



Arrival of mystics in Safed: Added note

1. Daniel 12:12-13

אֲשֶׁרִי הַמְּחַכָּה וְיָגִיעַ לְיָמִים אֶלֶף שָׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שְׁלֹשִׁים וְתַמְשָׁה: וְאַתָּה לֵךְ לְקֶזֶז וְתִגְוֹם וְתַעֲמֵד לְגִלְדֵךְ לְקֶזֶז הַיָּמִין:

Fortunate is the one who will wait and reach the days, 1335. And you, go to the end and you will rest, and you will rise for your lot at the end of days.

2. Zohar to Parshat Shemot, pg. 7b

At that time, the king, Mashiach will awaken, to leave the Garden of Eden, from that place which is called "the bird's nest", and he will awaken in he land of the Galilee...

Rabbi Karo as Legal Authority (continued)

3. Rabbi Yosef Karo, Introduction to Kesef Mishneh

I saw that Moshe, the great luminary, son of Maimon z"l explained this Torah, "Torah was commanded to us by Moshe, an inheritance", and he composed his great 14-part composition on all of the Torah's laws, its general principles, its specifics, its fine points. And who is like him, to teach in brief language and purity, like the language of the mishnah. And generations who came after him, their hands were too limited to understand from his words and to descend to the depth of his pure statements, which were refined sevenfold. The source of each law was also lost upon them... And as Rabbeinu Asher wrote in a responsum (31:9), "All who give practical rulings from the words of our master, Moshe son of Maimon, without being expert in Mishnah and Gemara to know the source of his words, will make mistakes, permitting the prohibited and prohibiting the permitted... For all who read it think they understand it, and it is not so..."

4. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Sanhedrin 4:11

It appears to me that if all of the Sages in Israel would agree to appoint judges and ordain them, they would be ordained.

5. Zohar, Parshat Vayakhel pg. 207b

The sanctity of Friday night is the sanctity of Shabbat of Bereishit, which was sanctified from 32 paths [of *binah*] and three levels of the sacred apples. And for that sanctity we must state the deeds of Bereishit.

6. Zohar, Parshat Emor 105a

When a person produces a holy declaration from his mouth, a declaration of Torah, a voice is produced from it, and it ascends above and arouses the holy ones of the Highest King, and it is crowned, and it causes great joy in realms above and below.

7. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 10:3

What is the appropriate love for Gd? To love Gd greatly, excessively, powerfully, to the point that his soul is tied to love of Gd, and he is perpetually lost in it, like an ill person who is ill from love, whose mind is never free of that woman, and he is perpetually lost in it, whether sitting or rising or eating or drinking. Beyond this should be the love of Gd... as Gd instructed us (Deuteronomy 6:5), "with all your heart, and with all your soul." ...

Rabbi Yosef Karo as a Mystic

8. Rabbi Dr. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* pp. 13-15

The student of mysticism needs no special proof that maggidism and similar phenomena (mentor angels, guiding spirits, voices, &c.) exist and that in certain periods and in certain groups their manifestations can be fairly frequent and typical, not to say epidemic...

The many testimonies and reports about *maggidim* and similar phenomena should not be underestimated. In spite of modern attempts – in diverse quarters – to boost the purely ‘spiritual’ side of mysticism... it becomes increasingly clear that the history of mysticism does not necessarily justify the fashionable tendencies among writers on mysticism... As far as Karo’s Maggid goes we have solid contemporary evidence. The slightly deprecatory remark in Vital’s *Sha’ar haGilgulim* that the Maggid had misled Karo in the matter of the former incarnations of his son’s soul at any rate confirms that Karo’s Maggid was taken for granted at the time in Safed...

9. Maggid Meisharim, Shevach haRav

Gd is with you, etc. Only, adhere to Me, and to awe of Me, and do not separate your thoughts from My Mishnah, even for a moment. I have made you a leader of My people, etc. Have I not instructed you not to separate your thoughts, even for a moment, from My awe and My Mishnah, and do not eat and drink in the manner of pleasure at all, for what benefit is there in your pleasure in this world? Your thoughts should only be that if the soul could survive in the body without any benefit, you would want this very much. Thus you will always adhere to Hashem, and you will merit to have miracles performed via you...

10. Rabbi Dr. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* pg. 123

The hope of living again the full life of *Torah*, with all that this implied in terms of the new kabbalistic mysticism, gave a very precise meaning to the prophetic promise (Isaiah 1:26), “I will restore thy judges as at first... *afterwards* thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city’. The prophecy clearly meant the restoration of organization, and ordination itself was now seen in an eschatological perspective...

11. Maggid Meisharim, Acharei Mot

Be strong and courageous in your Torah, as you do with Torah, Mishnah, Gemara, Rashi, Tosafot, rulings and mysticism, for you join them with each other...

12. Maggid Meisharim, Mussar

I ate only a little, and so I did in drinking, and I studied mishnah at the start of the night, and I slept until the light of day, and I woke and the sun was shining over the land, and I was greatly pained, saying, “How did I not rise while it was still night, so that the speech would come to me as usual!” Still, I began to review mishnah, and I read five chapters, and while I was reading mishnah a voice, my beloved knocked within my mouth, making music on its own, and it spoke: Gd is with you wherever you go, and all that you have done and will do, Gd makes you succeed. Only, adhere to Me, and to My awe and My Torah and My Mishnah always – and not as you did this night. For even though you have sanctified yourself with your food and drink, still, you have slept the sleep of the lazy... But in the merit of the six orders of the mishnah that you know by heart, and in the merit of those self-denials and afflictions you performed in the preceding days, and even now you adhere to them, they have agreed in the Heavenly academy that I may return to speak with you as at first...

13. Maggid Meisharim, Vayikra, Mahadura Kama

And because you devoted your spirit to returning the crown of ordination to its ancient standing, you will merit to be ordained by all of the sages of Israel and the sages of the Diaspora. Through you I will restore ordination to its ancient status, and I will give you the merit of completing your composition... And after that you will be burned to sanctify My Name, and you will dissipate like pure wool, etc., and you will merit the resurrection of the dead...

14. Maggid Meisharim, Toldot

And now I have come to reveal to you the secret of sanctity. You should know :that which My chosen one, Solomon said, that one should not respond Amen after “vikarev Meshicheih”, is not true; one must respond Amen five times...

Review Questions

- 1) Why was the 16th century ripe for the growth of Kabbalah?
- 2) Why did Jews come to Safed in the 16th century, as opposed to other parts of the Ottoman Empire?

- 3) What three major Jewish legal texts did Rabbi Yosef Karo author?
- 4) What were two major purposes of the attempt to re-start ordination?
- 5) What are three ways that the study of Jewish law can be mystical?
- 6) What did the Maggid want of Rabbi Yosef Karo?
- 7) Did Rabbi Karo incorporate mysticism into his legal writing?

Rabbi Yitzchak Luria: The Ari z"l

15. Kabbalah la'Am, **האר"י**, <http://www.kab.co.il/heb/content/view/frame/45128>

At the age of 35 he appeared in Safed, shrouded by mystery and splendor. In the span of just two and a half years, until his sudden death, he changed the face of history, birthing a powerful shift in the wisdom of Kabbalah, a shift which opened it to us, the nation.

16. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th century Israel), Pardes Rimonim, Gate 1

It is well-known regarding the number of *Sefirot*, all who are involved with this hidden knowledge have agreed as one that there are ten. There is no debate in this at all. This is one of the matters in which the covenant has been executed regarding knowledge of the *Sefirot*. And we have the *Book of Creation*, which is ascribed to our patriarch Avraham, and some ascribe it to Rabbi Akiva, and it is not decided. The words of this book are so deep, so lofty, and they are hidden from the eyes of the intellect of those who examine it. And even though there are many different explanations, still, we require explanation of all of its parts. Therefore, we will explain its words as much as we can, to the extent of our weak intellect...

17. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th century Israel), Tomer Devorah 1

Man is suited to resemble his Creator, and then he achieves the secret of the higher form, *tzelem* and *demut*. If he were to resemble [his Creator] physically, but not in his actions, he would be making the form into a lie. They would say of him, "This is a pleasant form, but ugly deeds." The essence of the higher *tzelem* and *demut* is in His actions, and of what good is it to be like the higher form, the form of His "limbs", and to not resemble his Creator in his actions?

18. Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (Chida, 18th century Italy/Israel), Shem haGedolim ♣ 332

And in his youth he recorded a *Shitah* on Tractate Zevachim in the compilation of his mentor, Rabbi Betzael... And through our great sins, it was burned in the fire in Izmir, with all of his books...

And it is already known that his students asked why he did not compose books of his great Kabbalistic knowledge. He replied that he could not, for wellsprings of knowledge would suddenly open for him, and he lacked the strength to write it. Even speaking was difficult, to find a narrow channel with which to speak to them.

His Mysticism

19. Rabbi Chaim Vital, Eitz haChaim, Anaf 1

Know that before the recipients received and the creations were created, there was higher light, simple, which filled all existence, and no space was empty... All was filled with that simple, infinite light. There was neither beginning nor end, but all was the simple light, all equal with total equality. This is what is called the Infinite Light.

And when it arose in His simple will to create the worlds and to give to the recipients, to bring to light the completeness of His deeds and His Names and His *kinnuyim*, which was the cause for creation of the worlds, as is explained to us... Then he restricted (*tzimtzem*) Himself at a centre point within Him, in the actual centre. And He restricted that light, and it was distanced to the sides all around that centre point. What remained was an open space, and air, and empty space, from that actual centre point...