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JAKUB FRANK, A JEWISH HERESIARCH AND HIS MESSIANIC DOCTRINE

The life and work of Jakub Frank (1726–1791) have been quite well known since the publication in 1895 of Aleksander Kraushar's monograph *Frank i frankiści polscy* (*Frank and the Polish Frankists*). What is far less known is the doctrine of the Messianic movement which he founded. A big collection of Frankist writings in Polish is only now being edited¹. Ignorance of these sources has led to many misunderstandings. The main defect of nearly all the studies on Frankism, of which those by H. Graetz², M. Bałaban³ and Gershom Scholem⁴ are best known, is that they treat Frank's doctrine as a stable construction which did not undergo significant changes. This is completely untrue. What Jakub Frank taught immediately after his arrival in Poland in 1755 differed essentially from the Messianic concepts which he worked out during his 13-year compulsory isolation in the Jasna Góra monastery (1760–1773) and these in turn were completely different from the Frankists' doctrine at the turn of the 18th century. The changes were so fundamental that, strictly speaking, we are faced with different Messianic doctrines. I will try to set things in order and present the successive stages in the development of Frankism.

¹ The first manuscript, entitled *Roznaite adnotacje, przypadki, czynności i anekdoty Pańskie* (*The Lord's Miscellaneous Annotations, Events, Activities and Anecdotes*) was published in Warsaw in 1996 (edited and prefaced by J. Doktor); it is referred to henceforward as *Roznaite adnotacje*; a collection of all of Frank's extant lectures, entitled *Księga Słów Pańskich. Ezoteryczne wykłady Jakuba Franka* (*A Book of the Lord's Words; Jakub Frank's Esoteric Lectures*) has been published under the same editorship in Warsaw, vol. 1–2, 1997; this edition keeps the original pagination of the manuscript.

² Cf. his monograph *Frank und die Frankisten. Eine Sektengeschichte*, Breslau 1868.

³ M. Bałaban, *Le-toldot ha-tenu's ha-frankit* (*A History of the Sabbataean Movement*), 2 vols., Tel-Aviv 1934–35.

⁴ Cf. in particular his *The Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, revised edition, New York 1941 and *Die Metamorphose des häretischen Messianismus der Sabbatianer in religiösen Nihilismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: G. Scholem, *Judaica II*, Frankfurt am Main 1973, pp. 198–217.

1. *Jakub Frank's Teaching in 1755–1759*

Jakub Frank was born at Korolówka in Podolia, but when he was only 12 months old he left Poland together with his parents. He was brought up in Wallachia in a Sephardic milieu and considered himself a Sephardic Jew until the end of his life. When he returned to Poland at the end of 1755, he already had clear Messianic aspirations. He propagated among the Polish Sabbataeans the syncretic doctrine of Barukhia Ruso (1676–1720?), who was regarded as the second incarnation of the Messianic soul after Sabbatai Zwi. He presented himself as the third, final saviour and implementer of Barukhia's Messianic concepts. Not much is known about Frank's teachings during his first four-month stay in Poland (December 1755–April 1756). It can, however, be assumed that he propagated the “new religion of the end” created by Barukhia (*dat hadasha le-gamre*), which extracted sparks of revelation from three religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, uniting them into one Messianic chariot (*merkavah*)⁵. We know much more about the doctrine which he preached during his second stay in Poland (December 1758–August 1759), statements made by his adherents in 1759 being an important source. According to them, Frank identified himself with Jesus and presented himself as Paraclete. He is said “to have lain in bed, his arms stretched crosswise, to symbolise the crucified Christ”⁶. His followers summarized the most important points of his teaching for the Father Gaudenty Pikulski:

“1) the end of the world is near and there will soon be one fold and one shepherd,

2) the Antichrist has already been born in Turkey; Frank himself visited him in the town of Salonika and saw him with his own eyes; Frank told Jakub of Tyśmienica that the person he (Jakub of Tyśmienica) had seen in Salonika was the Antichrist, adding that the Antichrist would soon perform miracles and persecute the Catholic faith; it was he that was described in the Scriptures; stick firmly to your faith, etc.,

3) he also said to us: you know that Christ the Lord will suddenly descend from Heaven for the Last Judgment, but you do not understand the meaning of these words in the Gospels. Who knows? Perhaps He is already concealed in a human body, but when the time comes, He will suddenly appear when the persecutions by the Antichrist are over.

⁵ For more details on Barukhia's “new religion of the end” see G. Scholem, *Baruchja; rosh ha-shabta'im be-Saloniki (Barukhia, the Sabbataean Leader in Salonika)*, *Zijon* 4 (1941), pp. 118–147 and 181–202, in particular p. 184.

⁶ Quoted after A. Kraushar, *Frank i frankiści polscy (Frank and the Polish Frankists)*, Kraków 1895, vol. I, p. 202.

Having considered all these words, things and other circumstances, we have come to the conclusion that the Christ in whom we believe is embodied in the person of Frank, our leader, for we have traced Christ's wounds on his head and heart, although he hides this, pretending to be the most worthless person"⁷.

These statements were confirmed before the consistory court in Warsaw by the other members of Frank's Messianic *havurah*. They are also corroborated by Frankist esoteric sources. It is stated in *Miscellaneous Annotations*, edited at the beginning of the 19th century, that in 1757 Frank appointed a Messianic *havurah* composed of 12 "brethren", each of whom was given the name of an apostle⁸.

It is also worth drawing attention to the words of Father Jędrzej Kitowicz, who did not take part in the interrogation of Frank but could draw his information from a reliable source. Father Kitowicz's statement departs from the official records, but it agrees, on the whole, with what we know about Frank's teaching at that time. Kitowicz said that during the interrogation "all they pumped out of Frank was that in addition to Christ, whose faith he has adopted and upholds in everything, there is to be, according to the teachings of the Old Testament, yet another Jewish Messiah who will convert all Jews; He substantiated this assumption by the words of Psalm 86: *Homo et homo natus est in ea*⁹, and nobody could undermine his conviction"¹⁰.

After the interrogation, the consistory declared that the Frankists sincerely believed in Jesus' mission, but had a poor notion of the Christian faith because of disastrous catechesis¹¹. The only heretic element detected by the consistory was that Frank identified himself with Jesus; this was the reason why he was sentenced to a seclusion of unlimited duration in the Jasna Góra monastery. On March 1, 1760, the consistory ruled: "The interrogation has shown that these Israelites, yearning for the holy faith, firmly and whole-

⁷ G. Pi k u l s k i, *Złość żydowska przeciwko Bogu i bliźniemu (Jewish Animosity against God and the Neighbour)*, Lwów 1760, pp. 331–332.

⁸ Rozmaite adnotacje 52. According to a statement made in 1799 by Löw Hönig von Hönigsberg, a Prague Frankist, Frank was said to have revealed to his brethren at Iwanie that "he is the living God and there is no other God but him", and his adherents believed that the Holy Blessed One (united with the *Shekhinah* was manifested in him; G. Sch o l e m, *Mehkare shabta'ot (Sabbataean Works)*, ed. J. L i e b e s, Tel-Aviv 1991, pp. 642–643.

⁹ This is a fragment of Psalm 87, 5: "This and that man was born in her" (Zion).

¹⁰ J. K i t o w i c z, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III (A Description of Custom under Augustus III)*, Warszawa 1985, p. 27.

¹¹ An extensive description of the Frankists' collective catechesis can be found in Konstanty A w e d y k's book *Opisanie wszystkich dworniejszych okoliczności nawrócenia do wiary ś. contra-talmudystów (A Description of All the Fanciful Circumstances of the Conversion of Counter-Talmudists to the Holy Faith)*, Lwów 1760, pp. 88 ff.

heartedly believed and believe in the mystery of the Holy Trinity and in Jesus Christ, God and man, the true Messiah and our Redeemer, but they had some false notions, incompatible with the holy faith, about Christ's second coming to judge the living and the dead; these notions were inculcated in them by Jakub Józef Frank, who accepted from them exceptional superfluous honours and respect, as a result of which they kept up their false opinions and were confirmed in them"¹².

Frank certainly did not identify himself with Jesus for opportunistic reasons, for he could not possibly secure the Church's goodwill by this claim which, after all, was the main reason why he was sentenced to seclusion of unlimited duration. He never accused his denouncers of lying but only of having denounced him and he never renounced being identical with Jesus. In 1784 he told his pupils:

"I will tell you now what I intended to do the first time when I came from Lwów to Warsaw. Everybody saw that I recognized you as brethren. Your names were those of the apostles, who preceded you. You saw that I started by performing supernatural deeds. I ordered that three horses be harnessed to a sleigh, one next to another, and in this way I drove in the streets of the royal town. Had I been asked: What are you doing? I would have replied that I am Jesus and that my brethren are the apostles. I would have led you into a church and would have broken everything there, saying: This is not the Messiah, for why was he killed by Jews, people like himself? All the soldiers in Warsaw would not have had power over you, despite their weapons, and you would have seen God's great deeds. You would have been the first to be called full men and you would have marked the beginning of the world"¹³.

There is not a shadow of a doubt that at the beginning Frank unreservedly shared the opinion of Sabbatai and Barukhia that salvation was a spiritual process which had nothing in common with historical reality, a process whose visible effects would be manifested only when it was completed. In consequence, salvation activities had to be covert. Barukhia made this the basic principle to be observed by his adherents. At the beginning Frank, too, observed the principle of "secret pace". During his first stay in Poland he only taught small trustworthy Sabbataean groups. At first conversion was not mentioned. Later his adherents told Father Pikulski that during

¹² A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 204.

¹³ *Zbiór słów Pańskich w Brünnie mówionych (Collection of the Lord's Words Said in Brünn)*, M.S. at the Jagiellonian Library, call numbers 6968 and 6969 (henceforward referred to as *Zbiór*) No. 1290 has been published in J. DOKTÓR (ed.), *Księga Słów Pańskich, ezoteryczne wykłady Jakuba Franka*, vols 1, 2, Warszawa 1997.

his first stay in Poland Frank “taught that there is certainly one God in three persons, without mentioning baptism and the Catholic faith”¹⁴.

2. *The Exposure of the Sect and the Attempt to Conduct Overt Activity*

There is controversy among researchers over the manifesto presented by Frank’s adherents to the consistory in Kamieniec Podolski and over their arguments at two public disputations with rabbis in Kamieniec Podolski (1757) and Lwów (1760). Most historians do not think that the arguments expressed the real opinions of the signatories and hold the view that they were influenced by opportunism or commissioned by the clergy, if not even dictated by them¹⁵. I hold a different view. In order to interpret the arguments of Frank’s adherents properly let us place them against the background of the circumstances in which they were formulated. Let us recall them briefly.

On January 27, 1756 Frank and a few other Sabbataeans were caught doing an orgiastic dance at Lanckoronie on the Zbrucz river. Heretical Sabbataean writings were also found. On June 13, 1756 the great *bet din* of Brody, presided over by Chajim Kohen Rapaport, pronounced *herem* (anathema) on all believers of Sabbatai Zwi and Barukhia. The *bet din* banned all contacts with the Sabbataeans and declared that marriages with Sabbataeans were concubinary and the children born of them illegitimate¹⁶. Having heard of these events, the bishop of Kamieniec, Mikołaj Dembowski, ordered that the Jewish heretics be brought before the consistory and interrogated. In his view, cases for heresy were by virtue of canonical law within his competence; he also summoned the rabbis who signed the anathema. When they failed to appear by the appointed time, the consistory prolonged the inquiry by six weeks, until March 31. It ordered that the arrested men be freed and gave them safe-conducts until that time.

The safe-conducts opened up new possibilities to the Sabbataeans. For the first time since the conversion of Sabbatai Zwi, his adherents could freely

¹⁴ G. Pikulski, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

¹⁵ The role played by the clergy in this famous disputation is, as a rule, exaggerated in literature. Major Balaban, for instance, did not believe that the Sabbataeans could have been the authors of the theses which they presented. “It is difficult to believe”, he wrote, “that Jews, especially in Podolia, a region of utmost ignorance, could have read Polish and Latin works and been familiar with Christian theology”; consequently he asserted that the theses had been “imposed by the clergy ... and the Frankists were only set the task of providing proof and justifications from the *Zohar* and the *Talmud* ... Since the evidence from the Bible is of a purely Christian character (the well known passages from *Isaiah*, *Psalms*, etc.), they are a Christian work while the evidence from the *Talmud* and *Zohar* is compiled in such a disorderly and senseless way that it is a true *lucus a non lucendo*”. M. Bałaban, *Studien und Quellen zur frankistischen Bewegung in Polen*, in: *Księga Pamiętkowa ku czci Dra Samuela Poznańskiego (1864–1921) ofiarowana przez przyjaciół i towarzyszy pracy naukowej*, Warszawa 1927, p. 36.

¹⁶ The full text of the *herem* has been published by M. Bałaban, *Le-toldot*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 125–126.

preach their faith, being protected against reprisals by the authority of the consistory. Frank realized quickly that this gave the sect a unique chance to come out into the open and become legalized in time; he called on his adherents to make a public confession of faith: "If we have the true God and you believe in Him, why should we hide this; let us go out into the open and break this (Mosaic Law) so that everybody sees it. Those who want to sacrifice their bodies and preserve their love of the faith, let them follow me. And they came out. This was during the great fast of *Ester Tanes*. There were thirteen of them. Our master had candied fruits and vodka in his hands and publicly gave everybody in the street something to eat"¹⁷.

Thanks to the safe-conducts, the sectarians could openly come out against orthodoxy. Frank tried later to attribute the circumstance-enforced change of strategy in Messianic work only to himself: "When you were true believers in Poland, you had to change your conduct, to break the fast and Mosaic laws. Although this was done secretly, you had to make this change ... On my first day, after my coming to you to Poland, you saw with your own eyes that all my activities were open. You used to say that you were commanded to keep your steps in secrecy, while I said that the whole world should know and see. If a thing is bad, may it be quickly destroyed, if the faith is good, who can spoil it? When I arrived in Lanckoronie and you were singing songs, I went out and opened the window so that they should be heard. When I returned from Wallachia with a certain rabbi Iszyje of Lwów, I did this in particular in order to break the March fast openly. I went out into the street and ate candied fruits and ordered lunch to be prepared at noon and the house to be open all the time. Although I was detained for seven days, I did not mind it, for I wanted everything to be brought to light. In Iwan, too, I ordered songs to be sung in the open to all nations, and who could oppose this? Also now, when my time comes, everything that I do will have to be seen by everybody, the whole world will see it, and those who are far away will hear about it. And you who acted secretly, what have you achieved?"¹⁸.

The Sabbataeans started public agitation. However, the investigation continued and the validity of the safe-conducts expired. We do not know whether the Sabbataeans tried to prolong them. It is highly probable that the bishop and the consistory by not prolonging the validity of the safe-conducts wanted to force the Sabbataeans, left at their mercy, to adopt the Christian faith. These tactics stood a great chance of success. On April 15, the rabbis again arrested Frank and his *havurah*¹⁹. The consistory ordered the prisoners

¹⁷ *Roznaité adnotacje*, p. 20.

¹⁸ Quoted after A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 329-330.

to be released, but they were told to renounce provocative behaviour and go home. For Frank this meant going back to Turkey. He left the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and together with a few friends and acquaintances soon adopted Islam. The Podolian Sabbataeans tried to implement his new strategy of public activity on their own account.

The trial before the consistory, which was not only to adjudge the question of “the Adamites’ sin” but also to decide whether the Sabbataeans had committed a heresy justifying their exclusion from the Jewish community, seemed to open the chance of legalization to the Sabbataeans. The Catholic Church could be expected to support a group whose doctrine was much closer to Christianity and which rejected Mosaic Law and the Talmud, symbols of Jewish obduracy. It should also be remembered that the Sabbataeans constituted a large part of the local Jewry, and in many localities, e.g. in Kopyczyńce, Nadwórna, Rohatyn, Busk, Gliniany, were in the majority.

The Sabbataeans succeeded in persuading Bishop Dembowski to combine the hearing of the Lanckoronie case with a disputation over the Jewish faith. They also asked him to “settle which teaching was worse, that of the *Talmud* or that of the *Zohar*”²⁰. The bishop agreed, but demanded that the Sabbataeans first present their confession of faith in writing, as a basis for discussion.

This confession, also known as *Manifesto*, was signed by 23 Sabbataeans from the Kamieniec diocese²¹. It was printed in Lwów in two versions: in Polish, to be used in a future dispute²² and in Hebrew, a version which the Sabbataeans treated as a propaganda publication and circulated all over Central Europe under the protection of the Church²³. The Sabbataeans did not have to lay false claims; the similarity between their doctrine and Christian theology was obvious, and neither before nor during the disputation did they promise the clergy that they would agree to be baptized. Gaudenty Pikulski, who dealt with the Sabbataeans, wrote with bitterness that despite Bishop Dembowski’s insistence, the Sabbataeans “did not mention baptism, which is the door to Christ’s Church, throughout the inquiry at Kamieniec”²⁴.

¹⁹ *Rozmaite adnotacje*, p. 21.

²⁰ G. Pikulski, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

²¹ It is significant that the *Manifesto* was not signed by Frank’s closest comrades: Eliza Szor from Rohatyn and his sons Jehuda, Natan and Salomon, and Nachman from Busko, Jakub from Tyśmienica and Mardochoj.

²² It was published by Franciszek Kley n in his collection of documents from the Kamieniec Disputation *Coram iudicio recolendae memoriae Nicolai de stemmate Jelitarum a Dembowa Góra Dembowski*, Pars III, Lwów 1758, pp. 58 ff.

²³ The *Manifesto* was printed in Lwów in 2,000 copies. M. Bałaban included it in *Le-toldot*, *op. cit.*, pp. 139–151.

²⁴ G. Pikulski, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

So this was a real Sabbatacan manifesto presenting the fundamental, though not all, points of their doctrine, such as the spiritual vision of salvation, divine incarnation, the Trinity and renunciation of the reconstruction of the Temple.

“1. We believe in everything that God prescribed to believe and taught in the Old Testament.

2. Without grace, man’s mind is incapable of clearly grasping the meaning of the Holy Scriptures.

3. The *Talmud*, which is full of unparalleled blasphemies against God, should and must be rejected.

4. There is one God, Creator of all things.

5. This God is in three indivisible persons.

6. God can assume man’s body and be subject to all passions except sin.

7. According to a prophecy, the city of Jerusalem will not be reconstructed.

8. The Messiah promised in the *Scriptures* will not come.

9. God Himself will annul the curse cast on the first parents and the nation. This is the true Messiah, God incarnate”²⁵.

Contrary to the opinion held by the historians of Frankism²⁶, Frank influenced neither the shape of the *Manifesto* nor the endeavours of the Sabbatacans of Podolia, though he continued to take an interest in the developments in Podolia and even came to Rohatyn during the disputation, which took place from June 20, 1757 to September 10, 1757. Even 27 years after the Kamieniec disputation he rebuked his adherents: “also at the beginning, when I crossed the Polish frontier on my way to Rohatyn, when you were having a dispute with Jews, why did you not ask me in a natural way: what have you come here for? Give us advice”²⁷.

In its ruling the court called the Sabbatacans “Jewish anti-Talmudists”, thus confirming their right to the privileges which the Commonwealth

²⁵ F. Kleyn, *op. cit.* (unpaginated). The book also includes a 23-page Polish record of the disputation, entitled *Rozmowa ustna niewiernych żydów contra-talmudystów, jako się oświadcniają, z niewiernymi żydami synagog niektórych podolskich w powszechności i innych imieniem (A Conversation Between Counter-Talmudists, as They Call Themselves, and Orthodox Jews from Some Synagogues of Podolia)* in which these theses are developed and backed by arguments mainly from the Bible and the *Zohar*. A Hebrew translation of the record was published by M. Bałaban, *Le-toldot, op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 139–151.

²⁶ Cf., for instance, Bałaban’s statement that “Cracow rabbis did not take part in the disputations with that “messiah” held in Kamieniec Podolski (1757) and Lwów (1758)”, M. Bałaban, *Historia Żydów w Krakowie i Kazimierzu 1304–1868 (A History of the Jews in Cracow and Kazimierz 1304–1868)*, vol. II, Kraków 1936, p. 495. A similar version of events, portraying Frank as an indirect, if not a direct, initiator of both disputations and a participant in them is presented by Bałaban in other works.

²⁷ *Zbiór*, p. 114.

guaranteed to the Jews. The court guaranteed the Sabbataeans freedom to conduct open agitation for their faith, although — and this reflected the court's distrust — only in accordance with the confession of faith presented by them. Since the court declared that the *Talmud*, the basis of the rabbis' religious authority, was a harmful book and ordered that it should be burned in public, this agitation could only consist in a replacement of rabbinical institutions. The Sabbataeans intended to give short shrift to their opponents, being assured of the protection of the Church and the nobility (the court ordered that the nobility should look after the Sabbataeans). In was then, and not, as is generally assumed, during the Lwów disputation, that the Sabbataeans for the first time publicly accused Orthodox Jews of ritual murder. Immediately after the Kamieniec disputation they dictated the text of a frequently reprinted pamphlet entitled *The Errors of the Talmud, recognized by the Jews themselves and revealed by the new sect of Counter-Talmudists*²⁸. In the pamphlet they enumerated the holy days on which the rabbis ordered Jews to use Christian blood, to disgrace the Host and holy pictures, etc. Having been allowed to conduct open activity, the Sabbataeans were determined to do anything to resolve the struggle to their own advantage.

The sudden death of Bishop Dembowski, the Sabbataeans' protector, who passed away only three weeks after the verdict, changed the situation completely. A Frankist chronicle stated with sorrow: "Jews began to gain the upper hand over us"²⁹. The Sabbataeans had to flee to Wallachia, where they recognized Frank's leadership.

The Commonwealth did not forget the hundreds of fugitives who seemed to be so near conversion. On June 11, 1758, King Augustus III issued a safe-conduct in which he guaranteed to the "Counter-Talmudists" not only a safe return but also the right to seek redress of their wrongs in ecclesiastic and secular courts and to benefit by all the rights granted to the Jews in Poland, including the right to live and engage in trade "everywhere"³⁰.

Several months later Frank and his adherents, including the converts to Islam, returned to Poland and set up a court at Iwanie, an episcopal village. The fact that they stayed in an episcopal village for several months without concealing their conversion to Islam — for they demonstrated this by their garment and behaviour — as well as the freedom of teaching enjoyed by Frank can only be explained by a tacit agreement between Frank and the

²⁸ Lwów 1758, Kraków 1758, Lwów 1773 and 1784.

²⁹ *Rozmaite adnotacje*, p. 28.

³⁰ The text of the safe-conduct has been published by A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 107–110.

archbishop of Lwów, Władysław Aleksander Łubieński, who later became primate of Poland³¹. On February 20, a delegation of the Sabbataeans lodged a supplication in which it declared its readiness to be baptized but demanded that this should be preceded by yet another public debate with rabbis. They also presented their theses for the disputation.

“1. The prophecies of all prophets about the coming of the Messiah have already come true.

2. The Messiah was a true God whose name was Adonai; he assumed our form and suffered accordingly in order to redeem and save us.

3. Since the coming of the True Messiah sacrifices and ceremonies have come to an end.

4. The Holy Cross symbolizes the Holy Trinity and is a seal of the Messiah.

5. Every man should be obedient to the Messiah’s order, for this means salvation.

6. Nobody can adopt the faith of the Messiah–King except through baptism.

7. The *Talmud* teaches that Christian blood is indispensable and he who believes in the *Talmud* cannot do without it”³².

The first five theses were in fact a repetition of the 1757 *Manifesto*. The sixth thesis, recognition that baptism is a prerequisite of salvation, was the mainstay of Barukhia’s doctrine. The seventh thesis accusing rabbis of ritual murder, a thesis which has attracted the attention of historians, repeated the slanders propagated two years before.

Negotiations concerning the holding of a disputation were conducted by Jehuda Lejb Krysa and Salomon Szor, who in a supplication of May 16, 1759 to Primate Łubieński presented themselves as the chosen representatives of all Sabbataeans³³. So it was not Frank but individual Sabbataean factions that elected 13 representatives to attend the debate³⁴. It is worth pointing out that Frank dissociated himself ostentatiously from the disputation. In his lectures in Brno and Offenbach he did not even mention the Lwów dispute. He regarded it as a propaganda game which would lead

³¹ Frank’s contacts with the curia in Kamieniec are mentioned twice in *Rozmaite adnotacje*. One reference (44) says that “the Lord has received a cross from Kamieniec”. The other says that immediately before the beginning of the dispute with the rabbis Frank and his wife spent two days in Kamieniec.

³² Quoted after G. P i k u l s k i, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–168. The book also contains a full official record of the disputation, pp. 146–323.

³³ “We ... elected by all those who ... from the bottom of their hearts overtly and covertly ask for the teachings and truths of the true Messiah, the King”; G. P i k u l s k i, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

³⁴ Cf. M. B a ł a b a n, *Der offizielle Protokoll der Frankistendisputation in Lemberg (17. Juli — 10. Sept. 1759)* in: *Skizzen und Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Polen*, vol. VI, Berlin 1911, p. 56.

to a predetermined end. He came to Lwów on August 25, at the very end of the debate, and on the same day he, his wife and more than one thousand Sabbataeans took part in a solemn mass celebrated in the Lwów cathedral for the intention of successful catechisation³⁵.

What was then the aim of the second dispute with Orthodox Jews? The documents published by Kraushar and Theiner³⁶ show that it was the Sabbataeans who insisted on it to the irritation of the Catholic hierarchy, which did not like the idea. The papal nuncio Sierra was also very suspicious of this initiative. The primate agreed after long hesitations, when the Sabbataeans committed themselves in writing to adopt the Christian faith immediately after the debate. The Church hierarchy regarded the disputation as a means leading to baptism, to which Frank had secretly agreed.

The accusation of the rabbis of ritual murder, which the Sabbataean delegates insisted on adding to their doctrinal theses, deterred the undecided adherents of Sabbatai Zwi from joining Frank's camp rather than attracted them to it. This time it was the Christians and not the Jews who were the real addressees of the theses. The aim of the debate was therefore not propagation of the Sabbataean doctrine but simply revenge. Asked by the archbishop about the Sabbataean intentions, the administrator of the Lwów diocese, Father Mikulski, wrote that in his opinion it was hatred, reciprocated hatred, as he stressed, that was the motive power of this renewed conflict with the rabbis³⁷.

Dov Ber from Bolechów, who participated in the preparations for the debate on the rabbis' side, recorded the supplication to the primate in which the Sabbataeans subjected their baptism to the following conditions:

1. it shall not take place before Epiphany, 1760,
2. they shall not be forced to shave off their beards and side curls,
3. they shall be allowed to use both their Christian and their old Jewish names,
4. they will wear Jewish dress,
5. they will be allowed to intermarry,
6. they will not be forced to eat pork,
7. they will be allowed to observe the Sabbath in addition to Sunday,
8. they will preserve their Hebrew books, especially the *Zohar*³⁸.

³⁵ K. Awedyk, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³⁶ A. Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lituaniae*, vol. IV, pars II, Romae 1864, pp. 15–164.

³⁷ Cf. A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 143–144.

³⁸ The supplication is included in Dov Ber's collection of documents concerning the Lwów disputation entitled *Divre Bina*. Abraham Brawer found the manuscript in the Tarnopol library and discussed it extensively in *Hashiloah* 33 (1917) and 38 (1927). According to M. Bataban, who also quotes the text of the supplication in *Le-toldot*, *op. cit.*, pp. 206–207. Dov Ber translated most of the documents into Hebrew from G. Pikulski's book *Złość żydowska*, *op. cit.* It is an open

These demands, which were of course rejected by the primate, show that the Sabbataeans, having lost the chance to legalize their sect within Judaism, tried to legalize it within the Catholic Church, as its Jewish rite. The theses presented by them during both disputations were meant to be a public confession of faith, a true one, though not full. In other words, they were an official interpretation of the doctrine which they promised to observe if they were legalized.

3. Frank's Cześćochowa Doctrine

In 1789, when Frank's double life came to light, the consistory in Warsaw sentenced him to isolation in the Jasna Góra monastery; the isolation lasted 13 years. As a result of his long stay in the centre of the cult of the Virgin Mary, Frank's Messianic doctrine underwent essential modifications. To begin with, incarceration put an end to his dreams of political success. Frank concentrated his attention again on spiritual salvation. In Cześćochowa he worked out a new concept of his Messianic mission, which allowed him to regain Messianic credibility. It was necessary to specify a programme of salvation within Catholicism, in particular to define where the truth is, for according to Barukhia's teachings, truth should be found and liberated from Christianity's institutionalized shell.

Interrogations before an ecclesiastic court showed that when he was put in prison, Frank had little idea of the Catholic doctrine. He learned it better in the Jasna Góra monastery, where he had to attend all religious services and Church ceremonies. It is not surprising that he found the truth of Christianity in the cult of the Virgin Mary. "The Virgin is in Cześćochowa, hidden in the portrait"³⁹. The fight to liberate the *Shekhinah* from the portrait of Our Lady was presented as the reason and aim of his stay in the monastery. The incarceration became a Messianic mission.

It was at Cześćochowa that Frank worked out the final version of his doctrine which remained practically unchanged until his death. His Messianic activity became so closely linked with the Jasna Góra monastery that even after his death he was called Cześćochower⁴⁰. Frank's late teaching, started at Cześćochowa, is the only well documented stage in the develop-

question why neither Pikulski nor Awedyk published the supplication, although they should have known it. It is conceivable that it clashed with the way in which they portrayed the Frankists as sincere converts who only occasionally succumbed to Frank's bad influence.

³⁹ *Zbiór*, p. 614.

⁴⁰ See the diaries of Mojżesz Porges published by A. Mandel, *The Militant Messiah or the Flight from Ghetto*, New Jersey 1919, p. 156, and records of the interrogations of three fugitives from the court of Frank's daughter, published by S. Bäck, *Aufgefunde Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Frankisten in Offenbach*, "Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums" 1877, pp. 132–136, 189–194 and 232–241.

ment of the Sabbataean doctrine. There are extensive sources on this subject and, what is even more important, they are reliable, being esoteric sources. These are collections of Frank's teachings recorded almost *in extenso* in Brno (Moravia) and Offenbach from 1784 on.

The idea that the Messiah would perform the act of salvation in the capital of hostile Christianity was very popular in Judaism and Frank knew how to make use of it. "Your ancestors said: *Ki Moschiach ben Jossef*⁴¹ *beture de Roime weoschore, weoser* (Messiah is at the gate of Rome, he ties and unties). I am the one who goes in front of Her and protects Her. I take upon myself all the troubles and pains out of great love for Her; my eyes are always turned towards Her. I am the one who ties and unties, as you can see with your own eyes"⁴². As can be seen, he constructed his doctrine on the basis of the well known passage from the treatise *Sanhendrin* 97b on the Messiah who suffers at the gate of Rome waiting for the time when the world is ready for salvation.

The success of this interpretation of the Messianic process, which helped Frank to regain influence, depended on presenting a convincing explanation why salvation had not come yet. Frank had to specify the stage reached by the process of salvation after the mission of Sabbatai Zwi and Barukhia and explain what should be done to conclude it.

Faced with reverses, Frank withdrew his claim to divinity and explained the setbacks by the frailty of human nature: "for I am human and can do nothing to help"⁴³. He seemed to forget what the editors of the chronicle of his life remembered even at the beginning of the 19th century, namely, that in 1756 his adherents had solemnly recognized him as God incarnate⁴⁴. After his incarceration he presented himself only as "a messenger of God"⁴⁵. He also denied that his predecessors had a divine nature, for otherwise he could not have been regarded as their worthy successor.

In the light of the Sabbataean doctrine, the human saviour's mission was concluded when the Messiah was united with the *Shekhinah*. The work of salvation was then taken over by the latter. It would have been difficult to justify *Shekhinah*'s long stay in the centre of the cult of the Virgin Mary, for she should have led man to her divine partner. But the stay in the Jasna Góra monastery fitted well with the notion of the Messiah seeking his *Shekhinah*. However, to assume that the *Shekhinah* was in the Jasna Góra

⁴¹ Frank must have been quoting from memory for the original says *Moschiach ben David* (David's Son), not *ben Jossef*.

⁴² Quoted after A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 338.

⁴³ *Zbiór*, p. 771.

⁴⁴ *Roznāite adnotacje*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ *Zbiór*, p. 194.

monastery put the history of salvation back to the starting point. In Częstochowa Frank returned to the old concept that in every generation the Messianic soul assumes the form of a righteous man (*tzadik hador*) who would appear as Messiah when the world was ready for salvation. Like Sabbatai, he maintained that his soul had from the beginning been mystically united with the *Shekhinah*, but in his view, the Messianic task of the righteous man was not to unite with the *Shekhinah*, but to protect her and liberate her at the end of the salvation process. "From the beginning of the world the Virgin Mary has been entrusted to me alone, and to nobody else, so that I should be her guardian"⁴⁶. Frank had to explain what allowed his great predecessors, Sabbatai Zwi and Barukhia, to earn the sobriquets of the "First" and the "Second" Saviour, if the liberation of the *Shekhinah*, which according to the Sabbataean doctrine was to inaugurate the era of salvation, had not yet been accomplished. Sabbatai and Barukhia deserved credit for clearing the way for Frank. Sabbatai was the first to realize that *Shekhinah* was no longer in Judaism, that he had to renounce the religion of his ancestors and look for *Shekhinah* in another religion. Barukhia deserved gratitude for showing that she had to be sought in Christianity. But neither joined the Catholic fold where *Shekhinah* was hidden and neither tried to liberate her. "The former, who opened the Mohameddan order (to believers), was like Abraham, the Holy Lord who revealed the Christian order (to believers) was like Isaac, but neither achieved anything. And the people who remained in their orders were left almost in darkness. Now you have the honour of seeing that the third day is coming, and from this brightness will come"⁴⁷. This third step, or day, was entry into the Catholic Church to find the truth of salvation hidden in it, a truth which he named *da'at ha-kadosh shel Edom*, the holy knowledge of Edom⁴⁸. This knowledge was hidden in the cult of the Holy Virgin, a cult which he presented as a falsified image of an important truth. According to Frank, the Catholics were aware of the holiness of Jasna Góra, which was a real Mount Zion⁴⁹. They knew that this was the place of the Holy Virgin who was to bring salvation to the world, and this is why they organized the main centre of cult there. "Is it to no purpose that kings and lords go to the picture of the Holy Virgin in Częstochowa in great humility? They are wiser than you are, for they know that all power is with Her, in Her hands; just as He was said to have risen

⁴⁶ *Zbiór*, p. 629.

⁴⁷ *Zbiór*, p. 263.

⁴⁸ Quoted after A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 357.

⁴⁹ See the Frankist prophecies published by A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 207.

from the dead, She will rise from the earth, almost from the earth, and all the kingdoms of the earth will kneel down to Her"⁵⁰.

The symbolism of Jasna Góra is as ambiguous as all the other images which Frank used to present the history of salvation. Jasna Góra was, in his opinion, a seat of evil powers, the Gate of Rome, and at the same time it was a true Mount Zion on which, according to Zechariah's prophecy, the *Shekhinah* was to appear and from which living waters were to go out. He backed this ambiguity by the *Zohar's* paradoxical statement that "salvation is in the worst place"⁵¹. The road of salvation led first to captivity, and in order to climb up, one had first to descend to the bottom of the abyss. The Gate of Rome was the prison of the Messiah and *Shekhinah*, but at the same time it was "a gate to God". In his view, Catholicism was, on the one hand, the greatest enemy of salvation while on the other, it was of all religions nearest to God. Its institutions were a veil which separated the material world from the spiritual, hiding the *Shekhinah*. The liberation and revelation of the *Shekhinah* and acquirement of holy knowledge constituted one act of salvation. In the cosmic aspect this act denoted the fusion of the material and the spiritual world, it spiritualized the body and gave the form of a body to the spirit⁵². In the individual aspect, it meant a new spiritual birth which Frank called "ascent onto the level of a full man". By *Shekhinah's* light the faithful would gain new knowledge and would obtain a new soul, not yet known on earth, a soul which will make man a true image of God. "No creature has so far been created by God, and everything has been in a state of depravation, the whole world is defective; nothing is permanent, for only when men are worthy to be created by God Himself, will they receive a new soul from Him, and man will then be as eternal as God Himself is"⁵³.

This is the picture of the Messianic process in the collections of Frank's lectures, in particular in the *Collection of the Lord's Words Said in Brünn*, the only full collection to have survived. The extant fragments of the *Collection of the Lord's Words Said in Offenbach* show that this picture did not change later.

4. *The Doctrine of the Frankists after Frank's Death*

A several-month-long struggle for Messianic succession started after Frank's death in 1791. We do not know whether it had a doctrinal background. In addition to Frank's three children, Ewa, Józef and Roch, Thomas

⁵⁰ *Zbiór*, p. 778.

⁵¹ *Zbiór*, p. 357; cf. *Zohar* II, 140a.

⁵² See *Zbiór*, pp. 410, 305, 338, 418 and 1267.

⁵³ *Zbiór*, p. 205.

von Schönfeld, Frank's cousin, called Mosze Dobruszka before his baptism, also took part in it. Thomas's adherents concocted a prophecy that he was the last saviour, an incarnation of the Messianic soul. Schönfeld was one of the most prominent figures of the Frankist movement. He was one of the few to dare oppose Frank openly. It was recorded in the Frankist chronicle that "in iunio 1783 Schönfeld accused the Lord before the lords and incited everybody, but he was then imprisoned for a whole year"⁵⁴. However, in 1784, that is immediately after his house arrest, Schönfeld joined the lodge of the "Asian Brethren" which tried to produce a Judaeo-Christian synthesis on the basis of the *Kabbalah*. The initiation took place in Brno in 1784⁵⁵, probably with the consent or even in the presence of Frank.

Frank's personal secretary, Antoni Czerniewski, took an active part in this factional fighting. He asserted that Frank, even after his "departure", was in permanent contact with him and conveyed through him messages for the faithful, as he did during his life. But Polish Frankists did not accept him in this role and he had to explain his visions on behalf of Frank: "My beloved *machna* (camp)⁵⁶ is cross in vain and suspects my beloved because of a few visions he had to convey to them. This is not his fault, he is clean. He says and writes what I order him to, and fulfils his duty like a soldier keeping a guard"⁵⁷.

After being defeated by Frank's children, Schönfeld left for France, where he joined the Jacobins under the name of Junius Frey and was guillotined in 1794, together with his brother in law, Chabot, and Danton. Czerniewski, too, left Offenbach with several score families and returned to his native Bukovina. He stopped in Warsaw, trying to obtain material support from the Frankists. The visit to Warsaw is testified to by a peculiar document, a message which Frank had allegedly told Czerniewski to convey to the Warsaw Frankists. Its fragments have been published by Kraushar⁵⁸.

According to Czerniewski, Frank told him to go to Warsaw and raise the spirits of his adherents, who were depressed by his death. "You shall now go to Warsaw, to my beloved forlorn *machna* and cheer them up with these words: *Jankiew lo emes* — Jakub, the true living God, is alive and will

⁵⁴ *Rozmaite adnotacje*, p. 100.

⁵⁵ See G. Scholem, *Ein Frankist: Moses Dobruschka und seine Metamorphosen*, in: *Max Brod, Ein Gedenkenbuch*, Tel-Aviv 1969, p. 81.

⁵⁶ From the Hebrew word *machna* (camp); this is how Frank called his converted Polish adherents; in late versions of the *Lord's Words*, the Polish word *kompania* (company) is used.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 94–96. However, Kraushar has misinterpreted and misdated the document, thinking that this was a real legation.

live for ever". Czerniewski tried to convince the Frankists that Frank had not died but was only temporarily in the other world. What is striking is that he attributed divine nature to Frank, although in his lectures in Brno and Offenbach Frank had definitely renounced his claims to divinity. Although the lectures contain some references to divinity, these look like later additions and are frequently given in brackets, e.g. "God gave you the heart to understand and the eyes to see ... that I am Yehova, the God"⁵⁹. These are probably reminiscences of his earlier teachings which were not fully obliterated by his later Cześćochowa doctrine. We will return to this question in a moment.

In 1791 and 1792, nearly all Polish Frankists who opposed Schönfeld's role as Frank's successor and did not fully accept the leadership of Frank's children left the Offenbach court. This exodus is testified by the Offenbach parish records; the number of baptisms, deaths and marriages of persons with Polish names started to decrease drastically in 1791, to disappear almost completely later on⁶⁰. Löw Hönigsberg, a Frankist from Prague, wrote in 1799 that seven years before, all Warsaw Frankists "even holy old men who had followed Him left for Warsaw, for their *Heimat*, and none of them has been seen since then"⁶¹. They were replaced by Czech and Moravian crypto-Sabbataeans who did not renounce Judaism and kept at a distance from Frank⁶². We know that Jonas Wehle and Löw Hönigsberg were in Offenbach in 1793, but Frank's children ordered them to return to Prague and carry on Messianic agitation there⁶³.

The Polish Frankists regarded renunciation of Judaism as a duty of the faithful and were therefore against admitting those Sabbataeans who despite Frank's appeal, had not converted to Catholicism. In 1799, on the wave of new Messianic expectations, an open letter to Jewish communities, called the *Red Letter*, was published by three leaders of the Polish Frankists: Franciszek and Michał Wołowski and Jędrzej Dębowski; in their letter they cited two appeals written by Frank in 1767–1768 in which he unequivocally made salvation dependent on adoption of Catholicism. In the first appeal, addressed to the *kehillot* of Brody and Cracow, Frank wrote that "everyone who is of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must adopt the

⁵⁹ *Zbiór*, p. 30.

⁶⁰ See K. Werner, *Versuch einer Quantifizierung des Frank'schen Gefolges in Offenbach 1788–1818*, "Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge" 14 (1986), pp. 153–212.

⁶¹ G. Scholem, *Mehkare*, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁶² Their contacts with Frank must have been very loose, for when acquainting Moshe Porges with the Frankist doctrine in 1795, Natan Kassovitz misrepresented basic facts from Frank's life; according to him, Frank was baptized after leaving Cześćochowa and lived in Prossnitz, not in Bern, before coming to Offenbach; cf. Porges's diaries in: A. Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁶³ S. Back, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

holy religion of Edom (Christianity) and he who adopts this religion with love will be saved from all these calamities"⁶⁴. In a circular appeal of 1768 Frank referred to the massacres carried out in the Ukraine by Żeleźniak and Gonta and prophesied that ills would continue "until Moses' *Torah* is annulled and until you join the sacred religion of Edom"⁶⁵. The signatories of the letter also recalled that in 1773, immediately after leaving Jasna Góra, Frank sent "us, the undersigned"⁶⁶ to Lublin, Lwów and many other towns with the announcement that "the time is near when all will be forced to be baptized, for this is what God wants". According to the signatories, these prophecies were to come true at once, in 1800: "We announce to all of you that God has taken mercy on us and in the current year, 560 (according to the Jewish, 1800 according to the Christian calendar) hard times will come upon the Jews and all the disasters described by Him in His Holy letter will take place"⁶⁷.

The fact that the authors of the *Red Letter* signed it with their own names, Jewish and those they were given at baptism, testifies to their courage and profound belief in salvation. They may have also wanted to recall the fundamental elements of Frank's teaching, for they considered themselves its depositories and knew that the Czech and Moravian Frankists frequently misinterpreted it.

At the same time two important professions of faith originated in the Czech Frankists' group. The first was Löw Hönigsberg's letter presenting the history of "the true faith"⁶⁸; the other was the *Book of Prophecies* edited in Offenbach by Prague Frankists on the basis of the dreams and visions of Frank's children⁶⁹. As regards conversion, Hönigsberg and the editors of the *Prophecies* seem to have shared the view of the signatories of the *Red Letter*

⁶⁴ A. Vishnits'er, *Postanie frankistov 1800 goda*, "Zapiski Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk", St. Petersburg 1914, pp. 9–10.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 10. It is said in *Roznaite adnotacje*, p. 71 that "on March 17, 1768 the Lord sent Jakubowski and Pawłowski to Podolia and Cernauti with the final order that (his followers) should adopt the (Catholic) religion".

⁶⁶ According to *Roznaite adnotacje*, p. 81, Frank entrusted this message to six persons but gave the names of five of them, namely, those of Piotr Jakubowski, Franciszek Wołowski, Michał Wołowski, Jan Wołowski and Jaser Korolewski.

⁶⁷ A. Vishnits'er, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁶⁸ It was published by G. Scholem, *Mehkare*, *op. cit.*, pp. 634–653. Scholem misdated the letter, saying it was written in 1802. In his opinion the Frankists left Offenbach in 1901 and this fact is mentioned in the letter. It slipped his notice that they had done this seven years before the letter was written; nor did he notice the statement that "the holy letters have been finally sent out". The content of the letter also indicates that it was written on the wave of Messianic prophecies connected with the year 1800.

⁶⁹ The three Frankists in whose lodgings the book had been found stated during the interrogation at Fürth that the book had been edited by three Wehle brothers, Abraham, Akiba and Józef; the Frankists had stolen it from Jonas Wehle, who was then staying in Offenbach; cf. S. B a c k, *op. cit.*, pp. 132–136, 189–194 and 232–234. Extensive fragments have survived in A. K r a u s h a r's work, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 186–218.

that baptism was an indispensable condition of salvation. The authors of the *Prophecies* declared that “although the Israelitic nation is too large to be counted, it must, as a whole, join the Christian religion”⁷⁰. The prophecies speak of some undefined “Christian religion”, not of any specific Church, but Hönigsberg wrote that “happiness and the world’s salvation are undoubtedly inherent in the Catholic religion”⁷¹. But he did not say that Judaism had to be renounced. He made it clear that true believers could draw from the treasury of Christianity without renouncing Judaism and be converted only spiritually. In an almost imperceptible way both letters equalized the significance of overt and covert conversion and included hidden proponents of Messianic syncretism in the camp of converts. By the mere fact of joining the party of Frank’s children the Prague Sabbatacans felt so important that they allowed themselves to make sarcastic remarks about “the highly praised holy *machna* which has left for Warsaw”⁷².

The picture of the Messianic process reflected in the writings of the Czech Frankists departs in many points from Frank’s teachings in Brno and Offenbach and is more in keeping with his earlier pre-baptism doctrine. This is yet another indication that the lectures in Brno and Offenbach were addressed to a narrow group of Frank’s old comrades, the “holy old men from Warsaw” and that the records of those lectures were scrupulously guarded. Hönigsberg heard about their existence from Polish Frankists but he never got hold of them⁷³. The majority of the Frankists had to be content with the popular version of the doctrine propagated by Frank’s environment. Nevertheless, Jasna Góra occupied a central place in eschatology also in the writings of the Prague crypto-Christians. It was on Jasna Góra that the revelation of the *Shekhinah* and the tearing of the veil separating the material world from the world of divine emanations were to take place.

According to all the extant doctrinal documents of that period, salvation was to be achieved by all those, both Jews and “the nations”, who fulfilled two fundamental conditions: were baptized and recognized Frank as the promised Messiah. The authors of the prophecies predicted the conversion of “a multitude of foreigners from various countries and nations”, but they set their hopes mainly on Austria and Hungary. “All Egyptians (i.e. Germans) will be converted to the Lord, they will follow Him, they will call Him and complain, and this will move His fatherly heart. The Lord will then

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, vol. I, p. 199.

⁷¹ G. Scholem, *Mahkare*, *op. cit.*, p. 648.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 647.

⁷³ He knew, however, about the cycle of esoteric lectures for he says that after being released from the Częstochowa prison, Frank “revealed a little. They talked the whole time, day after day”, *Ibidem*, p. 644.

take mercy on them and will lead all of them to eternal life. Egypt will then unite with Assyria (Austria) ... the true Israelites will then constitute the third element of unity between the Assyrians and the Egyptians, and will show the Lord's ways to powerful nations and teach them"⁷⁴. This only seemingly contradicts the sentiments of Frank who, until his death, regarded Poland as "the Promised Land" and his future Messianic kingdom. Nine years after his death Poland disappeared from the map of Europe. The Warsaw Frankists found themselves in Prussia and the Sabbataens of Galicia and Bukovina became Austrian subjects.

The failure of the prophecies had unpleasant consequences for the crypto-Christians of Prague. They had to pay for coming out into the open too hastily. They were publicly condemned in sermons, especially by Rabbi Eleazar Flekeles⁷⁵. However, the Holy Union, as the crypto-Christians of Prague called their community, survived that crisis. But they broke off all relations with the court of Ewa Frank. Records of the interrogations of Ewa's last courtiers, carried out immediately after her death in 1816⁷⁶, show that after 1800 very few Polish Frankists remained faithful to her. Several important early 19th century testimonies to the faith of the members of the Holy Union have survived. Among them are anonymous homilies preached on the occasion of the *Rosh Hashanah* of 1802⁷⁷. Löw Hönig von Hönigsberg's letters published by Peter Beer⁷⁸ are another document; Beer himself was related to leading Prague Frankists, including Hönigsberg.

Hönigsberg admits that after the discreditation of the prophecies predicting salvation in 1800, the Union was in poor condition. He says that many persons renounced their faith, and the enemies were doing their best to pluck the remaining ones out of the Holy Union. The members of the Union must have felt deserted and isolated for they frequently had to avoid disclosing their faith even to their wives. In one of his letters Hönigsberg congratulates the addressee: "it is a great happiness, rarely met among us, to have a believing (*ma'aminit*) wife"⁷⁹.

⁷⁴ A. Kraushar, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 211.

⁷⁵ They were published in Prague in 1800 under the title *Ahavat David (David's Love)*.

⁷⁶ See A. Kraushar, *Nowe szczegóły o frankistach w Offenbachu, 1816–1824 (New Details about the Frankists in Offenbach, 1816–1824)*, in: *idem*, *Obrazy i wizerunki historyczne*, Warszawa 1906, pp. 253–300.

⁷⁷ They were published by Wolfgang Wessely, *Aus den Briefen eines Sabbatianers*, "Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie", Leipzig 1845, Heft III, pp. 136–152. According to Scholem, they were written by Löw von Hönigsberg; cf. G. Scholem, *Mekare*, *op. cit.*, p. 634.

⁷⁸ They were published by Peter Beer, *Geschichte, Lehren und Meinungen aller bestandenen und noch bestehenden religiösen Sekten der Juden und der Geheimlehre oder Kabbalah*, Brünn, vol. II, pp. 339–401.

⁷⁹ W. Wessely, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Since the members of the Holy Union could not disclose their faith even to their nearest ones, they were forced to observe the rules of Mosaic law and celebrate traditional feasts even in their family circle. Hönigsberg recommended that they should impart a new sense, compatible with the spirit of their faith, to the traditional Jewish feasts and observe the Pesah as a day of liberation from the yoke of Mosaic law, the *Shavuoth* as a day of the revelation of the *Torah*, not the Mosaic *Torah* but the *Torah de-'Aciluth*, and the *Sukkoth* as a day of finding refuge under the wings of the true faith⁸⁰. Both documents reflect Barukhian syncretism. The following passage can be regarded as its credo: "The more good there is in an object, the more it attracts man. This means that the more believers a religion has, the more good and truth it contains . . . Since the three main religions, Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan, have the largest number of adherents in the civilized world, this means that they contain most of what is good and true. This applies in particular to Christianity, a religion professed for a long time by many sages, scholars virtuous and pious people and based on the Jewish religion. In the purely Christian religion there is indeed much moral good and this is what attracts people. But Christian religion attracts them even more by its belief in God incarnate, a God united by bonds of brotherhood with man. There is indeed something infinitely great and noble in the teaching about God's sensory-spiritual descent to man, aimed at raising man up, about God's embodiment in man and his adoration, an idea personified in the newly coined word God-Man which humanises God and deifies man. The same idea of humanizing God and consequently deifying man and lifting him up to God is the only aim and wish of the *Kabbalah*, which had to conceal itself behind a veil of secrecy in order not to be abused by the uninitiated"⁸¹.

What is striking is the expression "purely Christian religion" used interchangeably with "spiritual Christianity". It is meant to emphasize that this religion is purged of all institutional distortions. This is Jesus' message which, according to Barukhia's advice, should be united with the mystical traditions of Judaism and Islam into "a new religion of the end". In the doctrine of the Holy Union this message was no longer one of the three elements of the "new religion of the end" but was identified with it. Spiritual Christianity was simply a new name of Frank's "holy knowledge of Edom", the salvation truth of Catholicism, which may be gained without changing the religion one professes in public.

Hönigsberg believed that the saviour's spiritual mission was completed and he waited for its visible fulfilment. There are no traces of Messianic

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 141–142.

⁸¹ P. Beer, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 385.

activism in his arguments and it is even difficult to guess on their basis what the faithful could possibly do to be saved, except persevere in their faith. Hönigsberg watched the European political scene attentively, detecting signs of an early salvation in all changes. The most important change in his opinion was the decline of spiritual power, which he regarded as an augury of the “destruction of all religions”⁸². In his view, the history of salvation and the process of secularisation concurred, and he regarded the development of this process as the surest proof of the approaching salvation⁸³. The doctrine of the Holy Union came very near to the *Haskalah*, which already at that time had active representatives in the Jewish community. But the Holy Union leaders feared that the *Haskalah*, with its secular emancipatory ideals, might become a dangerous rival, and in their writings they frequently warned of “philosophical trends”, contrasting them with the “true faith”, which was the only reliable protection.

The death of Ewa, Jakub Frank's daughter, in Offenbach in 1816 is usually regarded as the end of Frankism as an organised movement. It was at her court that the last known Frankist work, *The Lord's Miscellaneous Annotations, Events, Activities and Anecdotes*, a kind of Frank's Messianic biography, was produced at the beginning of the 19th century. But this was not the end of Frankism. Many documents show that the Frankists preserved their faith and group solidarity at least until the outbreak of the January Insurrection in 1863⁸⁴. This is confirmed by the fact that it was only then that historians for the first time got hold of Frank's collected lectures from Brno and Offenbach. The Brno lectures were edited as early as the 1780s and they circulated among Polish Frankists in many versions (six copies existed before World War II), but no scholar had even heard of them before 1864. For lack of sources not much can be said about the Frankists' faith in the late 19 century.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)

⁸² W. Wessely, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, pp. 144–146.

⁸⁴ A. Jelinek, *Das Nachkommen der Frankisten in Warschau*, “Das Jüdische Literaturblatt”, Magdeburg 5.07.1882, p. 107. Walerian Kalinka wrote sixteen years later that although “Frank's sect declined as regards cohesion and membership after his death, it continues to exist in the Polish provinces of Galicia”; W. Kalinka, *Galicja i Kraków pod panowaniem austriackim (Galicia and Cracow under Austrian Rule)*, Kraków 1898, p. 109.