

Chapter Fourteen

Elias comes as a dinner guest, the Angel Uriel announces the coming of the Jewish Messiah, and other great miraculous signs occur

I learned to write the above-mentioned words of Isaiah at the end of Chapter 60, "Oeni Adonai Bocitto Ochysche," in which the Jews finally place all their faith, in Hebrew letters so beautifully and elegantly that the two scribes of Solomon, the sons of Shisha, Elihoreph, and Ahia themselves (Kings I, 4:3), could not have done it better. Afterwards I got several sheets of virgin parchment; this I dyed red, yellow, blue, and green, and treated it to make it quite as transparent as glass, so that one could not recognize what sort of material it was, whether it was horn, isinglass, or a talcous substance from which the Muscovites make their windows. This heavenly paper I cut into several hundred little bitty pieces and wrote the above Hebrew words on each of them with golden letters; and after I had also had an alb (that is, a long white robe which Catholic priests use for their church service) made for me of snow-white Dutch linen and a vest to go over it, like an ephod (Exodus 28:4f.), from a multicolored golden piece of cloth, and especially since I not only found myself to have been sufficiently informed by Erasmus about what I needed to know, but had also made and decided upon my plan of how I wished to go about the affair, then I had two blowpipes shafted onto each other and with them blew all my written-on slips of parchment through a broken window into the Jews' school, and indeed on precisely the day on which they were heard chanting with joyous voices the "golden ape" (Leviticus 26). With what reverence, what respect, and what wonderment and inner joy of heart, however, these slips were picked up and

read by the Jews cannot be put into words. One might get some idea of it when one saw how they trembled with joy, when they read them, when one communicated such a little slip to another, or even gave it to him as a present. It seemed as if each one had in his breast a lute of his own which was making him happy, for each was without any doubt convinced that this was a certain, infallible sign from heaven that now the misery and Diaspora they had hitherto suffered should have an end, and by contrast, their paradisaical life in the promised land under their Messiah, who was indubitably already at the door, should begin. Several days in a row I sneaked around invisibly in diverse Jews' houses and saw with wonderment what joy and certain hope those slips had given the superstitious, silly, and deluded folk, how for that reason they indulged in arranged feasts and holiday luxury, and sent some of those slips through the post to Poland, to Italy, to Germany, yea even to Asia, as joyful tidings of their certain deliverance.

The pious Jews have the custom of now and again setting a table for the prophet Elias in their houses, of filling it with poor folk they invite, and of leaving the place of honor free and empty for the afore-mentioned prophet Elias, firmly believing that he is present, although invisibly, so that he may then himself, together with the others, also eat and drink, etc. This custom the Jews now practiced much more than before, because they believed Elias would appear before or at least together with the Messiah. Now since this step had turned out so well for me and I happened to be in Eliezar's house in order to feast my eyes on Esther's beauteous countenance when he gave such a meal, I made so bold as to sit down in Elias' place at the table, and like the other guests fell to so boldly that everyone present, and Eliezar himself, who at the time was personally presiding over the table, was able to see in what measure the food wandered from the serving bowls onto my plate and little by little disappeared

from it, how my portion of bread decreased and the wine glasses were emptied, all of which was observed with the utmost wonderment and was re- and perceived by Eliezar with even greater joy and satisfaction, so that he poured for me not only common French and German, but even Spanish and Canary wine.

Now when I succeeded so well in this trick in this manner, I became so cheeky and bold that I betook myself not only to Elias' banquets in other rich Jews' houses but even appeared at circumcisions in Elias' place, which great and heretofore, as it were, unheard of miracles soon resounded among all the Jews there and elsewhere in the vicinity, so that I was well able to think that it was now time to proceed to my projected work and to put my plan into effect completely, and without delay.

I had a turner make me an instrument just like a singing top with which little boys amuse themselves, save that the pin or foot was hollowed-out like a pipe, and instead of the square singing-hole in the side I had a round hole which I could screw open and shut; this I filled inside with cotton moistened with the most precious Indian balsam and liquid amber and thoroughly mixed with musk, amber, civet and the most costly aromas of flowers, herbs, roots, gums, and fruits, so when I unscrewed the hole on the head of this instrument and below at the foot and blew through it, I was able to fill any room in an instant with the most lovely aroma a human being ever smelled. This musk-box I took, together with my invisibility, after I had first clad myself in my alb and golden ephod, and had adorned myself in a golden-yellow curly periwig worth 100 thalers and on top a green wreath with jewels on it, and had also painted my face with pleasant colors, and thus decked out I went toward evening to Eliezar's domicile; indeed, I even hid myself in his bedroom (which, perhaps because of the anticipated arrival of Elias and the Messiah he had adorned with tapestries and precious hangings around his bed in the

most ostentatious way and had provided with a wax candle which burned throughout the night), awaiting with greatest desire till he would go to bed and be in the first stages of sleep.

Now when I attained this desired time, I stepped forth, visibly, in my unusual habit, in my strange peculiar form and borrowed beauty, walked up to Eliezar's bed, and quite neatly waked him from his sleep. "Eliezar," said I, "let your heart not be affrighted and let your spirit be far removed from all needless fear: for, look you, I am the angel Uriel, who stands before the visage of God, dispatched by the King of Kings and His prophet Elias, whom you have served with fear and trembling all your days, to bring you the most joyous message of the salvation of the chosen people of Israel for which the house of Jacob has been sighing for so long a time; for you are the offshoot of the branch of the root of Jesse of Judah, from whose blood is to be born the Moshiach, the holy savior and leader of his people back from the Diaspora and into the promised land, wherein milk and honey flow." When I thereupon paused a little, and he had recovered a little and wiped the sleep from his eyes, he said: "For the Lord all things are possible, to be sure, but how will this be able to happen, for my Sara has grown old and unfit to bear children?" I answered: "It is the will of the Lord and has been ordained by Him that the Messiah be born not of you and of your Sara but of your daughter Esther and of the prophet Elias, who shall get her with child. Look you, God for that reason has so endowed her with virtues, piety, and rare beauty, so that she may be worthy to be the wife of such a great holy and wondrous prophet and at the same time also the mother of your so long awaited Moschiach. Elias has preserved for Moschiach the seed of David from that same king's time down to the present in order to impart it to your daughter Esther on the third day of the month of Elul (that is, September), that begins today; on this day he shall come, invisible as is his wont, to her bed chamber and perform

the task for which the house of Jacob has been longing for so many hundreds of years; and thus it is that it is written, Elias will appear before Moschiach. Therefore see to it and keep in mind that your daughter behave willingly towards him; you yourself, however, for as long as he stays with her will surely be able to entertain him as is fitting for such a holy prophet, particularly since you have already entertained him many times among the poor folk. From this you shall have this reward and delight, namely that straightway after the birth of her Messiah, your grandson, you shall be rejuvenated like the phoenix or eagle, shall afterwards live without want or illness in the Promised Land longer by far than the 930th year, shall be made by Moschiach a great prince of your people, and shall live to see with joy the demise and ruin of all your and the people of Israel's enemies, but also the eminence of yourself and your family."

Eliezar was rather curious and inquisitive, and therefore also wanted to know some particulars about how the occupation of the Promised Land might occur, and so I was obliged to spin some more lies for him in all haste, were I not to lose my credit with him, and in fact those things which he wished to hear and which are wished for by all Jews; therefore I told him that these would begin in this country, wherein the Moschiach was born, a war which would infect and spread over the entire world; France would make war against Holland; The Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and Holland against France, Sweden, and Denmark; The Poles against the Turks; the Turk against the Persians; the Muscovite against the Tatars, and *in summa* every people against the other, and in the entire world, and would so fatigue, emaciate, and exhaust themselves, whereby diseases and famine, war's cohorts, would faithfully resist, that the people of Israel, who would meanwhile multiply enormously and would be blessed and preserved by God, would be able to vanquish them quite easily, and in fact without, as it were, even drawing a sword, and make them

slaves, with the result that they would take away from the peoples of the whole world their best holdings and goods which were *mobilia*, such as their household furnishings, their goods for sale, and the like, and would have them taken with them to the Promised Land. Thereupon I concluded my exaggerations and told Eliezar that it was not fitting that he know for the present any more of this; he, however, answered: "The Lord's will be done in elevating Israel, and your words be confirmed over His people."

Here upon I again made myself invisible in an instant, blew my *poma d'amber* toward Eliezar, and thereby made such a strong and lovely odor in the whole room that the poor wretch in his joy thought that he was already halfway to Paradise. And this was really the seal which confirmed the lies I had told as truth; for since Eliezar may perchance have heard or read that evil spirits leave behind them after they appear a foul stench, so he believed certainly and firmly that by contrast good angels depart leaving behind an odor of Paradise, and therefore I could not be an angel of evil or a false apparition, but rather I must needs be a good spirit, particularly since my announcement agreed so well with the slips of paper recently found in the synagogue. What heartfelt joy he felt at this cannot be expressed, and, in fact, why not? He saw himself a grandfather of the Messiah, and next to Him he was, in his imagination, already the greatest prince in the world; he had been assured of a thousand years of life, which he thought to spend without all hardship, as if in the Land of Cocaigne, and according to Him he would most assuredly enter into Paradise anyway and without any difficulty, and not like a cow trying to go through a mouse-hole. He could not wait till it was day to proclaim these joyous tidings to his daughter—she must know that very night what the angel Uriel (I very nearly said "her lover Master Urian") had spoken with him; she too received the pleasant message with the greatest joy, and let the truth of it be confirmed for her by the lovely

odor which she smelled in her father's bedchamber, and which, for her, I made far more than doubly strong.

Now here every right-thinking Christian should consider with what danger to my soul my carnal lusts had brought me, or, to put it better, onto what a direct path to certain damnation Satan himself had led me, Satan, who, from that day on when I first availed myself of his help through a necromancer, had without doubt obtained greater power over me than he had hitherto had, since at that time he, from becoming my acquaintance and because of services performed for me, had obtained a claim and hold over me of which I should otherwise have surely been free and clear, because of which claim and hold he then was able to incite and drive me on all the more mightily to sins and the most heinous vices. It seems, to be sure, only an amusement and a clever jest that I so masterfully cheated not only the proud Jews and archenemy of both the entire Christian folk as well as our Lord Christ and His churches, but also the proud Jew's daughter of her virginity. But alas, no! my upright, pious Christian soul, there is far more indefensible to it than can be seen at first glance; for firstly, I was imitating the devil himself, who disguises himself as an angel of light in order to deceive mankind. In the shape of this angel I lied not only by the holy prophet Elias, to whom I imputed, in heretical manner and fashion, most heinous crimes, which he could commit, but also by just and faithful God himself. With these terrible and blasphemous lies I strengthened, as much as I was able to, the wretched and blind Jews in the pitiable error of their ways, made more stubborn and obdurate those very Jews, whom God Himself, after all, entices to conversion, offers paternally His mercy, and, if they convert to Christianity, more than willingly and gladly takes into the bosom of His church so that they, together with all chosen ones, may possess eternal blessedness. I, however, with my lies and the false hope I raised, so provided them with arms and

armor that at that time, even if an extraordinary ray of divine grace had struck them for their illumination, it would nevertheless have been able to cling to them not at all or at best with great difficulty. I made worse and more wicked the very people on whose conversion I should rightly have been intent. "But woe to the man by whom temptation comes!" says the Savior (Matt 18:7), and all this I did to an evil end, namely for the sake of vile and brief gratification of lust which separates the soul from God and places it in eternal death, in eternal damnation. But what was worst of all is that in so doing I offended my very highest good, my faithful God, thereby declared myself His enemy, and deprived myself of eternal life, killed my poor soul once more in the most terrible way, and put myself much closer to the left hand, to the side of the devil and his adherents than I had been heretofore. O, how often we wretched mortals err when we toady ourselves, make our own difficult fall from grace easy, hold it to be a slight defect, indeed not a sin at all, but meanwhile fail to perceive that we are deceiving ourselves and in this our own blandishments and blindness are sinking quite unnoticed with the most loathsome muck of the most terrible vices into hell's abyss.