

Medieval Israel Class #6: The Mystics: Tzfat's Golden Age

Timeline

1266 Mameluke ruler Baybars conquers Tzfat

1391 Massacres of Jews in Castile and Aragon

1453 Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire

1492 Jews expelled from Spain

1497 Forced conversion of Jews of Portugal

1517 Ottomans conquer Israel from the Mamlukes

1538 Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem

1837 Major earthquake destroys much of Tzfat

Tzfat People, Books and Songs

Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai 2nd century tanna (rabbi of the Mishnah), spiritual father of Jewish mysticism, (perhaps) author of the Zohar

Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488 Spain – 1575 Tzfat) Legal genius, author of several significant halakhic works, the most famous of which is the Shulchan Arukh .

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522 – 1570) Most important Kabbalist in Tzfat until the arrival of the ARI. (married to Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz's sister)

Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the "ARI" (1534 Jerusalem – 1572 Tzfat) Kabbalistic revolutionary who only lived in Tzfat for two years but transformed its spiritual landscape.

Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (1500 Greece - 1580 Tzfat) Mystic scholar who studied with Caro and Cordovero, in Tzfat he composed the famous Kabbalat Shabbat song "Lecha Dodi."

Rabbi Moshe Alsheich (1508 Adrianople - 1593 Tzfat) teacher and preacher, author of important commentaries on the Bible.

Rabbi Chaim Vital (1542-1620) Student of Cordovero and of Luria, main disseminator of the ARI's Torah

Rabbi Yaakov Berab (1474 Spain – 1546 Tzfat) Scholar and teacher who attempted to re-establish Rabbinic Semicha and the Sanhedrin. Opposed by Rabbi Levi Ibn Habib and the scholars of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yitzchak Abohav (Spain 14th century) Spanish rabbi who authored the ethical work Menorat HaMaor. The Abohav synagogue in Tzfat is connected to him.

Lecha Dodi by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (1500-1576)

Come, my friend, to meet the bride; let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath.

"Observe" and "Remember the Sabbath day," the only God caused us to hear in a single utterance: the Lord is One, and his name is One to his renown and his glory and his praise.

Come, etc.

Come, let us go to meet the Sabbath, for it is a well-spring of blessing; from the beginning, from of old it was ordained,—last in production, first in thought.

Come, etc.

O sanctuary of our King, O regal city, arise, go forth from thy overthrow; long enough hast thou dwelt in the valley of weeping; verily He will have compassion upon thee.

Come, etc.

Shake thyself from the dust, arise, put on the garments of thy glory, O my people! Through the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, draw Thou nigh unto my soul, redeem it.

Come, etc.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה

שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֶחָד
הַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמִּיחָד
ה' אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד
לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֲרַת וּלְתִהְלֵה

לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לָכֵן וְנִלְכֵה
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה
מֵרֵאשׁ מִקְדָּם גְּסוּכָה
סוּף מֵעֵשָׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תִּחְלֵה

מִקְדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מְלוּכָה
קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַהִפְכָּה
רַב לָךְ שַׁבָּת בְּעַמְּקֵי הַבְּכָא
וְהוּא יִחְמוֹל עֲלֶיךָ חֲמֵלָה

הַתְּנַעֲרִי מֵעֵפֶר קוֹמִי
 לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תַפְאֲרֶתְךָ עַמִּי
 עַל יַד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית הַלְחָמִי
 קִרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה

<p>כי מי יחמול עליך ירושלים (ירמיהו 15:5)</p>	<p>והוא יחמול עליך חמלה</p>
<p>התנערי מעפר קומי שבי ירושלים (ישעיהו 52:2)</p>	<p>התנערי מעפר קומי</p>
<p>לבשי בגדי תפארתך ירושלים (ישעיהו 52:1)</p>	<p>לבשי בגדי תפארתך עמי</p>
<p>עורי עורי לבשי עוזך ציון (ישעיהו 52:1)</p>	<p>עורי עורי שיר דברי</p>
<p>הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי קוֹמִי יְרוּשָׁלַם (ישעיהו 51:17)</p>	<p>התעוררי התעוררי כי בא אורך קומי אורי</p>