

R. Nathan Nata ben Moses Hannover: The Life and Works of an Illustrious and Tragic Figure

Save me, O God; for the waters have come up to my soul. I sink in deep mire (*yeven mezulah*), where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God. Those who hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; those who would destroy me, who are my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.

Psalms 69:2–4



In 1683, R. Nathan Nata ben Moses Hannover, *dayyan* in Ungarisch Brod, was murdered while at prayers by a stray bullet fired by raiding Turkish troops.¹ Thus was the untimely death of a multifaceted individual, author of highly valued and varied books, congregational rabbi and *dayyan* who recorded the tribulations of late-seventeenth-century Jewry.

Hannover's birthplace and early background is uncertain. Varied locations and accounts are given for Hannover's origin and early life. Hananel Nepi and Samuel Ghirondi suggest that Hannover was from Cracow and, based on references in *Yeven Mezulah*, that he was a student of the kabbalist R. Hayyim ben Abraham ha-Kohen (*Tur Bareket* c. 1585–1655). Moritz Steinschneider demurs, writing “Nostrum cum Natan Cracoviensi confundit Ghirondi,” that is, Ghirondi is in error and Hannover is not to be confused with R. Nathan

¹ The original version of this article was published on *The Seforim Blog* at <http://seforim.blogspot.com> on December 28, 2018. I would like to express my appreciation to Eli Genauer for reading the article and for his comments. Images are courtesy of the Library of Congress, the Jewish National and University Library, the Valmadonna Trust Library, Ozar ha-Hochmah, and Virtual Judaica.

of Cracow. William B. Helmreich writes that Hannover was born in Ostrog, Volhynia, in the early twenties of the seventeenth century.

According to Helmreich, Hannover's parents left Germany at the end of the previous century, when the Jews were expelled from Germany. He suggests that they likely lived in Hannover, as it was common practice for Jews to take the name of the community in which they resided. He adds that Ostrog was a center of Torah studies and that after studying with his father, apparently a learned man who perished in the Chmielnicki massacres, Hannover studied in the Ostrog yeshiva headed by R. Samuel Edels (Maharsha, 1555–1631). He is also reported to have learned Kabbalah with R. Samson Ostropoler of Polonnoye (Volhynia), who died on July 22, 1648, as the head of his community, in the Chmielnicki massacres.²

Hannover married the daughter of R. Abraham of Zaslav, had two daughters—it is not known whether he had other children—and delivered sermons and discourses often based on kabbalistic works. Hannover's residence in Zaslav, Volhynia, apparently peaceful and untroubled, came to an end with the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49 (*tah ve-tat*), which were witnessed and recorded by him in *Yeven Mezulah*. He subsequently wandered throughout Europe, traveling from southeastern Poland to Germany, Amsterdam, Venice, Livorno (Leghorn), and Moldavia. In Venice, Hannover studied Lurianic Kabbalah with Italian and Safed kabbalists then in Italy. For a time, Hannover served as rabbi in Livorno, before accepting several positions in Eastern Europe, the last as *dayyan* in Ungarisch Brod, Moravia, where, he was murdered by a stray bullet while at prayers, as noted above.³

In explaining these peregrinations, David B. Ruderman writes that the many migrations of Jewish intellectuals at this time “especially the large and conspicuous movements of persecuted or economically deprived Jews, constituted a vital dimension of early modern Jewish culture,” citing Hannover as one of many examples.⁴ This article, both historical and bibliographic in nature, will describe the books authored by Hannover and the presses that

2 Hananel Nepi and Mordecai Samuel Ghironi, *Toledot Gedolei Yisrael* (Trieste, 1853), p. 270 [Hebrew]; Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (CB, Berlin, 1852–60), col. 2044; and William B. Helmreich, forward to Nathan Nata Hannover, *Abyss of Despair* (*Yeven Mezulah*), translated by Abraham J. Mesch (New York, 1950; reprint New Brunswick, NJ, 1983), pp. 13–15; Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature* IV, translated by Bernard Martin (New York, 1975), pp. 122–23.

3 Hersh Goldwurm, ed., *The Early Acharonim* (Brooklyn, 1989), p. 194; Mordechai Margalioth, ed., *Encyclopedia of Great Men in Israel* IV (Tel Aviv, 1986), cols. 1181–82 [Hebrew].

4 David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, NJ, 2011), pp. 41, 51.

published them. We begin, however, with a brief background as to the events that preceded and caused Hannover's itinerant life and that are described in detail in *Yeven Mezulah*.

I

Jewish life in sixteenth-century and the first half of seventeenth-century Poland was noticeably better than elsewhere in contemporary Christian Europe, resulting in considerable Jewish immigration to Poland. Hannover's family, for example, relocated from Germany to Poland. The nature of Jewish life in Poland is reflected in the correspondence and responsa of the time. Bernard D. Weinryb quotes from R. Moses Isserles (Rema, 1530–90) and R. Hayyim ben Bezalel (c. 1520–88) to bring contemporary sources in support of this position. Two examples, the Rema and Hayyim ben Bezalel, respectively, write:

In this country [Poland] there is no fierce hatred of us as in Germany. May it so continue until the advent of the Messiah. He also says: "You will be better off in this country ... you have here peace of mind."

It is known that, thank God, His people is in this land not despised and despoiled. Therefore a non-Jew coming to the Jewish street has respect for the public and is afraid to behave like a villain against Jews, while in Germany every Jew is wronged and oppressed the day long.⁵

This is not to say that disabilities were not recognized and anti-Semitism was not present. Salo Wittmayer Baron writes, for example, that Jesuit colleges frequently became the centers of agitation and disturbances directed against the Jews. Jewish pedestrians passing the Jesuit college in Cracow were required to pay 4 groszy; if they were on horseback, they had to pay 6 groszy; and if passing with horse and buggy, they had to pay 12 groszy.⁶ Nevertheless, Jewish life in Poland at the time was still understood to be better than elsewhere. All of this changed in 1648 with the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49 (*gezerot tah ve-tat* תה-תט) led by Bogdan Chmielnicki (1595–1657), the head of a

5 Bernard D. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800* (Philadelphia, 1972), p. 166.

6 Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* xvi (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 98.

Cossack and peasant uprising against Polish rule in the Ukraine in which the Cossacks and Tartars “acted with savage and unrelenting cruelty against the Jews.” Chmielnicki is regarded as “one of the most sinister oppressors of the Jews of all generations.”⁷

The sources vary in their accounts of the number of victims. Among the sources quoted by Israel Zinberg, those who perished are estimated by R. Mordecai of Kremsier (*Le-Korot ha-Gezerot*) at 120,000 and R. Samuel Feivish Feitel (*Tit ha-Yaven*) at 670,000.⁸ In contrast, a contemporary writer, Shaul Stampfer, writes that “the number of Jewish lives lost and communities destroyed was immense. However, the impression of destruction was greater than the destruction itself,” suggesting that the true number “appears to be no more than 18,000–20,000 out of a population of about 40,000.”⁹

Jonathan Israel, while noting that the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648 were “a horrific episode which dwarfed every other Jewish tragedy between 1492 and the Nazi Holocaust,” concludes, in contrast to most other historians of the period, that it “was less a turning-point in the history of Polish Jewry than a brutal but relatively short interruption in its steady growth and expansion.” The traditional position that it was a “decisive turn for the worse” for Polish Jewry is, based on more recent research, to place “events in a misleading light.”¹⁰

In counterpoint, Simha Assaf quotes R. Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz, son of R. Isaiah Horowitz (Ha-Shelah ha-Kadosh, c. 1565–1630), who writes concerning *gezerot tah ve-tat* that the “third Churban (destruction of the Temple) done in our days in the years *tah ve-tat* ... truly was comparable to the first and second Churban.” Assaf notes that from that time on the Jews of Poland left to fill positions in the West, especially in Germany. In Poland, communities remained depleted, impoverished, and even intellectually in decline until the nineteenth century.¹¹

7 Shmuel Ettinger, “Chmielnicki (Khmelnitski), Bogdan,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 4 (Detroit, 2007), pp. 654–56.

8 Zinberg, *Jewish Literature*, p. 122.

9 Shaul Stampfer, “What Actually Happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?” *Jewish History* 17, no. 2 (2003), pp. 221–22.

10 Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750* (London, 1998), p. 99.

11 Simha Assaf, “The Inner Life of Polish Jewry (Prior to the Period of the Haskalah)” in *Be-Ohole Ya’akov: Peraḳim me-hHaye ha-Tarbut shel ha-Yehudim bi-Yeme ha-Benayim* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 80 [Hebrew].

II

All of this is reflected in Hannover's itinerant life and in his *Yeven Mezulah*, which was the chronicler of these events. Nevertheless, Hannover's first published work, *Ta'amei Sukkah*, is quite different. Based on a sermon delivered in Cracow in 1646, it was published in Amsterdam in 1652 at the press of Samuel bar Moses ha-Levi and Reuben bar Eliakim. In format, it is a small quarto (4⁰: 12 ff.).¹² Samuel bar Moses ha-Levi was, together with Judah [Leib] ben Mordecai [Gimpel] of Posen, one of the first Ashkenazi printers in Amsterdam. After their partnership ended in 1651, Samuel bar Moses continued to publish for a brief period in partnership with Reuben bar Eliakim of Mainz. Among their publications is *Ta'amei Sukkah*.

As the title page makes clear, *Ta'amei Sukkah* is a discourse on the festival of Sukkot, explaining Talmudic statements by way of esoteric allusions. The title page states that in the discourse

are explained all of the hard-to-understand sayings and Talmudic adages, and the accounts in the *Zohar* related to Sukkot. In it are revealed deep esoterica, explained and made intelligible according to and based on the Talmud, Rashi, and Tosafot and; "set upon sockets of fine gold" (Song of Songs 5:15) ... to satisfy the soul's yearning. In it the seeker will find "good judgment and knowledge" (cf. Psalms 119:66), "the honeycomb" and "pleasant words" (Psalms 19:11, Proverbs 15:26, 16:24), for this is a treasured and desirable discourse.

The title page is dated "to life and to peace וְלִשְׁלוֹם" (412 = 1652); the colophon dates completion of the work to the month *Menahem* (Av) Zion and Israel "And this is the Torah אֲשֶׁר הָתוּרָה וְזֵאת הַתּוֹרָה" (412 = July/August 1652) which Moses set before the people of Israel" (Deuteronomy 4:44). Hannover's introduction (1b) follows. He emphasizes his youth and informs the reader that he has written discourses on the entire Torah and all the festivals, which are entitled *Neta Sha'ashu'im* because the title contains his name.

Lack of funds had prevented Hannover from publishing the entire work; therefore, at this time he printed this discourse only, which was delivered in Cracow in 1646. Hannover's complaint that, due to a lack of funds, he had been unable to publish the entire book and at this time was printing one discourse only, which was really just a pamphlet, that is, *Ta'amei Sukkah*, is not unique.

12 L. Fuks and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585–1815* (Leiden, 1984–87), I, p. 197, no. 275.



FIGURE 11.1

Indeed, what makes Hannover different from other authors with like difficulties is that in contrast to the other authors, who were printing small excerpts of their works in hopes of finding a patron to support publication of their larger tome, those authors are today unknown except for their small works. Hannover, in contrast, is relatively well known, if only because of his other published titles.¹³

Hannover entitled this discourse *Ta'amei Sukkah* because it is on the Sukkah and the *arba'ah minim*; it explains wondrous *Midrashim* and sayings in the *Zohar* and Talmud relating to Sukkot; and furthermore, it explains that the numerical value of *Ta'amei* טעמי (129) equals the numerical value of his name Nata נטע (129). The text follows, and is set in two columns in rabbinic type

13 Concerning such small books published as a prospectus, see my "Books not Printed, Dreams not Realized," in *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 285–303.



FIGURE 11.2

with leaders in square letters. *Ta'amei Sukkah* is a multifaceted work with kabbalistic and midrashic content. Within the text are several headings in which Hannover notes that, based on the prior section, he will now explain a passage from *Midrash Rabbah*, the *Zohar*, or another work, such as one of the commentaries of the *Alshekh*. At the end of *Ta'amei Sukkah*, after the colophon, is a tail-piece, the bear pressmark.¹⁴ *Ta'amei Sukkah* has been reprinted once, in Podgorze (1902).

III

The following year, continuing his peripatetic movements, Hannover was in Venice where he published *Yeven Mezulah*, his detailed chronicle of the horrific experiences of Polish Jewry during the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49 (*tah ve-tat*) in which, according to contemporary sources, as many as several hundred thousand Jews were murdered and hundreds of communities destroyed.¹⁵

14 Concerning the varied usage of the bear pressmark, see my “The Bear Motif on Eighteenth-Century Hebrew Books,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 102, no. 3 (2008), pp. 341–61, reprinted in *Further Studies*, pp. 57–76.

15 Other contemporary works describing the horrors of *tah ve-tat* are R. Samuel Feivush ben Nathan Feitel's *Tit ha-Yaven* (Venice, c. 1650), R. Meir ben Samuel of Shcherbreshin's *Zok ha-Ittim* (Cracow, 1650), and R. Jacob ben ha-kodesh (“the holy,” suggesting that he was among the murdered) Simeon of Tomashov's *Ohel Ya'akov* (Venice, 1662). The latter wrote: “‘Light became darkness’ (Job 18:6) for me, for they killed my wife and three sons, ‘and I lived in the land of Nod’ (cf. Genesis 4:16) until 1656. In that year arose grievous troubles, old and also new, and I came upon *midat ha-din* (‘strict justice’) and ‘disaster upon disaster’ (Ezekiel 7:26), plunder after plunder, until finally I encountered pestilence, sword, famine, and captivity and every day was worse than before.” Also to be noted are *selihot* commemorating *tah ve-tat* (1648–49) such as R. Gabriel ben Joshua Heschel Schlussburg's *Petah Teshuvah* ([1651], Amsterdam) *selihot* and lamentation on the Jews massacred in *tah*

This, the first edition of *Yeven Mezulah*, is based on first-person accounts taken from oral testimony and other contemporary works. It was printed at the Vendramin press in 1653, and is also in quarto format (4⁰: 24 ff.). Founded in 1630 by Giovanni Vendramin, this press broke the monopoly enjoyed until then by Bragadin. For the first ten years, the press operated under the name of its founder, but after his death it became known by the names Commissaria Vendramina and Stamparia Vendramina. The press eventually joined with that of Bragadin and the combined presses continued to operate well into the eighteenth century.¹⁶

The title is from “[I sink in] deep mire (*yeven mezulah*), [where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me]” (Psalms 69:3). The title page, which has an architectural frame and is dated “coming בִּיאַת (413 = 1653) of the Messiah,” states that it comes to relate the decrees and wars in the lands of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland. There is an introduction from Hannover, which begins:

“I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath” (Lamentations 3:1), when the Lord smote His people Israel, His firstborn. He cast down from Heaven to Earth His glory, the land of Poland, His delight. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth” (Psalms 48:3) “The Lord has swallowed all the habitations of Jacob without pity” (Lamentations 2:2), “the lot of his inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:9), “and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!” (Lamentations 2:1). All of this was foreseen by King David (may he rest in peace) when he prophesied the joining of the Kadarim (Tatars) and the Greeks to destroy Israel, His chosen people, in the year ת”א (408 = 1648).

Hannover entitled the work *Yeven Mezulah* because the events that transpired in it are alluded to in Psalms. Also, *yeven* (*yavanim*—Greeks) refers to the Ukrainians, who belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church. Hannover writes that he has recorded both major and minor occurrences, all the decrees and persecutions, and their dates, so that families can calculate when their relatives perished. He also describes the customs of Polish Jewry and their religious devotion, which is based upon the pillars that support the world (ref. *Avot* 1:2,

ve-tat (written as a commentary on the Book of Lamentations) and R. Shabbetai ben Meir ha-Kohen (Shah’s *Selihot ve-Kinnot* (*Megillat Eifah*, 1651, Amsterdam).

16 David Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy* (Philadelphia, 1909; reprint London, 1963), p. 372; Joshua Bloch, “Venetian Printers of Hebrew Books,” in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography* (New York, 1976), p. 86.



FIGURE 11.3

18), and he notes the high level of Torah scholarship, which is unmatched elsewhere. *Yeven Mezu'lah* has been described as “a complex work that recounts not only the cruel fate of Ukrainian Jewry, but also the socioeconomic and political factors that led up to the rebellion ... it is noteworthy that he is able to give details of various political and military developments within the Polish camp.”¹⁷

17 Adam Teller, “Hannover, Natan Note,” in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* 1 (New Haven, 2008), p. 656.

The introduction concludes with a request that the book be purchased to enable him to publish *Neta Sha'ashu'im*, a work that, as noted above, was never published. It then records in detail the tribulations that befell Eastern European Jewry, concluding with a description of the inner life of the Jews, how they lived in accordance with the pillars of Torah, divine service, charity, truth, justice, and peace, which are set forth in *Avot*. *Yeven Mezulah* is organized by community, describing what befell them, save for an intermediate section on Chmielnicki. Two examples from this section are as follows. The first is a description of what occurred in Nemirow, relating how Chmielnicki and his followers gained entry by the ruse of flying Polish flags and thus passing themselves off as a relief force:

The people of the city were fully aware of this trickery, and nevertheless called to the Jews in the fortress: "Open the gate. This is a Polish army which has come to save you from the hands of your enemies ... No sooner had the gates been opened than the Cossacks entered with drawn swords, and the townspeople too, armed with spears and scythes, and some only with clubs, and they killed the Jews in large numbers. Women and young girls were ravished, but some of the women and maidens jumped into the moat surrounding the fortress in order that the uncircumcised should not defile them ... but the Ukrainians swam after them with their swords and their scythes, and killed them in the water. Some of the enemy shot with their guns into the water, and killed them till the water became red with the blood of the slain.... The number of the slain and drowned in the holy community of Nemirow was about six thousand. They perished by all sorts of terrible deaths.... May God avenge their blood.

The second example concerns R. Samson Ostropoler of Polonnoye (Volhynia) and his community:

Among them was a wise and understanding divinely inspired Kabbalist whose name was Our Teacher and Master Rabbi Samson of the holy community of Ostropole. An angel would appear to him every day to teach him the mysteries of the Torah.... He preached frequently in the synagogue and exhorted the people to repent so that the evil would not come to pass. Accordingly all the communities repented sincerely but it did not avail, for the evil decree had already been sealed.

When the enemies and oppressors invaded the city, the above-mentioned mystic and three hundred of the most prominent citizens, all dressed in shrouds, with prayer shawls over their heads, entered the

synagogue and engaged in fervent prayer. When the enemies arrived they killed all of them upon the sacred ground of the synagogue, may God avenge their blood. Many hundreds who managed to survive were forced to change their faith and many hundreds were taken captive by the Tartars.¹⁸

A critical view of *Yeven Mezulah* is expressed by Edward Fram, who writes that Hannover, in describing the massacre of Jews in Tulczyn, copied from other works, particularly *Zok ha-Ittim*, at times paraphrased those works, and “in some instances he took events said to have happened elsewhere and wove them into his own tale of Tulczyn,” without acknowledging his debt, melding them into his own tale of the massacre in Tulczyn. Fram suggests that Hannover did so because *Zok ha-Ittim* was not compelling enough to emphasize Jewish martyrdom and “place 1648 in the tradition of past tragedies, [therefore] a more resolute image of martyrdom would be necessary.”¹⁹

Nevertheless, *Yeven Mezulah* is regarded as the classic and most important work on *tah ve-tat* and has been frequently reprinted as well as having been translated into Yiddish, French, German, Russian, Polish, and English.

IV

We next, in terms of Hannover's publications, find him in Prague, where he published *Safah Berurah*, a popular four-language (Hebrew-German-Latin-Italian) glossary for conversation and a guidebook for travelers. Printed at the renowned press of the Benei Jacob Bak, which opened as early as 1605, *Safah Berurah* is a small-format book (8^o: [44] ff.). The title is from, “For then I will convert the peoples to a clear language (*safah berurah*)” (Zephaniah 3:9). The title page states:

“Behold, and see” (Lamentations 1:12) this new thing that was not before. The holy tongue (Hebrew), Ashkenaz, Italian, and Latin spread out flawlessly. It is good for women and men, the aged and elderly, adolescents and young, teacher and businessmen and also before the uneducated, who travel through all lands, “And you shall teach them to your

18 Both translations are from Hannover, *Abyss of Despair*, pp. 51, 63–4, respectively.

19 Edward Fram, “Creating a Tale of Martyrdom in Tulczyn, 1648,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers (Hannover, 1998), pp. 90–1.



FIGURE 11.4

ספר החסידים והחסידות
שני כל מלת וזרות בספר קנקרדאנסיא מלכוד ע"א
שני הדקדוק
באלו עשרים שנים ימצא אדם כל מלכוד בארבע לשונות הכל באר הטיב

ז"ל שני א' מדבר בין השמים וכל אשר על השמים והאדמה

לשון הקודש	לשון אשכנז	לשון אשכנז	לשון אשכנז
אל	אל	אל	אל
מלאכים	מלאכים	מלאכים	מלאכים
נשא	נשא	נשא	נשא
כבוד	כבוד	כבוד	כבוד
שמש ארמה	שמש ארמה	שמש ארמה	שמש ארמה
נחמה לבנה	נחמה לבנה	נחמה לבנה	נחמה לבנה
מזבחים	מזבחים	מזבחים	מזבחים
פזל	פזל	פזל	פזל
נחמה	נחמה	נחמה	נחמה
קשת	קשת	קשת	קשת
שמים	שמים	שמים	שמים
זו שני	זו שני	זו שני	זו שני
זיהנם	זיהנם	זיהנם	זיהנם
זימ	זימ	זימ	זימ
מזות	מזות	מזות	מזות
סוב	סוב	סוב	סוב
רע	רע	רע	רע
אור	אור	אור	אור
חושד	חושד	חושד	חושד
זם	זם	זם	זם
לחל	לחל	לחל	לחל
חזן	חזן	חזן	חזן
חנה	חנה	חנה	חנה

FIGURE 11.5

children, speaking of them, so that your days may be multiplied" (cf. Deuteronomy 11:19, 21), and in this merit may He send to our Messiah speedily in our day. Amen Selah.

The Lord grant us the merit to come soon to the holy land הקדושה (420 = 1660).

The introduction follows, in which Hannover repeats the description of the book from the title page and adds that it is based on the words in the

Torah, the twenty-four books of the Bible, and some words from the six *Sedorim* (*Mishnayot*). He follows “after the reapers” (Ruth 2:7), gleaning every strange word in the sheaf: from concordances, *Mirkevet ha-Mishneh*, and commentaries.²⁰ *Safah Berurah* is so entitled because from this straightforward work all four languages will be pure and clear. In the second paragraph, in a smaller font, Hannover explains the structure of the work, and that the Ashkenaz is not, with rare exception, that of the gentiles but of the Jews (Yiddish), but that the Latin is of the highest order, in order to be able to be spoken before kings and nobles.

This is followed by a list of the twenty *she'arim* that make up *Safah Berurah*—that is, the divisions of the book, which is not alphabetic but organized by subject. This arrangement was apparently followed because Hannover believed that it would be more convenient for conversation to be able to locate words related by subject. The first two *she'arim* include terms dealing with the divine and Torah; the next three deal with earthly objects. The sixth through the ninth deal with fish, birds, animals, and humans before continuing with material objects such as clothing, jewelry, metal, arms, tools, and nations, including proper forms of address, business, arithmetic, the calendar, and grammar.

The approximately 2,000 words comprising the text follow, in four columns, from right to left, of Hebrew, Ashkenaz, Italian, and Latin, all in square vocalized Hebrew letters. At the end of the book are errata by language and a colophon in which Hannover thanks Gariel Blanis and Jacob Szebrsziner for their assistance with the Italian and Latin, and notes that it was necessary to reduce the size of the glossary due to conditions in Poland, where there are no buyers.²¹

Safah Berurah has also been republished several times, beginning with an edition prepared by Jacob Koppel ben Wolf that included French at the press of Moses ben Abraham Mendes Coitinho (Amsterdam, 1701), and even an edition with Greek and Turkish (lacking place and date).²²

Sha'arei Ziyyon, Hannover's last published title, is a collection of Lurianic kabbalistic prayers, particularly for *Tikkun Hazot* (midnight prayers). First printed in Prague in the year “The trees of the Lord have their fill; the cedars of Lebanon, which he has planted **לִבְנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע יִשְׁבְּעוּ עֵצֵי יִי אֲרָזִי** (422 = 1662)”

20 *Mirkevet ha-Mishneh* (Cracow, 1534), by Asher Anshel of Cracow, is a concordance and glossary of the Bible. Published by Samuel, Asher, and Elyakim, sons of Hayyim Halicz, it was the first Yiddish book printed in Poland. Concerning *Mirkevet ha-Mishneh*, see Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth-Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* 1 (Leiden, 2004), pp. 216–17.

21 Shimeon Brisman, *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances* (Hoboken, NJ, 2000), pp. 44–46.

22 Ch. B. Friedberg, *Bet Eked Sepharim* (Israel, n.d.), *shin* 2223 [Hebrew].



FIGURE 11.6

(Psalms 104:16), also at the press of Benei Jacob Bak. *Sha'arei Ziyon* is a small work set in octavo format (8^o: [38] ff.). The title is from “The Lord loves the gates of Zion (*sha'arei Ziyon*) more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (Psalms 87:2).

The following text and images are from the Amsterdam 1671 edition, which was published by Uri Phoebus ben Aaron ha-Levi in quarto format (4^o: 54 ff.). Similar but not identical to the earlier Prague printing, this edition is dated *Rosh Hodesh Sivan* 431 (Sunday, May 10, 1671). The title page has an architectural frame with an eagle at the apex, which surrounds the text.²³ The text states:

These are the words of Kabbalah according to the scribes and according to the texts, *Sefer Etz Hayyim*, those who taste it merit life, written by the foremost student of the Godly rav, R. Isaac Luria, that is, R. Hayyim Vital. After him rose up students of his students and wrote this work (*Sha'arei Ziyon*).

The author sent his brother R. Mordecai Gumprecht ben Moses with many additional prayers and supplications, as can be seen.

The title page is followed by the approbations reprinted from the first Prague edition, from R. Nahman ben Meir Kohen of Keremenec, R. Samuel ben Meir of Ostrow, and R. Israel ben Aaron Benzion of Satanow. They are followed by Hannover's introduction, which concludes with a description of the seven *sha'arim* comprising *Sha'arei Ziyon*; *Tikkun Hazot* based on R. Hayyim Vital's

23 “The Eagle Motif on 16th and 17th Century Hebrew Books,” *Printing History*, NS 17 (2015), pp. 16–40.



FIGURE 11.7

Etz ha-Hayyim; *Tikkun ha-Nefesh*, to be said after *Tikkun Hazot* with *Yedid Nefesh*; *Tikkun ha-Tefillah* according to Kabbalah; *Tikkun Kriat ha-Torah*; *Tikkun Kriat Shema* with the appropriate *kavvanot*; *Tikkun shel Erev Rosh Hodesh*; and *Tikkun Malkhut on Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom ha-Kippurim*.

The text is in a single column in rabbinic type, with headers, initial phrases, and some limited text in square letters. The volume concludes with an epilogue dating the conclusion of the work to “half of (15) Kislev, ‘And he shall judge the world **תבל**’ (Tuesday, November 17, 1671) in righteousness’ (Psalms 9:9) and compassion.” Printing was supervised by Mordecai Gumpricht ben Moses, Hannover’s brother.²⁴

Sha’arei Ziyyon is primarily a compilation of existing prayers assembled into one work. Prayers such as *Ribbono shel Olam*, recited today prior to the removal of the Torah from the Ark by R. Jeremiah of Wertheim and the *Yehi Ratzon* after the priestly blessing are taken from *Sha’arei Ziyyon*. This edition, as stated on the title page, is much expanded from the first edition (8^o 38 ff.). It contains additional prayers, *piyyutim*, and supplications, some of considerable length, among them prayers for someone incarcerated and for those who are ill, and it has verse for the dedication of a new Torah scroll in the synagogue.²⁵

Gershom Scholem, in describing the influence of Kabbalah on Jewish life, writes that one of the areas in which it had the greatest influence was prayer. Among the most influential books in this sphere was *Sha’arei Ziyyon* in which Lurianic doctrines “of man’s mission on earth, his connections with the

24 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, pp. 263–64, no. 32.

25 A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (1932; reprint New York, 1995), pp. 55, 80, 259.

power of the upper worlds, the transmigrations of his soul, and his striving to achieve *tikkun* were woven into prayers that could be appreciated and understood by everyone, or that at least could arouse everyone's imagination and emotion."²⁶

The popularity of *Sha'arei Ziyyon* is such that it has been described by Sylvie Anne Goldberg as "one of the most widely read books in the Jewish world."²⁷ Indeed, *Sha'arei Ziyyon* was reprinted in Prague three times in the seventeenth century (1682, 1688, 1692), and three additional times within a decade, in Dyhernfurth ([1689]), Wilhermsdorf (1690), and Dessau (1698). The *Bet Eked Sefarim* enumerates fifty-four editions through 1917.²⁸

Hannover's life reflects the times in which he lived, both in the adversity and travail he faced but also in how he overcame them. Just as the Jews of mid-seventeenth-century Europe had their lives uprooted but survived to rebuild thriving communities, so too Hannover's accomplishments stand out. Not only did he both live and survive to chronicle the struggles and turmoil of *gezerot taḥ ve-tat* in *Yeven Mezulah*, but he also wrote such varied books as *Safah Berurah*, a lexicography, and *Sha'arei Ziyyon*, a liturgical work, all three important and much reprinted titles. In addition, Hannover was the author of *Neta Sha'ashu'im*, which was noted above; *Neṭa Ne'eman*, a kabbalistic work; a discourse on Purim, extant in manuscript, and a commentary on *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Akiva*, no longer extant. In addition to the printed editions of his books, Hannover's works were sufficiently popular that they were often copied by hand. Numerous manuscripts of his works are extant. KTIV, the International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts, records twenty-six entries under Nathan Hannover, the most popular of which being by far *Sha'arei Ziyyon*.²⁹

Despite experiencing suffering and tragedy, Nathan Nata Hannover survived to live a life of meaning and leave us a legacy of value. *Yeven Mezulah* concludes that the Jews who escaped from the swords of their enemies were treated with kindness in Moravia, Austria, Bohemia, Italy, and especially Germany, and given food, drink, lodging, garments, and gifts "each according to his importance":

26 Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York, 1973), p. 193.

27 Sylvie Anne Goldberg, *Crossing the Jabbok: Illness and Death in Ashkenazi Judaism in Sixteenth- through Nineteenth-Century Prague* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 88.

28 Friedberg, *Bet Eked Sepharim*, *shin* 2148.

29 I would like to thank Eli Genauer for bringing this to my attention. The web address for KTIV is <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/en/manuscript>.

May their justice appear before God to shield them and all Israel wherever they are congregated, so that Israel may dwell in peace and tranquility in their habitations. May their merit be counted for us and for our children, that the Lord should hearken to our cries and gather our dispersed from the four corners of the earth, and send us our righteous Messiah, speedily in our day. Amen, Selah.