Isaac Chayim haCohen Cantarini (Padua 1644-1723)

Rabbi Isaac Cantarini was born in Padua, Italy, in 1644. He was a rabbi, poet, writer and physician. He studied Talmud with Rabbi Salomon Marini, and Hebrew with the poet Moses Catalano. His instructor in the secular studies was Bernardo de Laurentius. Cantarini received his diploma as physician in 1664 from the University of Padua–which unlike other universities in Europe, was open to Jews. He practiced medicine in Padua for the rest of his life.

As a Rabbi, he very often preached in the Synagogue of Padua. His sermons were frequently attended by Christians, the number of these on one occasion was so great that the Jews had to find seats in the women's gallery (the Jews, as usual, might have arrived to the lecture later than the gentiles .

He also taught in the Yeshivah of Padua, and officiated as cantor, especially on Yom Kippur. His last name Cantarini, in Hebrew □□□□□□□□□□□□ – seems to indicate that he was coming from a family of 'cantors'. As he had a thorough knowledge of the Talmud, his decisions were often sought in Halakhic cases. Among his many students were two very famous Rabbis: Moses Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal, *Mesilat Yesharim*) and Rabbi Isaac Lampronti (see **here**).

Rabbi Cantarini wrote many books and poems in Hebrew, Italian and Latin. His most famous work is called Pachad Ytzchaq, a description of the attack against the Jewish ghetto of Padua by the Christian populace on August 20, 1684, where Jews were accused of having sided with the Turkish enemy and murdered Christian prisoners-of-war in Budapest. Fortunately, the garrison commander of Padua was able to repel the attackers but the incident made a strong and lasting impact in Rabbi Cantarini.

√ You can find Rabbi Isaac Cantarini book Pachad Ytzchaq **here**

The tragic story of the attack on the ghetto is written in a

beautiful Biblical poetic style, which those familiar with the Tanakh might fully appreciate. His book also contains many documents of the governments of Padua and Venice, translated and quoted in Hebrew. His book reports a detailed account of all the incidents, in most of which Rabbi Cantarini himself had taken part.

√ There is also a seven pages article published in 1960 by Harry A. Savitz in "Jewish Forum" *Doctor Isaak Hayyim Ha-Kohen Cantarini: Physician, poet, rabbi, preacher, and teacher (*1644-1723).