

⁵⁹ Mehmed East Effendi, 1999, *Lehçetül Lügat* (Haz, H. Ahmad kırkkılıç), p. 224, TDK, Ankara.

⁶⁰ Ahmad Rıfat, 1883, *Lugat-i Tarihiyye ve Coğrafiyye*. 4. Vols. p.20. İstanbul. Before Kâmil Pasha, Shabbetai Tzvi had only been mentioned as a Jew, a Haham, a Rabbi, famous Jew (yahudi meşhur) or negatively as 'çifit'.

⁶¹ Binbaşı Sadık, 1919, *Dönmelerin Hakikati*, p. 4. Karabet Matbbası, İstanbul; Anonymous 1919 *Dönmeler*, p.32, İstanbul

According to Miralay Sadık, Shabbetai Tzvi did not convert to Islam by force; however, he was spiritually inspired by God. Therefore, Miralay Sadık stated that such tough criticism on the activities of Shabbetai Tzvi is like a tree bearing fruit yet getting stoned.⁶² A writer of Sabbatean origin, Zorlu also stated that Miralay Sadık should have been a member of the Sabbatean congregation.⁶³

According to Sadık Bey, Tzvi was considered a real Saint (*Mürşid-i Kamil*) and even led many people to embrace Islam. It is said that even some converted Sabbateans attended Sufi schools and tarikahs in the Ottoman society.⁶⁴ For this reason, according to Sadık Bey, Sultan Mehmet IV honored Tzvi with a special title, Aziz, and thus he became Aziz Mehmet Effendi. In the second section of the book, Sadık provided information about Yakubi's side of the family. In his view, Tzvi added eight more rules to the Jewish principles, which constituted the essence of his eighteenth religious instruction.⁶⁵ As far as is understood from some sentences, Aziz Mehmet Effendi is presented as a Sabbatean from the Yakubi group. The author emphasized Shabbetai Tzvi's intention to establish a religion, but when he was exiled to Uljin in Albania, his followers became concerned about their future.

Miralay Sadık Bey's nephew was Ibrahim Alaatin Gövsa who was a well-known educator in Turkey and also wrote a book about Shabbetai Tzvi, which was published in Istanbul in 1934. However, unlike his uncle Sadık Bey, Gövsa studied this hidden congregation from a Muslim point of view and shared his experiences when he was a school principal and teacher in the school in Istanbul. In 1939, Ibrahim Aladdin Gövsa published a book in Turkish entitled *Shabbetai Sevi*, which was an illustrative study in this field. Gövsa also shared with readers his own experiences of Sabbatean followers when he was a school principal of Bakırköy Girls School in the 1920s. Gövsa's approach to this subject is considerably factual and sincere but not in an academic way.⁶⁶ However, this book still provides important information for readers.

⁶² It is a wellknown proverb, "Meyve veren ağaç taslanır" in Turkish.

⁶³ Zorlu, 1999, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Şişman, 2012, Vol.10, p. 23.

⁶⁵ İslam kisvesi altında ve adat-ı İslamiyye ile karışık ve fakat tamamen Yahudilik itikadında dahi müberra olmamak üzere yeni bir tarikat icat etti. Evvela Musevilere aid evamiri aşareye kendisi de sekiz emir ekleyerek 18 emrin esasını emretti See also; Saloniki Deunmeh, 1924, *Excluded from the Echange of polulation*, p. 3. Th Christian Science Monitor.

⁶⁶ Gövsa İbrahim Alaettin, 2003 *Sabatay Sevi*, p. 21, Ağaç Yayınları, Istanbul

Later on, a group of young Sabbatean rebels in Salonica published a journal, *Gonca-i Edep*, which was not previously known to scholars. At the beginning of the twentieth century, more articles and booklets appeared on the subject.

Other than secondary sources, numerous examples in the Ottoman State Archives and old newspapers highlight the essence of Shabbetai Tzvi's religious lifestyle from his time to the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1919, a text regarding Sabbateans (Donmes) was published in a newspaper, in Turkey, without the author's signature. However, Turkish archival sources highlight this topic and reveal that the text was written by a fundamentalist Turkish philosopher, Ebuzziya Tevfik, who acted against the Sabbatean religious movement throughout his entire life. According to this Turkish archival source, Ebuzziya's article was found to be too antagonistic and therefore confiscated by the order of the current government.⁶⁷

In 1924, one of the Sabbateans, Karakaşzade Mehmet Rüşdü, wrote an article and tried to explain that Sabbateans are loyal to the Turkish state and that they do not have so-called "special powers" alluded to in gossips about Sabbateans that circulated in society in the 1920s. According to Mehmet Rüşdü, this movement had become forgotten along with its traditions as time went by. Thereafter, another newspaper, *Vatan Gazette*, published an article to give further explanation about this movement. Few other newspapers followed in its wake with their publications⁶⁸ and eventually this subject became a rather "mystical topic" in Turkish society, centuries after the event and has remained as such until the present.

In Western literature, Galatowski's book shares important material about the history of Sabbateanism in Poland. Galatowski notes,

Shabbetai Tzvi appeared in the city of Smyrna and called himself the Messiah of the Jews. At the time, some Christians having heard Jewish impudence began to have doubts about whether or not Christ was the true Messiah and began to support a false Messiah out of fear. That's why I wrote the book, so that faithful Christians do not fear the false Jewish Messiah

⁶⁷ Ottoman State Archive, MF. MKT, 3/387 - 18/ L/ 1315 Hijra Yahudiler aleyhinde 'milleti Israilye' adıyla Ebuzziya imzasıyla neşr olunan risalenin ruhsatsız olduğunun anlaşıldığı ve toplatırılması için mufettişlere haber verildiğinin beyanı.

⁶⁸ Resimli Dünya Gazetesi, 1891, İstanbul: Son Saat Gazetesi , 1925, *Dönmelik nasıl çıktı, nasıl inkişaf etti, İstanbul*, 7 Gün Mecmuası, 1933, İstanbul: Gövsa, Alaeddin, *İzmirli Sabetay Sevinin hayatını ve mecaresi*, p. 6, İstanbul.

and without a doubt believe and know that Jesus is the True Messiah. The false Messiah motivated me to write this book called: The true Messiah Jesus Christ, the Son of God.⁶⁹

In 1925, Josef Kastein revisited this topic and discussed it with European sources in Germany. His book, *Messiah of Ismir*, played a crucial role in the Western media's re-analysis of the religious impact of Shabbetai Tzvi in Europe.⁷⁰ The Western viewpoint on the subject is particularly emphasized because of a common judgmental understanding of this matter that has mostly received considerable disapprobation.⁷¹ Even in 1931, when the journalist, Herbert Luger summarized the story of Shabbetai Tzvi he stated that:

Herein lies the secret of the miserable failure of Shabbetai Tzvi... Sabbatai's attitude is so ridiculously naïve that Graetz all but brands him a case of arrested development.⁷²

Despite such prejudicial approaches to the Messiahship of Shabbetai Tzvi, these sources will be used and critically analysed in this dissertation. How Shabbetai Tzvi declared his Messiahship and under which circumstances he was arrested and imprisoned, will be the questions raised the light of primary Ottoman archival sources.⁷³

The first academic publication on the subject was written by Professor Abraham Galante in Istanbul in 1935. His work was written in French and is a scholarly explanation of how Tzvi's religious movement began and what he bequeathed to his followers as a religious leader. Galante reveals Tzvi's religious practices with various sources published in different languages. Despite the rich sources analysed in his book, Galante could not use Turkish archival sources because Ottoman archival sources were not open to the public in those days. Still, it can be said that Prof Galante's work is the first attempt at a proper academic study in this field.⁷⁴

Likewise, an extensive study in the field was published in Hebrew by Gershom Scholem in 1957, and later translated into English entitled *Sabbatai Sevi, the Mystical Messiah*. However due to the language barrier, Scholem could not have access to Turkish

⁶⁹ Galas Michal, 2001, *Sabbatianism in the seventeenth century Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth*, A Rivew of the Sources, In the Sabbatean Movement and its Aftermath, Messianism, Sabbateanism, Frankism, ed. Rachel Elior, Vol. 2. p. 52. Jerusalem.

⁷⁰ Kastein Josef, 1931, *The Messiah of Ismir: Sabbatai Zevi*, translated by Huntley Paterson, Viking Press, New York.

⁷¹ Ricaut, 1686, p. 138.

⁷² Luger Herbert, 1931, *A Millennium that failed*, p. 3, (The Brooklyn Daily Eagle) New York City.

⁷³ The Ottoman Archives contain more than two million archival sources which cover the historical documents in 39 countries such as the Balkan area, Iran, and parts of Africa such as Sudan and South Africa.

⁷⁴ Galanti, 2000, p.5.

archival sources,⁷⁵ as Richard noted in his review of Gershom Schelom's paper, "It was unfortunate that Scholem did not have access to Turkish archives".⁷⁶

By 1979, Abdurrahman Küçük wrote a book in Turkish about "Donmes" called *Dönmeler Tarihi* which was the most extensive study done by a Turkish scholar to this day.⁷⁷ This study was written in a scholarly manner and explained this historical event from a religious point of view. Despite Küçük's contribution to this field, he could not find remarkable documents in the Ottoman Archives. This again created curiosity in Turkish society about the Sabbateans and the recurring argument regarding the so-called power of Sabbateans, who are supposed to be very mysterious and considerably secretive. It was believed that for this reason, they might have destroyed all their documents which should be in the Ottoman Archives. While this argument prevailed in Turkish society, some journalists, scholars, and writers imposed several political views about the Sabbateans in their works. However, none of the labels attached to Sabbatean people was based on factual and substantial evidence, but merely opinion. Other than popular history books and novels, some Masters and Doctoral dissertations also enriched Sabbatean literature in this field.⁷⁸

In 2004, a Turkish student Cengiz Şişman wrote a Doctoral thesis at the history department at Harvard University about Shabbetai Tzvi and his impact. Şişman used extraordinary sources in different languages in his study and contributed to knowledge in this field. Despite this being an extensive publication, he also could not access Ottoman archival sources regarding Shabbetai Tzvi. This again created curiosity in Turkish society and intensified the rumours about Sabbateans' "secret powers". Although Şişman's explanations are based on the significance of the Ottoman Archives in his dissertation, he had only been able to use Ottoman sources on the Jewish people, but not those specifically regarding Shabbetai Tzvi.⁷⁹ However, this dissertation is still the most remarkable doctoral study so far

⁷⁵ Scholem, 1973, p.87.

⁷⁶ The book, *Mystical Messiah* was written by Schelom in Hebrew in 1957, Review by Richard Popkin, *Gershom Scholem Sabbatai Sevi, the Mystical Messiah 1629- 1676* p. 87. (Princeton, 1973)

⁷⁷ Küçük Abdurrahman, 2001, *Dönmeler Tarihi*, Ed. 9, Berikan Yayınevi, Ankara

⁷⁸ Yeşilyurt Süleyman, 2008, *Yahudi Dönmeler ve Mum Söndü Ayinleri*, Kültür Sanat Yayınları, İstanbul

⁷⁹ In this dissertation Şişman had approached the subject as a psychologist rather than a historian because of his psychology background and called Shabbetai Tzvi as "manic depressive". This approach seems also to be a repetition of the study by Gershom Scholem. Thus, as a religious leader, Shabbetai Tzvi has been labeled a "manic depressive" or "false messiah" not only in individual studies but also in an academic dissertation. *A Jewish Messiah in the Ottoman Court: Sabbatai Sevi and the Emergence of a Judeo-Islamic Community*, A thesis 'resented by Cengiz Sisman, to Committee on Middle Eastern Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy in the subject of history and Middle Eastern Studies. p. 17-20 Harvard University Cambridge Massachusetts.

in the field which is written in English. Like Şişman, some Western scholars also contributed to the field with their academic works.

Marc David Baer wrote a book about Sabbateans entitled *Donmes* which was published in 2008. It can be said that his book is the most detailed research by a Western scholar in this field after Scholem's studies. Additionally, Baer learned Ottoman Turkish and was able to access Ottoman sources in this field which enriched his studies in the subject. That said, the title of his book, "*Dönme*" indicates that Baer also used the controversial term in order to describe the community in the Ottoman society.⁸⁰

By 2013, a Turkish historian, Professor Erhan Afyoncu had researched on Shabbetai Tzvi in the Turkish State Archive and for the first time he was able to access unique and important archival sources with regard to Shabbetai Tzvi, his conversion to Islam, as well as his death. With this remarkable study, Afyoncu broke the mystical wall on the Sabbateans and proved that Sabbateans have no secret powers which would have enabled them to destroy the archival sources about them in the Ottoman State archives. Therefore, it is possible to say that Afyoncu corrected several misconceptions in this field. Despite his achievement, he did not use many Western sources in his book, but mostly considered Scholem's works as the main source in his paper. Moreover, Afyoncu showed that he had the same basic approach in his work when he called Shabbetai Tzvi a *Sahte Mesih*, "False Messiah". This simplistic approach, using negative labelling is in fact not a scholarly way to analyze the activities of a religious leader in history, especially since this religious movement is still alive at present.⁸¹ Certainly, it does not follow that writers ought to positively label Sabbatei Tzvi as the true messiah. However, it is expected from all scholars to write on such subjects in a non-judgmental way, without labelling historical figures as good or bad or true or false.

1.4 Conclusion

The Messianic movement of Shabbetai Tzvi was undoubtedly the most remarkable religious movement in Jewish history. Neither in Europe nor in Africa, is there any other

⁸⁰ This book is a study of the religious transformation of Sabetean people and places in early modern Ottoman Europe. Calling this religious group Donmes actually shows his approach to the hidden sect in negative way. Baer Marc David, 2009, *The Dönme Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*, translated into Turkish, See, Baer M. 2011, *Selânikli Dönmeler: Musevilikten Dönenler, Müslüman Devrimciler, ve Laik Türkler*, Doğan Kitap.

⁸¹ Afyoncu Erhan, 2013, *Sahte Mesih, Osmanlı Belgeleri Işığında Dönmeliğin Kurucusu Sabatay Sevi ve Yahudiler*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul

massive Jewish community still following a religious figure in daily life, like in the followers of Shabbetai Tzvi.

In 1956, Scholem asked, “If the massacres of 1648 were in any sense its principal cause, why did the messiah not arise within the Polish Jewry?”⁸² However, in this dissertation, another dimension to this subject, which has not been explored before, will be examined in a socio-historical context. What are the conditions that have allowed Sabbateans to practise their religion so far? A messianic movement did arise in Poland as will be detailed in Chapter three. However, what is of interest is actually how people respond to Messianic movements in society rather than the emergence of a Messiah per se. This thesis explores the development of Messianic movements, especially in light of the socio-political set-up of the Ottoman Empire.

Many marginal religious groups, like the Sabbatean movement in Judaism, have been seen as “heresy” in the orthodox religious world. This general view did not allow them to flourish in their own community. Therefore, Huguenots and Mormon missionaries in Christianity, the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam have been treated in the same inhumane way worldwide and persecuted or exiled from their birthplace. The Ahmadiyya sect in Islam is the best example of controversial religious issues in the Muslim world. The sect is active all over the world, other than in Islamic countries including Pakistan.

Historically though, even minority movement of other faiths such as Sabbateanism, flourished under the rule of the greatest Islamic State of the time in history, the Ottoman Empire. Despite his marginal messianic thoughts, Shabbetai Tzvi and his followers were not treated badly by the Ottoman State. Ottoman tolerance towards all minority religious groups has enabled them to grow and thrive.

Undoubtedly, in the second half of the last century, many studies on Sabbateanism enriched the literature of Ottoman Crypto-Jews as a hidden sect. However, most of the scholars have neglected Ottoman sources in this field. As an orthodox Jewish scholar, Abraham Galanti’s book in 1935 is an exemplary study of Tzvi’s movement as he was not judgmental.⁸³ Mostly, writers have been influenced by Western literature and could not stay

⁸² Scholem, 1973, p.2.

⁸³ Galante Abraham, 1935, *Nouveaux documents sur Sabbetai Sevi* p. 58, Societe Anonyme de Papaterie, Fratelli Haim, Istanbul

unbiased in their analyses. This thesis aims to probe into the topic by drawing on a range of sources, without discriminating against any religious group.

1.5 Thesis Outline

The second chapter reveals the historical background of Turkish-Jewish relations to better understand why the most influential messianic movement in Jewish society occurred and flourished under Turkish rule in Turkish territory. It is based on the multicultural religious understanding of the Turkish nation which dates to 7th century Asia. This chapter concludes with a description of Turkish-Jewish relations in the Ottoman Empire at the time of Shabbetai Tzvi.

Chapter three aims to establish a link between messianic movements and messiahship in the all Abrahamic religions. This is because Shabbetai Tzvi's messiahship cannot be understood without first exploring the essence of Messianism in Judaism. Therefore, Messianism in the religious context will be analysed throughout this chapter.

Chapter four covers and reveals the life of Shabbetai Tzvi from his birth to his death in a historical context. Tzvi's conversion to Islam is particularly re-interpreted in the light of the unused archival sources in this chapter.

Chapter five analyses the Sabbatean movement after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi. In addition, the shift in perceptions about Sabbateanism from a spiritual to a negative movement in Turkish and Western society are examined in this chapter.

Chapter six compares the Sabbatean movement with two controversial religious movements, the Crypto-Christian movement, and the Ahmadiyya sect in Islam as hidden religious communities having dual religious identities.

Chapter seven discusses some of the key themes emerging out of this comparative research, and develops new ideas in this field which have not been considered by previous scholars. It discusses the role of state policies on minority groups, then revisits the term Messiahship in a socio-political and religious context.

Chapter eight provides a general conclusion for the entire thesis. In this way, the ideas, discussions and insights from each chapter are summarised in the light of unique primary and secondary materials in the thesis.

CHAPTER II: TURKISH-JEWISH RELATIONS FROM THE 7TH TO THE 17TH CENTURY

2.1 Introduction

In order to better understand the Turkish views towards the Jews, and subsequently towards the Sabbateans, Turkish-Jewish relations throughout history need to be explored in greater detail. Without examining Turkish-Jewish relations in history, it is not possible to understand the significance of the most influential messianic movement in Jewish society and its emergence within Turkish lands.

One reason for the amiable relations between Turks and Jews throughout history is the fact that for three centuries, many Turks were of Jewish faith and belonged to the Khazar Empire, named after the Turkish Sultan, Khazar. The Khazar Empire was the only Jewish Empire in world history. It was a Turkish State established around the Caspian Sea in 650 AD. From about 650 AD to 965 AD, the Khazars ruled over a large territory stretching from the Don-Volga valley as far as northern Caucasus. Their empire was the first and last Jewish empire in history, operated by nomadic Turkish tribes around the Caspian Sea.⁸⁴ Prof Pritzak named these tribes as “*the Turkic-Khazar Pax*” because of the union of many Turkish nomadic Turkish tribes.⁸⁵

The fact that the Caspian Sea is still called Khazar⁸⁶ serves as evidence for the establishment of the Turkish-Jewish Empire in the region.⁸⁷ Over time, the Khazar Empire declined, but the Turkish Jews retained their Jewish religion.⁸⁸ Many Turkish Jews are still alive in Romania and Russia, as well as in Turkey. Some of the tribes of the Khazar Empire such as the Karay, Karaim, and Gagauz Turks have preserved their religious identity and still consider themselves as Jews. This common view led to sympathetic relations between Muslim Turks and Jewish Turks because of the common national belonging of both communities. The Khazar Empire was succeeded by the Seljuk Empire, which was

⁸⁴ Togan Zeki Velidi, 1964, “*Hazarlar*” *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5. p. 394, Istanbul.

⁸⁵ Pritsak Omeljan, 1978, *The Khazar Kingdom's Conversion to Judaism*, p. 261. Vol. 2. No: 3, Harvard Ukrainian Studies.

⁸⁶ The term Khazar is known as Kuzarim in Hebrew literature and Hazar in Turkish, See, Dunlop D. M, 1954, *The History of Jewish Khazars*, p. 26, Princeton University. USA.

⁸⁷ Kurat, Akdes Nimet. 1992, *IV-XVIII. Yüzyillarda Karadeniz Kuzeyindeki Türk Kavimleri ve Devletleri*, p. 38 Murat Kitabevi, Ankara.

⁸⁸ Barthold, Vasiliy Vladimiroviç, 1996, “*Khazar*”. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Eds: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs, p.11, Brill.

established in Iran and spread as far as eastern Anatolia from 1041 to 1321.⁸⁹ During this time, Jewish communities were forced to migrate to other lands from the Roman territories due to persecutions by the Roman Empire.

Many Jews moved to Turkish lands in order to save their lives and benefited from the hospitality of the Turkish society where the majority of individuals were of the Islamic faith. O'Connor noted that: "...as a Jew, he is a kinsman of the Turk and as a Jew, he feels bound to make common cause with the Turks (Muslim Turk) against the Christian."⁹⁰ As a nation, Turks have been tolerant towards individuals of many different religions, besides Jews throughout history because of their multi-cultural background in the past. The second reason for good Turkish- Jewish relations pertains to the Islamic approach to the religion of Judaism within Turkish Muslim Empires such as the Seljuk and the Ottoman Empires. These two Muslim Empires followed similar principles and observed the same Islamic understanding, but with the traditional Turkish tolerance of individuals of other faiths as belonging to one and the same nation. Especially Seljuk and Ottoman Empires had similar understanding due to historical link to Turkish Jewish Empire, Khazars. This made them different from the other nations' approach towards the Jewish society in the historical context.⁹¹ Islam accepts Judaism as a divine religion and respects Prophet Moses and recognises the Torah as a holy book.⁹² There are many ayahs⁹³ in the Qur'an that define the Jewish believer as Zimmah⁹⁴, a non-Muslim who is a follower of one of the two Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Judaism. It is stated in the holy Qur'an:

⁸⁹ Togan, 1964, p. 39.

⁹⁰ In Spain, local crusade against the Muslim began in the 11th century but towards to 13-14 centuries the Black Death, which devastated the whole of Europe in the mid- 14th century, had considerably impacted the Christian Kingdoms. In Europe, especially in Germany, the epidemic set off waves of Christian attacks on Jews. Not possessing any unity beyond dynasty, these Catholic kings founds crusading religion a strong unifying element. Halevi- Wise Yael, 2012, *Sephardim, Michael Ragusa- Writing Spanish History in nineteenth century Britain*. p.79. Stanford University Press. USA.

⁹¹ Jews have always been treated with more tolerance under the Turkish rule in comparison to Iran and Arabia which is revealed very well by Bernard Lewis. See, Levis Bernard 1954, *Iranian Jews*. p.21, Middle Eastern Studies.

⁹² "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah—the which We have sent by inspiration to thee—and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein" See, Qur'an, sura 42 (Ash-Shura), Ayah 13

⁹³ The term, ayah means a verse of the Qur'an.

⁹⁴ Zimmah is an Arabic words, refers non-Muslim people as people of the book. See, Elisabeth Ozdalga 2010, *Late Ottoman Society, the intellectual Legacy* p. 254, Psychology Press, US.

Indeed those who believed and those who became Jews and Sabbathians and Christians. Whoever believed in Allah and the day last and did good deeds shall be no fear on them nor shall them grieved.⁹⁵

In this sense, the Turkish approach towards the people of the book has been considerably positive in developing Turkish-Jewish relations in the Muslim World.

2.2 Turkish-Jewish relations through the ages

Turkish-Jewish relations date back to the 6th century with the emergence of the Khazar Empire, and these ties were fortified over centuries in the Ottoman territory, especially as Jews got persecuted and expelled from European nations.

2.2.1 Turkish-Jewish relations in the first and last Jewish Empire, Khazars

The Khazar (Khuzarim) tribal union emerged in the course of the 6th century.⁹⁶ It was situated between the lower Volga River and the northern Caucasus. The Khazar country populated by a non-Semitic people, namely Turkish tribe, lay across the natural line of advance of the Arabs between the 7th and 10th centuries. Turkish Jews, Khazars established the first Jewish Empire in history.⁹⁷ According to experts in this field, the Khazar tribal union was the creation of the Turks.⁹⁸

The historical emergence of Khazar's tribal confederation Sabir, Oghuz, Turk and other nomadic groups, as well as the conversion of the Turkish Khazars to Judaism have been the subject of sizable Islamic and Hebrew literature for years, especially in the twentieth century. As far as is known, the Khazar Turks used the Hebrew language in their official correspondence.⁹⁹

Historian Dunlop etymologically linked the Chinese term for Khazars, Gesa, to one of the tribal names of the Uyghur Toquz Oghuz. Uyghur Qasar/Khazar was used as a surname for the chief of the Toquz Oghuz. The term Khazars was mostly used in conjunction with the word *Tujue* meaning Turk. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Khazar Turks fought against the Muslim Umayyad Caliphate and its successor, the Abbasids on several occasions. The

⁹⁵ The Quran, Surah al Baqara 2:62.

⁹⁶ Encyclopedia of Islam, 1978, *Khazar*, (new edition, E Van Donzel, B. Lewis and CH Pellat) Vol. IV, p. 1172, Iran- KHA , Leiden.

⁹⁷ There are many academic debates on the Khazar Empire on online. See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2oW63XkBhw> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2Xrsg7HikA> also

⁹⁸ Encyclopedia of Islam, 1978, p. 1172.

⁹⁹ Encyclopedia of Islam, 1978, *Khazar*, p. 1174.

first Khazar-Arab battle took place during the first phase of Islamic development in the region.¹⁰⁰ Originally, the ancestors of the Khazars, who belonged to the Göktürk Empire, were Tengrist worshippers. Then, in the late sixth century, they converted to Judaism, under Sultan Khazar. According to Oppenheim, the Khazar Empire was the only Turkish-Jewish State to evolve after the demolition of the second temple,¹⁰¹ and before the formation of the Promised Land in Israel.¹⁰² He holds that the Jews' aspirations to return to Israel may have encouraged messianic expectations already from the times of Jewish philosopher, Judah Halevi.

The strategic location of the Khazar Empire also enabled the Khazars to play an important role in the political struggles of the time.¹⁰³ The king of the Khazars had already met with Jews in the Caliphate of Harun al-Rashid and they joined him from all the lands of Islam.¹⁰⁴ Great Muslim sociologist from Middle Ages, Ibn Haldun describes the Khazars and the boundaries of their homeland as follows:

Azerbaijan's eastern point in this section is Ardabil, on a portion of the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea enters this section from the east from the seventh section and it's called the Sea of Tabaristan. On its northern shore, in this section, it contains a portion of the country, the Khazars. They are Turkomans. To the west, it contains the land of the Finland Turks. To the east lies the country of Tavast, followed by the land of Estonia.¹⁰⁵ As for the dynasties of our own time, the greatest of them is that of the Turks.¹⁰⁶

As described by Ibn Khaldun above, Khazars Jews lived around the Caspian Sea and spoke a dialect of the Turkish language.¹⁰⁷ Well-known scholars in the Middle Ages, such as İbn Miskeveyh, Taberi, Mesudi, İbn Haldun, Karamani, Kazvini, and later Barthold, Minorsky, H. Rosenthal and Togan accepted Khazars as a Turkish tribe.¹⁰⁸ According to well-known Russian scholar Artamonow, a minority group of Jews was living in the surroundings of Khazar State and even began spreading as far as Caucasia.¹⁰⁹ Armanotow

¹⁰⁰ Dunlop, 1954, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ Israel State was established in (1948).

¹⁰² Between 67 and 70 CE.

¹⁰³ Dunlop, 1954, p. 26.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 89.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 164.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Khaldun, 1958, *The Muqaddimah*, Vol. II. Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, Pantheon Books, p. 366, London.

¹⁰⁷ Karatay Osman, 2014, *Hazarlar, Yahudi Türkler, Türk Yahudiler ve Ötekiler*. p. 44, Kripto Basın Yayın, Ankara

¹⁰⁸ Kuzgun Şaban, 1985, *Hazarlar ve Karay Türkleri*, p. 42, Bilge Kültür Sanat, İstanbul

¹⁰⁹ Artamonow M. İ, 2004, *Hazar Tarihi, Türkler, Yahudiler, Ruslar*, (Cev, Ahsen Batur) p. 346-347, Selenge Yayınları, İstanbul

also notes that Judaism was the noblest religion for Khazar Turks in that time and they therefore embraced Judaism as an official religion in the State.¹¹⁰

Some scholars stated that the Khazars did not vanish in history even after the decline of their Empire but migrated Eastern Europe to later form part of the Ashkenazi Jewish population of the West. Abraham E. Harkavi then suggested that there might have been a connection between the Khazar and European Jews in the 1870s. Scholars like Ernest Renan, Joseph Jacobs, and Samuel Weissenberg followed the same hypothesis and spread the idea in the academic circles.

In the same vein, the Russian Orientalist Vasilii Vasil'eivch Grigorev theorized that the Crimean Karaites originated from the Khazar tribe and pursued their religious practices in Judaism. Numerous Karaims refuse having an Israelite ethnic background and declare themselves as descendants of the Khazar Turks. Western scholars such as Leon Kill and Kevin Alan Brook led the first scientific study of Crimean Karaites, using DNA proof that Crimean Karaites (Turkish Jews) indeed had some Middle Eastern genes. This would link them to the Khazars as the Khazar Empire was the only Jewish Empire established by the Turkish-Jewish people in the Middle East.¹¹¹

In present day Turkey, the only Jewish community from the Khazar lineage is that of the Karay Jews who mostly live in Romania and Turkey.¹¹² One of the Sultans in Khazar Empire accepted the three religions of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and performed his religious rituals on Friday in an Islamic way, on Saturday according to Jewish custom and on Sunday based on the Christian tradition.¹¹³ When Prophet Muhammad said, “*leave the Turks alone as long as they leave you alone*”, he was also referring to Khazar Turks in Asia.¹¹⁴ Like the Jewish religious item, the menorah,¹¹⁵ or the ancient Hebrew writing, Jewish calligraphy was found in a village in Fethiye southern Anatolia Turkey, in the fifth century. This indicates the existence of the Jewish community in Asia Minor already in the age of Roman Empire.¹¹⁶ Other traces of Jewish existence can be found through their contributions as well

¹¹⁰ Artamonov, 2008, p. 155.

¹¹¹ Kuzgun, 1985, p. 16.

¹¹² Ibid, p.19.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.114.

¹¹⁴ Sunnah Abu Davud ; 4302, Al Bidayat al Mujdahid Kitap al Jihad: Kuzgun, 1985, p. 137.

¹¹⁵ Menorah refers to the six branches candle-stand used by the Jews.

¹¹⁶ Güleriyüz. Naim. A. 2012, *Bizans'tan 20. Yüzyıla Türk Yahudileri*, p.5, Gözlem Yayınları, İstanbul.

as their recorded persecution in the Christian states. There are records of a compulsory monthly tax of two drahmi imposed on Jews in the Roman Empire.¹¹⁷

In Spain, between 755 and 931, the Jewish people are also known to have enriched and contributed to the cultural life of the Andalusian Muslim Empire. Interestingly, the Jews felt welcome and validated in the Andalusian Empire with a Muslim majority. According to some sources, the official correspondence between the Khazar Empire and the Andalusian Empire was in Hebrew which would confirm the tolerant Muslim-Jewish relations across the two territories.

Cordoba in Spain became the central academic city with Torah and Talmud schools. The central library in Cordoba had four thousand manuscript books reporting on the activities of the Jewish community. The Jewish medical doctor Hastay ibn Shabrut was the official doctor of the Andalusian Sultan Abd-ar-Rahman III. The doctor was later appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Andalusia and had an interesting correspondence with the Khazar Empire. It was his correspondence in Hebrew with Joseph, king of Khazars that would be preserved by the Jews in Spain and circulated for centuries because it so poignantly expressed his exemplary personal qualities.¹¹⁸ Undoubtedly, Jewish people played a prominent role in the establishment of the good relations between Khazar and Andalusian State.¹¹⁹ Thus, Cordoba became one of the most popular cities and therefore the academic institute in Babylon gradually moved to Spain.¹²⁰

In Turkey, the descendants of the Khazar Empire were mostly from the Karaite community. After the decline of Khazar Kingdom, Khazar Jews moved to Azaq and Crimea and established a state there.¹²¹ A nomadic group, the Karaites were of Turkish descent from the Khazar Empire and their similar ethnic roots also played an important role in establishing good relations with Turkish Muslim states such as the Ottoman Empire.¹²²

2.2.2 Turkish-Jewish relations in the Seljuk and early Ottoman Empires

In the Turkish land, from Anatolia to Mesopotamia, due to spiritual religious movements led by Sufi scholars Jelaleddin Rumi or Haji Bektashi Veli, conversion to Islam

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p.5.

¹¹⁸ Güleriyüz, 2012. p.50.

¹¹⁹ Güner Yasemin 2007, *Ortaçağ Avrupasında Yahudi Göçleri ve Yahudi Kültürü*, p. 18, (Master's Thesis, Celal Bayar University) Manisa.

¹²⁰ Craytor Henry John, 1933. *A history of Aragon and Catalonia*, Methuen.p. 24, Methuen, London.

¹²¹ Crimea region was ruled by the Ottoman State for four centuries. See, Togan, 1970, p.401.

¹²² Zvi Yitzhak Ben, 1957, *The Exiled and the Redeemed*, translated from the Hebrew by Isaac A. Abbady, p. 161, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia.

was popular in the Seljuk Era.¹²³ It is argued by contemporary historians that the Grand Vizier of Seljuk Empire, Jelaeddin Karatay embraced Islam when he met and attended Rumi's classes in Konya. Later he built his own Madrasa, the *Karatay Madrasa* which was established in Seljuk era in 1251. Great religious figures, namely, Jelaeddin Rumi, Shemsi Tabrizi, Sadrettin Konevi and Serafettin Musli attended the celebration for its opening day.¹²⁴ When contemporary historians mentioned this event, they also noted the significance of Jelaeddin Karatay's conversion to Islam. For instance, Ibn Bibi noted that despite being from an old Greek family in Anatolia (*Rum*), Jelaeddin Karatay was living like a Muslim even before he converted to Islam. According to Ibn Bibi, Jelaeddin Karatay was influenced by ancient philosopher Plato and combined Plato's knowledge with the Islamic knowledge of Jelaeddin Rumi and then decided to embrace Islam. Certain poems by Rumi regarding the understanding of religion as tolerant influenced many people to convert to Islam during this period.¹²⁵ After the Seljuk era, Ottoman rulers also followed similar principles and respected minority religious groups.

The Ottomans established their state in Anatolia, particularly after the decline of their predecessor, the Seljuk Empire, and developed their own unique imperial system especially after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453.¹²⁶

When Mehmet II captured Constantinople in 1453, he allowed many Jews from Ohrid to settle there and the Ohrid Synagogue stood in Istanbul until the 19th century.¹²⁷ Sultan Mehmet also invited the Karaite Turkish Jews to settle in the Istanbul neighborhood. This city is today called Karaköy, referring to Karaite Jews. Their synagogue in Karaköy still stands as one of the oldest synagogues in Istanbul. These historical ties led to remarkable tolerance among Muslim Turkish and their administrators from the Middle Ages to the following centuries, and they were emphasized by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II in his constitution. Similarly, first time in history, only Ottoman Empire recognized the Armenian church and established a Gregorian church in Istanbul when Fatih Sultan Mehmet II conquered to the city.¹²⁸ To set an example, during his era in between 1451 and 1480, he

¹²³ Şener Mehmet, 2013, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde ihtida kavramı ve Mühtediler*, p17, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul.

¹²⁴ Odabaşı Zehra, 2012, *Selçuklu Devletinde Muhtedi Vakıfları: Celaleddin Karatay Vakıfları Örneği*, p.66 (PhD Thesis Selçuk University) Konya.

¹²⁵ Odabaşı, 2012, p. 67.

¹²⁶ The Byzantine capital had never recovered from the fourth crusade when the crusaders sacked the city and destroyed or carried off much of its legendary wealth in 1204. Crusaders destroyed Istanbul in 1204 and betrayed to their co-religionists. See, Lewis, 2002, p. 32.

¹²⁷ Matkovski, 1982, p.39.

¹²⁸ Uzunçarşılı İsmail, 1987, *Büyük Osmanlı Tarihi*, Cilt. II. p. 518. TTK. Ankara

appointed many Jews in the Ottoman palace and provided them with substantial economic opportunities.¹²⁹

The Qur'an mentions the statute of *Zhimmi* and their social position in the Islamic State. The Qur'anic verses, for example, "no compulsion in religion as applied to non-Muslims" inspired the Ottoman rulers to establish their own constitutions for non-Muslim citizens, in accordance with such verses. There is also a particular verse in the Qur'an regarding non-Muslim citizens, which highlights the righteousness of non-Muslims as the People of the Book:

Indeed those who believe and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans – those among them who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness – will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.¹³⁰

This statement is generally understood as limited to Judaism and Christianity as both those faiths are mentioned in the Qur'an and have a recognized place in Islamic sacred history.¹³¹ As such, Jews and Christians are regarded as *Ahl al-Kitab*, the people of the book. In response, the Sharia law integrated them under the rule of *Ahl al-Dhimmi*. From this rule, the term 'Dhimmi' was derived, which refers to someone with the *Zimmah* status, in other words, non-Muslims who were granted freedom of religion as long as they paid the *Jizya* tax.¹³² According to this law, poor people, children, the elderly, the disabled and the monks were exempted from this taxation policy.

When Prophet Muhammad established his city in Arabia, he wrote his law for the city of Medina and did not separate minorities from the Muslim citizens. This constitution was the first written text regarding the law of human rights in Muslim history. In the official text, Muslims and Jews were accepted as two communities and respected their religious practices as people of the book.¹³³ Qur'anic teaching clearly emphasized it in *Sure al Tavba*, that non-Muslim can live under the Muslim rule on condition that they pay tax (*Jizya*) and will never

¹²⁹ On the other hand, Ottoman tolerance towards minority religious denominations was much understanding way. For instance, the Constantinople that fell to the Ottomans in 1453 was only a shadow of its former self. When the Ottomans made the city their new capital, they faced the challenge of restoring this symbol of Byzantine imperial power and civilization both economic and cultural. Lewis, 2002, p. 32. See also, Güteryüz, 2015, p. 13.

¹³⁰ The Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah 2.62

¹³¹ The Qur'an 2.256

¹³² Findley The Qur'an 2.256

¹³² Findley Carter Vaughn, 2005, *The Turks in World History*, p. 64-65, Oxford University Press, UK.

¹³³ Eroğlu Ahmet Hikmet, 2013, *Osmanlı Devletinde Yahudiler*. P. 14, Berikan Yayınları, Ankara

be forced to convert.¹³⁴ In the Ottoman Empire, the treatment of the non-Muslim population was essentially based on the Islamic legal concept of granting protection to the Dhimmi, who in turn were expected to recognize the Islamic state as an authority, pay a special poll tax. While it provided them some legal guarantee, they remained as Dhimmi in the Ottoman society.¹³⁵ However, Ottoman administration showed exceptional tolerance to them and other non-Muslims in history. For instance, in the 16th century, an Ottoman Muslim Scholar, Balizade Mustafa Effendi issued a religious decree, and said that, “*it is not right to collect jizya tax from a Christian monk if he is living far from the society by himself*” and the archival document shows the exceptional cases when jizya taxation is not imposed on some non-Muslim citizens in Ottoman era.¹³⁶ For instance, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Mehmet decided to make the capital of Byzantium his own yet remained in Istanbul, and sent an order transferring “his own people and many of the Hebrews” to the city.¹³⁷ The Ottoman Sürgün¹³⁸ brought Turks from Aksaray into Anatolia, Armenians from Ankara, and Jews from Salonica to live in Constantinople in order to develop the socio-cultural atmosphere in the city.¹³⁹

Another reason for Jewish movement was the mystical study and speculation among Jews for many centuries about the arrival of the expected Messiah. Originating in the Ottoman Empire was the study of Lurianic Kabbalah with its emphasis upon the messianic imperative. It was this religious doctrine - widely disseminated from one city to another province which allowed Shabbetai Tzvi’s messianic claims to gain a mass following.¹⁴⁰ The loss of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 sparked further messianic hopes and movements among converso communities¹⁴¹ in Valencia and other Iberian towns.¹⁴² Some

¹³⁴ Jizyah was head tax imposed on free non-Muslims adult males who were either old or sick. See, Eroglu, 2013, p.15.

¹³⁵ These are also called *Millet-i Ibrahim*, which refers to believers of all Abrahamic faiths. See, Lewis Bernard & Benjamin Braude, 1982, *Christian and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, p.70, Vol. I. New York: Matthias B. Lehmann, 2005, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature, Ottoman Sephardic Culture*, p. 19, Indiana University Press. USA.

¹³⁶ Ottoman State Archive, MSH, FTV, 1/16, İnsanlardan uzak, kendi halinde yasayan keşişten cizye alınmaz.

¹³⁷ İslam Ansiklopedisi 2004, ‘Sürgün’ Kemal Daşcıoğlu, Vol, 38, p, 168, DIA, Ankara

¹³⁸ Inalcık Halil, 2008, *Turkey and Europe in History*, p. 35, Eren Yay, Istanbul. *Sürgün* is a re-settlement system whereby population groups are moved to particular locations. This was done regardless of their religious faith, and affected mostly Muslim Turks. Its purpose was to develop that region in line with the socio-economic policy at that time.

¹³⁹ Lewis, Braude, 1982, p.11.

¹⁴⁰ Lewis, Braude, 1982, p.25.

¹⁴¹ Jews having converted to Christianity by force in Europe.

¹⁴² Meyerson Mark D. 2004, *A Jewish renaissance in fifteenth century Spain*, p.71, Princeton University Press. USA.

conversos in Valencia, thinking more in millenarian than in practical terms, attempted to set sail for Ottoman territories.¹⁴³

Before Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II invited Jewish and Christian merchants to the city, he re-established the city with Turco-Islamic architecture. The Ottomans made the city their new capital; they faced the challenge of restoring the symbol of Byzantine's imperial power and civilization both economically and culturally.¹⁴⁴ Jewish scholar Professor Lewis noted that:

The Turks who entered Constantinople were not the simple barbarians depicted by some Western writers, but the heirs and carriers of an old and high civilization- that of classical Islam, to which they themselves had added a not inconsiderable contribution.¹⁴⁵

Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II followed the same understanding as a tradition and built a church for his stepmother Mara Hatun in Bozcaada. This is in fact a similar approach to his predecessor, the Sultan of the Seljuk Empire, Giyaseddin Keyhûsrev II, who built a church in the palace for his Georgian wife, and even allowed her to stay with Christian nuns in the same house. The understanding of this tolerance helped everybody to live in peace under the Ottoman rule as citizens. From the religious perspective, Ottoman Sultans were able to stay moderately conservative because of their multicultural experiences throughout history. When Sultan Mehmet II conquered Istanbul in 1453, some religious leaders (*Ulama*) suggested that he force Christians to convert Islam if they wanted to stay under the Ottoman rule. Sultan Mehmet II replied, "*what a foolish attitude to be more conservative than the founder of this religion*" and refused this illogical idea.¹⁴⁶ An Ottoman decree also emphasized that the Islamic faith does not prescribe forcing anyone to convert to Islam. Furthermore, whoever forces someone to convert to Islam, commits an illegal action according to the Ottoman Law which goes to court.¹⁴⁷

After the conquest of Istanbul, Jews in the Ottoman land as well as in the Balkans region, including Salonica received more facilities due to the new policy of Sultan Mehmet

¹⁴³ The Byzantine capital had never recovered from the fourth crusade in 1204 when the crusaders sacked the city and destroyed or carried off much of its wealth. Ibid. p. 156.

¹⁴⁴ Lehmann 2005, p.16.

¹⁴⁵ Lewis Bernard, 2000, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 103. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

¹⁴⁶ In original text; "Dini İslam-ı hazreti Şariden ziyade himaye etmek iddiasında bulunmak ne büyük vazifesizliktir" See, Şener, 2013, p.18.

¹⁴⁷ In original text; Bir zimminin kendi rızası yoğiken cebren kimesne müslüman eylemeyiniz. Another religious decree in 1843 about conversion ' hüsni rızasıyla İslamiyeti kabul birle âlâ mele'in nâw telkini dine talib olanlar haklarında işleme edileceği ' kaydedilmiştir. İslamiyete girmek isteyenlerin ' tav-ı vicdaniyesiyle olduğu tahakkuk etmedikçe' kendilerine kelime-i şahadet getirmelerinin teklif edilmemesi çok açık bir ifade ile kaydedilmiş bulunmaktadır Şener, 2013, p.32.

II. Turkish traveler Evliya Celebi visited Greece, then part of the Ottoman Empire, and reported that there were eleven thousand Jewish families (*approximately 77,000 people*) living there, twice the local Greek population. Ottoman authorities sought to ensure and sustain public order and the payment of taxes by non-Muslims. The sixteenth - century Salonica Rabbi Joseph bin Leb explained how this worked:

In Salonica, every (Jewish) man speaks his own native tongue. When the exiles arrived, each vernacular group founded an independent congregation, there being mobility from congregation to congregation. Each congregation maintains its poor; each congregation is entirely separate in the crown register. Thus each congregation appears to be an independent city.¹⁴⁸

Still, the remarkable role assumed by the Jews in Ottoman diplomacy has never been thoroughly researched. The first openings for governmental service, since the Muslim conquest of Spain, were in translating and diplomatic negotiating, two roles that were virtually indistinguishable. Given their proficiency in European languages, the Sephardic Jews excelled in their translation and were able to forge their ties with the Marranos there, and apparently sought opportunities to return to Iberia as representatives of Islamic merchants and rulers.¹⁴⁹ That was due to the skills of Sephardic Jewish refugees. Unfortunately, this was not to last, as, in 1487, Sephardim Jews were exiled from Spain.

2.2.3 The welcome of Sephardic Jews under Bayezit II

In the fifteenth century, non-Christians faced a series of socio-political problems in Christian Europe. While the Christian communities had sectarian conflicts among themselves as Catholics and Protestants, they also condemned and persecuted Jews and Muslims in their states.

At the time of the Fourth council of the Lateran, Christians adopted new decisions about Jews. According to these decisions, they did not allow Christians to marry into the Jewish community. Therefore, Christian authorities changed the rule against Jews in order to separate them from other denominations; this was considered more of an anti-Judaic approach than an anti-Semitic one. In this way, Jews were differentiated from other

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 154

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 163.

minorities within society due to the type of clothes and different colour hats they wore.¹⁵⁰ J. Michelet notes how inquisition courts treated Jews in Spain at the time:¹⁵¹

It was not seen this type of horrible event after Albigeois Sultanate in Spain. Burning in fire, poverty, dying of hunger, got drowned in the sea and in a similar way of the massacre; about one million Jews were killed in last ten years. In Seville, many Jews were burned in ovens and smells of burning people were mixing up with their screening in the city. When inquisition courts implemented this action, they probably felt to do a holy obligation for their religion.

As a result of decisions by fourth Council of the Lateran, Jews had to wear particular symbol which looked like flywheels in front of their clothes. The idea of having an emblem for Jews in Europe later inspired Adolf Hitler, who also ordered the use of the Star of David emblem in countries controlled by the Gestapo during the Second World War.

In Spain, Jews were deported to avoid conflict between them and Catholics. This was achieved by placing Jews in separate suburbs in different cities in Spain, however, an inquisition court exiled them from the country thereafter.¹⁵² According to Bertrand, there were various reasons for deportation in terms of the Catholic Church: Christian men were concerned about Crypto-Jews and Muslims and blamed them for calamities and evil in their homeland. Jews left behind financial resources when they were deported which the local government then used to pay expenses. Historian Fernand Braudel notes that the Spanish government actually tried to classify the population into different religious groupings in their country before deciding to deport Jews from Spain.¹⁵³

However, this statement may ring hollow, considering that Jews were citizens who lived in Spain for centuries. After having long established themselves in Spain, Jews or any other citizen cannot be treated as refugees anymore in their State, which also received tax from them as civilians. Basically, Jews were not guests of the country. The differential treatment of Jews for economic reasons would be a clear sign of discrimination against them. Moreover, if they allowed the converted Jews to stay in Spain as Christians, that was clear evidence of the antagonistic approach towards Jewish people from a religious viewpoint.

From a historical perspective, there were two reasons for the deportation of Jewish people from Spain. One of these was a lack of religious understanding and tolerance in the West in the Middle Ages. Anti-Semitism was born and developed in Europe. Especially in the Middle

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 51.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 56.

¹⁵² Eroglu, 2013, p.58.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 59.

Ages in Europe, there was no sign of tolerance towards other religious denominations in the Christian world. Vatican used to interfere in the lives of people, but not only in their religious life, but also within social relationships in the country. The Catholic Church did not allow Christians to build substantial positive relations with the Jewish community. Furthermore, the Catholic Church issued many religious decrees in order to make manifest its strict way of thinking which did not show tolerance towards other religions or even other movement of Christianity. Therefore, after the deportation of Jews and Muslims from Spain, the Catholic Church began fighting with other movement of Christianity in Western Society, which caused wars over several years in the Christian World. Another reason for deportation of Jews was to remove Jews from Spain and Portuguese for their economic opportunities.¹⁵⁴

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were some important letters regarding Jews in Europe and in Ottoman lands. These correspondences highlight the historical subjects on Jewish life in Western World. The following correspondence is from the Jewish community in Arles to the Jewish community in Istanbul.

Respected Jews,

Shalom

You must know that the king of the French publicly informed all Jews to leave the country or stay on the condition that they convert to Christianity. Local authorities in Arles, (Aix Marseille) plan to occupy our own properties and also treated us by death. By the cruel rulers in the Government, they destroyed our synagogues and treated us badly. We are kindly asking you what to do according to Law of Moses. Please urgently inform us.

Chief Rabbi of Chammore Arles Jews - 13 Schevath, 1489 P. 61

Response: Dear brothers of Moses,

We have received your letter 21 December of 1489 that you mentioned your difficulty and living under the great pressure of Christian rulers. We invite you to live on the Ottoman soil.¹⁵⁵

As seen above, the Jews in Europe were living in dire conditions in the fifteen century. Since they had low credibility across different states, they could not find a state for themselves despite all their attempts.

In response, Sultan Bayezit II convened the State Council to discuss the matter and issued a decree to to send a fleet to the Mediterranean Sea, after which the Ottoman fleet

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p.60.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p.62.

sailed off for the campaign against Spain in 1487 under the command of Kemal Reis.¹⁵⁶ His decision was based on the Qur'an,¹⁵⁷ and Turkish authorities recognized Jews and Christians as having religious freedom.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the Ottoman State waged war against the kingdoms of Castillo, Aragon, Naples, Granada and Sicily. After the first voyage to northern Italy, Kemal Reis reached the Spanish waters and recaptured Malaga. Unfortunately, the Ottoman fleet also had to deal with the Tunisian Hafsi Sultanate. In 1492, Granada surrendered and thus the sovereignty of Islam ended in Andalusia. The Ottoman State transported more than three hundred thousand Muslims who were on their way to Morocco and Algeria.¹⁵⁹

An Ottoman intellectual of the nineteenth century, Namik Kemal summarized the fall of Andalusia as follows:

When the Spanish took Granada (1487) they burned people to convert them to Christianity by force. When Ottomans conquered Istanbul, they granted the followers of every religion complete religious freedom to practice their beliefs.¹⁶⁰

On the other hand, the Spanish issued orders for more than three thousand Jews to choose between death and conversion to Catholicism. In the same period, the Ottoman Empire had attacked Spain 23 times with their fleet under the command of Kemal Reis, as a result of the Andalusian incident.¹⁶¹ Then, the Jews were welcomed in the Ottoman territory and they settled with the Dhimmi status. According to the Islamic law, non-Muslims who made peace with Muslims and accepted the sovereignty of the Islamic state were Dhimmi, all of whom were treated equally by the Sharia law regardless of color, language, or race including Jews¹⁶²

The Jews settled in Anatolia in certain regions of Ottoman territory, Edirne, Agriboz, and Tirhala. The book of land registration of Edirne city (*Tahrir Defteri*) which had been

¹⁵⁶ In fact, as it mentioned before, this tolerant was established at the time of emergence of Islam by the Prophet Muhammad and Ottoman Empire followed the same understanding towards minorities. Lehmann notes that 'indeed, the refugees would find the Ottoman State to be powerful, generous and tolerant'. Lehmann, 2005, p.15.

¹⁵⁷ Matkovski, 1982, p.41.

¹⁵⁸ Matkovski, 1982, p.51.

¹⁵⁹ In 1492, king of the Spain, Ferdinand and his wife Isabella deported the Jews from Spain but also let those stay in the country on condition that they convert to Christianity. For this removal action, some Jews decided to pretend to be Christian but continued their religious practices in Judaism. Therefore, these Jews had been regarded as the first Crypto-Jews in history. Küçük, 2013, p.80.

¹⁶⁰ Akgündüz Ahmet- Öztürk, 2011, *Ottoman History, Misperceptions and Truths*, p. 159, IUR Press, Rotherdam.

¹⁶¹ Uzuncarşılı H. Ismail, 1988, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Volume II. p. 203. TTK, Ankara.

¹⁶² When King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella's decree of expulsion was promulgated on March 31, ordering the 300.000 Jews of Spain to leave within four months, the Sephardim reacted with shock and disbelief. Gerber S. Jane 1992, *A History of the Sephardic Experience* p.X. Thee Free Press, New York.

drafted in 925/ 1519 at the decree of the Sultan Selim is evidence of these settlements. Page 40 of this book contains the names of the heads of the Jewish families under the title “*Jamaati Ispanya*”, the congregation of Spain, who had been deported from there. During the reign of the Sultan Selim I, son of Bayezit II, the Jews were treated fairly under the Ottoman sovereignty.¹⁶³ These Sephardic Jews settled in the Ottoman territory, and some of them such as Dona Gracie Mendes and her nephew Don Joseph Nasi became the most important merchants who contributed to the Ottoman international trade.¹⁶⁴

According to the Ottoman constitution, The Jews who came from the West (maghrib) would pay jizya tax, just like in the Seljuk Empire, and each of them would pay twenty-five *akces ispençe* (Ottoman pound).¹⁶⁵ According to Lewis, there were many synagogues in Damascus in the 1560s, and these were protected by the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁶ They developed expertise in certain fields in the Ottoman society and contributed to scholarship and economical life. For instance, Findley notes that “the Turks owed one of their best-loved carpet designs to Sephardic refugees who had brought it from their lost Iberian homeland”.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, carpets were sometimes used as curtains before the Torah ark in synagogues.

The emerging powers of the Atlantic Seaboard began to dominate trade and encroached upon the economy of the Ottoman Empire that proved to be ill-prepared to face the onslaught. This change did not remain unnoticed by Ottoman observers as early as 1625, a certain Omer Talip wrote:

Now the Europeans have learnt to know the whole world, they send their ships everywhere and seize important ports. Formerly the goods of Indian, Sind, and China used to come to Suez and were distributed by Muslims to all the world but now these goods are carried on Porterhouse, Dutch, and English ships to Frangistan, and are spread all over the world from there. What they do not need themselves they bring to Istanbul and other Islamic lands and sell it for five times the prices.¹⁶⁸

As other non-Muslims, the Ottoman Jews also had certain rights in the Ottoman life. In the Ottoman Empire, at some point, people had had higher citizen rights than other religious denominations. Moreover, in order to preserve the identity of all religious communities in the country, they used different dress codes according to their religious identity. Sultan Murat II.

¹⁶³ Lehmann, 2005, p.1.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p.166.

¹⁶⁵ Akgündüz Ahmet, 1993, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, p. 393, Vol, III, OA Vakfi, Istanbul

¹⁶⁶ Lewis Bernard ,1939, *A Jewish Source on Damascus just after the Ottoman Conquest*, p. 183, Vol, 10 / No 1, Bulletin of the school of oriental studies, University of London.

¹⁶⁷ Lehmann, 2005, p.99.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p.22.

ordered the issue of an imperial decree to prepare different dress codes for Jews.¹⁶⁹ For instance, an imperial decree was issued for non-Muslims, and noted that non-Muslims in the country were not allowed to ride a horse in the city among Muslims and should use certain color and fabric in order to differentiate themselves from other religious denominations.¹⁷⁰ It was said that this implementation was not aimed at insulting or discriminating against other religious groups. Instead, religious differences were regarded as one of the values of a multicultural society, which was accepted by those who used to pay the non-Muslim tax (Jizya) thereby avoiding military service. This constitutional implementation was accepted by non-Muslims. Some religious chiefs such as Rabbi or priests complained about certain people in their community when they did not follow the principles according to the law.

Another Ottoman archival document illustrates that some rabbis came to the general secretary of the State in order to submit letters of complaint (*Şikayetname*) about some Jews in their congregation, who disobeyed the law and wore different clothes on the streets of Istanbul.¹⁷¹ The implementation of the dress code was also used in Europe as a State law. However, due to anti-Semitic approaches towards Jewish communities in the Western world, the dress code was only restricted to Jewish People. This compulsory rule in the West was not only-discriminatory towards Jewish societies but was aimed to insult Jews in Europe. Unlike Europe, the compulsory dress codes were imposed on all communities in the Ottoman State.¹⁷²

Few decades later, in the middle of sixteenth century, Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire travelled to Europe to inform Jewish refugees, who were suffering due to their religious identity, that they could settle in the Ottoman territory.¹⁷³ One of the prominent Sephardic figure Isaac Zarfati, sent a communique to the Jews in Germany and Hungary inviting his co-religionists to immigrate to Turkey. The letter extolled the qualities of the Ottoman state: “Turkey is a land in which nothing is lacking. If you wish, all can go well with you. Through Turkey, you can safely reach the Holy land. Here everyone may sit under his

¹⁶⁹ Ocak, 2004, p.14.

¹⁷⁰ Eroglu, 2013, p. 22.

¹⁷¹ (Yahudi taifesinden bazı Rikab-ı Humayunuma rika sunup, libas babında adeti kadime mugayir telebbüs ederler deyü şekva eyleyup...) Eroglu, 2013, p. 23.

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 23

¹⁷³ Mendelssohn 1920, p.2.

own vine and fig tree.”¹⁷⁴ Jews belonged to communities that were originally dispersed in Muslim countries, some of whom were still under Muslim rule.¹⁷⁵

Contemporary Turkish Jew Naim Guleryuz has written that several Jewish commanders and generals worked in the Ottoman Army, which indicates that Sephardic Jews were integrated in Ottoman society. Guleryuz also illustrated the contribution they made and their role in Ottoman army. Isaac Molho Pasha was one of those Ottoman Jews who served in Ottoman army in the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁶

All the Ottoman Sultans were Muslims but not all governors of provinces (*Wilayat*) were Muslims. Some of them were Christian, but there were even Buddhist and Brahman governors who were in charge to operate their provinces which also show the Ottoman tolerance towards to the non-Muslim citizens and their leadership in the Ottoman territory, even the state was ruled by Islamic Law.¹⁷⁷

This mosaic structure of the Ottoman Empire should have amazed British Consul Ricaut to make him say that “we have to take notice of how Turks respect other denominations in the state that’s an admirable attitude towards others which we must consider for ourselves as Christians.”¹⁷⁸ Similarly, some archival documents highlight the religious situation regarding the Ottoman approach towards minorities and other religious groups in Turkey. According to an archival source, Chief Priest Tudor embraced Islam by his decision and became Muslim.¹⁷⁹ However, another Ottoman archival document highlights an interesting fact that a young Christian girl, Sofia’s conversion to Islam was not found suitable because, she was only seventeen, a teenager, and hence might have taken the decision under her environment’s influence.¹⁸⁰ During the process of conversion, the names were registered as "*new muslimeyn or adet-i nev muslimeyn*", meaning the person who recently embraced Islam.¹⁸¹ According to an archival document, a Christian priest went to the Ottoman Palace with his brother and wanted to phrase the name of Allah in order to convert to Islam. He took the Muslim name of Mehmet, and his brother took the name of Ahmad. He was awarded an

¹⁷⁴ Mendelssohn, 1920, p.3.

¹⁷⁵ Zvi, 1957, p. XI.

¹⁷⁶ Güleryüz, 2015, p. 289.

¹⁷⁷ Öztuna Yılmaz, 1985, *Osmanlı Devleti Tarihi*, p. 11, T. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara.

¹⁷⁸ Ricaut, 1677, p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ Şener, 2013, p. 34.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p.32.

¹⁸¹ Uzunçarşılı İsmail Hakkı, 1984, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı* p.28, TTK, Ankara.

official job, *Tımar*, with three thousand pounds (3000 *akçe*) salary per year."¹⁸² Ottoman Turks provided a pleasant atmosphere within society with regard to substantial tolerance for other religious communities. These circumstances encouraged some to convert to Islam.¹⁸³

Ottoman Sultans considered donations as a religious charity to gain the blessing of God.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, they offered a paid salary to converted people and even donated new Islamic clothes called "*destar bahâ*" or "*yaşmak bahâ*" that indicates the application of Islamic tradition in the Ottoman palace to them.¹⁸⁵ For instance, English statesman, governor of Prezi in Malta had received a salary from the Ottoman Empire because of his conversion to Islam. Undoubtedly, these rules were established based on Turkish tradition and Qur'anic teachings, but also the lifestyle of Prophet Muhammad called *Sunnah*. Prophet Muhammad said that "all children were born as Muslim but later become a Jew, *Mecusi*¹⁸⁶ or *Nasrani*¹⁸⁷ by the teaching of their parents."¹⁸⁸ From an Islamic perspective, conversion to Islam from any other religions is theorized through this saying of Prophet Muhammad.

Jewish statesmen in the Ottoman palace were also noticeable. However, only some of them converted to Islam like great scholar Abdusselamel Muhtedi (*Ilyas bin Abraham al Yehuda*) who ran away from Andalusia and later became Muslim. His well-known book, *Al Risalet'ül Hadiye* was written in order to rectify misunderstood beliefs in non-Muslim society about Islam and defend the Qur'an in order to emphasize Muhammad's prophethood.¹⁸⁹

In this regard, other Jewish scholars İbrahim Muteferrika and chief teacher Isaac Effendi, Nuh bin Abdulmennan, Hungarian Abdullah Bey were well-known Jewish historical figures in Ottoman time.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, many scholars and statesmen served in the Ottoman

¹⁸² Ottoman State Archives, KK, Ru'us Defteri No, 246/41, Hattı Hümayun bir keşis karındaşı ile Divan-ı Humayuna gelüp şerefi İslamla müşerref olup, keşişe Mehmed karındaşına Ahmad deyu tesmiye olunub ibdidadsın tımar reca etmeğin üçer bin akçe tımar verilmek buyuruldu.

¹⁸³ This religious action is called Teblig in Arabic.

¹⁸⁴ Şener, 2013, p. 89.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 98.

¹⁸⁶ Mecusi means Zoroastrian or Mazdean.

¹⁸⁷ Nasrani means a person Nazareth. This was one of the sects Judaizing Christians in the first and second centuries, who observed the laws of Moses and accepted Jesus as Messiah. They were later declared heretic by the Church of Rome.

¹⁸⁸ Bukhari, 2014, Vol, IX, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Şener, 2013, p.137. Also, one of his works in medical sciences *Micenneti't Taûn ve al Veba* was regarded as a genius study that presented cures to many illnesses, particularly epidemics in that era. His other work *Risale fi Âleti'd Dâbid ve'l 'Amel Biha* was also a fundamental study in astrology.

¹⁹⁰ Şener, 2013, p. 142.

Empire as Christian or Jew, but a number of them also embraced Islam like Mahmud Pasha, Sokullu Mehmet Pasha, and Kemankes Mustafa and Koprulu family.¹⁹¹

Elijah Capsali of Candia believed that the Ottoman conquest of Rhodes Island was part of the messianic drama leading to redemption.¹⁹² To him, the Sultan seemed to be a messianic figure. Thereupon, a poem was written in honor of the Ottoman victory. Historian Baer emphasized that the Jews in Rhodes rejoiced about Ottoman victory. They rushed to the synagogue and prayed there openly for the first time.¹⁹³ During his tenure in Rhodes his community along with much of the Jewish community was shaken by the Shabbetai Tzvi movement. As Rhodes was not far from Izmir, Jews from the island probably travelled to the Messiah, Shabbetai Tzvi's native city.¹⁹⁴

In the face of a crusading Christian Europe, Ottoman-Jewish religious relations led to sentiments of solidarity and cooperation between European Jews and the Ottomans. The Turks and Jews' lived experiences within the same territory provided fertile ground for friendship and solidarity.¹⁹⁵ As Angel stated,

The Turkish State tradition of Central Asia favoured those subjects who could provide skill and capital to the empire. Finally, Islam's constitutional dime law provided the religious minorities with strict guarantees for their lives, property, and freedom of religion. All these made it possible for the Jews of Europe to immigrate, settle, and develop prosperous Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁶

The largest numbers of Iberian Jewish exiles found their way across the Mediterranean by the way of Italy to Ottoman Empire, where they were permitted to settle and practice their Judaism openly. These Iberian Jews became the most demographically significant Jewish immigrant community in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁷ They were easily 'ottomanized' in the public-sphere, which does imply that they entirely assimilated Ottoman ways, but rather that they became socially integrated with a sense of national identity, while retaining their religious distinctiveness. For instance, a Ladino journal condemns women's

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p.111.

¹⁹² Peçevi İbrahim, 1866, *Peçevi tarihi*, p. 99. Vol. I, Dersaadet. Istanbul. Similarly, Ottoman achievements on the battlefield were regarded as a pleasant news in Jewish environments, indicating a sense of identification with the Ottomans, and sentiments of patriotism. For instance, Ottoman official historian Peçevi notes that when Kanuni Sultan Suleiman conquered Budapest, welcomed Jews in Salonica and some in other Anatolian towns in 1526.

¹⁹³ Marc Baer quoted in Angel, 1980, p.39.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p.65.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p.14

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁹⁷ Cohen J. P – Stein S. A, 2014, *Sephardi Lives, A Documentary History*, p. 3, Stanford University Press, USA.

singing in cafes on Sabbath Day. During the late Ottoman era, some Jewish women and girls became public singers - in violation of Talmudic injunction - out of economic necessity. The fact was that they sang on the Sabbath and sought profit for their performances, was thereby perceived as a desecration the Jews' day of rest.¹⁹⁸

A publication entitled *Sephardi lives* informs us about Sephardic Jews in Ottoman lands, stating that "Europe began where the Turkish Empire had once ended. Most of the Sephardic Jews still live there and had always been good for them under the Turks."¹⁹⁹

2.2.5 Religious links between the Abrahamic religions

The three faiths within Abrahamic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are theologically interlinked. These faiths hold that there is one God (Creator) and that all creatures are mortal in this life. This religious view is apparent in the Ottoman Muslim and non-Muslim graveyards (including Sabbateans) where mention is made of the second life of human beings after their death on the historical tombstones.²⁰⁰ Also mentioned earlier, the Qur'an emphasises the links between the three faiths in Surah Al-Baqarah, stating that they are people of the book. From this standpoint, the Messiahs in Judaism and Christianity are also given similar status in Islam. The prophets of Islam begin with Adam and include Noah, Abraham, as far as Jesus.²⁰¹

In terms of ancestral history, Jews can trace their lineage back to Abraham through his son Isaac, while the Arabs see themselves as descendants of Abraham's other son, Ismail. Hence these similarities between Christians and Jews as Zimmah (people of the book) cause religious tolerance across faith in Muslim society. Therefore, God is seen as the maker of this religion and Adam as the first person on earth and the first Muslim, according to Islam. The great prophet Abraham is referred to as a Muslim in the Qur'an.²⁰² It is stated in the Qur'an, "we believe in the revelation made by Allah to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and all Prophets and we make no distinction between any of them".²⁰³ This evidence clearly shows that these Prophets were carrying the same message from God, the message of

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 77.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 79.

²⁰⁰ Indeed, each and every Muslim tombstone emphasises the concept of life after death in "huval baqi" (Surah Ali Imran, 185). Christian gravestones also remind Christians about the subject of the hereafter as "Memento mori" in Christian Cemeteries.

²⁰¹ These names are spelled as Adem, Nuh, Ibrahim, Ismail, Isak, Lut, Yakub, Yusuf, Musa and Eyub in Arabic and Turkish.

²⁰² The Qu'ran Surah 3: verse , 60

²⁰³ The Qu'ran Surah 11, Verse, 136

Islam as well, which means peace and piety. Therefore, throughout history, Muslim rulers were tolerant of other religions like the Seljuk Empire in Mesopotamia, the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia and Eastern Europe, and the Umayyad Empire in Spain.

One reason for the tolerance of Islam was that it was an established religion in the region. Hence, Muslims did not feel threatened by those from other religious denominations, allowing them to act in a sympathetic manner with individuals from other communities.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, his followers travelled to North Africa, then Spain and through the Middle East towards India in order to spread his message.²⁰⁴ Although for Muslims the Prophet is the perfect person,²⁰⁵ he is not divine. Mohammedanism cannot offer the full picture of Islam theologically, though in Western literature, Mohammedanism and Islam have been used interchangeably.

For the West, the link between Muhammad and Mohammedanism corresponded to similar links made between Christ and Christianity, Buddha and Buddhism, both figures seen by their followers as divine or semi-divine. However, the name of Islam is not associated with the founder of the religious faith, nor a specific region. Unlike Islam, the term Hinduism derives its name from the Indus valley, Judaism derives its name from the territory Judea. Despite these differences, there are a number of important similarities between Islam and Judaism.²⁰⁶ When the Qur'an and Torah are analyzed by scholars, one notes similarities in rules, this is because the Qur'an clearly states that Torah and Bible were the previous holy scripts which were not updated and therefore God sent Qur'an. In this sense, from an Islamic point of view, Judaism and Christianity are the predecessors of the religion of Islam. Therefore, as mentioned above, numerous similarities exist in these three religions. For instance, three times a year, Jews were recommended to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Once a year, Muslims are recommended to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims purify their body with water before going on hajj. Jews also purify their body with water before going on pilgrimage. During the pilgrimage, Muslims circle the Kaaba seven times anti-clockwise. Jews circle the holy temple seven times anti-clockwise as well. During the pilgrimage,

²⁰⁴ Many people thinking of the situation in the Middle East and bitter contest between Israel and Arab neighbours assume incorrectly that Islam is against Judaism whereas this is all about political conflict in the region. See, Lewis Bernard, 2002, *What Went Wrong, Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, p.172, Harper Prenal, Great Britian.

²⁰⁵ In Islamic literature it is called *Insan-i Kamil* which means perfect Human.

²⁰⁶ Akbar. S Ahmad, 2009, *Islam Today, A Short Introduction to the Muslim World*, p.26, I.B Tauris, London

Muslims are expected to offer certain animals as a *Qurban* (slaughtering of an animal as sacrifice).

Similarly, as part of the pilgrimage, Jews are required to offer certain animals as sacrifice. The Muslims sought to conform to the Sharia law,²⁰⁷ and accepted the conventions of Ahlul Sunna and that of the Halacha²⁰⁸ of orthodox Judaism. In this sense, Turks interpreted Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the compliance to similar customs that would help increase understanding across the three Abrahamic faiths.²⁰⁹ As previously mentioned, with this understanding, one of the Sultans in Khazar Empire accepted three religions of Islam Christianity, Judaism, and performed his religious ritual on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

The similarities between Christianity and Islam are remarkably visible in both religions. From the religious perspective, Christianity was also a faith close to Khazar Sultans because Jesus spread the message that there is one God, as mentioned in Deut.²¹⁰ The Qur'an also imparted the same message in particular verses.²¹¹ In terms of social practices, the consumption of pork was not permissible according to Jesus, as stated in *Leviticus*.²¹² Muslims held a similar belief based on the teachings of the Qur'an.²¹³ Another practice is that of greeting. In the Bible, in John 20:21 Jesus is said to greet with "Peace be with you!" which does not differ from the Muslim greeting "*as salaamu alaikum*".²¹⁴ Some religious phrases like Jesus used, for example "God willing" is similar to the Muslim phrase *inshallah* that is also emphasised in the Qur'an.²¹⁵ In terms of religious practices, Jesus showed the importance to cleanliness, washed his hands and feet before particular religious rituals like Muslims do.²¹⁶ In the same vein, like Jesus' mother Maryam, Muslim women cover their bodies and use the hijab which is found in both religious traditions.²¹⁷ Fasting obligation is also bequeathed by Jesus to his followers, and likewise is regarded as one of the five pillars

²⁰⁷ Sharia is the traditional code of Islamic Law. See, Gerber Haim, 1994, *State, Society, and Law in Islam*, p. 58, State University of New York Press.

²⁰⁸ Halakhah/Halacha is generally accepted ruling in rabbinical law. See, Johnson Paul, 1987, *A History of the Jews*, p. 590. Harper Collins Press, London

²⁰⁹ Jacobs, Louis, 2007 "*Judaism*". Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol, 11 (2d Ed.) Farmington Hills, Michigan.

²¹⁰ Deuteronomy, 6:4, Mark 12:29

²¹¹ The Quran, Verse 4:171

²¹² Leviticus 11:7

²¹³ The Qur'an Verse 6:145

²¹⁴ John 20:21, (Peace be with you)

²¹⁵ The Qur'an Verses 18:23-24

²¹⁶ Imam Abu Hanifa, Fikh ul Akbar

²¹⁷ Timothy 1/2:9, Genesis 24:64-65, and Corinthians 11:6. See also: The Qur'an verse 33:59.

of the religion of Islam.²¹⁸ Circumcision is another important ritual which Jesus did and bequeathed to Muslims.²¹⁹ In terms of terminology, the Aramaic word *Elah* referring to God in Judaism and also used by Jesus, is similar to the Islamic word *Allah* for the Creator.²²⁰ Namely, the Islamic tradition accepts Christianity and Judaism as its predecessors, but identifies Islam as the last divine religion in the world.²²¹ The relationships between Jews and Muslims have been understandably pleasant from the time of the Prophet Muhammad up until late nineteenth century. One of Prophet Muhammad's wives was of Jewish origin, Safiya, and had always been loyal to Muhammad until his death. This is an example of tolerance towards the Jews in the Islamic world. Certainly, with the same understanding, Khazar Jews observed Christianity and Islam, which is a bit different from Israeli Jews' religious perspective.

In most of the literature, the term Yehudi is a translation of the Yahudah tribe, which refers to the Jewish community.²²² In this regard, the literal translation of Jew would be a person from the Yahudah tribe, but the term Jew has come to mean a sect of people who follow Judaism. When Prophet Muhammad declared his Prophethood, Jews were living in Fedeq, Vadil Kura, Tayma, and Taif as a separate congregation.²²³ In the first years of his prophethood, as a conqueror of the city of Medina, Muhammad negotiated with Jews based on Qur'anic law.²²⁴ Under these circumstances, Jews agreed to live in Medina on condition that they would pay tax to the Muslim government.²²⁵ The relations between Muslims and Jews were reflected in the treaty which the Prophet made with them in Medina. The first of its kind, it allowed Jews free trade, free travel, and freedom of thought and expression. The Jews insisted that the Prophet must not sign the treaty as the prophet of God, but sign the treaty as the son of Abdullah. Indeed the Qur'an makes great strides to emphasize that Christians and Jews are the people of the book and must be treated with respect.

It is clearly stated in the Qur'an, "dispute not with the people of the book save in the fairer manner, except for those of them that do wrong; and say, '*we believed in what has been*

²¹⁸ Exodus 34:28, Daniel 10:2-6. 1Kings 19:8, and Matthew 4:1

²¹⁹ Bursevi Ismail Hakkı, 1864, *Ruhul Bayan*, Vol. 11, p. 1122, Dersaadet, Istanbul. See, The Bible in Luke 2:21: Genesis 17:13: The Qur'an verse 16:123.

²²⁰ The Qur'an Surah Al Maida, 5:44-50

²²¹ The Qur'an Surah Al Maida, 5:44-50

²²² Tanyu Hikmet, 2005, *Tarihte Boyunca Türkler ve Yahudiler*, p 14, Vol. 1, Elips Kitap, Istanbul.

²²³ Özger Yunus, 2011, *Sicili Ahbal Defterlerine göre bazı Yahudi memurlarının Sosyo-Kültürel durumları*, p.382, Vol, 4, No, 16, Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Istanbul.

²²⁴ Lewis, 1996, p. 20.

²²⁵ Shaw, 2008, p. 16.

sent down to us, and what has been sent down to you; our God and our God is one, and to Him we have surrendered".²²⁶ This verse in the Qur'an is actually embraced by all believers in Jewish and Christian societies as people of the book. In the Hayber War, Safiya's husband died on the battlefield and Safiya was captured as a war prisoner. However, when Prophet Muhammad offered that she either be his wife or slave (servant) for the state, she chose to marry him and become his wife. This resulted in closer relations with the Jews.²²⁷ These Islamic principles also affected some Jews and Christians and caused conversion to Islam.

At the time of Prophet Muhammad, a well-known Jewish Rabbi of the *Banu Qaynuqa* tribe, Abdullah ibn Salam embraced Islam in Medina around 630 AD. He was regarded as the first Muslim that was promised Paradise while he was still alive.²²⁸ Such events created sympathy and tolerance for other people of the book by Muslim rulers after the death of Prophet Muhammad.

For instance, in 640 AD, Caliph Omar, conquered Alexander (Iskenderiyye) and rescued the lives of 45000 Jews from the Roman Empire. Jews lived under the Muslim rule in peace for centuries.²²⁹ Caliph Omar protected the rights of Jews as Zimmah.²³⁰ After they defeated the commander of the Roman Empire, Kartaca Hannibal occupied the territory and mistreated Jews. These horrifying events were considered as a calamity for Jews and gave rise to messianic expectation.²³¹

Then, in the Roman Era, the Jews were again persecuted by the Roman Empire. According to Bowman, the rule of Roman Empire made the Jews fall back upon their messianic dreams.²³² He stated that,

The near total fragmentation of the Empire divided the Byzantine Jewry into the restricted enclaves of Constantinople and her hinterland, as well as Trabzon and Edirne cities.

Bowman states that no Jews, as far as we know, fought in the Ottoman army however this is not an accurate statement.²³³

²²⁶ The Qur'an, Surat ul Anqubat, 29:46.

²²⁷ Küçük, 2013, p. 28.

²²⁸ Bilmen Ömer Nasuhi, 1950, *Kuran-i Kerimden Dersler ve Öğütler*, Vol. 3 p, 654, Semerkant Yayıncılık, İstanbul.

²²⁹ Küçük 2013, p. 34.

²³⁰ Angel. Marc D. 1980, *The Jews of Rhodes, the history of a Sephardic Community*, p.27, Sepher Hermon Press, Newyork.

²³¹ Örs Hayrullah, 2015, *Musa ve Yahudilik*, p.302, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul.

²³² Steven B. Bowman, 1985, *The Jews of Byzantium, 1204 - 1453*, p.9, The University of Alabama Press. USA.

When Christianity became the main religion in the Roman Empire, the persecution of Jews was the part of the public policy of the state.²³⁴ Therefore, while Jews were suffering in Europe because of Anti-Semitic mentality, some of them chose to live under Turkish rule. In this respect, in 1394, as a result of anti-Semitic events against Jews in France, Ottoman Rabbi (*Hahambaşı*) Isaak Sarafati called Jews to Turkey “from the shadow of the cross to the shadow of crescent”.²³⁵ When the Ottoman Sultan, Murad I, captured the city of Ohrid in 1361, he found two Jewish communities welcoming him as a liberator, since they knew that the Turks did not harbor the anti-Semitic attitude of the Byzantines.²³⁶

2.2.4 Ottoman Approach towards Christians and Jews

As far as understood from the primary sources, the Ottoman Empire always cared about social rights for minority groups. Therefore, many nations in different faiths managed to live in the same country for centuries.²³⁷

Social problems within the Jewish community, and Ottoman approaches must be examined to better understand Jewish life in the Turkish society. Ottoman Law regulated the social life of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman land. Despite religious differences, Ottoman authorities advised Christian and Jewish citizens about private life in their community. An interesting archival record highlights the matter, by referring to an imperial decree that was issued for avoiding abortion among all the minority groups including Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Sabbateans, but did not exclude the majority group, Muslims.²³⁸ Sometimes social matters between Christian and Jews produced new cases for the Ottoman authorities. Due to inter-religious marriages, there were some disputes between Christian and Jewish communities in the Ottoman times. For instance, a court case was regarding an Ottoman Jew and his marriage to an Australian Christian lady that caused a dispute in his Jewish congregation.²³⁹ Another archival document is very important for the understanding of

²³³ Like military Molho Pasha, there were many Jewish commanders in the Ottoman army. See, Güleriyüz Naim, 2015, *Toplumsal Yaşamda Türk Yahudileri*, p. 183, Gözlem yayınevi, Istanbul.

²³⁴ Zvi, 1957, p. 34.

²³⁵ Shaw Stanford J, 1988, *Christian, Anti-semitizm and Ottoman Empire*, p. 565 (Belleten, Cilt, LVII, Sayı 219) Ankara.

²³⁶ Matkovski Alexander, 1982, *A History of the Jews in Macedonia, Skopje*, p. 37, Macedonian Review Edition, Macedonia.

²³⁷ Within this context, the Ottoman administration regarded subject Christian and Jewish population as people of the book (Ahl al-Kitab) and acknowledged them as separate communities, known as millets. (Ahl al Zimmah) people protected by the Islamic authority and each member of these communities called Zimmah. Aydingün Ismail & Esra Dardagan 2006 *Rethinking the Jewish communal apartment in the Ottoman communal building* p. 320, Vol, 42, No, 2. March, Middle Eastern Studies.

²³⁸ OSA, C. ADL. 29/Z/1254.

²³⁹ OSA, DH, SYS, 40/2, Hijree, 1328.

human rights in the Ottoman Empire. This decree was to resolve a social issue for Jewish people because the regular day of city market (bazaar), Saturday, was a religious holiday, Sabbath for all Jews. Therefore, Jewish people requested that the day of the public market in Manastir city be changed. The Manastir Municipality responded favourably and offered them another day, Monday or Thursday in the week. Thereupon, Ottoman decree was issued by the Ottoman Sultan for Jewish in order to change the day of public market.²⁴⁰

However, sometimes Ottoman Jews was subjected to unfair treatment by radical Muslims in the Ottoman society. Still, due to an equitable legal system, minorities were always protected by the constitution. In a suburb of Izmir city, the Ottoman judge sent an official warning to the Mayor of Bergama in order to stop him from forcing Jewish people to convert to Islam.²⁴¹ This document shows that from time to time, some Muslims might not have been tolerant towards those who belonged to different religious denominations; yet the State intervened to mete out justice.

Due to the multicultural and religious structures of the Ottoman Empire, Christian, Jewish and Muslim people lived in the same surroundings for centuries. However, there was always hidden antagonism between Jews and Christians that dates back to the crucifixion of Jesus by the orthodox Jews. According to an archival document, an Ottoman Greek linked the kidnapping and murder of a Christian child in Syria to the Blood libel during the Jewish Passover.²⁴² An imperial decree was then issued taking measures to find out the murdered Christian child in Fener suburb in Istanbul. The Ottoman Greek blamed Jews for killing the child.²⁴³ This allegation was found to be false.

Similarly, in Izmir, Christian community blamed a Jew for murdering a French man. Therefore Christian unfairly put pressure on Jews, and thereupon, the Ottoman judge made a statement to stop this wave of suspicion and accusation for social welfare.²⁴⁴ Equal treatment of minorities in the Empire was not only for Jews but also for other groupings as well. Once, a letter of complaint was produced by Jews and Muslims, who did not want to allow an Armenian man, Kalus, to open his butchery shop in Ortaköy suburb in Istanbul. However, Ottoman authorities ruled in favour of the Armenian.²⁴⁵ According to an Ottoman archival

²⁴⁰ OSA, HAT, 536/24557, Hijree, 1247.

²⁴¹ OSA, C. ML, Hejree 1260.

²⁴² OSA, YA. HUS. 323/129 Hijree 1312.

²⁴³ OSA, MF. MKT. 20/32 Hijree, 1291.

²⁴⁴ OSA, A, MKT. UM, 348/31 Hijree, 1275.

²⁴⁵ OSA, A, DVN, 18/92 Hijree, 1262.

document, the Armenian shopkeeper won the case against Muslims and Jews. This illustrates the fairness of the Ottoman Judicial system and the equal treatment of minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

Another issue in the Ottoman society for Jews was the blood libel during the celebration of Passover. According to the Jewish custom, on the Passover day, half an unleavened bread (*matzo*), called an Afikoman is hidden, and the child who finds it is entitled to ask for an expensive present in return for it.²⁴⁶ This custom was misinterpreted by Christian World and became a terrible day to blame Jews. Thus this custom began to call Blood libel by Christian world for the accusation that Jews kidnapped and murdered the children of Christians in order to use their blood as part of their religious ritual during Jewish holidays. There were more court cases about Jewish people in Ottoman State. In one document, Ottoman judge ordered to confiscate illegal books which were sold by the daughter of Sarioğlu Penayot, Greek Christian lady Mariam, who promoted anti-Semitic books against Jewish citizen.²⁴⁷

Similarly, the Ottoman Imperial decree was issued for confiscating some illegal books which were written in Greek language and delivered to people by an Ottoman Greek Zavniyos Isaac who has antagonistic approaches towards Jews.²⁴⁸ However, sometimes conservative Muslims in the Ottoman society also challenged Jewish people due to the misinterpretation of the Jewish religion. The murder of a Muslim child in Plevne city was interpreted as a blood libel issue and some Jews were arrested for this case. With the guidance of chief Rabbi, despite objections from Muslims, the Ottoman judge released the suspects due to lack of evidence.²⁴⁹ Some conservative Muslims in Cuma Pazarı attacked Jewish shops during that time. For this reason, suspects were also arrested and taken to court for judgment.²⁵⁰

Jews struggled in other countries, and therefore their migration to the Ottoman land became an important subject matter in Jewish history. For example, in Russia, Jews suffered at the hands of Russian authorities. Due to the persecution of some Jews, they requested a

²⁴⁶ Matzo or matzah is eaten by Jews on Passover. Afikoman is piece matzo, eaten by Jews since the destruction of the temple and the discontinuation of the Korban Pesach, refers to finish the Passover Seder Meal. Afikoman has become device to keep children awake until the time it is needed for desert.

²⁴⁷ OSA, MV, 81/93 Hijree, 1312.

²⁴⁸ OSA, BEO, 1429/177116 Hijree, 1317.

²⁴⁹ OSA, DVN. MHM. 7/21, Hijree, 1265.

²⁵⁰ OSA, MF. MFT, 387/3, Hijree, 1315.

place to stay in Syria.²⁵¹ Another archival record also provides crucial information regarding helping Jewish refugees who were treated inhumanely by the Russians and who therefore emigrated from Belarus to the Ottoman province of Moldavia.²⁵² According to an Ottoman archival document, 28 Russian Jewish refugees migrated to Haifa and requested Ottoman citizenship.²⁵³ Inhumane treatment towards Jews not only took place in Russia but also in Iran. Jewish refugees from Persia migrated to Gevara and request Ottoman citizenship from the Ottoman Foreign Affairs.²⁵⁴

On the other side, some antagonistic attitudes against Jews appeared in Bulgarian society. According to an archival record, an Ottoman commander informed Ottoman authorities about the conflicts in Lobniçe to find a resolution.²⁵⁵ In this regard, some Jews were also ill-treated by Serbians in Belgrade and around the villages.²⁵⁶ Some documents offer details about violence against Jews in Albania. In this document, Jewish merchants were robbed and killed in between Silivri and Lofça but robbers were eventually arrested by Ottoman authorities.²⁵⁷

2.2.5 The Turkish image in the Western world

When the Ottoman Empire rescued the Jews from Spain and Portugal, the Jews saw the Turks as redeemers, but the West increasingly saw them as a “terrible” enemy.²⁵⁸ The 'Turkish Problem' was regarded fundamentally as a clash of religions, even though throughout the sixteenth century the rhetoric of the crusades faded and was replaced by the recognition of the Ottoman Empire as a mere political force. Therefore, Ottoman image was not very pleasant in Christian eyes in medieval Europe:

If there be any men that earnestly do not consider miseries and calamities of Christian people let them reader this late treatise wherein they shall perceive how might Mahummetes superstitious impieties hath prevayled, how ample regions the Christians have lost in what bondage thy olive and where unto that base and ugly nation, Turks have increased through our sins.²⁵⁹

²⁵¹ OSA, Y.PRK AZJ. 55/88.

²⁵² OSA, C. İKTS. 22/1059 hejree 1255, (from Lehistan to Boğdan).

²⁵³ OSA, DH, EUM, 39/8, Hijree, 1335.

²⁵⁴ OSA, Y. PRK, 30/37, Hijree, 1312.

²⁵⁵ OSA, Y. PRK. UM. 47/87 Hijree, 1317.

²⁵⁶ OSA, HR. MKT. 171/35 Hijree, 1273.

²⁵⁷ OSA, A, MKT, MHM, 360/83 Hijree, 1283.

²⁵⁸ Çirakman Aslı, 2002, *From the Terror of the World to the Sick Man of Europe, European images of Ottoman Empire and society from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century*, p. 37, Peter Lang, New York.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 44. The negative Western perception can be traced back to the 11th century when the Seljuk Turks entered Anatolia and defeated the Roman Byzantine Empire. As revenge, the Christian World wanted to regain the holy land from Muslims. When Seljuk Turks defeated Eastern Roman Empire in 1071, the Christian World

The hostility and anxiety expressed towards the Ottoman Empire and society were basically presented as an issue around the incompatibility of different belief systems. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the two camps in the conflict were considered to be the Muslims and the Christians. According to Henry Marsh, there were two powers in the world, the Turks and the Christians.²⁶⁰ He states that as follows:

It hath been the happy fortune of the Turk to be accounted barbarous and ignorant: for upon this persuasion Christian Princes have laid themselves open and unguarded to their greatest danger; contending together for one Palm of land while this puissant Enemy hath made himself master of whole provinces and largely shared in the rich and pleasant possessions of Europe.²⁶¹

Contrary to above statements, according to Blount, the Turkish character is friendly, generous, honest and loving, and Turks are far from breaking their promises.²⁶² Thevenot points out their virtues and vices, among the virtues he observes that Turks are zealous for their religion, they do not have quarrels amongst themselves and duels are not known to them, they are loyal to their Prince, they never play for money, and they are temperate and moderate people.²⁶³ As for the vices of the Turks, he remarks that they are proud, and esteem themselves above all other nations, they are sodomites, they are covetous, they despise all other nations such as Christians and Jewish, and they do not improve sciences.²⁶⁴ Thevenot also argues that Christians and Jews corrupt virtues of the Turks. He emphasized how Turks are known in his environment as below:

In Christendom many think that Turks are Devil, Barbarous and men of no faith and honesty, but such as know them, and have conversed with them have a far different opinion for it is certain the Turks are good people and observe very that command of nature not to do others but what we would have others to do us.²⁶⁵

Additionally, the strangest portrayal of the cleanliness of the Turks was perhaps made by Grelot who stated that there was no other nation that valued cleanliness more than Ottoman or Muslims. “Turks bath themselves almost every day, their brains are thereby so over moistened that they are generally troubled with a continual Rheume in their eyes. The same

saw Turks as threat and considered Crescent as enemy against Crusaders.²⁵⁹ Thus, Seljuk Turks bequeathed this unwanted perception to their successor, Ottoman Turks. This understanding in the Western World caused anti-Turkish sentiment (Turkophobia) which affected the contemporary publications from the past to the present. See also, Geoffrey Antonie, 1542, *The order of the Great Turkes* (trans. R. Grafton). London

²⁶⁰ Çirakman, 2002, p 45.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.45. Rycout, 1668, p. 131.

²⁶² Çirakman, 2002, p.46.

²⁶³ Çirakman, 2002, p.55.

²⁶⁴ Thevenot' Jean De, 1687, *Travels of Monsieur into the Levant*, p.58. A. Lovell, London.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 58.

cleanliness for the public buildings especially near the mosques, they build a great number of public necessity houses (*washrooms*)."²⁶⁶ According to Abercromby and many others, the Turks had the ambition to destroy Christianity and they were now the most powerful nation in Europe.²⁶⁷ He stated that people must pray ardently to God that he will open the eyes of the Turks that they do not live by their superstition and obey the sure and true path of the Christian religion.²⁶⁸ This negative Western view towards Turks played a crucial role in terms of shaping a general idea of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Therefore, while the West developed a negative idea on Turkish image, the exiled Jews showed gratitude and supported the Ottoman State.²⁶⁹ One of those Jewish families was that of Shabbetai Tzvi, who moved to İzmir in the 1490s, where the Karaim Jewish community was already present.²⁷⁰

2.2.6 Turkish-Jewish relations at the time of Shabbetai Tzvi

Shabbetai Tzvi was born in the seventeenth century, and at that time, Ottoman Jews lived in good condition under the Ottoman rule from İzmir to Albania as far as Egypt, wherever the Ottoman administration systems had been established. Presumably, therefore first Jewish book in history was published in the reign of İV Mehmet who was the Sultan of the Empire at the time when Shabbetai Tzvi was declared his messiahship. Freedom of thought was well-established in Ottoman society in comparison to Western World. Spanish Jews migrated to Near East when they exiled from Spain 1492. Mostly Istanbul, İzmir, and Salonica were the center cities of Jews in Ottoman Era.²⁷¹

While Ottoman Jews lived in welfare under the Ottoman rule, Jews in the Western World were facing antisemitic approaches from the Catholic Church. These centuries might be characterized by rising Christian anti-Semitism invented in Western World. For instance, in the 16th and 17th centuries, Christian Europe's reorganization of the law resulted in a number of trials on charges of heresy. Galileo's statement that the Sun does not revolve around the earth was regarded as heretical by the church and state. This fanaticism not only negatively affected such philosophers, but also prevented other religious communities like the Jews to continue residing in Europe.

²⁶⁶ Grelot Joseph G, 1683, *A Late Voyage to Constantinople*, p.178. J. Philips. London.

²⁶⁷ Abercromby D.1660, *The Present State of the German and Turkish Empires*, p. 15 J. R. Press, London.

²⁶⁸ Theodorus Bibliander, 1542, *A Godly Consultation unto the Brethren and Companions of the Christian Religion*. Fol. CXXII. Basel.

²⁶⁹ Lewis, 2002, p. 160.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. P.27.

²⁷¹ Esther Benbasse, 1999, *Son Osmanlı Hahambaşının Mektupları*, (çev, İrfan Yalçın) p. 16, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul

Similarly, as mentioned earlier, it is a well-known historical event in the history of the Jews, that after the Alhambra decree, Jews were forced to immigrate to other countries - mostly onto Ottoman soil - in 1492. Spanish Jews moved to Salonica, Istanbul, and Izmir and settled in the Ottoman territory. In fact, there were already the *Romaniote* Jews who were old Greek speaking people, who lived under the Byzantine rule and Arabic-speaking Jews known as the *Mizrahhiyyim* who lived in southern Anatolia at around Iraq. Namely these Jewish communities such as the Ashkenazi and also Sephardic Jews found a sanctuary in Anatolia after the Ottoman conquest. However, *Rabbani* Jews were the most intensive Jews in Ottoman society and divided four groups as Ashkenazi, Sephardim, *Romaniote* and *Mustaries*.²⁷² Besides this, all these different Jewish people followed their own cultures, languages and traditional customs under the Ottoman rule.²⁷³

After a while, other Jewish groups such as Marranos and Ashkenazi migrated to Asia Minor to save their lives. Shabbetai Tzvi's ancestors also moved to Izmir, escaping Western hostility to find refuge in Ottoman lands. They lived in peace under the Ottoman rule and became Ottoman citizens classified as non-Muslim, basically given the Zimmah status. An Ottoman Rabbi described Ottoman lands as a heaven on earth while calling his co-religionists to move to Anatolia. Under these circumstances, Shabbetai Tzvi grew up and had the opportunity to observe the suffering of his co-religionists in the world. Therefore, the emergence of Shabbetai Tzvi's movement in İzmir and its surroundings, to all Ottoman territories as far as Europe, is not actually a coincidence in history.

In 1667, the Pınarbaşı suburb became the main center for Shabbetai Tzvi.²⁷⁴ During this period and even later, Ottoman official records indicate that the term *Yehudi* was used until the nineteenth century but after that Ottomans used the *Musevi* term in formal correspondences to express more of a religious in society.²⁷⁵ It is because, by the nineteenth century, Ottoman Jews preferred to call themselves as *Musevi* rather than *Yahudi* because they lost much prestige in the Ottoman society after the Sabbatean movement in 1666. For this reason, in an attempt to seek a new and positive social identity, they ended up calling themselves *Musevi*, referring to themselves as the believers of Moses, rather than stating that their Jewish identity.²⁷⁶ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman

²⁷² Ibid, p.87.

²⁷³ Ibid. p.323.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. P.36.

²⁷⁵ Kocabaş Süleyman, 2008, *Türkiyede Gizli Tarih II, Dönmelik ve Dönmeler*, p. 110, Vatan Yayınları, İstanbul.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, P. 86

administration was officially appointed the first Karay religious leader and recognized him as the head of his congregation. After this, the chief of Karaim congregation began to use an official stamp for his religious affairs. Karaim Jews separated their religious temples from other Jewish synagogues. They were registered in a different census book as a separate community, and orthodox Jews did not interfere in their religious rituals.²⁷⁷

Jewish communities in places such as Istanbul, Salonica, or Izmir experienced a process of insightful cultural and political transformation that improved the substance of their cultural identities and the economic circumstances of Jewish lives.²⁷⁸ How does one account for the energetic dominance of Sephardic, Judea-Spanish culture in Ottoman Jewry? The expulsion from Spain and the exodus of Jews after the forced conversions in Portugal in the sixteen century coincided with the great expansion of the Ottoman Empire from a regional power to a world empire.²⁷⁹

In terms of mercantile relations, the Jews in Izmir played a crucial role to develop remarkable links with other coastal countries such as Italy and France but also Ottoman states like Egypt and Syria. As such, the Izmir harbor was importantly active in the seventeenth century and helped the city's economy with its mercantile affairs. As Ottoman citizens, Jews were allowed to manufacture and sell any commercial items like Muslim Turks because in the Ottoman Empire, the treatment of the non-Muslim population was essentially based on the Islamic legal concept of granting them protection as Zimmah, people of the book. In turn, they were expected to recognize the political primacy of Islam, pay a special poll tax, and be confined to a legally guaranteed safe place within Ottoman society.²⁸⁰ The emerging powers of the Atlantic Seaboard began to dominate trade and encroached upon the economy of the Ottoman Empire that proved to be ill-prepared to face the onslaught. This change did not remain unnoticed by Ottoman observers as early as 1625, a certain Omer Talip wrote that:

Now the Europeans have learnt to know the whole world, they send their ships everywhere and seize important ports. Formerly the goods of Indian, Sind and China used to come to Suez and were distributed by Muslims to the entire world. But now these goods are carried on Porterhouse, Dutch, and English ships to Frangistan, and are spread all over the world from There. What they do not need themselves they bring to Istanbul and other Islamic lands and sell it for five times the prices.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 95

²⁷⁸ Lehmann, 2005, p.1.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 15.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 19.

²⁸¹ Ibid, p.23.

According to Cetin Yetkin, Jewish people were treated in a much more humane manner than in other Jewish communities in the world.²⁸² Lady Mary Wortley Montagu provides informative stories in her letter to her Rabbi friend in Edirne on 17 May 1717, noting that "I noticed that mostly merchants are all Jews in Edirne and Izmir. This nation has an incredible power in this state. Even they have more rights than the Turks."²⁸³ Lady Montagu also noted that one could clearly notice that the dominant religion in the Ottoman Empire was not Christianity but Islam, which was another reason for immigration of Jewish from Spain to Ottoman soil.²⁸⁴ In other words, Lady Montagu states that Jews were only accepted in a Muslim Empire.

Although Izmir had been contributing in a peripheral way to commerce of the Empire since the beginning of the 17th century, it was in the course of the 18th century, with subsequent the development of the European economic World and the revitalization of the Mediterranean, that Izmir became the most central port of the Empire. It surpassed Alexandria and Istanbul, and one of the main harbours of the Mediterranean.²⁸⁵

The initial thrust for the rise of Izmir came at the end of the sixteenth century when Aleppo started to lose its prominence in the long-distance trade between Europe and Asia. Around this time, Faroqi notes that, 'the first route which passed through Erzurum and Bursa and continued onto the Balkans and as far away as Venice, became active; and then, the Western portion of this route began to shift southwards, away from Bursa and toward Izmir. Thus, it was at the expense of both Aleppo and Bursa that Izmir acquired the status of an important transit point in the European trade with Asia'.²⁸⁶

Several factors contributed to Bursa's eclipse by Izmir after the seventeenth century. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, most of the trade that passed through or ended in Bursa was dominated by Muslim merchants from the Ottoman or Persian Empires. Izmir was much better positioned to fulfill the role of intermediary in the transcontinental trade. It already had a cosmopolitan- tan population, so it could easily accommodate the Armenian silk merchants; it had the administrative distance from Istanbul which was necessary for the uninterrupted growth of transit trade; and, finally, unlike Aleppo and Bursa, there was little in

²⁸² Yetkin, 1996, p. 22.

²⁸³ Montagu Lady Mary W, 2008, *Şark Mektupları*, p.731, Antik Kitap, Istanbul.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 37.

²⁸⁵ Elena, Frangakis Syrett, 2001, *Izmir and the Ottoman Maritime World of the Eighteen Century*. p. 120, Anno 20 (81), Nr. 1, Oriente Moderno, Nuova serie,

²⁸⁶ Faroqi, 1984, p.54.

the way of local manufacture of silk cloth in Izmir to compete with the European traders and their agents for the raw material.

The Mediterranean ports, especially in the trade of necessities made Izmir a strategically more influential city. Various groups around Izmir derived substantial benefits from the generally favorable conditions that surrounded the city during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Chief among these local groups were the Armenian merchants who held a controlling position in all aspects of the silk trade that moved through the area. At least as important, if not more, were the Jewish bankers who had become the perpetual farmers of Izmir's customs duties.²⁸⁷ As Izmir strengthened its position, the collectors and farmers of customs became ever more influential and wealthy as they provided one of the crucial links in the chain of trade that passed through this port.

In 1671, in his usual hyperbole, Evliya Çelebi stated that "places of exchange in Izmir are so crowded that people cannot pass each other without knocking their shoulders off"; and that "all streets in Izmir are clean and paved with white cobble stones"; and finally, that "the entire population of Izmir is composed of wealthy merchants who wear fur clothes". According to Prof Kasaba, "the second half of the seventeenth century, in particular, appears to have been a period of construction boom in the city. The physical layout of Izmir, especially the southern part, took shape in these years."²⁸⁸ In these economic circumstances, like other Ottoman minorities, Jews had also used several opportunities to enrich their community. Even Shabbetai Tzvi's father was a prominent Jewish merchant in Izmir, hence illustrating how Jews led prosperous lives in the Ottoman Empire.²⁸⁹

2.2.7 Turkish-Jewish relations globally

The Jewish society in the seventeenth century was suffering due to Anti-Semitism in the Western world. The Jewish were blamed for economic and other misfortunes of the Christian world. The Jewish community was treated as a scapegoat in most Christian societies. For instance, Western media mentioned that the Jews in Greece were blamed for the outbreak of an epidemic in the country, and were marginalized and othered.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Goffman, 1990, p. 88.

²⁸⁸ Kasaba Reşat, 1993, *Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean 1800-1914*, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 398 Research Foundation of State University of New York for and on behalf of the Fernand Braudel Center.

²⁸⁹ Akgündüz, Oztürk, 2011, p. 144.

²⁹⁰ Tulasoğlu Gülay, 2016, *Bir Ötekileştirme aracı olarak hijyen: 1837 salgınında "Kirli Selanik" "in " Vebali Yahudiler " üzerine*, p. 320. Istanbul.

This social attitude was not only evident in the public sphere but is also amongst famous Western writers and intellectuals: Shakespeare, Voltaire, Martin Luther, Desiderius Erasmus etc. who could be seen to have anti-Semitic feelings towards Jews throughout history,²⁹¹ having written negative texts which caused more hostility towards Jewish people. In Poland, many Jews were killed and also forced to convert to Christianity in 1648. These circumstances contributed to the reinforcement of Anti-Semitism throughout the world. While Jewish people were seriously struggling against these antagonistic attitudes, the expectation of a Messiah emerged as a more valuable spiritual idea among the Jews.

Martin Luther said that the Jews' synagogues ought to be burnt, and the remains ought to be covered with dirt. He added that their houses be destroyed, holy books be confiscated, Rabbis be threatened, such that Dutch theologian Desiderius Erasmus asserted, "if it is Christian to hate Jews, then we are all good Christians".²⁹²

For Voltaire, the Jew had contributed nothing to civilization. Voltaire stated that for Jewish as follows: "all of them born with the fury of fanaticism in their hearts, just as Bretons and Teutons were born with blonde hair. I should not be in the least surprised if these people one day became a calamity for the human race". Voltaire addressed Jews in his survey of religions he notes, "you seem to me the maddest of the lot. The Kafirs, Hottentots and the Negroes of Guinea are much more reasonable and honest people than your ancestors the Jews. You have surpassed all nations in impertinent fables, in misconduct, and in barbarism. You bear the punishment for all that, such is your destiny".²⁹³ Denis Diderot and other enlightenment thinkers thus reinforced the hated image of the Jew through their literary and social activities. Diderot wrote that: 'these people (Jewish) should be kept separate from others'.²⁹⁴

Anti-Semitism is best defined as "unprovoked and irrational hostility" towards the Jews.²⁹⁵ The major problem faced by those who wish to introduce notions such as a 'people-class' or 'middleman minority' is to explain why, in the first instance, Jewish assumed that position. Similarly, why is the Jew such a convenient target for those wishing to find a scapegoat for social economic or political problems, and why do accusations against the Jew resonate so widely and powerfully? Why specifically, is the Jew a scapegoat? This needs to

²⁹¹ Shain Milton, 1998 *Anti-Semitism*, p, 5 University of Cape Town Press, South Africa.

²⁹² Ibid. p.51.

²⁹³ Ibid. p. 54.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 56.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p.5.

be understood in relation to the fact that minorities or out-groups have been and often are the targets of hatred.²⁹⁶ Certainly, the Roman intellectual elite had disseminated many hostile comments about Jews. Among the many exponents of these ideas were *Apion*, *Poseidonius*, *Quintilian*, *Seneca*, and *Tacitus*. Apollonius Molon, a teacher of Cicero and Caesar, wrote an entire piece against Jews and Apion and introduced the earliest known 'blood libel' charge. His accusation that Jews annually kidnapped a Greek child, fattened him up, and consumed his flesh, would be repeated in one form or another, especially in the late Middle Ages, down to modern times.²⁹⁷ In essence, the Gospels went to great extents to exculpate the Romans in the death of Jesus and instead to blame the Jews.²⁹⁸ This is expressed in the Gospels where the Jews were perceived as worthy of hatred because they killed Christ, persecuted his disciples and rejected his teachings. According to them salvation would only come through conversion to Christianity.²⁹⁹

The writings of Justin Martyr³⁰⁰, Origen³⁰¹, Melito of Sardis, Tertullian, Cyprian, Novation, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, and St John Chrysostom, all slandered the Jews.³⁰² In 1879, the prominent German nationalist historian, Heinrich Von Treitschke noted that 'the Jews are our misfortune'.³⁰³ German composer and musician Richard Wagner composed the *Jewry in music* in 1851 which played a major role within contribution of the literature of Anti-Semitism.³⁰⁴

According to Lewis, the Ottoman State, the last great Islamic empire of the successive Mediterranean Muslim states since the Umayyad, was based on the principles of the Islamic law. The book, *Jews of Islam*, by Professor Lewis, explored the Jewish experience in the Islamic world from the rise of Islam to the present. Lewis has a strong foundation in Ottoman studies because he consults with Ottoman archival documents as well. Lewis analyzed the situation of Jews particularly in Iran and in the Ottoman Empire. The latter in comparison were said to be "living in paradise".³⁰⁵

²⁹⁶ It was seem kind of revenge and called Church versus Synagogue by Roman Catholic. Shain, 1998, p.13.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 18.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 21.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 22.

³⁰⁰ Justin Martyr lived between c. 100 and c. 165.

³⁰¹ Origen was a Greek thinker from antic period, lived in (c185-c 254)

³⁰² Shain, 1998, p. 24.

³⁰³ Ibid. p. 58.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 58.

³⁰⁵ Lewis Bernard, 2014, *The Jewish of Islam*. p.166, Princeton University Press, USA.

After the French revolution, Christian minorities in Ottoman Empire were influenced by ethnic nationalism which was emerged in Europe after 1789. Firstly in the communities of Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian minorities began to develop a sense of a national consciousness but this rapidly assumed a racist character.³⁰⁶ Historian McCarthy states that Ottoman tolerance towards minor religious group turned a complicated case in Ottoman State. Especially after 1774, with Russian influence, the Christian world began to interfere the Ottoman interior affairs as a protector of the Christian minorities in the Empire.

McCarthy points it out that in spite of hostility against Jews and Muslims in Europe, the Western world has always mentioned the tragedy of Greek and Armenian in the history of their independence but keep silence about the struggles and loss of Muslims and Jews in history. According to McCarthy, the West prefers to exaggerate the Bulgarian and Greek losses but do not even mention Muslims and Jewish Massacre in Balkans territory and Caucasian in history books. McCarthy also states that West does not even give credit to scholars when they intend to rectify history regarding traditional Western writing.³⁰⁷ If they re-analyze the traditional approach of the Western historiography, scholars are labeled as revisionists in a sarcastic way.³⁰⁸

When Ottomans were defeated by Russia, massive Muslims communities had to leave their homes from the Western provinces of the Ottoman Empire. However, not only Muslims but also Ottoman Jews was also forced to migrate from their lands. According to McCarthy, numerous houses and shops of Jews were burned down in Eski Zagra in Bulgaria.³⁰⁹ Professor McCarthy notes that Turks and Jews shared the same destiny. In Kızanlık city many Jews and Muslims killed in the same area with tortuous.³¹⁰ Even during the First World War, when Greek soldiers occupied Izmir and Aydin, they killed many Muslims and Jews without separating their *Fez* and *Kippah*.³¹¹ Several Jews were killed by Greek soldiers in Aydn.³¹² This indicates that Jews had integrated into the Ottoman society and felt a sense of loyalty towards the State.

³⁰⁶ George Finlay, 1861, *The History of Greek Revolution*, p. 7. London.

³⁰⁷ McCarthy Justin, 1995, *Death and Exiles, the ethnic cleansing of the Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, p. 173, Darwin Press, USA.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 175.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 83.

³¹⁰ Ibid. p.103.

³¹¹ Kasaba, 2009, p.131.

³¹² Ibid, p.298.

2.3 Religious conversion in the Ottoman era

Life under the Islamic rule, especially from the 14th century onward brought much diversity to the Jews and Christians in Asia Minor. Directly or indirectly, they were influenced by the Islamic lifestyle in that society. Some Muslim saints also influenced Turkish society for many years in Anatolia from the Seljuk era to the Ottoman times. For instance, Mevlana Jelaladdin Rumi transmitted a poem in his book, *Mesnevi*. According to scholars such as Schimmel, Rumi impacted many people with his humanistic approaches and made them embraced Islam.³¹³ One of his poems is evidence of his humble and open-minded view:

I am neither Christian nor Jew
Neither Maglan nor Muslim,
My place is placeless,
My trace is traceless
No body, no soul
I am from the soul of souls³¹⁴

Rumi's wisdom, mystical poems and figurative words caused many people to convert to Islam.³¹⁵ In one of his other stories, Rumi almost combined Judaism, Islam and Christianity in one context. He figuratively explained the similarities in the religious views of Jews, Muslims and Christians in his poems.

This poem indicates that how the religious terms and names like *Messiah*, *Moses*, *Sinai* and *Ararat* are commonly used by Rumi when writing on Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. It is because Rumi contextualized these three religions as one faith which principally follows one another from the Prophet Moses to Muhammed. Therefore, with the same understanding, Muslim saints spread similar religious messages from the Seljuk era to the Ottoman period.³¹⁶

Prof Eroğlu also notes that at the time of Jelaleddin Rumi, several people around his temple were influenced by his thoughts and soft personality, which led to remarkable inter-

³¹³ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mevlana Celalettin Rumi'nin: Sark ve Garpta Tesirleri*. (Ankara: Gutenberg. 1963), 35.

³¹⁴ Rumi Mevlana Jelaleddin, 1999, *Divân-i Kebîr Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî*, p. 75, Dergah Yayınevi, İstanbul .

³¹⁵ Çiftçiöğlü, İsmail. 2013. "Anadolu Selçuklu Sultanlarının Gayrimüslim Kadınlarla Evlilikleri". *Journal of World of Turks / Zeitschrift Für Die Welt Der Türken*. 5 (1).

³¹⁶ Mustafa Yigitoğlu. 2013. "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İslami Perspektifinde Gayr-i Müslimlere Etkisi /Islamic Perspective' S Effect on Non Muslims in the Ottoman Empire". *Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches* (Itobiad). 2 (4): 21-38.

religious dialogue in society, and thus many orthodox Christian people became his followers in his circle in Konya.³¹⁷

In Ottoman Turkish society, according to Islam, conversion takes two forms: *Ihtida*, and *Irtad*. *Ihtida* is the process of converting to Islam; the convert is referred to as a *Muhtedi*. However, if a person converts back to another religion from Islam, the process is known as *Irtad*; and the convert is referred to as *Murtad*. Those who converted back, i.e. the *Murtad* could be perceived as traitors to the state and could be sentenced to death penalty according to Sharia law. However, the Ottoman Empire did not institute this ruling against the *Murtad* because they believed that the Prophet's Hadith had been misunderstood by Muslim Ulama.³¹⁸

One possible reason for *Irtad* was the individual's own decision. Ottoman Archival documents highlight some complicated stories of these types of conversions in the Ottoman time. According to Ottoman State archives, the daughter of Istavito, named Cuka in the *Kortine-i Bala* village was forced to convert to Islam by her mother but later wanted to return to Christianity, and did so, hence become *Murtad*. This case was secretly judged by the Ottoman authority in order to avoid of gossip and any harmful treatment to Cuka by Muslims. Therefore, she was sent to Istanbul to resolve the issue in the magistrate court.³¹⁹ The Ottoman court eventually realized that this was a case of conversion due to family pressure, and therefore let her stay Christian as before till she was sufficiently mature to make a decision for herself.³²⁰

Yet another reason for the appeal of Islam, and in some cases for conversion, can be explained by observing the humanitarian approach of the Ottoman administration towards minority groups. For instance, in the Ottoman Empire, Jewish people were able to freely practise their religion. Furthermore, they got permission to extend their temples or built another synagogue in the same city. Turkish archival records provide thousands of examples with regard to Imperial decrees which were issued by the Ottoman Sultan for the Jewish citizens. According to an Ottoman Archival document, on his way to Edirne, the Ottoman

³¹⁷ Eroglu, *Osmanli Devletinde Yahudiler*, 27.

³¹⁸ Bukhari, 1999, Vol, III, Cihad, p149.

³¹⁹ Refika 2004, p.212.

³²⁰ Ottoman State Archive, BOA, HR. MKT. 42/81. Interestingly, conversion to Christianity also took place when individuals wished to avoid military service in the Ottoman army. According to an Ottoman archival document, Mehmed ibn Suleiman left his city in Turkey for Georgia, and then returned his city as Christian. However, later it was understood that in fact, his intention behind conversion was to stay away from military service which was a compulsory obligation for Muslims in the Ottoman State.

Sultan allowed Jewish people to renovate their synagogue in Tahtakale in Istanbul.³²¹ This kind of tolerance of the Ottoman administration towards other religious groups also caused sympathy towards Islam as a religion. For instance, in the same year, 1739, the Ottoman Sultan gave permission to Jews to construct a hospital in Hasköy.³²² Meantime, for any accident and calamity, when Jews applied to re-build their school, hospital or temple, they always got permission to build a new temple but also got financial help or lower tax for a while as relief. In addition, at the Toprak suburb, an imperial decree was issued for re-constructing a Jewish hospital which was burned down in a fire incident.³²³ Jews in Tokat also requested permission to renovate their Synagogue's wall in the city.³²⁴ According to one document, a religious donation (*sadaqa*) was given to the Jewish community among poor people and therefore informing chief Rabbi about sending money to the Jewish official religious institute (*hahambaşı*) in Istanbul.³²⁵

Similarly, in Jerusalem, the Ottoman Government issued a decree to renovate a synagogue.³²⁶ Ottoman Empire established two police stations to protect Jewish community in Havran province in Beirut. This document provides remarkable information regarding an establishment of few police stations in Beirut and Jerusalem in order to protect Jewish villages.³²⁷ In addition, an interesting letter was written about Ottoman Jews who were living in peace in Moldavia and Romania under the Ottoman rule.³²⁸ These humanitarian approaches also influenced non-Muslims to convert to Islam.

Additionally, in Ottoman history, if prisoners got the death penalty, they were offered the option to convert to Islam, which was a traditional ruling in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, during the reign of Murad III, Austrian emissaries were involved in a crime and found guilty. They were sentenced to a death penalty. Before that though, they were also offered the possibility of converting to Islam.³²⁹ This event in history is very similar to the case of Shabbetai Tzvi in the seventeenth century. The statements of reformist Rabbi of Izmir, Shabbetai Tzvi in Jewish circles in Izmir, to divide the world into 38 parts, and take

³²¹ OSA, HAT, 523/25538 A.

³²² OSA, HAT' 1186/ 46760L. See also; OSA, C. ADL. 60/3635, Hijree 1255.

³²³ OSA, HAT, 774/36296, Hijree 1246.

³²⁴ OSA, C. ADL. 101/6063, Hejree, 1255.

³²⁵ OSA, DH, MKT, 251/47 Hijree, 1311.

³²⁶ OSA, A, MKT. DV. 135/45, Hijree, 1275.

³²⁷ OSA, DH, H, 19/20, Hijree, 1329. See also, OSA, DH. ŞFR. 33/41 Hijree, 1330, The letter was written in French

³²⁸ OSA, HR, SYS. 2453/41 Hijree, 1918.

³²⁹ Wratistlaw Baron W. 1996, *Baron Wratistlaw'in Anıları, 16 yy. Osmanlı İmparatorluğundan çizgiler*, pp. 78-81 (First ed, 1597, 2 ed in Turkish, Çev.M. Süreyya Dilmen) Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul.

over Istanbul from Sultan Mehmet IV led to him being charged for political treason. In the magistrate's court in Edirne, he was judged for stirring controversies against state law and was pronounced guilty. He was then offered with a similar option to convert to Islam during his dialogue with Vani Mehmet Effendi. Unlike rulings in Europe, Tzvi was not punished by being burnt in the oven or being beheaded but was given a last chance to alive.³³⁰

Another reason for conversion was intermarriage across faiths. According to Sharia law, a Muslim man is allowed to marry a Christian or Jewish woman. One of wives of Sultan Murad II, a Serbian woman, Despina kept her religion her entire life and died as a Christian woman. However, if a Muslim woman decided to marry a non-Muslim, the latter would be expected to convert to Islam before marriage. According to Islamic tradition, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man. British consul, Ricaut provided similar examples regarding conversion of non-Muslims to Islam for marital reasons during his time in the Ottoman society.³³¹ Hungarian historian of 15th century, Georg stated that, '*Turks never force non-Muslims to convert Islam but also never tried to convince other to embrace Islam*'.³³² Faruqi also notes that as it was in Seljuk Turkish Empire, Ottoman Sultans never endeavored to plan for converting people to Islam during their reign.³³³ In his studies, Ocak also noted that, due to Qur'anic religious beliefs, Turkish Muslim States never implemented a compulsory conversion for other religious groups in history.³³⁴

Barkan emphasized another point about conversion in the Balkans. He states that Ottoman Sufis like *Mavlavies*, *Baktashies* and *Yesevis* and even marginal Muslim Sufis like the *Kalenderis*, who held certain controversial religious beliefs, moved to Balkan territory from Anatolia and established little modest *madrasahs*, *takkahs* and *zafiyas* in villages. These offered mystical atmosphere, influencing non-Muslims in the Balkans to follow and convert to Islam. Conversion is clearly understood from archival documents that list surnames as Abdullaoglu or Kuloglu, indicating traces of conversion to Islam. According to Barkan's research, Christian workers in Muslim temples in the Balkan geography not only embraced Islam but also positively affected their environment for conversion.³³⁵ On the other hand, some records show that the Ottoman Sultans were also involved with some individual

³³⁰ Ibid, p.79.

³³¹ Ricaut, 1686, p.192.

³³² Wratislaw, 1996, p 136.

³³³ Faruqi, 1997, p.28.

³³⁴ Ocak, 1981, p. 34-35.

³³⁵ Barkan,Ö. Lütfü, 1942, *Osmanlı imparatorluğunda bir iskan ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler I. İstila devirlerinin kolonizator Türk Dervişleri ve Zaviyeler*, 2, p.303-304, Vakıflar Dergisi, İstanbul.

conversions at particular times and occasions, but these were not forceful. Ibn Kemal noted that, once upon a time, Ottoman Sultan IV. Mehmet addressed one of his Christian close friends, "we attack enemies together and serve the state together and have such a sincere friendship like brother, but how can I call you infidel (*qafir/gavur*) and call myself believer?" Therefore, his Christian fellow friend became Muslim.³³⁶

According to an Ottoman archival document, a new converted Christian man asked a job from the Sultan as a gift from the state. It was a tradition to Sultan award new converted people with some money and/or job at the palace.³³⁷ Some non-Muslim gradually realized that they will be awarded with jobs and some amount of salary if there was any case of conversion to Islam.³³⁸ This factor also might have played an important role for conversion to Islam.³³⁹ In terms of demography, the converted people in Istanbul consisted mostly of Greeks, Armenians and lastly, Jews.³⁴⁰ At the same time, a Serbian orthodox Christian man also converted to Judaism and he requested protection order from the Ottoman administrators to protect himself from his radical Christian environment.³⁴¹

In this multicultural empire, conversion was regarded an ordinary event among high-profile generals and many Christian converted statesmen had been appointed in the Ottoman palace like Ibrahim Pasha who was close to Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.³⁴² Similarly, according to official record, while Ottoman Christian scholar Molla Hekim Isaac was studying philosophy and astronomical scientist, he found Islam to be the truest religion and embraced Islam. After his conversion, he wrote a book with regard to *Fıqh ul Aqbar*³⁴³ and revealed his Islamic understanding in this book.³⁴⁴ Without deeply analyzing the real reasons, some Western writers stated that one of the reasons for conversion was indoctrination by the Ottoman society. Between 1522 and 1555, Spanish medical doctor Pedro was captured and prisoned in Istanbul. During his imprisonment, he still got chance to practise his profession in jail. Once he checked up Sinan Pasha, a general in the Ottoman army, and with his medical

³³⁶ Bunca zamandır ki bizimle davay-ı muhabbed edersin, ebnay-ı cinsinle daveti ihtiyar eyleyüb bize izhar-ı sadakat edersin cümle alem bize ağyar iken, sen yar-ı vefadar oldun, bizimle gül gibi açulub düşmanlarımızın gözüne har oldun, muhabbetimki yolunda bu kadar sadakatin variken layıkmıdır ki dinimize münkir olasın biz mümin olavuz, sen aramızda kafir olasın.) See, İbn Kemal, 1970, p. 160.

³³⁷ OSA, A. RSK. DS. No, 10. Vs, no, 50

³³⁸ Ibid. (Ottoman document reveals the process of the conversion in gretaer detail, bir zimmi Divan'da İslama gelüp...)

³³⁹ İbn Kemal, 1970, p. 98.

³⁴⁰ BOA. MHM. No: 48 /433/436.

³⁴¹ Cohen– Stein, 2014, p. 100.

³⁴² Ibid, p.109.

³⁴³ The book belongs to a wellknown Muslim scholar Imam Azam Abu Hanifa.

³⁴⁴ İbn Kemal, 1970, p.111.

treatment, Sinan Pasha recovered from his sickness. Showing his appreciation, Sinan Pasha released him from jail, and offered him the status of chief doctor in the palace. He also prayed for him to find the most appropriate religion for his entire life and hereafter, in his view, İslam. From a Muslim perspective, if anyone converted to Islam, he would attain heaven. Thereupon, Sinan Pasha assumed that Doctor Pedro would embrace Islam after his offers but Pedro kindly refused Sinan Pasha's offer and stayed as Christian. This did not affect his social standing in society. In the history of Ottoman Empire, there are similar examples regarding conversion but no example for forcing them to convert to Islam, due to the religious principles of tolerance in the Qur'an about non-Muslims.³⁴⁵

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, Turkish-Jewish relations has been brought to consideration in order to better understand the presence of the Jewish community among Turks. In this regard, it would be easier to find a link between Jews and Turks not only on a religious basis but culture-wise. The Jews of present-day Turkey and the Balkan states are direct descendants of the Spanish exiles. This tolerance allowed Jewish people to declare their own views in a democratic atmosphere under Turkish rule.

It would also make much sense to understand why and how a Jewish religious sect flourished and became perhaps the most influential marginal religious movement in world history. In this regard, like other religious scholars, Shabbetai Tzvi was also able to manifest his divine religious mission to the world, in the Ottoman territory. He felt free to make his proclamations in society.³⁴⁶

The Ottoman approach towards all minorities was one of understanding and inter-religious and cultural dialogue among those nations under the Ottoman rule. Therefore, British historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, who was otherwise critical of the Ottoman Empire, admitted that “the Ottoman institution came perhaps as near as anything in real life could to realizing the ideal of Plato’s Republic”.³⁴⁷ From this socio-political perspective, like other minorities, Jewish people also lived under pleasant circumstances in the Ottoman Era. Also,

³⁴⁵ Anonim, 1996, *Pedronun Zorunlu Istanbul Seyahati*, pp. 24. 25, Güncel Yayıncılık, İstanbul.

³⁴⁶ This distinctive nature of Islamic tolerance is further elaborated in one of the earliest Muslim legal handbooks, Abu Yusuf's eighteenth century classic *Kitab al Khadadj*. Such a leading Jewish figures in subsequent centuries as Solomon Ibn Gabriela, Abraham ibn David, Abraham bar Hiyya, Judah Ha-Levi, Moses Maimonides, Moses ibn Ezra, and Isaac Abrabanel. The Qur'an characterizes the lot of non-Muslims as humiliation and wretchedness since they are visited with wrath from God. Zvi, 1957, p.18.

³⁴⁷ Toynbee Arnold J, 1947, *A Study of History*. p.178, Volume I: Abridgement of, Volms 1-6, Oxford University. US.

due to the religious understanding in the Ottoman era, there was widespread tolerance towards minority groups, and furthermore towards the claimants of messianic identity, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III: MESSIANIC BELIEF IN CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM AND IN JUDAISM

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the messianic idea and faith in the three religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, in order to shed light on the nebulous concept of messiahship, as a bedrock to examine Shabbetai Tzvi's messianic declaration. It is necessary to know that messianic expectation³⁴⁸ has existed in all three religions throughout history. Some scholars have criticized Shabbetai Tzvi's messiahship in terms of his declaration of messianic belief.³⁴⁹ This criticism is not religiously accurate because messianism does not exist only in the tradition of Judaism but also all other Abrahamic religions such as Christianity and Islam.³⁵⁰ Therefore, Shabbetai Tzvi was neither the first one who proclaimed his messiahship but nor the last one. Similar to Christianity and Islam, there have been many religious figures who have declared their messiahship up until today. Like other notable scholars in Islam and Christianity, great Jewish philosopher and theologian Musa bin Maimonides also emphasized the presence of messiahship in Jewish tradition.³⁵¹

On the other hand, some other scholars have labeled Shabbetai Tzvi as “manic depressive” because of his unusual ideas and behavior such as praying with fish, which will be explained in greater detail in chapter four. Shabbetai Tzvi's later conversion to Islam was

³⁴⁸ Shailer Mathews, 1898, *The Jewish Messianic Expectation in the Time of Jesus* pp. 437-443, Vol. 12, No. 6, December Issue, *The Biblical World*.

³⁴⁹ In last decades there are many publications on the Sabbatean Movement but most of them are written for commercial purposes in the field. Turkish Sabbateans known as the Donmeh became an interesting reading subject as an underground believers, and followers of “the False Messiah” Shabatai Tzvi in Turkey more than sociological and historical religious study. See. Aubrey Ross, 2007, *The Messiah of Turkey: A 21st Century*. p. 21, London: Yalçın Soner, 2004, *Efendi / Beyaz Türklerin Büyük Sirri*, Doğan Kitapçılık, İstanbul: Eygi Mehmed Şevket, 2000, *Yahudi Türkler Yahut Sabetaycılar İki Kimlikli, Gizli, Esrarlı ve Çok Güçlü Bir Cemaat*, İstanbul: Küçük Yalçın, 2000, *Tekelistan*, İthaki Yayınları, İstanbul.

³⁵⁰ The terms ‘messianism’ and ‘messiahship’ should not be confused. ‘Messianism’ is a belief in the expected redeemer, according to predictions made by different religions. ‘Messiahship’ on the other hand refers to the position held by the Messiah.

³⁵¹ He is known in Arabic literature as Abu 'Imran Musa ben Maimun ibn 'Abd Allah. See, Davidson Herbert A. 2005, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and his Works*, p. 13 Oxford University Press. US.

also criticized by some though, again in Judaism, conversion is not considered an inappropriate behavior when this conversion to another religion is a matter of life and death as in the case of Jews. Therefore, neither his declaration about being a Messiah nor his conversion to Islam can make him a manic depressive or a “False Messiah” from a historical perspective. In spite of such labeling him as manic depressive or a mad Rabbi, he had never been judged as an ignorant Jewish Rabbi. That is an important factor to grasp the personality of Shabbetai Tzvi in terms of his effectual impact in society as a religious legacy.

In a religious context, all marginal religious movements have been criticized by world societies. For instance, according to the ancient Greek State, the philosopher Socrates was guilty of corrupting the young and of not believing in the God in whom the city believed, but in other spiritual things.³⁵² The same intolerance towards other worldviews might have characterized the negative attitude towards Jesus Christ in his time, and later towards Shabbetai Tzvi among certain groups of individuals within and outside the Jewish faith. Therefore, one cannot jump to a hasty conclusion that a new religious movement is a heresy like Shabbetanism in Judaism. It may be said that whether one believes in messianism or not, the idea of messiahship must be taken into consideration while analyzing the messiahship of Shabbetai Tzvi in the context of Judaism. These terms should be re-analyzed in the light of three holy books, Qur'an, Bible, and Torah. In this regard, the essence of messianism and messiahship will be analysed in this chapter in the aspects of all Abrahamic religions which are all consistent with one another with regard to the roots of the messianic tradition.

3.2 Messianism and its meanings in three religious contexts

Throughout history, people have asked various questions. For example, where does the world come from? Who are we? What is our purpose in this life? These questions have different answers for different people. Some say that there is a larger, unseen purpose to life, and others suggest that one's life experiences can open doors to discovering the answers.³⁵³ When the matter is considered from a religious perspective, then human beings are confronted with particular terms as, Gods, religions, holy books, messiahship, prophecy, etc. In this case, what is the meaning of Messianism in the religious context? Different Abrahamic faiths have offered different interpretations of this concept, despite similar statements in the Holy Scriptures.

³⁵² Brickhouse Thomas C. Nickholas D, 1989, *Socrates on Trial*. p.26. Princeton University Press. USA.

³⁵³ Susan Meredith & Clare Hickman, 2001, *The Usborne Encyclopedia of World Religions*, p.14, Iaar, Press, Dubai.

The Qur'an mentioned that while Jesus must be recognized as Prophet and Messiah, the Christian World later gave him a different status and declared him as the son of God.³⁵⁴ On the other side, Jews do not recognize Jesus as a Messiah nor as a Prophet.

As a religious term, messianism should be well-explained to enhance our understanding of the significance of the messianic declaration of Shabbetai Tzvi from a religious perspective. Shabbetai Tzvi was not regarded as a real Messiah by some Jewish or Muslim scholars; however this cannot be a measure of his messiahship for the believers.³⁵⁵ Therefore, these terms must be analyzed before examining messiahship of Shabbetai Tzvi.

Messiahship originates from the word *Mashies*, which historically referred to the king who would be sanctified by being anointed with oil.³⁵⁶ Moreover, there were prophecies about an ideal king, and even if he was not called a Messiah, he would have a similar eschatological character.³⁵⁷ Besides that, the literal meaning of messiahship is that being of ordained by God as redeemer. According to tradition, a Messiah's miracles furnished evidence of prophethood, and contained the claim of messiahship.³⁵⁸ Several scholars like Waltzer has analyzed the meaning of messianic expectation and strongly emphasized that messianism is one of the most important religious factors in most World religions.³⁵⁹ Middle-aged Sufi Ibn Arabi noted that Prophet Muhammad heralded that a *Mahdi*, namely Messiah, will appear in the West and conquer Istanbul.³⁶⁰ In all aspects, messianism has been accepted by all societies as a religious belief. Therefore, on the basis of scriptures from different faiths, one can question what Messianism really refers to as a religious term.

³⁵⁴ Qur'an Surah al Tevbe, 30, 31; There is another statement in Quran that reads as follows, "Verily he whoever sets partners with Allah, then indeed Allah has forbidden Paradise to him and his abode will be the fire."

³⁵⁵ Ay Nazif, 2015, *Mehdi Mesih, Ilahi Hero*, p.131, Kaynak Yayınları, Istanbul.

³⁵⁶ Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2004, *Messiah* by Jacques Waardenburg, p, 307 Vol; 29, TDV, Istanbul. <http://www.tdvislamansiklopedisi.org/dia/maddesnc.php?MaddeAdi=mesih>

³⁵⁷ Torah, Isaiah 9:1-6

³⁵⁸ See the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cz5FY958FvQ>

³⁵⁹ Waltzer Michael , 2012, *Messianism, in God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 320, Yale University Press, USA.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 103.

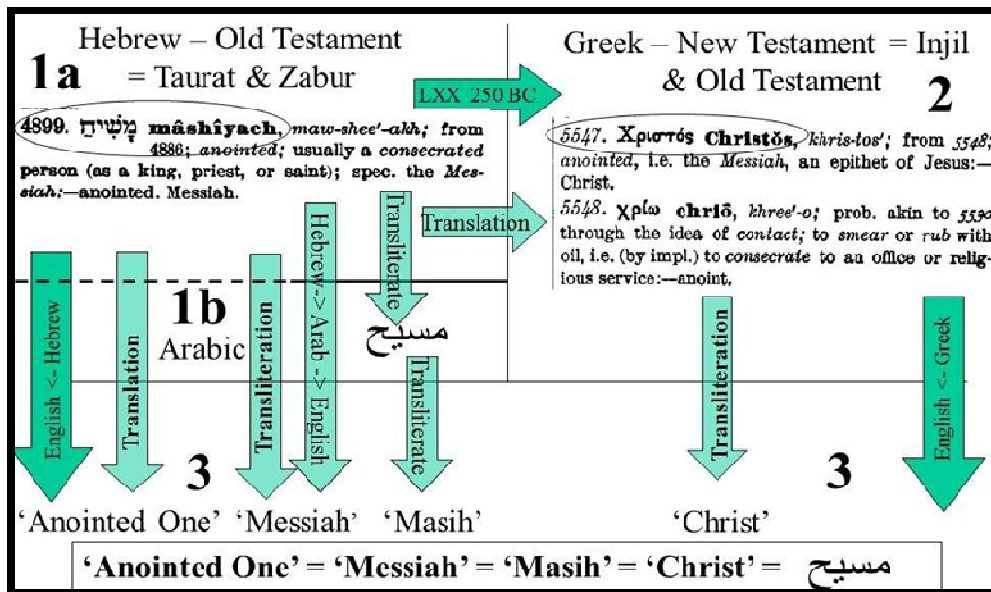


Figure 1 Graphic illustration of Messianism according to Islam, Christianity and Judaism

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What are the sources of the messianism in primary religious texts? Messianism can only be analyzed in the context of each of those religions. It is because there are different views and conceptions on Messianism across religious traditions, which have developed for centuries and have been influenced by religious societies. In this regard, messianic expectations are slightly different from one another, but in a fundamental sense, they all have the same understanding which is based on the expectation a redeemer from God. Many scholars have interpreted Messianism and claimed that its roots go back to ancient Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia.³⁶² Messianism can also be examined in an ancient faith, Hinduism with a question that what the Messianism is.

Hinduism is one of the world's most ancient living religions, and developed by nomadic Aryans around the Indus Valley in India and flourished particularly from 3500 BCE. In Hinduism, people believe in the reincarnation of God himself to resolve the miseries of the world, and set an exemplary path for all to follow. For instance, in Hinduism, *Kalki*, also rendered by some as *Kalkin* refers to the tenth *Maha Avatar* of Vishnu (*great incarnation*) who will appear to end the present age of darkness and destruction that's known as *Kali*

³⁶¹ Kavka Martin, 2004, *Jewish Messianism and the History of Phology*, p.176, Cambridge University Press, UK.

³⁶² Sumer was the southernmost region of ancient Mesopotamia which is generally considered the cradle of civilization. Ibid. p.39.

Yuga.³⁶³ According to Indian scholar Sircar, the origin of the name Kalkin, perhaps lies in the Sanskrit word Kalka that refers to dirt or foulness and hence denotes the destroyer of evil and confusion as well as darkness in ignorance. The reincarnation of God is referred to in the holy book of Hindu believers, the Bhagavad Gita as follows: “Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata and a predominant rise of irreligion at that time I descent myself.”³⁶⁴ This suggests that spiritual appearance will occur on earth whenever necessary in order to deliver the pious and implement the principles of the religion by God.³⁶⁵

Probably, therefore, the nineteenth-century mystic Ramakrishna said, “I have now come to a stage of realization in which I see that God is walking in every human form and manifesting himself alike through to the sage and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious. Therefore when I meet different people I say to myself God in the form of the Saint.”³⁶⁶ Here he draws on ancient knowledge that humans are individual souls and God the Supreme Soul. In this way, the oneness between all humans and between humans and God is emphasised. In addition to the incarnations of God, holy sages and saints also appeared at different points in time to spread the divine message. In other early Asian religions like Buddhism and Shintoism, the idea Messianism is similar. In this vein, it can be said that Messianism also exists in several of religions of the World other than Abrahamic religions.³⁶⁷

It is not hard to understand how messianic expectations flourished during the centuries of Roman oppression. Numerous Jews had taken seriously the prophetic promise that there would arise a figure that would bring about a transformation in the world, such that ‘swords would be beaten into plowshares and wolves would lie down with a lamb and none would be afraid’. Moreover, many Jews envisioned this messianic era would occur in times of struggle.³⁶⁸ These were the general circumstances of messianic expectation in the Roman Era. However, as a religious leadership, Messiahship was not easily accepted by society once messianic proclamation was made by a prominent religious leader, and rather labeled as “marginal”.

³⁶³ Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2004, *Hinduism* by M. Naeem Qureshi, Vol. 18, p. 112, TDV Istanbul. <http://www.diyaretislamansiklopedisi.com/hinduizm/>

³⁶⁴ Bhagavad Gita, 1986, *As it is (by his divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada)*, p. 201. India

³⁶⁵ Gita, 1986, p. 203.

³⁶⁶ Sircar, Mahendranath, 1887, *Hindu mysticism according to the Upanisads*, p. 91, K. Paul Trubner, London.

³⁶⁷ Kraynak Robert P, 1992 *The idea of the Messiah in the theology of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 54, Vol. 4 no. 2, Jerusalem Center for public Affairs: Joseph W. H. Lough, 2006, *Weber and the persistence of Religion*, p 234, Routledge Advances in Sociology, Newyork.

³⁶⁸ Kûçük Abdurrahman, 1999, *Dönmeler*, p. 34. Berikan Yayınları, Istanbul.

The extreme or marginal beliefs in all religions were strongly criticized in almost every religious society. Like Messianism, the emergence of new movement in different religious societies was mostly refused by massive followers of those religions but even caused persecution of some religious groups. Max Weber pointed out that elsewhere, among Poles in Russia, Huguenots in France, Ahmadiyya in Pakistan, Nonconformists and Quakers in England, and Jews throughout Europe, political persecution had had the very opposite effect.³⁶⁹ Weber noted that, “when excluded from politically influential positions by the dominant group, these minority groups might come under particular pressure to pursue a business career; in this way, their most talented members sought to achieve the ambition that could find no fulfillment within the service of the state.”³⁷⁰ As Weber mentioned, not only new religious ideas like Messiahship among religious people, but also new and marginal occurrences, might have caused political persecutions in societies.

3.2.1 Messianism in Judaism

As known, the history of the Jewish dates back to about 4000 years; one of the oldest religions based on the belief in one God. Traditionally, Jews are born into their religion, and anyone born of a Jewish mother is regarded as Jew whether or not they observe Jewish religious practices. Such prophetic declarations like Messiahship must be claimed from someone who is ethnically of Jewish origin. However, the roots of Messianic ideas must also be taken into consideration to better analyse the religious approach to Messianism.³⁷¹

By the first century BCE, Israel was under the Roman rule. In 70CE, after a Jewish rebellion, the Romans destroyed the second temple in Jerusalem. When the Christians began to destroy the temple, it was thought that Judaism had been superseded by a God who had punished the Jews, because the Jews had failed to accept Jesus as Messiah.³⁷² They also banned Jewish education and forced many Jews to leave Israel. The exiles joined existing Jewish groups around the Mediterranean, and these groups eventually spread into eastern and central Europe. To preserve their religious identity, the Jews began to observe the Ten Commandments given to to Prophet Moses more carefully. All that time, Jews were waiting

³⁶⁹ Bebbington D. W., 1982, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* p. 206, (George Allen & Unwin) Cambridge University Press. UK.

³⁷⁰ Weber Max , 2002, *The Protestant Ethic and the sprit of Capitalism and other Writings*, (ed. and trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells) p. 4, Penguin Books, Newyork.

³⁷¹ Shaye J. D. Cohen, 1999, *The beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainty*. p.7 University of California, Berkeley

³⁷² Lerner Michael, 1995, *Jewish Renewal*, p. 139. New York.

for the Almighty to send forth a Messiah who would re-structure the Jewish kingdom and launch an age of peace, referred to as the messianic age.³⁷³

Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah but Jews did not believe that the Messiah had arrived yet. Based on this fundamental disagreement, in the centuries following the diaspora, the Jews suffered further persecution, particularly by Christian rulers. It is rumoured that Jesus Christ said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me.” Likewise, Jesus’s disciples stated that he fulfilled the Old Testament’s prophecy.³⁷⁴ Despite strong faith in Jesus as the ‘son of God’ in Christian society, the Jewish view was different on the identity of Jesus. That might be one cause of their hatred, the fact that Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. The following diagram shows the messianic claimants from the past to the present.

³⁷³ Norbert M. Samuelson, 1989, *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Philosophy: Herut Party in Israel*, p.246. State University of New York Press. USA.

³⁷⁴ John 5:46, NKJV; Acts 3:18; 17:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

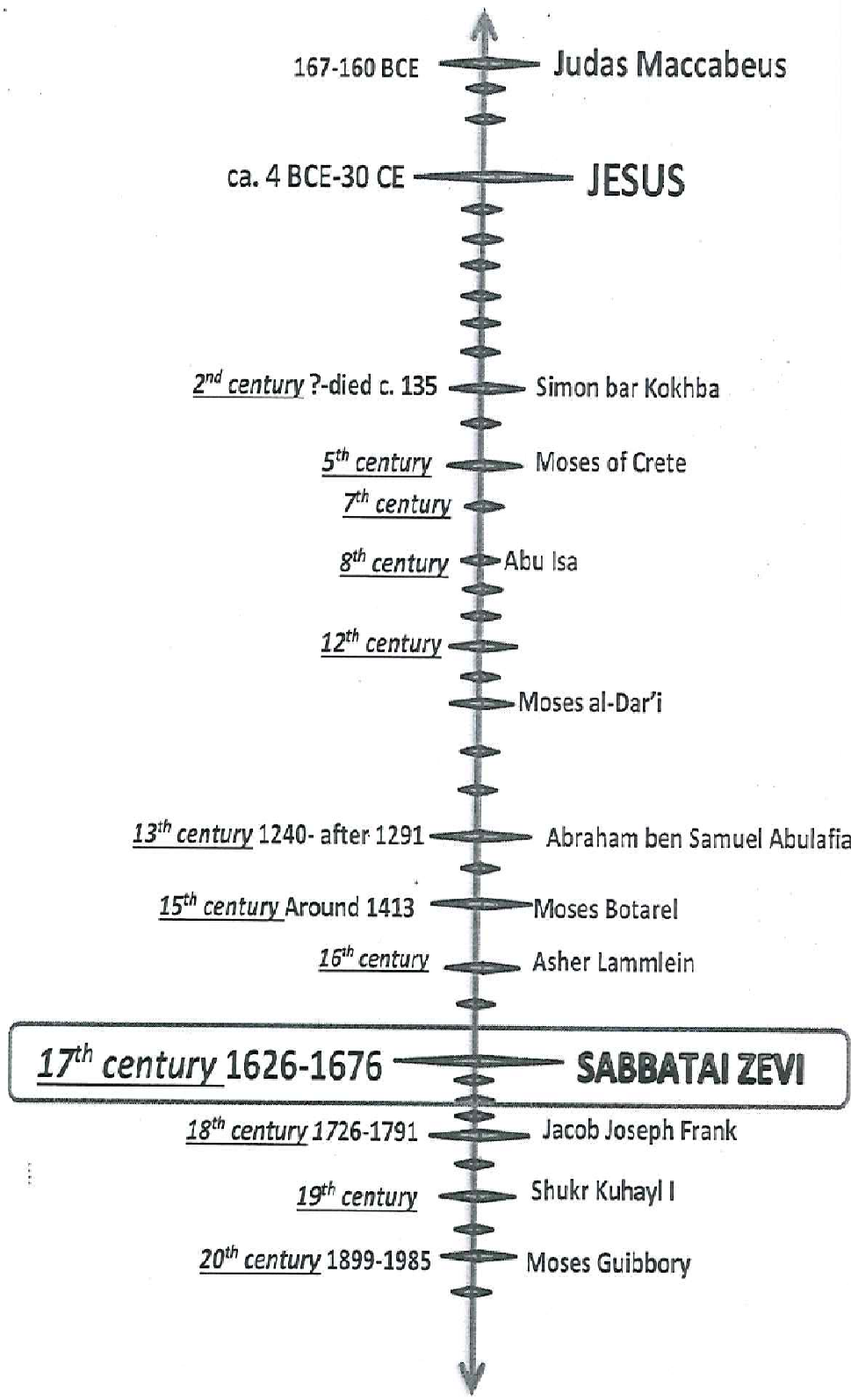


Figure 2 Prominent Jewish Messiahs from the past to the present

According to Jews, Jesus was neither the first false messiah nor the last one. Before the Common Era, few religious figures appealed to Jews as the Messiah. Judas Maccabeus,

Simon of Peraea and Athronges declared their messiahship in between BCE 167 and CE 2 in history.³⁷⁵ In the first century, it is recorded that seven Jewish men declared their messiahship and the first one was Jesus Christ. After Jesus, Judas of Galilee also came up with messianic claims but was killed by Roman authorities. Likewise, Menachem ben Judah, Theudas, Flavius Josephus, Vespasian and John of Gischala were brutally killed due to their spiritual claims in Jewish society.³⁷⁶ In following century, Simon bar Kokhba and Lukas were prominent figures but also found guilty as the leaders of Jewish rebels at the time. After the Roman occupation in Jerusalem, around a million Jews were killed in CE 70, and many Jews had to migrate to other continents to survive and flourish.³⁷⁷

By the fifth century, another Jew, Rabbi Moses of Crete called himself the Moses of his time and proclaimed his messiahship. However, after his death, his messianic proclamation became a forgotten event. Isaac ben Ya'qub Obadiah Abu 'Isa al-Isfahani of Isfahan, Yudghan, called "*Al-Ra'I*" and Serenus proclaimed their messiahship in the eighth century. Like Abu 'Isa and Yudghan, Serene also was considered as a religious reformer. In the twelfth century, a Moroccan teacher Moses al-Dar'i, and Iranian religious leader David Alroy and a potential Messiah from Yemen presented themselves as Messiahs in Jewish society. Another well-known Kabbalist Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia from the island of Sicily and Nissim ben Abraham were seen as other individuals coming up with claims of prophethood in the 13th century. Moses Botarel of Cisneros from Tortosa declared his Messiahship in 1413. In the sixteen century, a German Jew, Asher Lammlein proclaimed himself as a forerunner of the Messiahship in Venice at around 1502. Similarly, David Reubeni and Solomon Moloch declared their messiahship in Arabia but this resulted in their death as it happened the most of the others who came up with messianic idea among the Jews.³⁷⁸

By the 17th century, an Ottoman Jew, Shabbetai Tzvi claimed to be the Messiah in Izmir. When he later converted to Islam, he mostly lost his popularity among Jews, but still has followers today who live as Crypto-Jews. Crypto-Jews are individuals who have

³⁷⁵ Greenstone Julius, 1972, *The Messianic Idea in Jewish History*, Westport, Greenwood, p. 132, Jewish Publication Society of America. Philadelphia.

³⁷⁶ Schochet Jacob, 1992, *Mashiach: The Principle of Mashiach in the Messianic Era in Jewish Law and Tradition*, p. 212 New York.

³⁷⁷ Daşbadem İlknur, 2008, *Geçmişten günümüze Yahudi Mezheplerinin mesih Anlayışı ve Mesihi Hareketler*, p.5 (Master's thesis, Selçuk University) Konya.

³⁷⁸ Rabow Jerry, 2002, *50 Jewish Messiahs: The Untold Life Stories of 50 Jewish Messiahs since Jesus and how they changed the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Words*. p. 165, Gefen Publishing House, Israel.

preferred to hide their religious identity as a Sabbatean Jew and live as a Muslim after the conversion of their religious leader, Shabbetai Tzvi. His movement can be called as the most significant messianic movement and one whose influence was pervasive throughout Jewish communities. After his death, Shabbetai Tzvi was followed by a line of followers declared themselves as Sabbatean Messiahs, but lived as part of a “marginal sect” among Muslims.³⁷⁹ When Shabbetai Tzvi was judged in court, he was accused for encouraging people to create a state of anarchy in society.³⁸⁰ Sabbatean people are practising according to the Jewish tradition under the Islamic lifestyle, therefore, they are also sometimes called “Mohammedan Jews”. Sabbateans have neither been accepted as Jews nor as Muslims in Ottoman society, which would explain why they hid their religious identity after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi in 1675.

Another Ottoman Jew from Salonica, *Osman Baba*, in Western literature Barukhia Rossu, declared himself as the successor of Shabbetai Tzvi.³⁸¹ In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, another remarkable follower of Shabbetai Tzvi, Mordecai Mokia also claimed to be a Messiah. Mordecai Mokia preached that Shabbetai Tzvi was the real Messiah and his conversion was actually for spiritual reasons which were necessary for his Messiahship. Thus, the spiritual influence of Shabbetai Tzvi never actually declined in the marginal Jewish community of Sabbateans. Jacob Querido who was the son of Joseph Filosof, became the leader of the Sabbateans in Salonica, being regarded by followers as the new personification of Shabbetai Tzvi. He pretended to be Shabbetai's son and accepted the name Jacob Tzvi. It is in fact very interesting event in Sabbatean community that he even made a pilgrimage to Mecca as a Muslim. After his death, another Sabbatean figure Abraham Cardoso claimed that he was a prophet of the Messiah, and then converted Islam for saying that conversion was necessary for the Messiah. Abraham also said that Shabbetai Tzvi was the true Messiah because he even suffered for promoting his cause.³⁸²

At the beginning of eighteenth century, a Kabbalist Joseph Ben Jacob proclaimed himself to be representative of God, mentioning that he had been Shabbetai Tzvi, and the latter's soul had passed into other spiritual men, and as time went by into him.³⁸³ Similarly, in

³⁷⁹ This movement called *Avdeti* in Ottoman society and “*Dönme*” in modern Turkish.

³⁸⁰ Hummer J. V, 1986, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, p.171 Üçdal Neşriyat. Istanbul

³⁸¹ Barukhia Russo (1695-1740) See, Sisman Cengiz, 2015, *The Burden of Silence: Sabbatai Sevi and the Evolution of the Ottoman*. p.142. Oxford University Press. UK.

³⁸² Lenowitz Harris, 1998, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights*, p. 163. Oxford University Press. UK.

³⁸³ He is also known as Löbele Prossnitz (Joseph ben Jacob) (?-1750)

the 18th century another Shabbetean from Podolia Jacob Joseph Frank who claimed to be the Messiah and later became the founder of Frankism or the Frankist movement. He declared that he was King David in one of his previous births and stated that the purpose of his sect was to extirpate rabbinic Judaism.³⁸⁴ By the middle of the 18th century, the Jewish communities had suffered numerous actions of persecution, and were deeply disheartened by the conversion of Shabbetai Tzvi.³⁸⁵

After the persecution of his followers from Podolia, Jacob Joseph Frank advised his followers to embrace Christianity. The Catholic Church mistrusted his decision for conversion and imprisoned him as a man with heretical compoment. However, even in prison, he managed to protect his reputation as the head of his sect. Jacob Joseph should have inspired his daughter about his Messiahship. Eve Frank was the daughter of Jacob Frank and she proclaimed her messianic ideas, believed to be the incarnation of the *Shekinah*,³⁸⁶ in turn believed to be the reincarnation of Virgin Mary. With her messianic declaration, she could be regarded as the first woman to have been claimed a Jewish messiah.³⁸⁷

In the 19th century, two interesting religious figures, Shukr ben Salim Kuhayl I and Judah ben Shalom from Yemen proclaimed their messiahship. By the 20th century, also two Jews appeared as Messiahs. Moses Guibbory and later Menachem Mendel Schneerson were regarded as Messiahs in some Jewish circles.³⁸⁸ Menachem Mendel Schneerson never stated that he was the Messiah.³⁸⁹ However in 1994, after his death, people still believed that he would be the Messiah, but orthodox Jews called this belief heresy, as all others had been labeled so far. If there is a concept of messianism in Judaism, why was it that Tzvi or Jesus were not accepted as redeemers by the orthodox Jewish world? While one of them converted to Islam, the other was killed for his beliefs.

³⁸⁴ Reuchlin Johann, 1993, *On the Art of the Kabbalah*, p.95 University of Newraska Press. USA. In his claim, he was drawing on the reincarnation belief.

³⁸⁵ The Sabbath is Saturday which is the Jewish holy day and in this o work is done because Jewish creation episode says that Almighty created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh.

³⁸⁶ Shekinah is a Hebrew word means settling of the divine presence of God and his cosmic glory. The term, *Sakinah* is also mentioned in the Quran as *Sakinah*, means having descended upon the prophet Muhammad and the believers See, S. G. F. Brandon, 1970 , "Shekinah" *Dictionary of Comparative Religion* p. 573, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

³⁸⁷ Miller. L Michael, Scott Ury, 2015, *Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and the Jews of East Central Europe*. p..37, London.

³⁸⁸ Berger, David, 2008 *The Rebbe, the Messiah, and the Scandal of orthodox Indifference*. p.34, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

³⁸⁹ Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, 2010, *The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson*, p.322. Princeton University Press. USA,

According to the canonical gospels, Jesus, whom Christians believe to be the Son of God as well as the Christ, namely Messiah, was arrested and crucified. In the Gospel of Matthew, it is said that Jesus was brought before the Roman Governor Pilate. The Bible claims that after the Roman governor requested the frantic crowd to spare Jesus' life. Pilate said to the Jews:

What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all (the Jews) said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"³⁹⁰

The Gospel of John is perceived to be the most well-known Gospel, the most "spiritual" of the canonical Gospels, and yet, among some orthodox Jews, probably as the most anti-Jewish one. It is stated, "the one who delivered me to you (the Jews) bear the greatest iniquity."³⁹¹

According to the Jews, Jesus did not fulfill the prophecies required to be accepted as a Messiah, so he could not be the Messiah. The Jews of the time and today believe that Jesus did not meet those criteria which are required from a true Messiah. Despite this, the original Abrahamic religion, that is the root of Christianity and Islam, is Judaism. Christians claim that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament's messianic prophecies. However, according to the Jews, Jesus was not did not meet all the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament scripture. This situation was not very different from the experiences of another Jewish religious leader, Shabbetai Tzvi.

By the beginning of the 17th century, Lurianic mysticism had made a crucial impact on Sephardic Jews, and messianic expectations became a central feature of Jewish life. In this circumstances, the arrival of a self-declared messianic king, Shabbetai Tzvi brought about a transformation of Jewish life. After living in several of cities within the Ottoman boundaries such as Cairo, Salonica, Izmir, and Edirne, Tzvi traveled to Gaza where he encountered Nathan Benjamin Levi, who believed has was the Messiah. His Messiahship was proclaimed in 1665. Eventually, Tzvi was brought to the court in Edirne and founded guilty for rebelling against the State. He was to be given a death sentence. At that point, his co-religionist Ottoman statesman *Hayatizade*, suggested that Tzvi convert to Islam to save his life. When Tzvi realized this, he opted for the alternative and converted to Islam. After the conversion

³⁹⁰ Matthew 27:22-25

³⁹¹ John 19:11; until the middle of the 20th century most Christian churches included references to deicide in their hymns and liturgy. See, Thou, 1889, "The Christ Forever One," words by William Bright, from Supplemental Hymns to Hymns Ancient and Modern. See, http://cyberhymnal.org/bio/b/r/i/bright_w.htm

of Shabbetai Tzvi to Islam, the majority of his followers were despondent yet some continued to believe in his Messiahship.³⁹²

In the following century, the most important Sabbatean movement was partly led by Jacob Frank who proclaimed himself to be the incarnation of Shabbetai Tzvi. The Sabbatean sect, Frankism, remained convinced that the Messianic era had begun. The Sabbatean sect was led by Jacob Frank, who was influenced by the Sabbateans in Turkey.³⁹³ In his teachings, Frank revealed himself as the embodiment of God's power who had come to complete the Shabbetai Tzvi's mission which is also regarded as 'heresy' in Judaism by orthodox Jews.³⁹⁴

Then how must the Messiah be? The Messianic proclamation will be made by a religious person, who will reinstate the Davidic royal dynasty. According to Jewish tradition, *Moshiach* will be wiser than a prophet with similar virtues as Moses. Jews were not convinced that Jesus was the expected *Moshiach*. Judaism understands the expected redeemer as Messiah to be a human being and therefore he must accomplish certain specific criteria before being recognized as the Messiah. These specific measures and standards are present in the Jewish tradition as follows:

1. He must be Jewish.³⁹⁵
2. He must be a member of the tribe of Judah and a direct male descendent of both King David.³⁹⁶
3. He must gather the Jewish people from exile and return them to Israel.³⁹⁷
4. He must rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.³⁹⁸
5. He must bring the world peace.³⁹⁹
6. He must influence the entire world to acknowledge and serve one God.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹² Baer Marc David, 2010, *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*, p. 133. Stanford University Press. USA.

³⁹³ In English usage Crypto Jews is in Turkish “Dönme”, “converts,” in spite of their marginal thoughts they referred to themselves in Hebrew as Ma’aminim, “believers.” By the 1680s, the Dönme had congregated in Salonika, the cosmopolitan and majority-Jewish city in Ottoman Greece. See, Bali, Rifat N, 2008, *A Scapegoat for all seasons: the Dönmes or Crypto-Jews of Turkey*, p. 46. Isis Press, Istanbul

³⁹⁴ Karen Armstrong, 2005, *Jerusalem*, p. 74, 339, Ballantine Books, New York

³⁹⁵ Deuteronomy 17:15, Numbers 24:17

³⁹⁶ Chronicles I. 17:11, Psalm 89:29-38, Jeremiah 33:17, II Samuel 7:12-16) and King Solomon. (I Chronicles 22:10, II Chronicles 7:18) (Genesis 49:10)

³⁹⁷ Isaiah 27:12-13, Isaiah 11:12.

³⁹⁸ Micah 4:1.

³⁹⁹ Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 11:6, Micah 4:3.

⁴⁰⁰ Isaiah 11:9, Isaiah 40:5, Zephaniah 3:9.

So according to orthodox Jewish view, if a specific person fails to achieve even one of these conditions, he would not be regarded as a Messiah. Jesus was a Jew but was not perceived as a Messiah since, according to orthodox Jews, he did not meet some other criteria, and therefore was considered as a False Messiah by Jewish society. This thought among Jews cost them much pain and persecution in history.

In Judaism, Messianism is an accepted concept in Judaism. Messianic expectation not only exists in Jewish tradition but is also the subject of historical inquiries in Jewish studies.⁴⁰¹ The reason the Jews expected a Messiah of the Davidian family is well known, however, the source of the expectation that another Messiah would come and that he would be an Ephraimite still needs clarification.⁴⁰² The idea of a Messiah provided reassurance to the Jews during their persecutions, but it also brought many catastrophes to them. For instance, they praise their leaders as “long live our King, our Messiah, our Savior”. The news spread with remarkable rapidity throughout every town and village in Europe. Messianic centers in remote corners of the continent rejoined wildly and hoped and sang hosannas as a well-known hymnary. “The savior had arrived, the king of kings was on the earth, and suffering of the people would soon come to an end.”⁴⁰³

In the Hebrew Scriptures, *Mashies* is always used when referring to the actual king of Israel.⁴⁰⁴ In the Old Testament period, the term was applied to refer to the future king who was expected to re-establish the nation of Israel and rescue the people from all evil. At the same time, prophetic revelations referring to an ideal future king, taught by God, would be presided over or realized by a descendant of the royal house of David. According to Jewish tradition, “the Messiah will not merely renew the days of yore but will usher in a new age”. The great medieval scholar, theologian M. Maimonides expressed belief in the advent of the Messiah among the key articles of faith as follows: “Let no one think that in the messianic era normal course of things would be changed”.⁴⁰⁵

Throughout Jewish history, there existed two types of messianic ideas: the apocalyptic one and the more rationalist one. The apocalyptic idea of messianism refers to the mystical

⁴⁰¹ Zeitlin Solomon, 1954, *The essenes and Messianic expectations, a historical study of the sects and ideas during the second Jewish common wealth*. p. 102, Vol, 45. No, 2, University of Pennsylvania. USA.

⁴⁰² Samuel, 1:1 Elkanah, Ephraimite. (It is explained as the tribe of Ephraim according to Hebrew Bible); descendants of David.

⁴⁰³ Moshe Idel, 1993, *One from a town, two from a clan: the diffusion of Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabbateanism*, p.119, Vol, 7, no, 2. Are- examination.

⁴⁰⁴ David (2sm . 19; 21-22) I sm. 12:3-5, 24;7-11.

⁴⁰⁵ Mishmeh, Torah, Kings, 11,12

view that a Messiah would come to rescue the sons of Israel and take them to Zion. The rationalist idea would be that redeemers would appear at different points in time to guide the Jews, in line with particular criteria. Regardless of the nature of these messianic ideas, they had become an essential part of the Jewish faith and the Jewish experience of life.⁴⁰⁶ In the Old Testament, the expected redeemer is mentioned as King or Zion's future King. In Torah, Messiah is indirectly referred as a redeemer for Jews and daughter of Zion.⁴⁰⁷ Maimonides also stated that the expected Messiah would come for salvation. According to him, Messiah will even address Muslims people and help them for salvation.⁴⁰⁸ According to Karaim Jews, the Messiah should be from the descendant of David and will come back to his home in Jerusalem. The expected Messiah will also renew the temple in Jerusalem and save the all Jews.⁴⁰⁹ In this regard, as a tradition, messiahship is a valid religious concept in Judaism. In other words, according to Jewish beliefs, the purpose of the return to Jerusalem is to form the seat of the divine influence, which would be made possible through a Messiah, the son of David.⁴¹⁰ According to Judah Halevi, Moses was the expected Messiah.⁴¹¹ He also states that, 'Seven things were created prior to the world: Paradise, the Torah, the just, Israel, the throne of glory, Jerusalem, and the Messiah the son of David.'⁴¹²

According to Muslim tradition, the Messiah would be a descendant of Prophet Muhammad, namely, *Yishma'elite* but according to Jews, must be an Israelite sent to the Israelites, and that he will return to Earth.⁴¹³ Jews believe that the Torah traces the Israelites to the religious leader Jacob, who was renamed Israel as the grandson of Abraham.⁴¹⁴

Messianic movements accompanied Jewish history throughout the Middle Ages and thereafter. In this respect, the movement was inspired by the seventeenth century Messianic

⁴⁰⁶ The Gale Encyclopedia of Religion "Zion" 2nd Ed Vol. 9. UK.

⁴⁰⁷ The Bible, Holy Bible, *Old Testament, Zechariah* 8/9. King James Version. p. 805 South Africa.

⁴⁰⁸ Daşbadem İlnur, 2008, *Geçmişten günümüze Yahudi Mezheplerinin mesih Anlayışı ve Mesihi Hareketler*, p.24 (Master's thesis, Selçuk University) Konya.

⁴⁰⁹ Judah Halevi, 1954, *Kitab al Khazari*, Translated from the Arabic with an introduction by Hartwig Hirschfeld, p.159, London.

⁴¹⁰ Aydın Mehmet, 2002, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p.127, Din Bilimleri Yayınları, İstanbul

⁴¹¹ Judah Halevi, 1954, *Kitab al Khazari*, Translated from the Arabic with an introduction by Hartwig Hirschfeld, p. 186, London.

⁴¹² Ibid, p.196

⁴¹³ Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, 1993, *Muslim supporters of Jewish Messiahs in Yemen*, p. 714. Vol. 29 No. 4 October, Middle Eastern Studies.

⁴¹⁴ Ishmaelite are the descendants of Ishmael, the elder son of Abraham and the descendants of the twelfth sons/princes of Ishmael Ibid. p.721

religious leader Shabbetai Tzvi who first declared his Messiahship in Izmir in 1648.⁴¹⁵ In Judaism, the same is true of the Sabbatean and Hasidic leaders.⁴¹⁶

The Torah had been expressed in more outspoken terms than in a fragment from a book of Rabbi Eliyahu Kohen Ittamari Smyrna, the manuscript of which was available to Hayim Joseph David Azulai who quoted from his work.⁴¹⁷ According to Scholem,

This Rabbi Eliyahu was a celebrated preacher and Kabbalist, known for his asceticism⁴¹⁸ and piety, although his theology is strangely shot through with ideas that originated in the heretical Kabbalism of the followers of Shabbetai Tzvi, the “False Messiah”.⁴¹⁹ Shabbetai Tzvi, the pseudo-Messiah and his followers also thought it possible that a new *shemittah*⁴²⁰ might set in with the redemption, that the Torah which would govern this new age might indeed be revealed by the Messiah, and that this Torah would be a radical departure from the old law.⁴²¹

Despite the accurate theological explanation of Scholem on Kabbala, he still described him as “pseudo-Messiah” in his studies. This common view also prevailed among orthodox Jews about the Messiahship of Shabatei Tzvi and became a complicated issue like the case of Jesus Christ in Jewish society.

According to Scholem, ‘apart from the Zohar, myth is exemplified most strikingly and magnificently in the most important system of the late Kabbalah, the system of Isaac Luria of Safed, and later in the heretical *theologoumena* of the Sabbateans, whose Kabalistic Messianism was in part inspired by Luria.’

The sources above illustrate that messianism is an accepted religious term in Judaism. From this perspective, Messiahship of Sabbetai Tzvi must be re-examined without prejudice or judgmental comments.

3.2.2 Messianism in Christianity

Christianity largely drew on the Jewish concept of the Messiah to describe the role of Jesus. The Greek equivalent of Messiah was *Christos* that is Christ, the anointed one, thus in some ways linking Jesus with messianic ideas in Judaism. Still, the New Testament maintains

⁴¹⁵ G. Scholem 1965, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, (translated by Ralph Manheim), p.23 New York

⁴¹⁶ Hasidism is a branch of orthodox Judaism which is a religious movement that aims to replace the historical Kabalistic field in Judaism. See, Cecil Roth and Geoffrey Wigoder, 1972, *Hasidic Judaism*. Encyclopaedia Judaica 7 p.56 New York.

⁴¹⁷ Rabbi Eliyahu Kohen died in 1729.

⁴¹⁸ Christianity, Islam, Hinduism. See, Campbell, Thomas. 1907" *Asceticism*." The Catholic Encyclopedia. p.45, Vol. 1. New York

⁴¹⁹ Scholem, 1965, p.74.

⁴²⁰ This is a Hebrew term for the seventh year of the agricultural cycle. See. Deut: 15:1

⁴²¹ Scholem, 1965, p.83.

that Jesus is the son of God, which may not tally with the Jewish understanding of the Messiah.⁴²² It is stated in the Torah that the Messiah cannot be the son of God.⁴²³

Jesus was born as a Jew in Judea, which was then ruled by the Romans.⁴²⁴ Jesus grew up in Nazareth and probably became a carpenter. At about the age of 30, he was baptized with the guidance of his cousin John in the River Jordan. Baptism was the act of beginning one's spiritual life, after taking a dip in water. John recognized Jesus as the Messiah that the Jewish people were awaiting. Christians believe that the name of Jesus also shows him to be the Messiah.⁴²⁵

Jesus was one of the numerous candidates for Messiahship and from the standpoint of most of the Jews alive at the time of his death. According to the Jews, he did not meet some of the criteria to be seen as a Messiah. However, he challenged the brutality and oppression of Roman imperialism. From a religious perspective, what also made Jesus memorable was that he sent forth his disciples to spread his message of love and peace. One could retain one's belief in God's ultimate goodness and good intentions to redeem the world by believing that the place where salvation would take place was not in this world, but in a far off spiritual realm.

This perspective on life and the belief in 'heaven' might have given solace to those in suffering. The religion built around Jesus after his death centered on a set of beliefs, which would guarantee one's redemption in a future spiritual world. This way of thinking became popular even among Jews who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. There were many other comparable religious movement which believed that some internal state of mind or being would guarantee one salvation in some future world.⁴²⁶

The disciples who tried to portray Jesus as the Messiah and later as the Son of God may have disturbed Jewish people who were steeped in the Jewish tradition. Jesus challenged Jewish orthodoxy and the Jewish establishment. According to the beliefs in other religions like Islam and Judaism, Christians assumed that Christ, namely the Messiah would make changes in the existing order, of which they were all a part. However, the messianic doctrine did perplex some of the Christians, as he was revered as Son of God by some, and given

⁴²² Matthew, 22:44

⁴²³ According to Talmudic Jewish theology (Ta'anit 2:1)

⁴²⁴ Judea is a territory which is part of Israel at the present.

⁴²⁵ Regarding born of a virgin, see, Isaiah 7:14

⁴²⁶ Edersheim Alfred, 1993, *The life and times of Jesus, The Messiah*. p.152. UK

Godly attributes by others.⁴²⁷ So the conception of Messiahship gradually emerged the one whom God endowed with his own spirit to rescue his people and to establish His kingdom.⁴²⁸ The following diagram presents the list of prominent Christian messianic claimants.

⁴²⁷ Johnson, 1987, p. 220,

⁴²⁸ Rausch, 1982, p. 232.

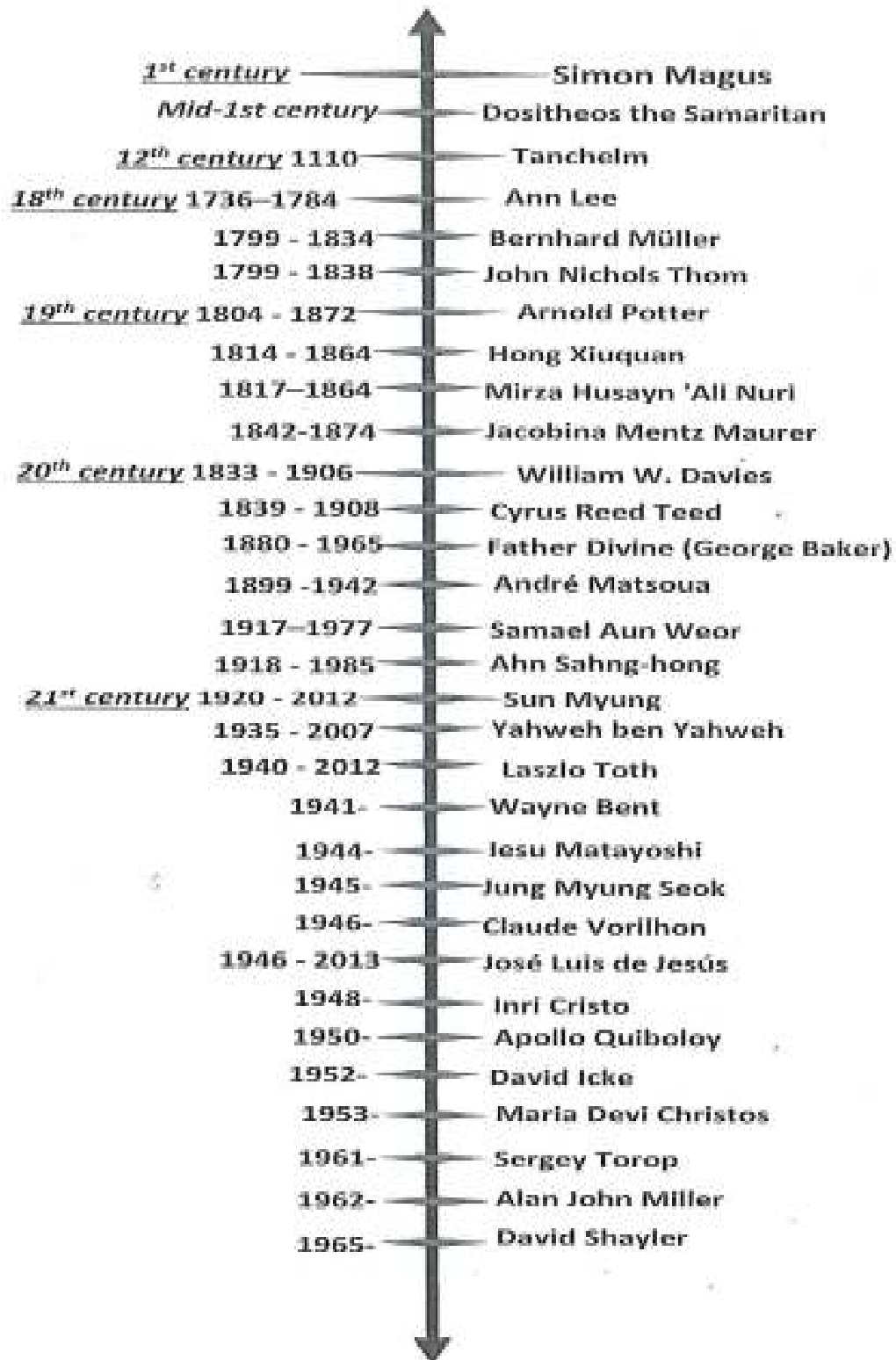


Figure 3 Prominent Christian Messianic Claimants from past to present

In this regard, messianic hope in Christianity is seen to possess more than political bearing, and the Messiah to be more than a human and national figure. At the time of Jesus, Messianism was an expression of a fundamental religious belief that God would express himself in some individual whom he empowered to save his people.⁴²⁹

Christian Messiahs claimants in the history of Christianity from the death of Jesus Christ to the present must be taken into consideration in order to better analyze Messianism in world history. Numerous religious leaders emerged in this century due to impact of Jesus Christ who inspired even other religious believers all over the World. In the first century, from an Abrahamic religion, basically Samaritan,⁴³⁰ after Simon Magus converted to Christianity, he began to regard himself as Christ and proclaimed his messiahship. According to some Christians, he was baptized but did not receive spiritual power for salvation.⁴³¹

In the middle of the same century, Dosithoes the Samaritan declared himself as the promised Messiah. His messiahship was seen as heresy in his close environment, although the inspiration for his messianic ideas came from a particular verse of Deuteronomy.⁴³²

There were some other messianic claimants in Christianity; however there is no substantial source about their activities. By the eleventh century, Tanchelm of Antwerp came up with a different religious idea as Messiah but could not succeed in influencing his religious environment. About five centuries later, a female religious figure Ann Lee claimed her messianic thoughts with the idea of having all the attributes of God in a woman. In 1772, when she declared herself as Messiah, she was mostly criticized by orthodox Christian World.⁴³³

At the end of the eighteenth century, numerous religious leaders declared messianic ideas and thoughts within the sphere of mystic spiritualism. For instance, Bernard Muller proclaimed his prophethood and called himself the Lion of Judah. As all other extreme ideas in Christianity, his declaration was also regarded a heretical proclamation in the history of Christianity. Similarly, John Nicholas Thom,⁴³⁴ presented his messianic ideas and gain some

⁴²⁹ Shailer Mathews, 1917, *The Permanent Message of Messianism*. p. 274. Vol, 49, No, 5. The University of Chicago. USA.

⁴³⁰ Samaritans are a religious group and live in Israel as a minor congregation.

⁴³¹ Matthew V. Novenson, 2012, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* p.43 Oxford University Press. UK.

⁴³² Deuteronomy 18:15

⁴³³ Morton Jeffrey, 2011, *Two Messiahs: The Jesus of Christianity and the Jesus of Islam*, p. 11 January, USA

⁴³⁴ He was also labelled as False Prophets John Nichols Thom (1799–1838)

followers in his town. It can be also said that apart from his marginal thoughts, his early death would have contributed to his obscurity in history.⁴³⁵

In 1857, Arnold Potter from New York also claimed his messiahship and called himself Potter Christ.⁴³⁶ As a religious leader of a schismatic sect of Christianity, most marginal idea of him was that he referred to himself as the son of living God that's found controversial claim in orthodox environments when he was in Australia. Majority of Christians believed that he ended his life in 1872 by "entering Heaven alive" like Jesus Christ who did initially died but was then resurrected from the dead by God with a promise to someday return to earth.⁴³⁷

Similarly, in China, Hong Xiuquan proclaimed himself to be the brother of Jesus in 1864. He was leader of Taiping Rebellion against the current government Qing Dynasty. His messianic decoration was impacted his environment but his sudden death suppressed his religious thoughts and therefore remembered more a political leader in the history.⁴³⁸

Another messianic claimant from India, Husain Ali Nuri Bahauallah who is the founder of his sect Baha'ism. When he proclaimed his prophethood he stated that as he accepts the all religions, he is the messiah for all the religions and believers. Nuri Bahauallah still has remarkable followers, most of them in Asia. Nuri Bahauallah called himself a Messiah for Christians and Jews, and Mahdi for Muslims.⁴³⁹

Likewise, another interesting figure, Brazilian woman Jacobina Mentz Maurer declared herself as a messianic Prophetess⁴⁴⁰ based on a marginal idea which that Jesus Christ reincarnated on earth. Her community was called *Die Spotters* after her death in Rio Grande

⁴³⁵ Epps Henry, 2012, *Consummation of the Ages* vol I, p. 29 -32 Independent Publishing Platform

⁴³⁶ Around the same period, in South Africa, a Xhosa woman by the name of Nongqawuse declared herself as a Prophetess. (This episode is also known as Xhosa Cattle Killing)

⁴³⁷ Mr. X 27th October 2014, *Forgotten Messiahs: Arnold Potter, or "Potter Christ"* p. 1 UK. See also, <http://www.journalofthebizarre.com/2014/10/forgotten-messiahs-arnold-potter-or.html>

⁴³⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, 1997, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*, p. 32, London

⁴³⁹ Christopher Buck, 1998, *The Kitab-i Iqan: An Introduction to Baha'u'llah's Book of Certitude with Two Digital Reprints of Early Lithographs, Occasional Papers in Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5* (June, 1998) See also, Adib Taherzadeh, 1974, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah. Vol. One., 1853-63* (Oxford: George Ronald) Baghdad.

⁴⁴⁰ As a female character, Jacobina was a unique figure as a woman who believed that she has been sent by God to lead people. See, Por Marinês Andrea Kunz, Jan, 2003, *Jacobina Mentz Maurer: a representação de uma líder*. p. 54 Volume 02 Revista Eletrônica do Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisa do Protestantismo (NEPP) da Escola Superior de Teologia.

do Sul in 1874. Her congregation were seen as a heresy by Christian orthodox community and labeled as a false saint, therefore she was killed by Brazilian Imperial Army.⁴⁴¹

In the nineteenth century, in addition to the above claimants, William W. Davies⁴⁴² from Washington, Cyrus Reed Teed from New York in 1869, George Baker⁴⁴³ from Philadelphia in 1907, Andrea Grenard Matsoua⁴⁴⁴ from Congo in 1920, Samuel Aun Weor from Colombia in 1972, Ahn Sahng Hong⁴⁴⁵ from South Korea in 1948, Sun Myung Moon⁴⁴⁶ from Korea in 1954, Yahweh ben Yahweh from Oklahoma⁴⁴⁷ in 1979, Laszlo Toth from Hungary in 1972, Claude Vorilhon ⁴⁴⁸ from France in 1973, Jose Luis de Jesus⁴⁴⁹ from Florida in 1973, Inri Cristo from Brazil in 1976, Jung Myung Seok from South Korea in 1980, David Koresh from Texas in 1983, Apollo Quiboloy from Davao city in 1985, Sergey Torop⁴⁵⁰ from Russia in 1990, David Icke from England in 1991, Marina Tzvi from Ukraine in 1993, Lesu Matayoshi from Japan in 1997, Wayne Bent from Mexico in 2000, Brian David Michael from Utah in 2002, Alan John Miller⁴⁵¹ from Australia in 2005, David Shayler from England in 2007 proclaimed themselves messiah, son of God, Jesus Christ or even God himself.⁴⁵²

Briefly from this understanding of the Christian world, two points are evident, firstly the the Christian belief that Jesus is a Messiah (the Son of God), and secondly the idea that Jesus was the one sent by God to reveal the path to redemption.

3.2.3 Messianism in Islam

Islam means peace. Muslims are referred to as the obedient ones. They believe that the word of God was transmitted to them by a man named Muhammad (Phub) in the seventh century CE. Muhammad was regarded as the messenger of God and Prophet but not Messiah

⁴⁴¹ Prosper Ayawei, Augst 2015, Beware of False Prophets, Meesaihs and Christs, Prophefor Ayawei examined messaihsip from the behavioral ,cognitive temperamental concept namely in terms of psychomorphological perspective. See, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/beware-false-prophets-messiahs-christs-anointed-ones-ayawei>

⁴⁴² The founder of kingdom of Heaven and later converted to Mormonism

⁴⁴³ He is also known as Father divine an African American religious leader, later claimed to be God

⁴⁴⁴ After his death his followers is called Matsouanism referring a messianic cult.

⁴⁴⁵ He was the founder of Witnesses of Jesus church of God and also Korean Christian minister in South Korea.

⁴⁴⁶ He was well-known Korean religious leader and politician and also founder of unification of church as a messiah claimant

⁴⁴⁷ The founder of a black supremacist new religious movement in US.

⁴⁴⁸ The founder of UFO religion.

⁴⁴⁹ The leader of Growing in Grace international ministry

⁴⁵⁰ The founder of the Church of the Last Testament

⁴⁵¹ *Alan claims to be jesus of Nazareth and the founder of Divine Truth*

⁴⁵² Tomasella Todd, 2008, *Deceivers and False Prophets Among Us*, p.2 USA See also, Daily Maily Reporter <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1387903/John-Miller-Mary-Suzanne-Luck-claim-Jesus-Mary-Magdalene.html>

like Jesus Christ. Besides this, Christians, Muslims and Jews have much in common, not only because their faiths trace their origins back to Abraham, but also due to the fact that Jesus Christ and Prophet Moses are holy figures in Islam as well. According to the Qur'an, the Jews were the chosen people.⁴⁵³

Messiahship is the equivalent of Mahdship according to Islamic traditions. In the Qur'an, in Surah ul Nisa for example, Jesus Christ is referred to as *Isâ Masih* which literally means "Jesus the Messiah" in the Qur'an. Muslims believe in the "virgin birth" of Jesus Christ. In the Qur'an, it is said that *Allah* infused his spirit into Prophet Adam in order to create humanity.⁴⁵⁴ According to Sufi thinkers, this idea could be extended to the virgin birth of Jesus through Mary.⁴⁵⁵ These stories align with the description of Jesus in Islamic thought as the Divine Spirit⁴⁵⁶ among the prophets.⁴⁵⁷

In fact, in particular hadiths regarding Messiahship, there are nine Qur'anic verses that mention Jesus as the Messiah.⁴⁵⁸ While these verses describe Jesus as Messiah, the conception of Messiahship differs in part from the Jewish and Christian beliefs. Islam distinguishes between a Prophet and a Messiah. A Prophet shares the word of God and a Messiah comes to redeem the world in times of hardship. In that sense, according to Islam, Jesus is both a Prophet and a Messiah, and will return to rescue humans at the time of the apocalypse. This view that Jesus will return derives mostly from the hadiths and common religious beliefs.⁴⁵⁹

The Holy Qur'an mentions that at the end of time, a Messiah will arrive to liberate all souls. The Messiah is associated with 'Jesus, son of Mary'. Some hadiths, on the other hand, mention the coming a *Mahdi*, whom, some Muslim communities believe will be a ruler from Prophet Mohammad's family. This ruler is called Mahdi, which means "the rightly guided one".⁴⁶⁰ Some hadiths identify the Mahdi with Jesus who is supposed to appear before the end of the world. However, some also believe that he will defeat the "false messiah", which

⁴⁵³ Quran, Surah al Bakarah 47

⁴⁵⁴ The Qur'an (15: 29; 38: 72)

⁴⁵⁵ Mariyam in Arabic, which is also the title of the chapter 19 in the Qur'an.

⁴⁵⁶ It is called Ruh of Allah in Arabic.

⁴⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Abraham is called Khalil Allah, the Loyal Friend of God, and Moses Kalim Allah, the Interlocutor and Conversant with God.

⁴⁵⁸ The Qu'ran 3:45, 4:157, 4,171,4,172,5,17,5:72,5:75,9:30, 9:31

⁴⁵⁹ Imam al Bukhari, 3, 34. 425

⁴⁶⁰ Sofuoğlu Mehmed, 1972, *Sahih-i Müslim ve Tercemesi, Mütercim*, p. 208, Vol. 1, İrfan Yayınevi, İstanbul : Kitab-ül Burhan Fi Alamet-il Mehdiyy-il Ahir Zaman, 14, p. 556, Vol, 17, Kütüb-ü Sitte Muhtasarı.

has created some controversy as the Qur'an does not state so. As such, in Islamic traditions the concepts of Mahdi and Messiah have been interpreted in slightly different ways.



Figure 4 The Prominent Messiah Claimants in Islamic History from past to present

According to a great Muslim scholar Imam al-Rabbani, the Mahdi is the most fitting benefactor of his time.⁴⁶¹ In the tradition of Islam, Messianism is also a valid belief among Muslims. Not all religious movements emphasize beliefs, doctrines, and creeds as most people have seen the examples of Islam and Christianity. Almost all religious denominations have similar problems about the interpretation of divine messages of God. As Christianity, has been subject to schism,⁴⁶² involving disputes over doctrines such as those between the Eastern orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants. Similarly, divisions between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, or between Theravada and Mahayana⁴⁶³ Buddhists, have sometimes given rise to heresy trials or wars of religion.

Millenarian movements have always been considered as a controversial subject in religion. These are the movements which expect an imminent apocalyptic collapse of the existing world order and its replacement by a new dispensation. In the Christian tradition, this involves active belief in the second coming of Christ. According to Aldridge, compared to other world faiths, Christianity has been intolerant of internal diversity of belief.⁴⁶⁴ The world rejected new religious movements which in fact most closely resemble the epistemologically dominant world religions. The latter may impose the view that they and they alone have the truth. They also impose uncompromising standards of conduct on their followers.⁴⁶⁵

A Muslim parallel would be the belief in the Mahdi in certain movements. In Shi'a Islam, the Mahdi is the hidden Imam, a religious leader who will reappear and establish a reign of peace and justice according to the will of Allah.⁴⁶⁶ The divisions within Islam turn on the questions of successors to the Prophet. In the majority Sunni tradition, Mohammad's successors are said to be Caliphs, that is to say guardians of the faith, its sacred rites and its traditions. The Shi'a community also embraces a powerful millenarian expectation. For them, the twelfth Imam will be the Mahdi, the hidden Imam according to the will of Almighty, Allah⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶¹ İmam-ı Rabbani, *Mektubat*, p.357, İstanbul

⁴⁶² Schism is separation or permanent division in the Christian church of 1054 such as East West Schism Photian Schism Western Great Schism.

⁴⁶³ Mahayanists distinguish themselves from the more conservative Theravada Buddhists of Sri Lanka. See: Robert Pollock, 2002, *The everything World's Religions Book: Discover the Beliefs, Traditions*, p. 121 USA.

⁴⁶⁴ Aldridge, 2008, p.32.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p.47.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, p.47.

⁴⁶⁷ Öztürk Yaşar Nuri, 1982, *Kutsal gönüllü Velî Kuşadalı İbrâhim Halvetî: hayatı, tasavvufî düşünceleri, mektupları*, p. 144, Fatih Yayınevi Matbaası, İstanbul.

When Messianism is analyzed as religious leadership, as Mahdship or Messiahship, social circumstances must be taken into consideration in society. Despite the apparent freedom, if the charismatic leader lacks institutional support, then his followers lose faith, and his authority will simply vanish. Also, paradoxically, a charismatic religious leader might be pressured by his followers to show miracles or other worldly actions, which he may not be able to satisfy or which may not be in accordance with his divine mission. When Muhammad was asked for miracles to prove that he was the Prophet, he reportedly referred to the Qur'an as miracle enough. As Weber said, a charismatically led movement will survive only if its members fare well which is an important statement, to suggest that self-interest might also influence faith and piety.⁴⁶⁸

From this point of view, who and what is the Messiah? This question has preoccupied Jews, Christians and Muslims for centuries.⁴⁶⁹ Only the most persistent and outrageous error or misconduct was condemned as sin (*qafir*) in Islam or as the more or less equivalent crimes of heresy (*zendeqa*) and denial of God (*ilhad*).⁴⁷⁰ The accused was then summoned to recant and repent and if he failed to do so, was put to death. Some accused refused the opportunity to recant since the good faith of a Zindīq could not be accepted.⁴⁷¹

The extremist group *imamiyah*, who believe in the Twelve Imams, share a similar viewpoint. They hold that the twelfth of their Imams, Muhammad b. Al Hasan al Askari, which they describe as *al-Mahdi* made his entry into the hidden cellar of their house in *Hillah*.⁴⁷² He will come forth at the end of the time and will fill the earth with justice. The Twelve Imams are still expecting him to this day.⁴⁷³ Ibn Khaldun noted that al-Mahdi al Muntazar namely the expected Messiah will be descendent of Prophet Muhammad and will appear at the end of time along with Jesus Christ to defeat the enemies of Islam.⁴⁷⁴ İbni Haldun explained the messianic miracles and the appearance of *al-Mahdi al Muntazar* in his well-known book, *Muqaddimah*.⁴⁷⁵ According to him, the Mahdi will purify and heal the

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.p 182.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. p.115.

⁴⁷⁰ Leaman Oliver, 2006, *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*. p. 289. London

⁴⁷¹ See, Lewis Bernard, 1953, *Some observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam.*, p. 60, No 1 Studia Islamica.

⁴⁷² Al Hillah was a city in the Southern side of Turkey, today situated in Iraq. See, M. Ismail Marcinkowski, 2004, *Religion and Politics in Iraq: Muslim Shia Clerics between Quietism*. p. X, Printing Kerjaya. Lmd. org

⁴⁷³ Ibid. p.408.

⁴⁷⁴ Dekmejian Hrair, 1995, *Islam in Revolution Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. p. 62, New York.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 125.

world of all evils in the world and bring peace the world as Prophet Muhammad did.⁴⁷⁶ According to ibn Khaldun, Mahdi will appear in future as below:

It has been well known and generally accepted by all Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of the time a man from the family of the Prophet will without fail make his appearance one that will strengthen the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi. Following him, the Antichrist will appear together with all the subsequent signs of the Day of Judgment, as established in the sound tradition of the Sahih (truth). After the *Mahdi Isa* (Jesus) will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or Jesus will descend together with Mahdi, and help him kill the Antichrist and have him as the leader in his prayers.⁴⁷⁷

The following tradition of Caliph Ali was published by Ibn Majah, as transmitted by Yasin al- Lili and according to him, the Messenger of God said, “the Mahdi is among us, the people of the house, God will give him success in one night.” According to this view, Mahdi will appear on the Mountain *Qaf* before Angel Gabriel blows his horn. There are many speculative arguments on the location of the mountain *Qaf* however it is also described in the Surat Al Qaf in the Qur’an.⁴⁷⁸

In Islamic literature, Mahdship has been depicted quite a lot by Muslim scholars. Like Egyptian theologian, Jeleddin as Suyuti in the fifteenth century and Aliyyul Kari in the sixteenth century had written interesting thoughts regarding messianic age, the expected Mahdi and significant of Mahdship in the Muslim world.⁴⁷⁹ In the same vein, another Egyptian scholar Imam Sharani from the sixteenth century very extensively explained the signs of the apocalyptic period and Mahdship in his well-known book *al Yevakit vel cevahir fi beyani akaidil ekabir* in which he explained Mahdship based on hadiths and Islamic tradition.⁴⁸⁰

Likewise, Ottoman scholars wrote specifically on Mahdship in the Islamic tradition. Haji Mahmud Effendi’s book in Ottoman Turkish, called *Mehdi Hakkında bir Risale* contains unique information about Mahdi. Similarly, another Ottoman writer, Zühdü Bey’s book, *Ahir zamanda Mehdi, Deccal, Yecüc ve Mecüc Zuhuru Hakkında bir Risale* is not only an

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 126.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibn Khaldun, 1958, *The Muqaddimah*, Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, p. 156, Vol. II London

⁴⁷⁸ It is mentioned in Qur’an “We spread it out and cast therein firmly set mountains and made grow therein [something] of every beautiful kind”, See, Qur’an Surah Qaf, Chapter 50, Verses 5:6.

⁴⁷⁹ Çınar Mehmet, 2016, *Osmanlı Halklarının Mehdilik Algısı ve Müslüman Tebaa Tarafından Bu Alanda Yazılan Eserler Bağlamında Kurtarıcı Beklentisinin sosyo-politik Bağlantıları*, p. 219, Vol, 14, Sayı, 1, Kelam Araştırmaları Dergisi. Istanbul.

⁴⁸⁰ Imam Sharani, 2003, *Al ye Vakıt..* . p. 406 Beyrut.

important source but also revealed numerous mysterious regarding the genesis of the messianic beliefs in the history of Islam. Ali Pasha also wrote a booklet called *Risalet'ül Mehdiye* which traces Mahdship in seven chapters from the past to up until seventeenth century.⁴⁸¹ From an anonymous writer, there is another religious text *Risale fi nizuli Isa ve hurücul Mehdi* where *mahdship* is explained within the Islamic tradition.⁴⁸²

An Ottoman folk musician and poet in Anatolia declared his uprising with a poem which contains fundamental messianic expectation for the salvation of people around his region.⁴⁸³ He influenced masses of people with his poems which actually contained many figurative mystical words, serving as excellent examples of the calibre of Turkish literature in Anatolia at the time.⁴⁸⁴

The flag of fairness Muhammed Mahdi
We should take it up whatever happens
And take an axe to shed blood of denier
Let's hew down whatever happens⁴⁸⁵

Nineteenth-century Ottoman statesman Ziya Pasha also mentioned Mahdi in one of his well-known poems. In this poem, Ziya Pasha emphasized the necessity of a Redeemer for Muslim World, basically a Mahdi who must come after all the waiting period and bring peace to Muslims. It also seems a difficult era for the Ottoman Statesmen like Ziya Pasha to deal with the nationalistic movements which caused trouble for the Ottoman reforms and reorganization in the second half of the nineteenth century. In his poem, Ziya Pasha notes that:

Don't wait any longer and come oh Mahdi, please
All Muslims are suffering in hopelessness
No peace is left in the Muslim world anymore
Violence cover everywhere as evil⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ İslâm Ansiklopedisi 2010, *Şehid Ali Paşa*,; p. 434, Vol, 38,TDV İstanbul.

⁴⁸² Zühdü Bey, *Âhir Zamanda Mehdi; Deccâl; Yecüc ve Mecüc Zuhûrı Hakkında Risâle*, Süleymaniye ktp., nr. 96/2, vr. 89-92. İstanbul.

⁴⁸³ Eyüboğlu Sabahattin, 1977, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, p. 76 Cem Yayınevi Eğitim Dizisi, İstanbul

⁴⁸⁴ Most of his words in his poems actually emphezised the Shia Islam and his smphatety to King of Shia Iran, namely Shah Ismail. Tabipsiz yaraya merhem sarılmaz, Mürşit olmayınca pire varılmaz, Yüz bin tabur kursan Yezit kırılmaz, Eli Zülfikârlı Al'olmayınca. See, also Derdim çoktur hangisine yanayım Yine tazalendi yürek yarası Ben bu derde kande derman bulayım Meğer Şah elinden ola çaresi Esat Korkmaz, 2005, *Pir Sultan Abdal, Üçüncü Ölmem Bu Hain*, p. 100. Alev Yay., İstanbul.

⁴⁸⁵ In Turkish, Muhammed Mehdi'nin Hak sancağını, Çekelim bakalım nic'olsa olsun. Teber çekip münkirlerin kanını, Dökelim bakalım nic'olsa olsun. See, Mehmet Fuat, 2012, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, p.56 Yapı Kredi Yayınları, See also; Baş Haydar, 2013, *İmam Hasan El Askeri ve İmam Muhammed Mehdi* p. 322 İcmal Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁴⁸⁶ In the original tex; Kandesin sen kande çık ey Mehdi sahib-i zuhur. Milleti İslam-ı pamal eyledi ceysi fütür. Kalmadı İslam içinde bir yerde arami-ü huzur. Kapladı mülkü seraba leşkeri zulmü şürir. See, Ziya Paşa 2011, *Terci-i Bend ve Terki-i Bend*, p. 65 Edt, Hüseyin Korkmaz, İstanbul.

This poem shows that the messianic expectation even affected the Ottoman high society in the late nineteenth century. It is interesting to observe that while messianic movement in the Jewish community was regarded as a private religious issue in the society, an Islamic Messianic movement in the Ottoman society was usually regarded as a rebellious one against the state. Several Ottoman archival documents highlight Mahdship movements throughout Ottoman era from the fifteenth century to the twentieth century, and mention these as acts of contempt against the Ottoman state. This kind of religious leadership appeared in Muslim societies as Mahdship several times in Ottoman territory, especially in the nineteenth century. Additionally, sometimes the Mahdi appeared as a reformer (*mujaddid*) and claimed divine sanction for his movement.⁴⁸⁷

In the nineteenth century, some scholars interpreted the arrival of the Mahdi in a spiritual way and at times, got influenced by Christian descriptions of the Messiah in their texts. Certain religious scholars expected redeemer Jesus Messiah will be seen on the holy mountain and save his nations.⁴⁸⁸ According to Ottoman scholar Abu Bakr Effendi, this mountain might be Table Mountain in South Africa because it is situated at the end of a continent and separated Indian and the Atlantic Ocean which is also mentioned in the Qur'an⁴⁸⁹

In the history of Islam, some Messianic movements were regarded as heretical which is called *Zendeqa* in Islamic literature. The term *Zındıq* which derives from *Zendeqa* was used for the first time in the last years of the Umayyad Caliphate around 740s. For his heretical crime according to Islam, an Iranian Manihisist, Zad Hürmüz was punished death penalty with his followers for establishing a new sect in Islam but found guilty of corrupting fundamental rules of Islam. Another *zındıq* was Cad bin Dirham who was actually secretary of Caliph Mervin II. also punished for his similar marginal ideas. His guilt was recorded in the court case that he stated that the "Qur'an was created by God as a miracle event but not

⁴⁸⁷ According to hadiths, a Mujaddid (reviver of Islam) will come in every century.

⁴⁸⁸ An Ottoman Muslim scholar Abu Bakr Effendi came to South Africa in 1863 and wrote religious book, *Bayan al Din*. In his book, Effendi stated that in catechism. Table Mountain was called Jabal Qaf by Abu Bakr Effendi in his book, *Bayan al Din*. See Effendi Abu Bakr 1960, *The religious duties of Islam as taught and explained*, A translation from the original Arabic and Afrikaans by Mia Brandel-Syrier, p. XLVIII., Vol 2 1960., Leiden.

⁴⁸⁹ In the Qur'an, the oceans of the world: they meet and yet each remains separate for Allah See, Surah 25. Al-Furqan, Ayah 53.

revealed to Prophet Muhammad.” For this reason, Cad bin Dirham was punished by death penalty in BC 750.⁴⁹⁰

In Islamic history, some messianic movements emerged with the different ideas such as Deism,⁴⁹¹ which was also regarded as a form of heresy among Muslims in the Umayyad period. A Muslim scholar Er-Razi declared that the intellect is above everything on earth. Er-Razi believed in a Creator but not in prophethood, which is close to the Deist approach. Like Ibnu’r Ravendi, Er-Razi was also a Deist. According to both religious leaders, if the intellect exists to be used in this life, then there is no need for holy book and Prophets. According to Er Razi, someone can write better books than all holy books including Qur’an.⁴⁹² When he declared his views, he was judged and immediately killed according to Sharia Law. Marginal views were not tolerated in Arabic States, neither by Abbasid Caliphate nor by the Umayyad Caliphate. Anything other than orthodox views in Islamic tradition was regarded as *Zendeqa* or *Ilhad* namely heretical thoughts or heresy.

Despite this strict law, several religious figures still came up with their marginal ideas and proclaimed their thoughts among Muslims. For instance, El Hussein bin Mansur el Hallac claimed himself as God and address his followers as visible version of God on the earth. He was sentenced to death and his body was burned down and its ashes thrown into the Dijle River.⁴⁹³ His dramatic death impacted some of his followers, since his peaceful message had previously inspired many Muslims. Still, while some Muslims respected him as a religious scholar and wrote folkloric poem about him, some of them said that he was a visible version of Satan (*Dejjal*) but not God at all.⁴⁹⁴ However, in one way or the other, for his extreme or misunderstood thoughts, he was punished by death penalty in Baghdad in 922BC.⁴⁹⁵

Another Persian Muslim scholar Şahabettin Şühreverdi was killed by the order of Salahuddin Ayyubi due to his marginal messianic ideas which he declared in Aleppo in BC 1191. It is rumored that when he was sent to the court, he was insulted and embarrassed by Muslim scholars (Ulama) with his great knowledge and they judged him as a heretical man

⁴⁹⁰ Ocak, 2008, p. 13.

⁴⁹¹ Deism is the set of beliefs with rejects prophethood. It holds that God is the Creator but that he is not involved with the day to day operations of the universe, once it was created.

⁴⁹² Ibid. p.35.

⁴⁹³ The Dicle river is also called as Tigris in the eastern member of the two great rivers in Iraq

⁴⁹⁴ Ocak, 2013, p. 53.

⁴⁹⁵ Encyclopedia of Islam, Louis Massignon, Louis Gardet, 1986, "*Al-Halladj*". p. 104. 2nd ed., Vol. 3, Brill.

who dealt with witchcraft. Whereas he was chemist and a knowledgeable scholar at the time, apparently his critically thoughts on other scholars and his prophetic ideas cost his life.⁴⁹⁶

As shown, the messianic idea in Islamic tradition has been a religious concept used by Muslim theologians.⁴⁹⁷ According to Jelaleddin Rumi, spiritual progress was not restricted to people of a particular race, culture, or religion; anyone could join him and his Sufi order.⁴⁹⁸ For example, in his poem “Call”, Rumi emphasized that there is no prejudice against anyone:

Come. Come again, whoever you are, come! Heathen, fire worshipper or idolatrous⁴⁹⁹, come!
Come, even if you broke your penitence a hundred times. Ours is the portal of hope, come as you are.⁵⁰⁰

In a long poem in the Masnawi, Rumi revisited the virgin birth of Jesus.⁵⁰¹ He described Mary’s words after the Holy Spirit, sent by God, made its appearance in front of Mary. She says, "I seek refuge in God", Rumi then added that in every era there is a saint to spread the message of God, this goes on until the hereafter, whether he is descendent of Caliph Umar or Ali. “Oh you who looks for the right path, he shall be Mahdi. He is not known but also sitting opposite you.”⁵⁰²

Often, the concept of Mahdiship is mentioned in the marginal Islamic sect of Shiism. Just like the twelve Apostles in the Christian faith, in Shiism, there is a belief in the twelve Imams. It is held that the last Imam will be the *Al Mahdi al Muhtazar*, namely expected Messiah. After the killing of grandson of Prophet Muhammad, Husain al Sheed (martyr), an expected redeemer from Quraysian family will appear among Muslims to bring peace to World in the end of the day. According to Shia Muslims, the hidden Imam will definitely come to save Muslims one day. Based on this understanding, many Muslim congregations developed their kind of redeemer as Mahdi. For instance in the era of Abbacy and Umayyad times, Haris bin Suraya and Abu Muslim Horosani were regarded as Mahdi. In the Selchuk period in Anatolia, few religious scholars also proclaimed their messiahship. The movement

⁴⁹⁶ Ocak, 2013, p. 66.

⁴⁹⁷ Sünen-i Tirmizi Tercemesi, Hadis No: 2333, ed., Osman Zeki Mollamahmutoğlu, 1991, pp. 92-93 Vol., 4, Yunus Emre Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁴⁹⁸ Rumi is very popular theologian in North America and other English speaking countries.

⁴⁹⁹ The term is relating to false gods or practicing idolatry; "idolatrous worship".

⁵⁰⁰ Şafak Yakup, 2009, *Mevlânâ'ya Atfedilen "Yine Gel..." Rubâîsine Dair*, 24 [2009/2], p. 75-80 tasavvuf ilmî ve akademik araştırma dergisi

⁵⁰¹ Masnawi by Rumi Book III, lines 3702-3790

⁵⁰² In the original text of the poem, this is explained in greater detail. See, Her devirde peygamber yerine bir veli vardır; Bu sınaama Kıyamete kadar daimidir. Kim de iyi huy varsa kurtulmuştur. Kimin kalbi sırçadansa kurtulmuştur. İşte diri ve faal Imam, o velidir; İster Ömer soyundan olsun, ister Ali soyundan. Ey yol arayan, Mehdi de odur, hadi de. Hem gizlidir, hem senin karşında oturmakta. Jelaleddin Rumi, 1988, *Mesnevi tercumesi ve serhi*,. p.154, vol 5, İstanbul.

of Turkish Sheikh, Baba Ilyas Horosani could be considered the most influential messianic movement of the time before the Ottoman Empire. Even after his death, his religious thoughts endured in Muslim circles and inspired many other religious messianic movements for centuries in Anatolia and the Balkans during the Ottoman era.⁵⁰³

Another example in the history also clearly shows the understanding of Islamic messianism in Muslim society. An Iranian Sheikh came to Istanbul in order to declare his Mahdship in 1497. He proclaimed that ‘I am the Mahdi and the redeemer for Muslim world and starting my jihad in Istanbul’. After his declaration he was found guilty and arrested in the city. He was judged in the Muslim court and killed by the Sharia Law, which was confirmed by Mudarris Mavlana Efdaleddin, Mavlana Arab and Molla Kestelli.⁵⁰⁴

In the fifteenth century, another Turkish Sheikh, Shah Kulu⁵⁰⁵ shared his messianic idea saying that he was the Caliph of Shah Ismail who was the prominent Iranian statesmen of Safavi State. In 1511, Shah Kulu began his religious sermon on the tenth day of Muharram which is a holy day for Shia Muslims. Shah Kulu declared his religious leadership in cruel way by refusing to pay tax to the government. With his followers, he defeated the Ottoman police officers but most importantly killed a notable Ottoman general Karagöz Pasha. With this fatal mistake, he committed a contemptuous act against the State sovereignty and was immediately arrested, court-martialed and sentenced to death by the Ottoman authorities. In those years, another follower of Iran Shah, Nuraddin Ali Caliph promised to bring warfare to Muslim life in Anatolia as expected Mahdi. With his friends, he created a rebellion in favor of Safavid State. He attended the Battle of Chaldiran against the Ottoman State and fought for Shah Ismail. After the defeat of Shah Ismail, Mahdi Nuraddin Caliph escaped to Iran and vanished in history.⁵⁰⁶

In the same century, a couple of religious Mahdships emerged, but also led to uprisings which challenged the Ottoman authorities. A mahdship movement emerged in the center of Anatolia around 1520 under the religious leadership of Sheikh Bozoklu Jelal⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Sachedina Abdulaziz, 1981, *Islamic Messianism*, p. 73, State University of Newyork Press, USA.

⁵⁰⁴ Öztürk Necdet, 2011, *Osmanlı Sosyal Hayatı Saray Penceresinden, 14–15 Yüzyıl*, p. 147, Yitik Hazine Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁵⁰⁵ In Turkish literature, it is called Şahkulu Revolt, See, Somel, Selcuk Aksin, 2003, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*. p. 271, Oxford.

⁵⁰⁶ Somel Selçuk Akşin, 2001, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908* p. 197, Brill.

⁵⁰⁷ Bozoklu Şeyh Celal who rebelled against the authority of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. See, Akdağ, Mustafa, 2009, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası - Celâli İsyanları*, p. 67, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul

spread his religious message in spiritual way as messianic redeemer. In his first religious sermon, he proclaimed news about the arrival of Mahdi from a cave very soon. Apart from his religious thoughts, Bozoklu Jelal influenced his environments with his physical powers which he was secretly supported by twenty soldiers by the help of Iranian State, Safavid. According to contemporary historian Solakzade, Bozoklu Jelal must be accepted as the head of riot (*fitne başı*) and his heretical declaration must be regarded as Zendeqa for Muslims. His mahdship declined when he was in the Ottoman court and his esoteric powers as Mahdi were rejected.⁵⁰⁸

Like other religious scholars, some marginal Muslim theologians also succeeded in creating a religious movement in Turkish history. In Anatolia, Sheikh Bedreddin and his followers, an Ottoman Jew, Samuel, after his conversion to Islam Torlak Kemal and Borkluce Mustafa had tried to influence people with spiritual sermons and emphasised democracy in their speeches but again under the religious structure. Some believers began to call Borkluce Mustafa as *Dede Sultan* in referring to him as a leader with mystical powers.⁵⁰⁹ Sheikh Bedreddin's revolt in the fifteenth century was a kind of charitable communism which was supported by a mystic love of God in which all differences of faith were overlooked.⁵¹⁰ One source of illusion is the term itself.

As other contemporary sources, Katip çelebi noted, a Muslim Saint, Sheikh Bedreddin together with a Jewish convert Torlak Kemal, rebelled against the Ottoman State.⁵¹¹ According to Prof Ocak, as a Mahdship movement, Sheikh Bedreddin's uprising, just like the Babai rebellion started by Babai Ilyas in the Seljuk Empire, originated from socio-economic struggles at that time. The only difference between them was that while Baba Ilyas proclaimed his prophethood, Sheikh Bedreddin proclaimed his mahdship.⁵¹² His chief followers Torlak Kemal and Borkluce Mustafa converted to Islam from Judaism and worked in the Ottoman palace.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁸ Karataş Hasan, 2011, *The City as a Historical Actor: The Urbanization and Ottomanization of the Halvetiye Sufi Order by the City of Amasya in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, p. 103 PhD thesis University of California, Berkeley.

⁵⁰⁹ Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, 1987, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol, 1. p. 364. TTK, Ankara.

⁵¹⁰ Lewis Bernard, Benjamin Braude, 1982, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, p.57, Vol. 1. New York.

⁵¹¹ Katip Celebi, 1988, *Kitabı Cihannüma*, p.54, Vol, XI., Ankara: Solakzade tarihi cilt 1 p. 183: Aşık paşaoğlu tarihi p. 90; As a religious leader, Sheikh Bedreddin's thoughts became a source of inspiration for many poets in Turkey.

⁵¹² Ibid. p.113.

⁵¹³ Ibid. p.114.

The revolt of Sheikh Bedreddin was the first religious rebellion in the Ottoman State.⁵¹⁴ According to his grandson Halil's historical record (*menakibname*), like his father, judge of Simavna, Sheik Bedreddin was also a well-educated judge (*Qadi*). As a Mahdi of his time, he intended to bring new rules into social life in Anatolia. With his sophisticated thoughts Sheikh Bedreddin spread his movement with his followers like Torlak Kemal and Borkluce Mustafa in Asia Minor as far as Balkans.⁵¹⁵ In his book *Varidat*, Sheikh Bedreddin revealed the Big Bang in a materialistic way without the influence of any creator. However, it was due to his statements against the Ottoman sovereignty which was called '*Huruc ale's Sultan*', which means an uprising against the authority of the Sultan, that he was sentenced to death by hanging in the city of Serez. Well-known Ottoman religious scholars (*Ulama*) regarded his thoughts as a rejection the existence of God basically heresy called *Mülhid* in Islam.⁵¹⁶ His movement was also seen as potential danger for society.⁵¹⁷ Therefore, as a religious thought, Mahdship has often been regarded as *Zendeqa* in Muslim States and found to be a threat to the unity of the state throughout history.⁵¹⁸

Another act of *Zendeqa* was committed an Iranian Sheikh Oğlan Ismail Maşuki who revealed all his marginal thoughts while he was judged in the court. This court case highlights the marginal thoughts of an interesting Muslim scholar in the Muslim world. Sheikh Ismail Maşuki who claimed himself as Mahdi said that, "when human became human, nothing is sinful for him anymore."⁵¹⁹ According to Sheikh Ismail Maşuki, his father was the ideal human and himself a Mahdi. He also stated that regular Salah prayer (names) to go to heaven is unnecessary; wine is a seed of Love and permissible (*Halaal*) for all Muslims; eating, drinking and sleeping must be all considered as praying for God. According to him, fasting, pilgrimage, zaqat and all sorts of things are useless; an illegal relation with any gender is normal attitude as long as both sides are enjoying it; the soul comes into the body with each new birth and leaves the body after death; everybody is a God. He even mentioned that man and woman make a baby and then say that God creates it, when actually they create it.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁴ Jesse Russell & Ronald Cohn, 2012, *Sheikh Bedreddin* p. 55 London.

⁵¹⁵ Halman Talât Sait, Jayne L. Warner, 2006, *The Turkish Muse: Views & Reviews, 1960s-1990s* p. 89 Syracuse University Press.

⁵¹⁶ Markus Dressler, 2013, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam*, p. 229. Oxford University Press.

⁵¹⁷ Özcan Abdülkader, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Mehdilik Hareketleri*, p. 3, Online Article.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. p. 62.

⁵¹⁹ Ocak, 2013, p. 53.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p.221.

Eventually, in Ottoman court, the *fetvâ* jurist condemned Ismâil Maşûkî to death penalty in 1529.⁵²¹

In the same century, another Muslim Sheikh, Abu'l Hayr came up with prophetic declaration but strangely insulted the companions of Muhammad and also stated that Caliph Ali deserved prophethood more than Muhammad. According to him, part of the Qur'an is false (*hurafa*) and another part is also meaningless. To him, wine is actually *halaal* but Muslims misinterpreted it in the Qur'an and then accepted it as forbidden (*Haram*).⁵²²

As seen above, most of the Mahdship movements in Muslim World derived Iranian territory due to strong messianic expectation of Shia Muslim society. Therefore, the belief of Mahdship has always lived in the Muslim public-sphere in Iran.

In addition, from the fifteenth the seventieth century, in Yemen, Trablusgarb, Mecca, and Balkans, some Ottoman Muslims declared their Mahdship in a different way but all of them referred to religious salvation for the Muslim World. However, in the seventeenth century, due to the beginning of the millennium year according to Muslim and Jewish calendars, some Muslim scholars declared their messianic ideas.⁵²³ For instance, the Sheikh of city Sakarya, Imam Ahmad sent a letter as a commandment (*Şehr-i Atik*) to the public in Eskişehir with immediate instruction for the payment of taxes as a compulsory duty after his Mahdship declaration. Sheikh Ahmad declared himself the expected Mahdi of the time (*Mehdi Sahibi Zuhur*), but at the same time claimed that he has the soul of Jesus Christ on him. He began to sign his paper as '*Isa Ruhullah*' means the spiritual appearance of Jesus. After his imprisonment, he was sentenced to a death penalty.⁵²⁴

In the same century, an Arabian astrologer (*Müneccim*) in Edirne proclaimed his Mahdship as the successor of Prophet Muhammad, but was immediately arrested for political corruption and sentenced to death penalty (*Qatl Al Siyasi*) and killed according to the state law.

⁵²¹ Zelyut Rıza, 1995, *Osmanlıda karşı düşünce: düşünceleri nedeniyle idam edilenler*. p. 118 Yön Yayıncılık, İstanbul

⁵²² Ibid, p.141.

⁵²³The Hijree Calendar began AD 622 which marks the day that Prophet Muhammad emigrated from Mecca to Medina. Hijra has been accepted as the first year of the Islamic year. See; Burnaby Sherrad Beaumont, 1901, *Elements of the Jewish and Mohammedi Calendars, with rules and tables and explanatory notes on the Julian and Gregorian calendars*, p. 132, London

⁵²⁴ Griswold, William J., 1983, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion*, Klaus Schwars Verlag, p. 232. Berlin.

In the history of Islam, there are several messianic movements, but only a few of them are a remarkable influence at the time of their genesis. In the nineteenth century, two notable Muslim leaders were declared as Messiahs by two different Muslim scholars in Asia and Africa, Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdullah from Sudan and Mirza Ghulam Ahmet from India.⁵²⁵

As a religious leader of Samaniyya⁵²⁶ Muhammad Ahmad proclaimed his Mahdship in 1881 in Sudan.⁵²⁷ His declaration was made during the time of Wahhabism and another puritanical form of Islamic revivalism which occurred during the British occupation in North Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁵²⁸ In his time, Mahdism haunted colonial authorities in North and West Africa, Sudan, and Somaliland. The Sanussiyya in Italy, dominated Libya, presented perhaps the clearest example of the expression of African nationalism and anti-colonialism through Islam. Pan-Islamism, the religious side of the culture-bound pro-Arabism and idea of Salafia also played a prominent role in the nationalist politics in Egypt however mostly appeared as a radical action in history scene.⁵²⁹ Despite his achievement against British-Egyptian government, Muhammad Ahmad's Mahdist state could not sustain its influence for long in the North African territory. After his death, his successor could only pursue his messianic statements until 1898.⁵³⁰

Sudanese statesman Sadik al-Mahdi who was the executive commuted member of Sudanese Socialist Union was one of the followers of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad. Sadik al-Mahdi was also the founder of Mahdist party in Sudan in 1966.⁵³¹ Like another radical

⁵²⁵ Like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, another Muslim claimant of Mahdi al muhtazar was Faqih Said from Yemen proclaimed his mahdisip in 1840. His idea about Mahdship was well explained in his poem as follow; "And then will come a swift khalifa who goes in the right way, And his people from Asir and from Turkey and from Yemen and from Qahtan, And after him will come the European with a great mass, He will collect the lords and the people of Turkey (Rum) and all the warriors, And after him will appear all Mahdi al muntazar, The day of which he will insert his sword in Huban, Oh what joy that brings joy, I shall praise God in the order of the letters of the Alef- Beth, Who is holy and alone in his throne." See, Bat- Zion, 1990, p. 208.

⁵²⁶ The region is called in Khartoum. See, Mirak-Weissbach, Muriel. 1995, 4 *Why the British Hate Sudan: The Mahdia's War Against*. p.2 September The American Almanac. London.

⁵²⁷ Holt P.M, 1966, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan*.1881- 1898, p. 61, London.

⁵²⁸ Orhonlu Cengiz, 1996, *Osmanli Imparatorlugunun Guney Siyaseti, Habes Eyaleti*, P. 153, Ankara

⁵²⁹ Boahen A, Adu, 1990, *General History of Africa, VII Africa under colonial domination 1880-1935*, p.247 Paris.

⁵³⁰ Hoexter M, S. Eisenstaet, N. Levtzion, 2002, *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, p. 154, State University of New York.

⁵³¹ Raph Uwechue, 1991, *Africa, who is who*, p. 1033. London.

Islamic groups in Muslim Society, Fulani Congregation of Nigeria, and Muhammad Ahmad of Sudan established his movement in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵³²

One of the Ottoman archival documents mentioned the emergence of a “false Mahdi” of Sudan and his movement in Egypt in 1882.⁵³³ In another archival document, it seems that Sultan Abdul Hamid II closely observed the Mahdship movement of Sudan. This movement also took place in the Egyptian news, called *Dairy al Ehram*.⁵³⁴ Ottoman authorities decided to publish some booklets to demolish the influence of Messianic movement of Muhammad Ahmad of Sudan.⁵³⁵ Some correspondence between Ottoman government in Egypt and Istanbul mentioned the Italian and French supports to Mahdi of Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad against the Ottoman State.⁵³⁶ Another archival document indicates that British Empire negotiated the king of Habesh⁵³⁷ to defeat Mahdi movement of Sudan on condition that they recognize the British occupation in Egypt.⁵³⁸ According to another Ottoman archival document, Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad used the honorific title Sayid to include himself into Qurayshian family in order to legitimize his messianic claim, Mahdship for Muslim World.⁵³⁹ Upon all these radical activities in Egypt, Ottoman Sultan order to send two warships to protect Hejaz shores from the growing Mahdi movement of Muhammad Ahmad.⁵⁴⁰ Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad proclaimed his Mahdship by publishing booklets after succeeded the occupied Sudan.⁵⁴¹ In response to his activities, the chief religious leader of Mecca issued a religious decree to emphasize his false Mahdship and as well as his sinful actions in the region.⁵⁴²

On the other side, local Muslims began to complain about the activities of Mahdi Mohammad Ahmad from Sudan. He was gathering tax from them according to his interpretation of the Islamic Law. Some leaders in Sudan sent a letter to the Ottoman Government regarding cruel treatment of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad, who even punished and

⁵³² Tandogan Muhammed, 2013, *Afrikada Sömürgecilik ve Osmanlı Siyaseti*, (1800 – 1922) p. 162 TTK, Ankara.

⁵³³ OSA, Y. EE.d, no, 1184,1185,1186,1187 Hijree, 1299

⁵³⁴ OSA, Y. EE, 79/23 Hijree , 1284

⁵³⁵ OSA, Y. PRK. UM. 6/27, Hijree, 1301

⁵³⁶ OSA, Y. PRK. MYD. 3/7 Hijree, 1301

⁵³⁷ Ottoman Habesh province is called Abyssinia" meaning "Ethiopia.

⁵³⁸ OSA, Y. PRK. TKM. 7/24 Hijree, 1301

⁵³⁹ OSA. Y. PRK.AZJ. 9/6, Hijree 1301, Sayyid Abdullahzade Muhammed al Mahdi

⁵⁴⁰ OSA. Y. A HUS. 175/104, Hijree, 1301

⁵⁴¹ OSA, YPRK. TKM.. 8/28, Hijree 1302

⁵⁴² OSA, HR. SYS. 59/6 Hijree, 1306

imprisoned some people from the *Mute Mahdi* congregation in Rabiğ.⁵⁴³ Muslim sphere in Sudan is informed the Ottoman government about the ill-treatment of local Muslims by Mahdi Muhammad therefore local Muslims requested Ottoman intervention on the matter.

After all illegal actions of the Mahdi, Sudanese people understood the necessity of the military involvement of the Ottoman rulers on Mahdi movement.⁵⁴⁴ Thereupon Ottoman sent a troop to Egypt to resolve the Mahdship issue which had created anarchy in the region.⁵⁴⁵ Mahdi Ahmad and his movement also took place in the Western media due to British interest in Egypt. According to English newspapers, his movement was labeled as the false messianic movement of Sudan.⁵⁴⁶ Another news indicates that the death news of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad of Sudan was declared in 1885.⁵⁴⁷

It is also easy to notice that English media of the time was approaching similar events very partially. For instance, in English newspapers, while Mahdi Muhammed Ahmad was labelled as "*the False Prophet of the Soudan*", due to favorable political relations on the other side, between British governors and another Muslim leader Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who claimed his prophethood among others in the same century in India. He was regarded as a "*modest man from Qadian*", in the media which clearly shows the politicisation of religion in the World history.⁵⁴⁸

After the messianic proclamation of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad, an Indian religious leader, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also created an influential messianic movement in the history of Muslim World. Perhaps his movement gained the most following members of the within its community, Moreover, his Mahdship was slightly different from other religious movements because of its content which also includes eschatological prophecies made in Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

In 1894, Mira Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed himself as *Mujaddid*⁵⁴⁹ and later promised Mahdi for Muslims as well as Messiah for Christian and Hindus. His movement later called

⁵⁴³ OSA, Y. PRK. UM. 13/37, Hijree 1306 See also, Karpaz Kemal H., 2001, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*. p, 44, 269, Oxford University Press.

⁵⁴⁴ OSA, Y. PRK. TKM. 17/55, Hijree, 1307

⁵⁴⁵ OSA, HR. SYS. 58/23, Hijree, 1307

⁵⁴⁶ The Natal Witness, 1883, *The False Prophet of the Soudan*, p.4, , 21 June Thursday.

⁵⁴⁷ OSA, HR. SYS. 59/18. Sudan'daki mehdinin ölümü haberi.

⁵⁴⁸ The Witness, *The False Prophet of the Soudan*, Tuesday, 21 June, 1883: The Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian, *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a member of the royal house of Delhi*, Thursday, 10 December, 1903.

⁵⁴⁹ According to Islamic tradition, mujaddid brings "renewal to the religion". See, Faruqi, Burhan Ahmad. 2010, *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*. p. 7. Lahore.

Ahmadiyya or *Qaldiyanism* which will be explained in the following chapters in greater detail, and compared with the religious movement of Shabbetai Tzvi in Judaism from socio-political and religious point of views. Like Shabbetai movement in the history of Judaism, Mirza Ghulam's movement was also regarded as "heresy" in the orthodox Muslim World. Many Muslim states declared the movement's followers as infidels (*Kafir* in Arabic) and rejected them from their community.⁵⁵⁰ Despite this reality, somewhat after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Ahmadiyya congregation became the most massive marginal Muslim community in the world.

According to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Mahdi will not be Jesus but will be someone who has a very similar personality to his.⁵⁵¹ As it mentioned above, Mirza Ahmad later extended his claim to Hindus, stating that he was an avataar of Krishna, Kalkin.⁵⁵² Like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, some Muslim scholars interpreted some words of Prophet Muhammad according to their understanding for their religious congregation. Prophet Muhammad says that "a *mujadid* who carries my name will appear among my people in future."⁵⁵³ That was interpreted as Ahmad and/or Muhammad by the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who declared his Mahdship based on particular hadiths, but based also on his interpretations which always remained ambiguous in orthodox Muslim World.⁵⁵⁴ The Ahmadiyya congregation prefers to hide their marginal sect in Muslim society and pretend to be orthodox Muslim unless they gather together in their private group. As seen above, Mahdship or messianic claims in the Muslim world have been occurring in society all the time and even if in a more marginal way.⁵⁵⁵

In the Ottoman era, numerous messianic movements occurred not only in Anatolia but also in other Ottoman territories as far as Morocco. In almost every century, a couple of Muslim declared their Mahdship in the Muslim world, however in second half of the nineteenth century, with the decline of the last Islamic state, the Ottoman Empire, hopelessness in the Muslim world caused some to seek religious salvation on earth. Hence, some of the messianic claims in Muslim society did attract many followers and impacted

⁵⁵⁰ Firstly in Pakistan and all Arabic countries as well as in South Africa. They only freely practice in Haifa in Israel.

⁵⁵¹ Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad, 2008, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p.138, Islam International publications Ltd. UK.

⁵⁵² Ay, 2005, p. 208.

⁵⁵³ Tirmizi, Hadis 2331, Edt. Osman Zeki Mollamahmutoglu, p, 91, Vol, 4. Yunus Emre Yayinlari. Istanbul.

⁵⁵⁴ Ahmet Hulusi, 1972, *Ruh, İnsan, Cin*, p. 123, İstanbul

⁵⁵⁵ Mazrui Ali. A. 1984, *The Semitic Impact on Black Africa, Arab and Jewish Cultural Influences*. p. 5 vol.,13. Cambridge University Press.

Muslim society. However, most of the religious scholars who proclaimed Mahdship were perceived as rebels against the State and were punished by the Ottoman rulers. It is because marginal Islamic movements were usually understood as Islamic revolts, which were regarded as an uprising in the eyes of the constitution of the Islamic State. For instance, a Muslim leader, Mohiuddin Binhani gathered fourteen thousand Muslims and waved the Mahdi flag in Syria. According to an Ottoman archival document in the late nineteenth century, Muhiddin Binhani claimed his Mahdship and later his prophethood. His movement was regarded as a false messianic rebellion and alleged to damage public safety in the State.⁵⁵⁶ He was arrested along with his followers. Another imperial decree was issued in order to arrest Abdullah bin Mehmet who was planning to declare his Mahdship with his followers in his visit to Mecca. In the same year, an Ottoman Muslim citizen, Hasan Baba proclaimed his Mahdship in Nazilli city of Aydin province.

Another interesting event at the same time, was the case of an Ottoman Armenian citizen who claimed that he was Jesus Christ. Subsequently, he was sent to hospital in Izmir.⁵⁵⁷ This is another important indicator that when Muslim leaders proclaimed their Mahdship, it was considered as a uprising but if the messianic movement was from Jewish or Christian society then the issue was not considered as a rebellion but only as a religious issue in the local community. When a Muslim praying in the Valide Sultan Mosque in Istanbul, declared his messiahship, he was tried in court, found guilty of rebellion and sentenced to a death penalty.⁵⁵⁸ However, by the decree of Sultan Abdul Hamid II he was forgiven and exiled to another city to settle the issue. On the other hand, Shabbetai Tzvi's movement was not seen as a threat, except when he decided to take over the Ottoman State.

Similarly, when another Ottoman Muslim citizen, Hasan Effendi from Keşab claimed his Mahdship, he was arrested and tried in court.⁵⁵⁹ In the following year, a similar religious declaration was made by Sheikh Muhiddin es Suleiman in Aleppo.⁵⁶⁰ He was arrested and exiled to Silifke city but governors still informed officers in Silifke to be careful about his attitudes.⁵⁶¹ Similarly, another Muslim leader Hadramudlu Ahmad Berberi claimed his

⁵⁵⁶ OSA, Y. EE. 40/4, Hijree, 1298

⁵⁵⁷ OSA, Y. MTV. 8/82, Hijree, 1299

⁵⁵⁸ OSA, Y. EE, 42/2 Hijree, 1300

⁵⁵⁹ OSA, Y. PRK. UM, 6/111, Hijree1301

⁵⁶⁰ OSA, Y.A HUS. 180/22, Hijree, 1302

⁵⁶¹ OSA, ŞD, 2485/1, Hijree, 1303

Mahdishop in Hedjaz but was later arrested and sent to his village by the Ottoman authorities.⁵⁶²

In the nineteenth century, these Messianic claims had increased inside the boundaries of the Ottoman State. Among many Mahdishop declarations, Hafiz Abdullah Effendi from Macedonia was not a very successful example of a messianic movement as it was not powerful enough to attract people. According to his correspondence, he regarded himself as a Mahdi and addressed his followers as a holy man who had a prophecy.⁵⁶³ After his proclamation, he was arrested before he could gain even a few followers. Khafiz Abdullah Effendi was sent to exile and thus his Mahdishop lost its popularity.⁵⁶⁴

Another interesting figure who claimed his Mahdishop in Trabzon in the nineteenth century, was Imam Hasan Hoca, who after his prosecution in Akka, was allowed to return his suburb of⁵⁶⁵ in Trabzon.⁵⁶⁶ During his arrest in Yemen, Imam Hasan had received some amount of money by the Ottoman Government in order to not to suffer much the prison. This indicates the remarkable state policy of the Ottoman Empire for his citizens at the time.⁵⁶⁷ The proclamation of his messianic movement was regarded as false Mahdishop in the Ottoman records.⁵⁶⁸

When the Ottoman army fought against occupiers' states in the War of Independence in Anatolia in 1919, an Ottoman citizen, Sheikh Ashraf from Bayburd city, created great rebellion for the sake of saving religion of Islam as Mahdi. However, according to Ottoman archival sources, his Mahdishop looked like a political rebellion under the Islamic guise of a Mahdishop movement. According to some Turkish scholars, there was some English political influence behind this rebellion, and its aim was to defeat Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the War of Independence.⁵⁶⁹ Sheikh Ashraf and his movement were demolished by the Ottoman

⁵⁶² OSA, Y. PRK. UM. 9/18 Hijree, 1304

⁵⁶³ OSA, YPRK, MŞ. 1/49, fi 17 sene 1309

⁵⁶⁴ Öztürk Eyüp, 2012, *Osmanlı'nın son döneminde bir mehdilik (peygamberlik) iddiası: Bosnalı Hafız Abdullah Effendi olayı*, p, 120. Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, İstanbul.

⁵⁶⁵ Of is a city on the Black Sea coast of northeastern Turkey and belongs to Trabzon Province.

⁵⁶⁶ BOA, DH. MKT. 1630/74 Hijree, 1306/24/L

⁵⁶⁷ BOA, DH. MKT. 1912/31, Hijree, 1309

⁵⁶⁸ OSA, DH. MKT. 1641/30 Hijree, 1306

⁵⁶⁹ Eliaçık Muhittin, Ocak 2015 *Bayburt/Hart'ta Şeyh Eşref İsyanı'na Dair Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeler*, p 124. Cilt: 5, Sayı:1 (Ottoman Archive Documents on Uprising of Sheikh Ashraf in Bayburt/Hart). Dergi Park Ulak Bilim Dergisi.

police in a military operation in Bayburd. Interestingly, some of his followers still do not attend religious rituals at mosques but rather pray at home by themselves.⁵⁷⁰

During those years, the Ottoman Caliphate published an important booklet in order to reveal a misunderstanding of Mahdship in Muslim World. Moreover by the imperial decree of the Ottoman Sultan, well-known theologian Sheikh Jamal Uddin Afghani wrote a long text regarding the meaning of the expected redeemer, the Mahdi.⁵⁷¹

In the last century, many messianic movements appeared in Muslim society. Like genesis of Messianic movements in Christianity and Judaism, Mahdship in Islamic world also emerged for the same reasons which are social and economic difficulty in Muslim society. However, some Muslim scholars argued that Mahdship proclamation was evidence for a physiological or mental a human condition.⁵⁷²

According to some scholars, Mahdship is one of the fundamental aspects of the religions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.⁵⁷³ Ottoman Muslim theologian Said-i Nursi revealed Mahdship in his book and stated that the Mahdi will bring the rightness of the Qur'an on Earth for the salvation of human beings.⁵⁷⁴ One of the last Turkish Muslims, İskender Evrenesoğlu declared his prophethood in last decades, but due to great criticism he left Turkey and moved to the USA. Evrenesoglu still addresses his followers from TV channels.⁵⁷⁵

As seen above, messianic revolts were regarded as revolts against mainstream religion and the State in the Ottoman Era. Sometimes Muslim leaders declared their Mahdship while drawing on some pre-existing ideas of Messianism in Christianity. The Qur'an refers to Jesus as the Messiah (*Al-Maseeh*), son of Mary, and God's messenger.⁵⁷⁶

In the Islamic tradition, Mahdi or Messiah should have a charismatic character but never proclaim his Mahdship until people realize that he is the true one.⁵⁷⁷ That is one of the

⁵⁷⁰ OSA, DH, ŞFR. 654/86 Hijree 1337

⁵⁷¹ OSA, Y. EE. 34/76, Hijree, 1327

⁵⁷² Ibid. p.129.

⁵⁷³ Ay, 2015, p. 32 Some Kurdish in Northern Iraq have been practicing as Jews and waiting for a Messiah for centuries. See, Günaydın Eşref, 2007, *Yahudi Kürtler*, p. 45 İstanbul

⁵⁷⁴ Saidi Nursi mektubat. Yirmi dokuzuncu mektup, p. 425. Saidi Nursi, *Şualar*, 1989. Beşinci Şua, p. 463, İstanbul.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 215 See also, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnR6Szwk8JE>

⁵⁷⁶ Qur'an Surah Al-i'Imran 3:42-54

⁵⁷⁷ Ocak Ahmet Yaşar, 1996, *Babailer İsyanı*, p. 94, Dergay Yayınları, İstanbul

most fundamental factors which have not been taken into consideration by most of the Messiah claimants in history.

3.3 Messianic beliefs in other nations at the time of Shabbetai Tzvi

During the time of the Shabbetai Tzvi, the messianic expectation was circulating in religious communities in Jewish and Muslim spheres in the sixteenth century. According to the Jewish calendar, messianic expectation was very popular at the time. Mystical and esoteric thoughts in Muslim and Kabbalistic studies in Jewish society were a common occurrence. This emergence of messianic actions was held as miscellaneous religious movements from Jewish and Muslim communities, was documented in the Ottoman state archive from the seventeenth century.

There were several reasons for Shabbetai Tzvi to proclaim his messiahship at that time. In the same year, a Muslim Sheik from Bagdad declared his messiahship and was arrested by the Ottoman authorities.

In Jewish society, with the emergence of Kabbalah after the thirteenth century, especially its development after the persecution of Jews in Spain and Portugal, Kabbalistic mysticism became a very popular element and driving social force in Jewish Messianism. This factor seems to also be applicable to classical Spanish Kabbalah. The new Kabbalah, Lurianic Kabbalah, developed after the Spanish mass migration to the Ottoman Empire. Lurianic Kabbalah interpreted the history of the world in general and Jewish exile, suffering, and redemption, in a particular form of drama in which God himself was involved. The Kabbalistic system provides a backdrop to one of the most considerable messianic episodes in the course of Jewish history. This religious movement centered on the person of Shabbetai Tzvi in 1648 which was the time of messianic uprisings.⁵⁷⁸ It is possible therefore, that the Kabbalistic mysticism led by the distinguished followers of Shabbetai Tzvi, had agitated men's minds as far as Carpathian villages.⁵⁷⁹

3.4 Conclusion

It can be seen that messianism is interpreted in various ways across Abrahamic religions, at times triggering controversy around the legitimacy of certain messianic claimants. Some of them spread new ideas and religious principles in society that might be

⁵⁷⁸ Schechter S, 1897, *Studies in Judaism*, pp 522 – 528 Vol., 9. No: 3. April.

⁵⁷⁹ Krstic Tijana, 2015, *Osmanlı Dünyasında ihtida anlatıları*, p. 34, (Çev, Ahmet Tunç Şen), İstanbul.

frowned upon by orthodox believers. At times, society may not have been prepared for these novel ideas and consequently rejected the Messiahs.

Therefore, sociologists should investigate the social conditions and circumstances at the time, to better understand how Messiahs were received. Weber's work involves wide-ranging historical studies of major world religions and the role of religious leadership. He engaged with ideas such as magic and taboo and analysed how social classes and status groups developed different conceptions of salvation.⁵⁸⁰ Weber's contemporary Emile Durkheim notes that, "religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them."⁵⁸¹ In fact, Weber and Durkheim already described the principles and role of religions in society and this perfectly fitted the example of the religious leadership of Tzvi and other messianic claimants.

Islam like Judaism places great emphasis on religious law, much of which lies outside the Qur'an itself. In Islam as in Judaism, the law began as an oral tradition that was later codified and set down in writing. This means that Islam and Judaism are inherently less scripturalist than Protestantism so that divisions within them do not turn on the interpretation of the sacred text.⁵⁸²

Another commonality across Abrahamic religions, is the notion of messianism. Therefore, without understanding the essence of Messianism in these religions, it is not possible to examine the messianic movement of Shabbetai Tzvi in history.⁵⁸³ From a religious perspective, it can be said that if Messianism is a taboo, it cannot be labelled as a false messianic movement in Judaism or Islam, because Messianism is a living religious phenomenon in all great religions like Judaism. So Jewish mysticism and its scriptures provided fertile ground for Shabbetai Tzvi's messianic declaration. Therefore, Jewish rejection of his messianic claim cannot be a sufficient reason to discount Tzvi's messiahship. As explained earlier, similar destiny was shared by Jesus Christ in Jewish history. Still, while

⁵⁸⁰ Aldridge, 2008, p.24, In United States the constitutional guarantee of free exercise of religion was reaffirmed in 1993 under the religious freedom restoration act, which restated the principle that the government could interfere with religious practices only if it could show not merely a reasonable but a compelling case for doing so.

⁵⁸¹ Émile Durkheim, Carol Cosman, Mark Sydney Cladis, 2001, *The Elementary forms of the Religious Life by Emile Durkheim (1915)*, p. 47 Oxford University Press.

⁵⁸² Ibid. p. 125.

⁵⁸³ Ünver Günay, 1998, *Din Sosyolojisi*, p. 507. İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul.

his messiahship was rejected by the orthodox Jews. On the other hand, Jesus has millions of followers.

If Shabbetai Tzvi were a false messiah, then what would the characteristics of a legitimate Messiah be? Due to the fact that Messiahs come in different ways, messiahship cannot be analyzed in a rigid and dogmatic manner. One needs to grasp a broader understanding of the significance of Messiahship, without which one cannot understand the intentions of Shabbetai Tzvi and his messianic proclamation.

CHAPTER IV: THE LIFE OF SABBATAI TZVI AND HIS MESSIAHSHIP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals the life and challenges of the Ottoman Jewish Messiah of Izmir, Shabbetai Tzvi. In the 17th century, Shabbetai Tzvi declared his Messiahship and made history. This messianic movement was not the first in Jewish history, nor the last one. However, it gained much popularity and became the most extensive marginal sect in Jewish history. If it reappeared in other societies in Europe, would it have had a chance to spread and flourish? From a historical perspective, this might not have been possible, because in fact, Ottoman tolerance towards other religious denominations allowed it to grow, and thus Sabbateanism became the most remarkable religious sect in Jewish history.

Shabbetai Tzvi's religious movement is also regarded as the most controversial messianic movement in Jewish society. However, as writers conflated his personality with his religious ideas, without any comprehensive sociological and historical analysis, Tzvi became depicted a heretical figure in history. For instance, Scholem noted that Tzvi was the most prominent of the modern Jewish "pseudo-messiahs",⁵⁸⁴ when in fact, there is no substantial evidence to make such a strong statement as "pseudo" or "true messiah" in relation to the life style of Tzvi. For this particular reason, in light of Ottoman archival documents and secondary sources, I re-analyze the religious rituals and all events surrounding Shabbetai Tzvi from his birth to death. Additionally, Shabbetai Tzvi's conversion to Islam is analyzed with the understanding of the Ottoman State policy regarding one's conversion from one religion to another, according to Islamic and Jewish Law. The chapter aims to re-establish the emergence of Sabbateans (*Dönme*) movement in light of rare and unused Ottoman sources.

4.2 Shabbetai Tzvi's early education

Shabbetai Tzvi was born within a conservative family in Izmir in 1626. His father was Mordecai Tzvi who was a prominent merchant in the city. According to Scholem, Tzvi's family was of Ashkenazi origin. However, according to Cengiz Sisman, he was of Sephardic origin. Not much known about her mother but her name was Clara and died in 1666 before

⁵⁸⁴ Scholem, 1973., p. 222.

Tzvi converted to Islam.⁵⁸⁵ Meropi Anastassiadou writes that “The Sabbatean and Kuniosolar lived in the Northeast of the city, sharing the same neighborhoods.”⁵⁸⁶ Tzvi’s close family members were also living in Izmir at the time. Tzvi’s other two siblings followed the footsteps of their father and became businessmen. However, Tzvi has a different character and only showed his enthusiasm to religious subjects, particularly Kabbalah.⁵⁸⁷

According to almost all the Western and Ottoman sources, Tzvi mastered Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah very well from his childhood to his adolescence. Tzvi impressed his environment already with his sharp mind and knowledge in his early twenties. At the age of twenty-two, he married a girl in Izmir, but due to his strict religious ritual which he regularly followed for his piety, he did not have any physical intimacy with his wife and therefore later divorced her. He gave very much importance to cleanliness and washed almost every day and also kept fasting very frequently. According to historian Derviş, these attitudes were already a sign of his mental problems.⁵⁸⁸ Scholem noted that Tzvi’s abnormal attitudes came from his psychosocial problem, called manic-depressive illness.⁵⁸⁹

However, contemporary writers of his time, like British consul of Izmir, Ricaut stated that, “with his deep knowledge in Kabbalah, Tzvi produced new doctrines in Jewish mysticism.” In his early twenties, Tzvi already gained his popularity in his environment. Jewish students began to visit his house to learn metaphysic and Kabalistic knowledge from him.⁵⁹⁰ As a primary source, this information shows the other side of the story about Shabbetai Tzvi, his personality and lifestyle is pretty different than what was rumoured later on. With his new ideas and reformist thoughts, he managed to gather considerable people around him.

Still, some Jewish Rabbis did not appreciate his attitudes in the community. According to some historians, as a charismatic spokesman in his young age, his increasing popularity led him to becoming perceived as a threat among some respected rabbis in the city.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁵ Scholem, 1973, p. 104.

⁵⁸⁶ There are several different views about Tzvi’s family however Şişman’s research shows that he was a Sephardim Jew. Sisman, 2004, p. 213.

⁵⁸⁷ Turkish historian Dr Derviş also repeated similar mistakes when he judged Tzvi as a manic depressive due to his lifestyle and cleanliness etc. See, Derviş Hüda, 2006, *Türkiyede Dönme Yahudi Gerçeği*, p. 26 Istanbul

⁵⁸⁸ Dervis 2006, p. 26.

⁵⁸⁹ Scholem, 1973, p.120.

⁵⁹⁰ Ricaut, 1687, p. 174.

⁵⁹¹ Gövsa, 2009, p. 24.

4.3 Religious movements of Shabbetai Tzvi and his contemporaries

To the prophets in Abrahamic religions, the messianic thought is about the awaited day, the great horn will be blown and lost people in Assur country and Egypt will be gathered in the holy mountain in Jerusalem.⁵⁹² According to Jewish tradition expected Messiah, says that “I will gather all my sons wherever they are executed and then bring them to valleys of Israel.”⁵⁹³

As it is explained in the third chapter, messiahship contains similar understanding in Islamic tradition which is based on a mystical story of Mahdi who will come out from his cave where he hides himself awaiting for the right time in the future.⁵⁹⁴

During those years a Muslim theologian, Sheikh Abdullah from *Imadiye* city in Iraq, created an uprising and his son Sayed Mehmet Mahdi proclaimed his Mahdiship in the city. Governor (*Beyleybeyi*) of Mosul, Pehlivan Ali Pasha, was informed by the Ottoman authorities in order to arrest the Mahdi Mehmet with his father. Mehmet Mahdi apologized in the court and asked for forgiveness from the Ottoman Sultan. In this regard, this event also shows that, like Tzvi, another religious leader declared his messianic idea. Contemporary Ottoman historian Rasit mentioned the event in Hijra 1077 years and explained the Mahdiship of Sheik Mehmet and his arrest in 1666.⁵⁹⁵ Thereupon Ottoman Sultan had forgiven him and resolved the issue in 1666 which is the date of messianic proclamation and arrestment for Shabbetai Tzvi in Izmir.⁵⁹⁶ Similarly, in the same years of declaration of Shabbetai Tzvi’s Messiahship, another Muslim scholar Sheik Ahmad claimed his Mahdiship. His movement was more revolt than the religious and mystical event which cost him his life.⁵⁹⁷

At the time of Shabbetai Tzvi, there were similar extreme statements which were made by Muslim leaders. Contemporary Muslim thinker Niyâzî-i Mısrî noted that “In our time, there was a well-known Sheikh, named Karabaş Ali Effendi from Üsküdar in Istanbul.

⁵⁹² Galanti, 2000, p. 19.

⁵⁹³ Ibid, p.20

⁵⁹⁴ Effendi Raşit, 2013, p. 47.

⁵⁹⁵ Gövsa , 2009, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁶ Galanti, 2000, p. 27.

⁵⁹⁷ Mustafa Naima Effendi, 1988, *Naima Tarihi* , p..336 - 338. Vol. III, Istanbul.

He was working at the palace of Sultan Mehmet IV. This Sheikh wrote a religious book, called *Risale-i Turkiyya* and stated that ‘everybody has a God inside as much as a hazelnut.’⁵⁹⁸

All these important events caused a messianic idea in Christian and Jewish World. Jewish in the Ottoman territories were concerning about their co-religionists in other countries. For instance, a prominent Jewish of the time, Elijah Capsali of Candia believed that the Ottoman conquest of Rhodes was part of the messianic drama leading the redemption. To him, the Sultan seemed a messianic figure. A poem was also written by Jews in honor of the Ottoman victory. The Jews in Rhodes rejoiced in the Turkish community in the Ottoman successes. Prof Angel noted that Jews rushed to the synagogue and prayed there openly for the first time.⁵⁹⁹ A Jewish proverb in Rhodes shows a similar cultural engagement between Turkish and Jewish communities despite religious differences.⁶⁰⁰

During his tenure in Rhodes his community along with much of the Jewish world was shaken by the Shabbetai Tzvi movement. As Rhodes was not far from Izmir, Jews from the island probably traveled to the Messiah’s native city.⁶⁰¹ Ottoman Jewry faced both socio-economic and spiritual crises, the later link to the public failure of the Sabbatean movement coupled with its continued 'underground' influence.⁶⁰²

It is a general rule that sometimes social psychology lead people to believe enigmatic beliefs and follow them in life. Ibn Haldun noted that mystical rumors are influencer like an epidemic in society. For this reason, messianic appearance of Shabbetai Tzvi is sociologically an understandable phenomenon in history. Certainly, there were substantial reasons for Jewish to believe an expected Messiah in the time of Shabbetai Tzvi. Not only according to Jewish calendar but also Islamic calendar refers the millennium for the Day of Judgment.

Additionally, Marranos initially lived as Jews in Iberia, but then converted to Christianity, some forcefully so. It is believed that some of them still practised Judaism secretly. In this sense, they would be practising Crypto-Judaism, which can be described as the secret adherence to Judaism. From the mid sixteenth century, the arrival of the Marranos

⁵⁹⁸ Bizim zamanımızda Üsküdar’da Karabaş Ali Efendi demekle meshur bir seyh-I gavi zuhur edup sultan mehmeti rabinin haremindedir ve haricde dahi bi hesap kimseleri izlal edup telif ettigi risalei Turkiyyesinde ‘herkeste fındık kadar Tanrı vardır’ deyu, Golpinarli. A. ‘1972, *Niyazi Mısri*’ Sarkiyat mecmuasi VII, p. 218, Istanbul.

⁵⁹⁹ Angel, 1980, p.19.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, p.161.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid, p.65.

⁶⁰² Goldberg. 1996, p.18.

in the Ottoman state,⁶⁰³ increased the Jews' influence in the money market, though there is little evidence that they developed a new mercantile system in the Ottoman economy. Rather, it seems that they brought along their practices to conform or complement the already existing practices.⁶⁰⁴ As Inalcik also noted that Christian oppression on Jewish people also coursed Crypto-Jews in Europe and this reality also catalyze the messianic thoughts in Jewish World. All these issues are prepared a messianic expectation for Jewish society.

Undoubtedly, Sahabetai Tzvi invented many religious ideas, rules, and practices, which led him to being a controversial figure among orthodox Jews. Due to his educational background in Kabbalah, Shabbetai Tzvi interpreted the future with his spiritual mind and mystical leaning. His sophisticated thoughts amazed people around him. Other than his Kabbalistic teachings, he used astrology in order to define his messianic thoughts. To him, the salvation for Israel would be in the month of *Pisces* which was symbolized by the fish in the horoscope, and thereupon, he prayed to God with a fish.⁶⁰⁵ Ricault shed light on his movement from that time and said that Shabbetai Tzvi was invited to rituals such as circumcisions and marriage, and wherever he went, his followers welcomed him with great fanfare, for example, 'carpets or fine cloth for him to tread on'.⁶⁰⁶

According to some writers, Shabbetai Tzvi lived in seclusion and experienced emotional ups and downs, to the point that many modern scholars have labeled him as a "manic depressive person".⁶⁰⁷ There are several studies which deal with the mental illnesses of Shabbetai Tzvi. Under the influence of theories in psychology in the 1950s and 1960s, Gershom Scholem tends to characterizes Shabbetai Tzvi as a "manic depressive" personality in his magnum opus.⁶⁰⁸ A. Falk also studied about Tzvi but he analysed the mental illnesses of Shabbetai Tzvi from the psychological point of view rather than from a historical angle. Whereas, most of the writers made a similar assumption about Tzvi, Olson states that they reveal little about the social context of the time, and state response to the messianic movement. Olson meaningfully noted that:

⁶⁰³ Zalloua, Pierre A.; Platt, Daniel E.; El Sibai, Mirvat; et al. 2008 "*Identifying Genetic Traces of Historical Expansions: Phoenician Footprints in the Mediterranean*", *American Journal of Human Genetics* 83 (5): 633–642

⁶⁰⁴ Inalcik Halil, 1969, *Capital formation in the Ottoman Empire*, p.121, Cambridge University.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 36.

⁶⁰⁶ Rycault, 1675, p. 176.

⁶⁰⁷ Scholem. 1973, p.564, See also Falk A, 1982, *The Messiah and the Quelpoth: On the mental illnesses of Sabbatai Sevi*, 7, pp.5,25, Sevi, *Journal of Pshychology and Judaism*.

⁶⁰⁸ Scholem, 1973, p. 434.

Unfortunately, for Ottoman historians, this excellent work by Prof Scholem, is only concerned largely with the religious and messianic evolution of Sevi within the context of Cabbalism. It shed little light on the reaction of Ottoman authorities to Sabatai Sevi's movement. The reasons and causes of Sabataist apostasy to Islam (September 1666) are inconclusive, and the Ottoman reasons for coercing his conversion are also unclear. In fact, just the conversion of Sabatai Sevi could be the subject of full-length study.⁶⁰⁹

As Olson emphasized, historians must examine at Tzvi as the whole subject in order to reveal the circumstances within which his religious activities evolved.

4.4 From Izmir to Solanica, Cairo, and Jerusalem

There is a well-known proverb in Afrikaans that “a prophet is never given credit in his own town.” Perhaps this proverb explains the reason for Tzvi's journey from his town to other Ottoman provinces.⁶¹⁰

When Tzvi declared his Messiahship for the first time in 1648, Jews were also suffering from the brutalities of the Russians in Ukraine and Poland.⁶¹¹ Tzvi was not taken seriously within the Jewish community, but was rather criticized by the prominent Jewish religious leaders in Izmir. Then he decided to leave the city for a while and went to Salonica. Jews in Salonica were more curious about Kabbalah. As a scholar, Tzvi was quite popular till he declared his messiahship in the Ottoman Jewish community. His messianic proclamation did not work there either and left Salonica for Mora island in 1658.⁶¹²

By the end of 1658, Tzvi came to Istanbul from Mora. On the one side, while he fascinated his environment with his knowledge, on the other side some of his attitudes were found too strange in the Jewish community. When he was in Istanbul, Tzvi bought a fish and prayed with it. Scholem stated that after this event, Tzvi was punished in the Jewish court in Istanbul.⁶¹³ Tzvi again damaged his reputation in public however never left his “marginal” attitudes. Eventually, he was deported from Istanbul in 1659. The Jewish community in Istanbul did not want to see Shabbetai Tzvi anymore in their surroundings. Nonetheless, Tzvi left an imprint in some people's mind. Other than spreading his own knowledge, Tzvi never mentioned earthly things but only referred to spiritual life for salvation. In 1659, he left

⁶⁰⁹ Olson Robert. W., 1977, *Jews in the Ottoman Empire and their role in light of new documents*. (Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi, İstanbul üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, sayı, 7-8,) p.125-126, İstanbul

⁶¹⁰ In Afrikaans, n Profet word nooit in sy eie land erkenning gegee nie.

⁶¹¹ Shaul Stampfer, 1996, *What actually happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?*, p. 223, , XVII/2, Jewish history.

⁶¹² Rycout, 1675, *The history of the Turkish Empire*, p. 174, London.

⁶¹³ Scholem, 1973, p. 152.

Istanbul for Izmir, and in that time, a great fire broke out in the Jewish quarters of Istanbul.⁶¹⁴ According to some Jews, this was not a good omen as they had been disrespectful towards Tzvi during his stay in Istanbul.⁶¹⁵ Scholem stated that Tzvi's approach to this great fire was positive because to him this fire gave signs from God for the Jews.⁶¹⁶

Once in Izmir, Tzvi resumed to his religious activities. His behavior sometimes even disturbed his family due to society's negative reaction to him. Izmir has been a cosmopolitan city for centuries and tolerated many different lifestyles. However, some in the Jewish community regarded Tzvi's messianic practices as a heresy.

Some particular religious uprisings did occur in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century regarding *fitnah* (evilness) cases; however, Tzvi's movement was not taken into consideration as a political revolt at the beginning of his messianic declaration.⁶¹⁷ When the commotion reached outside the boundaries of the Jewish Communities, namely became a threat to larger social stability, the Ottoman intervened but did not punish anyone since Sabbateanism was not a rebellion against the Ottoman System.⁶¹⁸ When Sabbatean movement is compared with Islamic messianic movement at the same time in the Ottoman territory, it is easy to understand that a noticeable tolerance was shown towards Tzvi's movement by the Ottoman authorities. As such, Tzvi continued spreading his messianic ideas to different part of the Ottoman territory. With the encouragement of his brothers, Tzvi decided to go to Jerusalem.

By October of 1665, Tzvi had already become a well-known religious leader in other nations such as Holland. Great Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza was also affected by Tzvi's movement in Amsterdam.⁶¹⁹ Spinoza mentioned Tzvi's movement in his letter:

There is a popular religious movement which is spreading rapidly in this region. There are not so many of his followers here but many of them would like Tzvi to succeed in gathering Jews to take them to Israel. In my view, I will only believe these rumors when I receive proper information from the Jewish society in Istanbul. I have great interest in the influence of Sabbateanism among Jews in Amsterdam.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁴ Abdi Pasa Vekaynamesi, 2008, p.142.

⁶¹⁵ Küçük, 2010, p. 213.

⁶¹⁶ Scholem, 1973, p. 163.

⁶¹⁷ Sisman, 2004, p. 70.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid, p.65.

⁶¹⁹ Dutch Jewish Philosopher of Sephardi, originally from Portuguese, See, Lazier Benjamin, 2008, *God interrupted; Heresy and European imagination between the World Wars*, p. 142 Princeton University Press.USA.

⁶²⁰ Nadler Steven, 2008, *Spinoza: Bir Yaşam*, (çev. Anıl Duman – Murat Başhekim) p. 360 Istanbul.

According to Ricaut, as an expected redeemer, Tzvi had already impressed people with his sermons in the public sphere. To him, Jews were not waiting for his miracles in Egypt, Amsterdam or Salonica but all over the world.⁶²¹

On the other hand, somehow Tzvi's popularity disturbed some Muslim and Jewish religious leaders like Sheikh Mahmud Effendi and Nehemiah Kohen from Poland. According to Kohen, Tzvi was deceiving people as a trickster and gathering money from poor Jewish people. Eventually, Kohen complained about Tzvi in Ottoman court in Edirne.⁶²² However, there was no substantial evidence to confirm Kohen's suspicions.

It is likely that Shabbetai Tzvi was influenced by these negative and positive events surrounding him. Building his reputation as a Messiah cost him much controversy in almost all aspects of his life. Meeting with another interesting Kabbalist, Nathan of Gaza, played a crucial role in improving his religious reputation.

4.5 Relations between Kabbalist Nathan of Gaza and Shabbetai Tzvi

In all sources, Abraham Nathan Benjamin Levi bin Elisha Khayyam Ashkenazi is recorded as Nathan of Gaza or "false prophet" of Gaza. He was the son of a famous religious leader in Gaza,⁶²³ Elisa Levi, who was looked after by Rabbi Jacob Hanjies and his Jewish congregation in Palestine.⁶²⁴ This well-known Kabbalist Nathan, whom Jews also described as a miracle, a charismatic man of God, not unlike a Sufi Sheikh, took upon himself the responsibility of being Tzvi's public relations advisor. He was the first prophet to recognize Shabbetai Tzvi's messianic claims.⁶²⁵

When Shabbetai Tzvi was in Gaza, he met Abraham Nathan Benjamin who played an influential role in the messianic appearance of Shabbetai Tzvi. Early Jewish historians emphasised the link between the time when Tzvi and Nathan appeared as Messiah and Prophet in 1665-1666, and the oppression of Jews in Poland and the Ukraine during the revolt of 1648-1649. The sixteen year gap between the persecutions in Eastern Europe and the appearance of Sabbateanism in Turkey, or the Prophethood of Nathan has been explained earlier in the thesis, namely that for some time, Sabbateanism developed in secret, forming

⁶²¹ Ricaut, 1675, p. 175.

⁶²² Mckeon, 1989, p. 155.

⁶²³ Scholem, 1973, p. 185.

⁶²⁴ Ibid, p. 36.

⁶²⁵ Ibid, p. 124.

hidden and mystical groups of believers, which only made their public appearance in 1665-1666.⁶²⁶

When Shabbetai Tzvi came to Egypt, Nathan had already declared his spiritual powers among Jews. He claimed that he could connect with God. In the heyday of Kabbalistic time, Nathan proclaimed his prophethood and called himself a man of God.⁶²⁷ In 1665, Shabbetai Tzvi went to Gaza in order to meet Nathan who was already popular among Jews with his religious thoughts. With his support, Tzvi declared his messiahship in 31st of May, 1665. As soon as proclaimed his messiahship, he declared a festival on the 11th of June to replace the commemoration day of Roman occupation in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Tzvi stopped fasting for Jewish people on this day.⁶²⁸ This attitude was criticized by some orthodox rabbis in Egypt.⁶²⁹ Despite some negative propaganda about Tzvi's behavior, his reputation reached Amsterdam and even as far as England.⁶³⁰

Some letters from Nathan about Tzvi's religious movement were transmitted to the public indicating Nathan's support of Tzvi as a Messiah.⁶³¹ Goldish provides remarkable information regarding the spiritual rituals and actions of Nathan in his letters. In these letters, mention was often made of miracles, and religious items as angels, Holy Scriptures, divine authority and Torah.⁶³²

4.6 Sarah's divine vision about Shabbetai Tzvi

Shabbetai Tzvi was married five times in his life.⁶³³ Of note was his marriage with Sarah who had escaped the Jewish massacre in Poland, Chmielnicki Massacre in 1648. Sarah spent her childhood in poverty. She lost her family in the Jewish massacre and grew up in the Christian community for a while.

Sarah was known for her three distinctive personality traits in the Jewish community. Rabbi Jacob Sasportas who regarded Sabbateanism as heresy shared his memories about Sarah when she came to Amsterdam in 1656. According to Rabbi Jacob, Sarah was a simple minded woman and always said that she will get married to the king Messiah. These rumors

⁶²⁶ Dan Joseph, 1992, *Scholem's view of Jewish messianism*, p.120, Vol. 12 No.2 Oxford University Press.

⁶²⁷ Hathavay Jane, 1997, *The Sabbatai Sevi controversy and the Ottoman reform in Egypt*, p. 669, Oct. Vol, 117, No, 4. American Oremtal Society.

⁶²⁸ Scholem, 1973, p. 342.

⁶²⁹ Freely. 2005, p.78.

⁶³⁰ McKeon, 1989, p. 151.

⁶³¹ Goldish, 2008, p.78.

⁶³² Ibid, p. 98.

⁶³³ Küçük, 2001, p. 121.

spread to other Jewish communities as far as the Alexandria Port in the Mediterranean Sea. The Governor of Alexandria Port, Raphael Joseph informed Shabbetai Tzvi about Sarah in Egypt. Tzvi declared that the woman Sarah who proclaimed that she will marry the Messiah is a chosen person by God. With the guidance of Raphael Joseph Celebi, Tzvi brought Sarah to Cairo and married her.⁶³⁴ However, other sources from the seventeenth century, provide more coherent and consistent information with regard to Sarah and her family. Baruch of Arezzo, Leib ben Oyzer and another contemporary Jew, Johannes Braun unanimously believed that Sarah was sent to Egypt by Rabbi Isaac Levi Walle because Sarah knew about her marriage with the Messiah in future, when she was not even aware of Shabbetai Tzvi.⁶³⁵

On one side, scholars labeled Sarah as a “wanton” woman,⁶³⁶ on the other side, a pure virgin girl who waited to marry the Messiah.⁶³⁷ According to Goldish, Sarah was an Ashkenazi Jew but grew up in Christian society. Therefore, her knowledge on Christianity was more than her knowledge on Judaism. She studied in a Christian school. Some scholars like De la Croix, preferred to use the name, Virgin Mary for her, referring to Jesus mother, instead of her real name Sarah. Therefore Goldish noted that as a religious woman, Mary/Sarah were similar female figures in religious context. Jesus’s mother Virgin Mary was also labeled negatively by certain people when she was pregnant with Jesus. However, in the Holy Scripture as well as in the Qur’an, Mary was a virgin and Jesus was born without father, by God’s spiritual power.⁶³⁸

According to several sources, Shabbetai Tzvi married Sarah on the 31st of March 1664.⁶³⁹ Coincidentally, the name of the Prophet Abraham’s wife was also Sarah. Instead of damaging his messiahship this marriage increased his popularity. It is because Tzvi was following the Holy Scripture which is advised him to marry a modest woman.⁶⁴⁰

Other than these rumours, Tzvi’s relationship with Sarah was recorded as an official marriage and she was very loyal to him. After the conversion of Tzvi to Islam in 1666, Sarah also converted Islam and showed her faithfulness to her husband. She embraced Islam and changed her name to Ayşe which was the name of second wife of Prophet Muhammad.

⁶³⁴ Scholem, 1973, p. 195.

⁶³⁵ Goldish, 2008, p. 114.

⁶³⁶ Scholem, 1973, p. 195.

⁶³⁷ From Goldish, De La Croix p 119.

⁶³⁸ Quran, Surah al Maryam, 19:34.

⁶³⁹ Afyoncu, 2013, p. 100.

⁶⁴⁰ Torah, Osee ½

Unfortunately, most of the writers could not stay objective when they wrote about the Sabbatean movement due to personal religious approaches. It is very complex and difficult to write on religious matters without judging them. So, controversial subjects like Sarah's marriage were interpreted according to certain writers' one-sided or biased understandings of the historical events. Jewish and Muslim scholars mostly negatively approached the Sabbatean case due to their religious background as Muslims or Jews.

4.7 The Ottoman Empire's perceptions of Shabbetai Tzvi

As a religious society, Jews were isolated from the rest of the world for centuries, even at the time of Shabbetai Tzvi. When Shabbetai Tzvi declared his messiahship, Jews in Jerusalem got excited because positive hope was better than hopelessness. Lurianic Kabbalists in particular were interested to know about the declaration of Tzvi. At the time, Jerusalem was still a part of the Ottoman Empire, and Jews lived in prosperity, when compared to other nations in the world. Well-known Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi visited Jerusalem after nine years of Tzvi's visit and mentioned significant Jewish presence in the city.⁶⁴¹ Shabbetai Tzvi had never left Ottoman territory even when he travelled to other countries from Izmir. All the regions he had visited were part of the Ottoman State. Tzvi knew that very well that there was no tolerance towards Jews outside of the Ottoman borders but especially in the Western world.⁶⁴²

From a long trip to North Africa, Salonica, Tzvi eventually arrived in Istanbul, but he also realized that conservative rabbis did not appreciate his preaching in the capital of the city. In 1665, Tzvi decided to return to the city Izmir where he was born. However, local rabbis in Izmir were gathered in the house of a Rabbi by the name of Rav Yuda Morterol and decided to deport him from the city. Furthermore, the chief Rabbi of Izmir, Haim Benbanaste negotiated with the chief Rabbi of Istanbul, Yomtov Ben-Yakar to punish Shabbetai Tzvi when he arrived in Izmir. The Jewish community in Istanbul believed that Shabbetai Tzvi was damaging the reputation of Jewish people in the Empire. Therefore, chief Rabbi of Istanbul signed a petition with 25 other members in order to have him punished with a death sentence. Rabbis in Istanbul and Izmir shared the same ideas for punishing of Tzvi, believing that they would thus save the reputation of the Jewish society in the Ottoman State.

⁶⁴¹ Çelebi Evliya, 2005, p. 230. Vol, IX.

⁶⁴² Cemil el Aseli Kamil, 2004, *Kudüs, Osmanlılar dönemi ve sonrası*, p. 336-337, DiA XXVI, Istanbul.

However, Tzvi was not alone anymore, but had built his reputation within some Jewish and even non-Jewish circles already, and thus became a holy man in the eye of particular prominent leaders. When he arrived in Izmir, he celebrated Hanukah with Jews in his environment. More importantly, on the same holy day, Rabbi Mois Galante declared that in his synagogue that Shabbetai Tzvi is the true Messiah.⁶⁴³ It can be said that this moment was a turning point for Shabbetai Tzvi in history.

Now, “false” or not, the Jews in Izmir had a Messiah. This social development encouraged Shabbetai Tzvi to engage in further activity, and he wanted to visit the Mayor of Izmir (*Qadi*). However because of his poor Turkish, Tzvi preferred to go to the governor with his brother Eli. At that time, a number of Jews began to question whether Tzvi was truly a messiah or not. After a short while, his popularity rapidly increased from his home town to Rhodes, Salonica, and Sofia, even crossing the borders to spread to Austria. Thus, Shabbetai Tzvi established his influence on the Jews as a religious leader. Tzvi also decided to celebrate the 17th of July as a religious day, which was also the day that Jerusalem gained its freedom from the Roman Empire. Thereafter, Tzvi changed the regular Saturday prayer which traditionally praised the Ottoman Sultan in the synagogues of the Ottoman territory. Furthermore, Tzvi excluded the Sultan’s name in the regular Saturday rituals and included his name in the Jewish prayer. This was deemed an act of contempt against the Ottoman sovereignty.⁶⁴⁴ A Rabbi prayer for Tzvi’s followers read as follows:

My siblings, the son of Israelis. Our messiah was eventually born in Izmir. His name is Shabbetai Tzvi and will appear with his kingdom very soon. He will get the crown of the kingdom from Ismael and wear it for his sovereignty because kingdom belongs to him. Then our messiah will disappear and nobody will know whether he died or whether he is alive. He will go to the Sabbatean River to get rest on Saturday. Whoever passed by the river on Holy Saturday will be punished because of his disrespectful attitude.⁶⁴⁵

During that time, writers also mentioned the events surrounding Tzvi, which indicates the social and esoteric effects he had on society. For instance, British Consul of Izmir, Ricaut transmitted his remarkable observations in his book, *The History of the Turkish Empire*. According to him, all Jewish cities in the Ottoman Empire were awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Due to this expectation, commercial life was negatively affected which caused scarcity of stock in certain cities. According to Ricaut, Jews were waiting for the expected Messiah shut down their shops and stopped working. People began to talk about honor,

⁶⁴³ Ibid, p.42.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid, p.43.

⁶⁴⁵ Galanti, 2000, p. 27.

respect, spirituality, salvation, and piety. They were waiting for a miracle to happen. Many Jews followed a religious tradition along the lines of “be fruitful and multiply.”⁶⁴⁶ Upon this verse in Torah, some Jews in Izmir and Salonica who believed him, married their children off before the age of adolescence and only focused on the messianic miracles predicted to occur at the time of Armageddon or apocalypse.⁶⁴⁷

4.7.1 Tzvi’s Arrest in Izmir

As a result of his social achievements, Tzvi decided to declare his kingdom in the world. He intended to be the king of the kings and to divide the world one by one for his second level kings.⁶⁴⁸ What began as a religious matter, thus became a socio-political issue and a matter of concern for the Ottoman State. Due to war between Ottoman and Venice, Ottoman authorities decided to quickly resolve this issue. Tzvi was arrested and imprisoned in 1666.⁶⁴⁹ Şişman notes that in 1665, Shabbetai went to Constantinople where he was arrested.⁶⁵⁰ However, according to newly found Ottoman documents, Shabbetai Tzvi was arrested in İzmir and sent to İstanbul. In February 1666, he was arrested and imprisoned after his boat was intercepted by the authorities en route to Istanbul.⁶⁵¹

When Tzvi was arrested in Izmir, he was taken by way of Marmara Sea to Istanbul, but due to adverse weather conditions, he was imprisoned in Kilidbahir in Gallipoli. Despite his arrest, he was still able to preserve his popularity among his followers, some of whom travelled to Istanbul by the way of the overland road, thinking he would be there.⁶⁵²

According to the reports of chief judge (*Qadi*) in Izmir, Jewish Rabbis complained about Shabbetai Tzvi and wanted to judge for his messianic idea, however, this was not sufficient reason for the Ottoman authorities to arrest him. Tzvi was chained and imprisoned in a fortress in Gallipoli, waiting for judgment day, but never complained about his situation. It is because he believed that the pain, struggle and challenge were a sign of messianic redemption in this world.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁶ Genesis 1:28, Then God blessed them and said, be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it.

⁶⁴⁷ Rycaut, 1675, p. 176.

⁶⁴⁸ Galanti, 2000, p.47.

⁶⁴⁹ Jane Hathaway, 1997, *The grand vizier and the false messiah, the Sabbatai Sevi Controversy and the Ottoman reform in Egypt*. p. 4, Oct-Dec, vol, 117, no 4; Tzvi’s imprisonment preceded by only a few years a major effort to reform Egypt’s finances.

⁶⁵⁰ Sisman, 2004, p.223.

⁶⁵¹ Afyoncu, 2003, p. 126.

⁶⁵² Ibid, p.47.

⁶⁵³ Ibid, p.48.

While the Messiah was planning to convert the Sultan to Judaism and take over the control of the Ottoman palace, ironically he ended up converting to Islam. The Sultan called for the Messiah, but the result was contrary to what he had imagined, as explained later. This trial resonates with the view of Minkin, that Tzvi became a 'Suffering Messiah' with still greater honor attributed to him.⁶⁵⁴ To Minkin, the “suffering Messiah had no taste for martyrdom, [he] accepted the challenge and donned the white Turkish turban”. This sounds more like a narrative based on imagination or speculation rather than a historical record because there was no expectation from converts to wear a white Turkish turban.⁶⁵⁵ However, it may be said that this period must have been one of hardship for Tzvi.

Besides, as an extreme controversial event, society was divided into two camps, one with his followers who believed that Tzvi is the true Messiah and the other with massive crowds of Jews, Muslims and Christian community who were displeased by Tzvi's transgressive acts in the state. Some of them ridiculed Tzvi and his messianic declarations. The arrival of the Shabbetai Tzvi in Gallipoli intersected the Passover. Oddly enough, Tzvi ate some part of the lamb that day, which was against the Jewish tradition.⁶⁵⁶

In general, while for some, his attitude was regarded as heresy, his followers were slavishly accepting his new rules as divine messages from God. On one hand, orthodox Jews wrote letters to the Ottoman palace stating that Tzvi should not Izmir, on the other hand, his followers tried to meet him by travelled along the coast towards Gallipoli, and paying the guards to see him. In order to settle the tension, Ottoman authorities still allowed the followers of Shabbetai Tzvi to visit him while he was in prison in the Gallipoli Peninsula. This treatment was misinterpreted by the followers of Tzvi as the Ottoman vizier for supporting of Shabbetai Tzvi's messiahship. Most probably Ottoman statesmen did not realize that the tolerance they showed towards the messianic declaration of Shabbetai Tzvi would increase his popularity in future. Tzvi began to receive visitors from Germany Italy, Ukraine, and Holland, Poland and it turned into a form of religious pilgrimage. In this way, Ottoman soldiers also received gifts and donations to look after Shabbetai Tzvi during his arrest. Therefore, security guards did not complain to the Ottoman Government with regard to the massive gatherings of visitors from all over the world.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁴ Minkin Jacop S, 1944, *Jewish Mysticism*, p.197, Vol, 24, No, 3 The University of Chicago press.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 197.

⁶⁵⁶ Galanti, 2000, p.48.

⁶⁵⁷ Afyoncu, 2013, p. 138.

Despite the negative developments between Shabbetai Tzvi and the Ottoman palace, Tzvi's followers believed that confinement of Tzvi was a noticeable sign for the imminent fall of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵⁸ Religious issues became a common social matter in the Ottoman society and threatened public security in the State. Thereupon, on the second of July 1666, a special natural event happened in the world, namely a solar eclipse. This brought great hope for Tzvi and his movement. Almost all Turkish contemporary sources mentioned this solar eclipse during the imprisonment of Shabbetai Tzvi in the *Kilid Bahir* castle in Gallipoli. This was interpreted as a positive sign for the followers of Shabbetai Tzvi.⁶⁵⁹

4.7.2 The Ottoman Empire's response to Tzvi's controversial statements

The Ottoman administrators did not interfere with this religious subject at the beginning; however when Shabbetai Tzvi started to threaten the Empire with his idea of kingship, the religious matter turned into a political one in the Empire. Therefore, after his imprisonment in Gallipoli in 1666, Shabbetai Tzvi was brought to Edirne for his judgment and questioned in front of the Sultan Mehmet IV.⁶⁶⁰

At the time, Ottoman Sultan Mehmet IV was affected by the current messianic events in his country. Sultan Mehmet ordered to find the heretical book, *Al Fiten ve'l-Melahim* and ordered to burn it immediately. *Melahim* means possible conflict in future and referred to all negative things such as sin, war, fire and all other similar calamities. Many Muslim scholars of the Middle Ages mentioned the dangerous knowledge of *Melahim* in their books.⁶⁶¹ Ottoman official historian of the time, Abdurrahman Pasha provided insightful information with regard to this interesting event. He remarkably noted that: "His excellency immediately ordered to burn a book, called *Melahim*. Undoubtedly His Excellency did a great holy job when he ordered to burn down such a heretical book".⁶⁶²

4.7.3 Tzvi's conversion to Islam

When Shabbetai Tzvi was brought to court for judgment, he realized that his religious declaration of become the king of kings could be regarded as a form of contempt against the Ottoman state's sovereignty. This fatal mistake would have caused him his life, had he then

⁶⁵⁸ Galante, 2000, p. 49.

⁶⁵⁹ In the original Ottoman text, Yigirmi dokuzuncu mübarek Cuma gününde bi emri illahi teala kables salat vasat-ı küsuf vaki oldu. ... Abdurrahman Paşa, 2005, p.240.

⁶⁶⁰ Güleryüz Naim. A., 2014, *Edirne Yahudileri*, p. 42, Gözlem Yayınları, Istanbul

⁶⁶¹ Prof Afyoncu first time emphasized the importance of the book, *Ebul Fida*, "El Fiten vel Melahim" See, Afyoncu, 2013, p. 138.

⁶⁶² Abdurrahman Paşa, 2008, p, 241.

not converted to Islam. His conversion to Islam caused some disappointment in Turkey but as well as in Eastern Europe.⁶⁶³ Baer importantly stated that “Rabbi Shabatai Tzvi converted to Islam rather than become a martyr” which was the turning point of Sabbatean movement in history.⁶⁶⁴

Besides that, unfortunately, there are only few documents about the conversion of Tzvi in 1666 because most of the Ottoman records (*mühimme defter*) got lost between 1665 and 1678.⁶⁶⁵ One of the few remaining documents⁶⁶⁶ is the letter below, which was found in Germany and published by Franz Babinger.⁶⁶⁶

To His Excellency chief door keeper,

A Jew who converted to Islam and is still in the prison in Edirne, some of his followers also requested to come to Edirne in order to join their leader even on condition of embracing Islam. Please urgently inform me whether it is right or not to send them through to Edirne city.⁶⁶⁷

Other than this record above, Afyoncu recently found remarkable documents with regard to the arrest and later the conversion of Shabbetai Tzvi in the Ottoman court in 1666. He also discovered the salary papers of Aziz Mehmet Effendi.⁶⁶⁸

The Sabbatean Jews carved a new religious identity for themselves beyond the ambit of Judaism. Tzvi’s conversion to Islam added an interesting dimension to their self-determination. Still it may be argued by some that because Tzvi was a ‘converse Messiah’ who changed to Islam to save his life, his conversion was not an authentic one and therefore that his followers were also in a predicament about where to situate themselves between the two faiths of Judaism and Islam.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶³ Tacut Tevarih, 1986, p. 175.

⁶⁶⁴ Baer, 2007, p. 143.

⁶⁶⁵ Sabetay Sevi ile ilgili bir Osmanlı Belgesi Uriel Heyd. (İbr. Çev. Cengiz Şisman, (tarih ve toplum temmuz/2002/sayı/223) p.7; Some writers stated that the Sabbateans working in the Ottoman palace might have stolen the relevant documents from the archive. There is no evidence to prove the theft.

⁶⁶⁶ Babinger Franz, 1931, *Das Archiv des Bosniaken Osman Pascha*, p.37, Berlin.

⁶⁶⁷ Uzunçarşılı .I. Hakkı 1988 *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, p.28 TTK, Ankara. Yahudiden müste'ar olub, libası islam, elbas olunan yehud(çehud diye çevirmisler) ki halen Edirne mahpustur, mukadema gelen mektubunuzda bi garaz müsliminden bir kaç kimesne kendi ağzından nice elfaz-ı küfür istima edip şehadet iktiza ederse , şehadet ederiz ve lazım gelirse Edirneye dahi gideriz dediklerin iğlam eylemiş idiniz.... Edirneye gelsünler şehadet hakkı eda eylesünler ki mucebi şeriyyesi icra oluna.” İslam dinine giren yahudi ve hristiyanlara İslam elbisesi, destar verilirdi.

⁶⁶⁸ Afyoncu, 2013, p. 203.

⁶⁶⁹ Baer, 2010, p.3.

Particular Ottoman official historians recorded the messianic movement of Shabbetai Tzvi at the time.⁶⁷⁰ Abdi Pasha related his version of the circumstances leading up to Tzvi's conversion. He wrote,

Some time ago, a *Haham* (Rabbi) appeared in Izmir. After all the dialogue, the mentioned Rabbi denied all the follies attributed to him.⁶⁷¹ When it was proposed that he embrace Islam and he was told with this certainty at the end 'after this meeting there is no way to escape. You embrace the faith or you will immediately be put to death.'⁶⁷²

Like Abdi Pasha, in the next century, another Ottoman historian Mehmet Ağa Fındıklılı notes that some notable people in the Ottoman palace who were heads of religious affairs (Sheikh ul Islam) complained that they were suspicious of Hayatizade Mustafa Effendi, who had converted to Islam and one of the two individuals who advised Tzvi to do the same. The chief religious leader of the Sultan Mehmet IV, Qadizade Vaiz Vani Effendi also played a crucial role in the conversion of Tzvi according to some historians. The Sheikhs suspected that Mustafa Effendi might be secretly practising Judaism as a Crypto-Jew. This could cast doubts on the sincerity with which Tzvi practised Islam.⁶⁷³

According to most of the scholars who studied on the Shabbatean movement, the conversion of Shabbatai Tzvi in the Edirne court was a forced conversion by the Ottoman State. Şişman noted that "since he (*Hayatizade*) was already a forced convert, it is not difficult to assume that he was practicing a Crypto-Jewish lifestyle at the palace".⁶⁷⁴ Şişman's assumption and his statement on the "forced convert" would be inaccurate from a historical

⁶⁷⁰ Abdi Paşa 2008, p. 247. Bundan akdem İzmirde bir haham zuhur idup, taifeyi taifeyi yehud ziyade meyli yagbet etmeleriyle defi fitne için Boğaz hisarına sürülmüş idi. Ol canibe dahi Yahudiler tecemmü idüp itikadı batılları üzre bu bizim peygamberimizdir deyü bahisi fesadı ihtilal olacak mertebe ahvalleri şayi olmagla hahamı mezbur emri padişahi ile Edirneye ihzar olunmuş idi. 16 ncı perşembe gününde yeniköşkde nazargâh ı hümayun da akdin meclis kaymakam paşa ile şeyhülislâm efendi vaniefendi haham mezburu söyleddiler şevketlu padisahimiz hazretleri pencerede mahfi seyru istimaa buyururlar idi. Badel kelim mezbur Haham ol kendi hakkında söylenen teruhhati inkar eyledi amma teklif-i Islam olunup ' Bu meclisten sonra halasa mecal yoktur, ya imana geliyorsun ya hemen şimdi katl olunursun. Nihayet müslüman olursan inayetlu padişahımızdan seni şefaaf edelum deyü kati kelim eylediklerinde hahamı mezbur biu tevkigi ol saat mazhari hidayet olup nuri iman ile müşerref ve bir mümini mükellef oldu. İnayet i aliyye hüsevaliden padişahant mezkura 150 akçe kapi ortasi tekaudu erzani buyurulup .., ve kendisiyle dahi islama gelen refikina dahi aliyyeyi atiyeye cavusluk sadaka buyruldu.

⁶⁷¹ Şişman presumably said that "Shabbetai Tzvi left Izmir on January 1666... being either his own initiatives or the Ottomans' orders, he preferred to travel by ship and some of his disciples traveled over land to meet him again in Istanbul." However it was not his decision to travel by ship but an ordered to the chief of the harbor in Ottoman naval force in Izmir to arrest and take Shabbetai Tzvi to Istanbul by ship. Sisman, 2004, p. 52.

⁶⁷² Abdi Paşa, 2008, p. 40.

⁶⁷³ Ve oniki seneden beri Rumeli Payesi ile ser-I eribba-I hassa olan Hayatizade Mustafa Effendi, Ulumi rekabette Kamil ve feridu serefnazi ve hakim adem idi. Valide Sultan vasitasi ile Islama gelup ve az zamnanda hekim basi olmus idi. ... Seyhul Ilma Efendiye geldiler ve simdiye deign hekimbasinin islamindan suphemiz vardir, artik Yehudi oldugunu bildik ve terki savm -u salattir. Bi ciftin bu sadri nazin silsileleri ulemada bulunduguna rizamiz yoktur. Suleymaniye Darussifasinda Serabba sahn-i muderrisi Hasan Efendiye hekimbasilik verilip ... Silahtar Tarihi, 1928 p. 578.

⁶⁷⁴ Sisman, 2008, p. 108.

perspective, according to the Ottoman State law. Firstly, the process of his religious movement until his judgment must be well analyzed in terms of the sociological circumstances of the time in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, while Ottoman Government ignored his messianic declaration for a long time, what suddenly made him guilty in front of the Ottoman law? On the other hand, in order to understand the situation of this kind of conversion in the Ottoman history, one must know the Ottoman law system and the State policy of the Ottoman Empire. Shabatai Tzvi was found guilty not for his messianic declaration but in fact his negative political statement against the Ottoman constitution.⁶⁷⁵

According to Ottoman law, the death penalty was issued for few critical reasons in the Ottoman State. These were categorized under the political crimes as illegal actions against the sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultan and not recognizing the authority of the Ottoman Sultan.⁶⁷⁶ In this situation, Ottoman State policy produced imperial decree (fatwa) to punish the criminal as a political offender which is called "*al-Qatl al-Siyasi*" (death sentence for political offence) in the Ottoman time.⁶⁷⁷ This action was based on Islamic doctrines and custom law.⁶⁷⁸ A similar implementation for this rule was issued in the same way according to Ottoman law.⁶⁷⁹ In this sense, conversion from Judaism to Islam of Shabbetai Tzvi must be well understood in terms of judicial system of the Ottoman State.⁶⁸⁰

Tzvi incriminated himself according to the state law in the Ottoman Empire. In terms of the constitution, there was no exception to save his life other than Sultan's permission. Under these circumstances, Tzvi was brought to the Supreme Court in Edirne and judged by the Ottoman authorities. Judgment was mere formality but rather a last chance to defend himself in front of the law. Tzvi did not actually realize the measure of plague he caused for himself when he made such an extreme ill statements against the Ottoman Law. In 16th September of 1666, Thursday, imperial council was gathered for the judgement of Tzvi at the palace called Yeni Köşk in Edirne. In the council, official governor of the provincial district (Qaymaqam) Kara Mustafa Paşa, head of Islamic Affairs (Sheikh ul Islam) Minkarizade Yahya Effendi, an Ottoman bureaucrat Vani Effendi and some few Ottoman

⁶⁷⁵ Donmes are separated from other Jewish communities and called avdeti in Turkey. As it is explained in the first chapter, Donme Movement began after the conversion of Shabatai Tzvi to Islam in the Ottoman Supreme Court in 1666.

⁶⁷⁶ Mumcu Ahmet, 1963, *Osmanlı Devletinde Siyaseten Katl*. p. 91 Ankara.

⁶⁷⁷ Uzunçarşılı, 1945, p. 297.

⁶⁷⁸ Onar Sıddık Sami, 1934, *İdare Hukukunun Umumi Esasları* 1, p. 334, Istanbul.

⁶⁷⁹ Naima.1280 (Hijree) p. 294.

⁶⁸⁰ Üçok Coşkun, 1946, *Osmanlı Kanunnamelerinde İslam Ceza Hukukuna Aykırı Hükümler*, p. 127 AÜHF Dergisi III. Sayı 1. Ankara.

statesmen were at present. Sultan Mehmet IV was watching the court case from a secret window. Contemporary Ottoman historian Abdi Pasha described the case in greater detail.⁶⁸¹

Tzvi was listening to the judge who expressed all the trouble he caused in the state. Ricaut provides interesting information with regard to the court case. Also, due to his spiritual statements about his Messiahship, the Ottoman authorities asked him to show his miracles during the judgment. The court decision was to hang him naked and test him with arrows. If arrows did not hurt him, then the Sultan and everybody would accept him as the true Messiah. This said, other than Ricaut, no historians gave such details about his court case in Edirne Palace.⁶⁸²

Despite the absence of such as information in Turkish sources, Ricaut stated that one of the chief doctors at the Ottoman Palace, Hayatizade Mustafa Effendi who was Moche Ben Raphael Abravanel before he converted to Islam, , was the translator from Hebrew to Turkish during the court case.⁶⁸³ Hayatizade told Tzvi that due to his scandalizing statements there was no chance for him anymore unless he converted to Islam. Abdi Pasha also described that Tzvi had to choose between converting to Islam and signing his death penalty. Perhaps, Tzvi did not want to die like Jesus but as a reformist Messiah prefer to alive and pursue his religious thoughts in a different way. Thereupon in the court, Tzvi denied all the allegations about himself and converted to Islam.⁶⁸⁴ This begs the question: Did Tzvi convert by his own will? If he did not, then would his conversion be regarded as legitimate?

“What was to happen when an idolater forced an Israelite to transgress one of the commitments of the Torah on pain of death?” asked Maimonides in the Mishneh Torah. The answer to that question is clear: “He transgressed and did not suffer death because it was said in the commandments that when a man performed them, he would live and not die.”⁶⁸⁵ That means Tzvi’s conversion to Islam was not against the main principles of Judaism. Then how it must be considered from an Islamic point of view?

As explained above, there is no force or compulsion in Islam.⁶⁸⁶ The Ottoman Empire ruled according to the Islamic teachings derived from the Qur’an, which states, “There is no

⁶⁸¹ On altıncı penc- şenbih gününde Yeniköşk’de nazagah- ı Hümayunda akd- i meclis olunup ... Bade külli kelim mezbur haham ol kendi hakkında söylenen türrehat-ı inkar eyledi. . Abdurrahman Paşa, 2008, p. 247.

⁶⁸² Ricaut, 1686, p. 181.

⁶⁸³ Islam Ansiklopedisi, 2010, *Hayatizade Mustafa Feyzi*, pp. 16, 17. Vol. XVII, DIA, Istanbul.

⁶⁸⁴ Baer. 2007, p. 143.

⁶⁸⁵ Leviticus. 18:5

⁶⁸⁶ Quran, al Bakarah 2:256, let there be no compulsion in religion.

compulsion in religion, truth stands out clear from error”, and the Ottoman customary law. Therefore, any coercion to make people convert to Islam would be considered as an unacceptable crime against the State constitution. Due to this, Şişman’s point that the “Messiah was threatened, be a Muslim or prepare to die”⁶⁸⁷ could be regarded as unfounded. Unfortunately, similar false statements have been made by several scholars in Turkey and Europe, due to lack of knowledge about the State law of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁸⁸ Many writers have repeated or re-interpreted Şişman’s statement without analyzing Ottoman Sharia law, thus misintepreting the event with regard to the conversion of Shabbetai Tzvi.⁶⁸⁹

In brief, conversion to Islam must be well understood in the context of the teachings of the holy scripture of the Qur’an, that there is no need to force anyone to embrace Islam.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, neither the Sultans of an Islamic Empire nor his religious environment could allow someone to convert to Islam by force. This means that after his fatal mistakes, conversion to Islam was offered to Shabbetai Tzvi by another Jewish convert, Hayatizade to save his life. It is explained in the Qur’an that, “Do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Haram until they fight you there [...] and if they cease to fight, then indeed, God is forgiving and Merciful.”⁶⁹¹ In the case of Tzvi, at no point did the State compel Tzvi to convert to Islam, however his decision to convert illustrated that he no longer wished to rebel against the Ottoman State.

Therefore, the above verse in the Qur’an inspired the Ottoman statesman (Hayatizaade) to give the last chance to someone like Shabbetai Tzvi who was sentenced to death already. Thus, from the label of rebel, he was now documented as “honored by the glory of Islam” in the official registration books.⁶⁹² Briefly, it must be understood that the legal implementation of the Ottoman authorities towards Shabbetai Tzvi cannot be labelled as an oppressive move on their part. Tzvi was never compelled to convert to Islam. Forced conversion is not only against the Qur’anic teaching but also the Constitution of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁹³ Therefore, such a saying “when Tzvi was brought to court, he was forced to convert to Islam” cannot be accurate in a historical and religious context.

⁶⁸⁷ Sisman, 2004, p. 112.

⁶⁸⁸ Aka Muharrem 2009, *Sabatay Sevi ve Sabataycılık*, p.1 (Yüzüncü yıl üniversitesi, Yüksek lisans tezi), Van.

⁶⁸⁹ Sisman, 2004, p. 114.

⁶⁹⁰ Quran, Al Baqara 2: 256; Quran, Surah Al-Kafirun 109:1-6; “For you is your religion, for me is my religion”.

⁶⁹¹ Quran, Baqara 2:191, 2:192.

⁶⁹² Krstic Tijana, 2015, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları* (çev, Ahmet. T. Şen) p. 137, Istanbul. See also, Baer. 2007, p.5.

⁶⁹³ Akgündüz – Öztürk, 2011, p. 117.

4.7.4 After Tzvi's conversion to Islam

When Shabbetai Tzvi converted to Islam in the Ottoman court in the Edirne Palace, he began to live like a Muslim in the society. After his conversion to Islam, there was some misunderstanding in scholarly work about Tzvi's appointment in the Ottoman palace. Some scholars noted that Shabbetai Tzvi was appointed as a Chief Keeper of the Gate in the Ottoman Palace.⁶⁹⁴ Freely also noted that, "Tzvi was appointed as the chief keeper of the gate with 150 Ottoman pound (akçe) salaries".⁶⁹⁵ Contrary to these statements, the Ottoman Archival documents illustrate the matter of the appointment which as a pension package from the *Kapıcıbaşı* unit in the Palace, i.e. from the post of Chief Keeper of the Gate.⁶⁹⁶ Cengiz Şişman noted that "the Messiah was appointed as the keeper of the Gate in Chief (*Kapıcıbaşı*)⁶⁹⁷ in the Ottoman palace. Although a common statement made by most of the scholars, Şişman's statement about the appointment of Shabbetai Tzvi after his conversion is not accurate. It is because according to later research, it was found that Tzvi was not appointed as chief keeper of the gate in the Ottoman palace. He only received the package from the *Kapıcıbaşı* unit.

Moreover, the *kapıcıbaşı* post is equal to a military general in the Ottoman State. In order to become a *kapıcıbaşı*, one must have had considerable experience in the Ottoman army. Tzvi in fact had no knowledge with regard to the Ottoman military system or policy. Therefore, how could the Ottoman Sultan have appointed him for such a high profile post? An ordinary citizen or religious leader like Tzvi could not have taken such a position in the state organizations of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁹⁸

Other developments after Tzvi's conversion include name change. Tzvi changed his name to Aziz Mehmet Effendi, and the principles he now taught showed consideration for the Muslim faith as well. These became known as 'the 18 commandments', including the prohibition against marriage outside of the sect, the external observance of Muslim custom and religious ritual.⁶⁹⁹

In the seventeenth century, despite his conversion, the reputation of Shabbetai Tzvi remained well-spread beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman state. He influenced many

⁶⁹⁴ Şişman, 2004, p.38: Freely, 1934, p. 141.

⁶⁹⁵ Freely, 1934, p.74.

⁶⁹⁶ Afyoncu, 2013, p. 205.

⁶⁹⁷ Şişman, 2004, p. 126.

⁶⁹⁸ İslam Ansiklopedisi, 2011, 'Kapıcı' (Abdülkadir Özcan), p. 346, cilt, 24, DIA, Ankara.

⁶⁹⁹ Bali. 2008, p.25.

Muslims, Christian and Jews but also affected some influential Ottoman statesmen of his time. An interesting event is sufficient to show his impact on the public. In 1668, a well-known religious leader, Yitzhak from Timesaver city, Rabbi Yitzhak intended to meet Shabbetai Tzvi, and for this reason, he left Hungary and came to Edirne with his family. When he arrived in town, his two years old baby, Menachem ben Yitzhak Ashkenazi got a deathly epidemic. There was limited knowledge about the sickness or its cure; therefore, the family members lost all hopes for their two years old boy. With the suggestion of Tzvi's followers, the two years old ill boy Menachem Yitzhak was showed to Shabbetai Tzvi as the last chance. When Tzvi saw the child, he put his hands on child's hand and prayed for a while. Thereafter, Tzvi turned to the child's mother and said that this child would be well soon. Eventually, Menachem was cured and grew up to become the general secretary of Chief Rabbi of Edirne, Avram Sarfati II in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.⁷⁰⁰

As understood from this passage, conversion to Islam was the only change in the outlook of Shabbetai Tzvi. He structured his religious movement which secretly grew even after his death and shaped in many different forms over the centuries.

4.8 Last years and death

Shabbetai Tzvi was not the first Messiah whose news spread openly and then more secretly by his followers in the Ottoman society.⁷⁰¹ Author Bali importantly explained that taking the comparison to the far extreme, one could suggest that Shabbetai Tzvi was like Jesus the Messiah to his followers. Like Jesus, Shabbetai Tzvi was a Jew whose followers broke away from the mainstream religion and established a new sect. This move therefore stressed divine renewal, a concept drawing from Judaism but radically departing from it.⁷⁰² Maybe, therefore, Şişman rightly pointed out that “Shabbetai Tzvi's messianic movement was deemed as one of the ‘seditious’ movements in the early modern Ottoman context. Like other extreme or ‘heretical’ and messianic movements, the Sabbatean movement was treated very cautiously by the Ottoman authorities in accordance with specific historical circumstances”.⁷⁰³

From a Jewish point of view, Lewis stated that the Shabbetai Tzvi affair had a destructive impact on the Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire. He said that, “Sevi left

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 63.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid, p.4

⁷⁰² Ibid, p.5

⁷⁰³ Sisman, 2004, p. 376.

them a double legacy: on the one hand, discouragement verging on despair; on the other, an unprecedented reinforcement of rabbinical power” which indicates how influential Shabbetai Tzvi’s messiahship was.⁷⁰⁴

Tzvi lived in Edirne after his conversion to Islam. It was believed that he practised Islam, but some eye witnesses reported that he was secretly reading Torah in his house. Thereupon, Ottoman authorities judged him again in the Edirne magistrate court. Apparently, his responses could not satisfy the judge in the court and he was deported to the Ulcinj city in present day Albania, where he lived for his entire life.⁷⁰⁵ Orientalist Joseph van Hammer also made a similar statement and mentioned that after the exile, Tzvi lived more twenty years.⁷⁰⁶

Many unfair labels were attached to Shabbetai Tzvi by society even while he was still alive. However, Tzvi and his followers preferred to live in the burden of silence, as Şişman emphasized in his study.⁷⁰⁷ On the one hand, the Rabbis anathematized their ‘heretical’ leanings, and on the other hand, the Ottoman officials accused them of being ‘insincere’. Because of this dual pressure, the Jewish Sabbatean believers had to either emigrate or keep their beliefs in secret.⁷⁰⁸ Shabbetai Tzvi died there in 1676, ten years after his messianic declaration. His grave was visible till the 1940s but then got destroyed during the Second World War.⁷⁰⁹

After the death of Tzvi, or rather Aziz Mehmet Effendi, his followers continued to pursue religious practices of their religious leader. The congregation was divided into three

⁷⁰⁴ Lewis, 1984, p.147.

⁷⁰⁵ Scholem, 1973, p.28, According to Scholem, Tzvi preferred to stay away from the capital of the State, but his precaution even could not stop Ottoman statesmen and Tzvi was deported to Ulcinj in Albania in 1672.

⁷⁰⁶ Contrary to Hummer’s statement, Tzvi only lived 4 years after his exile to Albania. Hummer, Hammer, J de. 1838, *Histoire de l’Empire Ottoman*, p.381, Vol. XI, Paris.

⁷⁰⁷ When Şisman wrote about the religious identity of Sabbateans, he probably might be confused the appearance of Sabbatean believers. While he was saying that “Although I was able to find only a few documents related to the Sabbatean movement, and its later sectarian developments, I found hundreds of documents related to the Ottoman Jews, who were potential believers in the Sabbatean cause.” This statement cannot be true because Ottoman Jews were practising Torah as all other orthodox Jews and living as Jewish believer. So the documents with regard to Ottoman Jews only reflected the proper Jewish believers in the official archival records. On the other hand, Sabbatean people were living as Muslims however secretly practising as Jews in their private life. They were basically practising both religions but believing in Jewish tradition with the guidance of Shabbetai Tzvi. Therefore, ordinary Jews cannot be potential believers of Sabbetai Tzvi. For this reason, Sabbateans are sometimes called Mohammedan Jews in order to reveal their complicated religious identity. Sabbateans are also recorded as Dönme or Avdeti in the Ottoman documents rather than Jews and this also shows that Jews and Sabbateans were categorized in different ways in the Ottoman records. See, Sisman, 2004, p. 135.

⁷⁰⁸ Sisman, 2004, p. 256.

⁷⁰⁹ Sisman, 2004, p.20.

parts, Yakubi, Karakase and Kapani, but remained as a hidden congregation in world society.⁷¹⁰ English traveler Edward Browne passed by the Greek city of Larissa and reported his observation about Sabbatean groups in the city. Browne stated that, “I heard of some hymns sung by followers of a Jewish imposter Shabbetai Tzvi in 1669. Fortunately Ottoman general Kasim Pasha punished them before”.⁷¹¹

In 1682, Tzvi’s letters were discovered and created a huge wave of excitement in Jewish settlements. His letters shared parts of his religious teachings, such that after his death, his Messiahship did not subside but endured in a different form.⁷¹²

4.9 Conclusion

Unfortunately, as a religious subject, the Sabbatean movement could not gain as much popularity among Turkish scholars as other religious movement did in the Ottoman territory. Protestantism, Jehovah's Witnesses or Suryanism⁷¹³ in Christianity⁷¹⁴, and Alavi, Qadianism⁷¹⁵ or Shi’ism in Islam have been researched more extensively than the Sabbatean religious movement.⁷¹⁶ Yet, this minority Jewish sect may be worthy of further research, not only as a religious movement, but because it is also deemed the first Zionist movement in Jewish history dating back to the 17th century.⁷¹⁷

According to Goldberg, the Ottoman Jews faced both socio-economic and spiritual crises, but the Sabbatean movement which went ‘underground’, influenced both societies, Muslim and Jewish ones.⁷¹⁸ The memories of the Sabbatean movement were transmitted from the generation to generation which inspired the followers of messianic movement of Shabbetai Tzvi.⁷¹⁹

Tzvi had structured his religious action before he died; however it was his community that developed the Sabbatean sect, also called the sect of Crypto-Jews.⁷²⁰ After the death of

⁷¹⁰ Aka, 2009, p.1.

⁷¹¹ Freely mistakenly spelt his name as Cussed Basha, See, Freely. 1934. p. 50.

⁷¹² Ibid, p.167.

⁷¹³ Syrian orthodox, member of the Syrian orthodox Church.

⁷¹⁴ Assyrian people also known as Chaldeans, live in Syria and Turkey

⁷¹⁵ Mirza Ghulam’s religious sect is self-named the Ahmadiyya Movement.

⁷¹⁶ Aka, 2009, p.1.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid, p.1.

⁷¹⁸ Goldberg.,1996, p.18.

⁷¹⁹ Elisheva Carlebach, 1998, *The Sabbatean Posture of German Jewry*, p.25, Mandel Institute for Jewish Studies.

⁷²⁰ The fact that Crypt-Jews were sojourning in this island at time when Menasseh Ben Israel sought the re-admission of his brethren. Adler H. 1896, *A Survey of Anglo - Jewish History*, p.12, Vol. 3. Jewish Historical Society of England.

Tzvi, his popularity increased among his followers. Jacob Frank, a Jewish religious leader from Poland proclaimed his messiahship by saying that Tzvi's soul was living in his body through reincarnation. Following a revelation from Heaven according to Frank, he converted to Christianity in 1750 and pursued his messianic statements as a Christian.⁷²¹ It seems that the conversion to another religion became perceived as a kind of piety in the Sabbatean community.

Even after his death, several questions remain to be explored, and the Sabbatean movement remains an influential religious movement in world history.⁷²²

⁷²¹ Şisman, 2002 *Sabetaycılığın Osmanlı ve Türkiye Serüveni*, p.5, Temmuz, Sayı, 223, Tarih ve Toplum.

⁷²² Barnai, 1996, p.78.

CHAPTER V: SABBATEANISM AFTER SABBATAI TZVI

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate how the marginal sect of Sabbateanism situates and structures itself between two mainstream religions, Judaism and Islam. This is why some refer to the Sabbateans as ‘Mohammedan Jews’. As a religious movement, after the death of Aziz Mehmet Effendi, or Shabbetai Tzvi before his conversion, the sect began to be called Sabbateanism or the sect of “Dönmes” in Western literature. Before his death, Shabbetai Tzvi converted to Islam in order to save his life but also according to him, to save his believers who converted to Islam with his guidance.

In this regard, it can be asked how exactly Sabbateanism flourished after the Messiah’s and some of his followers’ conversion and also how it developed within particularly in the Jewish and Muslims circles. After their conversion to Islam, Sabbateans were called *Avdeti* and later *Donmes*, which means converted in Turkish, but with a negative meaning of being unstable or untrustworthy. The concept could be partially similar to that of Crypto-Jews in Western literature. In the Ottoman society, Sabbateans preferred to be called *Avdeti* which is a more polite way to identify them.⁷²³ These definitions help us to better understand the public image of Sabbatean movement in world societies from the past to present. In this thesis, they are rather called Sabbateans.

This chapter also attempts to reveal the current situation of Sabbateanism and its followers who mostly live in Salonica, Istanbul, and Izmir. From the beginning of the Sabbatean movement to the present, the question of how Sabbateanism has changed and developed will be one of the aspects of our scrutiny, in the light of Ottoman and Turkish sources. In this section, I analyze unused sources to trace different periods of the Sabbatean movement and its subsequent sectarian development.

5.2 Controversies surrounding Sabbateanism

As explained in the first chapter, the word *Donme*, written in Ottoman Turkish as *Dönme* دونمه or *Avdeti* عودتی, is a colloquial word rather than an academic term. With time, this term became a common word to indicate the Sabbateans’ religious identity in the Ottoman society. *Donmes* is often translated as convert or turncoat, the most famous

⁷²³ Galas, 1995, p. 43.

appellation used for naming and describing the Ottomans and Turkish Sabbatean communities.⁷²⁴ Marck David made a remarkable statement about Sabbateans when he described Sabbateans as those who adopted the “Dönme religion and identity, not simply Jews, not merely Muslims”.⁷²⁵ This is another way of saying Jews in Islam, or as revealed in the first chapter Mohammedan Jews, namely Sabbateans.

Furthermore, Rifat Bali importantly asks why *Dönmes* are hated so much.⁷²⁶ This is an important question to answer in terms of the understanding of this marginal sect in Jewish history, but in fact, this applies for all marginal movement in other religions. The difference between the terms *Dönme* and Sabbatean is that while *Dönme* was humiliating those believers, presenting them as untrustworthy, the term Sabbatean was more affirming as it was derived from the name of Sabbateanism’s founder, Shabbetai Tzvi.

In the Jewish tradition, it is a common believed that if a new baby is born on Saturday, he was named *Shabbat Shebti* which is how Shabbetai Tzvi received his name.⁷²⁷ Children born on a Sabbath were frequently called Shabbetai.⁷²⁸ In this sense, it is possible to say that Sabbateanism derives from the name of Shabbetai Tzvi but originally comes from the term Sabbath in Judaism. Likewise another marginal sect in Christianity, Sabbatarianism⁷²⁹ has been established based on the Sabbath theory, and Christian believers of the sect follow the Saturday rituals with similar principles.⁷³⁰ However, Sabbateanism only became a proper sect after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi.

5.3 Sabbateanism as a hidden sect

Generally, the Jews’ views on Sabbateanism were similar to the Turkish views in the Ottoman society. Undoubtedly, the Sabbatean movement secretly developed after the conversion of Shabbetai Tzvi in 1666. As a religious sect, it was always seen as an unacceptable and unethical belief within Judaism. The orthodox Jewish community in Ottoman society regarded this group as heresy, and many Rabbis issued negative religious decrees against the Sabbateans.

⁷²⁴ Şisman, 2008, p. 37.

⁷²⁵ Baer, 2007, p. 12.

⁷²⁶ Bali, 2008, p.37.

⁷²⁷ Galante noted that the Exodus of the Hebrews, and look forward to a future Messianic Age. Galante, 2000, p.20.

⁷²⁸ Scholem, 1973, p. 104.

⁷²⁹ See, Neufield, 1976, pp. 1255–6.

⁷³⁰ Watts, Michael R., 2015. *The Dissenters: Volume III: The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity*, pp. 156–160, 19 March, Oxford University Press.

However, another factor played a crucial role in making Sabbateans evil in the eyes of the public. Writers and historians wrote about Sabbateans with much exaggeration and labelled them as heretical in society. Thus, Sabbateans gradually became scapegoats for socio-economic and political issues in the public sphere, and their movement was officially recorded as “a heretical movement” by most writers. For instance, when Hanna Swiderska mentioned that, “the Messiah was one of the latter, directed against the Jewish religion and in particular against the False Messiah”, he also meant Shabbetai Tzvi.⁷³¹ Miriam noted that, perhaps, understand how a great number of Jews in the seventeenth century were willing to follow the weary bizarre of Shabbetai Tzvi⁷³² Similarly, Scholem noted that “there is no doubt that Shabbetai Tzvi was a sick man, it is worth-while to try and understand the nature of his illness. His contemporaries speak of him as a mad man, a lunatic, or a fool.⁷³³ To Scholem, the sources suggest with almost absolute certainty that Shabbetai suffered from a manic-depressive psychosis, possibly combined with some paranoid traits- a constitutional disease.⁷³⁴

With the same understanding, Lehmann noted that the eighteenth century came on the heels of an abortive messianic movement around “the False Messiah Shabbetai Tzvi of Izmir” who had attached a large number of followers throughout the Ottoman Empire and Europe and across the entire spectrum of Jewish society.⁷³⁵ Lastly, Şişman repeated that he was a “False Messiah.”⁷³⁶ Like Scholem, Şişman also preferred to call Tzvi as a mystic Rabbi from Izmir, but almost no scholars called him only with his name.⁷³⁷ Once the clergy learned of Sabbateanism’s heretical character, some scholars would have judged the people of Shabbetai Tzvi’s sect.⁷³⁸ These common approaches completely show that Tzvi was already a negative figure in the past and no chance to defend himself as a founder of his sect. The purpose of this thesis undoubtedly not to defend a controversial messianic movement in history but rather as all other faiths, Sabbatean sect also must be considered as a religious belief whether it is hidden or not. From a believer point of view, if the Sabbatean movement

⁷³¹ Swiderska Hanna, 1989, *Slavonic and East European Collections: three polish pamphlets on Pseudo-Messiah Sabbatai Sevi* p.222, Vol. 15 No, 2.

⁷³² Feldon Miriam Eliav, 2004, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, p.224 Vol. 15. No, 2. Review, Penn State University Press

⁷³³ Scholem, 1973, p. 125.

⁷³⁴ Scholem, 1973, p. 126, 129,137.

⁷³⁵ Lehmann, 2005, p. 24.

⁷³⁶ Şisman Cengiz, 2008, *In search of the name, a history of naming ottoman/Sabbatean communities. In studies on Istanbul and beyond Studies on Istanbul and beyond*, Vol. 1. p. 84, (edited by Robert G. Ousterhout)

⁷³⁷ Sisman Cengiz, 2008, *Save Sabbatai Sevi house from oblivion*, p. 10, Vol. 40. No, 1, Cambridge University Press

⁷³⁸ *Ibid*, p.13.

is still a valid religious belief, then as most popular religions like Christianity or Islam, controversial sect Sabbatean movement also at least deserve a respect as a religious movement in the world. From the time of Shabbetai Tzvi to the present, very rare authors emphasized the remarkable achievements of the community in mercantile and social affairs in the Ottoman State, which approached more understandingly to the Sabbateans at the past.

Oddly enough, as an Islamic Empire, Ottoman State did not recognize this sect as a problematic congregation in the society. Some official correspondents highlight a historical fact that Ottoman treatment to the Sabbatean movement was not in hostility throughout history.⁷³⁹ For instance, according to an archival record, Sabbateans in Salonica lived peacefully under the Ottoman society. In this document, a Sabbatean lady named Rabia who was the daughter of Şeşbeşzade Osman Effendi ruined away from her house to the house of the Mayor and asked for protection. Rabia wanted to convert to Islam from Sabbateanism, but due to social pressure, she was scared to stay in her house anymore. Thereupon, she is saved at the house of the Mayor Ibrahim Bey in Salonica till the Mayor settled down the issue.⁷⁴⁰

Similarly, another Ottoman archival document provides important evidence to understand that in fact, Ottoman rulers were aware of the “Muhammedan Jews” in the community. For instance, some archival records highlight that a Sabbatean (*Avdeti*) merchant nicknamed Honiyos from Karakaş family in Salonica escaped to another city and this was reported to Istanbul by the local government. One remarkable example in Ottoman history illustrates the Turkish approach to minor religious movement under the Ottoman State which was ruled by Sharia Law. However, despite these official reports, Ottoman administrators did not deal Sabbateans’s identity but rather threat them as ordinary citizens in the society.⁷⁴¹ It is because as it mentioned earlier, with multicultural understanding, Ottomans always showed tolerance to other beliefs and minorities. It is clearly understood from this document that Ottoman administrators called them as *Avdeti* without negatively labeling them in any other

⁷³⁹ Ottoman State Archives, 15/M /1319 (Hicrî) I. HUS. 88/1319

⁷⁴⁰ Turkish version in original text; "Selanik'te minel kadın mutavassıt bulunan Avdetilerden şeşbeşzade Osman efendinin kasidesi Ali Efendi'nin kerimesi 18- 20 yaşlarında bulunan rabia'nın münasebet peyda etmiş olduğum manastırlı hacı feyzullah nam kimsenin delaleti ile naib i şerifin hanesine firar ederek ilanı ihtida ile avdetilikten iba ve hükümeti şehriyeye iltica etmesi üzerine vilayetce cereyan eden muameleden ve merhumenin meclisi belediye reisi ibrahim beyin hanesine misafir ettirilmiş olduğundan bahisle bu babba edilecek muamelenin istismarına dair selanik vilayeti nde tahrirat okundu. See; Eroğlu, 2013, p. 97.

⁷⁴¹ Ottoman State Archive, BEO, 152/11390, 21/B /1310 (Hicrî) Selanik; 4886) Selanik'de Karakaş Honiyos lakaplı Avdetilerden olup Üsküb'de ticaret yapan Osman Efendi'nin nezdinden firar ettiğini ... Kosova Vilayetinden bildirildiği.

way.⁷⁴² However, aforementioned tolerance was limited to the political interference of the religious congregations in the state affairs.

For instance, at the same time of Sabbetai Tzvi, an Islamic *Tariqa*⁷⁴³ called *Melami Movement*⁷⁴⁴ became a threat for the State. Melami movement (Malamatiyya) was established in eight century in Iran but later impacted Ottoman society in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This Sufi way of religious thought was followed by Ottoman Sufi Dervish Hajji Bayram Weli and his students and mixed up with the principles of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi. As a result of piety, Melami dervishes hide their religious thoughts in public. According to some scholars, Melami movement is regarded as a “heretical *tariqa*” and a marginal example of such violence among Ottoman dervishes.⁷⁴⁵ However, despite this, Ottoman State did not negatively consider Melamis’s religious ritual within Islamic thought until their political challenges for the State sovereignty.⁷⁴⁶ Turkish *Bayrami Melamis* was issued a religious decree and say that for the Sheikh namely their religious leader was regarded as ‘*Amir al Mu'minin ve'l Khalafet'ul Sayyidu'l Murselin ve'l Surat al Rahman ve'l Sahib al Zaman Imam al-Mahdi*’ which means they actually only recognized their religious leader and rejected the Ottoman Caliphate when they recognized their Sheikh as Caliph.⁷⁴⁷ This was found an illegal action against the Ottoman sovereignty which was considered an anarchic revolt under the Ottoman State. Therefore, in spite of the Ottoman ordinary citizens and Melami Muslims followed the same religious principles, Ottoman State still challenged with Melami community more than the Sabbatean movement. This event highlights that

⁷⁴² Gerber, 1994, p. 61.

⁷⁴³ Tariqah is school of Sufism (Tasawwuf) a path of Islamic mysticism. See, Kara Mustafa, 2008, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikat*, p. 3 Sır Yayıncılık. Istanbul.

⁷⁴⁴ Malamatiyya (or Melamiyyat in Turkish) is an Islamic mystical movement which goes back to Iran Khorasan in 9th century. See, Sviri Sara, 1999, *Hakim Tirmidhi and the Malamati Movement in Early Sufism*, p. 585 Oxford University Press. UK.

⁷⁴⁵ Gölpinarlı Abdalbaki, *Melamilik ve melamiler* p. 202-204 Melami poet and musician Neyzen Teyvik also emphasized the way of complicated lifestyle for Melamis in his interesting poem as follows: “*melamet mülkünün meczubuyum ben, eşek bir milletin mensubuyum ben, kapıldım her nasılsa ehl-i aşka, s...m her herife başka başka.*”

⁷⁴⁶ Well known Turkish melami poet Imadedin Nesimi, composed an interesting lyric in 14th century named “*Ben Melamet Hırkasını Kendim Giydim Kimene*” and this lyric is still very popular in Turkey as protest music. See. Aktaş Hasan, 2004, *Yeni Türk şiirinde Seyyid Nesimi Okulu ve misyonu*. p. 87, Yort Savul Yayınları, Edirne.

⁷⁴⁷ Ocak Ahmet Yaşar, 2010, *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar, Makaleler – İncelemeler* p. 171 Istanbul. Ahmadiyya Movement also had similar experienced in society and became a political “heretical” movement in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century.

Ottoman did not actually interfere religious practices in the religious congregation but rather considered their intentions towards the Ottoman State.⁷⁴⁸

In this condition, the Sabbatean movement was established by its followers and found to be an opportunity to develop only in the Ottoman society. With their exemplary tolerance, the Ottomans allowed Sabbatean people to continue their life in Ottoman society. This freedom provided remarkable public sphere for them to establish their enigmatic identity to transmit to their next generations. The freedom of faith under the Ottoman rule also allows them to structure their life.⁷⁴⁹ In these circumstances, Sabbatean Movement found an opportunity to develop its hidden sect in Ottoman territory.

Ottoman writer Ebu'l Mecdet provided important information with regard to Sabbatean movement after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi. According to Ebu'l Mecdet the successor of Tzvi, Osman Baba established a more remarkable image than Shabbetai Tzvi did in his life.⁷⁵⁰ According to Turkish sources, Mohammedan Jews have been called in many ways as follows:

<u>Yakubi.</u>	<u>Karakaş.</u>	<u>Kapanıcı</u>
Jakubis.	Osman Babalar	Papular
Arpados.	On Yollular.	İbrahim Ağalar
Tarbushlis.	Honiyozlar.	Çelebiler
Hamdi Beyler.	Coniozos.	Cavelieros
Sazan.	Konisoslar.	Kavalieoros
Bezestenlithes.	Konyosos.	Cavaglieros
Omoscos.	İzmirliler	
Honyoz.	Karu	

⁷⁴⁸ Melami Shaikhs in the Ottoman State furthermore stated that “*Constantine ve Diyar ul Rumda Fisk’u Fucur ve Zulm ve Jehalet*” criticism shows that Melami were not happy about the Ottoman administration. Because Magnificent Sulaiman I ordered to kill two prominent Melami religious leaders Sheikh Hamza Bali and Oğlan Sheikh Ibrahim Efendi by the religious decree (Fatwah) of the Sheikh-ul-Islam of the Ottoman Empire See; Ocak, 2010, p. 168.

⁷⁴⁹ Şisman, 2008, p. 37.

⁷⁵⁰ Ebul Mecdet, 1924, Sabatayislik, *Şimdiye kadar mestur Kalan Hakaiki Tarihiyeden*, p. 203, Türk Sesi, (Hicri Kanunisani, 1340) Istanbul

Çorapçılar. İstanbullular

Basık Burunlar. Öncüler

Berberi Trashci

Komflu Ağaları

Ghoniothes

Other than this, they are also classified into sub-groups and their other names. With their coherent lifestyle, Sabbateans managed to extend their families in different names but lived in secret in their own world. Generally, the Sabbateans are referred to as Dönme, Avdeti, Selanikios, Pastelikos, Mimim, Ma'miniko, Ma'amin, Haverim, Manzerim, Ba'ale Milhama, Patroness De La Pelea, Zoharites, Dolmethes, Mohammedan Jews, Jewish-Turks, Turkish-Jews, or even Zabbathaites.

5.4 Differences between some Sabbatean groups

After Shabbetai Tzvi's death, the Sabbatean movement was gradually structured by its prominent leaders in the community. Sabbateans then got named in many different ways such as Muhammedan Jews, *Sazanikos*, *Salonikas*, but they called themselves *Ma'aminim*. This was unlike Ottoman Jews, who preferred to call themselves *Manzarim*.⁷⁵¹ The term *Sazanikos* was ordinarily used for describing of carp fish (*Sazan Fish, Cyprinus*), so it is interesting that it was also associated with Sabbatean people. The community is divided into three main families *Karakas*, *Yakubi* and *Kapanci* (Capandji).⁷⁵²

The Karakas Sabbatean believers worshipped the leader of the community, Osman Baba, meaning father Osman in Turkish but he was secretly called Baruhia Russo in his congregation. Later on, Osman Baba became very famous in Jewish circles for his mystical power. Osman was not even an educated man but regardless of this, he was able to tell people about their future. His reputation increasingly grew in his environment as a blessed man. As time went by, it was rumoured that Osman had the same gifts as Shabbetai Tzvi and he could even heal sick people. This skill made him a respected and distinguished figure in the community. Eventually, many agreed that Tzvi's soul reincarnated on his body. After his

⁷⁵¹ Şişman Cengiz, 2006, *Ortada açığa vurulmayı bekleyen bir sır yok*, p.12, (Nokta, sayı, 9)

⁷⁵² Şişman, 2008, p. 37.

death, some people in the community even called him the soul of God on earth.⁷⁵³ Despite following a similar tradition, oddly enough, Jews and Sabbateans felt antagonism for each other.⁷⁵⁴ One of Osman Baba's written spiritual sermons to his followers was discovered later. He addressed his believers in the following manner 'Oh my children, you must always be aware of wrong doing and right doing. Injustice is a poisonous snake in your heart. Stay away from it. Our past is hell, but our future will be heaven for us. Absolute right is science, and I invite all of you to this privilege that cannot be undermining at all'.⁷⁵⁵ Furthermore, his followers have a sculpture of Osman Baba, made out of limestone. They worship the statue which symbolised their God, but this was interpreted in the wrong way. His followers were regarded as idolaters like the Zoroastrians. Leaders in the congregation were called "Agha"⁷⁵⁶ and leadership is passed from father to son. Lately, the religious leadership in the community was in the hands of Miserly (Misirli) Agha.⁷⁵⁷

According to Sabbateans, they follow a custom of leaving an empty bed in their house for Saint Osman Baba. A candle is always burned next to this bed as a part of the religious ritual. This custom is not practised by many believers anymore but is still known by many in the Sabbatean community.⁷⁵⁸

Prominent family members in the Kapancı and Karakaş families played a crucial role in developing the first private school in Salonica and later in Istanbul. The Salonica Terakki School, Fevziye School and Şişli Terakki School are the most popular Sabbateans educational institutes.⁷⁵⁹ Well-known educators of the time, Ismail Hakkı Bey, Cudi Bey and Şemsi Effendi used to teach in these institutes.⁷⁶⁰ Beside this, Cavit Bey and Şemsi Effendi from the Karakaş family contributed considerably to the urbanization of Salonica city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Despite some different understandings of religious principles, conservative Sabbateans or Mohammedan Jews showed their religious piety when performing the Islamic rituals, and also secretly prayed at home as a follower of Shabbetai

⁷⁵³ This belief also similarly exists in the circles of some Muslim Sufi scholars like Hallac-i Mansur who was another misunderstood figure in the Islamic History. See, Öztürk Yaşar Nuri, 1976, *Hallac-ı Mansur: Darağacında Miraç* (2 Cilt Takım) İstanbul.

⁷⁵⁴ Ebu'l Mecdet, Türk sesi nr. 197, 8c. 1924 Salı, p. 1 - 2

⁷⁵⁵ Ebu'l Mecdet, Türk nr. 203, Ca, 15, 1342 Hijree s.2

⁷⁵⁶ Aga or agha is an old title used among common people, local big landowner and Turkish chief.

⁷⁵⁷ Scholem, 1973, p. 830.

⁷⁵⁸ Bali Rıfat N. 2002, *Anılarda ve Söyleşilerde Sabetaycılar*, p. 35 Sayı, 223 Tarih ve Toplum

⁷⁵⁹ M. N. D. 1933, Resimli şark mecmuası, *Türkiyenin en eski hususi mektebi Selanik Terakki Mektebi*, p.2 Nisan, İstanbul

⁷⁶⁰ Şemsi Effendi was also teacher of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who is known as the founder of modern Turkish State.

Tzvi.⁷⁶¹ The Karakaş group did not entertain the idea of marrying people from different communities but rather stayed away from intermarriages until the 1870s.

However, in the twentieth century, after the loss of Ottoman provinces in the Balkans areas, there was a population exchange between Greece and Turkey. Ottoman Greeks moved to Greece, and Sabbateans were asked to migrate to Anatolia from Greece. Some of them also settled in Istanbul and Izmir, but also in the countryside of Anatolia, like Sivas, Erzincan, and Siirt, where mostly *Alavi* Muslims have lived for centuries.⁷⁶² This also affected ethnic populations in Anatolia between 1924 and 1925. According to some scholars such as Zorlu, Sabbateans lost their traditional characteristics in the course of this exchange.⁷⁶³ After this time, individuals gained more significant value than the congregation.⁷⁶⁴ Indeed, especially after the exchange (mübadele) between Greeks and Turks, a massive population of Sabbateans settled in Anatolia, where they faced criticism from Muslim Turks.⁷⁶⁵ Sabbateans naturally lived in comfort in such multicultural and civilized cities like Salonica and Rhodes under the Ottoman rule. However, living with a double religious identity of Jews and Muslims, made them look awkward in the eyes of Anatolian Sunni Muslims. Sabbateans naturally lived in comfort in such multicultural and civilized cities like Salonica and Rhodes under the Ottoman rule. When Sabbateans met conservative members of the Muslim community in the eastern side of Turkey, they struggled to communicate and socialize with them, particularly Sunni (orthodox) Muslim people, due to cultural differences.

Unlike the Sunni Muslims, the *Alavi* Muslims are more moderate in their religious beliefs and mostly carry out their practices in their temples, called *Cemevi*.⁷⁶⁶ The *Alavis'* religious practices in Turkey are based on representing the cultural values and humanitarian side of Islam which is linked to principles of Caliph Ali. It was easier for Sabbateans to identify with *Alavi* Muslims because for example, *Alavi* Muslims did not impose the wearing of a headscarf for their women. Therefore, instead of declaring their identity, some Sabbateans preferred to say that they were also *Alavi* Muslims. In this way, Sabbateans

⁷⁶¹ Şişman, 2006, p.16.

⁷⁶² Alawiyyah /Alevism or Alevi is a mystical branch of Islam whose adherents are followers of Chaliph Ali.

⁷⁶³ Ilgaz Zorlu, *Evet, ben Selânikliyim: Türkiye Sabetaycılığı: makaleler*. (Ankara: Zvi-Geyik Yayınları, 2004), 104.

⁷⁶⁴ Şişman, 2006, p. 13.

⁷⁶⁵ Koloğlu Orhan, 1991, *İttihatçılar ve Masonlar*, p. 23, İletisim Yayınları, İstanbul

⁷⁶⁶ *Alavi* Muslims perform their religious rituals in such a temple called *Cemevi*, means Meeting House.

integrated with *Alavi* Muslims and partially lost their identity in the countryside of Turkey. Many of the original Sabbatean communities are still living in Izmir and Istanbul.⁷⁶⁷

Like other Sabbateans, the *Karakas*, *Kapancı* and *Yakubi* families believe in a Messiah and they still await the arrival of a redeemer, like some Muslims or Christians.⁷⁶⁸ It is because according to Jewish people, the Messiah has not yet arrived. However according to the Christian world, Jesus Christ is a Messiah and he will come again at the end, in the apocalyptic age. Only on a few occasions did messianic fervour gain popular acclaim. Some *Kapancı* and *Yakubi* families live in all the major Ottoman cities, as well as in Italy, Germany, and France.⁷⁶⁹

Another important difference between Sabbateans and Jews is that Sabbateans bury their members in a separate cemetery, even if their funeral rituals are similar. In Salonica and Istanbul, Sabbateans preferred to separate their graveyards only from other religious believers. Studies on gravestones, in other words, epigraphy, highlight many unknown mysteries with regard to Sabbateans. In the Bülbülderesi cemetery,⁷⁷⁰ some calligraphic scripts on tombstones are very informative for Sabbatean studies. For instance, on one of the tombstones, it was written ‘I slept with my burden in me but never shared it’ which is one of the principles of the Sabbatean sect. On other tombstones, it was noted that “he is from a chosen descent” and “I will meet you there soon”. These explanations are all key factors to understand the essence of Sabbateanism and the followers’ lifestyle.⁷⁷¹

This subject is well-researched by particular scholars, but lately, C.S Kösemen wrote an interesting book on the Sabbateans’ tombstones and proposing that Sabbateans’ identities are in some ways recorded on gravestones in Sabbatean cemeteries in Istanbul.⁷⁷² *Karakaş*, *Yakubi* and *Kapancı* families are known from their surnames, and despite the fact that they

⁷⁶⁷ I am very thankful to Mr N. O who provided unique information for me as a Sabbatean origin Turkish citizen. See also, Mustafa Suphi Erdem, 2004, *The Exchange of Greek and Turkish populations in the 1920s and its social-economic impacts on life in Anatolia*. pp. 261- 282 Journal of Crime Law & Social Change international Law

⁷⁶⁸ Şişman made remarkable statement when he that Sabbateanism is theologically different than Judaism as much as Christianity is different than Judaism. Şişman, 2006, p. 14.

⁷⁶⁹ The idea of a Messiah is a constant and important feature of Judaism, but through most of Jewish history, it has remained latent. See; Gottreich Emily Benichou 2013, *Of Messiahs and Sultans: Shabatai Sevi and Early Modernity in Morocco*, p.187, Vol. 12, No. 2. Journal of Jewish Studies.

⁷⁷⁰ Epigraphy science is one of them most neglected fields in Sabbatean studies. The name of this cemetery is religiously important because the coming of the Messiah, described also as the “time of the nightingale, singing of birds are besides very few in Scripture; but especially the bulbul and the nightingale abound in the wooded valleys, filling the air in early spring with the rich cadence of their notes. See, (Tristram’s Nat. Hist. of the Bible, p. 160.

⁷⁷¹ Şişman, 2006, p. 15.

⁷⁷² Kösemen C.S, 2009, *Osman Hasan and the tombstone photographs of the Dönmes*.p 29 Libra Kitap, Istanbul.

have been hiding their religious identity as Crypto-Jews, their tombstones in the cemeteries do indicate some Sabbatean traces.⁷⁷³

5.5 Frankism: Between Sabbatenism and Christianity

After the death of Tzvi, his popularity increased among his followers. Jewish Rabbi Jacob Frank proclaimed his messiahship saying that Tzvi's soul is living in his body with reincarnation. According to the Frankist chronicle, Yaakov Ben Leyb later known as Jacob Frank was born in the Podolia province in 1726. When Frank was only a few months old, his family left Poland⁷⁷⁴ and moved to the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁷⁵ Perhaps due to this links between Sabbateans and Christians, Goldish places Sabbateanism squarely in the context of "contemporary Christian millennial phenomena, in all its remarkably miscellaneous varieties".⁷⁷⁶ According to the interpretation of the contemporary Kabalists, the Messiah was expected to appear in the year 5408 of the Jewish calendar (1666 in the Gregorian calendar) which was also followed by Frankists.⁷⁷⁷

Following a revelatory dream, Frank converted Christianity in 1750 and pursued his messianic activities as a Christian. Historically, conversions to Christianity were not devoid of trauma especially for the medieval and early modern Jewish community. Jews regarded baptism as a betrayal of communal values, a rejection of Jewish destiny, a submission to the illusory verdict of history.⁷⁷⁸ However, Frank's conversion was voluntary, and drew him closer to Tzvi, who had also converted to Islam, and the Sabbatean community, to indicate his level of piety.⁷⁷⁹

With the emergence of new movements such as Frankism, Sabbateanism continued to flourish even after the death of Shabbetai Tzvi.⁷⁸⁰ Frankism allowed Sabbateans to spread their thoughts in a different form within Christianity, all the way to Europe. Leading Christian theologians dubbed the belief in messianism and in the kingdom of saints, as "chiliasm"⁷⁸¹ and its adherents "chiliasts."⁷⁸² However, like Christians, according to the

⁷⁷³ Afyoncu, 2013. p 171.

⁷⁷⁴ Podolia used to be part of Poland, now a part of Ukraine.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid, p.12.

⁷⁷⁶ Goldish, 2004, p. 36.

⁷⁷⁷ Kastein, 1931, p.33.

⁷⁷⁸ Pawel Maciejko, 2011, *The Mix Multitude, Jacob Frank and Frankist Movement, 1755 -1816*, p.1, Philadelphia

⁷⁷⁹ Şisman, 2002, p.5.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid, p.7.

⁷⁸¹ Chilism is milleniraism and belief in Christianity is refered that in an earthly thousand year, period of peace and prosperity.

Frankist religious leaders, Jesus Christ will return and reign for a thousand years as a Messiah.

Simon Dubnow stated that Jacob Frank was the most influential saint for the Polish-Russian Jews of the eighteenth century. Similarly, Scholem argued that there is no basic difference between the terms Sabbateanism and Frankish.⁷⁸³ According to his followers, while the popularity of Shabbetai Tzvi continued to increase, after the death of Jacob Frank, his daughter took over his messianic mission, as his successor.⁷⁸⁴

Jonas Wehle (1750-1825) from Prag and Gitschinli Emanuel Wehle from Bohemia were known as prominent religious leaders in the Sabbatean congregation from the Frankist movement. Roesel Eger who was a close family member of Jacob Frank also contributed in spreading this sect in Offenbach where the city was regarded as a holy place of Frankist people for pilgrimage.⁷⁸⁵

5.6 Sabbateans in the late Ottoman society

Great Ottoman Jewish scholar Abraham Galante visited Israel in the 1950s and noted that the only news and documents about Ottoman Jews, were those on Shabbetai Tzvi and his religious movement. These had been stored in the museums and libraries of Israel. Despite the existence of many archival materials about the Sephardim Jews and their migration to Ottoman lands, these were not on display. Galante finished his writing with an interesting question “as Ottoman Jews who lived in this region for seven centuries, are we [Ottoman Jews] only about Sabbateans in the history?”⁷⁸⁶ This indicates that as a religious sect, the Sabbatean movement impacted on the image of Ottoman Jews more than other social-historical episodes. Then how did the Sabbatean movement impact on the social life in the Ottoman Empire? The image of Sabbateans has not only been unpleasant in Ottoman Muslim society but also in Christian and Jewish circles.⁷⁸⁷ According to some orthodox Jews, these heretical persons must be killed on one of the Holy Saturdays.⁷⁸⁸

According to Bali, the *Donmes* have often been seen as the scapegoats of many problems that have preoccupied rightist intellectuals among the conservative Turks (Both

⁷⁸² Scholem, 1973, p. 98.

⁷⁸³ Ibid.p.19.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid, p.27.

⁷⁸⁵ Scholem Gershom, 2002, *Newyorklu bir Sabetayistin Vasiyeti*, (translated by Cengiz şisman), p.38, Nokta.

⁷⁸⁶ Galanti, 2000, p. 5.

⁷⁸⁷ Ayverdi Samiha, 2013, *İbrahim Efendi Konağı*, p. 134, Kubbealtı Neşriyat. Istanbul.

⁷⁸⁸ Koloğlu, 1991, p. 22.

Islamist and Nationalist). For them, the problems range from the rise of communism in Turkey, to the end of the Caliphate and the formation of the Republic in 1923, to the erosion of values of Turkish society.⁷⁸⁹ Therefore, some writers say that converted people are in fact never converted but turned around 360 degrees which takes one back to the starting point.⁷⁹⁰

It must be understood that the image of the Sabbateans was shaped even before Tzvi's conversion to Islam because he was already a controversial figure in Jewish circles in the Ottoman era. Some Turkish Muslim also began to join the Sabbatean movement after the conversion of Tzvi to Islam. Despite these circumstances, Sabbateans stayed in modern Turkey instead of moving somewhere else. This is because Sabbateans lived under the Ottoman rule for 400 years and realized that there was perhaps not more tolerance for their sectarian beliefs in another part of the earth.⁷⁹¹ Therefore, Scholem states that,

Our knowledge of the last named communities and of their attitudes during the messianic movement outbreak is good. Turkish Jewry was safely established in the Ottoman Empire in which anti-Jewish persecutions were extremely rare and ran counter to consider a policy of its rulers.⁷⁹²

This statement may be a clear evidence that Sabbateans were even tolerated under the Ottoman umbrella. Additionally, Samuel stated that Salonica was seen as a paradise for Jews. To him, "Jews in a turban, Jews out of turbans, Jews as builders of houses and as barbers, the children of Israel are everywhere, in every kind of work."⁷⁹³ Quarter also emphasized the same point when he mentioned that "Jewish merchants of Salonica, Kapancı are also *Donmes* and had excellent relationship with Ottoman government."⁷⁹⁴ This sheds light on the fact that Jews and Sabbateans were not discriminated against in Ottoman society; they were regarded as citizens. This independent condition allowed them to pursue their "marginal" lifestyle among other minorities.

When the Ottoman General Kazım Karabekir visited Salonica, in 1910, he saw an interesting religious ritual in the new Mosque (*Yeni cami*) and expressed his thoughts on the rituals. Karabekir apparently did not understand the significance of the rituals and emphasized his astonishment in his memoir. The Sabbatean community gradually blended in

⁷⁸⁹ Bali, 2008, p.1.

⁷⁹⁰ Hiçyılmaz Ergun, 1995, *Çengiler, Köçekler, Dönmeler, Lez'olar*, p. 65, Cep Kitapları, İstanbul.

⁷⁹¹ Scholem, 1973, p. XIII.

⁷⁹² Ibid, p.4.

⁷⁹³ Samuel S. Cox, 1887, *Diversions of a diplomat in Turkey*. p. 187, (C.L. Webster), New York

⁷⁹⁴ Quarters Donald, 1993, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the age of the Industrial Revolution*, p. 45, Cambridge University Press.

with the Islamic community, which also contributed to their positive image in Ottoman society. For instance, Sabbateans believe in the existence of one God who is the creator of the universe. “The world must be saved; then the people must be saved by the Messiah!”⁷⁹⁵ After God, Shabbetai Tzvi ranked second for the Sabbateans. Also, they did not separate men and women in their meetings.⁷⁹⁶ All these factors help to create a particular Sabbatean image in the Ottoman society.

As a marginal belief, not only Sabbateanism but all new religious movement were considered as reformist challenges to the mainstream religions. Therefore instead of understanding of the emergence of this movement, conservative individuals in the community aggressively protected their religious principles by judging the newborn sect as “heresy” and its leader as “False Messiah”.⁷⁹⁷ This directly damaged the image of religious leaders, like Tzvi. Certainly, Shabbetai Tzvi also played a part in damaging his reputation among some of his followers when he converted to Islam and accepted the name of Mehmet for himself in 1666.⁷⁹⁸ However, later he managed to protect his image in public which was a very remarkable achievement for the religious leader. In this way, Tzvi still managed to spread his ideas and religious thoughts as far as Italy, Poland, Holland and attracted devoted followers from those places, but mostly in Salonica, Izmir and Istanbul.⁷⁹⁹

As far as is understood from archival sources, due to their Muslim identity in public, Sabbateans always used Ottoman magistrate court, which was only used by Muslims. In one of court cases, there was evidence that the Sabbateans were recorded as Sabbateans in the Ottoman court registration books but not openly mentioned in the case. Similarly, for a controversial court case, mention is made of a Sabbatean named Ibrahim Effendi from Salonica, who was taken to Istanbul under the security guidance. This again illustrates that the Ottoman State treated all the citizens with the same democratic tolerance.⁸⁰⁰ Another document highlights the same court case, where Ibrahim Effendi was found guilty but due to his health problem in prison, his condition was taken into consideration and he was admitted

⁷⁹⁵ Kastein, 1931, p.12.

⁷⁹⁶ The Donme Affair: a letter on assimilation (1925) *A Sabbatean from Salonica, Greece*, p.831, London.

⁷⁹⁷ Keleş Ahmet, *Dönmeleşik üzerine bir değerlendirme* (Sabetay Sevi Örneği) p.6, Istanbul.

⁷⁹⁸ Güteryüz. 2012, p. 100.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid, p, 108.

⁸⁰⁰ Ottoman State archive, I. HUS. 88/1319, 15/M /1319 (Hicrî) Selanik'den koruma altında Dersaadet'e getirtilmiş olan Selanik Vilayeti Evrak Müdür Muavini Avdeti İbrahim Efendi'yle polis komiserlerinden Süleyman ve Arif Efendiler'in yargılanmaları.

in hospital. After recovering, he was imprisoned for his entire life.⁸⁰¹ In this way, Ottoman rulers showed that they did not intend to insult or harm Sabbateans, which in turn helped them to retain their reputation as fair and tolerant.⁸⁰² In fact, this understanding was a result of the democratic ruling system which embraced all citizens, and that led to Ottoman tolerance in society.

5.7 Abuse of Sabbatean concepts: Underlying prejudice

A deplorable issue for Sabbateans was the negative label and shame attached to them in public. When someone attempted to demean another individual in society, he labelled him as *Donme* and / or Sabbateans. Thus, this term turned into a derogatory term, in some ways similar to the term *Kafir*⁸⁰³ in the Muslim community.

On the spiritual front, Sabbateans mostly integrated into the Islamic state. At times though, as “Donmes”, they faced some challenges from the orthodox communities. A renowned Sabbatean, Hakkı (Hakko) Effendi from Izmir used to go to the Mosque in Salonica, but Jews said that Hakki Effendi was an old Jew, namely not a Jew anymore but a Sabbatean. Despite following Islamic religious practices, people like Hakki Effendi, also fasted in Yom Kippur and consumed particular foods in Passover like the orthodox Jews. Hakki Effendi said that they wanted to convert to Judaism again, but the Jewish community in Salonica did not accept their request. It is because the Jewish congregation demanded that Sabbateans perform a proper religious ritual for spiritual cleanliness (*tevilah*) and circumcision according to Jewish rights (*giyur*). Hakki Effendi said that, “if we converted to Judaism, then we would have a serious problem with Turks. Because converting to other religion from Islam is regarded as a terrible heresy (*irtad*) in Muslim society. Sabbateans were scared of facing social rejection from both Jewish and Muslim societies.⁸⁰⁴

With this understanding, many great Turkish leaders and politicians were incorrectly labeled as *Donme*, and such verbal polemics were also reinforced in the media.⁸⁰⁵ One of the

⁸⁰¹ Ottoman State Archive, DH. MKT. 2495/ 55 21/S /1319 (Hicrî) İshak Tefvik Efendi'nin, tevkifhanedeki biraderi Selanik Vilayeti Evrak Müdürü avdeti İbrahim Efendi'nin gözlerinin tedavi ettirilmesi talebi.

⁸⁰² Ottoman State Archive, BEO, Adliye; 4886), 157/11723, 02/Ş /1310 (Hicrî) Selanik'de avdetilerden Osman Efendi'nin kızı Nigar'ın nikahlısı olduğunu rivayet eden Halil Osman'ın nikahlısı olduğu tahakkuk ettiği takdirde mezburenin serbest bırakılması ve hakkında cereyan eden muameleden bahisle Kosova Selanik Müdde-i umumilerine vesaya-yı lazıme ifa ve neticesinin inbası.

⁸⁰³ *Qafir* is an Arabic term meaning disbeliever. The Qur'an also mentions the word in Surah 2 Verse 256, warning Muslims not to practise idol worship, which is regarded as the action of "Qofr".

⁸⁰⁴ From the memories of the dendets Dr Eli Saul, See, Bali, 2002, p. 21.

⁸⁰⁵ Prof Küçük labeled almost all Turkish musicians and politicians as *Dönme* in a number of his publications. Instead of conducting historical methods, he did an etymological study of surnames, and drew conclusions from

most prominent figures of the twentieth century, the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was also labelled as Sabbatean by some radical Muslims or his political enemies. For instance, in the American newspaper *The Miami Metropolis*, the Armenian, Vahan Kardashian, who left Turkey for America after the Armenian rebellion in Anatolia in 1915, is quoted stating that, “Mustafa Kemal was born a Turk and his parents were from Salonica and were Donmes that is, converts.”⁸⁰⁶ Another newspaper in America, Philadelphia J.S B published that “*Traces Kemal Pasha’s Antecedents to Shabbetai Tzvi*” in its column. Based on the same fake news, called *The Daily Mail in London* noted that “Mustapha Kemal is a Jew.” These Armenian news in the press created antagonism against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk amidst existing political tensions between Turks and Armenians at the time.⁸⁰⁷ Cengiz Şişman noted that another Armenian propagandist Kalayciyan gave interview to New York Times in 1922 and stated that ‘Mustafa Kemal’s father was Donme. So he is not a Turk’.⁸⁰⁸ These allegations made by conservative writers based on these fabricated news, indirectly also caused more hatred against Sabbateans.

In fact, it is a historically inaccurate statement to label Mustafa Kemal as “*Donme*”.⁸⁰⁹ Jewish historian J. Nehame wrote seven volumes of history about Jewish people, and in the section on Salonican Jews, Nehame noted that “Mustafa Kemal grew up in a Jewish environment and studied among *Donme* students in the same class in Salonica, but he is not Sabbatean.”⁸¹⁰ Moreover, Turkish historian Mehmet A. Öz specifically studied on the ancestral history of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and discovered that his family lineage goes back to well-known Turkish *Nakipzade* family, a conservative Muslim family, in the seventeenth

it. Prof Küçük mistakenly claimed that many scholars, musicians and politicians are Sabbateans. Küçük Yalçın, 2001, *Tekelistan*, p. 254. Ysg Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁸⁰⁶ The Miami Metropolis, *Denies That National Turks are Foreigners* Wednesday, 30 June 1920.

⁸⁰⁷ According to scholars such as Lewis, Shaw, Dabagyan (Armenian historian) and McCarthy, these unfounded allegations unfortunately affected western historiography and created more hostility among nations. Based on their work, one could ask: How can the Ottoman Empire implement a “genocide” while many Ottoman Armenians were still working as diplomats in the Ottoman State? Further discussion on this topic lies beyond the scope of this study. For more, see McCarthy Justin, 2014, *Death and Exile, the ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922*, p.3 Princeton.

⁸⁰⁸ Şişman, 2015. p.332.

⁸⁰⁹ According to Profesor Arnold Toynbee, in 1878, in the Berlin Treaty, the Russian Government used the Armenian question as a political tool to implement Russian policies against the Ottoman Empire. Toynbee emphasized that in order to cover up the Jewish massacre in Poland, the Russian government advertised the Armenian Question and declared it as a fact in the Lahey conference. See, Tetik Ahmet – Mehmet Şükrü Güzel, 2013, *Osmanlılara karşı işlenen savaş suçları* p. 89, TTK. İstanbul.

⁸¹⁰ Nehame J., p. 602. Vol. 7 Additionally, Arnold Toynbee confessed in a later work that the “Blue Book” was a piece of the war propaganda in 1910. Toynbee Arnold Joseph, 2009, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations*, p. 50, Reprint of the 1922 Edition. London.

century. According to all archival sources Mehmet Öz provides in his book, Atatürk has Turkish forefathers who moved to Salonica centuries ago from Karaman.⁸¹¹

More importantly, these statements raise questions on the image of Sabbateans. Why is being Sabbatean is problematic? Kardashian stated that “*Turkish leader Kemal Pasha has Jewish blood in his veins*”, giving the impression that being a Jew was somehow reprehensible. Even if this were true family roots of Mustafa Kemal, why or how do his ancestral roots make Mustafa Kemal a good or bad individual? Why is the fact of being a Jew or Sabbatean a negative trait? What really makes people good or bad individuals in the first place? To a large extent, this can be explained by referring to political or racial discrimination. Otherwise, being a Jew or “Dönme” does not make anyone a better or worse human being. However, in this news, when Armenian propagandists labelled Kemal Pasha as Sabbatean, their intention was possibly to damage his credibility and image in Muslim Turkish society. Otherwise, Kardashian might have rather mentioned his leadership in the Republic of Turkey as a statesman. The press releases would suggest that Sabbateans have sometimes been unfairly viewed as scapegoats or negative figures in society.⁸¹²

Similarly, in the twentieth century, some Ottoman Turks began to suspect minority groups like Sabbateans as well, perceiving them as hidden enemies in society. This was because of the changing social circumstances, which also affected the image of minority groups in society. For instance, national consciousness appeared in the early 20th century in Europe and introduced the notion of nationalism, which largely caused the fall of multi-ethnic empires. The Ottoman Empire had an exemplary multi-cultural and religious structure with mosaic communities who lived for centuries under the Islamic rulers. Sabbateans also appreciated the tolerance of Ottoman rulers towards all other religious denominations despite their “marginal beliefs”. However, with the emergence of the National Turkish State, conservative writers began to criticize other minorities and religious communities.⁸¹³

Some Ottoman newspapers in Istanbul like *Vatan*, *Resimli Mecmua* or *Tan* mentioned “*Dönme*” in their column again as a negative way. It is said that “Dönmes are living in our community, thinking like us, speaking our language but are different hidden people.”⁸¹⁴ The Sabbateans’ secretive nature marginalized them further, and was not different in Jewish

⁸¹¹ Öz Mehmet Ali, 2014, *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün Soy Kütüğü*, p. 35, Kişisel Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁸¹² These types of allegations can certainly not change the historical facts but suggest the radical attitudes towards Jews and Sabbateans.

⁸¹³ Eygi Mehmet Şevket, 17.04.1999 *Belgeleri Kimler Yok Etti?* Milli Gazete. İstanbul.

⁸¹⁴ Resimli Mecmua, 1924, *Selanik Dönmelerinin Duası*, No, 117, p, 3 İstanbul

environments in the Ottoman Empire, even if the state policies themselves encouraged acceptance. Jewish newspapers in Izmir and Istanbul were reporting similar stories about Sabbatean people. According to both communities, Sabbateans were often the evil ones among them and had to be persecuted.⁸¹⁵ Others stated that Sabbateans were complicated and lived like “scorpions” among them.⁸¹⁶ The debate circulated among religious congregations and in 1924, the chief Rabbi of Istanbul, Bacerona stated that *Dönmes* were neither Muslim nor Jews.⁸¹⁷ Unfortunately, this same partial writing on Sabbateans influenced some scholars who continued to attack Sabbateans based on the general negative thoughts.⁸¹⁸ In the same vein, a conservative Muslim, Ebuzziya wrote an article in a newspaper and mentioned the Jews (*Millet-i Israiliyye*) as evil. In Ottoman times, these publications were soon to be found illegal and were confiscated by the Ottoman authorities.⁸¹⁹

For some Turkish writers in early twentieth century, there were some reasons to blame minorities (Christians, Jews, Greek, Armenian) for their treatment during the First World War. At the beginning of the establishment of the modern Turkey, Turks saw themselves alone at the battle for independence against the Western allies. However, Muslims in the Arabian nations did not support the Ottoman State anymore due to the emergence a national consciousness among Muslims in the Middle East at the time. Turks realized that a new epoch had come with new ideas, and gave less importance to religious unity as was prevalent under the Ottoman Caliphate, and now placed greater emphasis national identity for states in the new century. Baer noted that nationalist Turkish writer Nihal Atsız also confronted Yalman who was the most prominent “*Dönme*” pointing out that although he had a Turkish passport as a Turkish citizen, “he was not a Turk and not a Muslim but a Jew”.⁸²⁰ Like Nihal Atsız, after the war of independence, some Turkish politicians in Asia Minor suspected other religious groups to be hidden enemies who possibly acted like secret spies against the Ottoman State during the First World War. Certainly, other than partial allegations, there were some substantial reasons for these assertions during the First World War. Zionist soldiers commanded by the British army in Gallipoli fought against the Ottoman State in the WWI. The Zionist soldiers were also known as the Jewish ester legion and were the first Jewish fighters after 2000 years in Jewish history. Similarly, Ottoman Armenians

⁸¹⁵ Koloğlu, 1991, p. 19.

⁸¹⁶ David Ruderman. B., 2010, *Erken modern Dönem Yahudi Tarihi*, p. 140, Istanbul.

⁸¹⁷ Düzdag, 2012, p.274.

⁸¹⁸ For a similar documentary movie, one of these documentaries is fabricated based on imagination as follow; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNAAWB3TvK4>

⁸¹⁹ OSA, Y. PRK. 18/45, Hijree, 1315

⁸²⁰ Düzdag, 2012, p.225.

began to revolt against the Ottoman Empire in order to establish their own state on the eastern side of Anatolia. In the same vein, when the Greek army occupied Izmir, some Ottoman Greek (*Rum*) citizens welcomed the Greek soldiers from Greece.⁸²¹ Under these circumstances, conservative Turks were understandably suspicious about the other denominations whether they were loyal or not. Conservative Turkish writers like Abu Zeya Teyyiq (Ebu Ziya Tevfik) labelled Jews and Sabbateans as the secret enemy.⁸²²

Traditionally, the Ottoman treatment towards Jewish people can be generally summed up under the term 'tolerance'. The Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey under Atatürk have always protected Jews from Greeks and Armenians, briefly from Christian pressure in the Ottoman Empire.⁸²³ Additionally, according to Levi, Turks protected stateless Jewish scholars against Nazi racism in Germany during the Second World War.⁸²⁴ Frank Tachau states that university reforms in Turkey were made by Jewish scholars by the order of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. According to Tachau,

Reform of Turkish higher education was a natural culmination of Kemal Atatürk's nationalist program.⁸²⁵ The main reason that they were seen as 'enemies' is the opinion, widespread among the Turkish public, that converts Islam never truly accept the religion of Islam and continue to practice their Christianity or Judaism in secret.

In spite of general positive views between Jews and Turks, extremist nationalist or radical Muslims did label Jews as the hidden enemy. As explained before, this is reflected in the popular label 'Donmes'.⁸²⁶ In other words, while Jews and Sabbateans were regarded as evil in public, the state policies of Ottoman Empire and its successor, the modern Turkish Republic were always positive towards them excluding particular periods after the death of Atatürk.⁸²⁷ Atatürk provided similar policies of tolerance towards all minorities including Sabateans and Jews because Jews also shared the same destiny in Anatolia with Turks. Therefore, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established the modern Turkey, he said in one of his

⁸²¹ When Greek soldiers occupied Izmir in 1919, the local *Yeni Asır* Gazette published statements made by some non-Muslims in the Aegean region. Some mentioned that "*Kurtulduk*", which means "we are rescued by the Greek". This could be seen as a betrayal of the Ottoman state. See, Hüseyin Kocabıyık, 2009, *Tarihin Arka Odasında Arıza Var*, 21.10.2009. *Yeniasir*.

⁸²² Turkish Jewish historian Avner Levi remarkably stated that the history of the Turkish Jews is part of Turkish history and Turkish history is a part of world history. Levi described Turks as the protectors of Jews in his studies. See, Levi, 1998, p.7.

⁸²³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid*, p.98.

⁸²⁵ Tachau P. Frank, 1933, *German Jewish Emigrés in Turkey*, (Edited by A. Levi) p. 235, Syracuse University Press. USA.

⁸²⁶ Bali, 2001, p. 1.

⁸²⁷ Çiftçioğlu Necdet Sancar, 1952, *Türklük Sevgisi*, p. 57. Tanrı Dağı Yayınları, İstanbul.

public speeches in Izmir; “we have some countrymen who attached their destiny with us for centuries. Therefore, due to their loyalty to this land particularly the Jews lived in peace with us, they will continue to live in happiness and welfare in Turkey.”⁸²⁸

Despite this generally positive view, conservative Turkish writers regarded Christian, Jews, and Sabbateans minorities as *Fitnah* in the Turkish society. For this reason, an Ottoman journalist, Ahmet Emin Yalman who was of the Sabbatean origin, wrote an article in 4 January 1924 to defend minority groups like Sabbateans. In order to protect the image of Sabbateans, Yalman noted that, “it is indeed an ugly attitude to create a division between Turks and Sabbateans who were converted to Islam two and half centuries ago. This is the seed of animosity which particular writers declared in newspapers about Sabbateans who had already proved their loyalty to the Turkish State.” Indeed, there are many benefactors among Sabbatean people like well-known banker of Salonica Mehmet Kapancı who was also from a famous Sabbatean family, and who made a remarkable donation to the Ottoman Navy for many times during the WW1.⁸²⁹

As explained before, some western scholars also exaggerated the Turkish treatment towards the Sabbatean movement. When Baer stated that “almost from the moment of their arrival in Turkey as part of the population exchange, the Sabbateans were treated with suspicion about their true nature” he confused the Sabbateans with the Jewish people in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, when Jews migrated to the Ottoman territory, there was no such religious movement in Izmir nor was its founder Shabetai Tzvi yet born.⁸³⁰

At the beginning of 1924, an article named *One word, two meanings* in one of the most popular humor magazines in Istanbul, ridiculed the Sabbatean sect as *Donme*.⁸³¹ Due to these social pressures, Sabbatean communities lived with a different identity and moved to the countryside of Anatolia. In the process, they lost their socio-cultural identity, especially when they embraced Islam and became Sunni or Alevi Muslims.⁸³²

Similarly, Sabbatean institutes, Fevziye and Terakki Schools were established for particular reasons in Istanbul and Salonica. However, none of the members of these schools acted against Turkish State. According to some conservative Turkish writers, notable

⁸²⁸ Shaw Stanford J, 2008, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda ve Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Yahudiler*. (Çev. Meriç Sobutay) p. V. Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul.

⁸²⁹ Donanma Mecmuası, 1915, p. 21 İstanbul.

⁸³⁰ Baer, 2007, p.155.

⁸³¹ Akbaba 1924, no 114, Ocak 7, p.3 İstanbul.

⁸³² The Donme Affair: a letter on assimilation (1925) *A Sabbatean from Salonica, Greece*, p. 830, London.

statesmen and eminent politicians were all from Salonica at the time of establishment of modern Turkey. Well-known woman novel writer Halide Edip Adivar, from Kapancı family and the minister of economy, Mehmet Djavid Bey from Kapancı, one of the well-known journalists Ahmet Emin Yalman from Karakaş were all of Sabbatean origin from Salonica.⁸³³ According to Kazım Nazım Duru, Salonica was a cosmopolitan city, but most of the businessmen were Jewish. He noted in his memoir that, “there was an interesting group in Salonica, speaking Turkish and looking Muslim however they did not have a close relationship with Muslim society. Then I heard of it they were called Dönme. They even go to mosque”.⁸³⁴

The issue surrounding their image in fact still continues. As a religious belief, Sabbateanism has not been seen as a proper faith from past to present. Almost all the writers have analyzed Shabbetai Tzvi and his movement with similar words and terms. For instance, as mentioned earlier, some writers preferred to classify Shabbetai Tzvi as a “False Messiah” but whether he was the true or “False Messiah” in Judaism, Tzvi is still an idol and religious leader for his followers.⁸³⁵ In this regard, calling Tzvi a “False Messiah” and labelling his movement as a heretical set of beliefs would not be appropriate in the religious context.⁸³⁶ Therefore, this marginal sect can only be called by its name which affirms the identity of the sectarian believers, and links them to the founder of Sabbateanism. As explained in the third chapter, according to the Jewish belief, Jesus Christ was also labeled as a False Messiah by some, but to date, about two billion people believe him as the Messiah, basically Christians, as well as Muslims for whom Jesus is a holy Prophet.

Similarly, a well-known conservative Muslim woman writer, Semiha Ayverdi also mentioned Sabbateans in her books. Ayverdi noted that the Sabbatean community hated Turkish people and according to her, only people like Ayverdi could understand this because she came from a *Dönme* family. Ayverdi stated that when she married a Turkish-Muslim man, her family rejected her because she was supposed to marry a Sabbatean man. It seems that based on her unpleasant experiences in her family, Ayverdi generalized Sabbatean people as evil in her memoir.⁸³⁷

⁸³³ Zorlu, 1998, p. 166.

⁸³⁴ Bali, 2002, p. 27.

⁸³⁵ Baer, 2007, p. 84.

⁸³⁶ Scholem, 1973. p. 106.

⁸³⁷ Ayverdi Samiha, 1985, *Ne idik ne olduk*. p. 77 Kubbealtı Yayınları, İstanbul

Rifat Bali's interviews with some Sabbatean families provide considerably important information to better analyze the other side of the story. A Sabbatean declared in the interview that,

Radical conservative Muslims see us as fake Muslims. According to them, we are too liberal and Mason people. This is maybe not a totally wrong allegation; we are liberal and respect all the religions. Communist Turkish sees us as capitalist because some Sabbateans are wealthy merchants. For these reasons, we have to hide our religious identity in society.⁸³⁸

Some writers also described the negative image of Sabbateans with their studies. For instance, Kasten exaggerated the social situation without showing any evidence and stated that "all the Shabbateans did was the worship of God in the open, a simple proceeding which he did not allow the mockery of the unsympathetic Turks to interrupt".⁸³⁹ This interpretation seems to be a general understanding in the Western world rather than historical realities.⁸⁴⁰ Not only did some nationalist Turks or orthodox Jews negatively affect the image of Sabbateans in society, so did some Christians, as well as authors of world literature. Prof Baer noted that, despite remarkable studies by Gershom Scholem and Cengiz Şişman, Sabbateans' social status and identities in early modern Turkey has been neglected and undermined so far. Baer also emphasized in his book the important role that Donmes played at the time of structuring of modern Turkey in the beginning.⁸⁴¹

5.7 How Sabbateanism flourished until the present

This question in fact determined a historical reality with regard to the existence of a minority religion namely Sabbateanism. Unlike temporally religious movement, in some way, Sabbateanism has survived until the present. This process was sometimes more difficult than only preserving their hidden religious identity in the society. Scholem also emphasized that most of the "heretical" literature of the Sabbateans was destroyed during the persecution of the sectarian groups in the eighteenth century.⁸⁴² Although the Sabbatean documents were allegedly destroyed, Sabbateans did not abandon their religious practices.

Regardless of whether the faith was "heretical" or "marginal", Ottoman rulers did not interfere in any religious movements unless it challenged the State policies or sovereignty.

⁸³⁸ Bali, 2002, p. 31.

⁸³⁹ Kastein, 1931, p.22.

⁸⁴⁰ For these kind of subjective approaches, See, Çırakman Aslı, 2002, *From the terror of Empire to the sick man of Europe*, p.34, New York.

⁸⁴¹ Odabaşı Arda, 2010, *Kadın dergisi üzerine ve bazı notlar ve Basına yansıyan ilk Sabataizm tartışması, Müteferrika*, p.37, Istanbul.

⁸⁴² Scholem, 1973, p. X.

Therefore, Ottoman administrators tolerated the religious practices of Sabbateanism from its emergence to the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Certainly, there are other significant reasons for this continuation of this religious movement from the past to the present. For instance, Shabbetai Tzvi was not an ordinary Rabbi in Jewish history. He had extraordinary achievements to his credit, and in order to improve his knowledge he had studied and mastered the entire Talmudic and Rabbinic literature by the time he was fifteen. According to Kastein, other Jewish Rabbis required a whole lifetime to achieve such a feat while the gifted Rabbi Tzvi reached this level of knowledge within few years of education.⁸⁴³ Tzvi was sent to the Yeshiva, the school where Rabbi Joseph Escapa was the headmaster.⁸⁴⁴ It was the world of Kabbalah, a world full of wonders, containing the history and promised destiny of a people as well as the meaning of creation and the universe that appealed to him.⁸⁴⁵ His educational background provided him his remarkable reputation. Indeed Shabbetai Tzvi was labelled as manic depressive or a mad Rabbi but was not regarded as an ignorant religious leader. Moses Pinherio said that, Tzvi has a brilliant mind. Great scholar Galante also stated that undoubtedly, Tzvi was an erudite Rabbi and very learned man in Halacha and Kabbalah.⁸⁴⁶

Another important reason is mentioned by Professor Barnai about Shabbetai Tzvi movement, “Other factors that must be taken into account are the religious and political upheavals that occurred in the seventeenth century, especially in Europe. Christian millennialism was the broad extent of mysticism among Jews. Christians and Muslims in this period were including the mutual influences among the three religions”.⁸⁴⁷

Barnai emphasized another important point for the emergence of Sabbateanism. At the time, well-known Kabbalist Manasseh ben Israel was considered with his sermons as a Rabbi from Portugal. In this era, he was one of the most remarkable Rabbis who mentioned his messianic hopes in writing. Like him, some other millenarians also recognised the prominence of Shabbetai Tzvi's approach without giving up their acceptance of the unmatched status of Jesus. Additionally, most of the Amsterdam Jews did in fact accept

⁸⁴³ Kastein, 1931, p.15.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid. p 14

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 17

⁸⁴⁶ Moses Pinherio was an Italian Jew, lived in Livorno in seventeenth century. See, Galante, 2000, p. 34.

⁸⁴⁷ Jacob Barnai the case of Izmir P. 42 I am very grateful to Prof Jacob Barnai who spent his valuable time with me and shared his important thought with me during my visit in Israel.

Shabbetai Tzvi as the coming Messiah and became his Christian followers.⁸⁴⁸ It is not well-known how long they continued to stay as his followers after Tzvi's conversion to Islam however, as mentioned earlier, the Frankist movement that emerged later, shows that the followers continued to have faith in Tzvi as the Messiah.⁸⁴⁹ This said, after the apostasy of Shabbetai Tzvi, that is, the conversion of Tzvi to Islam, some Christians looked at the whole religious affair as a Jewish mistake.

In the Sabbatean tradition, the soul of the Messiah will appear at the bottom of a draw well like a crooked snake which symbolized the Messiah in Kabbalah.⁸⁵⁰ The year 1666 was named by some Jewish believers as the messianic year, which was to bring "renewed splendor to the Jews and see their return to Jerusalem."⁸⁵¹ Tzvi structured all these theories with his own framework and managed to gather remarkable followers who not only believed in him after his death but also spread his holy message to next generation with mystic piety.

5.8 Sabbateans' contribution to Ottoman society and Modern Turkey

There is, indeed, no doubt that Shabbetai Tzvi and his followers created a great stir among Jews in Europe and around the Mediterranean and that the crisis following the Messiah's apostasy to Islam generated an enormous amount of polemic literature.⁸⁵²

Other than its socio-historical impact, it must be noted that Sabbateans left a considerable legacy behind. Are these people that evil because they believe something different from the mainstream?

As stated earlier, Socrates was also labelled and found guilty more than two thousand years ago. This age is supposed to be a technically more advanced, but if one still criticizes others for their beliefs, how can one then claim that the modern world is more civilized or more understanding? The question we must ask that is why or how Sabbateans became perceived as evil based on their religious identity? If the contributions of the Sabbatean movement are taken into consideration, it can clearly be seen that they contributed

⁸⁴⁸ Popkin Richard, 1992, *Jewish-Christian relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: The supported the idea of the messianic proclamation of Tzvi*. In this regard, it can be said that while the religious movement already began to shape within its own Judea-Muslim environment, Christian millenarians also tried to decide what to make of Shabbetai Tzvi.

⁸⁴⁹ Popkin, 1992, p.166.

⁸⁵⁰ Freely, 2001, p.42.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid, p.61.

⁸⁵² Feldon Miriam Eliav, 2004, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, p. 224 Vol. 15. No, 2. Review, Penn State University Press

considerably to the development of the Ottoman society by modernizing several sectors in comparison to many Islamic congregations in the Ottoman world.

For instance, Sabbateanism was an important catalyst for the development of communication channels and the scope of information transmitted. From a historical perspective, it would seem that this was the most important and lasting impact of Sabbateanism.⁸⁵³

In the late nineteenth century, there were important historical figures among Sabbateans in Turkish society, and despite being Sabbateans; they contributed to the political, economic and social life in the Ottoman Empire. Several Sabbateans were prominent leaders, who eagerly showed their loyalty to Ottoman State at the time of emergence of national ideas in the world. Well-known Ottoman musician Udi Ahmad Effendi (1868-1927), composed several of the classic Ottoman songs and lyrics and contributed to Turkish Classic Music in Salonica.⁸⁵⁴ Ahmad Effendi absorbed the Ottoman culture and showed this in his songs in his lifetime. Like him, many Sabbateans lived with the same feelings of patriotism on the Ottoman soil and bequeathed important cultural values in history.⁸⁵⁵ Well-known journalist Hasan Tahsin, famous merchants like Mehmet Kapanci would count as the last Ottoman prominent Mohammedan Jews in Ottoman history. Hasan Tahsin (Osman Nevres Bey) was the first man who fought against Greek occupation for Turkish State, and sacrificed his life in Izmir in 1919.⁸⁵⁶ Several examples show that in fact, Sabbateans have been faithful to the Turkish state throughout history.

Other prominent Sabbateans were Kapanci Yusuf, and Ahmet Effendi who dealt in linen drapery in Salonica but were to sell their items across the Balkans region. Similarly, Shabbetai Elhasi also excelled in textile business. Another well-known Sabbatean Karakas

⁸⁵³ Lehhman, 1995, p. 25 Lehhman might be confused about the script what Ottoman Turkish used in publishing because he noted it prints was in Arabic script which is not accurate because Ottoman alphabet is based on Persian (Farisi) Alphabet. Ibid, p.. 40.

⁸⁵⁴ Öztuna Yılmaz, 1978, *Türk Musikisi akademik Klasik Türk Sanat Musikisinin Ansiklopedik Sözlüğü*, p. 37 AL. İstanbul.

⁸⁵⁵ Yeşilyurt, Süleyman 2007, *Geçmişten günümüze Rum ve Ermeni Dönmeler*, p. 79 İstanbul

⁸⁵⁶ "İki buçuk asır evvel İslamiyeti kabul eden ve pek çokları hakiki bir Türk olduğunu fiilen ispat eden bir nüfus kitlesini Türklüğün camiasından hariç göstermeye çalışmak, memleket nokta-i nazarından çirkin ve delice bir nifakçılıktır. Aralarında memlekete fedakarca hizmet edenlerin bulunduğu ve bunların son örneği Yunanlılara ilk ateş eden gazeteci Osman Nevres Bey (Hasan Tahsin) olduğu vakidir" See, Düzdağ, 1994, p.274, İstanbul.

Mehmet Effendi was involved in different businesses in Ottoman Salonica.⁸⁵⁷ There were also Sabbatean bankers such as Mehmet and Yusuf Kapani Effendi.⁸⁵⁸

A number of Mevlevi and Bektashi families also became known as Sabbatean families and were accepted into the social fold of Ottoman life. Hamdi Bey from Yakubi side of the Sabbatean sect became the Mayor of Salonica. Other prominent Sabbatean individuals include journalist, Fazli Necip, Dr. Osman Ögütmen (1895-1940), Ottoman consulate of Iran, Abdi Effendi, Professor Mustafa Santur (1883 -1936), Govenner Dr. Şükrü Bey (1870 - 1919), Ottoman military general, Yiğit Ömer Pasha, musician, Faiz Kapancı (1871-1950) Musician and composer Ibrahim Ziya Özbekkan played crucial role in the development modern Turkey.⁸⁵⁹

In the twentieth century, a professor of international affairs of Sabbatean origin, İsmail Cem, successfully served as Turkey's Foreign Minister in Turkish governments in the 1990s. He preferred to change the surname İpekçi early on in his career, most probably to hide his Sabbatean identity in the public sphere.⁸⁶⁰ One of the most famous Turkish fashion designers Cemil İpekçi who is the brother of İsmail Cem is also of Sabbatean origin. The first woman prime minister of Turkey, Prof Tansu Çiller was also of Sabbatean origin.⁸⁶¹

5.9 Conclusion

In order to analyse such a complex religious situation, one needs to accurately define religious communities and their identities. Despite using primary sources from various archives, care must be taken when using, interpreting and applying sensitive and at times, contentious terms and ideas.

The religious identities of the Sabbateans has been examined in this chapter. In order to better understand their situation, in following chapter, Sabbateanism will be compared with two other sectarian faiths, Crypto-Christianity, and the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam.

⁸⁵⁷ İpek Nurdan, 2011, *Selanik ve İsyانبul'da Seçkin Yahudi Bankerler (1850 - 1908)* (Istanbul university, PhD thesis)p. 12

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid, p.18.

⁸⁵⁹ Doğan Mehmet 2010, Ali, Rivew, *Dönmez Jewish Converts, Muslim revolutionaries, and Secular Turks* İsam, Osmanlı Araştırmaları, Sayı, 38. 2011, Standford University press.

⁸⁶⁰ Macar Elçin, 1997. *Selanik dönemlerinin yaşayan simgesi, yeni camii, tarih ve toplum*, Abdurahham Dilipak, 25 eylül 2000. *Sabataycılık yada soykırım iddiaları üzerine* "p. 3, Dec. Akit.

⁸⁶¹ In 2001, an Istanbulian Donmes boy was still listening to her mother song in Hebrew as a religious hymn, Bali, 2002, p. 34.

Unfortunately, sensitive religious subjects like Sabbateanism cannot be easily analyzed without acknowledging them as socio-political, religious and historical movements, with mystic links to popular religions, basically Islam and Judaism. Some Muslim and Jewish scholars usually fall prey to such a mistake. It is because they assume that such ‘marginal’ or ‘heretical’ movement like Sabbateanism in Judaism or the Ahmadiyya sect in Islam might damage the main structure of the mainstream religion, which some individuals would deem as dogmatic. However, it could be argued that these movement only address their communities and might not affect the mainstream religious faiths. Still, scholars studying this topic have in some cases struggled to leave aside their feelings and emotions knowingly or unknowingly. They tend to examine the newly born religious movement in a way that may aggravate people’s intolerance towards the believers of those marginal movement. This chapter attempted to examine the events with an awareness of the social understandings of Sabbateanism.

CHAPTER VI: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MARGINAL MOVEMENT IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze two other marginal movement, the Crypto-Christian communities and the Ahmadiyya religious congregation (Jamahah) in Islam in order to compare their social situation and difficulties in society with those of the Sabbatean movement. There are some visible similarities between these three minority movement from a theological perspective but also from a sociological point of view.

As is understood from Ottoman archival documents, hidden religious groups like Crypto-Christians appeared in the Ottoman society from time to time. However, due to apprehensions of being socially labelled or condemned, Crypto-Christian groups, like Crypto-Jews, preferred to hide their religious identities. This “marginal” situation has been negatively represented by most writers.⁸⁶²

As for the Ahmadiyya movement, it is a modern Muslim messianic movement at present. It was founded in 1889 in the Indian province of the Punjab by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Prophetology⁸⁶³ is the mainstay of Ahmadi religious thought, and it relies on the system of succession. The view of Mirza Ghulam as a Prophet is the principal reason for the controversy aroused by the Ahmadiyya movement.⁸⁶⁴ As mentioned in the chapter three, this Muslim religious leader hailed from India, present day Pakistan, and declared his messiahship in his environment. However, in his later life he proclaimed his prophethood more widely. Since this proclamation, his movement has been regarded as a “heretical movement” in the orthodox Muslim world. It is because according to Qur’anic teaching, Prophet Muhammed

⁸⁶² Hiding religious identity is actually a religious phenomenon for all of the times in world history. Prof Özyürek has written a book about conversion to Islam in Germany. Her research did not only analyze the converts to Islam in Germany but also examine the social-religious transformation in a country which remains suspicious about embracing the religion. According to Özyürek on the one hand, German youth's conversion to Islam and become Muslim, and on the other hand, because of the social pressure in German Christian society, hiding the new religious identity in earlier religious community, basically, Christian surrenders. Özyürek Esra, 2014, *Being German, Becoming Muslim*, p. 6 Princeton University Press

⁸⁶³ It means Prophethood which applies all religions.

⁸⁶⁴ Encyclopedia of Religion “Ahmadiyya”, p. 200, Vol. 1, Second edition (Lindsay Jones)

(Pbuh) was the last Prophet.⁸⁶⁵ Therefore, the orthodox Muslim world considers Ahmadiyya movement as heresy (zendeqa) in Islam like Sabbateanism in Judaism.⁸⁶⁶

Despite this controversial situation, from the time of the prophetic declaration of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to the present, the Ahmadiyya movement has tremendously grown worldwide. However, Ahmadis have also been persecuted, discriminated against and therefore have sometimes had to hide their religious identity. Living in these conditions, make them very similar with Sabbatean people from a sociological perspective.

What was poetically expressed on the tombstone of a Sabbatean, “I hide my burden in my heart, and did not say it to anyone other than my Lord” in fact summarizes the life circumstances of the members of various Crypto-religious movement in World Society. This chapter aims to reveal the fundamental rules of these “marginal movement”, the Crypto-Christian religious group and the Ahmadiyya sect in comparison to the Sabbatean sect in Ottoman-Jewish history. These “marginal” movement will be analysed before examining the Ottoman approach to them in the Ottoman territory.

6.2 Marginal group in Christianity: The case of Crypto-Christians

Due to the diverse cultural background of the Ottoman state in history, as explained in the second chapter, Ottomans developed an elaborate constitution for the all different nations to live in peace under the same umbrella.⁸⁶⁷ Most of the rules for non-Muslims in the Ottoman State aimed to establish a peaceful climate for unity of diverse people. Indeed, the following rule in the Ottoman constitution sheds light on the tolerance of the Ottoman State. It states, “the Ottoman Sultan will be very grateful to see that all citizens live in justice without excluding anyone from one another” clearly revealing the understanding of the state policy.⁸⁶⁸ According to Prof Akdag, for particular suburbs where non-Muslims had settled, Christian or Jewish officers were appointed by the Ottoman Empire to provide a more understanding atmosphere for minority groups.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁵ Prophet Muhammad clearly indicates that in his farewell letter, “Oh people, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born...” Al Bhukari Hadidths, 1623, 1626 6361

⁸⁶⁶ Qur’an, Ahzap, Sura, 40 clearly stated that Prophet Muhammed is the last Prophet. Also surah al Saaf 6 indicates that Jesus mentioned a prophet after him who is called Proglatemos in Bibel.

⁸⁶⁷ Gerber, 2003, p. 34.

⁸⁶⁸ Ottoman State Archive, I. Hus. 73/46, 28.L 1316. H.

⁸⁶⁹ Akdag Mustafa, 1999, *Türkiyyenin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi*. p. 36, Vol, 2. Barış Yayınevi, Ankara. See also, Qur’an Surah al Tavba, 9:29.

In the Ottoman era, other than religious minorities in Asia Minor, there were hidden religious communities who had had dual religious identity such as Sabbateans, Crypto-Christians, Kurumis and Istavris (Stavritoai). Similarly, some other Crypto-Christians lived in the Black Sea region in Turkey. As Baer stated, there were many other descendants of Muslim converts who kept their Christian faith, and maintained their ethnicity. One example would be the Hemshin,⁸⁷⁰ who preserved their Christian faith, and the Armenian language and customs long after converting to Islam in the Black Sea region.⁸⁷¹ In this regard, it would be interesting to analyse how the Ottoman State managed to integrate the minority religious groups through its Islamic constitution as well as customary law.⁸⁷²

By 1744, Pope Benedict XIV issued a religious decree and proclaimed that Crypto-Christians could not be baptized unless they were about to die. Orthodox Church labeled the Crypto-Christians as hybrid and Lamara which means mix race. Despite Ottoman tolerance towards this marginal community, Crypto-Christians were sometimes seen with hostility by the orthodox Christian world like other “marginal” beliefs.⁸⁷³ Doctor Richard Robert Madden visited Turkey between 1824 and 1827. His observations about different nations in Istanbul are remarkable for understanding of national and religious approaches towards diverse groupings in the Ottoman public-sphere. Dr Madden noted that,

It is possible to see all nations in Istanbul, but Christians do not like Jews, Jews do hate Greeks (Rum) Greeks humiliate Kpties (Coptic),⁸⁷⁴ Kpties dislike Armenian.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁰ Hemşin is a little city in Rize, northern east of Anatolia. Unlike Baer, Prof Kırzioğlu noted that Christian people in Hemşin are Khipchak (Kuman) Turkish who migrated to Northern Anatolia around 6th century before Islamic period. See, Kırzioğlu Fahrettin, 1999, *Yukarı Kür, Çoruh Boylarında Kıpçaklar*, p. 35, TTK, Ankara

⁸⁷¹ When Cengiz Sisman described Crypto-Christians in Anatolia, he provided misinformation about them, and confused the ethnic groups and regions. For instance, he mentioned the Hemshin people in Trabzon and the Istavris in Yozgat, though that was not where they were situated. Istavris people were from Trabzon and Hemsin were from Rize. Sisman, 2015, p.213.

⁸⁷² Indeed, there were lots of inexplicit areas about religious beliefs of communities that lived in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. One of them is the faith system of religious groups of people who have two religions. The double faith is called as mottled, half linen -cotton by the Muslim and Christian neighbors in the provinces of the Ottoman state. Although most of the people around them had Christian faith, those people continued to pursue both religions. In the daily life, while they were continuing their lives according to Muslim tradition, in their private life they were Christians to satisfy their spiritual needs. Furthermore, those people benefited from the advantages of minority. The members of these groups at the time abandoned the two religion systems and chose Islam or Christianity. Bilgin Mehmet, 2010, *Trabzon Vilayetinde İki Din Taşıyanlar* (Master's thesis, Marmara University) p. 19, İstanbul

⁸⁷³ Skendi Stavroi, 1967, *Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under Ottomans*, Slavic Review, vol. 26, sayı, 2, p.238 London.

⁸⁷⁴ Coptic or Kptie is Egyptian who is a descendant of the ancient Egyptian people.

⁸⁷⁵ R.R Madden 1829, C. Fellow 1852, E. J. Davis 1879, W. J. J. Spry 1895, London.

Dr Madden also mentioned that despite this negative situation, these nations had similar traditions and they were all hospitable towards foreigners. Ottoman archival sources highlight religious interactions between different groups in the Ottoman society.⁸⁷⁶ It is also mentioned in some Ottoman documents that particular congregations performed double religious rituals in their daily life.⁸⁷⁷ That suggests that Ottoman Governors were aware of this community, but they tolerated their religious practices and kept them a secret for social welfare.⁸⁷⁸ It also indicates that there were other Ottoman citizens, like the Crypto-Christians who hid their religious identity their entire life, similar to the Sabbateans.

Similarly, Robert Pashley who visited Crete Islands in 1834 noted that Megalo Kastron and his close environment left Christianity and converted Islam. According to Pashley, Crypto-Christians in Crete lived like Muslims but secretly practised Christianity. Pashley also stated that although there was no religious imposition by the Ottoman state, oddly enough these Ottoman Greek citizens preferred to hide their Christian identity. The fear of losing their faith might have made them become more strict Christians. Additionally, Pashley noted that, the Kurmulidies family from this community even circumcised their male children and gave them Muslim names in a religious celebration. On the other hand, they baptized their children at home according to Christian customs.⁸⁷⁹

Another important memoir written by Lady Marry Wortley Montague, contains her observations during her visit to Istanbul in 1716.⁸⁸⁰ She provided considerable information with regard to secret Christians in the Ottoman State.⁸⁸¹ One of her letters was to the Bishop in Edirne in 1st of April of 1717. Lady Mary Wortley Montague noted the following:

The most interesting religion in this territory belongs to Albanian people. These people are old native people of Macedonia. These indigenous Albanian live among Muslims and Christians but never get problem with any of those people. Perhaps, therefore they cannot decide which religion is better than other. Moreover, in order to find the best religion they

876 In Ottoman era, several examples regarding Crypto-Christians highlight the religious situation of some communities and provide important information to better understand other marginal religious groups whom have had double religious identity in Asia Minor. For instance, Pashley noted that in 1834, a Crypto Christian who lived like Muslim entire his life went to Jerusalem for pilgrimage for religious obligations. He asked a cardinal in Jerusalem about his double religious identity and wanted to know whether he will go to heaven or not in these circumstances. However, Christian religious leader of Jerusalem strictly told him that he could not go to heaven till he lives like a proper Christian in this world. Gürsoy Şahin 2005, *Ondokuzuncu yüzyılda İngilizce seyahatnamelerine göre Türkiye ve Türkler* (W. Witman 1803)

877 Ottoman State Archives, Y. EE. 132/3, 'iki ayrı ayin icra eyler bir mezhep olub...'

878 Pashley Robert, 1837, *Travels in Crete*, p.106 Vol. I, London See also. Skendi Stavroi, 1967, *Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under Ottomans*, *Slavic Review*, vol. 26, sayı, 2, p.228

879 Pashley, 1837, p. 105,106.

880 She lived from 1669 to 1762.

881 Lady Montague was the wife of the British consul-general in Istanbul, Sir Edward W. Montague.

follow the principles of the both religions and practices Christianity and Islam. They said that we will find the best guidance hereafter and that's why we go to Mosque on Friday and Church on Sunday.⁸⁸²

Crypto-Christians also appeared in Albania at the same time as Shabbetai Tzvi converted to Islam. Some travelers mentioned these Crypto-Christians in Albania.⁸⁸³ Indeed, as understood from these sources, the emergence of Crypto-Jews in Albania was related to this episode. While Catholic Christians and Muslims were living in the same territory, some Albanians decided to convert Christianity.⁸⁸⁴

According to Ottoman archival sources, this situation was known by the Ottoman authorities but apparently was treated with understanding. However, these particular people were in disagreement with Catholic Church for their double religious identity. Because, apparently Catholic Church was not happy about this “marginal Christian Albanians” and therefore bishop of Skopje did not allow sending a priest to Albanians for their wedding ceremonies anymore.⁸⁸⁵ Thereupon, in 1703, the regional leader of the Catholics church gathered in northern Albania and decided that Crypto-Christians must declare their religious identity as Christianity. However, this decision did not change the religious choice of Crypto-Christians in Albanian.⁸⁸⁶ When they declared themselves as Greek Catholics, they knew that they would be protected by the Austria-Hungarian Empire.

On the other hand, Russian Bishop sent some orthodox Christian missionaries to the region as well. Russian missionaries wanted to attach them to orthodox Church. Thereupon, the local governor informed the Ottoman government about this controversial sectarian group. However, eventually, Ottoman administrators in Istanbul decided to leave this issue to Crypto-Christians as a religious matter. When Albania got independence in 1912, Crypto-Christians from Shpathar villages declared their attachment to the Russian Church and became orthodox Christians.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸² Lady Montagu, 2009, *Şark Mektupları*, (çev. Asude savan), p.31, 32, Lacivert yayınları, İstanbul

⁸⁸³ Benjamin & Lewis, 1982, p. 342.

⁸⁸⁴ Skendi, 1967, p. 237. A Catholic missionary from Prizen, Gregory Mazraki (Gregarious Massarechi) visited Albania in 1650-51 and noted his observations. He was regarded Albanians, and their conversion to Islam was for their self-interest. They said that “we attach to Christianity from our heart, but only our names are Turkish (Muslim) because, in this way, we do not pay more tax. We still married Christian girls and thus pursue our religious practices.”

⁸⁸⁵ Skopje was recorded as Üsküp in Ottoman sources as in Turkish for today.

⁸⁸⁶ Tanzimat is reorganization period in the years 1839-1876 in the Ottoman history.

⁸⁸⁷ According to Skendi, 43 villages in this region are known as Crypto-Christians and nations called Shpathars. Shpathars only declared their Christianity after the Tanzimat reform in the Ottoman State. Skendi, Ibid. p. 242.

Similarly, those with the dual faiths of Christians and Muslims, in Trabzon city in Turkey were regarded as Crypto-Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Armenian priest Mijas Bijikyan from Trabzon noted in his travelogue, that there was another congregation among Trabzon Greeks (Rum) called Gromisi who had two religious identities.⁸⁸⁸ To him, these people looked like half Muslim and half Christian, but in fact, they were Christians at heart. Despite this, they looked like Muslims from outside and even performed the daily Muslim ritual (Salah) like ordinary Muslims. This sectarian faith was transmitted from generation to generation for years. These people's personalities were perceived as similar to their dual religious identity, neither balanced nor trustable.⁸⁸⁹ It is clearly understood from the Ottoman state archive, the Crypto-Christians mentioned in the records lived in a secretive manner as half Muslim and half Christian in society.⁸⁹⁰

Traveler George Finlay visited Trabzon in 1850 and shared his memories in his book. When Finlay was in Trabzon, he met a local Greek (Rum) Dimitri and spoke to him in Ottoman Greek language (Rumca). Dimitri told him that his name was Ömer within the Muslim community.⁸⁹¹ Finlay also noted that "local people are not Laz but originally old Greek. It is likely that there are still some Crypto-Christians in this region, though it is hard to ascertain due to their secretive lifestyle". However, as it is rumoured that they later converted Islam and like typical Muslims, they regularly went to Mosque and even circumcised their children. Beside that, they were also members of Greek orthodox Church in Trabzon. They embraced their secret names according to Old Testament.⁸⁹²

Sir Edwin Pears stayed in Istanbul and later wrote a memoir with regard to his experiences in Turkey. According to his observations, Stavritoai Christians also converted to Islam but lived like Crypto-Christians. It is because they were involved in a political revolt once upon a time and when the Ottoman rulers decided to punish them by death, they

⁸⁸⁸ Bijikyan wrote his memoir in between 1817 and 1819.

⁸⁸⁹ Bijikyan Per Minas, 1969, *Karadeniz kıyıları tarih ve coğrafyası 1817_ 1819* (cev, H. d. Andresasyan) Istanbul

⁸⁹⁰ Certainly, other than memories, most important sources regarding double religious believers are official reports in the Ottoman archive. Although this "marginal religious communities" were known by the Ottoman administrators, they were still recorded in Ottoman archival documents and treated as they wanted to be, Muslim. Ottoman State Archives, İ. D. H 517/ 35188-4, ' el altından işlerini becermekle sabir bu kesim buçuk müslüman buçuk hristiyan yaşarlar...'

⁸⁹¹ Bilgin, 2010, p. 121.

⁸⁹² Finlay George, 1867, *A history of Greece from the conquest by the Roman to the present time* B.C 146. to A.D. Oxford.

pretended to embrace Islam. Sir Edwin emphasized that there is no doubt that Stavritoai are pure Christians in the heart.⁸⁹³

6.3 Marginal sect in Islam: The Ahmadiyya sect

The Ahmadiyya congregation has been designated as one of the most controversial religious movements in Islam. Due to their belief in prophethood after the Prophet Muhammad, Ahmadis have been rejected as infidels (qafirs) by mainstream Muslims who teach the finality of Prophethood, that Muhammad was the greatest and last of the prophets. Arising in India, in the nineteenth century, the Ahmadiyya movement as a vibrant Islamic reform group in Britain and throughout Europe.⁸⁹⁴

6.3.1 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a controversial figure

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in Qadian in 1835. His family root goes back to Turkish-Mongol origin. Mira Ghulam's ancestor Mira Hajji Bey immigrated to India from Semerkand in 1530.⁸⁹⁵ Mira Ghulam Ahmad clarifies mysteries about his ancestral history but also modifies it with his own assumptions as follows:

Mirza surname indicates that I come from Turkish-Mongol origin which is obvious.⁸⁹⁶ However, Allah revealed me that my family not Turkish but Persian.⁸⁹⁷ Allah also revealed me that from my mother side I am from the Fatimi Saltanate, obviously Qurayshaian family.⁸⁹⁸ Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, mentioned that in his Fususul Hikem that the Messiah will appear soon. Once I thought I am originally Chinese.⁸⁹⁹

As seen from his sentences, Mirza Ghulam was originally from Mongolia but later moved to India and settled in Qadian. In order to get honorific title such as Sayed or Sherif, he also claimed his Arabic roots, and linked his lineage to Prophet Muhammed SAW.⁹⁰⁰ Some of the statements above indicate that Mirza Ghulam used words in a figurative manner

⁸⁹³ Sir Edwin Pears 1912, *Turkey and its people* p. 267 Methuen, London.

⁸⁹⁴ Valentine Simon Ross, 2008, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jamaat, history, belief, practice*.p. XV Columbia/Hurst, London.

⁸⁹⁵ Ottoman Historian of 20th century extra-ordinary Profesor Yusuf Hikmet Bayur stated that all primary sources show that when the British empire occupied india the colonial British administrators knowingly called the State as Mogol Saltanate in order to avoid of the Ottoman Caliphate in india. According to Bayur, official correspondences show that former name of the state is recorded as Gurkanli State which goes back to their ancestor and therefore the Turkish –Mogol State can not be proper name. See, Bayur Y.H., 1988, *Hindistan Tarihi*, Vol. II, p. 1-6, TTK, Ankara.

⁸⁹⁶ Mirza Hajj Bey is also spelt as Mirza Hadi Baig.

⁸⁹⁷ Ahmad Mira Ghulam, 1894, *Sirrul Hilafe*, p. 56 Amritsar. India.

⁸⁹⁸ Ahmad Mira Ghulam, 1896, *Hakikatul Wahy*, Tetimme, p. 77, India.

⁸⁹⁹ Ahmet M. G. 1907, *Hakikat ul Wahy*, p. 200, India.

⁹⁰⁰ On the other hand, the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that stating himself from Qurayshian family was only a vision of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and contains figurative meaning. However Mirza Ghulam's further explanations about his family roots cause a complication when he also said he is Chine and Persian etc.

to express spiritual ideas. Due to the metaphorical meanings of his sentences like Shabbetai Tzvi, Mirza Ghulam also got labeled as ‘manic depressive’ and ‘hypochondriac’.⁹⁰¹ In his book, Mirza Ghulam mentioned his own sickness as migraine and diabetes, which was then used as a derogatory tool by radical Muslims to attack the Ahmadiyya movement.⁹⁰²

Mirza Ghulam showed his interest in religious subjects and studied Arabic to better understand early written religious texts in Arabic. It is rumoured that he had no Arabic teacher, but he was fluent in Arabic reading and writing.⁹⁰³ At a young age, Mirza Ghulam was already a well-known learned man among his friends in Qadian.

6.3.2 Declaration of messiahship

Particular events in society often play a crucial role for leaders to structure their ideas and thoughts within their environments. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also grew up in difficult times in India and realized the social problems of the Muslim world in his time.

After the Sipahi Rebellion in India in 1857, all Indian people who fought against British colonialism, were either killed, exiled or they escaped to other territories. This social chaos was a horrifying event for Muslims in India who were eagerly looking for a solution for themselves. Mirza Ghulam began to show his intellectual powers in his environment with his mystical writings and his publication of religious books. The timing was therefore suitable for messianic declaration.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also had some reasoning for his messianic declaration. For instance, according to Ahmadis, many chaotic events and disputes were taking place around the world at the time of Mirza Ghulam.⁹⁰⁴ Mirza Ghulam thus came up with a messianic idea and influenced his environment with his spiritual teachings.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰¹ One of the reasons was Hz Isa namely Jesus’s grave is in Trablis/Tripoli, Syria. See, Roohani Khazain, Itmam ul Hujja ti, Volume 8. p. 296. Whereas, Tripoli is one of the largest city in Libya. On the other hand, when Sabbatea Tzvi prayed with a fish, he was also called a mad man despite the fact that in Kabbalah astrology fish had a specific symbolism for the Jews. See, Afyoncu, 2013,, p. 93.

⁹⁰² Ahmad, 1907, p. 206.

⁹⁰³ Ahmad Mirza Tahir, 1998, *Revelation Rationalty Knowledge and Truth* p. 633, Islam International Publications, UK

⁹⁰⁴ The following are some of the wars in the world: the partial war between China and England in 1842, the Crimean War, England, France and Turkey against Russia, China and Japan 1890 to 1900, The Boer War 1890 to 1900 and some others. These wars have been interpreted by Ahmadi Muslims as signalling a new messianic era in the nineteenth century.

⁹⁰⁵ According to Ahmadi Muslims, Mirza Ghulam declared his prophethood in 1904 and published a book about his declaration in the same year. WWI broke out in 1914, after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. See, Bashiruddin, 2008, p. 120.

According to Ibni Khaldun, Prophet Muhammed mentioned a redeemer for the future and said that “Mahdi Mahud” or “Mahdi Mavûd” will appear in future.⁹⁰⁶ These hadiths must have been inspired Mirza Ghulam for proclamation of his Messiahship but interestingly all hadiths mentioned that the Mahdi will be from the Qurayhsian family, namely a descendant of Prophet Muhammed. However, other than Shia Muslim, in all Islamic history, almost all mahdi claimers, including Mirza Ghulam Ahmad were not descendents of Prophet Muhammed.⁹⁰⁷ The term Messiah is mentioned in the Qur’an in some ayahs.⁹⁰⁸ It is also stated that there will be redeemers for all nations until the end of the World.⁹⁰⁹

As explained in the third chapter, in the nineteenth century, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not the only man who came up with a messianic proclamation. Muhammad al Mahdi’s Senussi movement in Libya, similarly Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad’s movement in Sudan and other Muslim religious leaders declared their Mahdiship in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One of the main reasons for this was that this time was one of hardship for the Muslim world. The Ottoman Empire lost its power in Africa, and Western colonial states occupied Northern Africa. Libya was occupied by Italy and this social chaos led to Senussi rebellion in the region. British occupied Egypt, and also Sudanese Mahdi Muhammed Ahmad fought against the British occupation as a redeemer.⁹¹⁰ On the other hand, as mentioned above, after the Sipahi rebellion against the British occupation in India in 1857, Indian people suffered and waited for a Messiah while they were fighting. From this general miserable situation, emerged a new fervour and messianic expectation in India. Therefore, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote several articles and books to guide Muslims in India as a religious leader.

After the Sipahi rebellion and the defeat of the locals, not only Indian Muslims but also Hindus and Christians faced challenges from the British colonial government. Mirza Ghulam was aware of this sensitive time and situation and therefore declared that he has a different view from other Muslim scholars. Mirza Ghulam said that holy war (jihad) could

⁹⁰⁶ Expected Mahdi and Redeemer is called in different ways in Islamic literature like Mahdi al Murtaza or Mahdi Mavud etc, Ibni khaldun, 1954, p. 152, 204.

⁹⁰⁷ See, Chapter two, Mirza Ghulam’s family roots Turkish –Mogol origan. See; Khan Adil Hussain, 2015, *from Sufism to Ahmadiyya, A Muslim minority group in South Asia*, p. 42 Indiana University Press.

⁹⁰⁸ Quran, Nisa, 4:172 Nisa 4:157 Tavba 9:30 and Maida 5:17, 72, 75. This ayah also inspired wellknow Turkish aouthor Omer Seyfeddin and he wrote a novel about « The Mahdi » after the Ottoman Balkan War 1912

⁹⁰⁹ Omer Seyfettin was looking for a savior for the nation and refers to religious scripture “in arabic, ve likulli qawmin haq, means there is always a warner and for every people is a guide.” See, Qur’an Surat al Rad 13:7.

⁹¹⁰ Somehow after British accupation in India and Sudan these two states divided two part as Pakistan and India and much later as North Sudan and South Sudan.

not be implemented through violence, because Prophet Muhammed said that ‘pen is mightier than sword’ which indicates a peaceful approach to resolving issues.

However, Mirza Ghulam went as far as proclaiming his loyalty to the British colonial rulers and said that ‘I pray for the British government and proclaiming that I have no negative thoughts about them in India.’⁹¹¹ This friendly approach of Mirza Ghulam was criticized by the majority of Muslims. A Muslim Ulama questioned that, “when British occupied your country how can you still show your loyalty to them?” Mirza Ghulam’s response to criticism was that of challenging Christian missionaries in India in a peaceful way.⁹¹² However, still the majority of Muslims strongly criticized him as they perceived him to be a teacher of heretical thoughts, and having moved away from orthodox doctrine, his followers were condemned as apostates and Zindiq (heretics) ⁹¹³ Thus, his messianic proclamation began with a controversy but his movement spread to other continents as time went by.

6.3.3 Emergence of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Despite its success, after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, his followers were divided into two movements, namely the Qadiani Ahmadiyya Movement and the Ahmadiyya Andjuman Ishaat’i Islam (Lahore Group). The Lahore group accepts Ghulam Ahmad as mudjaddid,⁹¹⁴ not as a prophet and affirms that he never claimed to be a Prophet.⁹¹⁵ The Ahmadis from this group merely regard the founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the reformer of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the Qadiani group view him as a Prophet, a view which has subject to much controversy.⁹¹⁶

Another controversy in Muslim World about Ahmadiyya movement arises from the fact that the declaration of Mahdiship was made to Muslims, but also to Christians and Hindus. According to the Islamic tradition, the Mahdi is supposed to guide Muslims but Mirza Ghulam’s proclamation was addressed to Christians and Hindus as well. However, there were about ten Muslim leaders who proclaimed their Mahdiship at the same time as

⁹¹¹ Maulana Muhammad Ali, 1918, *The Ahmadiyya Movement, The Split* (Vol. 4) p.20, Lahore.

⁹¹² Indian Opinion, *Punjab and Khilafat Wrongs*, August 1921, p. 198 South Africa

⁹¹³ Ross, 2008, p. 34.

⁹¹⁴ Mujaddid means a Muslim theologian and able to give Islamic jurisprudence. Atlanta, Ga, 1986. Van Donzel, E. Art. "Mudjaddid." In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C.E. Bosworth et al., vol. 7, 290. Leiden and London. 1993.

⁹¹⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Islam* 1960, *Ahmadiyya* (new edition, A-B Vol. 1. H. A. R. Gibs, J. H. Kramers.) p.302 London

⁹¹⁶ *Rand Daily Mail* 4 Saturday September 1982 p. 5 South Africa

Mirza Ghulam. So if Mirza Ghulam is regarded as the ‘real’ Mahdi, then all other claimants would be False Mahdis. This raises questions on how one would define the ‘real’ Mahdi.

A century before Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, another Muslim scholar came up a very similar messianic proclamation. The eighteenth century religious scholar Sheikh Veliyuddin⁹¹⁷ proclaimed that he was the expected redeemer (Kaimu’z Zaman) and for the first time, declared a very profound statement that no prophethood exists after Muhammad (pbuh), but the light of prophethood will continue forever. Similarly, according to members of the Ahmadiyya congregation, there are successors to Prophet Muhammad, and they have the same quality as previous Prophets. It is believed that these special leaders are capable of guiding people like Prophets. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad might have been influenced by Veliyuddin’s ideas.⁹¹⁸

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad developed his own interpretation of spiritual beliefs according to Islamic tradition and Qur’an, for instance, the verse the pen is mightier than the sword, which became his main slogan.⁹¹⁹ This is the peaceful understanding of Jihad which was emphasised and bequeathed by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to his followers.⁹²⁰ Basing their teaching on the hadiths, Ahmadis argue that the promised Messiah would put an end to fighting in the name of the faith. Still, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad told his followers that there might be occasions in the future when Jihad by the sword would be necessary for self defense.⁹²¹ According to Ghulam Ahmad, the Mahdi’s role is to spread Islam, not with the sword, but by heavenly sign and arguments.⁹²² Using the same term as Peace Be upon Him for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who will appear on the minaret in Aqsa Mosque in India is a still valid belief in Ahmadiyya congregation.⁹²³

Some critical ideas in the Ahmadi sect make them appear as an extreme movement in the Muslim world. Therefore, the Ahmadis are regarded as unbelievers by the

⁹¹⁷ Sheikh Veliyuddin religious leader lived between 1703 and 1762 years.

⁹¹⁸ Baljon M.S. 1970, *Prophetology of Shah Wali Allah*, Vol, IX, p. 73, J. M. S. Baljon.

⁹¹⁹ Another hadith regarding the significance of knowledge “The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr” Saheeh Al-Bukhari, #2447.

⁹²⁰ Ross, 2008, p. 189.

⁹²¹ Ibid. p.198

⁹²² Ibid, p. 199

⁹²³ According to Ahmadis, abolition of Caliphate was brought by westernized Turkish nationalist and by the betrayal of Islam. However, this statement contains untruthfulness because historically, Ottoman Caliphate was declined when Ottoman Empire lost in WWI. See, Ross, 2008, p. 40. In fact, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk established a new state in Ankara; he still allowed religious activities of the Ottoman Caliph in Istanbul until Caliph Abdulmecid secretly began to correspondent British Empire against Ankara government in Turkey. See, British National archive, E/8826/199/44 Regarding the Ottoman Caliph from Neville Henderson, London

majority of Muslims because they deny the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh); they accept the teachings of Ghulam Ahmad who claimed to be a Prophet and the Messiah who received revelation from God. They reject the virgin birth and “Immaculate Conception” of Jesus Christ as well as the religious war against unbelievers (Jihad) in Islam. Mainstream Muslims consider Ahmadiyya as a heretical faith, a sect whose members, according to them, hypocritically claim to be Muslim, and who are damaging the beliefs of those Muslims who may have lack of Islamic knowledge. For this reason, Muhammad Iqbal, Indi-Pakistani political and religious leader recognized Ahmadis as a danger to the solidarity of Islam.⁹²⁴

Similarly, other than Ahmadis, all Ulama declared the belief in Muhammad as the last of the Prophets, as the main criterion for acceptance as a Muslim believer.⁹²⁵ Therefore even the Muslim Judicial Council of Cape Town published defamatory literature which categorised Ahmadis as infidels (qafirs).⁹²⁶ Being a persecuted minority globally, and keen to be acknowledged and gain support, the Ahmadis have even struggled to get involved in politics.⁹²⁷

Additionally, three important reasons caused division among some members of the Ahmadiyya congregation. One of them was the Caliphate issue,⁹²⁸ the second one was the prophethood issue and the last one was the Cawnpore (Kanpur) mosque dispute. The first one began after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Another prominent religious leader in Ahmadiyya movement, Sayid Muhammad Ihsan Amrohavi who used to edit the Arabic texts of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, soon began to criticize the marginal declarations of Mirza Ghulam. In the beginning, when Sayid M. Amrohavi wrote an article on the 24th December of 1916, he proclaimed that he left the Qadiani path of Ahmadiyya movement for particular reasons. In

⁹²⁴ Ross, 2008, p. 239.

⁹²⁵ Ibid, p.242.

⁹²⁶ It is called as MJC, See, Ross, Ibid, p.242

⁹²⁷ Ibid. p.167.

⁹²⁸ Mauritian historian Moomtaz highlights the Caliphate issue of Ahmadiyya movement in his book in the context of Mauritian history as below: “The State of affairs in the Muslim community was a reflection of the turmoil afflicting the Islamic world at the time. The tensions and bickering were symptomatic of the troubled times. World War I was rising in Europe. Great Britain was at war with Turkey which had joined Germany as an ally. The Sultan of Turkey, who was also ruler of the crumbling Ottoman Empire and the Caliph of Islam, was in the enemy camp. The Muslims, as a rule, used to fly the Turkish Red Crescent over their mosques and in their daily prayers, invoked God to bless the [Ottoman] Caliph and his successors but not the Ahmadis. They had a Caliph of their own in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his successors and they prayed for the well-being of their own Caliph who unlike the Caliph of Islam [for Ahmadis], was not at War with Britain and who urged his followers to fully co-operate with and abide by the laws of the Ottoman Empire and Muslim World in disarray.” See, Moomtaz Emrith. 1994, *History of the Muslims in Mauritius*, (Edition 2. Publisher, Editions Le Printemps). p. 38, University of California.

terms of the prophethood issue, according to M. Amrohavi, Mirza Ghulam created divisions among Muslim people when he declared himself as Nabi (Prophet), and stated that the word Ahmad in Qur'an⁹²⁹ refers to him, Mirza Ahmad.⁹³⁰ On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad said that "I have five names, I am Muhammad and Ahmad, I am Al Mahi, I am al-Hashir, I am al Aqib (means no prophet after me)."⁹³¹ Indeed, in some old Islamic religious books in sixteenth century, the religion was called as Din-i Ahmadiyya, namely Islam.⁹³² The third issue revolved around the Ahmadiyya mosque in Cawnpore, which the State wished to demolish in 1913 in order to build a highway. While the Ahmadis objected to the demolition, their response to the State's decision was not a unanimous one. The Qadiani group favoured retaliation, on the other hand, the Lahore group maintained that Mirza Ghulam would have professed a peaceful encounter with the State. This exacerbated rifts between the two groups with the Ahmadiyya movement.

Similarly, some statements of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad led to negative attitudes against him in Muslim society. In 1884, Mirza Ghulam said that God would give him a son in future and he will be a very remarkable man for humanity. However, in 1886, his daughter Ismet was born. Thereupon, in 1886, Mirza Ghulam explained his divine inspiration about his coming blessing son, named Basher and also his Christian name Emanuel. According to Mirza Ghulam, his son will have the Holy Spirit and will be a famous religious leader worldwide. In 1887, a son was born, and he gave him a Basher Ahmad. Then, Mirza Ghulam called this son the expected leader "Muslih-i Mevud." Ghulam Ahmad expected miracles from his son for humanity. However, the sudden death of Basher in 1888 disappointed Mirza Ghulam. He did not mention this subject anymore, but for sake of the Caliphate, Ahmadis believed that the expected Redeemer would still come as Muslih-i Mevud. Despite that, there is always controversy between the Lahore and Qadiani congregations on the subject.⁹³³

Ahmadiyya movements have some reasons for claiming the divine inspiration of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. According to them, God sent divine inspiration some holy people other than Prophets. For instance, according to the Islamic teaching, Moses's mother,⁹³⁴

⁹²⁹ Qur'an, Surah 61:6

⁹³⁰ Amrohavi M. Ihsan, 1916, *An important Declaration*, p. 2 Lahore

⁹³¹ Sahih al Bukhari 4/ 3532 (O.P 732)

⁹³² Imam al Halabi, 1517, *Multaqa al-Abhur, A treatise of on the Hanafi Law*, p. 61. Sulaymaniyya Library, No; 5640/3 Istanbul

⁹³³ Fiğlalı Ethem Ruhi, 1986, *Kadiyanilik*, p, 84, Dokuz Eylul Universitesi, Izmir

⁹³⁴ Surah Kassas: XXVIII, 7.

Jesus's mother holy Virgin Mary⁹³⁵ and some saints (apostles) received divine inspiration from God.⁹³⁶ Therefore, even the Ahmadiyya movement of Lahore believes that Mirza Ghulam received some divine inspiration from God at particular times.⁹³⁷

These arguments even influenced some Christian missionaries in their intellectual discussions. For instance, Christian missionaries in India in the nineteenth century used some influential teachings to their advantage, arguing that Jesus must have been superior to Muhammad because Muhammad died a natural death, while Jesus was tortured and crucified.⁹³⁸ Muslims traditionally imparted the idea that Jesus, although appearing to die on the cross, was taken physically in his living form to heaven by God, to return as a champion of Islam in the future. As mentioned in the Qur'an, the Jews stated, "we did slay the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary the messenger of Allah," whereas they slew him not, nor did they bring about his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified." The Qur'an affirms, "on the contrary, Allah exalted him to Himself".⁹³⁹

On the other hand, according to Mirza Ghulam, his Messiahship was supported by God. To Mirza Ghulam, God said to him, "Oh my servant, I created you with the features of Jesus. You and Jesus are created from the same nature, the same precious material." After this period, Ghulam revealed that he is the Messiah al Mevud. Unlikely Shia Muslims, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not believe that the expected redeemer Mahdi/Messiah must be a descendent of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Mirza Ghulam said that some Hadiths about coming of Mahdi were fabricated by early Hadith transmitters.⁹⁴⁰ Additionally, in 1902, he said that "I am the chosen shadow of Prophet (Zilli Nabi) and Messiah."⁹⁴¹ For this reason, the Ahmadiyya congregation still defends the same view the the divine inspiration did not stop after the death of Prophet Muhammad.⁹⁴²

Additionally, this separation from mainstream Muslim community was also mentioned by Prophet Muhammad who said that "my people (followers –Ummah) will be separated into 72 parts in future." So this Hadith shows that the separation of religion is not

⁹³⁵ Taha XX: 38

⁹³⁶ Maide:V, 111, and also Meryem: XIX, 17-21

⁹³⁷ Figlali, 1986, p. 122.

⁹³⁸ Ross, 2008, p. 17.

⁹³⁹ Quran, Surah ul Nissa (4:157-59)

⁹⁴⁰ Ahmad, 1907, p. 17.

⁹⁴¹ Ahmad. 1902, p. 4

⁹⁴² Figlali, 1986. p. 153.

against the fundamental structure of the religion. Different thoughts among Muslim can cause the separation of the congregation but does not change the main values of the religion.⁹⁴³

According to the Ahmadiyya movement, the sign of the Messiah's arrival was that many false Messiahs would appear in Mirza Ahmad's time and there would be several claimants for messiahship. Prophethood from other Holy religious texts regarding the coming of the chosen one of the latter days were mentioned. Qadian Ahmadis stated that Guru Baba Nanak was also a holy man who received revelation from God. His words are recorded in the Holy Book of the Sikhs. For instance, Guru Baba Nanak stated that:

The reign of the Mughals shall last from 1578 to 1897 of the Bikram era, then a Reformer shall rise.⁹⁴⁴ A time shall come in the latter age when people shall cease to act upon their scriptures and observe no prayers, Yogis, Sanyasis, Brahmacharis and Brahmins would be labelled as Gurus.⁹⁴⁵

Ahmadis find these words to be evidence for the messianic proclamation of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Similarly, Ahmadis also stated that Guru Nanak emphasised that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would be a Muslim and true Messiah, that he would come from the district of Gurdaspur and that he would be from the Moghul Tribe.⁹⁴⁶ Ahmadis identify commonalities between Guru Nanak's religious message and that made by Christ in the New Testament. Ahmadi Muslims believe that some earlier scholars like Guru Nanak indicated the same particular location for the appearance of expected Messiah with his extraordinary wisdom. According to Ahmadis, the era of his appearance was also the same as predicted, and of these prophecies were realised by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. Therefore, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad began his mission during the British rule when the Christian missionaries were well-resourced. To the community, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad challenged the doctrine of Christianity by suggesting that Jesus did not die after his crucifixion and was buried in Kashmir. Therefore, in 1890, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad declared that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and was fulfilling the predictions in the Bible and Qur'an.

According to Ahmadi believers, solar and lunar eclipses occurred exactly as predicted in the Holy Scriptures in 1894 in the Eastern Hemisphere and in 1895 in the Western Hemisphere. This prophecy is also stated in the Bible. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall

⁹⁴³ Gazali, 2014, *Faysali' t tefrika beyne' l islam ve' z zendeka* (Islamda müsamaha) p. 48, Dergah Yay. Istanbul

⁹⁴⁴ Puratan Janam Sakhi Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji-Bhai Vir Singh Punjabi, 2010, Hindi Book-Guru-Nanak-Ji-Ki-Janam-Sakhi-Punjabi-Hindi, p. 272, New Delhi.

⁹⁴⁵ Janam Sakhi, 2010, p. 527

⁹⁴⁶ Janam Sakhi, 2010, p. 234, 251, 452.

fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."⁹⁴⁷ As explained in chapter three, according to the Shia sect, Prophet Muhammad made several statements regarding the identity of the expected Redeemer. According to the Ahmadis, the Mahdi will come from Damascus of Persian descent. However, as shown earlier, Mirza Ghulam claimed his origins back to the Moghuls, Arab from Fatimi Sultanate as well as to the Chinese. These unstable claims of Mirza Ghulam are interpreted as metaphorical by Ahmadi followers.⁹⁴⁸

6.3.4 Mainstream Muslim views on the Ahmadiyya Movement

Most of the Muslim Ulama have criticized some of the religious statements made by the Ahmadiyya Movement regarding Islam. For instance, the Ahmadiyya movement believed that Ahmadis established their own Caliphate in 1908, after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. However, according to mainstream Muslims, the Ottoman Caliphate was still active and controlled by the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁴⁹ It was only abolished sixteen years later, by the modern secular Turkish State in 1924.

Ahmadis believe that while the Caliphate of Ottoman Empire was a political power, the Caliphate of Ahmadiyya movement was only a spiritual phenomenon.⁹⁵⁰ However, Sunni Muslims state that Ahmadis knowingly or unknowingly damaged the unity of the Muslim world when they declared another Caliphate.⁹⁵¹ On the other hand, the Ahmadis criticized the modern Turkish policy due to its secular administration, and the fact that the Caliph title was no longer in use, as was the case during the Ottoman times.

⁹⁴⁷ Mat 24:29

⁹⁴⁸ Gita 4:7-8

⁹⁴⁹ Redhouse J.W., 1877, *A vindication of the Ottoman Sultan's title of Caliph*, p. 4, E. Wilson, London. "The Ottoman State successfully conducted the Caliphate duties and considered the rights of the Muslims in the World." W. Redhouse, as an orientalist, noted; "a new assumption by the present or late sultan of Turkey, it dates from 1517 and from China to Algiers, from the snows of Siberia to the tropical isles of Sumatra and Java, to the British colony of the Cape of Good Hope."

⁹⁵⁰ I thank Mirza Mansoor who is the current Imam of Ahmadiyya mosque in Cape Town, shared his valuable knowledge with me during my studies in South Africa, Mirza Mansoor told me during my interview. "Ahmadi is most corrected way to call us Ahmadis. Because Ahmad was also name of the prophet Muhammed. When he wants to refer Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, otherwise Ahmad name is exist in Quran. Surat al Saff, partially refers Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) Ortodox Muslim Ulama are asking us why we believe prophecy of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad but not the prophecy of the first false prophet Muselman. I answered that because Musselman did not bring anything but he did only created debate. According to me, dejjals are Imams. Many hadids have metaphorical meanings but Sunni Imams do not understand this deep knowledge. For instance, it is transmitted as the Imam comes and dig the grave of prophet Muhammed is taken as literally which is wrong. We don't consider any others as Kafir unless they reject almighty Allah."

⁹⁵¹ I am very grateful to Sheikh Seraac Johaar, Imam of Nurul Islam mosque in Cape Town. Sheikh Seraac provided important information for me in terms of mainstream of Islam.

From a political point of view, there were two key reasons why the Turkish national assembly in the 1920s had to abolish the Caliphate. One reason was that the establishment of a secular country, modern Turkey, was at odds with Islamic institutes such the Caliphate. The second reason was that Caliph Abdulmecid Effendi secretly began to correspond with the British Empire against the Turkish government based in the capital Ankara.⁹⁵² This was a catalyst to the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate.

Other than the Caliphate issue, the Ahmadiyya movement has been criticized for believing in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam, after Prophet Muhammad. One of Mirza Ghulam's controversial statements was around the meaning of the Qur'anic verse about Khatamun Nebiyyen. According to mainstream Muslims, Khatamun Nebiyyen means the final Prophet and refers to Prophet Muhammad. According to Mirza Ghulam, Khatamun Nebiyyen refers to Prophet Muhammad, but stands the last law bearing Prophet. The Ahmadiis believe that there could be other Prophets after Prophet Muhammad, but the latter is the last one to bring the Holy Book. This constitutes the main bone of contention between mainstream Muslims and Ahmadiis⁹⁵³.

Interestingly, to be an Ahmadi Muslim, one must complete a specific form, namely the declaration of initiation which was prepared by the fifth Caliph of the Ahmadiyya movement, Mirza Masroor Ahmad. In this declaration, it is clearly stated that Prophet Muhammad is the Khatamun Nebiyyen, which as mentioned, refers to the last law bearing Prophet according to Ahmadiis. This sheds light on the Ahmadi's understanding of Islam, and ideas of prophethood. It is declared by Mirza Ghulam, that the Qur'an is a perfect book and the world owes its civilisation to Holy Qur'an.⁹⁵⁴ However, the Ahmadiis' interpretation of the Qur'an is not acceptable by the majority Muslim society.⁹⁵⁵ According to Mirza Ghulam, "Hatem" means a seal but is misunderstood by mainstream Muslims as the last or final divine authority.

Another controversy revolves around Mirza Ghulam's declaration that he is Prophet not only for Muslims, but also for Christians and Hindus. However, this statement is unusual because even across Abrahamic religions there is little consensus around who the Prophets

⁹⁵² British National Archives, E/8826/199/44 regarding the Ottoman Caliph from Neville Henderson, London

⁹⁵³ Ahmad, Mirza Mansoor, 2007, *Ahmadiyya movement or the true Islam*. p.39, Islam International Publications Ltd, London.

⁹⁵⁴ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadiyan, 1997, *The Philosophy of the teachings of Islam*, p. 55, Islam International Publications Ltd. Cape Town

⁹⁵⁵ Bashiruddin, 2008, p.13-14

are. While Islam recognizes all other Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Judaism do not consider Muhammad as a holy Prophet. Therefore, by extension, Mirza Ghulam's messianic proclamation cannot apply to Muslims and at the same time to Christians and Hindus.⁹⁵⁶

Other than Ahmadis, all other Muslim scholars largely interpreted this prophethood issue in the Qur'an in a similar way. For instance, Ahmadis came up with new idea about the interpretation of a Qur'anic verse that mentions Ahmad.⁹⁵⁷ In the Qur'an, it is mentioned that the expected messenger after Jesus would be "Ahmad" in verse six. According to mainstream Muslims, Ahmad refers to the qualities of the Prophet. Thus, Prof Okuyan stated that the name Ahmad contains a eulogistic meaning, rather than designating a person by the name of Ahmad.⁹⁵⁸ In this verse, he stated that Jesus refers to Prophet Muhammad as his successor. Prof Bayindir also said that the term Ahmad is not the name of the Prophet but one of his virtues mentioned by Jesus.⁹⁵⁹ Similarly, another Muslim scholar Mustafa Islamoglu stated that Jesus mentioned his successor in the Qur'an but made no mention of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.⁹⁶⁰ It is clearly understood that none of these Sunni scholars even mentioned the coming of a Prophet by the name of Ahmad in future.⁹⁶¹

Furthermore, some verses in the Bible were also interpreted by Ahmadi Muslim in their own way.⁹⁶² These scriptures are used by Ahmadis to prove the prophethood of Mirza

⁹⁵⁶ When I discussed the prophecy with the Imam of Ahmadiyya mosque in Cape Town, Mirza Mansoor told me that; *"we are representing the true Islam and remember Prophet Muhammed (Pbuh) said that "My ummah will split into seventy-three sects, all of whom will be in Hell except one group". This is mentioned in the hadeeth of 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr which was recorded and classed as hasan by al-Tirmidhi (2641). So these different views among Muslims are not suprising us because we know we are on right path, Alhamdulillah."* This interview really clearly explains that controversial statements do not always come from majority of religious groups.

⁹⁵⁷ Qur'an 61:6, Yusuf Ali version; and remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "This is evident sorcery!"; See also the Holy Bible, John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me".

⁹⁵⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkXTFqNCD-Q> in this video, 1:13' minutes.

⁹⁵⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7T9E_V00Yg in the video, it is mentioned in the first minute until 1:13' minutes.

⁹⁶⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7T9E_V00Yg

⁹⁶¹ Surah Ali Imran 3:84 also mentioned that Say, "We have believed in Allah and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him."

⁹⁶² For instance, according to the Bible, God said to Moses, on whom be peace: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I commend him."⁹⁶² The prophet was depicted as having the following characteristics: He will resemble Moses. He will come from the community of the Israelites, known as the Ishmaelite. He will declare what God ordered him. God says: "I will punish anyone who refuses to obey him" See, Good News Bible, Deut. 18:19

Ghulam Ahmad, however according to most Muslim scholars, these verses refer to the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, some Christians believe it to be referring to Jesus.⁹⁶³

Due to major religious disagreement orthodox Muslims and the Ahmadis, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad could not succeed in achieving good relations with the Islamic state of the time, the Ottoman Empire. There are important Ottoman archival documents about Mirza Ghulam and his plans to visit holy places in Mecca and Medina. According to an Ottoman document, Mirza Ghulam wanted to go on pilgrimage with his wife, but he could not complete his voyage.⁹⁶⁴ It is because, before his messianic actions, the Ottoman Empire sent the Ottoman consul of India, Husain Kami to Mirza Ghulam for a meeting in 1899. However, when Ottoman diplomat Husain Kami visited Mirza Ghulam, he was not welcomed by Ghulam. Instead of speaking to him in a peaceful way, Mirza Ghulam told Husain Kami unpleasant things about the Ottoman Sovereignty. Thereupon, Husain Kami reported these issues to Ottoman Empire. After this negative development, Ottoman authorities did not allow Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to carry out what they deemed to be any messianic propaganda in the Muslim lands.⁹⁶⁵

Another document highlights that despite his desperate intention to perform Hajj duty, Mirza Ghulam was not allowed to visit Mecca for pilgrimage.⁹⁶⁶ Some other documents also illustrate that Ottoman statesmen were careful about the religious movement of Mirza

⁹⁶³ Ahmad Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud, *Introduction of the study of the Holy Quran*, p. 83, London

⁹⁶⁴ Ottoman State Archive, DH, SYS, 31/8 Hijree, 1330

⁹⁶⁵ Ahmadi Muslims in Qadian and London mentioned this event but blaming Turkish consul for this issue. In one of their publications, Ahmadi writer stated that, "Turkish Consul-General Husain Kami was indeed not an honest man, he stole donated money and then went to prison which is also a proof for the statements of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad regarding Husain Kami." In fact, the writer has mixed up the consul Husain Kami with Husain Kamil Effendi. See, Dard A. R, 2008, *Life Of Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 535, UK. Other than Ottoman sources, contemporary Indian Muslim leader, Muhammad Inshaullah who led the Hedjaz Railway Project in India, met the Ottoman Consul-General Hüseyin Kami in Karachi in 1896. According to Inshaullah, Hüseyin Kami was a dynamic diplomat, who "undertook an extensive trip within Northern India, partly to gauge the situation near the Afghan frontier. He met many people and was warmly welcomed by the Muslims of India. However, after a meeting and celebration he organized in 1897 to celebrate the Turkish Victory over Greece, his activities were deemed incompatible with his status, and a protest was sent by the (British) Government of India to the Sublime Porte (Istanbul) in which it was stated that if and when he returned home after a vacation, he would not be allowed to land in India." Whereas, this primary source clearly shows that Hüseyin Kami was not popular because of British policy in India but actually not about his corruption what Ahmadi writer states above. See, Wasti, Syed Tanvi, 1998, *Muhammad Inshaullah and Hijaz Railway*, p. 69 fn, Vol, 34, NO, 2, Middle Eastern Studies

⁹⁶⁶ Ottoman State Archive, DH, SYS, 31/10 Hijree, 1331

Ghulam Ahmad, seeking to ensure that the movement does not occasion a religious uprising, which would threaten the sovereignty of the State.⁹⁶⁷

As mentioned, the Ahmadiyya movement was divided into two different congregations in 1914. Unlikely Qadiani Ahmadis, the Lahore Ahmadis did not accept the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad but only considered him as a Mujaddid and religious leader. According to the Qadiani group, Lahore accepted the Qadiani Caliphate in 1908 but then left it in 1914. This said, the Qadiani group has a much wider congregation in the world. Still, this alone cannot be a measure of the legitimacy of the congregation. If that were the case, then any Hanafee Sunni Muslim could declare that Hanafees formed the largest Muslim community in the world. Certainly one cannot appeal to the large numbers to determine rightness.⁹⁶⁸

Another controversial subject among Qadiani Ahmadis is that of not attending prayers in the same temple with other Muslims. According to Professor Figlali, Qadiani Ahmadis only pray with other Qadiani Ahmadis.⁹⁶⁹ From this perspective, their principle resembles that of the Sabbateans.⁹⁷⁰ On the other side, many Muslims in Turkey and other Islamic countries declare that Ahmadis are Kafir.⁹⁷¹ Interestingly some conservative writers even blame the Zionist Jewish State to support Ahmadis project without any evidence.⁹⁷² Worldwide, many Ahmadis defend themselves in the media.⁹⁷³ On the other hand, many Muslim followers find Ahmadis to be non-Muslims,⁹⁷⁴ and this perception has been

⁹⁶⁷ Ottoman State Arhive, BEO, 4201/315060 Hijree, 1331; Likewise, books like *Risaletul Edyan* to teach reformist Islamic knowledge as *Talimi Islamiyye* (education on Islam) were recorded as a political threat by the Ottoman commander from Punjab.

⁹⁶⁸ Figlali, 1986, p. 157.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 163.

⁹⁷⁰ Gövsa, 2009, p. 90.

⁹⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fhb1e0IBljM>

⁹⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-ikIv2gE6g>. In spite of these pleasant relations with Ahmadis and Israeli government in Israel, in order to emphasize the political issues between Philistine and Israel, the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Tahir Ahmad could frankly note it in his book, "... *this historical background shows that the Western Israel powers accepted the right of the Jews to carry out terrorism and that these activities of the Jews were not to be termed as "Jewish terrorism". On the other hand, the Muslims countries are not even allowed to retaliate to protect their territorial and political interest, and if they do so then not only are they censured but even Islam is slandered and such efforts are maliciously termed "Islamic Terrorism".* See; Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, 1991, *The Gulf Crisis & The New World Order*, p. 224, United States of America.

⁹⁷³ Why accept Imam Mehdi and Jamaat Ahmadiyya?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_clC4v20yH4

⁹⁷⁴ Shaykh Hamza Yusuf condemns Pakistan's decision to declare Ahmadiyya non-Muslims <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FieqCwmbNQ>

prevailing for years. The debates that arise publicly and academically also have similarities with those that discuss the marginal community of Sabbateans.⁹⁷⁵

As Prof Bayur noted, the Ahmadi movement has been secretly growing in Muslim society that shows that whenever and wherever the Ahmadis have felt threatened, they have hidden their religious identity.⁹⁷⁶ Therefore, as a primary source, Prof Bayur's observations are very significant to understanding the social problems that the Ahmadiyya congregation dealt with in the past.⁹⁷⁷ Besides that, Ahmadiyya movement at present does not hide itself in public but the individuals themselves still prefer to stay discreet when they are among Sunni Muslims. It is because the majority of Muslims recognize them as heretical. In response, according to Prof Bayur, Ahmadis prefer to separate their mosque and even graveyards until they receive recognition and respect from the Sunni Muslim community. These speculative arguments have been partially published and promoted by both camps of believers who always find a way to prove that they are right, which sometimes leads to disagreement. Therefore, as a solution, it would be better to respect every believer who can be equally considered as a human being, rather than reject one another as infidel.

6.4 Response to fundamentalism in Islam

Like the Ahmadiyya movement of the nineteenth century, there have been several religious movements in Islamic history from the beginning of the religion of Islam to the present day. It is important to analyze such marginal movement based on the main religious sources without being influenced by personal views. It is because although there are Muslims throughout the world, who call themselves Sunni or Shia, they all agree on one God, and hold that Prophet Mohammad is the final messenger of the God. There are different schools of thought in Islam, but they all agree on the fundamental principles. According to Lahore Ahmadis as well, Prophet Muhammad is the last one. However, the Qaldians hold that Prophet Muhammad is the last law-bearing Prophet, but there can be other reformist Prophets after him. Prophet Mohammad said that "the differences of my Ummah (followers) are a

⁹⁷⁵ Muslim & Ahmadiyya debate: Are Ahmadis Muslims & part of Islam?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0W6iLwnIrg>

⁹⁷⁶ Bayur Y. Hikmet, 1987, *Hindistan Tarihi*, cilt 3, p. 487 Ankara, Ahmadis do not allow to go to Haj because they are found qafir and not access to visit Mecca.

⁹⁷⁷ However, hiding one's religious identity is regarded as an insincere attitude in Muslim world and called *Taqiyyah* which is literally dissimulation but for cautionary purposes. Stewart, Devin, 2014, "*Dissimulation in Sunni Islam and Morisco Taqiyya*". *Al-Qanṭara*. 34 (2): 439–490

mercy. Whoever says a prayer as we say it, and faces our Qibla and eats the meat slaughtered by us, he is a Muslim for who is the covenant of Allah”.⁹⁷⁸

Therefore, the different mystical philosophies in Islam are not regarded as heresy by Prophet Muhammad. However, to overly emphasise one’s belonging to any given sect such as the Ahmadiyya movement, without acknowledging that one is Muslim, may be regarded by some as a heresy. Still, according to the divine ordinances laid down in the Qur’an and also supported by Hadiths, to label one as heretical might go against the very principles of Islam, “and say not to anyone who offers you the Islamic salutation; thou art not a believer.”⁹⁷⁹ Briefly, when any Muslim declares the unity of God as it is known in the Muslim World, “la ilahe illallah Muhammedan Resul Allah” one should not call him an unbeliever for any sin, nor expel him from the fold of Islam.⁹⁸⁰

Early Muslim scholars like Imam al-Ghazali clearly explained this need to resist radicalism in their books.⁹⁸¹ For instance, some Muslims believe that the expected Mahdi will arrive, like Shia Muslims await the arrival of the Imam al Muntazar as a Redeemer or Mahdi. Some mainstream Muslims might regard this as heresy, or Taqfer.⁹⁸² Likewise, Imam Bukhari stated that Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifa (the founder of the Sunni Hanafi School) was a Kafir because of his jurisprudence.⁹⁸³ According to Imam Ghazali, these radical thoughts caused extremism in Muslim society. Unfortunately, Ghazali faced similar extreme criticism by some Muslim scholars.⁹⁸⁴ Still, the statements in his books are not against Qur’anic teachings, because the Qur’an states that Only God can decide about that who is Kafir and who is not.⁹⁸⁵

For Ghazali, there is no substantial evidence to hold this, and these beliefs do not make the followers infidel because of their alleged “false beliefs”. His view might also of relevance to the current perception of Ahmadis as Taqfer by some mainstream Muslims, because of their belief in Mirza Ghulam as a Mahdi. Such beliefs might not be in the Qur’an,

⁹⁷⁸ Bukhari, Chapter 8:28 See also, Maulana, 2014, p. 88.

⁹⁷⁹ Quran, Surat An-Nisa, 4:94

⁹⁸⁰ This is also a hadiths trasmitted by Abu Dawuud, Chapter 15:33.

⁹⁸¹ Gazali, 2014, p. 54.

⁹⁸² *Taqfer* refers to someone who rejects the rule of the Creator, or re-sets the divine authority, in other words someone is *Mushrik*.

⁹⁸³ Camilla Adang, 2006, *"This Day I have Perfected Your Religion for You: A Zahiri Conception of Religious Authority," Taken from Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies.* p.33, Ed. Gudrun Krämer and Sabine Schmidtke: Brill Publishers, Leiden.

⁹⁸⁴ When particular scholar claimed that Gazali lost his control of his pen and writing with pen of Satan a *Kafir*, he realized that Cuneyd al Baghdadi also suffered similar social problems in his time. Gazali, 2010, p.20.

⁹⁸⁵ Qur’an, Enam 6/7, Enam 6/11

but according to Ghazali, that would not necessarily make those who believe in them Taqfer. From his explanation, it can be understood that “false beliefs” in religion do not make a believer infidel, provided that the believer does not reject Islam or anything from the Qur’an.⁹⁸⁶

Ghazali explained that some scholars made a powerful statement that Muslims who do not know the Islamic scholastic theology (ilm al-Kalam), which is written by us, are Kafir. According to Ghazali, these Muslim scholars make a grave mistake to determine the boundaries of sin and goodness, which was already determined by the creator Almighty for humanity in the Qur’an.⁹⁸⁷

Ghazali further explained that in light of the Hadiths, those who are Kafir are supposed to go to hell, but according to these Muslim scholars almost everybody will go to hell.⁹⁸⁸ Imam al-Ghazali analyzed the boundaries of tolerance in Islam and explained it in his well-known book *Faysalü't tefrika beyne'l Islam ve'z zendeqa*.⁹⁸⁹ To Ghazali, some Muslim theologians misinterpreted particular verses in the Qur’an and declared that most of the scholars and intellectuals were sinners, Zindiq or Qafir. However, their different interpretation of the religious texts could not be a strong enough reason to label them as disbelievers. Ghazali stated that these extremist thoughts towards those who might be perceived to deviate from mainstream Islamic thought, have existed throughout the history of Islam. Those with radical views have even judged Caliph Ali as Kafir. He was married the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah. Ali was eventually killed. Indeed this narrow understanding among particular radical Muslim scholars has been prevailing. As mentioned, Imam Ghazali got labelled as Kafir by some radical Muslim scholars. Some Muslim Ulama like Abu Abdullah ben Ali al Mazeri, Abu'l Velid Muhammad ben Velid ad Turtushi issued religious fatwas to burn the books of Imam Ghazali in Northern Africa.⁹⁹⁰

As stated above, when conservatism rises in Muslim communities, believers slavishly tend to follow their own understanding of their faith while rejecting other thoughts in society. In this way, the boundaries between mainstream and minority faiths becomes more visible. In contrast, as mentioned, as an Islamic empire Ottoman Sultans managed to rule different

⁹⁸⁶ Gazali, 2014, p. 55.

⁹⁸⁷ In Arabic, ‘Ashadu anna lailaha illallah wa ashaduanna muhammadan aduhu va rasulallah’ Gazali, 2014, p. 56.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 65

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 26.

⁹⁹⁰ Islam Ansiklopedisi, 1995, *Faysalut Tefrika*, Vol. 12. p. 268 Istanbul

Muslim, Jewish and Christian minorities within the same territory for centuries. The section below analyses how the Ottoman Empire managed to rule even Crypto-Christians with tolerance in history.

6.5 Minority movement' response to their marginal religious status

As indicated earlier, there are many similarities between the three minority movement in terms of the challenges they faced in society. Despite different religious rituals and beliefs, these communities have been struggling with similar issues for years. One of the most important similarities in both communities is with regard to hiding their religious identities. Sabbateans, Crypto-Christians and Ahmadis prefer not to say which community they belong to.⁹⁹¹ However, over time some began to reveal their dual or secret religious allegiances.

Crypto-Christians only proclaimed their secret religious identity publicly in society after the Tanzimat reform in the Ottoman Empire. On the 15th of July 1857, a total of forty four native people from Kurumis family went to the governor in Trabzon and wanted to register as Christians which they partly were anyway. After that, they visited consulates of France, England, Russia and Australia in Trabzon. This seemed very to be an interesting event in the city, and Trabzonian people even made fun of with them in a poetic way.⁹⁹² The British Consul of Trabzon, Steven explained the situation of Crypto-Christians in his reports on the 31st of October 1857 and noted that:

His Excellency,

It is an honor for me to transmit that Kurumi family officially embraced Christianity. They met with me and also Russian-French consulate as well in order to get their supports. If Turkish Government does not positively response the requests of Kurumis family, they will move to Russia. I can surely say that Russian consulate is ready to provide Russian passport for all the members of Kurumi family.⁹⁹³

As far as is understood from the primary sources, the governor of Trabzon tried to provide some special facilities for Crypto-Christians if they officially declare their religious identity. Apparently, French Consul of Trabzon put pressure on the government of Trabzon for the benefit of Kurumnis family. The political pressure from Christian countries helped

⁹⁹¹ Bayur Y. Hikmet, 1987, *Hindistan Tarihi*, Vol, 3, p. 487, TTK, Ankara

⁹⁹² Eli Simith and H.G.O. Dwight, 1833, *Armenia including a journey through Asia Minor and into Georgia and Persia*, p. 319, Vol. II. New York. The local song in Turkish was very interesting as follow: Long Street became dirty, Kurumlis became disbeliever. This also explained that before this event, despite the Ottoman awareness of secret religious identity, in order to provide peace for the all nations in the city, this social matter was kept in secret in Ottoman records. Original lyric: "Uzun sokak Çamur oldu/Kurumlilar gavur oldi".

⁹⁹³ Ibid, p.128.

Crypto-Christians to declare their secret Christian beliefs at the time of the declining Ottoman State.⁹⁹⁴ However, there was no pressure on the Christian society in the Ottoman period. As a multicultural state, the Ottoman Empire treated all nations with the same manner. Therefore, the old Greek names of suburbs like Santa, Party, and Kurumis did not change in Trabzon during the Ottoman period and are still used.⁹⁹⁵

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, some other Crypto-Christians declared their secret religious identities in Akdağ Madeni in Yozgat. This family was called Istavrili in the Ottoman archival correspondences. However, as understood from Turkish sources, Istavris family were also originally from Trabzon but went to Yozgat from the Istavri village in Trabzon in order to operate a mining company in Akdag Madeni in 1830.⁹⁹⁶ When they moved to Yozgat city, they were still performing their religious practices in Islam and attending military service like Muslim citizens. However, in the 1880 census of the Ottoman State, Istavri family members recorded with their Christian names in the official lists. This was found to be a normal event for the Ottoman administrators but shocked their Muslim neighbors in the city.⁹⁹⁷ Oddly enough, there were even some well-known Imams in this family like Mahmud Effendi who performed religious rituals at Mosques.⁹⁹⁸ Ottoman archival documents provide insightful information about Crypto-Christian families in Trabzon as follows:

Your Excellency,

As I have been informed that while Kurumi family in Torul was known as Muslim, they converted to Christianity with the encouragement of an orthodox Greek priest.⁹⁹⁹

Some other archival documents show evidence of Crypto-Christians who were Istavris being compelled by the Greek bishop to record themselves with Christian names in this region in the 19th century.¹⁰⁰⁰ Another archival document, this time released by the Ottoman state, reveals that Istavri families in Trabzon and Yozgat must be registered as they

⁹⁹⁴ Bilgin, 2010, p. 135.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 144.

⁹⁹⁶ Ottoman State Archives, DH. EUM. 3. ŞB. 8/54, İstavriyyun taifesi...

⁹⁹⁷ Bilgin, 2010, p. 161.

⁹⁹⁸ Ottoman State Arcives, Y. PRK. UM. 50/52.

⁹⁹⁹ Ottoman state Archives, İ. DH. . 517/35188/_7, Devletli efendim hazretleri, Torul kazasının kurum tabir olunan mahallatında ve bir de bu kazaya mensup Kürtün nahiyesinin bazı köylerinde vaktiyle kabul -i islam etmişler iken şimdi papaz teşvikatına külliyetli olarak irtidat etmek tasavvurunda bulunan kimseler olduğunu evvel ve ahir benzeiz de işitmişim.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ottoman State Archive, BEO 2971 /222812 T15/Za/1324 (Hijri) Akdağ Madeni kazasında sakin İstavrilerin tahrir-i cedidde sicill-i nüfusa İslam isimleriyle kayd olunmalarının men'i hususunun Rum Patrikliği'nden istida olunduğu.

want, namely, as Muslims or Christian, but their marriage relations with Christian families must also be declared according to the constitution, in order to establish which taxes they would be subject to paying, as explained later.¹⁰⁰¹

As far as is understood from one archival document, a Crypto-Christian Istavri family was regarded as Muslim and treated according to the Islamic law. After the Tanzimat reform, the Ottoman Greek orthodox Church kindly asked the Ottoman government to register them as Christians.¹⁰⁰² Beside this, archival documents demonstrate that the Ottoman State not only showed tolerance towards minorities in the Empire, but was careful to provide Christians with freedom of faith within their own community. Therefore, the Ottoman Government decided that they must be recorded as they want according to taxation policies in the census lists, because among them some members declared themselves as Christians but still paid tax as Muslims.¹⁰⁰³ For instance, due to disputes between the Catholic and Christian Churches in Jerusalem, in order to liberally perform their own religious rituals, upon their request, the Ottoman Sultan issued an imperial decree to separate the Churches for each of the religious congregations.¹⁰⁰⁴

On the other hand, the Sabbatean movement never revealed or proclaimed their distinctive identities as Sabbateans. Unlike Crypto-Christians, as a hidden religious group, Sabbateans lived in solidarity. One of the Sabbatean believers in Izmir provided interesting information with me during an interview. N Ongan said that “Sabbateans use particular terms such as ‘my lamb’ (kuzum) among themselves and thus show their loyalty to their faiths and co-religionists”. N. Ongan more importantly said that, “we believed that Sevi was the true Messiah and his messiahship was proclaimed by some Jewish and Muslim saints even before Sevi was born. Well-known 13th century Muslim saint, Yunus Emre revealed that in his poem as follows:

¹⁰⁰¹ Ottoman State Archive: BEO, 4326 /324419, 26/M /1333 (Hicrî) Trabzon vilayetindeki İstavrilerin Akdağ Madeni'ndeki İstavriler hakkında alınan karar dairesinde muameleye tabi tutulması ve bunların Rumlarla akrabalıklarından doğan evlatları hakkında da vech-i şer'i üzere muamele ifası lüzumu. (Harbiye, Adliye, Meşihat, Dahiliye, Maarif; İD/100-3) Ottoman State Archive: C...DH. 59 /2927, 22/B /1236 (Hijrî) Terk-i din ederek İslam olan ve Mehmed ismini alan birine İstanbul Tütün Gümrüğü malından olmak üzere Darbhane'den muhassas iki yüz kuruşun verilmesi.

¹⁰⁰² Ottoman State Archive, BEO 2971 /222812 T15/Za/1324 (Hijrî) Akdağ Madeni kazasında sakin İstavrilerin tahrir-i cedidde sicill-i nüfusa İslam isimleriyle kayd olunmalarının men'i hususunun Rum Patrikliği'nden istida olduğu.

¹⁰⁰³ Ottoman State Archive DH.EUM.6.Şb :4 /39 , 09/Za/1333 (Hijrî) Trabzon'da bulunan istavriyunların bir kısmının Rum cemaatine katıldığı, bir kısmının da müslüman tanındığı, hiçbirisinin başka mahallere ihraç edilmediği

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ottoman State Archive Tarih: DH.İ.UM.EK. 35 /94 , 29/N /1335 (Hijrî) Kudüs'de bulunan Protestan ve Katolik darüleytamların büyük bir haneye yerleştirilmeleri yüzünden, dini ayin yapmakta zorlandıklarından bahisle, bunların ayrı ayrı yerlerde dini ayin icra etmelerinin, temini için gerekli tedbirlerin alınması hakkında.

I did not come for material things,
My dealing is only for Sevi
My friend's refuge is in the bosom
I came to make it a happy place".¹⁰⁰⁵

Indeed, As N. Ongan stated that, thirteenth century Turkish Sufi Yunus Emre used the term Sevi in his poem. Some may interpret Sevi as "love" for that was its meaning in the old Turkish.¹⁰⁰⁶ On the other hand, Sabbateans interpret the poem as the Ahmadis would interpret some of the hadiths. They believed that Sevi stood for Shabbetai Tzvi, and regarded it as a sign that mention was already made of their Messiah in the 13th century. In the same way, Ahmadis also stated that there were several signs about the messiahship of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad before he was born.¹⁰⁰⁷

Sabbateans have lived as a more hidden society in the Jewish and Muslim communities. Although, Shabbetai Tzvi conversion to Islam, some sources prove that Shabbetai Tzvi asked for some religious texts for Youm Kepeer. In his letter, he requested for Jewish prayer books from the Jewish congregation when he was living in exile, in Uljun, Albania.¹⁰⁰⁸ This indicates that while Tzvi was promoting himself as a Muslim, while he was secretly praying as a Jew at his home. However, due to this dual lifestyle, Sabbateans were involved in many different Islamic groups and lived under this camouflage. For instance, Sabbatean relations with Muslim groups (tarikats) historically stems from Islamic mysticism within Mavlavi, Bekhtashi and Melami paths of Ottoman religious groups, which have always been seen as more reformist schools of thought in the Ottoman society.¹⁰⁰⁹

Other than religious influence, Sabbateans contributed to the renovation of the grave of the famous Ottoman Muslim Sheikh of the Halveti Dergahi in Uskudar, Aziz Mahmud Hudai Effendi. The main reason for this donation was that some Sabbatean people were members of this Islamic school. According to Sabbatean writer Zorlu, they continued their

¹⁰⁰⁵ Mr N.Ongan did not want me to declare his name in my study so therefore, with his permission, I indicate his initials in the thesis. In the original Turkish text, the poem reads as follows: Ben gelmedim dava için, Benim işim Sevi için, Dostun evi gönüllerdir, Gönüller yapmaya geldim, See, Selime D. Ameli 2014, *Bizim öykülerimiz, "Tevazunun şevkatli kollarında"* .p. 90, Vol. 7. Toronto

¹⁰⁰⁶ During the interview, when I discuss these Turkish terms with N O, he told me that Yunus Emre also used the common term "Aşk" namely love in his other poems but not in this poem, According to N. O, Yunus Emre particularly meant something else when he used the term Sevi in the poem. Indeed, like Yunus Emre's one of the most wellknown poems is called "Gel gör beni aşk neyledi" which in fact Yunus Emre preferred to use the term *Aşk* in his all other poems excluding one which he preferred to use Sevi term and for this reason, some Sabbateans like N.O got inspiration from this metaphorical poem.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Friedmann Yohanan 2003, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background*. pp. 147–153. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Zorlu, 1999, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 30.

religious rituals in the Halvati madrasa of Aziz Mahmud Hudai until 1924, when the Ottoman-Greek exchange took place.¹⁰¹⁰ Additionally, Zorlu mentioned that Tzvi also interacted with well-known Melami poet Niyazi Misri who had a religious school in Sultan Ahmet's area in Istanbul.¹⁰¹¹ Therefore, many Melami Sheikhs and members were actually originally from the Sabbatean community.¹⁰¹² It was later found that some Islamic religious lyrics were actually composed by Sabbatean believers because the lyrics often contained other metaphorical meanings. The Kapancı group recite this Hebrew- Turkish- Ladino poem during their prayer at home:

The door of the heaven is made with jewelry
Yosef (flower) is itself, konvenyanos konvedrad hey,¹⁰¹³
Sabbathai is the crown of my head
Let's light candles, we will see our future.¹⁰¹⁴

This poem highlights that Sabbateans even metaphorically composed some poems and secretly explained their thoughts in the poems. As time went by, this hidden religious sect were as an illegal organization by conservative Muslims and considered to be a spy community who secretly helped the enemies of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, radical Islamists in Turkey always saw Sabbatian people as another branch of Zionism in Turkey.¹⁰¹⁵ Thereupon, on 10th January of 1924, A Sabbatean, Karakas Rustu, sent some letters to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and revealed the current situation of the Sabbatean people at present. This social issue even circulated in national parliament among politicians in Turkey.¹⁰¹⁶

It is likely that the Sabbateans' most controversial subject is one of the religious rituals which contains marginal sexual practices during the religious celebration of the 21st of March, also know as the "lamb celebration". Not much is known about this ritual and it might be even an allegation in order to damage the Sabbateans' image in society. This subject must be carefully analyzed from religious perspective of the matter in order to rectify this social issue. Sabbateans have always followed Jewish religious books as well as some textbooks

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid, p. 41.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid, p.42.

¹⁰¹² Ibid, p. 70.

¹⁰¹³ It is klasik Hebrew or Ladino.

¹⁰¹⁴ In the original text, Cennetin kapısı, cevahirdir yapısı. Yosef açar kemdisi, konvenyanos konvedrad hey, Başım tacı Sabetay hey başım tacı Sabetay, Direk, direk muımları, Göreceğiz onları, Kim görürse onları, Ibid. p.38

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid, p. 31.

¹⁰¹⁶ It is rumoured that at this time, many family documents in Sabbatean community were deliberately destroyed in order to hide their religious identity. Other than this, some family documents burned in the great fire in Selaniko in 1917.

produced from Shabbetai Tzvi's own writing to date but not found any text in the Sabbatean community regarding this episode so far.

Sabbatean scholar Ilgaz Zorlu states that the freedom to engage in sexual relations is explained in a complicated way in Torah.¹⁰¹⁷ According to Ilgaz Zorlu, his grandfather, Semsî Effendi was a teacher of religion (akaid-i diniyye) in Fevziye School. He aimed to transmit this kind of hidden knowledge to new generations within the Sabbatean community. Semsî Effendi moved to Istanbul from Salonica and died in 1917. He was buried in Bulbulderesi cemetery in Uskudar.¹⁰¹⁸ Zorlu emphasized that Prophet David had an affair with a married woman and had a child from her. He mentioned that this might cause gossip among enemies of Sabbateans because it seems there were possibilities in old Abrahamic religions for illicit relations.¹⁰¹⁹ Indeed, some Christian scholars have argued that in the Old Testament, David and Bathsheba's scandalous affair is a complicated story to explain from a religious perspective.¹⁰²⁰

Similarly, in the Torah, there is an illustration regarding Prophet Lot and his affairs with his daughters.¹⁰²¹ It is written in the Torah, "And Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him". Moreover, the first born said unto the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in until as after the manner of all the earth; come and let us make our father drink wine and we will lie with him that we may preserve seed of our father. They made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father".¹⁰²² Dr Reisenberger has explained this verse from a socio-religious perspective and noted that the role a woman played in the Torah has been neglected by scholars so far, and rather, attention has been given to prophethood.¹⁰²³ In Islamic literature, Lut ibn Haran was a Prophet of God in the Qur'an and lived in Sodom and Gomorrah.¹⁰²⁴ His time was narrated as a demonstration of disapproval of rape and homosexuality in Islamic history.¹⁰²⁵ However, there is no controversial statement in the Qur'an with regard to Lot and his marginal relations with his daughter. According to some

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid, p. 20. See also, Öztürk Yaşar Nuri, 2015 *Tanrı, Akıl ve Ahlaktan başka kutsal tanımayan bir inanç, Deizm* p. 20 Yeni Boyut Yayınları, İstanbul.

¹⁰¹⁸ Zorlu, 1999, p. 20.

¹⁰¹⁹ Torah 2 Samuel, 11/12 p. 287 Bible Society of South Africa

¹⁰²⁰ Coogan Michael, 2009, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 209 Zondervan, Newyork.

¹⁰²¹ Genesis, 19: 30-38

¹⁰²² Genesis, 19:30-33

¹⁰²³ Reisenberger Azila, 2000 *Biblical Women, The Non Existant Entity*, ; A Study in Rape Cases, p.57 Vol, 6, No, 2 Universtiy of Durban

¹⁰²⁴ Quran, 26: 161

¹⁰²⁵ Quran, 11:82

historians, the life of Prophet David and Lot might have inspired Sabbateans for their marginal sexual relations.¹⁰²⁶

However, as explained already above, there is no written source and religious text about the lamb celebration.¹⁰²⁷ Ilgaz Zorlu stated in his well-known book, that no sources available to prove that the night of the 21st of March is a real story. Zorlu also interviewed a Sabbatean and wrote that despite the existence of the 21st March religious celebrations, there is no such exchange with women during the prayer.¹⁰²⁸ Scholem only assumed that this marginal religious ritual might exist.¹⁰²⁹ According to Zorlu, almost all sources regarding the night of 21st of March were fabricated based on rumours and repeated by scholars from the past to the present. Indeed this lamb feast seems to be abused by some writers to humiliate Sabbateans in society.¹⁰³⁰

The Ahmadiyya movement in Islam or Sabbateans in Judaism cannot change the fundamental structures of the religions. Despite certain rules in Islam and Judaism, as emphasized by all the holy books of Abrahamic religions like the Qur'an and Torah, only God (Creator) can decide who is a believer or unbeliever at the end of the world. Human beings have no right to label other human beings about corrupting or violating religion. Otherwise they might make a fatal mistake like killing a divine authority like Jesus, or great scholars of their time such as Socrates or Hallajee Mansoor. While all Abrahamic religions emphasize religious tolerance, radicalism cannot be acceptable in society.

6.6 Conclusion

A detailed history of the Sabbatean Movement, the most important messianic movement in Judaism since the destruction of the Second Temple has long been lacking in Jewish historiography.¹⁰³¹ According to Jewish beliefs, the Messiah would be “reviled, persecuted, and made to suffer”. These were some of the signs whereby he would be

¹⁰²⁶ Zorlu, 2010, p.62.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid, p.63.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid, p. 63

¹⁰²⁹ Scholem, 1973, p. 383.

¹⁰³⁰ I have interview a Sabbateans gentleman N. Ongan during my visit in Turkey and he stated that family does not know anything about this rituaels but we only praye in 21th of March with candels and perform our religious ritual which is al about reading and reciting holy scipture. He said that, in Sabbatean tradition, there are some particular signs to show respect their past. For instance, calling each ather “*kuzum*” in Turkish means my lamb which is also similar to saying of Jesus Christ. Similarly, Sabbateans used the Osman name based on the tradition of Osman Baba.

¹⁰³¹ Scholem, 1973, p.IX.

recognized, and these signs clearly manifested themselves in the life of Shabbetai Tzvi.¹⁰³² According to his believers, he was the Messiah chosen and appointed for the age.¹⁰³³

As a historical matter, the Sabbatean movement has been knowingly neglected by scholars for some reasons. One of them is about the general view on the Sabbatean movement, which is commonly a negative one in world society. Second, the Prime Minister of Israel, Ishak Ben Zvi was only interested in the Sabbatean movement and led some scholars to researching the history of this secret religious movement in the 1950s.¹⁰³⁴

This chapter has attempted to respond to the general problem of all religious minorities in the example of Sabbatean movement in Judaism and in comparison to Crypto-Christianity, and Ahmadiyya movement in Islam. As explained in the second chapter, due to Turkish tolerance towards Muslim and/or non-Muslim religious congregations, several communities have flourished up until today. This understanding largely comes from the socio-cultural background of Turkish people in history.

The story of religious minorities is already a controversial issue from a religious perspective. Certainly, new movement in any religions will bring about more argument and contestation. However, the essence of all religions has been structured to bring peace and salvation to the world. In this sense, the recognition of the marginal beliefs of the minorities should be regarded as threat for the main body of the religion. Therefore, the focal point must not be about degeneration of beliefs but rather about the possibilities that exist to dialogue with marginal groups.

Managing these religious groups without separating them from one another must be considered as a noteworthy act of religious tolerance towards other minorities. This example in the Ottoman history shows that living in the same place with different minority groups is in fact not impossible, but more importantly this may also enrich the society with diverse influences and perspectives.

If one contrasts the Sabbatean and Ahmadiyya movements, then the question arises: What makes the Ahmadiyya movement in the Muslim world more complicated than that of Sabbateans, to the extent that they are not tolerated in certain countries? Is that a sign of “fundamentalism” in the Muslim World or “heresy” within the Ahmadiyya Movement?

¹⁰³² Kastein, 1931, p.67.

¹⁰³³ Ibid, p.70.

¹⁰³⁴ Zorlu, 1999, p. 24.

One of the main religious misconceptions surfaces from the subjective interpretation of holy texts within and across religions. There is no religion superior to other according to believers. The religion must bring harmony not disharmony among human beings to unify the World. We have one God in all religions. He is our Creator, to whom we attribute different names based on our mother tongue.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the importance of Ottoman tolerance towards minority groups and its effect on social life during the Ottoman Era. From a religious point of view, why do minority groups become marginal? In this section, extreme views within religious societies, political involvement and as well national radicalism are discussed from a socio-religious perspective which strongly influences social life in public. Late Ottoman era and the emergence of the modern Turkey in the twentieth century are the main timeframe within which the subject matter is analysed.

7.2 State Policies for religious minorities

It can be said that Sabbateans have been respected throughout Ottoman history. As the last Islamic Empire, the Ottoman State respected all minor ethnic and religious denominations throughout history.

At present, the Ahmadiyya movement is perceived as a controversial group by the majority of Muslims. In 1953, following some instigation by particular religious parties, anti-Ahmadiyya revolts broke out in Pakistan, killing many Ahmadis and damaging their properties.¹⁰³⁵ In 1974, a violent campaign, began against the Community in Pakistan.¹⁰³⁶ In 1984, the President of Pakistan issued the anti-Ahmadiyya Ordinance XX and several other attacks on the Ahmadi mosque in Mandi Bahauddin in 2005 or Lahore attacks on May 2010 showed radical actions and violence against the Ahmadiyya Community.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³⁵ Just like Ahmadis in Pakistan, Chinese Muslims in Myanmar (also known as Burma) have been persecuted by radical Buddhist believers. While Buddhism seems to be one of the most peaceful religion in the world, extremists even in Buddhism somewhat misinterpreted religious scripture and several times attack minority Muslim community in Myanmar. In the same context, some Christian and Jewish communities were unfairly persecuted for ethnic or religious purposes.

¹⁰³⁶ Balzani, Marzia. 17 April 2016, "*Localising Diaspora: The Ahmadi Muslims and the Problem of Multi-sited Ethnography*". Retrieved, https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Persecution_of_Ahmadis.html

¹⁰³⁷ Constitution of Pakistan Art. 260 (3), added by Constitution (Second Amendment) Act, 1974 (XLIX of 1974) S. 3 and amended by Constitution (Third Amendment) Order, 1985 (President's Order No. 24 of 1985) p. 6

Still, the Ahmadis follow Islamic principles such as “the pen is mightier than the sword” and try to contribute to humanity with this understanding.¹⁰³⁸ There are many successful people among them in the world. One of them was Mohammad Abdus Salam who was the only Ahmadi Muslim to receive the Nobel Prize for Physics. However, in spite of this success, due to his association with the Ahmadiyya sect, he has been ignored.¹⁰³⁹

The question is why the State does not seek to accept the Ahmadiyya movement as was the case for the Ottoman Empire when it welcomed the Sabbatean movement in history. The Turkish State not only welcomed minority groups, but also benefitted from the skills they brought to modernize and enrich society through their own initiatives. It is not surprising that many ambassadors in the Ottoman period were non-Muslim citizens because of their linguistic skills. In modern Turkey, minorities have continued to contribute to the state as writers and politicians. For instance, the Sabbatean Ipekci family established the first cinema in Turkey. Also, the first publishing houses were established by Sabbatean journalist Ahmad Emin Yalman who contributed to the development of modern journalism in Turkey. Similarly, well-known Sabbateans like the Minister of foreign affairs, Ismail (Shumel) Cem ipekçi, Rahsan (Rashel) Ecevit, primary minister Tansu Ciller, minister of economy Kemal (Samuel) Dervish, journalist Cengiz Candar, journalist Canan Barlas, journalist Yasar Aksoy have contributed to Turkish society with their works and writings. Therefore it can be said that these laws were implemented in Turkish state without distinguishing anyone, in the example of the Sabbatean movement.¹⁰⁴⁰ Ottoman rulers thus developed understanding for non-Muslims (dhimmi) societies within the same territories through their state policies.¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁸ Ahmadi Muslims promote their events in their official web sides, Ahmadiyya's Contribution to National Development; <http://www.jalsasalana.org/ghana/2004/news1.html>. See also; Ahmadiyya Muslim Contributions to Promoting Islam for All Muslims; <https://themuslimtimes.info/2017/03/04/ahmadiyya-muslim-contributions-to-promoting-islam-for-all-muslims/>

¹⁰³⁹ Gordon Fraser, Cosmic Anger, 2008, *Abdus Salam: The First Muslim Nobel Scientist*, p. 119. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Except wealth taxation policy was excluded in 1942. On the other hand, some corrupted businessman like Halil Bezmen runaway to America and said that “I am Sabbatean and have received social political pressure in Turkey”. According to Zorlu, this was fabricated by him to legitimate his escape from Turkey. See, *Ilgaz Zorlunun Savunması*, p. 7 Secret documents about turkish sabetaist followers" Eski bir Sabetayist, Sabetayistleri Deşifre ediyor: *Ilgaz Zorlunun itirafları*, <http://www.adanapost.com/eski-bir-sabetayist-sabetayistleri-desifre-ediyor-ilgaz-zorlunun-itiraflari-20426h.htm>

¹⁰⁴¹ Therefore historian Tonnybee said that, “*The Ottoman institution came perhaps as near as anything in real life could to realizing the ideal of Plato's Republic*”. See; Toynbee, 1989, p.178. However Andalusia Empire had had also similar approaches towards minorities in Spain like Ottoman period.

7.2.1 Ottoman State policies

Religious tolerance towards minority groups can be traced back to cultural and traditional rules and policies in Asia Minor before the Ottoman period, during Seljuk era in Anatolia. As explained before, the background of this tolerance dates back to the first Turkish Jewish State in history, Khazar Empire in 7th century. Besides this, the Turkish-Jewish Empire Khazar is an extraordinary example in history for Muslim Turks who positively recognize other religious communities from a wider perspective. With the same understanding, Seljuk Turks established a multicultural state with a similar understanding of Khazar Turks in Anatolia. Studies show that the minorities lived comfortable lives in Anatolia during the Ottoman times. Most probably contemporary religious scholars like Jelaleddin Rumi, Hajee Bektashi Weli or Sufi Yunus Emre also provided a peaceful mystic atmosphere and general social understanding towards all other minorities in Anatolia. This cultural legacy built a pleasant understanding towards “others” in successive Turkish rules.

Tolerance towards all religious minorities was determined by the Ottoman constitution much before the Messianic declaration of Shabbetai Tzvi in 1666. Ottoman Sultan Bayezit II issued the imperial decree to rescue Jewish people from Spain and settle them in Salonika, Istanbul, and Izmir in 1492. The most likely ancestors of Shabbetai Tzvi came aboard the same ship during this time and settled in Izmir. In this tolerant atmosphere, Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews integrated into the Ottoman social life. Sultan Bayezit’s father Sultan Mehmet II developed a tolerant State through particular policies during his reign. In 1458 for the Christians religious leaders in Jerusalem, in 1478 for the Bosnian priests, he declared the policy of ‘firman’ or religious freedom. Mehmet II went as far as to state that, “whoever abolishes this rule, hopefully, Allah will punish him” which indicates his sincerity and tolerance towards non-Muslim minorities, and his intolerance towards extremists.¹⁰⁴² From this point of view, Prof Yaron points that how Muslims treated non-Muslims according to the Ottoman law in Ottoman period.

The syncretistic and pluralistic character of the Ottoman State encouraged minority religions and cultures to integrate into the majority civilization and the process of powwowing from it was accelerated. It is clear that there was a constant flow of Jewish converts to Islam, but we cannot assess the dimensions of this phenomenon – with one outstanding case, that of Sabbatean believers in the last third of the 17th century.¹⁰⁴³

¹⁰⁴² Kazııcı Ziya, 1985, *İslâmî ve sosyal açıdan vakıflar*. p. 111. Marifet Yayinlari, Istanbul.

¹⁰⁴³ I am very thankful to Professor Yaron who has shared his valuable thoughts with me during my researches in Israel and also provided this source for me for my academic studies. Eyal Ginio and Elie Podeh, 2014, *The*

Indeed, pluralism was one of the key principles upheld by the Ottoman society, which was legitimized through the millet system. This system allowed diverse communities to have their own separate courts, based on their religious faiths. In this regard, each personal court might approximate what Prof Ramadan would describe as the “shura”, a “space which allows Islam the management of pluralism”.¹⁰⁴⁴ As extensively explained in the second chapter, Turks in history have always established multicultural and religious states which provided a broader understanding towards other nations and their cultural presence. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire welcomed the Jewish people when they were deported from Spain in 1492. The Jewish community was allowed to live freely in the Ottoman Empire and established remarkable relations within the Ottoman palace. This positive approach towards Jews was coupled with freedom of thought. Therefore, a Rabbi of Izmir like Shabbetai Tzvi was allowed by the Ottoman statesmen to operate freely when he proclaimed his messiahship, whereas in many Western countries, as well as in the American and the African continents, some Jewish and Christian Messiahs were exiled or killed by the state authorities. For this reason, it is mentioned earlier that even ancient Greek philosopher “Socrates was charged as guilty for corrupting the minds of the young and believing in the gods who were not recognized by the State”. This understanding made Socrates a scapegoat in the eye of State, and a similar viewpoint was adopted towards marginal believers from the past to the present.

With its unique constitutional structure, the Ottoman State managed to support many nations and religious communities and allow them to declare their own thoughts in society. Tzvi’s case could be explained through the universal state policy in terms of the accepting all nations as citizens. However as mentioned the previous chapter, at the end of the Ottoman Empire, national Turkish society began to find reasons for the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

7.2.2 Policies in Modern Turkey under Ataturk

During the time of Ataturk, the State displayed tolerance towards minorities such as the Sabbateans, because Ataturk knew that the latter were remarkable businessmen and politicians always who supported the establishment of modern Turkey. However, some radical writers even criticized Ataturk for his amiable behaviour towards minorities. His attitude mirrored the tolerance prevailing in the Ottoman period, for Ataturk allowed

Ottoman Middle East, p. 184 , Studies in the honor of Amnon Cohen, (Yaron Ben-Naeh, Urban Encounters; The Muslim-Jewish Case in the Ottoman Empire, Leiden.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ramadan, Tariq, 2001, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*, p. 81, Islamic foundation, UK.

minorities to attend into the Turkish National Assembly as parliamentarians. One of his most trustworthy parliamentarians were of Armenian origin, Berç Keresteciyan¹⁰⁴⁵ Greek (Rum) origin Dr Nikola Taptas¹⁰⁴⁶ Jewish origin Dr Abravaya Marmaralı¹⁰⁴⁷, and later, Ottoman Jews such as Prof Avram Galanti were most prominent non-Muslim minority parliamentarians in Ataturk's environment.

Despite state policies of religious freedom and tolerance, socially, a new wave of suspicion of minority groups was set in motion following the rise of separatist sentiments in Modern Turkey.

7.2.3 New policies in line with German Nazi policies

After Ataturk's death and especially during the Second World War, the Turkish policy was influenced by the German Nazi policies. This is one of the rare instances in Turkish history where based on the Nazi policies, a taxation policy was imposed in 1942 on minority groups such as the Jews and Sabbateans under the name of Varlık Vergisi.¹⁰⁴⁸ The 10th law of the Turkish constitution clearly explains that: "everybody, irrespective of their religion, language, skin color, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion, and sect, is equal in the state."¹⁰⁴⁹ This sheds light on the understanding among religious and ethnic societies in Turkey. Despite this law, temporary rules such as taxation policy in the Turkish National Governments between 1940- 1950 also caused hatred against minorities in Turkish society.¹⁰⁵⁰ According to Faik Ökte, Secretary to the Minister of Economy of Turkey in 1942, Turkish citizens were secretly marked by officers as Dönme (D) Muslim (M) and Non-Muslims (G) and paid tax accordingly in the book of taxation.¹⁰⁵¹ It can be said that this was a result of rising Turkish national radicalism which was against the traditional Turkish hospitality throughout history.

¹⁰⁴⁵ He had a medal from War of independence. He fought against Western World during the WWI and contributed to establishment of modern Turkey. Ataturk said that Berç Keresteciyan is one of our exemplar Armenian citizens from Ottoman period. His existence will be only enriched our assembly. He received honorary surname "Turker" from Ataturk and stayed in Turkish National Assembly in between 1935-1943

¹⁰⁴⁶ Dr. Nikola Taptas was also one of the special medical doctors for Ataturk till his death. He occupied a chair in Turkish Assembly between 1935-1943

¹⁰⁴⁷ Abravaya Marmaralı was also special medical doctor for M. Kemal Ataturk. He acted as one of the most active par-lamenters in Turkish National Assembly in between 1935-1943

¹⁰⁴⁸ It means wealth tax for richness only once in 1942 in Turkey. See, Ökte Faik, 1951, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, p. 47. İstanbul.

¹⁰⁴⁹ See; Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf

¹⁰⁵⁰ Unfortunately the politicization of religion has showed its face in recent Turkish Government between 2002 and 2017. In this regard, this period looks like the decade of religious radicalism in the Turkish state in the 1950s.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ökte, 1951, p. 47.

7.2.4 Emergence of religious radicalism based on politicization of Islam

After the decline of the nationalist government (Republican People's Party) in 1950, a religious government (Democratic Party) won the elections and used Islam as a political tool. Sympathisers of the new government began to criticise the previous secular party and began to damage Ataturk's statues. Under the pressure of the opposition party as well as the Turkish army, the Democratic Party had to institute a new law to protect Ataturk's image.¹⁰⁵²

Then, a political issue called 6-7 September events or Istanbul pogrom followed a policy seeking to address the conflicts initiated by Turks of Greek origin in Cyprus Island. This policy also brought up religious propaganda against non-Muslims minorities and ethnicities in Turkish society in 1955.¹⁰⁵³ On the fifth of September, attempts were made to bomb Ataturk's house, though there was no certainty that the attack was organized by the Turks of Greek origin. This event acted as a catalyst to the Istanbul pogroms which initially targeted the latter (Christian), but also affected the Armenians (Christians) and Jews. As a result, the efforts of the national government of the 1940s and conservative government of 1950s were undermined by the politicians of the time and negatively affected religious minorities as well.¹⁰⁵⁴ Due to religious extremism, Jewish scholars, who had been invited to Turkey by Ataturk from Germany, left Turkey and moved to Israel and other parts of the world.

In the 60s, a coup d'état by the Turkish army put an end to overt religious radicalism by sentencing the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes to death.

As such, state policies are an important consideration in understanding the status of minority groups. In some countries, these policies are influenced by two factors, religious radicalism and national extremism. In such cases, the politicization of religion, in other words the use a religious lens for governance and decision making purposes, and national extremism go against the tenets of secular, democratic states. As seen above, such policies are also

¹⁰⁵² Nokta Dergisi, 22 Jan 1989, *Ataturk'u Koruma Kanunu 5816*, p. 62 Istanbul

¹⁰⁵³ Zorlu, 2010, p. 80.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid, p.161 (In spite of this unpleasant situation, a Sephardim Jewish businessman, Şabat Levi said that in his interview " I have forgiven Turkish government at the time because at least Ismet İnönü saved Jews from Nazist Germany" See" Milliyet Gazetesi, 29.01. 2012, "*Varlık Vergisini affettim çünkü inönü bizi Hitlerden kurtardı.*" Miraç Z. Özkartal.)

against values of social tolerance and have a bearing on the status and welfare of minority groups in those countries.¹⁰⁵⁵

7.3 The paradox of Messiahship

Central to this thesis is the question of what messiahship means for its believers and non-believers. While the concept of Messiahship or Mahdship is prevalent in all Abrahamic religions, one still wonders why most Messianic claimants have been criticized by societies through the ages. While Messiahs claim to preach goodness and bring new revelations, historically, it has often been the case that they in turn get persecuted for deviating from the norm. They are expected to be figures that are larger than life performing miracles, and yet as soon as they perform the unexpected, they may get labelled as deviant or false. From a mainstream perspective, their action may be seen as heterodoxy, which is something unexpected by some in the orthodox world. This is the first paradox. Figure 5 offers a visual representation of the typical life cycle of a Messiah.

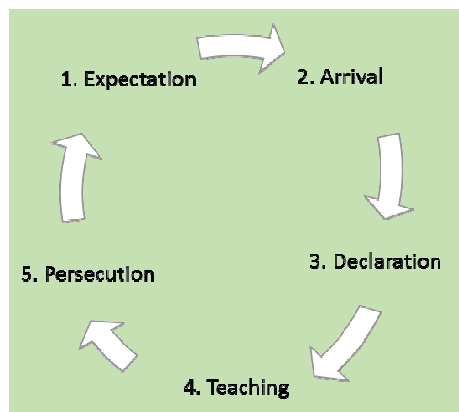


Figure 5 The typical life cycle of a Messiah

In this figure, the first step is the messianic expectation, but it is also the last step of the cycle as believers await the arrival of the next Messiah. In the case of Tzvi for example, after his birth, he fulfilled the prophecy about the time of his Messiahship. He then imparted spiritual teachings to his followers. However, due to an interesting turn of events where he appeared to defy the status quo and the sovereignty of the State, he was subjected to same fate as many of the other Messiahs. Fortunately, his conversion to Islam rescued him from further persecution, but it hampered his messianic fervour, and he now only addressed his followers

¹⁰⁵⁵ Foucault Michel, 1982, *The subject and Power*, p.21 University of Chicago Press.

secretly. His death could be seen as the beginning of a new cycle for his successor, the next Messiah.

The same cycle would apply to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. After his death, his followers started their Caliphate to designate Caliphs to continue his spiritual leadership. While the Caliph cannot be equated to a Messiah, he is filling up the position as a shadow of the Messiah, in the interim while waiting for the next Messiah.

In the context of messianism in Christianity, Jesus Christ was persecuted for challenging Orthodoxy in his environment. According to the Bible, Jesus was killed in order to bring an end to his spiritual activities, as he was not recognized as a divine authority. However, his spiritual message lived on through his twelve followers or apostles, who spread his word across the globe, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What is surprising is that the movement expanded to such an extent that the minority movement was to become one of the largest mainstream religions in the Abrahamic faiths, Christianity. The fact that Jesus was persecuted and said to die to liberate all from their sins, also added more appeal to his message, rather than undermine it. This is the second paradox, namely that a marginal religion might over time become more popular and mainstream, precisely because of its marginalization in history. In this, such messianic movements could be seen as having life of their own, transcending the life of their founder, and could be likened to a phoenix rising from the ashes, and reaching new heights, in terms of a growing congregation.

Further, having more followers is not an indication of how righteous a religious group is. The spiritual experience within a religious group cannot be quantified. In the South African context, a white minority ruled a non-white majority during the apartheid era from 1948 to 1994. As a minority group, the anti-democratic white regime governed all South Africans for more than fifty years. In this case, the majority was an oppressed group which struggled to attain its freedom. Eventually in 1994, with the democratic elections, all citizens were given the right to vote, and Nelson Mandela won the election.

Moreover, there was a deliberate use of pseudo-race science to discriminate against “non-white” populations. Religion, especially as presented by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was used as a political tool to further entrench differences between the White elite and the Black majority. Over time, the persecution of Blacks and the notion the DRC imparted a ‘white man’s religion’, caused a number of Black slaves to convert to Islam as a form of

retaliation. Hermann writes that, “Many slaves turned to Islam in a rejection of the Christian church that was lukewarm about baptizing the colonist slaves or campaigning for more freedom for the slaves”.¹⁰⁵⁶ During the Apartheid regime, it was evident that the majority population i.e. Blacks were marginalised by an oppressive State. This shows that regardless of whether a group is in minority or majority, marginalization depends on the power play between them, and the group wielding more power socially or politically generally has an upperhand. This socio-political instance could be used as an analogy to better grasp the dynamics of messianic movements, and to debunk the myth that the minority is always marginalised.

Therefore, messianic movements in all the Abrahamic religions must be re-analyzed without any pre-judgment or list of expectations, because as seen in history, the persecution of messianic groups is not going to end the messianic thought, but is most likely going to act as a catalyst for the followers to establish their movement. On the other side, if they are allowed to establish their religious sect, this will enable the majority to understand another dimension of their religious thought. This amiable approach might also help society to live in diversity and pluralism, which is possibly the message of all religious leaders.

7.4 The plight of Donnes

It is evident from the archival documents that in the absence of State policies or as a result of socio-religious pressures, Sabbateans may need to hide their religious identity and feign to be Muslim on the outside. This dual identity has sometimes caused them to be labelled as Donme, or turncoat, that is, someone with questionable character. Navigating this dual identity, while maintaining secrecy about one’s Sabbatean ties, could be quite daunting, as one can displease neither Muslim nor Jewish or Sabbatean congregations. Readers may find it ironic that while the purpose of Tzvi’s messianic movement is redemption, it has required that his followers go into hiding or put on a performance.

However, according to the Sabbateans, these trials are all a test of their piety. In fact, even the conversion to another religion is regarded as an act of piety, because the hardships entailed in the process of conversion are seen as a form a sacrifice for spiritual progress. The difficulties faced by the Sabbateans after conversion are exacerbated by the fact that they still maintain their ties with the previous faith, hence holding dual religious identities.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Gilomee Hermann & Mbenga Bernard, 2007, *New History of South Africa*, p. IX, Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Likewise, the Melamis of a Sufi order *Melamiyyat*, also had dual identities but within the same religion.¹⁰⁵⁷ *Melamis* usually preferred to hide their devotion for God, and they would deliberately embarrass themselves in public in an attempt to destroy their ego, which was another way to prove their level of piety. Their modest principles in their daily lives appealed to the Sabbateans, and as a result, in the seventeenth century especially, the *Melamiyyat* community received many members from the Sabbatean movement. After conversion, in this case as well, Sabbateans continued to carry dual identities, which has been expressed on some gravestones in Bulbulderesi Cemetery in Istanbul as the burden of silence.¹⁰⁵⁸

In this way, religious conversion on the part of Sabbateans took different forms. Rabbi Jacob Frank, another messianic claimant after Tzvi, converted to Christianity to give a larger spiritual purpose to his existence, and followed on the footsteps of his predecessor. Thus, contrary to orthodox views, marginal religious communities like Sabbateans or Crypto-Christians found themselves with a more spiritual disposition as a result of having dual religious identities.

7.5 Conclusion

Minority religious movements in world society have often been regarded as marginal groups in public. However as explained earlier, radical religious understanding and extreme national approaches instigate negative actions towards minorities but also catalyze the marginalization of religious groups. Despite the Islamic foundation of the constitution, the Ottoman Empire successfully managed to rule minority religious groups and nations without considering them as marginal. This factor demonstrates that extreme understandings and movements have been shaped according to national and religious structures of the states in world history.

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis seeks to address particular questions with regard to the religious beliefs and general approaches towards minority communities. One of the questions seeks to shed light on when and how Ottoman Jewish relations began in history. This question highlights an important historical fact around the reasons for the Ottoman Empire to allow a Jewish Rabbi to increase his popularity as a Messiah. The chapter also outlines the paradox of Messiahship, the typical life cycle of a Messiah and the identity challenges of the Sabbateans as “Donme”.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ocak, 2010, p. 171.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Sisman, 2004, p. 135.

CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Sabbateanism is the most interesting and controversial minority religious congregation in Jewish history. This marginal religious sect is also mistakenly called the sect of Mohammedan Jews, and in Western literature, the term Sabbateanism became popularly used to refer to the said movement. Its emergence, establishment, development and enduring nature as a living religious sect must be well-understood in terms of its socio-cultural impact in Ottoman Turkish society. Similarly, the Ahmadiyya movement has struggled to survive in its birthplace, India.¹⁰⁵⁹ On the one hand, a marginal sect like Sabbateanism found a space to flourish in the Ottoman society and remains active to this day. On the other hand, the Ahmadiyya followers have been persecuted from their homeland and are struggling to live in Pakistan. This leads one to ask the following questions: What made Ottomans different and what led such a powerful empire to allow such marginal movement to flourish in history? What makes Ahmadis unacceptable, such that they cannot be tolerated by the state? As it happened in the Ottoman history, how can the State accommodate marginal movement for the welfare of all its citizens?

8.2 Summary of findings

Through the case study of Sabbateanism, and a comparative analysis of various other “marginal” movement, the thesis has analysed their socio-political challenges. It has also discussed how extreme nationalism and religious radicalism may create if not exacerbate animosity against minority groups.

This thesis illustrates that while the Ottoman Empire succeeded in accommodating marginal groups in the sixteenth or seventeenth century due to their elaborate State policies, today’s states are less tolerant when dealing with people from diverse backgrounds. What is the ideal society type for all human beings? Living in square houses with strict rules or living within multicultural mosaic communities in the same region? Certainly, people’s marginal identities should not make them controversial in society. These measures are usually determined by the majority.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Present day Pakistan.

The Ottoman's approach towards the other religious communities and minority groups can be studied further in order to be more sympathetic towards current controversial groups such as the Ahmadiyya movement in the Muslim World. This can only be achieved with tolerance, dialogue and understanding towards "others" in an unequal and divided world.

While Sabbateans and hidden Christian groups were welcomed by the Ottoman State due to national structure of modern Turkey, its successive rulers could not provide the same positive approach towards them. For this reason, the ruling system of the Ottoman Empire must be well examined in order to understand its administration of minority groups with an overarching sense of tolerance and respect.

While an ideal state may implement the fairest of policies, it is also incumbent upon individuals in society to honour these. While the Ottoman State sought to accommodate minority groupings, socially, they did face some challenges due to different religious understandings, in this case, around the notion of Messiahship. Conceptually then, the thesis interrogates the notion of the Messiah. Who is a Messiah and what makes him or her a false Messiah, or what makes him or her rejected and accepted by mainstream groupings? It highlights some of the paradoxes of Messiahship without seeking to condemn or defend any particular sect.

Likewise, it sheds light on the plight of those individuals within minority religious movement, and how they navigate their hidden, dual and sometimes contradictory identities, in order to manage appearances and gain social acceptance in a multicultural context, especially by those in mainstream Abrahamic movement.

8.3 Recommendations for further research

The myth of modernization and technological advancement – we are actually regressing – makes us question the very notion of civilization. People are being persecuted and killed because of their marginal movement. There is an apt example in history, the Ottoman Empire, which treated minority groups fairly. However, presently in some contexts, extreme nationalism occasions instances of prejudice. Here are some recommendations for further research:

1. How do state policies influence society and how do religious issues become political?
2. From a sociological perspective, what are the risks of accepting marginal groups into society in the modern context?

3. Are the origins of radicalism in Abrahamic religions to be found in human nature or in the religious scripts?
4. What are the views of Sabbateans or Ahmadis about their own sect and about the majority movement/ religions today?

8.4 Conclusion

The way Sabbateanism developed and flourished among Muslims under the Ottoman rule is actually in part due to the Ottoman Empire's tolerance towards minority religious groups in society. Therefore, not only Sabbateanism but also other dual religious communities were given free reign to explore and define their religious allegiances and identities by the Ottoman authorities throughout Ottoman history. Similarly, Crypto-religious congregations in Christianity like Kurumi, Istavri families in Black Sea region and some Christian families in Albania secretly practised their religious customs up until the twentieth century. Despite the Ottoman's state's awareness about the existence of minority religious groups, and at times their marginalization by society, the State policy enforced measures to mitigate any form of social or political discrimination against them. These Crypto-Christians were not declared as heretical by the State, whereas, members of another minority religious group in Islam, the Ahmadiyya movement, were treated harshly by members of the Muslim world due to their so-called misinterpretations of Islam. While Ahmadis have been persecuted in their home country, they are leading peaceful and prosperous lives in countries such as Israel, Canada and United Kingdom.

New sources bring a new dimension to the field but more importantly provide an opportunity to better analyze the subject matter within a broader religious and socio-political context. As mentioned earlier, marginal groups in society must be embraced by the State and democratically included into social life for the welfare of the nations and the benefit of the State. The other issue arises when those marginal groups are separated from the public so as not to create further animosity within society, as exemplified by the Ahmadiyya movement in Pakistan at present.

The Ottoman State created an elaborate system through its State policies so that marginal groups like Sabbateans, Kurumis or Istavris could thrive and also enrich Ottoman cultural life and society. The State constitution must be in favour of egalitarian principles for legal communities whether they are marginal or not. As long as marginal groups are legal organizations or congregations, the State must consider all members as citizens of the

country. This was possibly how the Ottoman Empire managed to rule multi-religious groups and nations for centuries.

In the 21st century, in light of present challenges of cross-border migration, our understanding of minorities, marginal groups and religious movement need to be revisited. The study of the Sabbatean case enables us to scrutinise the matrix of self, community, state and spirituality, to reflect on how these dynamics play out in the present day, which draws its inspiration from history.

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- Ottoman State Archive, BEO, Adliye; 4886), 157/11723, 02/Ş /1310 (Hicrî) Selanik'de avdetilerden Osman Efendi'nin kızı Nigar'ın nikahlısı olduğunu rivayet eden Halil Osman'ın nikahlısı olduğu tahakkuk ettiği takdirde mezburenin serbest bırakılması ve hakkında cereyan eden muameleden bahisle Kosova Selanik Müddei-i umumilerine vesaya-yı lazıme ifa ve neticesinin inbası.
- Ottoman state archive, I. HUS. 88/1319, 15/M /1319 (Hicrî) Selanik'den koruma altında Dersaadet'e getirilmiş olan Selanik Vilayeti Evrak Müdür Muavini Avdeti İbrahim Efendi'yle polis komiserlerinden Süleyman ve Arif Efendiler'in yargılanmaları.
- Ottoman State Archive, İstanbul, HAT, 523/25538A
- Ottoman State Archive, MF. MKT, 3/387 - 18/ L/ 1315 Hijra Yahudiler aleyhinde 'milleti Israiliye' adıyla Ebuzziya imzasıyla neşr olunan risalenin ruhsatsız olduğunun anlaşıldığı ve toplatırılması için mufettişlere haber verildiğinin beyanı.
- Ottoman State Archive: BEO, 4326 /324419, 26/M /1333 (Hicrî) Trabzon vilayetindeki İstavrilerin Akdağ Madeni'ndeki İstavriler hakkında alınan karar dairesinde muameleye tabi tutulması ve bunların Rumlarla akrabalıklarından doğan evlatları hakkında da vech-i şer'i üzere muamele ifası lüzumu. (Harbiye, Adliye, Meşihat, Dahiliye, Maarif; İD/100-3) Ottoman State Archive: C...DH. 59 /2927, 22/B /1236 (Hicrî) Terk-i din ederek İslam olan ve Mehmet ismini alan birine İstanbul Tütün Gümrüğü malından olmak üzere Darbhane'den muhassas iki yüz kuruşun verilmesi.
- Ottoman State Archives, A. MKT. UM. 348/911
- Ottoman State Archives, BEO, No: 79695 /1063 10/Ş /1315 (Hicrî) Edirne Hapishanesi'nde mahpus olan Musevi Sabatay oğlu Hayım'ın afv-ı aliye mazhariyeti.
- Ottoman State Archives, BOA, HH. 47784 Hijree, 7 R. Sene, 1255 (Yedi sekiz yaşında bir yahudi kızı Selanikte mukim Nemçe müste'minanından Libaso nam Yahudinin hanesinden çıkıp Frenk mahalesinde gezer iken üç yunan mersume kızı kapup kaçtırdıkları konsolosu mumailih de herne kadar ifade olunmuş ise de 'bizim tebeamızdan bu misillu halat zuhut etmez' yollu cevabına- savaba ibtidar eylediği)
- Ottoman State Archives, DH. EUM. 3. ŞB. 8/54, İstavriyyun taifesi...
- Ottoman State Archives, İ. D. H 517/ 35188_4, ' el altından işlerini becermekle sabir bu kesim buçuk müslüman buçuk hristiyan yaşarlar'
- Ottoman state Archives, İ. DH. . 517/35188/_7, Devletli efendim hazretleri Torul kazasının kurum tabir olunan mahallatında ve bir de bu kazaya mensup Kürtün nahiyesinin bazı köylerinde

vaktiyle kabul -i islam etmişler iken şimdi papaz teşvikatına külliyetli olarak irtidat etmek tasavvurunda bulunan kimseler olduğunu evvel ve ahir bendeiz de işitmişim.

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APPENDICES

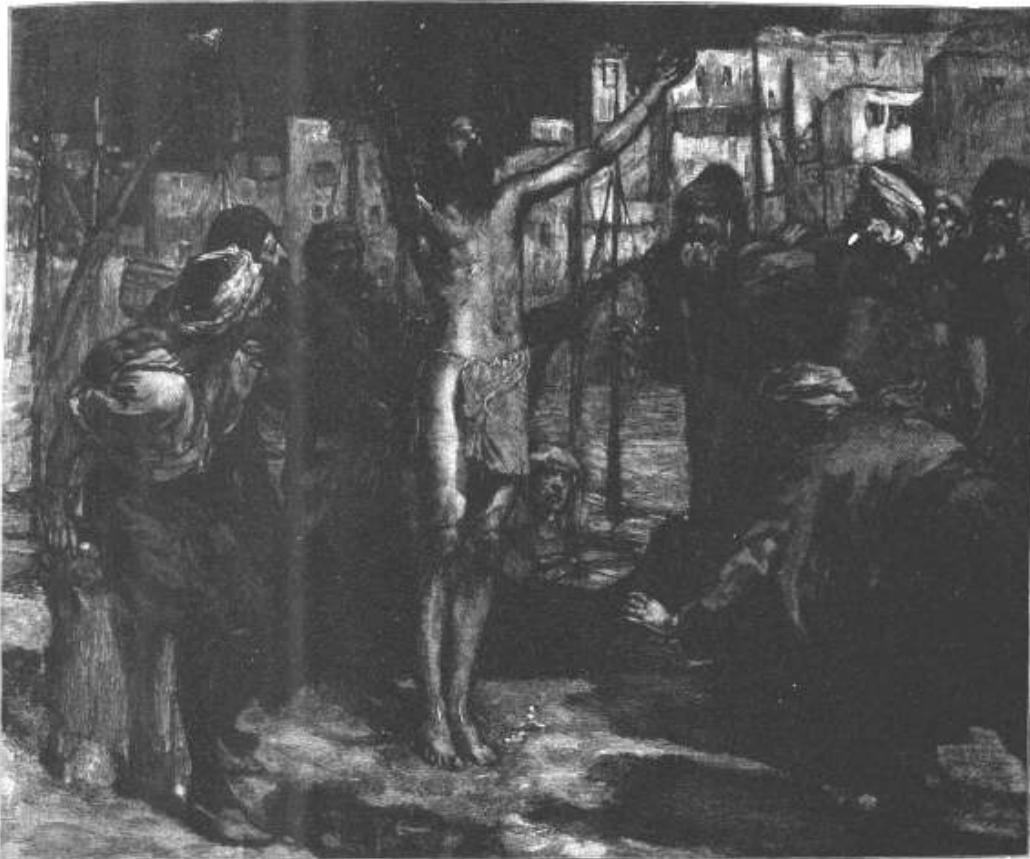
Image I



Shabbetai Tzvi in Istanbul in 1665

Image II

Image III



"He lay there dead before them in silent majesty, the water dripping from his black beard and hair, a perfect waxy figure, saved only by self-inflated arrogance, one and wonder Aed thus breathless with expectation."

THE TURKISH MESSIAH:

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF THE GHETTO

By I. ZANGWILL,

Author of "The Meloch," "The King of Schavereza," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

Published by I. Zangwill in the United States of America

SCROLL THE FIRST

I.

One of the world has thousand four hundred and eight, and every night years after the coming of Christ, the weary dead eyes of his own life on earth, Natdant, which declared himself at prayers to his disciples—the world Messiah of the Jews. They were gathered together under midnight, a little group of fatigued, long-crested, and hair was immovable cerebral, the sea stretching out of their feet, and the swarming Oriental city, a black and white and infinite, dominated by the Acropolis, asleep in its crowded hill.

They had awaited their Prophet's emergence from his tomb in the dry harbor, and as he now stood before them, the water dripping from his black beard and hair, a perfect waxy figure, covered only by self-inflated arrogance, and wonder Aed thus breathless with expectation.

How long, O Lord, how long?

That desolate cry of the renunces would be heard no more. While Israel was oppressed and the world full of sin, the higher and lower worlds had been joined, and the four letters of God's name had been discovered, and to be pronounced in unison. For God Himself had been made imperfect by the impurity of His moral purposes.

But the Messiah had pronounced the Tetragrammaton, and God and the Creation were One again. O mystic transport! O

Surely it was no illusion himself at last that he had summoned them, blessed patriarchy in the greatest moment of human and divine history.

What would he say?

Awake, silent, hushed by an invisible, stonify, he stood long motionless, exclaiming, his followers left, the Calvinistic teaching as to the Messiah, immaturing the Goalhead through the primal Adam, pure, unloved, at one with himself and elemental Nature. At last he raised his luminous eyes heavenward, and said in clear, calm tones one word:

JAWWOK!

He had uttered the sacred, forbidden Name of God. For an instant the raptured figures stood rigid with awe, their blood cold with an ineffable terror, then as they became conscious again of the stars glittering on the sea, plucking untrilled, the earth still solid under their feet, a great hoarse shout of holy joy flew up to the shining stars. "Messiah! Messiah! The Messiah!"

The Kingdom was come. The Messianic Era had begun.

How long, O Lord, how long?

That desolate cry of the renunces would be heard no more. While Israel was oppressed and the world full of sin, the higher and lower worlds had been joined, and the four letters of God's name had been discovered, and to be pronounced in unison. For God Himself had been made imperfect by the impurity of His moral purposes.

But the Messiah had pronounced the Tetragrammaton, and God and the Creation were One again. O mystic transport! O

occultic mission? The pyrus shoots died into a more serene silence.

From some near mosque shrine broke upon the midnight air the solemn tones of the muezzin chanting the *Adhan*:

"God is most great. I testify that there is no God but God. I testify that Mohammed is God's Prophet."

Sadulata shivered. Was it the cold air or some ineluctable foreboding?

II.

It was the day of Messianic dreams. In the century that was over, strange figures had appeared of prophets and martyrs and Hebrew visionaries. From obscurity and the far East came David Rosten, journeying to Italy by way of Nubia to obtain firearms for the Palestine of the Moslem—a dark-faced death, made a skeleton by Asia, rising on his white horse up to the Yarkhan to demand an interview, and graciously received by Pope Clement. In Portugal, where David Rosten, handled by a sultan, staidly worked with the Tea Commandments, had been married by the King with an snowing popularity of banners and processions—a Marquis mistle-vent visions of Moses and the angels, unshakable as lead her suffering kindness to the Holy Land, and was burnt by the Inquisition. Diego Eliza—husband and William and young, and a Christian by faith—returned to the faith of his fathers, and, under the name of Solomon Moltes, passed his brief life in spirit of prophetic ecstasies and the pangs of martyrdom. He sought to convert the Pope to faith, and predicting a great flood at Rome, which came

THE END OF THE SCROLL THE FIRST

A news about Shabbetai Tzvi in Western literature in nineteenth century, 1897

Image IV

Handwritten Ottoman Turkish text in Nasta'liq script, likely an imperial decree. The text is written on aged, yellowed paper. At the top, there is a date: 1076 / 1666. The main body of the text is written in a cursive hand, with some words appearing to be in Hebrew or Yiddish script, such as "Shabbetai Tzvi". The text is arranged in several lines, with a large, stylized signature or seal at the bottom right. The overall appearance is that of an official document from the 17th century Ottoman Empire.

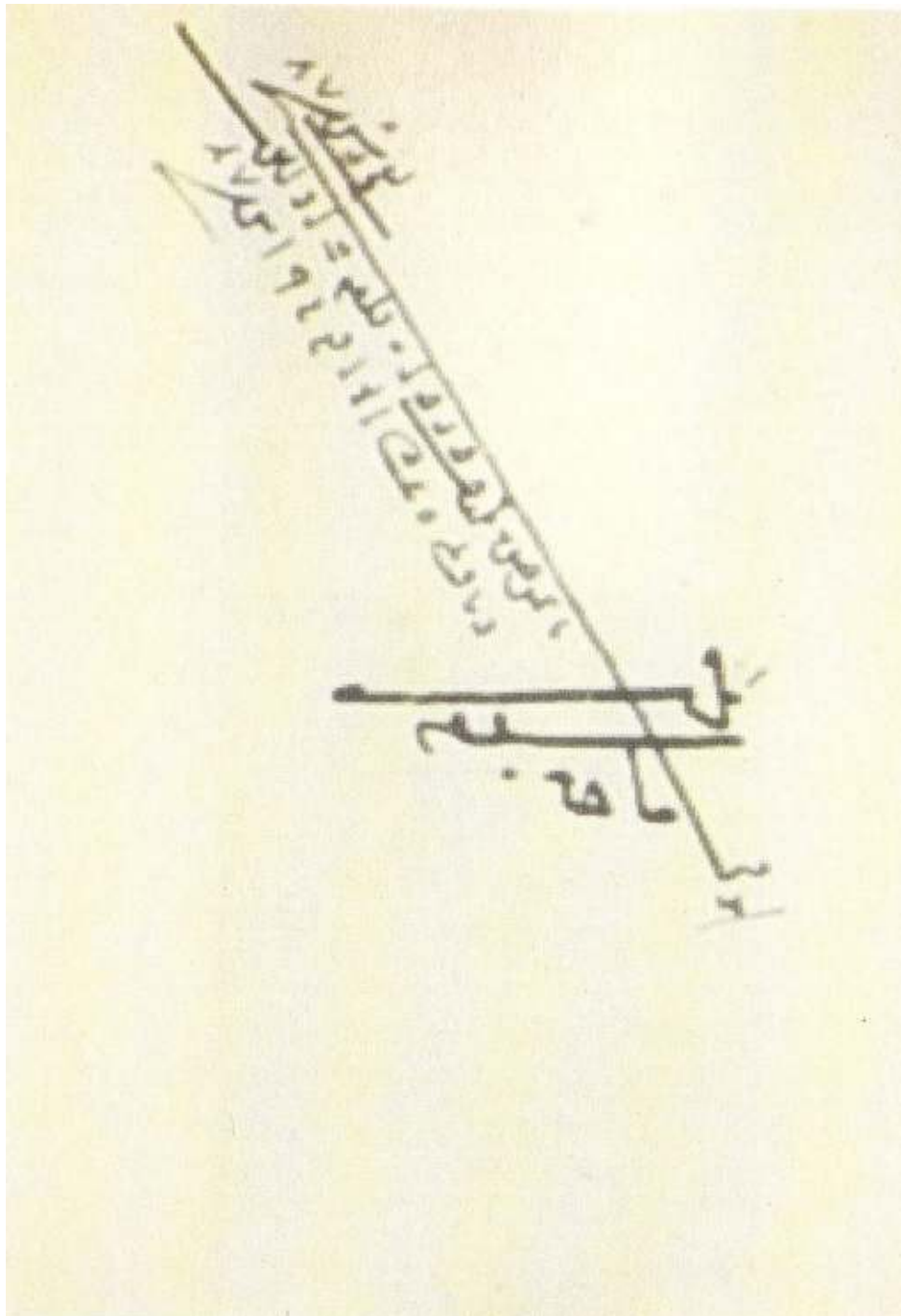
The imperial decree of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet IV for the arrestment of the Shabbetai Tzvi in Izmir city in 1666

Image V

لوحه لوقا و سلاوی
عند
پادشاهان
وجود شریعتی خطا کردن
حق سبحانه و تعالی حضرت نوری شکرگلو و مجانبو
حفظ ادب و سریر سلطنتان کان پیر ایله امین عرف حال بنده بود که نیم عنایتلو
و کرامت لو پادشاهم بوبنده لری شجاعا و پادشاهان حضور هیا بونلندن دین مبین
ایله مشرف اولغین مزید عنایتلرندن چا و شلق علوفه سیله بهر مند بویوله
باقی امر و زمانه لطف احسانه کرامت لو پادشاهان احمد

The document is regarding Shabbetai Tzvi and his conversion to Islam

Image VI



The death notice of Aziz Mehmet Effendi, Shabbetai Tzvi, 1676

THE MIAMI METROPOLIS,
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 1920.

Denies That National Turks Are Foreigners

(Correspondence Associated Press)
NEW YORK.—Vahan Cardashian of the American committee for the independence of Armenia takes issue with the recent statement of Damad Ferid Pasha, premier of Turkey, and brother-in-law of the Sultan, as cabled from Constantinople. The Turkish premier stated that the provinces of Van, Bitlis and Mosul, said to be claimed by the Armenians, have only five percent of Armenians and that the leaders of the Turkish nationalist movement were not really Turks but adventurers from other countries. Concerning this Mr. Cardashian says:

"We do not claim Mosul. That is a part of Mesopotamia. In the provinces of Van, Bitlis and Erzerum there was in 1914, a Turk and Kurd population of 551,000 as against 581,000 Armenians. Today there is a Turk and Kurd population of only 96,000 in those three provinces and possibly 4,000 or 5,000 Armenians. But there are 286,000 Armenians from these provinces who have taken refuge within the boundaries of the Armenian republic. And also over 75,000 Armenians from these provinces are to be found in other contiguous regions.

"Mustafa Kemal (Turkish nationalist leader), whom the grand vizier presents as a Jew, was born a Turk and his parents were from Saloniki and were Deunmes, that is converts, as were the parents of Talat and Djavid. Rustem, whom he presents as a Pole, is of Polish extraction as Enver. He is a Moslem, was the Turkish ambassador in Washington in 1913 and was the director of Turkish propaganda during the great war. Fuad, I do not know who he is. But, the majority of the Turks are of foreign extraction. Of the 33 grand viziers up to 1909, 17 were of foreign extraction."

TRACES KEMAL PASHA'S ANTECEDENTS TO SABBATHAI ZVI.

Philadelphia (J. C. B.)—Kemal Pasha, head of the Turkish Nationalists' Angora government, has Jewish blood in his veins, if Clarence Straight, special correspondent of the "Public Ledger," is correctly informed. Describing the Turkish leader, the correspondent says that he is the lineal descendant of one of the followers of Sabbathai Zvi, who embraced the Mohammedan faith after the exposure of their leader.

MUSTAPHA KEMAL IS A JEW DECLARES "DAILY MAIL"

London, (J. C. B.) The "Daily Mail" announces, that it understands Mustapha Kemal is not a Turk but a Sephardic Jew from Solonika who has made himself master of the interior of Asia Minor and claims that he has the right to speak for Turkey.

Armenian probaganda against M. Kemal Ataturk with using Sabbateans (Deunmes) as derogatory term in American Newspapers, 1920

Image VIII



Sabbateans' famous graveyard, Bülbulderesi Cemetery in Istanbul

Image IX



A Sabbatean benefactor businessman in Ottoman Empire, Kapanci Mehmet Effendi, 1912

Image X

Turkish Sufferers Relief Fund.

IN Compliance with the earnest request of the London Jewish Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Revs. SAMUEL HARDY and JOEL RABINOWITZ beg most respectfully to appeal to the generous Public of South Africa for aid to alleviate the dire distress of the inhabitants of the Turkish Empire, caused by the War which is now raging in that Country.

Thousands of Families have been deprived of all their worldly possessions, and are now without Shelter and Food. Great as their suffering must be at the present moment, it must undoubtedly increase at the approach of the Winter, which will soon be in their midst. The Funds collected will be distributed by an Independent Board, in conjunction with Lady BURNETT COURTNE and Lady STRANFORD to all the sufferers without distinction of creed or nationality. The Revs. HARDY and RABINOWITZ therefore hope that the Ministers of all Religious denominations will kindly give their earnest co-operation to plead the cause of Humanity which knows no creed.

The Rev. Mr. HARDY will act as Chairman of the Relief Committee; Mr. L. ALKARDER, Treasurer; and J. RABINOWITZ, Secretary, to whom all communications on the subject should be addressed.

Synagogue Chambers, Cape Town,
October 22nd, 1877.

The following Correspondence will show the distressing position of the sufferers from the present desolating War:—

[Cont.]
"RUSSIAN AND BULGARIAN OUTRAGES"
South Lodge, Holland Gate,
August 23rd, 1877.

To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph.

Sir,—May I request the favor of your inserting the accompanying correspondence which has been forwarded to me to day through the courtesy of the Foreign Office.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) HENRY DE WOODEN.

[Cont No. 220]
Thessalon, August 18th, 1877.

My Lord,—I am informed that amongst the Fugitives who have arrived at Adrianople and elsewhere see a number of Jewish Families who have suffered almost as much as the Mahomedans who must cruel treatment at the hands of the Bulgarians and Russians. They are chiefly from Eski Saghira and Hissalik, at the latter place many Jews are stated to have been massacred.

The Turkish Authorities—Mr. BROWNE informs me—have done their best to protect them, and many of the Fugitives have assured him that the Turkish regular Troops treated them kindly and gave them their own blankets and cloaks for their children. One Jewish girl, of 15 years of age, has died at Adrianople from the outrages which she received from 50 Circassians.

These poor Jews, persecuted by the Christians and helped and protected by the Mahomedans also see in the greatest misery, having been stripped of everything, their houses and property having been destroyed.

An appeal to their community in England would probably do something for their relief, and I venture to ask your Lordship to bring their sufferings to the knowledge of some of the leading members of it. Mr. ELLIOT, Mr. DEVEREAUX, and some other gentlemen who have formed themselves into a Committee at Adrianople, for the relief without distinction of Creed or Race of the thousands of fugitives that have taken refuge in that city would, I feel sure, willingly see to the distribution amongst the Jews of any sums that may be sent for the purpose.

I have, &c., &c., &c.
A. H. LAYARD.
The Earl of Derby, &c., &c., &c.
Foreign Office, Aug. 22nd, 1877.

Sir,—I am directed by the Earl of Derby to transmit to you a copy of a dispatch from Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Constantinople, relative to the sufferings of a number of Jewish Families, who have fled from their Villages and have arrived at Adrianople and other towns in Roumelia. Her Majesty's Consul and Vice-Consul, at Adrianople, are doing all in their power with the assistance of other Foreign residents for the relief of the refugees, and Mr. LAYARD suggests that they would be happy to undertake the distribution of any money that might be sent from this country for these poor people. I can request you to be good enough to take such steps as you may think advisable for making known the contents of Mr. LAYARD's dispatch to the Jewish Community in this country.

I am, &c., &c.,
(Signed) JULIUS PANDURF.
BARON HENRY DE WOODEN.

South African Jews prayed for the Ottoman Army who saved Jewish from Russian and Bulgarian Attacks, 1877