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I heard that the Taz asked his son and son in law about Shabbesai Tzvi and what he was like. When he was informed that he was leaning back in his chair while learning, the Taz said, "One who learns like that cannot be Moshiach." It could be apocryphal, but I heard it from Rabbi Binyomin Cherney--a YU musmach and something of a Jewish History buff.

Either way, as the Taz's grandson, it was somewhat nice to hear 😊.

Dovid | 01.11.06 - 8:13 am | <#>

Dovid

I heard a similar story except that ST was sleeping on his back rather than on his side as dictated by halacha x | 01.11.06 - 9:06 am | <#>

I heard a similar story also. ST was sitting indian style learning a gemara and biting his nails. Or was he doing a head stand and flossing his teeth. Maybe i heard both versions.

D | 01.11.06 - 9:20 am | <#>

The problem is, all these stories dated from many years after the Taz, and were propagated by his descendants, many of whom were members of the naicent Hasidic movement. The movement was under heavy criticism from the GRA and his disciples, some of whom noted the ancestry of certain hasidim linked to the Taz.

The Taz sent his son and son-in-law to check out SZ. They came back declaring him the messiah. There is no known evidence that the Taz disagreed with their findings, and he did not stop people from following SZ.

One must therefore conclude the Taz was a Sabbatean. (Unless you want to believe that the Taz sat by and did nothing while his own family and followers went off into heresey.)

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 9:45 am | <#>

Technical point: The stepson was also his son-in-law?

NCO Chassid | 01.11.06 - 10:08 am | <#>

No. There were two who went to visit ST.

I'm sure we're all glad to get Shmarya official *pesak* on the history.

Gil | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 10:10 am | <#>

Shmarya's issues are obvious, I was just a bit confused about D.

Dovid | 01.11.06 - 10:43 am | <#>

Gil -

Prove me wrong - if you can.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 11:04 am | <#>

I suppose it's not so bad to have been a Sabbatean, unless one refused to give it up after the apostasy. Did the Taz live until then? Apparently so: the apostasy was on 16 September 1666, and the Taz lived until 26 (or 24) Shvat, 1667.

thanbo | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 11:12 am | <#>

>[T]here can be little doubt that Rabbi David's son and stepson were impressed with Shabbetai and convinced of the authenticity of his messianic visions. There is, however, no real evidence to back the claim that Rabbi David himself was a believer in Shabbetai Zevi.

What on earth does that mean? How does the second sentence follow the first?

S. | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 11:47 am | <#>

Gershom Scholem vs. Elijah Schochet -- my money is on Scholem.

Aleichem Scholem | 01.11.06 - 11:47 am | <#>

Sorry, I misread it. Ignore the above.

S. | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 11:48 am | <#>

As noted by thanbo, there is a fundamental difference between believing that SZ was, or probably was, Moshiach before he converted, and believing it afterwards. The term "Sabbatean" carries connotations of the latter group, and I wonder if the usage of it by certain individuals here is designed for the purpose of their general anti-rabbinic agenda. It seems intended to confuse the issue by lumping people who made misjudgements together with people who were heretics. Certainly it confuses more than enlightens.

IchLochZichOse | 01.11.06 - 11:59 am | #

What's to be confused about? These stories are all narishkeit. Btw, Gil, I thought Shmarya was banned officially from this blog.

D | 01.11.06 - 12:19 pm | #

By most estimates, the majority of rabbis worldwide were Sabbateans before the apostasy.

Even after it, many (not the majority, just a lot) of them continued to publicly believe. Others obviously continued having that belief in private.

After his death, most of both groups gave up on SZ. The generation just was not "roi," was the usual explanation. Others condemned SZ for his trickery. Few rabbis stood up and said "I was wrong."

But Sabbatean and crypto-Sabbatean sefarim continued to circulate in the rabbinic world and influence mainstream rabbinic theology and halakha. This is what R. Yaakov Emden was fighting.

Back to the Taz. Nowhere does the Taz come out against SZ. Nowhere. His son and son-in-law were Sabbatean followers. They were sent by the Taz to check out SZ and found him kosher. This was very public knowledge at the time. Did the Taz die to soon to rectify this error? Could be. But evidence points instead to something else: The Taz, and especially his son and son-in-law, probably heard the kabbalistic defense propagated by Nathan of Gaza of SZ conversion and believed it.

I believe the best case one can make for the Taz is that after the apostasy he took a wait-and-see attitude. If Nathan of Gaza was correct, we will soon find out. If not, that will become clear as well.

But before the apostasy? Sabbatean.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 12:24 pm | #

" By most estimates, the majority of rabbis worldwide were Sabbateans before the apostasy.

Even after it, many (not the majority, just a lot) of them continued to publicly believe. Others obviously continued having that belief in private."

Should read:

Even after it, many (not the majority, just a lot) of them continued to **privately** believe. Others, **a much smaller number**, continued having that belief in **public**.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 12:31 pm | <#>

thanbo, I don't think news travelled that fast. By the time of R' Eibeshitz, they would have known, of course, but not in a year.

In a bit of historical irony, another direct descendant of the Taz, Gwyneth Paltrow, is turning to her local Kabbalah Center (in London) for help with her problems, including an exorcism of her house.

Nachum | 01.11.06 - 12:47 pm | <#>

Was that a joke about Gwyneth P's yichus?

If not what are you basing that on?

David | 01.11.06 - 1:32 pm | <#>

> Was that a joke about Gwyneth P's yichus?

>If not what are you basing that on?

It isn't. Her father, Bruce Paltrow, is indeed a descendent of the Taz.

S. | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 1:52 pm | <#>

It came out in the news just at the same time as someone I know was refusing to date a Ba'alas Teshuva because of his great yichus, being descended from the Taz as he was. "So's Gwyneth Paltrow," says I, "and she's not even Jewish!"

Nachum | 01.11.06 - 2:34 pm | <#>

Shmarya: I think you're extrapolating upon extrapolations, to the point where you're barely cantilevered.

I just read Scholem on the Taz and SZ. In the Hebrew version (1957), he reports the sons' trip, and how they were convinced and brought back presents from SZ to the Taz. In the English version (1973), the same passage

is translated, and Scholem infers that, like the majority of the Polish rabbinate, the Taz accepted SZ.

The sons came back about Rosh Hashanah 5427, just before the apostasy of SZ. You, now, are extrapolating upon Scholem's extrapolation that the then-elderly R' David Halevi Segal, because he did not write anything explicit to the contrary, held of SZ even after the apostasy, conscious of the apostasy. To Nachum: News doesn't travel that slowly, either. The Taz was nifter 26 (or 24) Shevat 5427. The sons took about a month to travel to Gallipoli, and two months to travel back. Between the apostasy and the Taz' petirah, was almost 5 months, long enough for news to have reached him. News of SZ's advent and later arrest in 5426 certainly traveled pretty quickly.

How likely is it, that either he was too ill to react, or that he was too embarrassed to make a public thing out of rejecting SZ? Do we know if the sons continued to hold with SZ afterwards?

IOW, in the absence of real evidence, which is more likely and/or halachic: multiple extrapolation to believe that he was a Sabbatean, or dan lechaf zchus of an old man?

By the way, that EJ Schochet has some yichus. He's descended from the Taz, and from the Gra.
thanbo | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 2:36 pm | <#>

Perhaps the Taz felt that never having stated explicitly that SZ was Mashiach, he didn't have to be public that he wasn't (especially since it was so obvious).

Nachum | 01.11.06 - 3:16 pm | <#>

Nachum --

It wasn't all that obvious.

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Thanbo --

Good point. All I will say is there is no record of the Taz speaking out against SZ. And, as far as I know, this holds true for his son and son-in-law, as well.

Surely the Taz believed his son's report. There is no evidence to prove otherwise.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 4:24 pm | <#>

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Hey here's a thought. Maybe the Taz DID state publicly that SZ was not Moshiach. It's not like we have record

of every public statement that the Taz ever made.

And especially because, according to Scholem, after the apostasy the communities did their best to pretend that the whole episode never happened and have life return to normal. It's hardly surprising that there is a lot more record of what people were saying and doing at the time when excitement was at fever pitch, then we do for the period afterwards, when people were trying to forget the whole thing had ever happened.

IchLochZichOse | 01.11.06 - 4:26 pm | #

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Which is why, if the Taz had come out against SZ, we would have that statement today. The mission to SZ sent by the Taz was very public. Why keep the retraction or correction (or simply the statement opposing SZ) quiet?

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 4:57 pm | #

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Her father, Bruce Paltrow, is indeed a descendent of the Taz.

S. | [Homepage](#) | 01.11.06 - 1:52 pm | #

What is the basis for our knowledge of his lineage?

nachum klafter | 01.11.06 - 8:14 pm | #

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Well, the Forward reported it when she was winning awards for Shakespeare in Love.

Although judging from this thread, it seems like *\*everybody\** is descended from the Taz. Similar to the Tosfos Yom Tov there...

Nachum Lamm | 01.11.06 - 9:38 pm | #

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The overwhelming majority of the Jews at the time believed that Shabbtai Tzvi was the Messiah until he converted to Islam. Then only the "hard-core" remained as believers. Just like the overwhelming majority (if not over 90%) of the PHARISEE Jews - including Rabbis and Sages - in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus believed he was Messiah until the crucifixion at which point only the "hard core" remained believers.

Suggesting that the Taz was a Sabbatean b/c he believed that ST was Messiah at a point in time prior to ST's conversion to Islam, is as ridiculous as suggesting that Rav Herzog was a kofer.

oysvurf | 01.12.06 - 4:39 am | #

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"Just like the overwhelming majority (if not over 90%) of the PHARISEE Jews - including Rabbis and Sages - in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus believed he was Messiah until the crucifixion at which point only the "hard core"

remained believers."

What is the evidence for THAT?

Anonymous | 01.12.06 - 4:55 am | <#>

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"The overwhelming majority of the Jews at the time believed that Shabbtai Tzvi was the Messiah until he converted to Islam. "

This part seems to be true, though.

Anonymous | 01.12.06 - 4:57 am | <#>

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"Just like the overwhelming majority (if not over 90%) of the PHARISEE Jews - including Rabbis and Sages - in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus believed he was Messiah until the crucifixion at which point only the "hard core" remained believers."

What is the evidence for THAT?

Anonymous | 01.12.06 - 4:55 am | <#>

It's there, but not in the sources that Rav Eliashiv would deem non-kefira works.

oysvurf | 01.12.06 - 6:34 am | <#>

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Please. The vast majority of Jews had no idea that Jesus was even alive. He was active in a limited area in the Galil for about a year before he was crucified. Those who did know about him probably regarded him in the same way as they did the dozens of other "Messiah"s that were running around at the time. (In any event, Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, at least not out loud.)

The Life of Brian is quite instructive as to the atmosphere of the day.

Nachum | 01.12.06 - 7:33 am | <#>

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>Just like the overwhelming majority (if not over 90%) of the PHARISEE Jews - including Rabbis and Sages - in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus believed he was Messiah until the crucifixion at which point only the "hard core" remained believers

You have got to be kidding. That isn't evident in even the most kvetched in reading of the Greek Testament.

S. | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 7:41 am | <#>

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oysvurf,

I've never seen anything to indicate your understanding of Jesus' popularity is correct.

HAGTBG | 01.12.06 - 12:07 pm | <#>

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If memory serves me, oysvurf is a Chabadnik. That may account for his interesting understanding of Jesus.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 2:37 pm | <#>

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I agree with the earlier post - it is not a fair use of the term *Sabatean* to apply it to the Taz or to anyone who believed he was moshiach before his conversion to Islam. It should be reserved to those followers (like modern day lubavitch *mishichistim* (may they see the light, bb'!) who continued to believe despite the apostasy.

One could argue whether one who actively followed ST as moshiach before the Apostasy only (in contrast to the more passive 'believers' but not necessarily 'followers' - like the Taz) should also be 'branded' a *Sabatean*

J | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 10:16 pm | <#>

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If memory serves me, oysvurf is a Chabadnik. That may account for his interesting understanding of Jesus.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 2:37 pm | <#>

hah. not even close - not by lineage, not by practice, not by location.

I do own a pair of rabbeinu tam tefillin though and have put them on here and there. they didn't come from a Habad connection either

oysvurf | 01.15.06 - 6:04 am | <#>

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