**The Sabbatean Syndrome and Its Imprint on Research of the Messianic Idea and Zionism**

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He was a lad of 11, a pale Jewish boy in a black frock coat, who was sitting in the study hall of the Yeshiva of Plonsk when he heard that the Messiah had come. They said that Herzl, a handsome, dignified man with blazing eyes, would lead the Jewish People to the land of their forefathers. The boy, suffused with the innocence of youth, believed what he heard and expressed enthusiastic support for the Zionist idea that was then arising and sweeping through the Jewish world (Bar-Zohar, M. (1977). *Ben-Gurion*, vol. 1. Jerusalem: Am Oved, p. 23 [Hebrew]).

Praised be He who restores life to the dead! Yesterday was the day for which we had all been hoping! One thousand, eight hundred and eight years after the destruction of the Temple, the monarchy was restored to Israel—a miracle greater than the parting of the Red Sea! Ezekiel’s prophecy has been fulfilled! Skin and sinews have covered the dry bones and the Lord, the Great, Mighty and Formidable God, has breathed the breath of life into them! Praised be He who restores life to the dead! (Rabbi Rahamim Naouri, Rabbi of Bône (Annaba), Algeria, 8 Iyar 5708 / 17 May 1948).

One summer evening in 1963, my father announced that the Messiah was coming tonight. To the question of how we will recognize him, he responded “He will wear an open shirt, short trousers and sandals.” I met the Messiah, the Jewish Agency emissary who took us out of the *mellah* in Casablanca, where I lived up to the age of 10, and brought us to Jerusalem, where we lived without a gas stove or refrigerator, struggling with integration pangs and a new language, but we rejoiced, for we were deemed worthy of living in *Eretz Israel* (Miriam Peretz, Israel Prize recipient, 2018).

**Introduction**

The Israeli educational system instilled in its students a well known, rigid differentiation between the terms “longing for Zion” and “Zionism” as part of a dichotomous terminology long demanded by the academic world. During my research on the Jews of Spain, the Sephardic Diaspora and the Parisian *Hokhmat Israel* School,[[1]](#footnote-1) I began to realize that such distinctions are intentional but artificial. In the present article, I seek to lay the foundations for a challenge to this paradigm. The issue is of considerable significance because it sheds light on the study of Jewish history in the Modern Era and on the paths of Zionist historiography and its alternating exclusion or exaltation of personalities and processes, especially with regard to trends in research of the Messianic idea and its reflection in Zionism. The scientific aura in which such historiography is enveloped effectively conceals bias of a purely ideological nature.

**The Ottoman Conquest of *Eretz Israel* as a Point of Departure**

Several highly impressive historical research conferences were held in 2017, marking the round-number anniversaries of various historical events: 500 years since the Reformation (1517),[[2]](#footnote-2) 120 years since the First Zionist Conference (1897), 100 years since the Balfour Declaration and the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), 70 years since the United Nations Partition of Palestine Declaration on 29 November 1947 and finally 50 years since the Six-Day War (1967). This study adds a sixth anniversary date: 500 years since the conquest of *Eretz Israel* by the Ottoman Empire in 1517, an event that brought on half a millennium of dissent and decline within Western Christianity as it faced the challenge of Lutherans, Calvinists and Anglicans, as well as a rise in the status of the British Empire, that witnessed Protestant Hebraism and Millenarianism and their avowed close ties to *Eretz Israel*.[[3]](#footnote-3) That same year marked the beginning of an era that laid the foundations of the authentic Messianic idea—and, as a direct consequence thereof, the basis of the Zionist idea as well, with all its ideological and practical strata and components. I maintain that the fundamental process beginning in the 16th century ought to have been a point of departure for Zionist historiography.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Originally, the Messianic idea was nothing but a normative historical pattern calling for reinstatement of Jewish reign over *Eretz Israel*—a paradigm that Maimonides stipulated in *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*,[[5]](#footnote-5) according to which the King Messiah is a political figure who will take national, rational and concrete measures to reestablish the rule of Israel. Needless to say, Maimonides scorns those who perceive the Messianic idea as abstract and Utopian, entailing miracles and wonders.[[6]](#footnote-6) This idea was a key component of Jewish history and the foundation of the aspiration for Jewish Redemption as a vector for universal Redemption, expressed powerfully since the Expulsion from Spain.

The Expulsion from Spain is perceived as the harshest blow ever sustained by the Jewish People during the Middle Ages: The downfall of a grand and glorious Jewish community was enshrouded in a cloak of cosmic dimensions, as if it represented the expulsion of the entire Jewish People or even the expulsion of humanity from the face of the earth.[[7]](#footnote-7) Shortly thereafter, scholars in the Sephardic Diaspora, as well as those of sixteenth-century Safed and other centers of Jewish learning in *Eretz Israel*, accorded significance to this tragedy, perceiving it as the pangs of Redemption, the tribulations that will befall Israel at the advent of the Redemptive Era in Jewish history. The expulsion edict was signed on 5252 (1492), a date echoed numerologically in the following Biblical verse: “Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say: ‘He that scattered Israel doth gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.’” [Jeremiah 31:10]. Kabbalistic literature associates this verse with the onset of the rising dawn.[[8]](#footnote-8) These interpretations were well-established in the minds of Jews in the relevant communities, reinforcing the era’s redemptive dimension. In his *Migdol Yeshuot* trilogy (comprising *Yeshuot Meshiho*, *Maayanei Hayeshua* and *Matzmiah Yeshua*),[[9]](#footnote-9) Don Isaac Abarbanel, the greatest leadership figure among the exiles from Spain, nurtured hope among his fellow Jews and helped them cope with the expulsion crisis. His views were shared by several prominent Kabbala scholars, including Rabbis Isaac Louria/Ashkenazy, Shlomo Alkabetz, Yosef Karo[[10]](#footnote-10) and Manasseh Ben-Israel,[[11]](#footnote-11) Attachment to *Eretz Israel* and the events occurring therein during the 16th century were considered the renaissance and restoration of the Jewish nation within its own land, thereby attesting to and confirming the above insights, according to which Jewish statehood is being restored. The authentic Messianic idea was thus realized most vividly in multiple areas of activity: Political-military—measures intended to conquer the land militarily (David Hareuveni and Solomon Molcho);[[12]](#footnote-12) settlement—*aliya* (immigration to *Eretz Israel*—plural: *aliyot*) and dwelling throughout its territory (Don Joseph Nasi and Doña Gracia Nasi);[[13]](#footnote-13) fortifying the cities of *Eretz Israel* by building walls that surround them and undertaking Jewish political activism (Abraham Castro in Jerusalem and Don Joseph Nasi in Tiberias);[[14]](#footnote-14) political-economic—the Ancona Boycott (Don Joseph and Doña Gracia Nasi), along with development of the textile industry in Safed, silk production in Tiberias and tourist activities in the Lower Galilee; restoration of the Hebrew language—in administration, the educational system and religious literature; political-Messianic-legislative—restoring the Sanhedrin, renewing ordination, national codification of Halakha in the *Shulhan Arukh* (Rabbis Jacob Berab[[15]](#footnote-15) and Joseph Karo[[16]](#footnote-16)); establishment of a Hebrew press that disseminated the works of authors from Safed and elsewhere in *Eretz Israel* throughout the Jewish Diaspora, including the liturgical poetry of Rabbis Shlomo Alkabetz and Israel Najara;[[17]](#footnote-17) increased significance of the Ten Lost Tribes and their inclusion in the vision of Redemption and a future Sanhedrin[[18]](#footnote-18) and finally, the emergence of an Ingathering of the Exiles in microcosm,[[19]](#footnote-19) owing to aliya from Spain, the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, Italy and even Germany, as well as the liturgical seal on European states from the Low Countries to Poland, resulting from the Diaspora’s attraction to the Jewish community in *Eretz Israel*.[[20]](#footnote-20) The Messianic ideal at the foundation of all these phenomena was thus not merely some abstract, theoretical or metahistorical concept but rather a series of actual, practical, operative and historical measures.[[21]](#footnote-21)

As indicated, the time period beginning with the 16th century appears to be an appropriate point of departure for study of the history of Zionism,[[22]](#footnote-22) because in the 19th century, it was only natural that the Zionist enterprise—that sought to restore Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz Israel*—would adopt most of the features already discernible three hundred years earlier, especially the conquest of labor and revival of the Hebrew language. For example Joseph Marco Baruch[[23]](#footnote-23) and Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Bibas,[[24]](#footnote-24) who could be considered the fathers of Sephardic Zionism, adopted the sixteenth-century vision of restoring Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz Israel* in a natural and direct manner, believing that it constituted fulfillment of the authentic Messianic ideal. They perceived Zionism as a modern phenomenon deeply linked with ancient intentions. Gershom Scholem and Ben-Zion Dinur thought differently, ignoring the 16th century entirely.[[25]](#footnote-25) In their view, the point of departure of the Zionist enterprise was the Sabbatean crisis and its repercussions, as embodied in the aliyaof R. Judah the Pious (Hebrew: *Hasid*).[[26]](#footnote-26) It thus emerges that the lively dispute between them centered on the question of whether or not the respective aliyotof Hasidim and Perushim (non-Hasidic followers of the Vilna Gaon) were of a Messianic nature and whether or not they foreshadowed Zionist aliya. Dinur took on a more minor tone than Scholem, avowing that Zionism is not a rupture in Jewish history but rather a complete realization thereof, original expression of an ancient national awareness that is necessarily the natural product of Jewish history. Dinur, by contrast, does not accord the 16th century the scholarly attention it deserves. Scholem claimed that the aftermath of the Sabbatean crisis enabled secularization of traditional Jewish society and its penetration by the modern Haskalah and Reform Movements, followed by secular ideologies such as socialism, communism and Zionism, that would not have been able to strike roots in Jewish society were it not for the breaching of the spiritual ghetto walls in the days of Sabbatai Zevi.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Zionist historiography sought to display Zionism as a manifestation of revolt in the Diaspora and a revolution with its foundations in crisis awareness. Consequently, while “love of Zion” represents a traditional and passive world, “Zionism” represents a revolt against tradition that brings about activism. This pattern was unacceptable to the Sephardic Diaspora but appeared to suit the Ashkenazim, who had experienced schisms and polar sociological division between tradition and crisis, as Jacob Katz noted.[[28]](#footnote-28) Zionist historiography is consistent in its desire to emphasize change, crisis and revolution rather than perseverance, continuity and evolution. Moreover, there is an attempt to differentiate between periods of mass Messianic aliya aimed at fulfillment and realization of Redemption and Zionist aliya intended to build a homeland and a nation, as Mor Altshuler and Arie Morgenstern repeat on numerous occasions, each with its own nuances (see below). I believe that deep within the Messianic idea, at least as perceived by the Sephardic Diaspora, the symbiosis between redemption and construction is natural and organic and the difference between them artificial.

Hence my initial challenge to contrived differentiation between “love of Zion” and “Zionism,” the product of Zionist historiography, as “love of Zion” is nothing other than the culmination of yearnings for the renewal of that very same Israeli statehood. While the Sephardic Diaspora is suffused in organic awareness that is characterized by perseverance, continuity and evolution, the Ashkenazic Diaspora adopted a crisis-based awareness that would ultimately affect the historiography of Zionism, depicting it as a movement typified by schism, division and embedded dichotomous terminology, such as the following pairs: Love of Zion vs. Zionism, Old Yishuv vs. New Yishuv, the Holy Land vs. *Eretz Israel* and so on.[[29]](#footnote-29)

**Continuity and Disruption in the Jewish Diasporas: The Messianic Idea and Zionism**

The substantive difference between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Diasporas is rooted in the primacy accorded to Bible and Kabbala studies in the former and Talmud study in the latter throughout the period examined. This was reflected in the daily study of *Hok l’Israel* among Sephardim and of the daily Talmud page by Ashkenazim. These practices are rooted in deep historical processes that took place in Spain and Germany during the Middle Ages. Bible and Kabbala demand an overtly spiritual and educational orientation to shape an identity that strives and yearns for the redemption of Israel and the entire human race.[[30]](#footnote-30) Four roots extend from this historiographic approach that differentiates the 16th and 19th centuries from one another in the Ashkenazic Diaspora. As a direct consequence, the normative Messianic idea was severed from its natural reflection, Zionism: (1) The Sabbatean crisis; (2) the shaping of a Jewish identity; (3) attitudes towards the Three Oaths and (4) attitudes towards the concept of the “Messiah son of Joseph.” Unlike the Ashkenazim, the Sephardic Diaspora maintained continuity between the Messianic idea and Zionism throughout that period – Moshe David Gaon, citing Itzhak Bezalel, called it “Zionism of the generations”.

**The Sabbatean Crisis**

The Sabbatean crisis, the culmination of which occurred on 6 September 1666 (16 Elul 5426), corrupted the original, normative Messianic idea by imbuing it with anarchism, chaotic impulses, megalomaniacal adventurism and an apocalyptic dimension. Sabbatai Zevi’s conversion to Islam sent shockwaves throughout the Jewish world and led most of his despairing followers to abandon their faith in him. Jews converted to Christianity or Islam as a result of Sabbatai Zevi’s own apostasy.[[31]](#footnote-31) Once the repercussions of this crisis died down, however, the respective Diasporas began to develop diametrically opposite positions regarding the essence of the Messianic idea. The crisis thus became a watershed in Jewish history of the Early and Late Modern Era. As a rule, the Sephardic Diaspora recognized the significance of the normative Messianic idea as a key component of national identity and consequently adopted a position calling for rehabilitation and explication of the Messianic idea according to its authentic Biblical meaning. Sephardic Jews devoted themselves to Messianism as a historical, political and national concept that aspires primarily towards restoration of Jewish nationalism on the soil of *Eretz Israel*.[[32]](#footnote-32) By contrast, the Ashkenazic Diaspora concentrated on suppressing shame: Community records were destroyed and mention of Sabbatai Zevi’s name was forbidden. To prevent others from declaring themselves to be the Messiah, the Eastern European Council of Four Lands set limits on Kabbala studies. Only persons expert in Talmud and Halakha were permitted to study Kabbala, to keep others from falling into error.[[33]](#footnote-33) In general, the Messianic idea was postponed to the “End of Days” and ceased being a tangible concept because the community was beset by the fear that another false Messianism might emerge.[[34]](#footnote-34) This substantive anxiety gave rise to the Division Model that was at the foundation of the intrinsic schism characterizing the Ashkenazic Diaspora during the Modern Era: Secularism vs. religiosity; Hasidim vs. Mitnagdim; Orthodoxy, neo-Orthodoxy and ultra-Orthodoxy vs. Enlightenment, reform and the Conservative Movement; tradition vs. modernity. This fractured and dichotomous world also embodied antagonism between Zionism and anti-Zionism. The anti-Zionist outlook was thus conceived in Ashkenazic religious space. Hence for Zionism to be realized in the Ashkenazic Diaspora, it had to rebel against the religious norm. This was not the case, however, in the Sephardic Diaspora.

Some perceive the students of the Baal Shem Tov and especially those of the Vilna Gaon[[35]](#footnote-35) to be the exceptions that prove the rule, as for a short time, they diverged from the norm that characterized that same Diaspora and chose the activist path of *natural redemption*. Nevertheless, when their hopes were dashed, especially in 1840, they returned to the path that shuns Messianic activism and was destined to be channeled in clearly anti-Zionist directions.[[36]](#footnote-36) Consequently, one should perceive R. A. I. Kook and his school of thought as the exception that proves the rule as well: He had to swim upstream to restore the crown of the normative Messianic idea to its ancient glory.[[37]](#footnote-37) By contrast, Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari was an outstanding exception in the Sephardic Diaspora because of his opposition to Zionism.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Note that R. Yissachar Teichtal (1885-1945), Chief Rabbinic Justice and Head of the Yeshiva in Pishtian (now in Slovakia), who rebelled against the anti-Zionist trends in European Orthodoxy and met a tragic end. He challenged the entire system of arguments against Zionism that had taken shape among the Hasidim of Munkacs.[[39]](#footnote-39)

It thus emerges that in the Sephardic Diaspora, the Sabbatean crisis did not sever continuity between the normative Messianic idea of the 16th century and the affinity for Zion of the 17th and 18th centuries:

I refer to Rabbis Abraham Azoulay,[[40]](#footnote-40) Saadia Chouraqui, Yaakov Culi, Shalom Sharabi, Hayim de la Rosa, Haïm Joseph David Azoulay, Raphael Immanuel ben Abraham Hai Ricchi, Haim Ben Attar,[[41]](#footnote-41) Yehouda Ayache and Sephardic Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Israel* Yaakov Moshe Ayash[[42]](#footnote-42); and Zionism and the Zionist idea in the 19th and 20th centuries:[[43]](#footnote-43)

Rabbis[[44]](#footnote-44) Judah Bibas, Judah Alkalai,[[45]](#footnote-45) Shmuel Abbo,[[46]](#footnote-46) David Ben-Shimon,[[47]](#footnote-47) Mordekhai Attiya,[[48]](#footnote-48) Moshe Kalfon Hacohen,[[49]](#footnote-49) Chaim Hezekiah Medini,[[50]](#footnote-50) Chaim Shvilly,[[51]](#footnote-51) David Cohen Scali,[[52]](#footnote-52) Chaim Beliah,[[53]](#footnote-53) Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel,[[54]](#footnote-54) Yaakov Moshe Toledano,[[55]](#footnote-55) Abraham Taviv,[[56]](#footnote-56) Yosef Renassia,[[57]](#footnote-57) Abraham Almaliah,[[58]](#footnote-58) Amram Aburbeh, Ovadia Hedaya, Yitzhak Nissim, Eliyahu Pardes,[[59]](#footnote-59) Joseph Mashash, Levi Nahmani, Israel Abuhatzeira (the Baba Sali), Yitzhak Abuhatzeira (the Baba Haki),[[60]](#footnote-60) Yeshayahu Meshorer,[[61]](#footnote-61) Hayyim David Halevi,[[62]](#footnote-62) Haïm Houri, Meir Mazuz, Michael Cherbite, Meir Zini[[63]](#footnote-63) and Yehouda Léon Askenazi (Manitou)).[[64]](#footnote-64)

In this context, we should also mention Prof. Abraham Shalom Yehuda, whose life and research express a combination of Jewish Diasporas and a special Zionist approach accordingly.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Moreover, the years considered to have “Messianic potential” (especially those that fell during the sixth millennium since Creation: 1240; 1540; 1648; 1740-1781; 1840)[[66]](#footnote-66) were viewed differentially by Ashkenazim—who perceived them as a comprehensive objective—and Sephardim, who considered them milestones in a process that reveals Redemption gradually. As such, the former reacted to Messianic crises with disappointment that even led to apostasy, while the latter saw them as desirable and anticipated them enthusiastically.[[67]](#footnote-67)

The Sabbatean Syndrome permeated academic research, obscuring differentiation between the normative Messianic idea and the chaotic and apocalyptic variety, having emasculated the former manipulatively, emphasizing the chaotic narrative over the normative one.[[68]](#footnote-68) In this manner, it succeeded in politicizing research by creating intellectual battering rams that label researchers as “Messianists”[[69]](#footnote-69) and compiling aggregates of Messianism-free historical theses to achieve “normalization of history.”[[70]](#footnote-70) Israeli academic research is characterized by a dialectic and paradoxical trend: On the one hand, it renders the Messianic idea mythical, allegorical, abstract and metaphysical,[[71]](#footnote-71) while on the other, it normalizes and secularizes the Zionist idea, cleansing it of all redemption-oriented “thorns.” Thus, academic research seeks to obscure the dualism between normative and chaotic Messianism, thereby normalizing the history of the Zionist Enterprise and according it the character of a national liberation movement—one of many that existed in the Modern Era.[[72]](#footnote-72) There is no doubt that these measures were spearheaded by Gershom Scholem,[[73]](#footnote-73) whose entire Messianic conception was crisis-oriented.[[74]](#footnote-74) Scholem’s works were criticized sharply by researchers and intellectuals alike. Especially prominent was the pointed critique by Shabbatai Ben-Dov, that focused primarily on distortion of the concept of Redemption in Scholem’s writings, as well as on Scholem’s attraction to anarchistic mysticism[[75]](#footnote-75) and his abhorrence of political Messianism.[[76]](#footnote-76) Equally critical was Prof. Eliezer Schweid, who invalidated Scholem’s philosophy and his view of Kabbala as a central theme that turns the wheels of history.[[77]](#footnote-77) He was strongly supported by Kabbala and history scholars, who claimed that his study was pure scientific research,[[78]](#footnote-78) whereas in actuality the Sabbatean Syndrome was already evident in their Jewish[[79]](#footnote-79) and political[[80]](#footnote-80) identities.

Baruch Kurzweil was the first to take issue with Gershom Scholem.[[81]](#footnote-81) By the 1950s, he had already identified certain weak points in Scholem’s research: The objective *hubris* of researching Jewish studies, that conceals a new historiography of Judaism, according to which secularization is immanent to traditional Judaism. According to Kurzweil, through rehabilitation of the controversial image of Sabbatai Zevi, Scholem seeks to present him as a legitimate leader and to ascribe progressive views to him. On the other hand, Sabbatai Zevi’s most distinctive opponent, Rabbi Jacob Sasportas, is presented as “a Jewish Inquisitor.” It emerges that anyone who attacked the apologetics of the Berlin *Hokhmat Israel* school of thought is tainted with the apologetics of a purely secular identity. One who seeks to accord supreme authority to the research of historical realities “is diverting attention from the authentic wellsprings of human spirituality, namely religion on the one hand and poetry and art on the other, drowning his soul in the depths of fine detail in worlds distant from that of his own spirit.”[[82]](#footnote-82)

**Shaping Jewish Identity in the Various Diasporas**

While in Christian countries, Jewish identity was defensive, as Christianity purported to be the true Israel (*verus Israel*) and declared that the Messiah had already arrived, in Islamic countries Jewish identity did not sense any complexes regarding national affiliation, wherein Islam was more of a threat to the status of Jews and less to their identity. Consequently, while the Jews of the Christian world perceived Judaism as a religion[[83]](#footnote-83) or an ancient religious community,[[84]](#footnote-84) those in Islamic countries saw themselves as a nation.[[85]](#footnote-85) As such, the authentic Messianic longing in Islamic countries was not damaged and remained intact. Moreover, the secular appearance of Zionism did not deter Jews in the Sephardic Diaspora,[[86]](#footnote-86) as emphasis was placed on the renewal of a national entity in *Eretz Israel*. Consequently, “The ‘kosher’ Messianism was Zionism, because the nation as a whole decided to return to Zion,” as R. Askenazi (Manitou) declared:

The Zionist Enterprise succeeded, unlike all other Messianic initiatives throughout history, because this is the authentic Messianism of which the Torah and Prophets speak—rehabilitation of the nation upon its land, in the political dimension and not the religious-mystical one. Herzl did not perceive himself as the Messiah, yet he was, just as those who lived in the time of Moses did not know that he would save them. […] When the nation declares that this is the time, it is true. When a mystic declares that he is the Messiah and avows that this is the time, it is false. Two millennia of exile were ordained to eliminate the “false Messiah images” and enable return to the authentic constellation of the Messianic idea.”[[87]](#footnote-87)

Moreover, the conflictual foundation that emerges even more powerfully in Judaism experienced as a religious community, offers an additional explanation of the polarization and divisiveness that characterize the sociology of the Ashkenazic Diaspora, including the anti-Zionist dimension.

**The Three Oaths**

The Talmud indicates that Israel swore Three Oaths[[88]](#footnote-88) unto God, promising not to take initiative for mass immigration to *Eretz Israel* (“scaling the wall” or “as a wall”) and thereby postpone the inevitable. These oaths were never considered part of *Halakha* by any major rabbinic authority: Neither R. Isaac Alfasi, Maimonides, Rabbenu Asher, R. Jacob ben Asher nor R. Joseph Karo accord them legal status, nor are they mentioned in the commentaries of the *Rishonim* on Tractate Ketubot (Nahmanides, R. Yom Tov Asevilli, R. Menahem Meiri) or in Rashi’s commentary on the Song of Songs. R. Zeira, to whom the Three Oaths are attributed in the Talmud, retracted them when he came to *Eretz Israel*, as R. Mordechai Attiya explains in his [Hebrew] book *The Secret of the Oath*.[[89]](#footnote-89) According to R. Attiya, the theory propounded by R. Yohanan and the sages of *Eretz Israel* maintains that aliya “as a wall” is mandatory. R. Yohanan explains that there is an oath obligating the Jewish People to rise as a wall en masse and come to *Eretz Israel* as one: “R. Yohanan said: The Holy One, Blessed be He tells us: ‘I will not come to Celestial Jerusalem until I come to Earthly Jerusalem.’”[[90]](#footnote-90) Therefore, R. Elazar [a disciple of R. Yohanan] said: “The Holy One, Blessed be He told Israel: ‘If you uphold the oath, all will be well and if not, I will abandon your flesh like the gazelles and deer of the field.”[[91]](#footnote-91) Altshuler indeed emphasizes in her research of R. Joseph Karo that by his aliya, this renowned Halakhic scholar demonstrated that he does not recognize the validity of the Three Oaths.[[92]](#footnote-92) In the Sephardic Diaspora, the Three Oaths do not constitute an impediment at all, in any period. On the contrary, the only valid oath is, as indicated, aliya “as a wall.” By contrast, the Three Oaths continued to deter the leaders of ultra-Orthodox communities in Europe from aliya. R. Meir Simha Hacohen of Dvinsk, author of *Meshekh Hokhma*, had this to say after the 1920 San Remo Conference: “Fear of the oaths disappeared[[93]](#footnote-93) and by the grace of the monarchs, the commandment calling for settlement of *Eretz Israel*, that is equivalent to fulfillment of all commandments in the Torah, was restored to its place.” Regrettably, his assertion remained a lone cry in the wilderness.[[94]](#footnote-94)

**The Term “Messiah Son of Joseph”**

The national reawakening of Israel is a gradual, dialectic process that constructs two tiers, one on top of the other,[[95]](#footnote-95) each of them essential in historical terms. Indeed, the Messiah son of Joseph (MSJ) precedes the Messiah son of David (MSD)—not because one era is inferior to that of the other, but rather on account of the development and substance of rebirth: The era of the MSJ is one in which geographic, political, military, economic and institutional reawakening takes place, whereas the MSD heralds a spiritual era, in which Hebrew identity becomes complete, applying to all the Jewish People and embodying a universal imprint as well.

In countries under Christian influence, the Jews became accustomed to speaking of one Messianic personality only.[[96]](#footnote-96) Actually, the Jewish People await many messiahs, of which the most prominent are the MSJ, to be followed by the MSD. These principles are stipulated in the Midrash, Talmud and of course in Kabbalistic wisdom, but their roots are discerned in the Biblical account of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis. For the Jews living in Europe, who are subject to the religious influence of Christianity, Messianism became part of the occult. This is the result of the Ashkenazic Jewish Sages’ decision to prohibit study of the topic, thereby preventing confusion between the Christian and Jewish interpretations of Messianism. As a corollary, the topic of Messianism became a kind of legend or dream, until Theodor Herzl rose and declared: “If you will it, it is no dream.”

By contrast, for the Jews in Islamic countries, Messianism was an integral part of the conventional curriculum. In my youth, yeshiva students were taught the topic from Midrashic and Talmudic sources. Every school child knew simply that the Jewish People anticipate the arrival of the MSJ, inaugurating the Messianic Era that culminates with the arrival of the MSD and the resurrection of the dead. Whenever Sephardic Jews in Islamic countries studied Judaism in Arabic, Messianism was an integral part of conventional studies. But when they began studying in the languages of the Ashkenazic world, Messianism began to be classified as an occult topic in Sephardic circles as well. The primary reason for this shift was the impending danger of confusing Jewish conceptions with those of Christian tradition, leading scholars to prohibit public discussion of such matters. As in many spheres of Torah study, concealment led to oblivion. Consequently, when the incidents hinted at in Jewish source literature began to occur, the Jewish People—except for Kabbalistic circles among them—had no way of identifying their significance and particularly their connection to Zionism. Rabbi A. I. Kook was the first[[97]](#footnote-97) since R. Isaiah Horowitz to explain the issue. In his eulogy for Dr. Theodor Herzl, visionary of the State of Israel, R. Kook hinted that Herzl’s endeavors are part of the MSJ conception.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Rabbi Askenazi perceived MSJ as a component of the restoration of Jewish settlement in *Eretz Israel* (in the 19th and 20th centuries), basing his conclusion on the Talmudic commentary of R. Chaim Shvilly:

The Talmud explains that there will be mourning for MSJ, ostensibly because he will be killed. Nevertheless, in the Kabbalistic Sephardic prayer book *Tefilat Hahodesh*, published in Livorno, the [*Amida*] blessing “who buildeth Jerusalem” includes a directive instructing worshippers to pray that MSJ not be killed. Even though the Kabbalists accept the Talmudic statement, they believe that the consequences may be avoided through prayer. […] According to the Midrash, MSJ is destined to be killed by the Roman Army Chief, the wicked Armilus.[[99]](#footnote-99)

Armilus is the Midrashic version of the Latin name Romulus, i.e., Rome. The Midrash thus foresees that in MSJ’s time, a war may break out between Rome and Israel, during which MSJ will be killed by the Roman military leader. R. Chaim Shvilly, a Jerusalem Kabbalist of Georgian origin whom I knew personally, explains in his book *Calculations of Redemption*[[100]](#footnote-100) that in our own generation, during World War II, the Jewish community in *Eretz Israel* faced possible destruction by German and Italian forces, led by a general named Rommel. R. Shvilly hinted that the possibility that the MSJ’s death may have been ordained for that time and that we were only saved from tragedy thanks to two thousand years of prayers, according to the Kabbalistic interpretation.

Eulogizing Herzl in the summer of 1904, R. Kook introduces a “major innovation” for the Ashkenazic Diaspora, an “innovation”[[101]](#footnote-101) that was part of the standard prayer ritual for Jews in the Sephardic Diaspora for many years. R. Kook, in emphasizing the existence of MSJ, hints at the activities of Herzl.[[102]](#footnote-102)

In this respect, R. Kook examined the exception that proves the rule, seeking to swim against the current by adopting an outlook that had long been upheld by the Sephardic Diaspora but had worn away among the Ashkenazim. Rabbis Judah Loew ben Bezalel (1520-1609) and Isaiah Horowitz (1558-1630), both of whom were active in the Ashkenazic Diaspora during the 16th century, were the last supporters of the normative Messianic idea to express their views in print until the 19th century.[[103]](#footnote-103) Subsequently, Rabbi A. I. Kook would draw on their philosophy to compose his own. Rabbi Loew’s outlook was also supported enthusiastically by Rabbis Dr. Jacob Gordin and Isaac Hutner, who would impart his philosophy to their students in France and the United States, respectively.[[104]](#footnote-104)

**Overt and Covert Historiographic Trends**

**The roots of Zionism: The normative Messianic idea or modern European nationalism?** My research, that is still in its early stages,[[105]](#footnote-105) proposes a basic methodological and historiographic perspective[[106]](#footnote-106) that transcends particularistic analysis. This perspective challenges the crisis orientation that has reigned supreme in Zionist historiography and examines the roots of Zionism that are integral to the Sephardic Diaspora. The purpose, conscious or otherwise, of Zionist historiography that detaches the 16th century from the 19th is to ensure that the mighty process of return to the Jewish homeland is attributed exclusively to Zionism of the Modern Era, thereby ignoring all the momentous accomplishments of the 16th century that heralded a new age in the settlement of *Eretz Israel*. Most Zionist historiographers attempt to assign all due credit for national activism to the Zionist Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries and to “normalize” history so that anything hinting at Redemption is summarily excised.[[107]](#footnote-107) This is the meaning of the historiographic dispute taking place over the past few decades concerning Messianism and the history of Jewish settlement of *Eretz Israel* in the Modern Era.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Nineteenth-century Zionism is only one segment of the process discussed above, only a reflection of the normative Messianic idea that has monopolized the entire process of return. The unprecedented success of Zionism diverts attention from the process as a whole, the sum total of all its stages and layers.[[109]](#footnote-109) Historical research ignores far earlier stages that possess all the components of the Zionist enterprise: Formative spiritual foundation, settlement and conquest of *Eretz Israel* and legislation of a national character. The old Sephardic Yishuv was a platform for Eastern European Zionism. Its people were involved in the Yishuv, people of action and vison who drew on the Jewish tradition. The classic Zionist narrative to which we have become accustomed has a direct affiliation to the growth and legitimation of the leadership prevailing in the Yishuv as of the late 19th century, a kind of three-way memory–Zion–control relationship.[[110]](#footnote-110) There is an obvious link between research of historical memories and the shaping of Jewish elites.

I emphasize that the treasures of Jewish wisdom have always constituted the source on which Zionism drew.[[111]](#footnote-111) Consequently, it would not be correct to limit oneself to the tripartite paradigm that ostensibly shaped Zionism exclusively: Emancipation/Secularization—Antisemitism—Modern Nationalism. This paradigm is correct regarding the Diaspora in Christian countries—and less so for those in Islamic lands—in the late 19th century. It represents the immediate factors that shaped the national ethos of Zionism in the Christian countries of Eastern, Central and Western Europe.[[112]](#footnote-112) But the deepest roots of the birth of Zionism will always be cultural. Zionism’s drawing on the Messianic idea embodies a universal aspiration for the land that is its objective. Moreover, the Zionism that was impelled by pogroms and crises, that embodied aspirations for shelter and response to existential distress, drew on cultural roots as well.[[113]](#footnote-113) The substantive difference between these approaches reflects the quality and motives of Zionism in the respective Diasporas.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that Jewish nationalism preceded European nationalism in all respects, having faced and challenged the mighty empires of the ancient East. Jewish nationalism thus derives substantially from the Biblical Era,[[114]](#footnote-114) in which the Jews were “the true proto-nation,” as Adrian Hastings declared.[[115]](#footnote-115)

Subsequently. Gershom Scholem’s dialectic and somewhat paradoxical outlook perceived Zionism and Hasidism as reflections of Sabbateanism, drawing on the wealth of Jewish wisdom without necessarily referring to European nationalism. Scholem considered exile-based mysticism[[116]](#footnote-116) to be the national power of Judaism and Zionism a factor that accords it a political hue.

Conversely, I am pleased to indicate that there has been a certain shift recently from the dominant tones of crisis historiography to the more subdued voice of organic historiography, especially regarding Zionism in the Sephardic Diaspora: Prof. Alon Gal describes it as “a movement of national continuity that is rooted in Jewish civilization and the tradition of Jewish political culture” on the one hand and “Zionism of tradition, continuity and rebirth with great Zionist potential” on the other.[[117]](#footnote-117) Furthermore, Dr. Itzhak Bezalel wrote an article in whose title he quoted Dr. Nahum Sokolov’s address to the Sephardic community in *Eretz Israel*: “We have become Zionists but you were born Zionists.”[[118]](#footnote-118)

Finally, I note the most recent book by historian Jacob Katz[[119]](#footnote-119) in which he traced the communities of Israel that settled in Christian countries, from the dawn of the Middle Ages until the Modern Era. His methodological procedure, that is applied in the present article as well, is worthy of attention by those studying the history of the various Jewish Diasporas. Like Katz, who observed and focused on the manifestations of two extended phenomena—tension between Jews and Christian nations and the Jewish aspiration to preserve and maintain a collective identity—I reviewed the manifestations of the Messianic idea over a period of 500 years in the different Diasporas. Katz considered the two phenomena he studied to be the historic roots of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, while I sought to discern the roots and causes that shaped the attitudes of the respective Diasporas towards Israel’s rebirth.

1. Charvit, Y. (2016). Between Berlin and Jerusalem—*Hokhmat Israel* in France during the twentieth century, as viewed by Rabbi. Y. L. Askenazi. *Jewish Studies* (a publication of the World Union of Jewish Studies) 51, 131-155. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Reformation—special edition devoted entirely to the Reformation, following research conferences held in 2017. (2019). *Zmanim Historical Quarterly* (Tel Aviv University), 140. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tuchman, B. W. (1956). *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour*. New York: New York University Press; Morgenstern, A. (1987). Messianism and Settlement of *Eretz Israel*. Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, pp, 197-203 [Hebrew]; Verete, M. (1968). *The Return of Israel Concept in British Protestant Thought – 1790-1840*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and the Historical Society of Israel, pp. 145-179. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It should be indicated that at the same time, diametrically opposite trends were evident as well: *Conversos* who looked westward and contributed to the discovery of the New World and *ipso facto* to the expansion of the Christian world, as they kept their own status a closely-guarded secret (see Pedaya, H. (2011). *Going Beyond the Trauma: Mysticism, History and Ritual*. Tel Aviv: Resling [Hebrew]; Wiesenthal, S. (1973). *Sails of Hope: The Secret Mission of Christopher Columbus*. New York: Macmillan. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Yad Hahazaka*, *the Book of Judges, Laws of Kings and Their Wars 11*: 1. “The King Messiah is destined to rise and restore the Kingdom of the House of David to the glory of its first reign, and to build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. All the laws will be reinstated in his day, as they were in the past: We will bring sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years just as Torah stipulates.” See Schwartz, D. (2005). *The Messianic idea in the philosophy of the Middle Ages*. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press [Hebrew]; Berger, D. (2006). Some ironic consequences of Maimonides’ rationalist approach to the Messianic age. In Y. Levy and S. Carmy (eds.), *The legacy of Maimonides: Religion, reason, and community* (New York: Yashar Books, pp. 79-88). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Knohl, I. (2019). *The Messiah dispute: For whom are the Jews waiting?* Tel Aviv: Dvir, pp. 170-182: “Do not let it enter your mind that the King Messiah must perform miracles and wonders, create new things in this world, or resurrect the dead and so on. This is what foolish people say” (*Yad Hahazaka*, *the Book of Judges, Laws of Kings and Their Wars* 11: 3). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Nahon, G. (1997). *La Terre Sainte au temps des Kabbalistes*. Paris: Albin Michel, pp. 169-172. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The numerical value of the Hebrew word מְזָרֵה is 252 (alphabetic representation of Hebrew years customarily omits the millennial digit). signifying the “midnight” of the sixth millennium (the Hebrew year 5252 / 1492 CE). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Netanyahu, B. (1998). *Don Isaac Abravanel* [sic]*, statesman and philosopher*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 195-260; Cohen-Solal, C. (2017). *Don Isaac Abarbanel.* *Great Jewish Thinkers and Creators*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Altshuler, M. (2017). *The Life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, pp. 357-385. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A seventeenth-century personality who continued and intensified processes that began in the previous century. See: Droman. M. (1989). *Manasseh Ben-Israel*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hillel Ben-Haim Library), pp. 65-72. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Benmelech, M. (2016). *Shlomo Molcho: The life and death of the Messiah son of Joseph*. Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, pp. 91-120; 187-228; 267-306 [Hebrew]; Altshuler, M. (2017). *The life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, pp. 59-80; 268-291. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Netanyahu, B. (2007). *Don Isaac Abarbanel, statesman and philosopher*. Jerusalem: Schocken, pp. 212-270 [Hebrew]; Harozen, Y. (1980). *Doña Gracia and the Jewish state in Tiberias of the Galilee*. Jerusalem: Zur-Ot [Hebrew]; Sheba, S. (2001). *Eretz Israel: An autobiography.* Tel Aviv: Dvir, pp. 262-271 [Hebrew]; David, A. (2005). *A historian in turmoil: The personality and character of the historian Joseph Ha-Kohen, author of* Vale of tears*, as reflected in a collection of his personal letters*. Jerusalem: Beit David [Hebrew]; Ha-Kohen, J. (1575). *Vale of tears*. Genoa. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Nahon, G. (1997). *La Terre Sainte au temps des Kabbalistes*. Paris: Albin Michel, pp. 79-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Katz, J. (1989). The dispute between Jacob Berab and Levi ben Habib over renewing ordination. In J. Dan (ed.). *Binah: Studies in Jewish history* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, pp. 119-141). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “Joseph Karo’s image of the Messianic world was inspired by three Messianic tales that were interwoven during the Middle Ages: The *Zohar*’s symbolic-mythic story […]; the *Kuzari*’ssemi-historical account […]; finally, there is Maimonides’s quasi-realistic narrative […].” Altshuler, M. (2017). *The Life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, p. x; for renewal of ordination, see pp. 268-291. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Elkayam, S. (2002). The Kabbala, love and Messianism of Rabbi Israel Najara. Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. As first expressed by David Hareuveni in the 16th century and by Rabbi Manasseh Ben-Israel in his book *Mikve Israel* [The hope of Israel], in the 17th century (see Droman, M. (1989). *Manasseh Ben-Israel*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hillel Ben-Haim Library) [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. In the mid-sixteenth century, the Jewish community in *Eretz Israel* was estimated at about 10,000 persons out of a total population of some 300,000. See Rozen, M. (1981). The image of the Jewish community. In A. Cohen (ed.), *History of Eretz Israel*: *Mameluke and Ottoman rule* *(1260-1804)* (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, pp. 201-217) [Hebrew]; Hacker, J. (1985). *The Attraction and immigration of Spanish Jews to Eretz Israel*, vol. 36. Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, pp. 3-34 [Hebrew]; Nahon, G. (2011). *Saudade*: Portuguese testimony to Jewish nostalgia in Jerusalem and the Galilee in the sixteenth century. *Hispania Judaica*, 8. Jerusalem: Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, pp. 125-147; Cohen, A. & Lewis, B. (1978). *Population and revenue in the towns of Palestine in the sixteenth century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Cohen, A. (2011). New evidence on demographic change. In *Studies on Ottoman Palestine*, ch. XIII, Variorum Collected Studies Series. Farnham (UK): Ashgate; Abraham, D. (1999). *To come to the land: Immigration and settlement in sixteenth century Eretz-Israel*. Judaic Study Series*,* Tuscaloosa (AL) and London: University of Alabama Press, Judaic Studies Series, pp. 15-23, 120-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Nahon, G. (1997). *La Terre Sainte au temps des Kabbalistes*. Paris: Albin Michel, pp. 137-152, 155-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Shazar. Z. (1950). Your watchers, Safed. In *Morning stars* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, pp. 185-294). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Mordechai Breuer’s remarks corroborate my observations: “In the history of the yeshivot—and perhaps in other aspects of Jewish history as well—the 16th century is depicted as the dawn of the New Era. […] Yeshivot also thrived in *Eretz Israel*, particularly in Jerusalem and Safed, as a result of the Yeshiva Movement established by exiles from Spain who found refuge throughout the Ottoman Empire. Each group of immigrants to *Eretz Israel* established yeshivot and *batei midrash*, especially after the Ottoman conquest (about 1517). The ideal of pure and sacred Torah study in the Holy Land was a powerful motivation for immigration and settlement” (Breuer, M. (2003). *Tents of Torah: The yeshiva, its structure and history*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, pp. 38-39 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Weinshall, J. (1981). *Marco Baruch, prophet of the War of Independence*. Haifa: Shikmona [Hebrew]; Dratwa, D. (1984). Aux origines du sionisme en Belgique: Le Petit Macchabi de Joseph Marcou-Baruch. *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 143(1-2), 135-144. ‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬ [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Weiler-Israel, Y. (2015). Religion, nationalism and new tidings—Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Arye Léon Bivas, harbinger of Zionism. In A. Yedidiya (ed.), *Time to Be Gracious* (Jerusalem, Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, pp. 50-75). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Unlike Zalman Shazar, who perceived the 16th century as the dawn of a new era. See Shazar. Z. (1950). Your watchers, Safed. In *Morning Stars* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, pp. 185-294. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Barnai, J. (1995). *Historiography and nationalism: Trends in the study of Eretz Israel and its Jewish settlement, 634-1881*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, pp. 185-186. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Altshuler, M. (2007). Against all odds: The dispute between Ben-Zion Dinur and Gershom Scholem concerning Messianism at the inception of Hasidism. In Y. Dan (ed.), *Gershom Scholem memorial volume on the 25th anniversary of his death* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Studies on Jewish Thought (vol. 20), pp. 1-30 [Hebrew]); Schieber, E. (2020). *Le Retour à Sion De l'idéalisme au pragmatisme, de Juda Ha-Hassid au Gaon de Vilna et ses disciples*, (Paris: Honoré Champion). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Katz, J. (1971) *Tradition and crisis: Jewish society at the end of the Middle Ages*. New York: Schocken. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Yishuv*—the pre-state Jewish community in *Eretz Israel*. SeeKaniel, J. (1977). The terms “Old Yishuv” and “New Yishuv” as perceived by contemporaries (1882-1914) and by historiography. *Cathedra*—*Journal of the History and Settlement of Eretz Israel*, 141, 3-19 [Hebrew]; Conforti, Y. (2006). *Past tense: Zionist historiography and shaping the national memory.* Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Charvit, Y. (2009). Hebraism and beyond: An intellectual portrait of Rabbi Y. L. Askénazi (Manitou). *Idra*, 152-160 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Rachel Elior (Elior, R. (2014). *Israel Baal Shem Tov and his contemporaries—Sabbateans, Hasidim and Mitnagdim* (vols. A-B). Jerusalem: Carmel [Hebrew]) emphasizes the growth of the Messianic idea during the Cossack Riots of 1648, that gave rise to the image of an Avenging Messiah to combat the Gentiles who persecuted the Jewish People—an idea attributed to the Zohar. This theme also characterizes the rhetoric of Sabbatai Zevi; see Elior’s Introduction to Schatz-Uffenheimer, R. (2005). *The Messianic idea since the expulsion from Spain*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. “When news of the Zionist Movement reached the lands of the East, the idea was given unhesitating support by the somewhat limited groups of Jews who had established previous contact with European personalities representing the Haskalah and National Revival, but were unaware of the new Zionist ideology conceived by Herzl and his associates. These circles—and all Sephardic Jews—related to political Zionism as a traditional Jewish movement aimed at fulfillment of the vision of the ancient Prophets” (Tobi, J. (1988). The roots of Eastern Jewry’s reaction to the Zionist Movement. In S. Almog et al., *Changes in Jewish history in the Modern Era* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, pp. 169-192; citation on page 170); in this same vein, see Haim Cherki’s Ph.D. dissertation, submitted to the Senate of Bar-Ilan University (2022), entitled *National awareness among Sephardic scholars at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Heilperin, I. (1990). *Annals of the Council of Four Lands: Selected regulations, writings and records* (vol. 2). Bialik Institute: Jerusalem [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Hamburger, S. B. (2009). *False Messiahs and their opponents*. Bnei Brak, Israel: Ashkenazi Heritage Center. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Yedidiya, A. (2018). Between internal and external rectification and between symbolic-theurgic and real Messianism: Students of the Vilna Gaon and R. Zvi Hirsch Kalischer. *Cathedra*—*Journal of the History and Settlement of Eretz Israel*, 167, 27-58. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Morgenstern, A. (1985). *Messianism and settlement of Eretz Israel*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Dadon, Y. (2006, 2008) *It is a beginning: The attitude of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Sages to Zionism and the establishment of the State* (vols. 1 and 2). Jerusalem: Y. Dadon [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Braun, B. (2001). Sages of the East and religious zealotry: Topics for reassessment. *Akdamot*, 10, 289-324. [Hebrew] Also to be cited are Rabbis Haim Nahum (Turkey), Baruch Toledano (Morocco) and Matslia’h Mazouz (Tunisia) who opposed Zionism. In a future study (Holocaust and rebirth: Viewing the complete picture), I will explain the nature of their reservations. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Teichtal, Y. S. (1983). *A joyous mother of children*. Jerusalem: Machon Pri Ha’aretz [Hebrew]; Schatz-Uffenheimer, R. (2004). Confession at the crematoria and postscript: A Haredi rabbi confesses his wrongdoings. *Kivunim*, 23, 49-62 [Hebrew]; Schatz-Uffenheimer, R. (2005). *The Messianic idea since the expulsion from Spain*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ben-Yishai, A. (2019). Exile and redemption in the Kabbalistic thought of Rabbi Abraham Azoulay. Master’s thesis in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheba, Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Morgenstern, A, (1997). *Natural redemption*. Jerusalem: Maor [Hebrew]; Morgenstern, A, (1999). *Mysticism and Messianism*. Jerusalem: Maor. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Charvit, Y. (2011). The Rishon leZion Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Ayash: A reassessment of his term in Jerusalem during the first two decades of the 19th century. *Cathedra*—*Journal of the History and Settlement of Eretz Israel*, 141, 53-74. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Remarks by *Eretz Israel* emissary to North Africa Ephraim Ben-Haim towards the end of the Second World War will now be better understood. In September 1943, Ephraim Ben-Haim emphasized that Zionism was not intended only for victims of persecution but also those whose Zionism is Messianic, such as the Jews of North Africa (see Charvit, Y. (2010). *History of the Jews of Algeria during the French period*. Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense University of the Air series, 121-122 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Other such notables include Moses Montefiore and Isaac-Jacob Adolphe Crémieux—Sephardic Jews who developed an attachment to Zion during the same period and in the same atmosphere. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Katz, J. (1979). *Messianism and nationalism in the philosophy of R. Yehuda Alkalai*. Jewish nationalism: Essays and studies: Jerusalem: Zionist Library, pp. 308-356. Malach, A. (2015). Rethinking the harbingers of Zionism as a result of contemporary nationalism studies. In A, Yedidiya (ed.), *Time to Be Gracious* (pp. 17-35). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Charvit, Y. (2003). France in Galilee during the nineteenth century, as reflected in the consular correspondence of the Abou family. *Cathedra*—*Journal of the History and Settlement of Eretz Israel*, 108, 75-104. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Kark, R. (1991). A pioneer Moroccan neighborhood in new Jerusalem: Mahane Israel and Rabbi David Ben Shimon (*Zuf Devash*). In S. Shetreet (ed.), *Pioneers in tears* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, pp. 66-83). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Greenberg, G. (2009). Mordekhai Yehoshua Atiyah's Kabbalistic response to the Holocaust, In G. C. Bacon, A. Baumgarten, J. Barnai, H. Waxman, & I. Yuval (eds.), *Iggud: Selected essays in Jewish studies*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, pp. 137-156). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Zohar, Z. (2002). Religious confirmation of Zionism as a secular national movement: A chapter in the philosophy of Rabbi Kalfon Moshe Hacohen. *Israel*, 2, 107-125 [Hebrew]; Mamo, R. (2009). *A Psalm of Moses—Chapters in the Zionist philosophy of Rabbi Kalfon Moshe Hacohen*. Jerusalem: Publisher unknown [Hebrew]; Naim, Y. (2009). Rabbi Kalfon Moshe Hacohen—between conservatism and modernity. Doctoral dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel [Hebrew]. See also Ratzabi, S. (2001). Religious philosophers on the secular state. In P. Ginossar and A. Bareli (eds.), *Examining the rebirth of Israel: A compendium of problems facing Zionism, the Yishuv and the State of Israel*, vo. 11. Sde Boqer, Israel: Ben-Gurion Heritage Center, pp. 1-26. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Elmakias, Y. (2015). The Zionist Movement and Hebron: From vision to reality, 1882-1948. Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, pp. 47-51, 69-60 [Hebrew]; see also Elmakias, Y. (2019). *“Our faces towards Hebron!—Hebron and the Zionist Movement: From vision to reality, 1882-1948*. Jerusalem: Carmel, pp. 72-76, 110-111. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See below. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cohen Scali, D. (1994). *Keren leDavid*, *Yalkut David*, *Parashat Vayishlah*, Section C, p. 8b [Hebrew]; Cohen Scali, D. (1926). *Lekha* *David*, *Parashat Vayehi*, p. 74. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Charvit, Y. (2005). La France, l’élite rabbinique d’Algérie et la Terre Sainte au XIXème siècle – Tradition et Modernité, Honoré Champion – Sorbonne Paris IV, pp. 157-163. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ratzabi, S. (1998a). Zionism, Judaism and *Eretz Israel* in the philosophy of the Rishon leZion Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel. *Peamim*, 73, 60-83 [Hebrew]; Ratzabi. S. (1998b). The Rishon leZion Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, Halakha and Zionism. In *Zionism*, vol. 21, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Chaim Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism, pp. 77-97; Zohar, Z. (2001). *The Luminous face of the East: Studies in the Legal and Religious Thought of Sephardic Rabbis of the Middle East*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, pp. 237-284. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Bezalel, I. (2018). *You were born Zionists: Sephardim in Eretz Israel, Zionism and the rebirth of the Hebrew language during the Ottoman Era*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, pp. 206-209. “R. Toledano’s critique of Haredi ideology clearly characterized its anti-Zionist foundations: Reconciliation to exile; prohibition of natural human activity oriented towards redemption; opposition to Jewish nationalism and isolation from secular Jews. R. Toledano was a partner in religious Zionism and propounded an even more radical view, defining secular national activity as a brilliant, noble and sacred endeavor—a position similar to that of R. A. I. Kook—for whose primacy we should express our gratitude” (p. 207). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Tobi, J. (1982). *“I shall ascend the date tree”—A century of immigration and settlement*. Jerusalem: Mekorot. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Charvit, Y. (2005). Rabbi Joseph Renassia —Portrait of a spiritual leader in French Algeria, 1879-1962. In M. Orpali & E. Hazan (eds.), *Renewal and tradition, creativity, leadership and cultural processes in North African Jewry* (Ramat Gan and Jerusalem: Bar-Ilan University—Aharon and Rachel Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage and the Bialik Institute, pp. 89-98). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Hirschberg, H. Z. (ed.) (1972). *Remember Abraham: Anthology in memory of R. Abraham Almaliah on the fifth anniversary of his departure*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Council of North African Jewry. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Zohar, Z. (2002). The State of Israel in the eyes of senior Sephardic/Eastern Sages. In M. Bar-On and Z. Zameret (eds.), *On both sides of the bridge: State and religion in the early years of Israel*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, pp. 320-349. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Dadon, Y. (2006, 2008). *It is a beginning: The attitude of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Sages to Zionism and the establishment of the State* (vols. 1 and 2). Jerusalem: Y. Dadon [Hebrew]. R. Dadon refers to many additional personalities: Tunisia—Rabbis Rahamim Hai Hawita Hacohen, Yossef Susu Hacohen, Houmani Allouche, Eliyahu Hai Damari, Abraham Hacohen, Eliyahu Salacmon; Morocco—Rabbis Moshe Malka, Moshe Azgari, Reuben ben David, Haïm Chochana, Moshe Aharon Pinto; Algeria—Rahamim Naouri, Sidi Faraj Halimi, Yihya Yitzhak Halevi; *Eretz Israel*—HaRishon leZion Haim David Hazan, Ben-Zion Abraham Koenka (emissary to North Africa), Meir Vaknin; Djerba—Moshe Hacohen Driham, Makhlouf Idan, Yosef Buchritz, Shaul Sheli Mekikatz, Abraham Magutz Hacohen, Shushan Hacohen, Ben-Zion Hacohen, Mordechai Sagron, Saghir Achouche, Haim Houri, Peretz Maimon, Bougid Hanina Saadon; Yemen—Amram Korah, Chaim Sinwani, Mordechai Sharabi, Haim Kasar, Yahya Alsheikh, Saadia Ozeri, Joseph Kapah; Iran—Rahamim Melamed Hacohen, Abraham ben Azaria Hakham. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Gavra, M. (2018). *Rabbi Yeshayahu Meshorer—His life and works*. Bnei Brak (Israel): Yemenite Sages Research Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Zohar. Z. & Sagi, A. (eds.). (2007). Living Judaism : essays on the Halakhic thought of Rabbi Hayyim David Halevi. Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Charvit, Y. (2002a). *From the island land to Eretz Israel: Algerian Jewry and the State of Israel—1948-1998*. Kiryat Arba (Israel): Gei Yinasei Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Charvit, Y. (2002b). Identity and history—The cultural heritage of Rabbi Yehouda Léon Askenazi (Manitou). *Peamim Quarterly for Research of Eastern Jewish Communities*, 91, 105-122 [Hebrew]; Charvit, Y. (2016). *Hokhmat Israel* in France in the twentieth century—Between Berlin and Jerusalem. *Mada’ei Hayahadut*, 51, 131-156. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Prof. Abraham Shalom Yahuda (1877-1951) was a scion of Joseph ben Shoshan, counselor to the court of the King of Castile Alfonso VIII. His father was Rabbi Benjamin Yehezkel Yahuda of Iraq and his mother Rivka Bergmann of Germany. A researcher, collector and Zionist activist of many talents. I intend to publish a comprehensive study of his life and works (see Gaon, M. D. (1938). *Eastern Jews in Eretz Israel*, vol. 2. Jerusalem: Azriel Printers, pp. 276-280 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Pedaya, H. (2012). The sixth millennium—Millenarism and Messianism in the Zohar. *Daat* 72, 51-98.[Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Morgenstern, A, (2002). Diaspora Jewry and longing for Zion, 1248-1840. *Tekhelet*, 12, 51-100 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. In a [Hebrew] lecture/YouTube clip entitled *Sabbateans, Hasidim and Mitnagdim in eighteenth-century Jewish community leadership*, Rachel Elior elucidates this trend well, addressing the Messianic trend as entirely non-normative and inherently crisis-oriented: “Messianism flourishes and prospers when realities are absurd and impossible to cope with… Messianism concerns speculation about other worlds, hidden Utopias.” Gershom Scholem’s approach to the study of R. Joseph Karo is highly symptomatic of this same tendency: “The internal mixture of Halakha, Kabbala in R. Joseph Karo’s thinking clarifies why Gershom Scholem, greatest of the Kabbala scholars, hardly refers to him in his writings. For Scholem, the Kabbala is underground knowledge that threatens Halakha and upsets the well-ordered world of Rabbinic Judaism. Consequently, the charismatic Kabbalist concerned with Divine Grace clashes frequently with the authority of Halakhic sages” (Altshuler, M. (2017). *The life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, p. IX [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ariel-Yodel, D. Lebovitz, M., Mazar, Y., & Inbar, M. (eds). (2001). *The battle of Gog and Magog: Messianism and the Apocalypse in Judaism—past and present*. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Safire Hemmed) [Hebrew]; Feige, M. (2002). *Two maps for the [West] Bank: Gush Emunim, Peace Now and shaping Israeli space*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press [Hebrew]; Aran, G. (2013). *Kookism, the roots of Gush Emunim, settler culture, theology, Zionism and contemporary Messianism*. Jerusalem: Carmel, pp. 332-382 [Hebrew]; Uriel, M. (2015). From the Park Hotel to the Jewish Underground: The place of Kiryat Arba–Hebron settlers in shaping the ideological path of settlement in Judea and Samaria, 1967-1984. Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Bartal, I. (1995). *Exile in Israel: Pre-Zionistic settlement of Eretz Israel—essays and research*. Jerusalem: Zionist Library, pp. 236-264 [Hebrew]; Etkes, I. (2016). A portrait of Messianic Zionism. In I. Etkes, D. Assaf, & Y. Kaplan (eds.), *Milestones: Essays in Jewish history—dedicated to Zvi (Kuti) Yekutiel*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, pp. 363-378 [Hebrew]; Harel, Y. (2016). Traditional Zionism? Clarifying the nature of Zionist activity among Asian and African [Jewish] communities. In I. Etkes, D. Assaf, & Y. Kaplan (eds.) *Milestones: Essays in Jewish history—dedicated to Zvi (Kuti) Yekutiel*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, pp. 321-336 [Hebrew]; Etkes, I. (2015). The Vilna Gaon and his disciples as early Zionists—the making of a myth. *Zion*, 90(1), 69-114 [Hebrew]. For a recent and more comprehensive examination of the same subject, see Etkes, I. (2019). *The Messianic Zionism of the Vilna Gaon—the invention of a tradition*. Jerusalem: Carmel. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Araki-Klorman, B. (1995). *Messianism and Messiahs: Yemenite Jewry in the nineteenth century*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hillel Ben-Haim Library) [Hebrew]; Saadon, H. (2002. Longing for Zion and immigration to Israel. In H. Saadon (ed.), *Yemen: Eastern Jewish communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, pp. 115-125. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. In the best case, a colonialist movement in the worst. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Scholem emphasizes Messianic agitation and the hegemony of the Lurian Kabbala in Safed, following the trauma of the Expulsion from Spain. Nevertheless, his research hardly mentions the political Messianic paths of the Lurian Kabbala (see Gris, Z. (2004). The Messiah’s scribe—Aaron Zev Eshkoli. *Peamim*, 100, 147-157 [Hebrew]; Liebes, Y. (2017). The truth about the Kabbala of R. Moshe Cordovero as reflected in Lurian literature. *Peamim*,148, 27-40 [Hebrew]; Nahon, G. (1997). *La Terre Sainte au temps des Kabbalistes*. Paris: Albin Michel, pp. 129-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Jonatan, M. (2018). Messianic movements: Unknown lectures by Gershom Scholem, 1947. *Dehak: Journal of Hebrew Literature*,10, 395-459. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. In their discussion, Profs. Avi Elkayam and Zahi Weiss (Sabbatai Zvi [sic], YouTube, 28 July 2011) found legitimacy for chaotic Sabbatean Messianism. They emphasize that Sabbatai Zevi and Benedict Spinoza were viewed as heroes by Zalman Shazar, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, David Ben-Gurion and Nahum Sokolov. Zionist leaders and historians considered Sabbateanism a rallying point and a direction in which to proceed. “Their hearts were drawn to heretical figures. They perceived the Sabbatean Movement as a proto-Zionistic Messianic movement between the Bar-Kochba Revolt and the Zionist Revolt.” According to them, Gershom Scholem’s attraction to Sabbateanism originated in spiritual anarchy: “This an anarchy that contributes to the renewal of Israeli society, as it is chaos that seeks order and the structures of law. This is the groundwater that threatens to destroy the world, the Messianic fire that Jewish tradition bears within it. From “chaos” to “Let there be light”—this is the procedure located within Jewish Messianism. These are the dialectics between construction and destruction.” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Felah, B. (2010). *[Jacob’s] Ladder: Thoughts on the Monarchy of Israel* (periodical)—between poetics and politics. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Hebrew Literature, Bar-Ilan University, pp. 256-264. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Schweid, E. (1983). *Mysticism and Judaism according to Gershom Scholem—analysis and critique*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought, Appendix B. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Raz-Krakotzkin, A. (2011). Legislation, Messianism and censorship: Printing the *Shulhan Arukh* as the advent of modernity. In E. Baumgarten, R. Weinstein and A. Raz-Krakotzkin (eds.), *Tov Elem [Bonfils]: Memory, community and gender in Jewish societies in the Middle Ages and at the advent of the Modern Era* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Mandel Institute, pp. 306-355) [Hebrew]; Mor-Altshuler criticizes Raz-Krakotzkin for his anachronistic adoption of Jewish Orthodoxy’s later interpretation of the *Shulhan Arukh* [SA]: “The later Orthodox interpretation is clearly incompatible with R. Joseph Karo’s purpose in publishing the SA: He did not seek to establish an imaginary ‘legalistic community’ to supplant the Ingathering of Exiles to *Eretz Israel*. On the contrary, he perceived the actual ingathering in his own time as the inception of Redemption. His codification endeavors were intended to lay uniform legal groundwork for members of the various Jewish communities who were gathering in *Eretz Israel* and even those who would arrive at some future date. […] In Karo’s eyes, the SA was the culmination of a historical legal interpretation process and the beginning of the era of Messianic interpretation. […] One consequence of the SA’s national-Messianic purpose is the development of a Sanhedrin image […] The SA thus laid the foundations for a national Sanhedrin out of hope that ‘thy children shall be Sanhedrin in the Hall of Hewn Stones,’ that did not disappear on the conclusion of the SA but rather gained momentum’” (Altshuler, M. (2017). *The Life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, pp. 354-355. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. The Israeli television program *First Reading—Messianism* (YouTube) presents works by Prof. Israel Knohl (Knohl, I. (2000). *In the footsteps of the messiah*. Tel Aviv: Schocken [Hebrew]) and Eli Shai (Shai, E. (2003). *Messianism of incest: A new and uncensored history of Jewish Messianic mysticism’s sexual foundation.* Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth (Hemed Books) [Hebrew]) with the same bias. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Idel, M. (2004). Aharon [Adolf] Jellinek and the Kabbala. *Peamim*, 100, 15-22. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Kurzweil, B. (1959). *Fundamental problems of our new literature*. In B. Kurzweil, *Our new literature: Continuation or revolution?* (Tel Aviv: Schocken). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See Malach, A. (2008). The heart of historical truth—Kurzweil vs. Gershom Scholem. *Makor Rishon* weekly newspaper, Friday supplement, 26 December. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Batnitzky, L. (2011). *How Judaism became a religion: An introduction to modern Jewish thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Malach, A. (2016). Research on nationalism and the Jewish-Israeli case. *Iyunim*, 26, 15-152. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Charvit, Y. (2008). Christianity and Islam in the philosophy of Rabbi Yehouda Léon Askenazi (Manitou): Chronicles and eschatology. In D. Schwartz and A. Gross (eds), *On repentance and redemption*—*A festschrift for Binyamin Gross*. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, pp. 257-278. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. “The secularism of Zionism was reflected in three spheres: First, laying the foundation that the Jewish People constitute a nation, in the modern sense of this term, and not a religious community by nature. Second, the conception that one need not await miraculous Redemption but take human action and initiative to establish a national home for the Jewish People. Third, a central and outstanding percentage of Zionist Movement leaders and activists did not observe a Halakhic way of life. […] During their first few years in the State of Israel, Eastern sages […] were aware of the secularity of Zionism and the State of Israel and its institutions, but supported Zionism and the Zionist enterprise unanimously (Zohar, Z. (2002). Religious confirmation of Zionism as a secular national movement: A chapter in the philosophy of R. Kalfon Moshe Hacohen. *Israel*, 2, 108 [Hebrew]); “[R. Kalfon Moshe Hacohen] was well aware of the secular-national character of the Zionist movement. He knew about the criticism against him within ultra-Orthodox circles, yet accorded it great value and highly positive religious significance” (Zohar, Z. (2002). Religious confirmation of Zionism as a secular national movement: A chapter in the philosophy of R. Kalfon Moshe Hacohen. *Israel*, 2, 110 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Toumanitou, Parachat Chemot, 1994. Retrieved 4 June 2020 from <http://www.toumanitou.org/toumanitou/la_sonotheque/parasha/chemot_serie_1994/cours_1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ketubot, 110b and 111a. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Attiya, M. (1965). *The Secret of the Oath*. Jerusalem: Hatehiya. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Taanit 5a. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. R. Mordechai Attiya perceived an allusion to the Holocaust here. For a more thorough exposition, see Attiya, M. (1965). *The Secret of the Oath*. Jerusalem: Hatehiya, pp 15-20 [Hebrew]; Livni, A. (1995). *Return to Zion: A banner unto the nations*. Jerusalem: El Artzi Publishers, p. 308. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Altshuler, M. (2017). *The life of Rabbi Joseph Karo*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, pp. 169-173. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. What disappeared was *fear* of the oaths and not their *prohibitions*, as there had been no Halakhic prohibition from the outset, only a psychological cloud hovering over mass aliya. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Pachnik, A. (1983). The late Gaon R. Meir Simha—love of the land and fear of the oaths. *Barkai* 1, 37-41. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. The original Hebrew version of Biblical phrase “…and made you go upright” [Leviticus 26:13] is *vaolekh etkhem komemiyut*, hinting at these two tiers (Hebrew: *komot*). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. As Jesus was the “son of Joseph” the carpenter, extra caution was exercised in Christian countries regarding the term “Messiah son of Joseph” (see Charvit, Y, (2019). *Hebraism and beyond: An intellectual portrait of Rabbi Y. L. Askenazi (Manitou)*. Ramat Gan, Israel: *Idra*, pp. 237-268 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Kook, A. I. (1974). *The vision of Redemption*. Jerusalem: Association for the Publication of R. A. I. Kook’s Works, p. 176. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Askenazi, Y. L. (2006). *Mourning for the Messiah?* Efrat, Israel: Manitou Institute, 35-36. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 52a. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Shvilly, C. (1968). *Calculations of Redemption* (fourth edition). Jerusalem: [publisher unknown], p. 63. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. The Hasidic courts of Satmar and Lubavitch maintain that Halakha recognizes only MSD, as they learn from Maimonides’s Laws of Kings and Their Wars (see Kasher, M. M. (1969). *The Great Era*. Jerusalem: Torah Shlema Institute [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Kook, A. I. (1984). Mourning in Jerusalem. *Maamarei Hareiayah*, Part I. Jerusalem: Golda Katz Foundation, pp. 94-99. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Gross, B. (1994). Le “sionisme de Maharal.” In B. Gross, *Le Messianisme juif dans la pensée du Maharal de Prague* (Paris: Albin Michel, pp. vi-xiv). [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Gordin, J. (1995*). Ecrits – Le Renouveau de la pensée juive en France* (Paris: Albin Michel). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. As part of a broader research project entitled *Holocaust and rebirth: The full picture*. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Barnai, J. (1995). *Historiography and nationalism: Trends in the research and Jewish settlement of Eretz Israel, 634-1881*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem—Magnes Press and the Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Ben-Zion, Y. and Kedar, A. (eds.). (1978). *Ideology and Zionist policy*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. “The outstanding activism in Messianic immigration to *Eretz Israel* proves that even before the advent of modern Zionism, the attitude of the Jews towards *Eretz Israel* was not limited to spiritual longing and textual and symbolic mention. Under the influence of Messianic anticipation, many Jews raised their eyes towards the Promised Land, believing that return thereunto constitutes a practical and realizable goal. […] *Eretz Israel* […] is not just some bare, distant and unreachable concept. It is no longer only the object of dreams whose name is mentioned primarily in prayers. It is a real place that accepts aliya from various communities and countries and maintains a living, breathing Jewish community of its own that has preserved its unique identity throughout all generations. […] Intense longing for the historic homeland and powerful faith in Redemption of the Jewish People through aliya, that nourished the Messianic ferment of sixth-millennium (1240-1840) aliyot, still motivate mass return to the Land of our Forefathers under the flag of Zionism. They served as an essential theoretical axis for establishment of Jewish ownership rights and for belief in the Jewish People’s spiritual and physical rebirth in its national home. In this respect, one may at least perceive the Messianic aliyot and the Zionist revolution as distinct signs along one historical axis, as chapters in an ongoing historical narrative.” (Morgenstern, A. (2002). Diaspora Jewry and longing for Zion. *Tekhelet*, 12, 89-90 [Hebrew]). By contrast, Israel Bartal claims that Morgenstern is ascribing non-existent acute Messianic anticipation to the immigrants who arrived before 1840, when the sum total of their traditional Messianic faith was their desire to die in the Holy Land and thus merit resurrection (Bartal, I. (1995). *Exile in Israel: Essays and research on pre-Zionist settlement of Eretz Israel*. Jerusalem: Zionist Library. p. 255 [Hebrew]). [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Shmuel Trigano, like Gershom Scholem, perceives the Sabbatean crisis as the beginning of the process that led to Zionism, but unlike Scholem, he considers Zionism a reflection of “the Great Return” that began with the Sabbatean crisis. I adopt Trigano’s Great Return paradigm but extend it backwards to the 16th century for the reasons indicated above. See: Stillman, N. (1995). “My heart’s in the east”: Sephardi Zionism. In N. Stillman, *Sephardi* *religious responses to modernity* (Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, pp. 49-64); Trigano, S. (1977). *Le récit de la disparue*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, pp. 361-373; Trigano, S. (1979). *La nouvelle question juive*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, pp. 225-311; Trigano, S. (1984). *La demeure oubliée*. Paris: Lieu Commun, pp. 255-279. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. This is also true regarding the history of the Holocaust. Methodologically, historically and educationally speaking, one should say “the Holocaust of the Jewish People” and not “the Holocaust of European Jewry.” Holocaust and rebirth are not the destiny of European Jews only. The entire Jewish nation coped with the anguish of the Holocaust and shaped paths of rebirth, each in its own way in its own Diaspora. This perspective, as indicated, will be addressed in subsequent research. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. “The foundations of Zionism are in the Torah of Israel. All the spiritual movements led to *Eretz Israel* in one way or another. All Zionist processes originate in previous ones. One should examine the points of transition and trace the processes of development. In Islamic countries, they underwent crisis at a later date” (Interview with Prof. Eliezer Schweid, Jerusalem, 2020). [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Talmon, J. (1977). *Herzl’s “Jewish State” seventy years later, in an era of violence*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, pp. 143-183. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Conforti, Y. (2006). *Shaping the nation: The cultural sources of Zionism*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute [Hebrew]; Weiss, G. I. (2014). *Theodor Herzl, a new reading*. Jerusalem: Gefen; Malach, A. (2019) Herzl’s theology: A new reading of *Altneuland*. *Cathedra*—*Journal of the History and Settlement of Eretz Israel*, 171, 49-74. [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. And even during the Second Temple Era and the Bar-Kochba Revolt, Jewish nationalism would be expressed most powerfully and would remain during the Middle Ages, largely shaping European and American nationalism at the dawn of the Modern Era (see Malach, A. (2008). The legitimate basis for a Jewish nation-state in the Postmodern Era. Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Hastings, A. (1997). *The construction of nationhood*: *Ethnicity, religion and nationalism.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 186; Malach, A. (2016). Research on nationalism: The Jewish-Israeli case. *Iyunim*, 26, 135-173 [Hebrew]; Talmon, J. (1965). Jewish history—its universal significance and uniqueness. In J. Talmon, *Unity and Uniqueness: Essays on Historical Thought* (Jerusalem: Schocken, pp. 209-245) [Hebrew]; Ben-Israel, H. (2004) *On behalf of the nation: Essays and articles on nationalism and Zionism*. Ben-Gurion Institute for Israel Studies, Ben-Gurion University, Beersheba, Israel; Ben-Israel, H. (2003). Review of A. D. Smith (2000), *The nation in history* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England)*.* *Historia—Journal of the Historical Society of Israel*, 12, 93-104. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Interview with Prof. Boaz Hoss, Jerusalem, 2020 [Hebrew]. See Hoss, B. (2016). The existential question of Jewish mysticism: The genealogy of Jewish mysticism and the theology of Kabbala study. Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. See Introduction in Gal, A. (ed.). (2010). *Regions of Zionism: Vol II—the Balkans, the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and Beersheba: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Bezalel, I. (2006). “*You were born Zionists”: The Sephardim in Eretz Israel in Zionism and the Hebrew revival during the Ottoman Era*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Katz. J. (1998). A time to study and a time to observe. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center. [Hebrew] [↑](#footnote-ref-119)