

# Rabbi Kaduri's Meeting with Messiah

Much mystery still surrounds Rabbi Kaduri—maybe even more now than in his lifetime. Did he really meet the Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth?



BY TOBY JANICKI

**M**ost of us have a deep longing to know the Master Yeshua and experience his presence in our lives. We probably have all mused at one time or another, “What would it be like to meet Yeshua? What would I say? What would he say?” The possibilities seem endless. For most of us, this remains a desire that will someday come to fruition in the world to come, but one elderly rabbi from Jerusalem claimed that he did actually meet the Messiah.

## His Early Life

Sometime around 1900, Yitzchak Kaduri was born to a family of spice traders in Iraq. Recognized early in life as a Torah prodigy,<sup>1</sup> he often traveled to Jerusalem to study, settling there permanently in 1922.<sup>2</sup>

Kaduri attended the Porat Yosef Yeshiva<sup>3</sup> in Jerusalem and later transferred to Rabbi Yehuda Hadaya's Beit El Yeshiva around 1930.<sup>4</sup> He studied in the mystical branches of Judaism. During his intense learning and probing the deep mysteries of Torah and the Godhead, Rabbi Kaduri also busied himself with teaching others. He refused to take money for this

service; instead he earned his living as a translator for the British Army and then later as a bookbinder.

When Rabbi Kaduri was in his sixties, a yeshiva was established for him in the Bukharian Quarter of Jerusalem, where he was known as a charismatic figure with his signature black gown, long scarf, and red “fez” hat.<sup>5</sup> Yet in spite of his popularity, he continued to live a simple life in poverty and privacy.

## The Tzaddik

Rabbi Kaduri was known to hold to the highest character standards of the Torah. The Orthodox Israeli novelist Chaim Be'er said of Kaduri:

*His appearance was striking; he radiated a great deal of human warmth. [Whenever he] passed by, people would whisper, “There goes a truly righteous individual.”<sup>6</sup>*

One of his students, Rabbi Benaihu Shmueli, described him as an “extremely pleasant man, extremely happy, he did not know what anger was even once.”<sup>7</sup> He was also gentle in his answers to students and advice seekers.

## Some in the Christian community thought Rabbi Kaduri had become a Christian; others thought he had met the antichrist.

Sometimes a student would pose a question, the answer for which he did not feel the student was ready. Instead of refusing to reply, he would evade the question by giving a complex or riddling answer.<sup>8</sup>

Rabbi Kaduri was also known for his disinterest in wealth. A story was told of Kaduri's son, who found a check for \$500.00 in one of the rabbi's books. His son discovered that ten years earlier Rabbi Kaduri had been studying, and a man came in and put a check in the book Kaduri was studying from. Kaduri, engrossed in his studies, noticed neither the donor nor the check.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Rabbi Kaduri's immense learning and wisdom, he never wrote a circulated book or article and, in fact, rarely spoke outside of teaching and answering questions. He felt that "talking too much shortens your life."<sup>10</sup> Even so, he would do his best to make time to see everyone who wanted a blessing or prayer. Those close to him noted that dozens of people sought his counsel and blessing after morning prayers and throughout the day, and "in the goodness of his heart, he did not have the strength to turn away even one."<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi Kaduri was also thought of as one whom HaShem used to heal others. Religious and secular Jews sought prayers from him for things such as sickness or infertility. Hundreds of stories came out after his death of people who had been cured through his counsel and prayers. Even famous Arab world leaders such

as King Hussein of Jordan and Ismail Haniyeh (a senior political leader of Hamas) asked for his prayers and blessing.<sup>12</sup>

### Encounter with Messiah

In 1990 Kaduri met with the famous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Rebbe Schneerson told Kaduri that he would live to see the coming of the revelation of Messiah.<sup>13</sup> On his deathbed, Rabbi Kaduri revealed to his followers that this had indeed happened. He told them that he had met the Messiah:

*The [Rabbis] will investigate my words over the recent months about the Redemption and Messiah and will reveal the secret name of Messiah which was revealed to me on Cheshwan 9, 5764 (November 4, 2003).<sup>14</sup>*

He passed away a few days later, but he left behind a letter and specific instructions not to open the letter until a year after his death. When his followers finally opened the Hebrew note a year later, it read:

בענין הר"ת של משיח  
ירים העם ויוכיח שדברי ותורתו עומדים  
באתי על החתום בחודש הרחמים  
התשס"ה יצחק כדורי

*Regarding the reishet tivot of Messiah: "The people shall lift up and verify that his word and his Torah stand." Written with my signature in the month of Mercy [Elul], 5765, Yitzchak Kaduri.<sup>15</sup>*

*Reishet tivot* [ראשי תיבות] is a method of coding used by Jewish mystics wherein a name or phrase is found in the first letter of each word in a sentence of a paragraph. Therefore the name of the Messiah is to be found in the phrase: "The people shall lift up and verify that his word and his Torah stand" [ירים העם ויוכיח] [שדברו ותורתו עומדים]. Taking the first letter of each word in this Hebrew sentence reveals the

name Yehoshua [יהושוע]. This is the Hebrew form of the Aramaic “Yeshua” [ישוע].

This situation sparked much controversy both in the Orthodox Jewish world and the Christian community because of the closeness to the name of Yeshua. Some in the Christian community thought Rabbi Kaduri had become a Christian; others thought he had met the antichrist. In the Jewish communities opinions ranged from “It’s a forgery,” to “Rabbi Kaduri was crazy.” Yet the organization that continues to be the voice of Kaduri, even after his death, maintains that the letter is authentic.

Perhaps equally as exciting were the things that Rabbi Kaduri said the Messiah had revealed to him regarding the characteristics of Messiah’s revelation. Many of these points are strikingly similar to the descriptions we find of our Master Yeshua in the Gospels and Apostolic Writings:<sup>16</sup>

- The soul of Messiah is conceived inside a person of the Israelite nation.
- The Messiah is engaged in bringing near those who are far away to the world of the Torah.
- The union of the two Messiahs (Messiah son of Joseph and Messiah son of David) has taken place.<sup>17</sup>
- He is to lead Israel, in a pleasant and loving way, to walk in the ways of Judaism.
- By his mouth and words he will gather the outcasts of Israel from all the expanses of the world.
- His words will have the ability, from the moment his mouth forms the letters, to settle easily into the minds of many.
- His sayings will come true by the very fact that they are his words.
- As a leader, Messiah will not sit in some kind of government office.
- He will only say his words through different vessels.
- In the coming future, purity will arrive to the world in the same vessels in which impurity arrived.

- His rule will be absolutely innocent of all lust.
- His true test will not be his ability to perform miracles, but the very essence of his being and his actions. He will act as a simple Jew.
- Messiah does not distinguish between a secular Israelite and a religious one.
- Accepting him is easier for those who do not keep the Torah and the commandments.
- Messiah will reveal himself to individuals, and not necessarily to those who excel in Torah.
- When he is revealed many will wonder: “What, is it he?!”

One thing is for certain: Kaduri’s posthumous note has stirred fresh interest in the Messiah of Israel and his name.

## Conclusion

In the last weeks of his life, Rabbi Kaduri spent much of his time in a hospital with pneumonia, kidney failure, and internal infections. Although he was between 104 and 116 years old, he was described as “lucid and chatty” until the day he died.<sup>18</sup> He finally passed away on Saturday night January 28, 2006 [29th Tevet 5766]. He is survived by his second wife Dorit, whom he married in 1990 (after his first wife had passed); and his son and daughter.

Much mystery still surrounds Rabbi Kaduri—maybe even more now than in his lifetime. Did he really meet the Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth? Perhaps HaShem, in His Divine wisdom, chose to reveal Yeshua to a man who

influenced thousands upon thousands in his search of the deep mysteries of Torah and truth. The parallels between his words and Yeshua of Nazareth are dramatic. One thing is for certain: Kaduri's posthumous note has stirred fresh interest in the Messiah of Israel and his name. 

## Endnotes

- 1 Legend tells us that when Yitzchak was sixteen years old he received a blessing of "long life" from the most important Sephardic rabbi of his time, Rabbi Yosef Chaim, the Ben Ish Chai ("son of man [who] lives"). See Matthew Wagner, "Kaduri Funeral Draws More than 200,000," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 30, 2006.
- 2 *The Times* (London), "Yitzhak Kaduri," February 14, 2006.
- 3 Led by the famed mystical Rabbi Yehuda Petaya (1859–1942), known as the Beit Lechem Yehudah.
- 4 Lawrence Joffe, "Obituary: Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri: Mercurial Jewish Mystic Who Threw His Weight Behind Rightwing Israeli Politicians," *The Guardian* (London), January 31, 2006.
- 5 *The Times* (London), "Yitzhak Kaduri."
- 6 Joffe, "Obituary: Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri."
- 7 Eliezer Sofer, *HaRav Kaduri* (Jerusalem, Israel: Hotza'at Yefe Nof, 2006), 253.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 244.
- 9 Matthew Wagner, "In the Celestial Realms," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 27, 2006.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Sofer, *HaRav Kaduri*, 254.
- 12 Wagner, "In the Celestial Realms" and Sofer, *Harav Kaduri*, 108.
- 13 Baruch Gordon, "Kabbalist Urges Jews to Israel Ahead of Upcoming Disasters," n.p. [cited 22 September 2008]. Online: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/89850>.
- 14 Israel National News, "Rabbi Kauri's Most Recent Words," n.p. [cited December 9th 2006]. Online: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=97225>.
- 15 Yehoshua Meiri, "*Hapetek* ['the note']," n.p. [22 September 2008]. Online: <http://www.kaduri.net/Index.asp?ArticleID=906&CategoryID=225>.
- 16 The following points are taken from Meiri, "*Hapetek*" and translated by FFOZ with special thanks to Ramona Frank for the initial translation work.
- 17 In Judaism there is a tradition that there are two Messiahs: One who suffers, "Messiah ben Joseph," and one who rules and reigns, "Messiah ben David." See for example b.*Sukkah* 52a–b.
- 18 Wagner, "Kaduri Funeral."

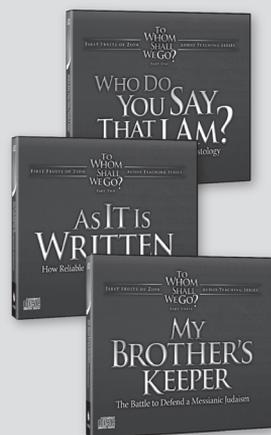
## So Many Questions!

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