The Sabbath-Keepers of Transylvania

Buried lay the old teachings of Christ…but to us, the least of all, the most insignificant on the earth, to us the poor and despised ones, You have revealed it. (Old Sabbatarian Hymnal)
if the village clergy suspected that a person secretly belonged to the sect of the Sabbath-keepers, they would force him to work on the Sabbath. One Sabbath day, in the Transylvanian district of Bőzöd, a Catholic priest came upon a maid he suspected of Sabbath-keeping. He seized her and forced her to make hay for him on the Sabbath. Although the skies were clear and the weather was warm, a few hours after she began working in the field a cloud overshadowed the villages, and a violent thunderstorm ensued. Fierce wind and rain blew away the hay. Lightning struck and killed a man. The villagers came to the priest while the storm continued to rage and cried out, “Let the Sabbatarian go home while we are all still safe!” After that, no one ever again dared to force the Sabbath-keepers to work on the Sabbath in that village.

Origin of the Sabbatarians

Transylvania, the homeland of Dracula, used to be the homeland of an amazing sect of Torah-keeping Christianity. The modern Messianic Jewish movement and believing Torah-keepers stand to learn a great deal from these Transylvanians. Our beliefs mirror theirs exactly in many ways, and they can be seen as forerunners of our faith and practice. In certain matters of theology, however, matters such as Christology and relationship to greater Judaism we differ strongly, and we should take warning from their history.

The protestant Reformation arrived in Transylvania early in the sixteenth century. By 1568, Transylvanian Christians were divided between Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist (Reformed) and Unitarian churches. The latter denomination was primarily distinguished from the others by its rejection of Trinitarian theology. Transylvanian Unitarianism is the predecessor to the liberal Unitarian church of the modern era. At its inception, however, Unitarian Christians were very conservative and fundamentalist in their approach to Scripture. They often retained a very high Christology despite their anti-Trinitarian stance. From those conservative ranks of early Unitarians the Transylvanian Sabbatarian movement emerged.

Reformation-era Transylvania fostered a spirit of religious tolerance. A state law in 1577 announced that everyone was free to “hold and practice matters of faith either old or new” according to their own conscience. A 1568 law reads that “ministers should all preach the gospel in all places according to their own views,” and that they are not to be coerced. Transylvania’s free religious climate, coupled with the Reformation-era enthusiasm for returning to the “New Testament Church,” inevitably led some Christians back to the default mode of our faith. The Sabbatarians emerged as a biblical form of Christianity—that is, they kept the commandments of Torah and the testimony of Yeshua.

The story of the Transylvanian Sabbatarians begins with András Eössi, a wealthy Székely landowner. (The Székely are a Hungarian-speaking ethnic group.) Eössi was a Unitarian who, despite his vast wealth, suffered a difficult life. He lost his wife and three sons, and he himself endured a debilitating disease that left him largely incapacitated. Alone in his castle in the village of Saint Elizabeth, Eössi committed himself to studying the Bible. In the course of his studies, he came to many of the same convictions that characterize the Hebrew Roots movement and Torah-observing, Messianic Judaism today. Fueled by the joy of discovery, he began to propagate the observance of the Sabbath, the festivals, the dietary laws and the ongoing validity of the Torah among Christians. In his writings, he frequently expressed that his teachings were comprehensible to anyone with plain sense: “It requires not much arguing, quibbling, bickering; farmer’s sense is sufficient to understand it easily and surely,” he wrote. By 1588 he had disseminated his teachings and amassed followers throughout the Székely people.

Practice of the People

Transylvanian Sabbatarian literature is written in Hungarian, and Eössi’s writings are no exception. Eössi proved to be prolific. He produced theological treatises, hymn books, didactic poetry, liturgical prayers and halachic (legal) manuals for the emerging Transylvanian Torah movement. In addition he introduced Hungarian versions of traditional Jewish prayers, interspersed with prayers particular to the Sabbatarians. The Old Sabbatarian Hymnal reads,

“We cannot boast Abraham as our father, nor claim to be his descendants. We are but the offshoot of Japheth’s house and foolish heathen children. Only in Thee, Father, will we rejoice... The one who has brought us heathens to Thee and made us children of Abraham.”

Because Eössi’s Sabbath-keepers were identified with Judaism, the government would not allow them to publish literature. When Eössi would write an article or a book, his followers would set to work copying it by hand, one copy at a time. Eössi led the Sabbatarians for twelve years, and during those twelve years his beliefs spread along the foothills of the Transylvanian Alps.

Eössi’s followers kept the Jewish calendar. Their hymn books have special hymns and prayers for each of the festivals. On the evening of the Passover they kept a Seder and ate unleavened bread (they called it the “bread of the Christ”) as an annual com-
munion ritual in memory of the Master. They kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread in commemoration of the first coming of Yeshua and in anticipation of His future second coming. At Rosh Hashanah they celebrated the New Year, and at Yom Kippur they fasted. At Sukkot they helped the poor prepare for winter. They rejected Easter, the January New Year, Christmas and Sunday—sabbath as days invented by Rome. They kept strict kosher; not only abstaining from unclean animals but also from any meat that was not slaughtered and bled by rabbinic standards. Community leaders were responsible for kosher butchering of the animals, leading the Sabbath services and teaching the Torah.

The Sabbatarians rejected pictures and statues of Christ as idolatrous. They even shunned putting up crosses as dangerously close to idolatry. They believed that the one most Christians called “Christ” was actually the Messiah of the Jews, who would one day literally return, resurrect the dead, gather in Messiah and reign and prepare for each Sabbath with “merry singing, teaching, scripture reading and the singing of psalms and hymns particular to their faith in Messiah.

**Distinction from Christianity**

They had still other beliefs that separated them from the rest of Christianity. The Sabbatarians regarded themselves as Gentiles, “adopted” as sons of Abraham through faith in Messiah and obedience to the Torah. They believed that the New Testament must be read in continuity with Torah, not as a replacement of Torah. They taught that the Torah must be studied day and night, so that one knows how to fulfill it. They recognized that no one could keep the Torah perfectly. Hence, according to their writings, they asked for forgiveness and mercy—that is, grace. They believed that the New Covenant began with Yeshua, but was not yet fulfilled, and would not be fulfilled until Messiah returned. They proclaimed that the Jewish people were the elect of God and had not been replaced by Christians.

They restored the authentic practice of Christianity, in that they returned to the same mode of faith that the original believers observed as binding. They pointed out that the religion of Yeshua and His original followers was Judaism. The Old Sabbatarian Hymnal states that Yeshua

...was a Jew by descent and faith; He preached the Jewish law and instructed humans to depend on Moses and the prophets. His apostles were likewise Jews, and held and taught the Jewish faith.

They taught that Yeshua condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, but in His interpretation of the Torah He agreed with them. Like adherents of the modern Jewish Roots movement, the Sabbatarians were fond of quoting Matthew 5:17–19 and 23:2–3. They differed from Judaism only in their belief in Yeshua as Messiah and their reluctance as Gentiles to practice circumcision, a peculiarity that they must have derived from Paul’s epistles. Some did voluntarily undergo circumcision, but it was never practiced as a community rule.

The observance of the Sabbath was at the center of their faith. The Sabbatarians prepared for each Sabbath with “merry singing, with prayer and cleaning.” They received each Sabbath as a wedding day; Women wore white dresses. One observer of their community wrote,

On Friday night when they glimpse the first star shining from the direction of Jerusalem, they cease work, light the Sabbath candle in every window, and begin their Vespers.

They observed a Friday evening service (ma’ariv), a Saturday morning service (shachā’rit), an afternoon prayer time (minchah) and a prayer at the close of the Sabbath after sunset (havadalah). They observed each service with the appropriate prayers, translated into Hungarian, a teaching, scripture reading and the singing of psalms and hymns particular to their faith in Messiah.

**Early Persecution**

The Sabbatarians did not pass through history unnoticed. The four accepted religions of Transylvania fought bitterly with each other, but they agreed on their common hatred for the Sabbatarians. By 1595, only a few years after the sect’s inception, the government issued laws attempting to stop the spread of the movement. Severe persecution followed. Five years later, the courts passed a law that allowed Sabbatarian estates and properties to be confiscated. A furious persecution broke out. Their writings, sacred books and prayer books were confiscated and burned in piles. Despite the persecution, the sect flourished among the poor Székely people. It swept through villages and rural farm communities. As it grew, scholars, aristocracy and noblemen were drawn into the faith. By 1600, the Sabbatarians were among the largest religions in Transylvania.

In 1618, a decree was passed with the approval of Prince Bethlen that gave the Sabbath-keepers until Christmas to come to their senses and rejoin one of the recognized churches, or face the consequences. Soon thereafter, their books were again cast into bonfires; their properties were seized; and those who had not officially entered a recognized church were thrown into dungeons, scourged and often killed. Despite the persecutions, they persisted. Many fled to the mountains. Others left Transylvania altogether, to seek refuge in Jewish communities. Most maintained their faith secretly, even within the ranks of the established churches. In the face of fierce persecution from the larger Christian community, the Sabbatarians found solace in the Kingdom to come. One hymn from *The Old Sabbatarian Hymnal* expresses their hope under duress:

Then our liberty comes, for our peace, We believe it firmly, the hour, When you retaliate and exact with high price Every wrong and each wound. And as replacement the holy city, which is enough, We shall be allowed to rebuild;
Simón Péchi

After András Eössi died, the leadership of the movement passed to his heir Simon Péchi. Eössi had originally hired the brilliant young Simon Péchi to tutor his three sons. After the death of his sons, Eössi adopted Péchi as an heir. He sent Péchi abroad to study. Péchi became adept in twelve languages, including Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. He returned to Transylvania as an accomplished statesman and diplomat. After inheriting the wealth of Eössi, Péchi served as Secretary of State in the Government of Prince Bethlen. All this while he was a secret Sabbatarian studying Judaism. In 1621 Péchi fell out of favor with the prince, who removed him from office. Worse yet, the prince had him arrested and imprisoned in a dungeon, fettered in chains. While imprisoned, Péchi turned his attention to matters of faith and committed himself to the study of the Scriptures.

Three and a half years later, Péchi emerged from prison committed to the advancement of the illegal Sabbatarian faith. He acquired a library of Judaica and began translating it into Hungarian. He established a network of secret copyists, who carefully hand transcribed his translations, prayer books and books one at a time. Péchi produced more than 5,000 pages of theological writings. He translated Talmudic literature while producing copious commentaries on the Scriptures. In addition, he authored scores of new songs, hymns and liturgies for the Sabbatarians. Under Péchi’s leadership, the underground movement flourished. Péchi, however, seemed intent on minimizing the role of Yeshua within the Sabbatarian literature he produced. Building on the already deficient Unitarian Christology, Péchi introduced a general drift away from Yeshua-centeredness and toward mainstream Judaism. Péchi’s own convictions about Messiah are somewhat uncertain. He continued to use the New Testament and interpret observances in light of Yeshua. Whether intentionally or not, though, he laid the groundwork for a complete and final theological abandonment of Yeshua by diminishing His role in faith, practice, liturgy and interpretation.

Despite his “Judaization” of the Sabbatarian movement, Péchi did not consider conversion to Judaism an option for the Székely. If conversion had been his goal, he himself could have undergone the ceremony. Instead, through his liturgical formulations, he encouraged the Sabbatarians to continue to regard themselves as Gentiles. Whenever the conventional Jewish liturgy spoke in ethnic or exclusive terms, Péchi altered the language to a form more appropriate for Gentiles. All of the hymns and liturgies concluded with thanks to God for having brought them into truth and the practice of Torah by grafting them, the wild branches, into the ancient, holy tree of His people.

Transylvanian Inquisition

By the third decade of the seventeenth century, there may have been between 15,000 and 20,000 Sabbatarians, secretly or openly, living out their convictions in Transylvania. If these numbers are correct, Sabbatarianism, though illegal, was the fourth-largest religion in the country. The Christian clergy appealed to the new prince to do something about the problem, so in 1635, Prince György Rákóczi reinforced the old laws requiring Sabbatarians to renounce their faith and enter one of the four accepted state religions.

Three years later, Rákóczi instigated a sort of inquisition in which suspected Sabbatarians were arrested and tried in court. By means of informants, testimony, cross-examination and coerced confession, the court sought to identify practicing Sabbath-keepers. In the court trials, the first question the authorities posed to witnesses was, “Do you know those who do not eat pork, crabs, eels, scaleless turbots and gudgeons?” Anyone proven to have abstained from work on Sabbath and festivals, to have eaten matzah at Passover, to have abstained from unclean meats, from infant baptism, from holy communion, or to have avoided church were “each and every one condemned to the loss of their life and property.” The death penalty was usually reduced to prison sentence, but not always. The court sentenced more than one thousand men to prison. “There was hardly chaining enough to forge chains for them,” a contemporary chronicler wrote.

Among the condemned, those who were alleged to speak blasphemy against “Jesus” were treated the most severely. For those imprisoned, the only way they could ever be released was to consent to convert to one of the established churches. Even the renowned Simon Péchi eventually acquiesced. After imprisonment and confiscation of property, he and his family entered the Reformed church.

Rákóczi was a Calvinist himself. He sent out a commission to all the outlying villages where Sabbatarianism was rooted, to press the locals to convert to the Reformed Church. The Sabbatarians disappeared, seemingly forever. In 1645, the Reformed Church bishop Stephan Katona declared, “There is not one of the Sabbatarians now in the whole country left, unless they still keep themselves concealed in secret somewhere.”

Then we shall never have to tremble again
Before the executioner and hangman.
(Old Sabbatarian Hymnal)
By the third decade of the seventeenth century, there may have been between 15,000 and 20,000 Sabbatarians, secretly or openly living out their convictions in Transylvania.

**Concealed in Secret**

In actual fact, they were concealed in secret within the Reformed, Lutheran, Unitarian and even Catholic churches. Over the next century, the government and clergy made repeated attempts to flush them out. In one aggressive program to end the sect, the Catholic clergy stationed monks in the homes of everyone they suspected of practicing Sabbatarianism. Occasionally the persecutions were fierce, involving house to house searches and inquisition-styled trials. Hosts of Sabbatarians emigrated to other countries where they joined Jewish communities. Wave after wave of Transylvanian Sabbatarians fled to Turkey. Those who remained often lost their property to the state. The Sabbatarian faith became a religion of poor villagers and peasants.

For the next two centuries, the sect continued clandestinely. Unable to hold public Sabbath services, the Sabbatarians were forced to meet in their own homes. Their homes became houses of worship and study. They often built small chambers into their homes where they kept their prayer books and hymnals and held family services. “To each of their houses a hidden chamber was added, facing east and separated by a curtain. This is the prayer sanctuary,” one traveler observed. On the festival days they congregated in the woods, caves and the mountains so that they could keep the feast days collectively. Like the home-schoolers of today’s Jewish Roots movement, they removed their children from the church schools and taught them at home.

The community leaders had the custom of never shaving their beards. This practice, however, made them easily identifiable to the authorities. To avoid detection, the community rotated the leadership every six weeks...

...so that one is not long enough in the office for the unshaved beard to be recognized and thus betray to the Christians who the clergyman and butcher of the Sabbatarians was.  

Whenever they were invited to dinner by a Christian family, they feared being betrayed by their refusal to eat swine. They would usually give some excuse or another for why they were not able to attend, or find themselves protesting that they were allergic to pig and rabbit.

In order to remain inconspicuous, Sabbatarians attended church. When they did so, they endeavored to avoid participating in objectionable practices. Crucifixes, rosaries and icons they carried only when forced to do so in church. At home they would never touch them. When a Sabbatarian died, the community performed the funeral service in secret and only then sent for the local clergyman to perform last rites.

Every now and then they handed over to the clergyman an empty coffin or one filled with stones for the funeral, saying that the coffin had to be nailed because of the intolerable smell of the corpse.

They refused to marry outside their faith. Sabbatarians married only Sabbatarians. If it ever happened that a Sabbatarian took a Christian wife, the woman had to first convert to Sabbatarianism and then take a solemn oath to keep the religious practice of the house secret. When two Sabbatarians married, they would allow the Christian church that they attended outwardly to perform the wedding, but they then sought out their secret rabbi to officiate over their genuine vows.

Because the men were often arrested, the Sabbatarian women were the enduring strength of the movement, and they outnumbered the men. They zealously maintained the traditions and practices of Torah in the family and handed them on to the children. They were responsible for keeping the kitchen kosher. In fact, the Sabbatarian preference for goose fat, instead of pork lard, was often the telltale sign in pantry that revealed the family’s faith. In order to avoid profaning the Sabbath, Sabbatarian women employed as maids sometimes pretended to get sick on Friday nights and remain bedridden all day Saturday. Miraculously, they suddenly recovered on Saturday night.

It sometimes happened that a woman became Sabbatarian without her husband’s consent. The story is told of a woman named Judith, the wife of a local governor. Every time she gave birth to a child, her husband sought to have the baby baptized, but Judith would not hear of it. Each time, her husband had to steal the baby and have it baptized behind her back. Judith insisted on bringing the children up as Sabbatarians, and when she found her daughter eating crab legs once, she had the girl flogged! The flogging apparently worked. Her daughter grew up to be an ardent Sabbatarian.

**Curses of the Sabbatarians**

One time a family suspected of being Sabbath-keepers was summoned to appear before the court of law. The judge asked the family why they did not work their fields on the Sabbath. They replied that their fields were repeatedly destroyed by hail when they worked them on Saturdays, and therefore they vowed not to work the fields on Saturdays, in order to avert the curse. The judges were not convinced. They said to the accused Sabbatarians, “Come to dinner tonight and we will discuss it further.” The officials planned to serve pork and unclean foods, in order to expose their guests as Torah observant. The wary Sabbatarians suspected the trick and sent two non-Sabbatarians to the meal in their stead. The court officials never noticed the swap. The non-Sabbatarians ate everything set before them, and the real Sabbatarians escaped conviction.

Nevertheless, the Sabbatarians did not escape notice, and their history is a four-hundred-year chronicle of constant harassment and outright persecution by both state and church. In the early nineteenth century, a small Sabbatarian community was discovered in the midst of a Sabbath service. They were condemned in court, and their properties were ordered forfeit. Before their property could be seized, they went home and on the very next Sunday, they spent the entire day performing the hardest of farm labor, thereby publicly defying the Christian Sabbath. That night, they loaded their most valuable belongings on wagons and fled to Turkey.

In keeping with the broader context of peasant Europe in general and Transylvanian Székely society in particular, the Sabbatar-
ans were, as a rule, very superstitious. Among their idiosyncrasies, they were careful never to throw trash toward the east because that is the direction of Jerusalem. They fasted on Wednesdays to break the power of evil spirits. If a cow couldn’t be milked, they suspected that someone had sinned. Ghost stories abounded. Moreover, the Sabbatarians were renowned for the power of their curses.

In the early nineteenth century, the dreaded Catholic clergyman, Alexander Czinczéri, used to force suspected Sabbatarians to work on Saturdays. On Sundays, he sent henchman to go from house to house and drag the suspected Sabbatarians to mass, where he forced them to make the sign of the cross throughout the entire service. When he could prove a person to be a Sabbath-keeper, he had the person inhumanely punished. Ordinarily, the Sabbatarians tried to pray for their enemies and persecutors as Messiah instructed, but in the case of Alexander, some Sabbatarians laid a terrible curse on him. “May he be unable to die, let worms eat him alive.” It came to pass that as Czinczéri was preaching violently against the “Judaizers” he was overcome by a sudden agonizing attack. He did not die, but lived on suffering in agony. After enduring the agony for some time, he called for the Sabbatarian rabbi to come to his bedside. He begged his pardon and he was actually going through the painful travail of giving birth to a calf. He dreamed that the curse was being fulfilled and he had given birth to a calf. To conceal the matter he had given birth to a calf. To conceal the matter, he carried the calf outside and threw it into an open well. The next morning, as his wife searched in vain for the new-born calf, Miklósi took her aside and said confidentially, “Wife, the curse of the Sabbatarians has overtaken me. I bore a calf in the night and in order to hide my shame, I threw it in the well.”

Greatly amused at her husband’s folly, Mrs. Miklósi told the tale all around the village. The villagers teased Miklósi so mercilessly about the matter that he had to give up his office and leave public society. They say he spent the remainder of his days lonely and joyless.

**Bözödujfalú**

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Sabbatarians continued to hide out in the midst of the Christian community. Their numbers grew progressively smaller. The largest concentration of Sabbatarians to survive into the nineteenth century, were centered in and around Bözödujfalú, a nearly inaccessible village tucked away in a valley surrounded by steep mountains, near the Romanian border. The Sabbatarians constituted a fourth of the local population.

For the few remaining Sabbatarians scattered through Transylvania, Bözödujfalú became a pilgrimage center during the annual High Holidays. In addition to the fall festivals, there may have been another factor drawing the Sabbatarians to come to Bözödujfalú. Since Sabbatarians did not marry outside of their sect, the dwindling numbers made finding a mate very difficult. The beauty of the daughters of the Bözödujfalú was legendary. “Beautiful as the women of Bözöd,” a Székely proverb said.

The Sabbatarian daughters of Bözödujfalú were available for marriage only to other Sabbatarians, or occasionally to members of neighboring Jewish communities if any eligible Jewish bachelors were available. Such marriages did take place, but no Jewish bride ever married a Sabbatarian. The neighboring Jews discounted the Sabbatarians as “bats.” Just as a bat is neither a bird nor a mouse, but something in between, so too, the Sabbatarians were neither Jew nor Christian.

On December 22, 1867, the Hungarian House of Lords proclaimed the emancipation of the Jews, officially and legally recognizing the Jewish religion. Now under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Jewish people of Transylvania were allowed full citizenship in the empire. Against all odds and after 230 years of hiding, the Sabbatarians stepped forward from each of the four accepted Christian religions and asked to be recognized for legal purposes as Jewish. As Jews they could enjoy state protection. Most of the Sabbatarians quickly melded into the emerging Jewish communities throughout the empire.

Several families in Bözödujfalú, under...
The Sabbatarian communities never recovered after World War II. They faded into greater Judaism and disappeared from history. A few aging Sabbatarians remained at Bözödujfalú and carried on their traditions.

Some did. Those that acquiesced and re-converted were forced to burn the Bözödujfalú synagogue to the ground. In the end, they were still rounded up for the ghetto along with those who refused to recant. Transylvanian Sabbatarians and Jews found themselves together in the brick factory of Marosvásárhely. As the deportations to Auschwitz began, the local priest of Bözödujfalú, Father Ráduly, began an urgent rescue mission. Forging documents, baptismal certificates and other records, he began rescuing Sabbatarians from the Gestapo at Marosvásárhely. He came to be known as the “priest of the Jews.” In the 1930s he had been a boxer, and even as a priest, he retained the fighting posture. He was known to baptize Jews and Sabbatarians without their consent, simply so that he could fill out baptismal certificates in good conscience.

Local anecdote tells of one occasion when he presented papers to the SS guards at the camp petitioning for the release of several Jews and Sabbatarians. The SS guard, with gun in hand, tried to dismiss the priest. Ráduly grabbed the SS officer's hand and gun and pointed the weapon at his own head saying, “Either shoot me or let these

During the World Wars

World War I changed the lives of all Hungarians, transforming them into an oppressed minority under Romanian rule. When the Nazis' Jewish deportation orders came during World War II, the Sabbatarians were included. They were told that if they would renounce their faith and return to one of the recognized churches they would be spared.

The remains of the Catholic church at the flooded village of Bözödujfalú (Bezidu Nou)
Most importantly, the story of the Transylvanian Sabbatarians reminds us that we are not alone on the journey of Torah. There have been others before us and will be others yet after us “who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Yeshua.”

Lessons for Today

The modern Jewish Roots movement can learn a great deal from the long, sad story of the Sabbatarians of Transylvania. The Sabbatarians were able to hold on to their identity, despite fierce persecution, for almost four centuries. Generations of church persecution were unable to extinguish the flame of Sabbatarian faith, but a few generations of conversion into Judaism managed to snuff them out of existence.

We should learn from them the danger of a weak Christology that will make us vulnerable to conversion, assimilation into greater Judaism and extinction. If we are not deliberate in defining our identity squarely in Yeshua, we face the same danger. Even if we do not disappear into the mainstream of Jewry, perhaps our children will. We need to impart to them the centrality of Yeshua.

Similarly, the Sabbatarian legacy demonstrates the ability to maintain faith-continuity even while within denominational Christianity. If we were in such a situation, would we have the resolve to stay faithful, or would the pull of the mainstream slowly erode our commitment?

The story of the Sabbatarians should make us wonder about our own convictions. Are our convictions deep enough to identify ourselves with the Jewish people even if it means facing persecution from the rest of Christianity? Theirs were. Are our convictions deep enough to sustain us and our descendents for generations despite all adversity? Theirs were. Maybe their story should make us ask ourselves, “Do we really want to get involved in this Torah thing?”

Think about it carefully. It means changing everything. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the company you keep, the day you worship, the holidays you celebrate, your family, your faith, your fellowship—everything. There is not an aspect of life Yeshua does not make a demand upon and that the Torah does not in some way touch. And what is more, the journey of Torah has been known to make unscheduled stops at unpleasant places—Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenvald and Treblinka, to name a few. If you decide to take this path, though, you can do so knowing that others like yourself have walked this way before.

Endnotes

3 Kohn, 158.
4 Kohn, 106.
5 Separation of meat and dairy by the Sabbatarians is unlikely in their early years, but in later generations they did so.
6 Kohn, 79.
7 Gellérd quoting Mor Jokai’s novel Egy az Isten [God is One].
8 Kohn, 105.
9 Kohn, 88.
10 Kohn, 91.
11 Kohn, 173. See Romans 11.
12 Kohn, 173.
13 Kohn, 167.
14 Gellérd.
15 Kohn, 187.
16 Kohn, 201.
17 Gellérd quoting Mor Jokai Egy az Isten [God is One].
18 Kohn, 222.
19 Kohn, 223.
20 Kohn, 208.
21 Kohn, 207–208.
22 Kohn, 228; Gellérd.
23 Kohn, 213.
24 Kohn, 214.
25 Kohn, 229.
27 Gellérd.
28 Gellérd.
30 Gellérd.
31 Gellérd.
32 Mark Nauth, unpublished interview with Hungarian Unitarians.
33 Gellérd.