

# Mysticism, Mantras & Miracles: The Life and Legacy of the Ari Ha'Kadosh



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- I. Introduction
  - a. Arizal was seminal figure of Jewish mysticism
  - b. Gershom Scholem: "The Lurianic Kabbalah was the last religious movement in Judaism the influence of which became preponderant among all sections of Jewish people and in every country of the Diaspora, without exception."
- II. Biography
  - a. Where did his name Ari, come from?
  - b. Parents – Ashkenazi father, Sephardi mother
  - c. Born In Yerushalayim, move to Egypt, back to Yerushalayim and then Tzefat
  - d. Teachers
    - i. R' Betzael Ashkenazi – Shita Mekubetzes
    - ii. R' Dovid ibn Zimra – Radvaz
  - e. Married
    - i. At 15 married a cousin, tried business and stayed in learning
  - f. Kabbalah
    - i. At 17, discovered manuscript of Zohar and began to meditate in solitude.
  - g. Israel
    - i. In 1570 arrived in Israel, went to Yerushalayim but no Kabbalah so continued to Tzefat
    - ii. Joined chabura of Kabbalists studying with R' Moshe Cordovero
    - iii. Later introduced to Rav Chaim Vital who became primary student
  - h. Death
    - i. Died on 5 Av 5332, July 15 1572 barely two years after arrival
  - i. Works
    - i. He left commentary on Zevachim and some zemiros
    - ii. R' Chaim Vital recorded classes in Etz Chaim, Pri Etz Chaim and Shemona She'arim
- III. Lurianic Kabbalah
  - a. Emphasis on galus and geula
  - b. Historical context
  - c. Kavanos
  - d. Yichudim
- IV. Nusach Ari
  - a. Ari didn't leave a siddur but had made innovations
  - b. Tradition of Ari creating a 13<sup>th</sup> gate
  - c. In the 18<sup>th</sup> c., the Alter Rebbe created a Nusach Ari Siddur
- V. Influence on Halacha and our Practices
  - a. Kabbalas Shabbos
  - b. V'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho
  - c. Tzitzis under clothing
  - d. Seder plate
  - e. Interlocking fingers
  - f. Kissing mezuzah
  - g. Tikkun layl shavuot

# R' Yitzchak ben Shlomo Ha'Levi Luria

## 1534-1572

### Sefer HaKavanot U'Ma'aseh Nissim records:

Shlomo Luria was in Shul studying when Eliyahu Ha'Navi told him "I have been sent to you by the Almighty to bring you tidings that your holy wife shall conceive and bear a child, and that you must call him Yitzchak. He shall begin to deliver Israel from the klipos [husks, forces of evil]. Through him, numerous souls will receive their tikkun. He is also destined to reveal many hidden mysteries in the Torah and to expound on the Zohar. His fame will spread throughout the world. Take care therefore that you not circumcise him before I come to be the Sandak."



### Teachers:



R' Betzalel Ashkenazi  
1520-1592



R' Dovid ibn Zimra  
1479-1573

### **Kabbalists in Tzefat in 16<sup>th</sup> c.**

- R' Moshe Cordovero
- R' Shlomo Alkabetz
- R' Yosef Karo
- R' Chaim Vital
- R' Moshe Alshich
- R' Yosef Chagiz
- And others



#### *Rav Chaim Vital* *Introduction to Shaar HaHakdamot:*

The Ari overflowed with Torah. He was thoroughly expert in Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, Pilpul, Midrash, Agadah, Ma'aseh Bereishit and Ma'aseh Merkavah. He was expert in the language of trees, the language of birds, and the speech of angels. He could read faces in the manner outlined in the Zohar (vol. II, p. 74b). He could discern all that any individual had done, and could see what they would do in the future. He could read people's thoughts, often before the thought even entered their mind. He knew future events, was aware of everything happening here on earth, and what was decreed in heaven.

He knew the mysteries of gilgul [reincarnation], who had been born previously, and who was here for the first time. He could look at a person and tell him how he was connected to higher spiritual levels, and his original root in Adam. The Ari could read wondrous things [about people] in the light of a candle or in the flame of a fire. With his eyes he gazed and was able to see the souls of the righteous, both those who had died recently and those who had lived in ancient times. With these departed souls, he studied the true mysteries.

From a person's scent, he was able to know all that he had done. (See Zohar, Yenuka vol. III p. 188a). It was as if the answers to all these mysteries lay dormant within him, waiting to be activated whenever he desired. He did not have to seclude himself to seek them out.

All this we saw with our own eyes. These are not things that we heard from others. They were wondrous things that had not been seen on earth since the time of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. None of this was attained through magic, heaven forbid. There is a strong prohibition against these arts. Instead, it came automatically, as a result of his saintliness and asceticism, after many years of study in both the ancient and the newer Kabbalistic texts. He then increased his piety, asceticism, purity and holiness until he reached a level where Eliyahu/Elijah would constantly reveal himself to him, speaking to him "mouth to mouth," teaching him these mysteries and secrets.

(translated by Rabbi Moshe Miller)

## Introduction to Eitz Chaim R' Chaim Vital Translation: Aryeh Kaplan

In every generation, there were exceptional individuals who were worthy of *Ruach HaKodesh*. Elijah revealed himself to these individuals and taught them the mysteries of this Wisdom (Kabbalah). This is found many places in the books of the Kabbalists.

In his discussion of the Priestly Blessing, [Rabbi Menachem] Recanti (1228—1290) writes, "Elijah had revealed himself to Rabbi [David], head of the Rabbinical Court, and had taught him the wisdom of the Kabbalah. He taught this to his son, the Raavad (Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquieres: 1120—1198), and he also experienced a revelation of Elijah. The tradition was passed to his son, Rabbi Isaac the Blind, who was blind from birth, and to him Elijah also revealed himself. He gave the tradition to his two disciples, the first being Rabbi Ezra, who wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs, and the second was Rabbi Azriel. From them, it was given over to the Ramban."<sup>12</sup>

In his commentary on Maimonides' Code, the Raavad himself writes, "*Ruach HaKodesh* has been revealed in our Academy for many years. . . ." <sup>13</sup> Elsewhere he likewise writes, "This was revealed to me, as a mystery of God to those who fear Him." <sup>14</sup>

But I must also sing praise, for in each generation God's love is with us. . . . In this generation too, God of the first and last did not withhold such a leader . . . He sent us an angel . . . the great Godly pious Rabbi, my master and teacher, our mentor, Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, of blessed memory.

[The Ari] was overflowing with Torah. He was thoroughly expert in the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Pilpul, Midrash, Agadah, Workings of Creation, and Workings of the *Merkava*. He was expert in the conversation of trees, the conversation of birds, and the speech of angels.<sup>15</sup> He could read faces in the manner outlined in the Zohar.<sup>16</sup> He could discern all that any individual had done, and could see what they would do in the future. He could read people's thoughts, often before the thought even entered the individual's mind. He knew future events, and was aware of everything happening here on earth, and what was decreed in heaven.

He knew the mysteries of reincarnation, who had been born previously, and who was here for the first time. He could look at a person and tell him how he was connected to the Supernal Man, and how he was related to Adam. He could read wondrous things in the light of a candle or in the flame of a fire.

With his eyes he gazed and was able to see the souls of the righteous, whether those who had died recently, or those who had lived

## Emek Ha'Meleck R' Naftali Hertz Bacharach 17<sup>th</sup> century Translation: Aryeh Kaplan zTran

[The Ari's] father died while he was still a child. Because of poverty, he went to Egypt, where he lived with his wealthy uncle. His brilliance continued to shine in dialectic (*pilpul*) and logic.

By the time he was fifteen, his expertise in Talmud had overwhelmed all the sages in Egypt. At this time he married his uncle's daughter.

After he was married, he spent seven years meditating (*hitboded*) with his master, Rabbi Betzalel Ashkenazi. He then meditated alone for six years.

He then added to this, meditating an reaching higher levels of holiness. This he did for two years straight, in a house near the Nile. There he would remain alone, utterly isolated,, not speaking to any human being.

Th only time he would return home would be on the eve of the Sabbath, just before dark. But even at home, he would not speak to anyone, even to his wife. When it was absolutely necessary for him to say something, he would say it in the least possible number of words, and then, he would speak only in the Holy Tongue (Hebrew).

He progressed in this manner and was worthy of *Ruach HaKodesh*. At times, Elijah revealed himself and taught him the mysteries of the Torah.

He was also worthy for his soul to ascend every night, and troops of angels would greet him to safeguard his way, bringing him to the heavenly academies. These angels would ask him wick academy he chose to visit. Sometimes it would be that of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and other times he would visit the academies of Rabbi Akiba or Rabbi Eliezer the Great. On occasion he would also visit the academies of the ancient Prophets.<sup>10</sup>



in ancient times. With these he studied the true mysteries. By a person's odor he was able to know all that he had done, an ability that the Zohar attributes to the Holy Child.<sup>17</sup>

It was as if all these mysteries were lying in his bosom, ready to be used whenever he desired. He did not have to meditate (*hitboded*) to seek them out.

All this we saw with our own eyes. These are not things that we heard from others. They were wondrous things, that had not been seen on earth since the time of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

None of this was attained through the Practical Kabbalah, heaven forbid. There is a strong prohibition against using these arts.

Instead, it came automatically, as a result of his piety and asceticism, after many years of study in both the ancient and newer Kabbalistic texts. He then increased his piety, asceticism, purity and holiness until he reached a level where Elijah would constantly reveal himself to him, speaking to him "mouth to mouth," and teaching him these mysteries.

This is the same thing that had happened to the Raavad, as Recanti states. Even though true prophecy no longer exists, *Ruach HaKodesh* is still here, manifest through Elijah. It is as the prophet Elijah taught his disciples, commenting on the verse, "Deborah was a prophetess" (Judges 4:4): "I call heaven and earth to bear witness, that any individual, man or woman, Jew or Gentile, freeman or slave, can have *Ruach HaKodesh* bestowed upon him. It all depends on his deeds."<sup>18</sup>

Rabbi Chaim Vital.<sup>19</sup>

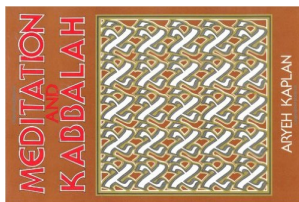


Shul of Arizal



Ari Mikvah





Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  
1934-1983

Although the bulk of the Lurianic writings deal with the theoretical Kabbalah, his teachings were by no means confined to theory. An important meditative aspect of the Ari's system involved Kavanot, which are specific meditations related to particular practices. These can involve dressing, putting on the Tallit or Tefillin, or the various holiday practices, such as eating Matzah on the Passover, or taking the Four Species on Succot. Since a person was constantly involved in these religious observances, the Kavanot would bring him to a meditative state throughout his daily activities. Particularly important is the formal prayer service, where each word has Kabbalistic significance, and is the focus of an entire system of meditations.

Many Kavanot are discussed among the older Kabbalists, and most of these are based on the Zohar, even though the Zoharic allusions are often very vague. But an important part of the Ari's greatness was his ability to extract the fullest meaning from each word in the Zohar, and therefore, where the Zohar only hints, the Ari is able to present a fully-structured meditation. For the most part, these Kavanot fit closely into the Ari's theoretical system.

To a large degree, these Kavanot bring a person into the upper Universes, and involve combinations of Divine Names and many gematriot (numerology). They fill two large volumes, the *Pri Etz Chaim* (Fruit of the Tree of Life), and the *Shaar HaKavanot* (Gate of Kavanot), as well as several smaller texts. These Kavanot involve virtually every aspect of life, both religious and mundane.

To take only one of thousands of examples, we shall present here the Ari's system of meditations when immersing in the Mikvah (ritual pool) before the Sabbath. As we have seen, such immersion played an important role in virtually all the meditative systems, being an essential

### Expansions of the Name Ehyeh

The Name *Ehyeh* (אֶהְיֶה) is spelled Alef (א) Heh (ה) Yod (י) Heh (ה).

Value	Expansion	Letter
161	ALePh HeY YOD HeY	אֶלֶף הֵי יוֹד הֵי
151	ALePh HeH YOD HeH	אֶלֶף הֵה יוֹד הֵה
143	ALePh HeA YOD HeA	אֶלֶף הֵא יוֹד הֵא

step in attaining spiritual purity. This meditation can also be compared with a similar one that we shall present from the Baal Shem Tov in the next chapter.

### Meditation for Immersion<sup>26</sup>

This is a meditation for immersing before the Sabbath:

After entering the lake, river or Mikvah, but before immersing, meditate on the word Mikvah:

מִקְוָה MKVH

Meditate that the Mikvah is the mystery of the Name Ehyeh (אֶהְיֶה) expanded through the letter Heh (ה):

אֶלֶף הֵה יוֹד הֵה ALePh HeH YUD HeH

This expansion has a numerical value of 151, and this is also the numerical value of the word Mikvah. [Just as water is gathered together in a Mikvah,] the expansions of the Name Ehyeh are gathered [into the above expansion].

Now meditate on the word *Nachal* (נַחַל), meaning stream.

This supernal Stream consists of [seven Names]. These are the four expansions of the Tetragrammaton, Ab, Sag, Mah, and Ben, together with the three expansions of Ehyeh, respectively with the Yod, the Heh, and the Alef. (Ehyeh is AHYH, אֶהְיֶה).

Bring the Mikvah into this Stream.



## 4. YICHUDIM

The essence of the Ari's meditative system consists of *Yichudim* (Unifications), where one manipulates the letters of various names of God. The word itself indicates a unification, and in general, these meditations consist of unifying two or more names. Sometimes the names are intertwined and various vowel points are added. Since the various divine Names reflect spiritual forces, and these forces have their counterparts in different parts of the human mind, these *Yichudim* can have powerful effects in integrating the psyche. At times, this can also be extremely traumatic.

As in the case of the Kavanot, many of these *Yichudim* are alluded to in the Zoharic literature, but little or no indication is provided that these manipulations are actually meditative techniques. It took the genius and inspiration of the Ari to reveal explicitly how they should be used.

The idea of unifying God's Name is a most ancient one. The *Sh'ma*, the declaration of faith, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4), is often spoken of as the "Unification of the Name."<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, the Zohar provides a specific *Yichud* associated with this verse.<sup>30</sup> On the verse, "[You shall] attach yourself to [God]" (Deuteronomy 30:20) an ancient Midrash states that this is a "Unification of the Name," indicating that it is through such unification that one binds himself to the Divine.<sup>31</sup> Among the earlier Kabbalists, there are specific references to *Yichudim* involving combinations of Divine Names, a clear example being in the writings of Rabbi Isaac of Acco.<sup>32</sup>

We have also seen how the Ramak advocates meditating on the various names of God, especially on the Tetragrammaton with different vowel points paralleling the Ten Sefirot. In the Ari's system, the Sefirot are no longer seen as independent entities, but as complex interacting Partzufim. His system of meditation therefore involves manipulating

these names in a manner corresponding to these interactions on high. The exact method of depicting these Names is not discussed, but we have spoken of this in the previous chapter. The mind is completely emptied, and the letters are then seen as huge solid bodies, completely filling the mind. Gematriot involving the numerical value of letters also plays an important role.

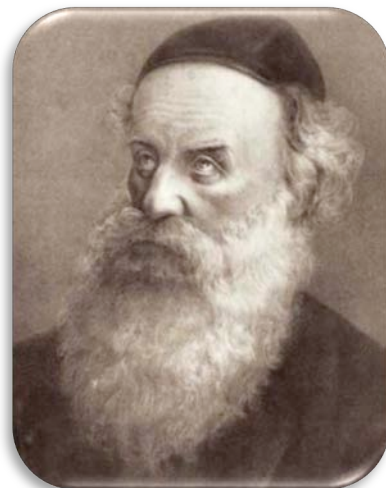
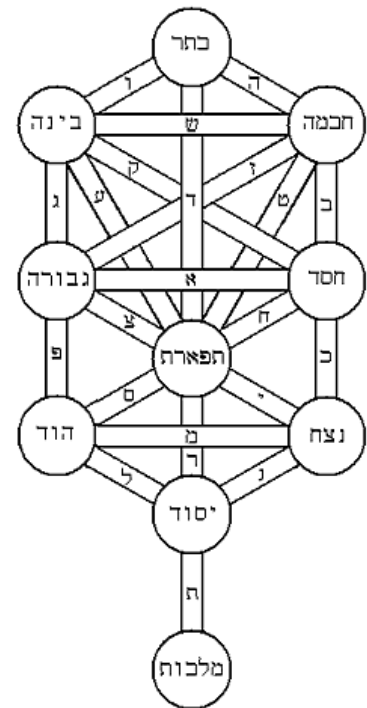
The Ari saw the method of *Yichudim* meditations as being most important to attain true enlightenment. Although other methods exist, the only one specified, if only by allusion, in the Zohar was that of *Yichudim*, and it was therefore the purest and most effective of them all. While other meditative systems involved the pronunciation of Divine Names, the system of *Yichudim* was completely mental, and therefore did not involve the dangers inherent in actually pronouncing names.

Still, *Yichudim* can produce very high meditative states and channel powerful currents of spiritual energy. If improperly used, they can produce effects that are both traumatic and dangerous. Even someone as spiritually advanced as Rabbi Chaim Vital was often overwhelmed by these experiences.



**R' Chaim Vital writes in the introduction to Pri Eitz Chaim:**

“Regarding the roots of the practices that there are differences between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Catalanians and Italians and so forth, that they have ancient practices in the prayerbooks... my teacher [Arizal, R' Isaac Luria] of blessed memory would say that there are twelve gates in the heavens, corresponding to the twelve tribes, and each[tribe's] prayer rises through a different gate, and these are the gates mentioned in the end of the book of Ezekiel (cf. 48:31-34). And he said that certainly, the gates and pathways of the gates were not identical, but rather each was different from the other; therefore, the prayers differ ... but that which represents laws that are explicit in the Talmud are identical among all the tribes.”





Rav Asher Weiss

## אם מותר לעבור מנוסח שבו מתפלל אביו לנוסח שבו התפללו אבות אבותיו

במה ששאל לדעתי במי שגדל בבית שמתפללים בו בנוסח אשכנז, ושוב הלך ללמוד בישיבה שבה התרגל לנוסח ספרד, שבו התפללו סבו ומשפחת בית אבותיו מקדמת דנא, האם ידבוק בנוסח אשכנז שבו מתפלל אביו או ימשיך להתפלל בנוסח ספרד שבו התפללו אבות אבותיו.

הן ידוע מה שנחלקו גדולי עולם החתם סופר והדברי חיים בענין שינוי נוסח התפילה והעניינים נשגבים מבינתנו. אך מכיון שהענין נוגע למעשה אבאר בזה את פשוטן של דברים.

כתב במגן אברהם ריש סימן ס"ח "האר"י ז"ל לא היה אומר פיוטים ופזמונים אלא מה שסידרו הראשונים כגון הקלירי שנתקנו ע"ד האמת. אמנם המנהגים שנהגו בשרשי התפילה אין לשנות ממנהג מקומו כי י"ב שיערים בשמים נגד י"ב שבטים וכל שבט יש לו שער ומנהג לבד מה שזכר בגמ' שזה לכל ז"ל הגמ' ירושלמי אף על פי ששלחנו לכם סדר התפילות אל תשנו ממנהג אבותיכם עכ"ל".

ומקור הדברים בשער הכוונות להר"ח.

הרי לן מדברי האר"י החי ועמוד ההלכה המגן אברהם דנוסחאות התפילה מכוונים כנגד י"ב שיערים בשמים הרמזים בסוף ספר יחזקאל והם מכוונים ליי"ב שבטי ישראל, ומש"כ כתבו שאין לו לאדם לשנות נוסח אבותיו כיון שאין איתנו יודע מה שורש נשמתו ושבטו. אמנם במקום שכתוב בשער הכוונות שאין לשנות מנהג אבותיו כתב במג"א בשמו שאין לשנות מנהג מקומו, ושם אין בזה כל סתירה דלא כימינו ימי קדם, בזמנינו השיירות מצויות מהכא להתם ומהתם להכא, ומעשים בכל יום שאנשים עוברים לגור ממקום למקום מקצה העולם עד קצהו. אך בימיהם ישבו דורות ע"ג דורות איש תחת גפנו ואיש תחת תאנתו, ודברי האר"י והמג"א עולים בקנה אחד.

אמנם כאשר עיר וקדיש משמיא נחית והבעש"ט התפלל בנוסח האר"י המבוסס בעיקרו על נוסח ספרד, וכך נהגו תלמידיו ותלמידי תלמידיו עד שהמון עם החסידים עברו כולם להתפלל בנוסח זה. התימה כמו עלזה מאלה. היאך יכול החי להכניש את החי, והלא האריה"ק הוא זה שהזהיר בל ישנה אדם נוסח אבותיו, וכי איך אפשר שהדבקים בתורתו ובמנהגיו ינהגו שלא כדבריו ויעזבו את מנהג אבותיהם, דהלא עד שלא התפשטה תורת הבעש"ט לא התפללו בנוסח ספרד אלא בני עדות המזרח ויחיד סגולה מעדות האשכנזים.

וכדי ליישב מנהג החסידים מצינו חידוש גדול בליקוטי אמרים להמגיד הגדול ממזעריטש אות קל"ג דמלבד י"ב השערים הכתובים בשער הכוונות יש עוד שער י"ג המיועד לתערובת השבטים וכל מי שאינו יודע שבטו יתפלל בנוסח זה שהוא נוסח האר"י שתיקן ויסד בחכמתו והוא מתאים וראוי לכל י"ב השבטים. והוסיף עוד לבאר דודאי אם היה אדם יודע שבטו והיה יודע גם איזה נוסח מיועד לשבט זה, עדיף היה שיתפלל בנוסח המיועד לשבטו ותפילותיו תעלינה למרומים דרך שער שבטו. אך כיון שכל השבטים נתערבו עדיף להתפלל בנוסח האר"י שהוא תל שכל הפיות פונים אליו. אך לעתיד לבא כאשר ימלא הארץ דעה את ה' וכל אחד יכיר שבטו ושרשו שוב יהיו רק י"ב שיערים, והם הרמזים בספר יחזקאל, ע"ש.

וכע"ז מצינו עוד בספר זרע קודש להצה"ק מרופשיץ בד"ת ליום ט"ו באב, יום שבו הותרו השבטים לבא זה בזה, שכתב דנוסח האר"י הוא שער הכולל שבו יבא כל עם ה' לשפוך צקון לחשם והביא כן בשם כתבי האר"י. אך אני בעניי לא ידעתי איה מקום כבודו בכתבי האר"י. (ופירש לפי דרכו דמה שאמרו שהותרו השבטים לבוא זה בזה, היינו בשער הכולל שבו מתאחדים כל הנוסחאות והשערים).

אך בשו"ת חת"ס או"ח סימן ט"ז כתב בתוקף רב דכשם שאין לעבור מנוסח ספרד לאשכנז כך אין לעבור מאשכנז לספרד, וכנראה שהשואל כתב לו את דבריו המחודשים של הלקוטי אמרים, והחת"ס כתב שאינו מכיר ספר זה ולא קיבל דבריו.

ויסוד דברי החת"ס דאין הבדל יסודי ומהותי בין נוסח לנוסח, כל הנוסחאות קדושים ונשגבים וכולם נרמזו סודות עליונים אלא שהאר"י הקדוש התפלל נוסח ספרד וזכינו שגילה סוד ה' ליראיו בכונות שבנוסח זה, אך כל המתפלל על דעת מתקני הנוסחאות תפילותו עולה למעלה ועושה פרי, אך בשורש עניינם אין בין זל"ז ומש"כ לעולם אין לשנות נוסח אבותיו, ע"ש.

ולעומתו האריך הגה"ק מצאנז בשו"ת דברי חיים ח"ב או"ח סימן ח' והביא שכבר כתב המשנת חסידים בהקדמתו לספרו הק' שמי שאינו יודע "אם בנפשו הוא המנהג שתפסו אבותיו נוח לו שיתנהג במנהג המובחר שקיבל הרמ"א כוונותיו עליו מהאר"י ז"ל" ע"ש. ובהמשך דבריו כתב גם הוא בסגנון רבו בעל הזרע קדש דנוסח האר"י הוא שער הכולל כמבואר.



וידוע עוד מה שנחלקו החת"ס ובעל הישמח משה לגבי מנהג החסידים שהלבוש בגדי צמר לא יעבור לפני התיבה להיות שליו ציבור. דבשו"ת חת"ס או"ח סימן ט"ו מבואר בדברי השואל דעפ"י הקבלה אין להתפלל בנוסח ספרד אם לבוש צמר, והחת"ס דחה דבריו מכל וכל ולשיטתו כתב דאין בעצם כל הבדל בין נוסח לנוסח לגבי שגב קדושתם ואינם אלא כשני נביאים המתנבאים כל אחד בסגנונו ודבר אחד התנבאו ומשו"כ אין לומר דהלבוש צמר אל לו להתפלל בנוסח זה אף שמותר לו להתפלל בנוסח אחר, עי"ש.

ובשו"ת השיב משה או"ח סימן ז' כתב להצדיק את המנהג הנ"ל אך ברור מתוך דבריו דלא משום דבעצם ובפנימיות הענין יש סתירה בין בגדי צמר לנוסח ספרד אלא משום דכך תיקנו וקיבלו עליהם החסידים וקבלה זו מחייבת את ההולכים לאור האריה"ק והבעש"ט. והחת"ס בסימן ט"ז שם פקפק גם בסברא זו וכתב דלא מצינו תקנה או קבלה שנקבעה בספר ע"י מי מגדולי ישראל עי"ש.

כללו של דבר אין לנו עסק בנסתרות, וכל כה"ג גדול כח המנהג, נהרא נהרא ופשטיה, וכל מנהגי ישראל תורה וקדושה ואין להרהר אחריהם.

ובני"ד נראה דכיון דכל טעמו של האריה"ק שכל אדם ידבק במנהג ונוסח אבותיו אינו אלא משום דיש להניח דלמשפחותם לבית אבותם מסתמא זה נוסח השבט שאליו הוא שייך, וכיון שבני"ד שינה האב ממנהג אבותיו הוא, והבן הוא זה שרוצה לחזור לנוסח ספרד שבו החזיקו אבות אבותיו זה דורות, אין בזה כל מניעה אלא כך ראוי מצד עיקר הענין וההלכה.

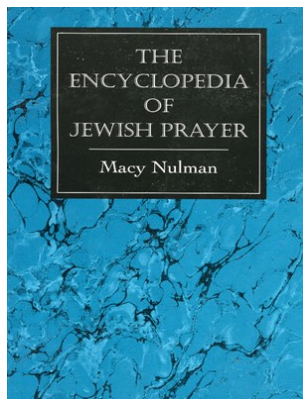
אך מ"מ נראה דאילו התחנך ונתגדל על ברכי נוסח ספרד ונוסח זה רגיל על לשונו, ואילו שדעת אביו נוחה מכך שיתפלל בנוסח ספרד ואינו רואה בזה פגיעה בכבודו, הייתי אומר שלא ישנה מנוסח אביו וסביבתו, דלאחר שבא סנחרב ובלבל כל העולם כולו, ודור תהפוכות הנה, נראה עיקר לענ"ד שכל אחד ידבק בנוסח ביתו ובית חינוכו, וימשיך בדרך ובנוסח אותו ינק בביתו ובבתי החינוך בהם קנה עולמו הרוחני, ובפרט אם יש בזה ענין כיבוד אב.

אך כיון שאין מצד אביו כל קפידא והבן גדל בישיבה שבה התפללו נוסח ספרד וזה נוסח אבות אבותיו, כך נאה וכך יאה, ובפרט שמדובר בנוסח ספרד שלדעת גדולי החסידות ובעל משנת חסידים שהיה מגדולי המקובלים מתלמידי תלמידיו של האריה"ק נוסח זה ראוי ומתוקן לכולם כמבואר לעיל. (ובמק"א הארכתי גדר מנהג אבותיו, עיין לעיל).

#### Gemara Shabbos 119a

**בתלמוד** ע"י ר' אבהו דדינרי. אומר ר"ת דעליתא שם כלי הוא דלמרינן צריש כליד מעצין (עינין דף ע"ג:) עלת נקפת צדה<sup>ו</sup>: **רב** אמר להקדים ושמואל אמר לאחור. ולא פליגי אלא רב איירי דרכו לאחר ושמואל איירי דרכו להקדים דלמרינן נקמון: ומלא

עבידנא יומא טבא לרבנן אמר רבא \*תיתי לי דכי אתא צורבא מרבנן לקמאי לדינא לא מזיגנא (ב) רישי אבי סדיא כמה דלא מהפיכנא בזכותי אמר מר בר רב אשי פסילנא ליה לצורבא מרבנן לדינא מ"ט<sup>ו</sup> דחביב עלי כגופאי ואין אדם רואה חובה לעצמו<sup>ו</sup> רבי חנינא מיעטף וקאי אפניא דמעלי שבתא אמר בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה רבי ינאי לביש מאניה (ג) מעלי שבת<sup>ו</sup> ואמר בואי כלה בואי כלה רבה<sup>ו</sup> בר רב הונא איקלע לבי רבה בר רב נחמן קריבו ליה תלת סאוי טחיי א"ל מי הוה ידעיתון דאתינא אמרו



## LEKHAH DODI (לכה דודי).

A hymn recited on Friday night at *Kabbalat Shabbat*. Composed by the kabbalist Rabbi Solomon Alkabetz of Safed in 1529 (according to others, 1571), the author signed eight of its nine stanzas with his acrostic (SHeLoMoH HaLeVI). R. Moses ibn Makhir of Safed has a different version of a text for *Lekha Dodi* by an anonymous author.<sup>1</sup> However, the current hymn in usage was sanctioned by R. Isaac Luria (*ha-Ari*) and recommended by R. Isaiah Horowitz for its inclusion into the service, and it was accepted by all Jewish communities throughout the world.

The popular poem, the title of which was borrowed from Song of Songs 7:12, opens with the refrain, "Come, my friend (*Lekha Dodi*), to meet the bride, let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath." Its text is a mosaic of biblical and rabbinic phrases, and no less than six of the nine stanzas are devoted to the yearning for Jerusalem (stanzas one, two, and nine deal with the value of the Sabbath and stanzas three through eight with Jerusalem and redemption). The poem was inspired by the talmudic accounts that describe how scholars honored and welcomed the Sabbath. They would say, "Come, let us go out to welcome the Sabbath Queen" or "Come, O bride; come, O Bride."<sup>2</sup>

The poem is recited responsively. Some stand throughout its recitation and at *Bo'i Veshalom* ("Enter in peace") all rise and face the entrance of the synagogue (west) to greet the Sabbath Bride. A motive for this practice is that the *Shekhinah* ("Divine Presence") that accompanies the Sabbath is in the west.<sup>3</sup> Turning to the door also has

its origin in King Solomon's innovation of making two gates in the Temple, one for bridegrooms and the other for mourners to enter. The purpose was to alert the people with whom to rejoice or whom to comfort. After the destruction of the Temple, the sages transferred this custom into the synagogue.<sup>4</sup>

In *Bo'i Veshalom* the phrase *bo'i Khalah* ("come bride!") is repeated. The repetition teaches us to have abundant love for the Sabbath. This form of expression appears in Scripture, for example, when the angel calls "Avraham, Avraham" (Gen. 22:11) or when God calls, "Ya'akov, Ya'akov" (Gen. 42:6) and "Mosheh, Mosheh" (Ex. 3:4).<sup>5</sup> Another explanation is that just as the groom says to his bride, "Come my bride to the *huppah* ('canopy') and then he says, "Come my bride to the house of your husband (*lebayt ba'al*)," and just as, through *Kiddushin* ("Sanctification") the bride becomes a *nesu'ah* ("married"), so the *Shabbat* through the sanctification of the day becomes wedded to the people of Israel.<sup>6</sup> Sephardim of hasidic origin and Oriental as well as Western Sephardim add a third *bo'i khalah* followed by *Shabbat Malketa* (or *Hamalkah*)—Sabbath Queen. This third phrase is added since the entire hymn revolves around the Bride who is also the Queen.<sup>7</sup> According to some, *bo'i khalah* is uttered seven times, corresponding to the numerical value of *Shekhinah*.<sup>8</sup> When turning to the entrance of the synagogue it is suggested that one turn counterclockwise. That is, one should turn to *Ma'ariv* ("west") via *Tzafon* ("north") and return from the west to *Mizrah* ("east") via *Darom* ("south").<sup>9</sup> It is customary to bow or face different directions when saying *bo'i khalah*. Several suggestions are: when saying the first *bo'i khalah* one bows westward and immediately when facing eastward the worshiper bows in the direction of the ark.<sup>10</sup> When uttering *bo'i khalah* three times, one bows to the left, which is the right of the *Shekhinah*, then to the right, and then forward while saying the third *bo'i khalah* *Shabbat Malketa* in a hushed voice.<sup>11</sup> Sephardim have the custom of facing *Mizrah* ("east") and then *Ma'ariv* ("west"), for they await to greet the *Shabbat* from right and left.<sup>12</sup> Sephardim who adhere to the customs of Aleppo and Rabbi Ovadia Yossef

recite only four stanzas (the first, second, third, and fifth) in *Lekha Dodi*, which spell out the author's first name, SHeLoMoH. They then recite *Bo'i Veshalom*. These stanzas do not reflect any aspect of "sorrow."<sup>13</sup>

The Western Ashkenazic rite attempted to establish certain melodies linking them to the particular character of the respective Sabbath or season. For example, there are special tunes for *Shabbat Teshuvah*, the *Omer* weeks between Passover and *Shavu'ot*, the "Three Weeks" preceding the Fast of *Ab*, and for *Rosh Hodesh Elul*.<sup>14</sup>

When a festival coincides with Sabbath, most Ashkenazic congregations omit this hymn. The hymn includes the phrase *penay Shabbat nekabelah* ("The presence of Sabbath let us welcome") and we do not want to demean the festival.<sup>15</sup> Sephardic hasidic Jewry recites only the first and last two stanzas of the hymn.<sup>16</sup> For the Sephardic customs see MIZMOR LEDAVID.

1. *Seder Hayom, Seder Kabbalat ha-Shabbat ve-Hadlakat Hanayr u-Tefillat Arvit*.

2. Shab. 119a.

3. Taz, OH, 3:3.

4. *Siddur Ha-Gra, Ishay Yisrael*, quoting *Siddur Rashban* (Jerusalem, 1974), p. 219.

5. BSH, p. 240.

6. *Maharsha* to B. K. 32.

7. *Ket Shem Tob*, 185:230; cf. also Jacob b. Hayyim Zemah of Safed, *Nagid u-Metzaveh* (Amsterdam, 1712).

8. *Seder Hayom*, *ibid*.

9. *Siddur Sha'ar Yisakhar* (Brooklyn, NY, 1982), p. 103.

10. Munk, WP, vol. 2, p. 7.

11. Emden, *Bet Ya'ak*, p. 146.

12. *Ket Shem Tob*, 184:227.

13. *Siddur Bet Yosef Ve'ohel Avraham* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 198, 199; *Siddur Hazon Ovadia* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat "Hazon Ovadia," 1988), p. 309; cf. also TSLC, p. 225.

14. For the settings of these occasions see CJMP, p. 15.

15. Cf. *Orz Shal Lem Yis*, 67:3.

16. *Elef Hamagayn*, 625:56, in *Matt Eph*.

## LEKHU NERANENAH (לכו נרננה).

Psalm 95, the first of six psalms (95-99 and 29)<sup>1</sup> recited prior to the *Arvit* service at *Kabbalat Shabbat* ("Welcoming the Sabbath"). The psalm is a call to Israel to worship the Creator of the world, Guardian of His people. Reference is made to the Exodus from Egypt and the forty years of



wandering through the desert. The psalmist concludes: "If you will only hearken to His voice" (Ps. 95:7), the resting place—the Promised Land—will be reached.

Reciting the six psalms, instituted by the kabbalist Rabbi Moses Cordovero of Safed (1522–1570), has its origin in the Talmud and relates that when the Sabbath drew near the sages would clothe themselves in fine garments and say to one another, "Let us go out to greet the Sabbath queen."<sup>2</sup> The six psalms symbolize the six working days of the week,<sup>3</sup> the six days of creation,<sup>4</sup> or the six *Shofar* blasts that were sounded on Friday afternoon to announce the ushering in of the Sabbath.<sup>5</sup> The custom of reciting these psalms was lauded by Rabbi Joseph Yuspa Hahn of Frankfurt (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries)<sup>6</sup> and spread among Ashkenazic Jewry in the land of Israel and in the Diaspora, but not among Sephardic Jewry. However, many Sephardic prayer books later did include them. In the Syrian tradition (Damascus) they are not said; however, in the Aleppo tradition they are said. In the Moroccan, Judeo-Spanish, and Spanish and Portuguese rites the custom varies.<sup>7</sup> In the Baghdad tradition as well as in some other Sephardic communities *Kabbalat Shabbat* may begin with Ps. 99, *Hashem Malakh Yirgezu Amim*, followed by *Mizmor Letodah* (Ps. 100) and *Mizmor Ledavid* (Ps. 29). In still other Sephardic congregations they may begin with Ps. 29, *Mizmor Ledavid*.

The initial letters of each of the six psalms have the numerical value of 430, which equals the value of the Hebrew word *NeFeSH* ("soul"), signifying the soulful inspiration derived from these psalms on the eve of *Shabbat*.<sup>8</sup> The rationale for having a *minyan* ("quorum") at *Kabbalat Shabbat* is that in *LEKHAH DODI* we say *bo'i khalah* ("Enter, O bride!") and according to the Talmud, "The benediction of the bridegrooms (has to be said) in the presence of ten [persons]."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is advisable to join a *minyan* Friday evening since *VAYE KHULU* is a form of testimony that God created heaven and earth. Thus, for proper testimony to the Holy One (blessed be He), an entire congregation is needed, as it is written, "But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel" (Lev. 22:32).<sup>10</sup>

In some congregations, mainly of

Western origin, the festive inauguration of the Sabbath is marked by the reader and worshipers chanting the six psalms responsively.<sup>11</sup> It is advisable that when reciting each of the six psalms, the worshiper bear in mind each of the six working days, *Lekhu Neranenuh* corresponding to the first day, *Shiru Lashem* to the second day, and so forth.<sup>12</sup> The reader chants the psalms as well as the prayers that follow from the *bimah* ("platform"), rather than at the prayer desk, to signify that *Kabbalat Shabbat* is a recent innovation and not part of the evening service proper. In Hamburg, Germany, a further distinction was made when the reader put on his *Tallit* ("prayer-shawl") only before the evening service (*Arvit*) and not at *Kabbalat Shabbat*.<sup>13</sup> Among the Sephardim, the Syrians as well as the Sephardim in Israel stand during *Kabbalat Shabbat*. The London and Amsterdam custom is not to stand. Some Ashkenazim do make it a practice to stand at *Lekha Dodi*.<sup>14</sup>

When a festival (the conclusion of a festival) or one of the Intermediate Days of a festival falls on Sabbath, or when Yom Kippur occurs on Sabbath, the six psalms are omitted. This is done so as not to demean the festival day or particular holiday. The hasidic Sephardic rite begins with the sixth psalm, *MIZMOR LEDAVID*, on the festival. Even though the *Ba'al ha-Tanya* recommended reciting all six psalms, when the conclusion of a festival occurs on *Shabbat*,<sup>15</sup> the Lubavitch rite begins only from *Mizmor Ledavid*.<sup>16</sup>

1. Ps. 96, *Shiru Lashem*; Ps. 97, *Hashem Malakh Tagayl Ha'aretz*; Ps. 98, *Mizmor, Shiru Lashem Shir Hadash*; Ps. 99, *Hashem Malakh Yirgezu Amim*; and Ps. 29, *Mizmor Ledavid*.

2. Shab. 119a.

3. Emden, *Bet Ya'ak*, p. 144; Baer, *Sidd Avod Yis*, p. 178; *Otz Hat*, 590.

4. *Tor Hat*, p. 161.

5. *Siddur RaSHBaN*; cf. also Shab. 35b and Sukk. 53b.

6. Joseph Yuspa Hahn, *Yosif Ometz* (Frankfurt on the Main: "Hermon," 1723), no. 587.

7. TSLC, chap. 11.

8. R. Moses Cordovero quoted in *Otz Hat*, vol. 1, p. 590.

9. Ket. 7a.

10. Cf. *Likk Mah*, vol. 2, p. 34, and *Yesod Yesh*, vol. 3, p. 171, in the name of *Hilkhot Ketanot* and *Peri Megadim*.

11. Cf. Baer, *Sidd Avod Yis*, p. 178; *The Hirsch Siddur*

Magen Avraham  
OC 46:1

מן קודם צואו לזית הכנסת יאמר ואני צרוב חסדך [מהלים  
ה, ת] וכו', וזכניסתו יאמר צנית אלהים נהלך צרגש [שם נה,  
טו] (כתבים שער הכונות ענין צית הכנסת). קודם תפילת שחרית יקבל  
עליו מלכות עשה של והצבת לריעך כמוך (יש ספר הכונות ד"ה  
נשיא): א כשיניח ידיו. פירוש

Shulchan Aruch

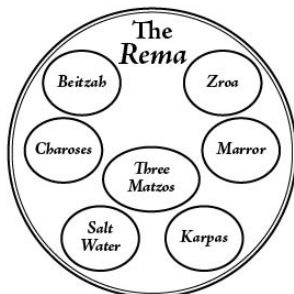
יא [כ] עיקר מצות טלית קמן ללבשו (י"א) על בגדיו  
כדי שתמיד יראהו יג ויזכור המצות:

א אם אין אדם לובש טלית בת ארבע כנפות אינו  
חייב בציצית וטוב י [א] \* ונכון להיות כל אדם  
זהיר ללבוש טלית קמן כל היום [ב] כדי שיזכור המצות  
(\*א) בכל רגע [ג] \* ועל כן יש בו חמשה קשרים כנגד  
חמשה חומשי תורה [א] וארבעה כנפים שככל צד שיפנה  
יזכור ג [ד] [ה] [ו] ונכון ללבוש על המלבושים: [ז] \* לפחות  
יזהר שיהיה לבוש ציצית בשעת התפלה:

Rama

וקריאת ההגדה: ד (י) "מביאין לפני בעל-הבית קערה (יח) שיש בה שלש מצות ומרור  
(יט) וחרוסת וכרפס (כ) או ירק (ס) אחר (וחומץ (כא) או (ו) מי-מלח), וישני תבשילין, אחד זכר  
לפסח ואחד (כב) זכר (ו) לחגיגה. (כג) ונהגו בבשר וביצה. הגה (ס) ויסדר הקערה לפניו (כד) בענין  
שאינו צריך לעבור על המצות, דהיינו הכרפס יהא (כה) למעלה מן הכל, והחומץ סמוך לו יותר מן  
המצה, והמצות מן המרור והחרוסת, (כו) והם יהיו יותר קרובים אליו מן הבשר והביצה (מהרי"ל).  
והבשר נהגו שיהיה (ט) (כו) זרוע. ונהגו שהבשר (כח) יהיה צלי (כט) על הגחלים (ל) והביצה

Be'er Heitiv



הגמרא. ועיין יד-אהרן בזה: (ט) ויסדר. סדר הקערה של האר"י ז"ל  
מועתק מספר עץ-החיים, וז"ל: סדר הקערה של השמורות יהיה כסדר  
זה, והוא שתיקח ג' מצות שמורות ותניח הכהן למעלה ואחריו לוי  
ולמטה ממנו הישראל שהם כנגד ג' מוחין דאבא עילאה, ואח"כ תקח  
מרור וכרפס וחרוסת וב' מיני תבשיל, זרוע של טלה צליה וביצה  
מבושלת, ותניח אלו הה' דברים למעלה על הג' מצות, דהיינו זרוע  
שהיא חסד בימין שלך וביצה שהיא גבורה בשמאל שלך, מרור שהוא  
רומז לת"ת באמצע בין הזרוע והביצה כי ת"ת מכריע בין חסד לגבורה,  
ואח"כ החרוסת בקו ימין תחת הזרוע מפני שהיא רומזת לנצח, ואח"כ  
הכרפס שהוא רומז להוד תניח תחת הביצה בקו השמאל שלך, ואח"כ  
תקח חזרת ותניח למטה מן המרור בקו האמצעי שהוא כנגד היסוד והוא  
כדי לעשות אח"כ כריכה עם החזרת, והקערה בעצמה שכוללת כלם  
היא המלכות, הרי י"ס דחכמה, ואל ישנה מזה הסדר, ואשרי לו מי  
שמכין להנזיל, עכ"ל: (ט) זרוע. ויהא מעט בשר עליו, ד"מ:

Piskei  
Teshuvos  
95:5

על כך מאד, וכתבו<sup>43</sup> שצריך לצוות את אשתו ובניו על כך, ושעפ"י הוזה"ק לאו דווקא בעת שלום, אלא תמיד יש לימנע מכך, כי מתקשר<sup>44</sup> מזל, כי<sup>45</sup> הם כוחות עליונים ימנים ושמאלים ואין לערבם, ומעורר<sup>46</sup> עליו בזה הדינים של מעלה ומורידם עליו ר"ל, וביותר יש מאד מאד לא ליכשל בכך בעשרת<sup>47</sup> ימי תשובה, ולמי<sup>48</sup> ששעתו דחיקא עליו וכגון לחולה, ואם בלא כוונה אירע לו כן יש<sup>49</sup> לו לפשפש במעשיו ולחזור בתשובה.

אמנם להסתכל על האצבעות כשהם נפרדות, טוב<sup>50</sup> הדבר בכל שעה ושעה, ויכוין<sup>51</sup> כי כל אצבע ואצבע הוא סוד של שם אהו"ה במילוי (אל"ף ה"י וא"ו ה"י) שהוא גימטריא קס"ג במתכוין, ובספרי האר"י הק' ותלמידיו<sup>42</sup> הזהירו – כמנין אצבע.



כתוב בזה"ק (פ' יתרו) שמתקלל ב' קללות ורוח מסאבא שורה על ידיו, ולכן נשתקע הדבר ונתבטל, זולת ליחיד הדור ובעת רצון<sup>39</sup> וסגולה, ולא כל הרוצה ליטול השם יטול.

בקפידא שלא לשלב אצבעות ימין ושמאל זה בזה

ה. בה"ט סק"ג: ואין לפכר ידיו בעת שלום כי מוריד דין על עצמו בזה ח"ו כידוע – ט"ז. ופירשו בשו"ע הרב (סי' צ"א סעי' ו') ועוד אחרונים<sup>40</sup> שהכוונה על הקפידא הידועה שלא לשלב אצבעות ימין ושמאל זה בזה, ומקורו בזה"ק (פ' ויקרא, כ"ד). שזה מורה על גזר דין שעליו למעלה, ואפילו<sup>41</sup> עושה כן שלא במתכוין, ובספרי האר"י הק' ותלמידיו<sup>42</sup> הזהירו – כמנין אצבע.

**ד הגהה.** יניח ידיו על המזוזה וכו' והאר"י ז"ל כתב יניח אלצנעו הנקדל חמה על שדג וינשקנו ויתפלל לה' שישמרנו צדק שדי וחילופו צלותיות המאורות תכ"ה שילכלנו מילה"ד:

Birkei Yosef  
YD 285:2

Mishna Berura  
494:1

**א (א) ביום חמשים לספירת העומר וכו'.** ומאחרין להתפלל ערבית (ב) בכניסת שבועות בצאת הכוכבים כדי שיהיו ימי הספירה מ"ט יום תמימות. איתא בזה"ק, שחסידי הראשונים היו ניעורים כל הלילה ועוסקים בתורה, וכבר נהגו רוב הלומדים לעשות כן. ואיתא בשולחן-ערוך האר"י ז"ל: דע, שכל מי שכלילה לא ישן כלל ועיקר והיה עוסק בתורה, מובטח לו שישלים שנתו ולא יארע לו שום נזק. והטעם, כתב מגן-אברהם על-פי פשוטו, שישראל היו ישנים כל הלילה, והוצרך הקדוש-ברוך-הוא להעיר אותם לקבל התורה [כדאיתא במדרש], לכך אנו צריכין לתקן זה. וצריכין ליזהר אותם הנעורים כל הלילה, שלא לברך 'על נטילת ידים' בבוקר רק אחר שעשה צרכיו קודם התפלה, ואז מברך 'על נטילת ידים' ואשר יצר, וכמבואר לעיל בסימן ד במשנה ברורה

## COFFEE, COFFEEHOUSES, AND THE NOCTURNAL RITUALS OF EARLY MODERN JEWRY

by

ELLIOTT HOROWITZ

When and where, then, does coffee make its first appearance in Jewish history? The earliest responsum in which it is discussed concerns the question of its permissibility for consumption when prepared by non-Jews and was composed by R. David ibn Abi Zimra (d. 1573). This is hardly surprising, for the forty years in which Radbaz resided in Egypt (1513–1553) coincided with the period in which coffee drinking spread from Sufi circles to the Egyptian population at large.<sup>13</sup> He saw no problem with the beverage being prepared by a non-Jew, both because separate utensils were used for coffee and because it was too insubstantial an item to fall under the prohibition of *bishulei nokhrim*. Coffeehouses, however, were for him another matter entirely, prompting him to add:

Nonetheless, I do not consent to its being drunk at a meeting place [*mesibbah*] of non-Jews, for this has some undesirable consequences and the Jews are holy. . . . And, especially since that beverage has no [pleasing] taste nor odor nor appearance, if it is needed for medicinal purposes one may send for it and have it delivered home. This is done by their leading figures, who would be embarrassed to drink it at such establishments.<sup>14</sup>

In distinguishing between the beverage and its characteristic place of consumption, Radbaz expressed an opinion strikingly similar to that of his fellow Cairene, the Islamic jurist al-Jaziri. The latter composed a lengthy treatise on the subject of coffee in the wake of the sometimes violent clashes which had occurred in Cairo after its introduction there in the early sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> In it he praised coffee on account of the many benefits it provided, especially that of driving away sleep during the performance of nocturnal devotions. On the other hand, however, he carefully limited his advocacy of the beverage by insisting that its use be kept free of the taint of the reprehensible activities then associated with the coffeehouses.<sup>16</sup> Like his Muslim colleague, Radbaz demonstrates considerable awareness of the social realities of coffee drinking and of the problematic status of the places in which it was engaged in publicly.

As time passed and the beverage spread, many halakhists exhibited a similarly intimate knowledge of its properties and manner of consumption, one of them going as far as to assert that in Egypt “one cannot attain presence of mind without the aid of coffee.”<sup>17</sup> Yet some differences of opinion emerged concerning its consumption when prepared by non-Jews. R. Hayyim Benveniste of Smyrna, who died a century after Radbaz, reported in response to a query on this subject that drinking the coffee of non-Jews was customary “in all the places of which we have heard,” but he himself had recently decided to abstain from it. He claimed, moreover, to have found support for such a position in the literature describing the customs of the “divine kabbalist” R. Isaac Luria—the ARI.<sup>18</sup>

Luria, a younger contemporary of Radbaz, had, like the latter, migrated from Egypt to Palestine during the second half of the sixteenth century, settling in Safed. There, as is well known, he gathered around him a circle of disciples who followed his kabbalistic system and observed his distinctive practices, both of which they continued to disseminate after his death in 1572. One of the practices popularized by the ARI and his disciples was the regular recitation of a midnight rite mourning the Temple’s destruction and praying for its return. This practice, known as *Tikkun Hazot*, had been



observed in various forms throughout the Middle Ages as an individual act of piety. As Schechter noted, “midnight, with its awe-inspiring silence and the feeling of utter isolation which comes upon man,” was a favorite time for voluntary prayer. Only in late-sixteenth-century Palestine did *Tikkun Hazot* suddenly take off and become a mass rite, spreading from there to other countries in the Near East and the Mediterranean basin.<sup>19</sup> Its popularization was, of course, part of the wider diffusion of kabbalistic rites during this period and their penetration into daily life, but it can hardly be divorced from the increasing availability, by day and night, of a stimulant such as coffee.

Although increasingly available, the beverage was not as universally familiar in the Near East of the sixteenth century as we might expect. R. Joseph Caro, for example, who came to Safed from Turkey in 1536 and completed his *Bet Yosef* there some six years later, shows no signs in the relevant sections of that work (nor of his later *Shulkhan 'Arukh*) of any familiarity with coffee.<sup>20</sup> Yet Caro would have had good reason to be interested in a stimulant which could effectively promote wakefulness. For he, together with his brother-in-law R. Solomon Alkabetz, introduced the custom of observing an all-night study vigil on the festival of Shavuot, and he also invested much energy in remaining awake at night on a year-round basis in order to commune with his personal “Maggid.”<sup>21</sup>

By 1580, however, there was at least one coffeehouse in Safed, for it is mentioned in the responsa of R. Moses Trani, Caro’s successor as spiritual head of the community, who died in that year.<sup>22</sup> Whether or not the Jews of Safed actually patronized the establishment, they could hardly have been unaware of the special properties of the beverage in which it specialized, and which, as Trani testifies, continued to attract customers late into the night. Furthermore, among the fundamental changes resulting from the introduction of coffee and coffeehouses in the cities of the Islamic eastern Mediterranean during the sixteenth century was the gradual breakdown of some of the conventional divisions between day and night. The latter, it has been noted, became associated to an increasing degree with activity rather than repose, and with sociability outside the home.<sup>23</sup> Did not this shift, together with the easy availability of a new stimulant, present the ideal conditions for the revival of a “half-forgotten observance,” to use Scholem’s phrase, which required nocturnal wakefulness and which, under Zoharic influence, focused upon the hour of midnight, an hour which had otherwise lost almost all significance in positive Judaism?<sup>24</sup>

It has been suggested, as a corrective to Scholem’s version of the Lurianic revival, that the messianic prayer vigils instituted in Jerusalem during the first quarter of the sixteenth century provide a missing link between the medieval tradition of mourning the exile and the rite popularized in Safed at that century’s end.<sup>25</sup> This may have been the case on the ideational level, yet it is worthy of note that the Jerusalem vigils were held in conjunction with the afternoon prayers, while those in Safed were held in the middle of the night. Although the Zohar’s fascination with midnight was presumably known to the mystics in both cities, coffee had not yet affected Jerusalem in the early sixteenth century in the way that it would affect Safed before the century’s end.<sup>26</sup> From the perspective of their social history, the differences between the rites practiced in the two cities signify more than do the similarities.

In the Safed rite popularized in the circle of the ARI and his disciples, the custom was encouraged not only of rising at midnight for prayer (the mournful *Tikkun Rahel* followed by the messianically charged *Tikkun Leah*) but of remaining awake and engaging in Torah study for the remainder of the night.<sup>27</sup> For those who could not adhere to such a grueling schedule, however, the alternative suggested was to rise at midnight and study briefly after the recitation of prayers, then return to sleep, to rise again half an hour