

Source Sheet Class 14-“2000 Years of Jewish History”-Rabbi Menachem Levine

Source 1

The city [of Tzfas] is filled with an abundance of good things and excellent foodstuffs: grain, wine, and oil in great abundance and cheap for the person who purchases everything in its season. If it were not for the large amount of oil and grain that they export from there to Damascus and to other places, it [this produce] would have no value. All manner of succulent fruits are available there and whatever is not available locally is imported from Damascus. Trade is widespread in this region, with shops for woolen garments, haberdashery, and spices...He who so desires can deal in grain, wine, and oil, each in its proper season. Generally speaking, there is much more trade in this land than in Italy, for the Muslims purchase more willingly from Jews than from others.

Sixteenth century Italian Jew, Moshe Bosola, cited in Lawrence Fine's, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*, p. 46.

Source 2

“The first-begotten Son of G-d, Shabtai Tzvi, Messiah and Redeemer of the people of Israel, to all the sons of Israel, Peace! Since ye have been deemed worthy to behold the great day and the fulfillment of G-d's word by the Prophets, your lament and sorrow must be changed into joy, and your fasting into merriment; for ye shall weep no more. Rejoice with song and melody, and change the day formerly spent in sadness and sorrow into a day of jubilee, because I have appeared.”

Directive of Shabtai Tzvi, in 1665

Source 3

“About this time people began to talk of Shabtai Tzvi but woe unto us that we have sinned and never lived to see what we heard and I believed. Throughout the world servants and children rent themselves with repentance, prayer and charity for two, yeah for three years my beloved people Israel sat in labor but there came forth naught but wind....Our joy when the letters arrive from Smyrna is not to be told. Most of them were addressed to Sephardim. As fast as they came they took the letters to the synagogue and read them aloud. Young and old the Germans too hastened to the Sephardic synagogues...Many sold their houses and lands and all their possessions for the day they hoped to be redeemed. My good father-in-law left his home in Hamelin, abandoned his house and lands and all of his goodly furniture. Full well we know the Most High has given us word and were we not so wicked but truly pious from the bottom of our hearts, I’m certain G-d would have mercy on us. If only we kept the commandment, ‘thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ but G-d forgive us for the way we keep it. No good can come from the jealousy and thoughtless hate that rules our lives...”

The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln, (Schocken Books, 1977), pp. 46-47.

Source 4

‘There is here a holy man, my master and teacher, the holy lamp, the lamp of G-d, his honor Rabbi Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. For these past two and a half years a “maggid” has been revealed to him, a holy and tremendous angel who reveals wondrous mysteries to him... The angel speaks out of his mouth but we, his disciples, hear nothing. The angel begins to reveal to him great mysteries. Then my master orders Elijah to come to him and he comes to impart mysteries of his own. Sometimes Metatron, the great prince [and angel], also comes to him as well as the Faithful Shepherd [Moss], the patriarch Abraham, Rabbi Hamnuna the Elder, and That Old Man and sometimes King Messiah and Adam... To sum up, nothing is hidden from him. At first permission was only granted to reveal to him the mysteries of the Torah but now all things are revealed to him.’

Account of Ramchal, by student Rabbi Yekuthiel Gordon which brought the young Ramchal under Rabbinic Scrutiny