Introduction to Chapter 1: 17-18th Century Overview

The eighteenth century brought tests for the Jewish nation of a different type. In the earlier centuries the Jews had been forced to choose between their religion and the sword. The choice was clear: Either convert or die.

As we have mentioned, the Jews stood up to this test admirably. Few and far between were the Jews who would willingly give up their religion and beliefs even at the cost of their lives.

The eighteenth century would bring a different test. No longer would the gentile world force the Jewish nation to give up its faith. On the contrary, the Jew would be invited to join the world of the gentile. The ghetto walls would slowly come down and the Jews were allowed to enter the world of commerce and education in ways that they had never dreamed of before. (I referred to the explanation of the Bais Haleivi in the beginning of parshas Beshalach on the posuk of "הצילני נא מיד אמי מיד אשו" (בראשית לב, יב).)

Would the Jewish nation be able to hold on to their beliefs and their sacred mission in this new world?

As we shall see, unfortunately, many did not.

A few points:

- These new circumstances were not bad in and of themselves. But they presented a new test that many were not ready to fight.
- Many Jews did stand up to these tests and did admirably! (For example- Rothschild and Montefiore)
- This era would usher in the period of mass assimilation- a phenomenon that was impossible and unheard of in previous generations.
- Ask the students what kind of tests we are facing today? How are we doing?

Note: This was some of the backdrop to the movement of chassidus. One aspect of this movement was that it attempted to inject the Jews with a new pride and understanding of who they were and their inherent value. This would prove to be one of the strongest weapons in the battle against assimilation.
Introduction to Tach V’tat

Our curriculum begins with the study of Tach V’tat. However, our history goes back thousands of years. It is important to give the students some background about what Jewish life was like in Europe before Tach V’tat. Explain to them that we are moving back in time a few hundred years and try to paint a picture of what life was like in the Europe of the seventeenth century.

Here are a few points to consider:

- Countries were run by kings and noblemen. The regular citizen (“serfs”) served the king by farming the land and did not have much opportunity to move up on the social or financial ladder. There was no real “middle class” at that time. The serfs welcomed the Tach V’tat rebellion as they perceived it as an opportunity to break out of this cycle by overthrowing those in power.

- The Jews lived in ghettos for the most part. Theses ghettos severely restricted their ability to assimilate into the societies of their host countries. It also limited their potential to prosper.

- The ghettos were like mini-Jewish cities within cities.

- These ghettos should not be confused with the ghettos of World War II which were made to isolate and ultimately kill the Jews.

- The Jewish communities were united under the leadership of the gedolim. Assimilated Jews were few and far between.

- Although life was not easy, the Jews lived of the seventeenth century lived relatively peacefully and they had a strong Torah-centered infrastructure until Tach V’tat, which changed the face of Europe for the Jews forever.
THE COSSACKS
The Cossacks were a tribe from the country of Lithuania. They were dangerous and ruthless warriors who fought primarily by horseback. Originally, they were hired by the Polish king to help fight against the Tatars.

THE BIG CHANGE
The Cossacks were angered when the Polish noblemen took away some of their powers. Their leader, Bogdan Chmielnicki, or Bohdan Zinoviy Mykhaylovych Khmelnytsky in the original Ukrainian, decided to take revenge from the Polish Nobles. He realized that he would be unable to overthrow the Polish Nobles on his own. He therefore joined forces with the Tatars. Although the original anger was directed against the noblemen, once the Cossacks were organized they spent most of their energy killing the Jews. [Note: The Jews captured by the Tatars were generally not killed. They were usually redeemed by the Turkish Jews who paid lots of money for them. The Cossacks, however, always killed the Jews unless they converted. Only a very small percentage agreed to be baptized.]

THE KING’S REACTION
The Polish king sent an army of 6,000 men to stop the army of Chmielnicki but they were not successful. Shortly afterwards the king died and the country of Poland was left without a leader.

AND THEN...
The Cossacks continued to butcher the Jews until the death of Chmielnicki in 1657. Besides the actual killing done by the Cossacks they also caused a general uprising of the serfs against the noblemen. Once again, the main victims were the Jews. The Swedes invaded Poland at that time as well and the Jews suffered terribly until 1660 when Poland finally made peace with the Swedes.

IN SUMMATION
After all the killing was over a total of over 300 cities had been destroyed and over 300,000 Jews had been killed, ר"ל. (And one half crazed girl was found wandering in a cemetery. But that’s our next story.)
**Introduction to “So Why Did It Happen?”**

This lesson introduces two very important concepts.

1. When the Jewish People suffer it is because of their aveiros.
2. The fact that the Jewish people are punished will be noticed by the goyim and they will attribute the events to the fact that the Jewish People have fallen short of what they are supposed to accomplish.

Only after establishing these two principles is it possible to examine what may have been the cause of the tragedies of Tach V’tat.

I referred to a story at the end of the lesson. The story is told that King Louis XII asked Blaise Pascal to prove that there is a G-d. Blaise Pascal is said to have replied, “Your Majesty, the Jews!” The king agreed that this was indeed a proof of G-d.

I also referred to the book the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. This book is a classic anti-Semitic work that describes a meeting that takes place between the “Elders of Zion” in which they plot how to take control of the world. Once again, this illustrates that there is some feeling amongst the nations that the destiny of the world revolves around the Jewish nation.

To quote from the Britannica Encyclopedia: The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion fraudulent document that served as a pretext and rationale for anti-Semitism in the early 20th century. The document purports to be a report of a series of 24 (in other versions, 27) meetings held at Basel, Switz., in 1897, at the time of the first Zionist congress. There Jews and Freemasons were said to have made plans to disrupt Christian civilization and erect a world state under their joint rule. Liberalism and socialism were to be the means of subverting Christendom; if subversion failed, all the capitals of Europe were to be sabotaged.

The Protocols were printed in Russia in abbreviated form in 1903 in the newspaper Znamia (“Banner”) and subsequently (1905) as an addendum to a religious tract by Serge Nilus, a tsarist civil servant. They were translated into German, French, English, and other European languages and soon came to be a classic of anti-Semitic literature. In the United States Henry Ford’s private newspaper, Dearborn Independent, often cited them as evidence of a Jewish threat.

The spurious character of the Protocols was first revealed in 1921 by Philip Graves of The Times (London), who demonstrated their obvious resemblance to a satire by the French lawyer Maurice Joly on Napoleon III published in 1864 and entitled Dialogue aux Enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu (“Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu”). Subsequent investigation, particularly by the Russian historian Vladimir Burtsev, revealed that the Protocols were forgeries compounded by officials of the Russian secret police out of the satire of Joly, a fantastic novel (Biarritz) by Hermann Goedsche (1868), and other sources.
SO WHY DID IT HAPPEN?
WHAT DOES THE TORAH TELL US ABOUT SUCH TRAGEDIES?

Let’s take a look in the Torah:

The Torah is telling us that the Goys will have a question. What is it?

Why did Hashem punish the Jews?
The Piskah then tells us what the Goys will answer:

The answer that the Goys will give is clear: Because the Jews broke the treaty that they had with the הקב"ה.

Now look at this unbelievable רמב"ן!

The רמב"ן explains that we must understand that there are no coincidences in the history of כלל ישראל. Our history is really a series of constant נסים נסתרים. When we do the מצוות, we are successful. And when we do not do the מצוות then we are punished.

The רמב"ן explains further that the נסים נסתרים that guide לכל ישראל become “well known” to the Goyim through לכל ישראל when we are punished for our עבירות and rewarded for our מצוות.

1 Translation: “And all the nations will say ‘For what reason did Hashem do this to this land? What is this great anger?’”

2 Translation: “And they will say ‘Because they forsook the treaty of Hashem, the G-d of their forefathers.’”

3 נסים נסתרים: hidden miracles
WE MUST THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT:

The tragedies of קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל והם קהל ישראל קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קהל ישראל ות"ח קחלו מודה מצא להם בכסים התנאים שליילא כהתייבת על כוליו התניאים דלמי ברית ידוע. תרגום: So that it should not be said in the shuls and bein medrash of the Yidden that an idol worshipper hurt the daughter of Yaakov.

It is told that King Louis XIV asked Blaise Pascal to prove to him that there is a G-d. Pascal reponded, “Your Majesty, the Jews!” The King agreed to the proof!
The protocols of the Elders of Zion is a book originally printed by the Russians alleging that the Jewish elders met to discuss how to get control of the world. It is written in the form of minutes of the meeting. It was translated into many languages and was serialized in Henry Ford’s newspaper, Dearborn Independent. (Henry Ford was very anti-Semitic.)

These points highlight the fact that the goyim feel that the Jewish survival is miraculous and that the world somehow revolves around the Jews.

Related Story: **King Louis XIV and Blaise Pascal (17th Century Roman Catholic philosopher and mathematician)**

Famous book that sold more copies than any book besides... the Bible!

“The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”

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4: שאלת חלום: asking for advice in a dream
5: קראת התורה ברכה: a barca given during קריאת התורה
6: ח مواضيع: a certain type of lottery using a תורם
7: תורם: one of the many translations of the Torah
**Introduction to Shabsai Tzvi:**

The Saga of Shabsai Tzvi and his false mission as the final redeemer should be introduced properly in order that the students fully understand the far reaching repercussions that this had on the history of the Jewish nation.

The story of Shabsai Tzvi can be put in perspective with a story that I read about Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky ZT”L.

When Rav Yaakov was a young rov in Europe he was approached by a non-religious Jew. This fellow wanted to do teshuva and learn how to be a frum yid. Rav Yaakov asked him why he suddenly wanted to do teshuva at this late point in his life. The fellow responded that he heard that moshiach is about to come and he wanted to start keeping the Torah before moshiach would arrive.

Rav Yaakov responded, “It is certainly possible that moshiach may come but I don’t see any reason to believe that he is about to come now any more than any other time.”

The fellow asked, “Rabbi, are you sure?”

Rav Yaakov answered again, “He certainly may come and we hope he does come soon. But I don’t see any sign that he is coming imminently.”

The fellow was clearly relieved. “If so, I guess I don’t have to do teshuva yet.”

And with that the man walked out of Rav Yaakov’s house.

There were some people that had witnessed the exchange and they were very puzzled why Rav Yaakov had let the fellow slip away.

They asked the Rov why he had not grabbed the opportunity to make this fellow into a baal teshuva.

Rav Yaakov answered, “If he would have begun keeping mitzvos based on his anticipation of the imminent arrival of moshiach then what would have happened in a few weeks from now? Do we know if moshiach will be here? We certainly hope so. But it is definitely possible that moshiach will not come. When this fellow sees that moshiach is not coming soon he will stop keeping mitzvos altogether. And even furthermore- he will stop believing that moshiach will come. This man has only one mitzvah that he keeps. He believes in the arrival of moshiach. Should I let him lose this last mitzvah too?!”

This story is the tragedy of Shabsai Tzvi on a national level. Immediately after Tach V’tat the Jews of Europe were devastated. Their communities and their whole infrastructure had been destroyed. Many people were hoping that the tragedies of Tach V’tat were the tragedies that we are told will take
place as the “birth pangs” of moshiach. They hoped that from the tragedy they would merit to see the final redemption.

When Shabsai Tzvi began his charade he found a vulnerable nation that was desperate to find hope of a better future. That hope, for millions of Jews, was Shabsai Tzvi. Unfortunately, when Shabsai Tzvi was shown to be a hoax, that hope died. And for many of the Jews in Europe a tremendous void was left. Hope of a better future was permanently dead.

The Jews were now vulnerable to the greatest threat of all. The opportunity to join the lifestyle of the nations around them. No longer did many of the masses have the strength to look inward and find strength to look toward a better future. Instead, they looked to the outside world for hope and a better future.

When the winds of tolerance and acceptance began to spread across Europe this would prove to be the test that would claim the most casualties in the Jewish nation. This test would prove more dangerous than Tach V’tat!

And it all began with Shabsai Tzvi who ignited the spark of hope. And then, for many, extinguished it forever.
1626: Shabsai Tzvi is born in Smyrna, Turkey (Possibly on תשעה באב).

Shabsai Tzvi says the שם המפורש in the Shul of Smyrna.

1651: Shabsai Tzvi is put in cherem by the רבני of Smyrna.
  - Shabsai Tzvi travels to Constantinople and meets Avrohom Yocheni. (produces “old” document that verifies that Shabsai Tzvi is moshiach)
  - Shabsai Tzvi travels to Salonika and “marries a sefer Torah”!! Shabsai Tzvi is put in חרב by the רבני of Salonika.
  - Shabsai Tzvi travels to Cairo, Egypt and meets Raphael Chalabi. (Wealthy man, finances campaign).
  - Shabsai Tzvi travels to Eretz Yisroel, but does not get accepted.
  - Shabsai Tzvi returns to Cairo and marries deranged woman who claims to be destined to marry משיח. (mentioned before at the end of ת"ח וט"ט)

1663: Shabsai Tzvi then returns to ארץ ישראל, and this time he is accepted by many of the simple people. He meets Nosson of Gaza who claims to be אליהו הנביא.

1665: Shabsai Tzvi returns to his birthplace of Smyrna and officially proclaims himself to be משיח.
  - Followers of Shabsai Tzvi declare יום טוב be a new השם הבועת.
  - Shabsai Tzvi travels to Constantinople to remove the Sultan from his throne and is arrested. He then abolishes השם העולמי and orders a אתונה be kept on the following Monday!! He also proclaims תשעה באב to be a יום טוב! While he was at it, he abolished the idea of Kashrus and even made a new ברכה for it!!
  - The ט"ז sends messengers (his son and step-son) to investigate the claims of Shabsai Tzvi.
  - Messengers tell of Nechemia Cohen who had predicted that משיח was coming.
  - Shabsai Tzvi sends a letter to the ט"ז asking for Nechemia Cohen. (He also sends back gifts to the ט"ז.)
  - Nechemia Cohen arrives and announces Shabsai Tzvi to be a complete fraud.
  - Sultan gives Shabsai Tzvi ultimatum.

1666: Shabsai Tzvi converts to Islam and becomes officer in the court of the Sultan.

1676: Shabsai Tzvi dies, forever disgraced.
Introduction to Aftermath of Shabsai Tzvi

The episode of Shabsai Tzvi had terrible repercussions for years after he was exposed as a fraud. In our lessons we discuss a few of them.

It is important to be aware that just as the gedolim suffered, as we illustrate in the lessons, there was also deep and lasting damage to the Jewish nation as a whole. This is because when the gedolim suffer through persecution or through the fires of machlokes, all of Klal Yisroel suffers.

In addition, on a practical level, many people had sold their businesses and homes and had booked tickets on boats to be ready to leave their countries and move to Eretz Yisroel. Many people had married off their children hastily, and at a young age, hoping that they would bring the redemption earlier by giving all of the neshamos that were destined to come down to this world the opportunity to come down. (As the gemara says that moshiach will not come until all of the neshamos that are in a place called “guf” come down to this world.)

In addition, as we already mentioned, the hope of Shabsai Tzvi and the subsequent disappointment caused untold damage to the Jewish nation as a whole.

The Ramchal

The Ramchal was one of the great kabbalists of the 17th century. As we mentioned in the lesson he suffered terribly throughout his life due to his way of life being misunderstood by some of the great leaders of his time. This is a good time to discuss the difference between a machlokes which is l’shaim shomayim and a machlokes which is not.

Another tidbit. The Ramchal lived for forty years. It is said that he was a gilgul of Rabbi Akiva and was sent to “fix up” the first forty years of Rabbi Akiva’s life when Rabbi Akiva was an am ha’aretz. Indeed, the grave of the Ramchal is right next to the grave of Rabbi Akiva in Tveria.
THE AFTERMATH
OF SHABSAI TZVI (#1)

OTHER IMPOSTERS

- In the decades following the Shabsai Tzvi episode, there were several instances where people claimed to be "גלגולים" of Shabsai Tzvi. These also caused much confusion and brought about persecution of the Jews.
- One of these people was Nechemia Chiyun from Amsterdam. He wrote a "ספר" outlining his philosophies and gave it to the חכם צבי for a הסכמה. It was immediately recognized as a fraud and he was exposed by the חכם צבי. Unfortunately, the חכם צבי was forced to leave the city as a result. Other גוונים investigated the matter and concluded that this individual was a dangerous charlatan. He was then put in חרב and driven out of Amsterdam. His son ended up converting to Christianity.
- Another who claimed to be רשע enlisted the help of the church and forced the Jews to have debates about the truth of the Torah. He then caused many ספרים to be burned because of these debates. This man and his followers also eventually converted to Christianity.

THE REACTION OF THE גוונים

- The גוונים decided that the study of cabala must be reserved for mature תלמידי חכמים. This was because cabala had been used by Shabsai Tzvi to mislead the masses.
- The consensus was that cabala was not to be studied until the age of 40.
- The Jewish community was in a general state of "high alert" against anything that might be the beginnings of a new "משיח" movement. This would have terrible repercussions, as we shall soon see...
THE RAMCHAL

- The Ramchal was born in the year 1707. He lived in Padua, Italy.
- His רבי was Rav Yeshaya Bassau.
- At the age of 20 the Ramchal wrote a ספר on קבלה that some people called a "second זוהר".
- It was rumored that the Ramchal was learning secrets of קבלה with a מלאך (A תלמיד, Yekusiel Gordon of Vilna, had published a letter which said that his רבי was learning with a מלאך).
- The רבני (led by Rav Yaakov Emden, who was a son of the חכם צבי) went into action by accusing the Ramchal of having to do with the ideas of the "Shabsai Tzvi-knick’s".
- Restrictions were placed on the Ramchal. He was not allowed to publish any ספרים on קבלה without the permission of his רבי. He was also supposed to limit his study of קבלה in some ways as long as he was living在国外.
- The Ramchal printed a ספר on קבלה (with the permission of his רבי) but, nevertheless, was put in cherem by the רבני of Venice. His ספרים were burned!
- The Ramchal accepted the decision of the רבני and he left Italy, settling in Amsterdam. He supported himself by becoming a lens grinder and a diamond polisher.
- The Ramchal authored the מסילת ישרים in Amsterdam.
- At the age of 36, the Ramchal moved to שראל ארץ י. 3 years later, the Ramchal and his entire family were killed in a plague.
- The 그”א said that if the Ramchal would have been alive in his days, he would have walked by foot to sit by his feet and learn from him!
Introduction to
The Machlokes between R’ Yonason Eibeshetz and R’ Yaakov Emden

Once again, we take a look at a machlokes but with far greater consequences for the Jewish nation as a whole. Whereas the tragedy of the persecution of the Ramchal was terrible for the Ramchal and his students, it did not change the face of the Jewish nation as a whole.

However, the machlokes between Rav Yonoson Eibeshets and Rav Yaakov Emden was a national tragedy. Communities were split and families were destroyed as the machlokes spread and everyone on all levels took sides.

It is important to point out that at the level of the great gedolim this machlokes as well as all machlokes was waged with the noblest of intentions- a true machlokes l’shaim sholayim. However, when the masses of Jews got involved the spirit of the machlokes often became personal and could no longer be categorized as a machlokes l’shaim shomayim.

I ended the lesson referencing a story that is told about the passing of Rav Yaakov Emden. It is said that as Rav Yaakov lay on his deathbed he suddenly opened his eyes and said, “Rav Yonoson has come to greet me!” He then passed away.

When the funeral arrived at the graveyard it was erev Shabbos and they were in a rush to bury Rav Yaakov Emden before Shabbos. However, to everyone’s shock, the only available place was in the same row as the grave of Rav Yonoson Eibeshetz. This presented a problem. Rav Yehuda Hachassid writes in famous will that people who were enemies during their lifetimes should not be buried on the same row.

The Noda BeYehuda was present at the funeral and he ruled that since Rav Yonoson had come to greet Rav Yaakov Emden that shows that both Rav Yaakov and Rav Yonoson had waged the machlokes totally l’shaim shomayim! Therefore, in heaven they are not considered enemies! Therefore they may be buried on the same row.

I like to end with the famous quote from the Alter of Kelm. “I am confident that if I had to wage a machlokes - the first five minutes (some say two minutes) would be Il’shaim shomayim. After that, I’m not sure!”

The machlokes that we are studying raged for twenty five years and we have testimony from the on high that it was totally l’shaim shomayim!
The communities in these three cities were run as one large קהילה. It was organized this way all the way until World War II!

1751:
1. In 1751, an epidemic broke out in Hamburg which caused stillborn children. Some women went to their rov for help, and he gave them קמיעה. One of these קมעות was brought to Rav Yaakov Emden, who believed that it had references to שבטי צבי. R’ Yaakov immediately called for the הרובים to put R’ Yonoson Eibeshitz in חירום.
2. The communities of AHU split into two groups. There were those that supported their rov, Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz. This side included many of the leaders of the community. There were many that sided with R’ Yaakov and turned against their rov. The leaders of the community forced the shul and the printing press of R’ Yaakov to close down. Because of this מחלוקת, R’ Yaakov was forced to leave AHU and move to Amsterdam.
3. Many גיימראים supported R’ Yonoson including the נודע ביהודה and the גרא. Many of the הרובים of AHU supported R’ Yaakov Emden.
4. One unfortunate aspect was that this מחלוקת, which was between the greatest נודעים of that generation, spread to include those who were not גיימראים as well.
5. Eventually, the tumult reached the ears of Emperor Frederick of Denmark, who decided that Rav Yakov was right in his accusations. He therefore had Rav Yonoson removed from his position as the rov of AHU! A few years later, in 1756, supporters of R’ Yonoson successfully appealed to the Emperor to change his mind. R’ Yonoson returned to his position as rov of AHU.

- 1764: R’ Yonoson dies
- 1776: R’ Yaakov Emden dies
- פסק of the נודע ביהודה regarding צוואה of R’ Yehuda HaChasid

It is told that when Rav Yaakov Emden was about to pass away he said that he sees Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz coming to greet him. After his פטרה, when they arrived at the בית הקברות, the only grave available was on the same row as Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz. The נודע ביהודה was asked if it would be permissible to bury Rav Yaakov on the same row since צוואה of R’ Yehuda HaChasid writes in his ה_LANEHOV that people who were enemies during their lifetimes should not be buried on the same row. The נודע ביהודה ruled that since Rav Yonoson came to greet Rav Yakov it is clear that their מחלוקת was TOTALLY גיימרא and it was never a personal thing on either side. Therefore they are not considered enemies and may be buried on the same row.

13 מחלוקת לשם שמים: disagreement that is לחם שמים, and not for personal gain
14 קמיעה: amulets
15 חירום: excommunication
16 צוואה: will
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
AND THE JEWS

THE REVOLUTION
1. In the year 1789 the French Revolution occurred. This was a revolution in which the “ordinary people” overthrew the “royal people”. Their motto was “Liberty, Fraternity and Equality”. In English this means that everyone has equal rights. In September of 1791 the National Assembly of France passed a law that allowed for the Jews to have full rights as French citizens.

2. Soon after the revolution, the country involved itself in a series of wars with its neighboring countries. Instead of becoming a free country, France became a dictatorship. In 1795, Napoleon Bonaparte became the commander-in-chief of the French army. In the year 1804, Napoleon declared himself Emperor of France.

NAPOLEON’S PLAN FOR THE JEWISH “PROBLEM”
3. Napoleon did not want to destroy the Jews. But he did want to solve the Jewish “problem” in his own way. His plan was to reduce the religious Jews living in France to “Frenchmen of Mosaic Persuasion”. This meant that religion would take a back seat to what was really ‘important’: being a good French citizen. Obviously, this is completely opposite of what a Jew is supposed to be. The way that the Torah wants us to live our lives is to be first and foremost a Jew; our country is merely our place of residence.

4. For the most part, Napoleon granted the Jews of France all the rights of French citizens. He was expecting the Jews to assimilate and to become “normal” French once they had the opportunity to do so. He allowed Jews to move out of the ghettos and to open their own businesses.

5. With this goal in mind, Napoleon organized a “Great Sanhedrin” in the year 1807. This “Sanhedrin” was a group of 71 Rabbis and Jewish leaders (both religious and irreligious). Their job was to answer 12 questions which would define the correct attitudes of French Jews. They understood that if Napoleon didn’t like their answers, he would punish them…

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17 Fraternity: Group of people, usually men, who share something in common
18 Sanhedrin: Jewish court
6. Here are some of the questions that Napoleon asked the “Sanhedrin”:
   a) Do Jews consider non-Jewish Frenchmen to be **brothers** or strangers?
   b) Do the Jews consider France their **country**?
   c) Are **secular marriages** recognized by Jewish law?
   d) Can a Jew take interest from a Jew?
   e) Can a Jew take interest from a non-Jew?
   f) Would the Jews fight for their country (France) even if Jews were fighting for the enemy country?

7. The purpose of these questions was to force the Jewish leaders to state that they were **no different** than other Frenchmen. Napoleon knew that they wouldn’t dare answer the questions any differently than what how he wanted them answered. Now, the road to Jewish assimilation would be wide open…

8. The “Sanhedrin” event was very impressive. There were grand ceremonies and **regal uniforms** for all those involved. The entire world watched and listened.

9. Napoleon was forced to end the “Sanhedrin” project after only seven sessions, at which point he received news that the war in **Russia** was not going as he had expected. However, the “Sanhedrin” had captured the imaginations of the people throughout Europe, and it served to grant the Jews a certain respect and legitimacy in the eyes of the rest of the world. Although this benefitted the Jews in certain ways, it also paved the way for many more Jews to assimilate and leave their religion.