Notes on the Study of Later Kabbalah in English

THE SAFED PERIOD & LURIANIC KABBALAH

Don Karr


The small Galilean town of Safed (also Tzefat or Zfat) flourished in the sixteenth century as a center of Jewish ideals and spirituality in all of their expressions: law, ethics, philosophy, and mysticism. This community was home to great teachers and thinkers whose works and ideas have proven some of the most influential in all of Judaism.

Luminaries of the great Safed period include Joseph Karo (1488-1575), the renowned legalist, whose codification of Jewish law, Shulhan Arukh (The Set Table), is authoritative to this day, and Elijah de Vidas, author of the popular kabbalistic ethical treatise, Reshit Hokhmah (The Beginning of Wisdom). Moses Cordovero (1522-70) was a late exponent of the classical kabbalah. A prolific writer, Cordovero succeeded in systematizing a vast and disparate body of kabbalistic lore.

Dominant among these figures was Isaac Luria (1534-1572). Though Luria wrote very little himself, his developments of the kabbalah, primarily as recorded by his chief disciple Hayyim Vital, shaped later Kabbalism and, ultimately, Hasidism. To quote 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. —Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 3rd edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 1955), pages 285-6

It should be noted at the outset that there is a woeful lack of translated material from this period. For example, we have seen but fragments of Cordovero’s Elimah Rabbati (The Great Palm) and Ohr Yakar (Precious Light—a commentary on the Zohar) in English. A full translation of Pardes Rimmonim (Orchard of Pomegranates), Cordovero’s ranging popular compilation of kabbalah, is available.

Some of the works written and compiled by Hayyim Vital and his son Shmuel (Etz Hayyim/Shemonot She’arin), have found their way into English in recent years, but these renderings do not approach the entirety of the Kabbalat Ha-Ari. Only a few of the major Lurianic expositions from succeeding generations have been translated: Abraham Cohen de Herrera’s Puerta del Cielo, Joseph Ben Immanuel Ergas’ Shomer Emunim, Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto’s Kelah Pithei Hokhmah, and significant parts of Yehudah Lev Ashlag’s Talmud Eser Sefirin. English sources on these authors and works are detailed in the following bibliography.

1 See my “Which Lurianic Kabbalah?” at https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which_Lurianic_Kabbalah.
2 On Pardes Rimmonim translations, see below, pages 6 and 7.
3 Refer, in particular, to pages 10-17 below.
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Shlomo Bar Heikel Eliashiv
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OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST
OVERVIEWS & PRE-LURIANIC

Safed


On the writings of Cordovero, de Vidas, and Vital.


“…codes embedded in this poem identify pathways on Kabbalah’s Etz Hayim (Tree of Life).”—page iv.


Fine’s introduction gives historical and religious background to his presentation of Elijah de Vidas’ “The Rules of Mystical Piety” as codified by Cordovero, Luria, Karo, and others, and practiced by Safed mystics.


“I reflect on the mystical writings of Moshe Cordovero, Eliyahu de Vidas, and Hayyim Vital…”


Gutter, Israel. The Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism (New York: Philosophical Library, 1987).

Brief discussions of topics and personalities, including “The Holy City of Safed, Cradle of Kabbalah,” “Ari the Saint: A Star That Shone with a Light of Its Own,” “Rabbi Chaim Vital: The Faithful Disciple of the Ari Hakodosh,” “Rabbi Yeshayahu Halevi Horvitz: Shela the Saint” and “Rabbi Joseph Caro: Compiler of the Shulhan Arukh.”


§ 4. A Zohar for the Shekhinah according to Moses Cordovero
§ 5. R. Joseph Karo and the Revelation of the Feminine Divine Powers
§ 6. R. Isaac Luria Ashkenazi: Revelation as Source of Kabbalah

Kaplan, Aryeh. “Safed” = CHAPTER 5, in Meditation and Kabbalah (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1982).


Kaplan includes quotes from Cordovero’s Parles Rimmonim and Vital’s Sha’arei Qadshah shedding light on biblical techniques of meditation.


Schechter’s article is considered a classic, but now see


Source material from Solomon Alkabez (Ayelet Elhajim), Moses Cordovero (Parles Rimmonim), Moses Alshekh (Shoshanath Ha’Amakim), Abraham Galante (Kinath Seterim), Hayyim Vital (Sefer HaGilgulim), and Israel ben Moses Najara (Zamirin Yisrael).


Silberman’s is one of the better popular books on Kabbalah.


“This book examines kabbalah’s passage from the esoteric to the public domain. Few aspects of Jewish life and religious practice were not touched, commented upon, and eventually changed as a result of the spread of kabbalah.” (Weinstein, page 3) The *kabbalah* Weinstein speaks of is that developed in Safed in the sixteenth century. Thus, we find references to Joseph Karo, Moses Cordovero, and, more prominently, Isaac Luria, with his primary follower, Hayyim Vital.


Abraham Galante: A Biography by Albert Kalderon (New York: Sepher Hermon Press, Inc., 1983) is frequently listed among works on kabbalists of sixteenth-century Safed. This book is not about Abraham ben Mordecai Galante (d. 1560), student of Cordovero and author of kabbalistic commentaries, but rather a more recent member of the same family, Abraham Galante (1873-1961), journalist, historian, and Turkish nationalistic, who “served as a deputy in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey” and “a professor at the University of Istanbul.”

Joseph Karo (1488-1575)


Idel, Moshe. “R. Joseph Karo and His Revelations: On the Apotheosis of the Feminine in Safedian Kabbalah,” WORKING PAPER for the Tikvah Center for Law & Jewish Civilization New York, NYU School of Law, 2010). at Academia.edu:

*https://www.academia.edu/8792022_ R_Joseph_Karo_and_His_Revelations_or_the_Apotheosis_of_the_Feminine_in_Safedian_Kabbalah?email_work_card=titl*


Six passages from *Maggid Mesharim*.


An English translation of *Maggid Mesharim*.
Moses Cordovero (1522-1570)

Abramson, Henry. The Kabbalah of Forgiveness: The Thirteen Levels of Mercy in Rabbi Moshe Cordovero’s DATE PALM OF DEVORAH (Tomer Devarah) (Lulu.com, 2018).

“…a new translation of the first chapter of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero’s classic work … with modern commentary” by Henry Abramson, Dean at Touro’s Lander College of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn.


Ch. 12. Moses Cordovero: selections from Tomer Devarah and Or Ne’erav


Or Ne’erav (THE PLEASANT LIGHT) “constituted an epitome of Cordovero’s great systematic theology of Kabbalah entitled Pardek Rimmonim (THE ORCHARD OF POMEGRANATES).” (Robinson’s Introduction, page xi)


_______. Pardek Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 1-4 / Parts 5-8:5 / Parts 8:6-26 / Parts 9-12, Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Translated by Elyakim Getz (Monfalcone: Providence University, 2007 & 2010)—four volumes.
The preceding four-volume set has been reprinted as “Tome 1 of 12” through “Tome 4 of 12”: © David Smith, LLC, October 1, 2016, and again, edited by Fabrizio Del Tin, by eUniversity.pub, January 1, 2018. “Tome 5 of 12” through “Tome 12 of 12” of this set complete the 32 treatises of *Pardes Rimonim* in these two editions.

Contents of *Pardes Rimonim – Orchard of Pomegranates*, TOMES I-XII, by Moshe Cordovero:

- ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016): Tomes 1-6 translated by Elyakim Getz; Tomes 7-10 translated by Sharron Shatil; Tomes 11-12 translated by Avraham Broide.
- ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018), Tomes 1 of 12—12 of 12, edited by Fabrizio Del Tin.

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__ § 4. A Zohar for the Shekhinah according to Moses Cordovero.__


In tracking the sources of the BeShT’s vocal rites, Idel states,

I shall be concerned here especially with the various forms of the ecstatic one [i.e., Kabbalah] and the Cordoverian corpus and their many reverberations, as well as with the line of a certain type of Jewish astro-magic mediated, especially, by the Cordoverian corpus. (—page 9).


“[I reflect on the mystical writings of Moshe Cordovero, Eliyahu de Vidas, and Hayyim Vital...”


“Chapter three focuses on the concept of *imitatio dei* in Moshe Cordovero’s *Tomer Devorah.*” (FOREWORD, page iv)


A passage from *Pardes Rimmonim*, pages 199-201.


The goals of Raviv’s dissertation are (1) to offer “a more precise biography of RaMaK, his family and overall community in order to shed new light on certain biographical uncertainties and to correct some erroneous data that
have infiltrated modern scholarship; (2) “to broaden J. Ben-Shlomo’s important analysis of RaMaK’s metaphysics (1965) and to deepen our appreciation of RaMaK’s highly complex theoretical edifice—especially the relations between metaphysical and theosophical concerns”; (3) “by offering a broader phenomenological canvas as the backdrop to RaMaK’s intellectual command, this monograph challenges the premature tendency to underplay the intricate affinities between RaMaK’s theoretical aptitude and devotional slant” building upon B. Sack’s “stupendous articulation of RaMaK’s devotional piety.”

Chapter 3 offers a useful survey of Cordovero’s writings. “The fourth chapter, which is devoted to RaMaK’s Sefer Gerushin, examines in depth a composition to which no serious attention had hitherto been given in scholarship.”

(All quotes are from Raviv’s PREFACE.)

“[Josef] Ben Shlomo… (1965)” refers to Ben-Shlomo’s Mystical Theology of Moses Cordovero (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik);

“B[radah] Sack’s stupendous articulation” refers to Sack’s Kabbalah of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero ([Be’re Sheva]: Universitat Ben-Guryon ba-Negev, 1995). Both of these works are in Hebrew, making Raviv’s dissertation the only substantial discussion of Cordovero in English.


Elijah de Vidas (1518-1587) – Reshith Hokhmah


Benyosef translates a significant portion of de Vidas’ kabbalistic ethical classic and provides a full introduction.


Safed Spirituality includes a translation of a condensed version of Elijah de Vidas’ popular Reshith Hokhmah (THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM).


“I reflect on the mystical writings of Moshe Cordovero, Eliyahu de Vidas, and Hayyim Vital…”


A passage from Reshith Hokhmah, pages 207-209.

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4 Elijah de Vidas’ Reshith Hokhmah is not to be confused with the medieval astrological text of the same name by Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1167). Translations of Ibn Ezra’s work abound:

# Lurianic Kabbalah: A Bibliography

Isaac Luria (1534-1572) – *via* Hayyim Vital (1543-1620) & the Safed school

**Etz Hayyim** by Hayyim Vital: The Contents of Four Translations Compared

- **DS/eU** 1 through **DS/eU** 12 = *Etz Hayyim – The Tree of Life* [twelve volumes: Tome 1 of 12, Tome 2 of 12, etc.] translated by Baal Even ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016) / translated/edited by Fabrizio del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018)—the Baal Even and Fabrizio Del Tin translations are identical.

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The scope and order of WC’s “ten Branches” differs significantly from the other versions of Etz Hayyim.

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5 “The Work of the Chariot Trust published the first English translation of all ten Branches of the Etz HaChayyim in 1973.”
   —Daniel Hale Feldman, Qabalah: The Mystical Heritage of the Children of Abraham (Santa Cruz: Work of the Chariot, 2001), p. 76
   “The Etz HaChayyim presents the qabalistic worldview of R.Yitza’q Luria, as recorded by his student R. Chayyim Vital. The book is composed of ten ‘branches.’ The Work of the Chariot published an English translation of all ten branches in 1973.”
   Clearly, these statements about Etz Hayyim do not square with the bibliographic information and tables above. Etz Hayyim has fifty gates, each containing any number of branches, altogether totaling over 370. Also, WC’s first and second editions of Tree of Life are dated 1970.

6 I have yet to locate passages that parallel WC Branch III. The themes which are combined there appear separately elsewhere:
   • DIRECT LIGHT and REFLECTED LIGHT are discussed in Palace I, Gate 6, Branch 6: —M-P, p. 275,—CeC vol. 1, p. 214,—Sm/eU, tome 2, p. 109.
   • the combination of YYHVH and ADNY into YAHDVNHY turns up in the introductory “Prayer to be recited before the study of the book Tree of Life”—Sm/eU, tome 1, p. xii; in Palace 7, Gate 44, Branch 2—Sm/eU, tome 1, pp. 104; and in Palace 7, Gate 46, Branch 6—Sm/eU, tome 11, p. 202.
Translating: Isaac Luria — via Hayyim Vital & the Safed school


“Original Translations from Sha’ar HaGilgulim of the Ari’zal, Nishmat Hayim of HaRav Manasseh Ben Israel of Amsterdam, Hesed L’Avraham of Avraham Azulai, and The Ba’al Shem Tov.”


Ch. 13. Isaac Luria: a selection of passages from the writings of Luria’s disciples, i.e., Etz Hayyim (Vital), Shelhan Arukh ba-Ari (Yakov Zemech), Nagid u-Mezaveh (Zemech).


The selections on the “Kings of Edom,” “Divine Rebirth,” “Adam among the Worlds,” and “Benedictions of the Soul” from the writings of Hayyim Vital, primarily Peri Etz Hayyim (FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE), which was redacted by Meir Poppers.


Lengthy passages of Etz Hayyim (translated by M. Kallus) and Sha’ar baHaqdamot (translated by B. Ogren).

Kaplan, Aryeh. Meditation and Kabbalah (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1982).


Passages from Hayyim Vital’s Ta’amei ha-Mitzvot: Parashat Bereshit and Sha’ar ba-Kavannot.


“The texts presented here come from three collections, Sha’ar Ha-Pesukim, Sefer Ha-Likkutim, and Likkutot Torah, all of which are running commentaries to the Torah. Sha’ar Ha-Pesukim is one of the Vitalian Shemonah Sh’arim. R. Meir Poppers, in his Derekh Etz Hayyim, called Sefer Ha-Likkutim (and Sefer Derashim) part of the “early edition” the Lurianic corpus. This would make it part of the Vitalian school as well. We know that the first edition of Sefer Ha-Likkutim (published under that title) was edited by R. Benjamin Ha-Levi, a student of Vital. Likkutot Torah, first printed in Zolkiew in 1775 appears to be a mosaic of various earlier material consisting largely of the second section of R. Meir Poppers’ Nof Etz Hayyim combined with portions of R. Ya’akov Zemah’s Osar Hayyim, Adam Ya’abar, and Sefer Derashim.” (—§ 7)

Matt includes excerpts from various Lurianic writings: Isaac Luria, “*a kavanah* recorded by Joseph Don Don, ca. 1570”; Hayyim Vital’s *Liqqutim Hadashim* and *Sha’arei Qedushah*; Israel Sarug’s *Limmudei Atsilat*; Menahem Azariah of Fano’s *Yonat Eleh*; and Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto’s *Mesillat Yesharim*.


“This book presents the Arizal’s original study guide, in both Hebrew and English.” (page 4)


“Transmigrations of the Souls – A Translation of Chapter Four of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* by Rabbi Hayyim Vital” – introduction, text and notes (pages 73-95).

Tree 4: RA’A/EVIL, edited by David Meltzer (Berkeley: Berkeley/Tree, 1974).

- pp. 28-30: from *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, Hayyim Vital (translation from the German by Jack Hirschman).


Vital, Chayim. (attr.) *Dershb ba-Daat – Explanation of Knowledge*, translated by Yair Alon ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016)

This work treats the unfolding of the *parshiyot* with explanations and “over 140 drawings.”

- *Etz Chayim – The Tree of Life* [twelve volumes: Tome 1 of 12, Tome 2 of 12, etc.] ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016/[n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).

A collection of excerpts (*Yosef Daat, CharchaVat ba-Daat, Gilay ba-Shem, Makor ba-Shem*) connected to *Dershb ba-Daat* “as written by our Kabbalistic Masters,” e.g., the Zohar, Vital, RaShaSh, Ben Ish Hai.

- *Sha’ar HaGilgulim: Gate of Reincarnations – An English Translation of the Arizal’s Work on Reincarnation: Volume 1 – Chapters 1-35, Volume 2 – Chapters 36-40*, translated and annotated by Rabbi Pinchas Winston [English and Hebrew] (Kiryat Yearim: Thirtysix.org, 2014; rpt. “all in one volume,” 2015; rpt. Paperback, 2018; also available in two volumes as a Kindle Edition). The English translation without the facing Hebrew text but retaining the annotations is available as

  *Arizal On Reincarnation: An English translation of the eighth volume of the Arizal’s teachings on the topic of reincarnation and personal rectification* (Kiryat Yearim: Thirtysix.org, 2020).


  Yitzchak Bar Chaim has inserted clearly marked “personal annotations … to help the reader” (page v).


  An un-annotated version rendered in a large, centered font spread over 270+ carelessly proofed pages.


  Covering *parashat Bereishis* through *Vayechi* from within the book *Beresish* (GENESIS)

The commentaries included begin with a lengthy section on the parashah Shemot (pp. 13-144) with shorter sections on the other parashat (Va’aira, Bo, Beshallach, etc.) within the book Shemot (EXODUS).


On aspects of sewage Rauch ba-Kodesh, see Lawrence Fine’s papers, listed below under Academic Studies.


This translation comes in two editions: English only and English-Hebrew.


With a 12-page introduction. This translation is English only.


This translation is English only.


This translation is English only.

 sewage The Writings of the Arizal (or The Arizal Writings), a brief summary of the “Eight Gates,” the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria Ashkenazi, the Arizal, as transmitted to his student, Rabbi Chaim Vital. … compiled by Rabbi Abraham, son of Rabbi Nisim Cohen Soae (Jerusalem: Bene Aharon Institute, 2016).

Hundreds of passages from throughout Shemonah She’arim.

“The Ben Ish Hai was asked whether it was permitted to translate the Zohar into Arabic, and he replied that it was forbidden due to the complex, profound concepts that could not be properly explained in languages other than the Holy Tongue. This publication [The Writings of the Arizal], therefore, focuses on the superficial kabbalistic parts brought in the Eight Gates and leaves aside the rest.” (—p. 17)


“The teachings in the present anthology are culled from several of Rabbi Vital’s works, chiefly Sha’ar HaPesukin, Sefer Halikutim, and Likutei Torah.” (—PREFACE, page xi). While slightly smaller in format, the fourth printing adds over 200 pages of new content to the original.

Hayyim Vital’s personal, eclectic, and non-Lurianic works: texts & studies

**Sefer ba-Hezyonot (BOOK OF VISIONS)**


The texts translated are *Sefer ba-Hezyonot (BOOK OF VISIONS)* by Hayyim Vital and *Megillat Setarim (BOOK OF SECRETS)* by Rabbi Yitzak Isaac Safrin of Komarno, a 19th-century *hasid* who believed himself to be a reincarnation of Isaac Luria.


On passages from Vital’s *Book of Visions.*


See pages 70-84, § IV, on Vital and *The Book of Visions* on the spirit possession of Raphael Anav’s daughter.


Passages from Morris Faierstein’s translation of *Sefer ba-Hezyonot* revised and introduced by Assaf Tamari.

**Sefer ba-Peulot (BOOK OF OPERATIONS)**

Brod, Eliezer “R. Chaim Vital and his Unknown Work *Sefer ba-Pe’ulot: A Work on Science, Medicine, Alchemy and Practical Magic*” (2010) at *THE SEFORIM BLOG:*


Ch. 28. “Hayyim Vital, Alchemist,” on the alchemical content of *Sefer ba-Peulot.*

Vital’s interest in magic and alchemy has been underplayed to such an extent by the historians of Jewish mysticism that one has the impression that they are embarrassed by the fact that this great Kabbalist devoted much of his attention to such subjects.” (page 341)

—Sha’arei Qedus[ha], or Kedus[ha] (GATES OF HOLINESS)

Sha’arei Qedus[ha] is included under Vital’s independent works because, while written under Lurianic influence, it shows reliance on a wide range of other kabbalists: Nahmanides, Azriel of Gerona, Abraham Abulafia, Joseph Gikatilla, Menahem Recanati, Isaac of Acre, Cordovero, and Elijah de Vidas, among others. (ref. Fine, Lawrence. “Recitation of Mishnah…,” p. 189; see bibliographic details immediately below.)


______. “Serupulous Observance of the Mitzvot: The Kabballistic Way to Complete Mental and Physical Health” (Sha’arei Kedus[ha], Part One, Gate One), in Panu Derekh – Prepare the Way, Issue No. 9 (Chicago: Yeshivat Benei N’vi’im, August/September 1995), pages 27-30.


“An Excerpt from the GATES OF HOLINESS,” pages 94-96.


This paper includes a “partial rendering of part 4 of the Shaarei Kedus[ha]” (—p. 234, n. *).

Tree 4: RA’A/ EVIL, edited by David Meltzer (Berkeley: Berkeley/Tree, 1974).


Omits the fourth part.


“Shaarei Kedus[ha] is an inspirational work by Rabbi Chaim Vital (1543-1620), the foremost disciple of The Ari. It contains instructions and exhortations for a life of utmost holiness, which will ultimately elevate the person to the point where he will be worthy of Divine Inspiration (Raoh Ha-Kodesh). … Respectful of the tradition, we will here omit the fourth part, which was published only recently for the first time in history in Klaivim Chadaishim (THE NEW WRITINGS). We will publish its translation separately.”

—from the preface by Fabrizio Lanza, page viii

For the publications which include the fourth part of *Shaarei Kedusha*, see below:


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Discusses Vital’s *Kabbalat Ma’asit we-Alkhim’ah* (PRACTICAL KABBALAH AND ALCHEMY).


*Ktivim Chadashim* contains Vital’s commentary on *Brit Menucha* (attributed to Avraham ben Yitzchak of Granada), which “deals with Kabbalah Ma’asit (Practical Kabbalah),” and the fourth part of *Shaarei Kedusha*, which “deals with practical ways to force Ruach Ha-Kodesh (Divine Inspiration) to descend upon us.” This work, thus, completes *Shaarei Kedusha*, listed above.

——-. *Sefer ba-Goralot: The Book of Oracles*, translated by Elyakim Getz (Belize City: Providence University, 2007).

“In times of need, the authorities of Israel consulted an Oracle (*Goral*) to learn the will of Ha-Shem (the Lord) and to receive answers to their questions. Conceived by Ahitophel, special adviser of King David, the *Goralot* elicit the intercession of 117 Angels in order to receive an answer directly from God concerning matters which we take at heart.” (—back cover)


The title page of the text-commentary reads, “Book of Formation / Attributed to our Forefather Abraham – may the Peace be with him / According to the version of our Master and Rabbi, the Arizal / With explanations of out teacher and our Rabbi, the great light, The holy Gaon and divine kabbalist, Rabbi Chaim Vital of blessed memory / [published for the first time out of an unique manuscript in the world].”

Ariel Bar Tzadok7 identifies this commentary as being from *Ktivim Chadashim l’Rabbi Chaim Vital* (NEW WRITINGS OF RABBI HAYYIM VITAL) published in Hebrew (Jerusalem, 1988). See above Vital: *Ktivim Chadashim*—which listing does not contain the *Sefer Yetzirah* commentary.

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7 Sefer Yetzirah: The BeGd KaeReT of Chap. 4 (CASSETTE TAPE – Chicago: Yeshivat Benei N’vi’im, 1994).
Academic Studies


*Physician of the Soul* is the most important study on Luria in English to date. Not only is Lurianic doctrine treated but also Luria’s life, his activities, and his circle of fellow kabbalists—all without succumbing to the mythology which surrounds the Ari. Oddly, Fine does not tell us how Luria actually died, just that he died “by a kiss.”


“I reflect on the mystical writings of Moshe Cordovero, Eliyahu de Vidas, and Hayyim Vital…”


“I have concentrated on the versions of the Lurianic cabala expounded by Haim Vital and Joseph ibn Tabul and have not included the predominantly linguistic innovations of Israel Sarug which merit separate treatment.” (—page 13, n. 3)


Giller discusses how the *Zohar* was interpreted by the Safed Kabbalists, Moses Cordovero and, particularly, Isaac Luria, with special attention to developments of the *Idrot*.


§ II contains five articles on spirit possession in Safed, and there are eight appendices offering texts from this period. The predominant sources for the articles and the texts offered are the works of Hayyim Vital.


“Yosef Hacker of Hebrew University in Jerusalem discusses "Introduction to R Hayim Vital and his Treatise ‘Etz Hayim’ – The Tree of Life and to the ‘Sha’ar haHaqdamot’ – Gate of Principles (1572).” Unfortunately, Hacker is repeatedly interrupted by argumentative colleagues—one in particular—which quickly becomes tedious and annoying.


Krassen translates and comments on two passages from Vital’s Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim (GATE OF TRANSMIGRATIONS) (pp. 4-5 and 6). Also in this issue of Kabbalah is a segment of Sefer Etz Hayyim: Sha’ar baKalah, p. 10ff, on “The Ascent of Saints” translated by Eliyahu Klein (p. 7).


Magid argues “that the mythic world of Lurianic Kabbala is both a response to, and a construction of, the historical reality in which it lived; furthermore, its canonical status influences the way future generations understand their own historical station.” (—page 1)


Magid shows how Lurianic kabbalah, primarily through Vital’s writings, presents itself as a “meta-text” which seeks no justification in Scripture, as its predecessor, the Zobair, did. This suggests that only through the Lurianic meta-text can the Torah be understood.


______. “Zelim (Image) and Medicine in the Lurianic Teaching (According to the Writings of R. Hayim Vital),” in Karoh, Vol. 8, Nos. 5-6 (Jerusalem: The Israel Institute of the History of Medicine, Fall 1982), pp. 170-176.


“[F]our studies by Mordechai Pachter on central ideas in kabbalistic thought: (1) The Root of Faith is the Root of Heresy; (2) Circles and Straightness; (3) Smallness and Greatness; (4) Devequt in Sixteenth Century Safed. The first study describes the most supreme point of deity revealing itself out of the depths of Ein-Sof (the Infinite), the point defined as faith. The second chapter goes on to the two modes of revelation and operation of all the Divine sefirot, the modes of circles and straightness; and the third chapter treats the Sefirot, namely the two lower configurations, ze’ir ‘amn (the Short Countenance) and maqva (the Female), who are the Lurianic equivalents of the sefirot Tiferet and Malkhut, in their two states of
development and growth: the state of qatnut (smallness) and the state of gadlut (greatness); the final chapter discusses the lowest point of the Divine world, the point at which man and God meet in communion, i.e. deqvat.”


A summary of kabbalistic beliefs concerning the punishment of sin after death, exorcism, and spirit possession. An excerpt from Vital’s Sefer ha-Gilgulim is translated.


Ch.1.IV. “Lurianic Kabbalah and its myth of exile and redemption”

Ch.1.V. “The historical role and social significance of Lurianic Kabbalah”

Ch.1.VI. “The spread of Lurianic Kabbalah until 1665”


“This book, cited by every significant bibliography in kabbalistic scholarship, is the first and only comprehensive work ever to provide a definitive description of Lurianic kabbalah. Working with an immense range of texts, Isaiah Tishby approached his discussion from one specific angle—the problem of evil. Tishby demonstrates that Luria’s unique contribution to theodicy was to indicate that the source of evil is the result of a profound catastrophe that takes place deep within the Godhead itself. This idea is consistent with ancient gnostic themes but is reinterpreted by Luria to provide a uniquely Jewish response to the problem of evil. This is the first ever translation of the work into English, and represents a valuable contribution to the world of Jewish scholarship.” (—Kegan Paul description)

“The publication of an English translation of the foundational study of Lurianic Kabbalah by Isaiah Tishby is a major event for religious studies and all those who wish to gain a better understanding of Kabbalistic literature. Access to the Lurianic corpus is extremely limited given the dense and enigmatic style of the various Hebrew writings that comprise this immense corpus. There are very few programmatic studies of its central themes and most of all those are available only in Hebrew, often mirroring the opaque character of its sources. This may be inevitable for studies written in the language of the primary sources, which often boast a faithfulness to the original as they claim to preserve the multiple meanings contained within any expression or passage, but ultimately circumvent the difficult task of deciding on its contextual meaning. Isaiah Tishby advanced the study of this corpus with painstaking analysis and comparisons of all the major texts as he interpreted the main themes regarding the problem of evil. Even so, his contribution is taken to new heights in the meticulous translation of David Solomon who rendered both the Lurianic sources and Tishby’s interpretations into a clear prose that provides unfettered access to what is arguably the most esoteric body of Kabbalistic literature. This was made possible because Solomon was trained in both the study of Kabbalistic texts and the art of translation and the volume before you displays his mastery of both. In this sense, the English translation before you is not the lesser shadow of the original Hebrew study, but perhaps a more important exposition of the study of Lurianic Kabbalah and its presentation of Tishby’s contribution.” (—Cherub Press description)

Tishby’s brief article discusses the Lurianic ideas of the “breaking of the vessels” and the “falling of the sparks.”


The legends of Luria’s “wondrous knowledge,” *i.e.*, unlimited access to truth.


“In the remainder of this study I would like to concentrate on one specific ecstatic technique, that of weeping, which appears a number of times in the writings of Vital” (—page 215).
Adaptations, recent authors’ commentaries, lessons, legends

Abdulaziz, Matthew. Gate of Reincarnations: Explanation of Work of One of the Greatest Kabbalists – Reincarnation Stories (independently published, 2021)—which is the same as


Contains numerous legends of the Arizal, then brief selections of Hayyim Vital’s works: Ets Haim, Peri Ets Haim, Shaar Hagilgulim, Shaar Hakavanot, Shaar Hamitsot, Shaar Hapesukim, and Shaar Raa’b Hakodesh.


“Herein are discussed in-depth lessons from the master Kabballist, Rabbi Hayyim Vital, who recorded for us the Kabballah Torah of the Arizal. Rabbi Vital’s language is more intense in its usage of metaphor and symbol that any other school of Kabballah. Yet, to understand it literally is a terrible misfortune.” (—The Evolution of God, back cover)


The book includes Dudaim Basadeh’s essay, “Kabballah and the Modern Sciences” (3rd April 1952), which offers brief chapters on astronomy, psychology, and cosmology.


Derived primarily from Vital’s Ets Hayyim and Peri Ets Hayyim, Sur me’er va’aseh tov “is unique in its blending of classical [i.e., Lurianic] kabbalah with the approach of Beshtian Hasidism” (Jacobs’ PREFACE).


“This book attempts to present an accurate picture of Luria’s thoughts, and is based on the writings of Luria’s favorite student, Rabbi Chaim Vital. … It is said that Luria authorized only Vital from his many students to preserve his system.” (—PREFACE, p. i)


“Wonder tales” from Sefer Shiur ha-Ari with tired “modern art” drawings.


“…desk reference for basic concepts, relationships, keywords, and core principles of Lurianic Kabballah.”


https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2853891/jewish/Tzimtzum.htm (index page)

- “Creation Impossible: What Is Tzimtzum Like?”
- “Immanent Transcendence: Chassidim, Mitnagdim, and the Debate about Tzimtzum”
- “Everywhere Revealed: How Everyone, Children Included, Can Apprehend the Unknowable Essence of G-d”
- “About Presence: The Revelatory Trace (RESHMU) of the Divine Withdrawal”
- “Covert Luminosity: The Reshimu, the Kar, and the Concretization of Creativity”
- “Making Space: The Chassidic Concept of Tzimtzum and Its Applications in Our Service of G-d”

(VIDEO)


Part I on reincarnation is “…adapted and translated for the English reader directly from the original text, Gateway to Reincarnation [Shear ha-Gilgulim], written by Rabbi Chaim Vital, ציור, as taught to him by the Arizal.”

Part II on creation “…is adapted from the Great works of Rabbi Chaim Vital, of blessed memory: The Gateway to the Introductions [She’ar ha-Hakdamot] and the Treasury of Life [Otsrot Hayim].”

Part I of this work has been reissued with a new introduction as The Gateway to Reincarnation: Translation of the Work of the Arizal (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018; Kindle edition, 2020).


“This book … is primarily derived from the work of Rabbi Chaim Vital called The Fruit of the Tree of Life [Pri Etz Hayyim].” (—FOREWORD, page xvii)

Yassif, Eli. The Legend of Saad: Life and Fantasy in the City of Kabbalah, translated by Haim Watzman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019).

Numerous tales, many from the writings of Hayyim, Vital are quoted in full; the primary protagonists are the Ari and Vital.
A SELECTION OF SECONDARY LITERATURE ON TZIMTZUM


· “Creation Impossible: What Is Tzimtzum Like?”
· “Immanent Transcendence: Chassidim, Mitnagdim, and the Debate about Tzimtzum”
· “Everywhere Revealed: How Everyone, Children Included, Can Apprehend the Unknowable Essence of G-d”
· “About Presence: The Revelatory Trace (RESHIMU) of the Divine Withdrawal”
· “Covert Luminosity: The Rebimnu, the Kar, and the Concretization of Creativity”
· “Making Space: The Chassidic Concept of Tzimtzum and Its Applications in Our Service of G-d” (VIDEO)


Yosef ibn Tabul (1545-1610)


“I have concentrated on the versions of the Lurianic cabala expounded by Haim Vital and Joseph ibn Tabul and have not included the predominantly linguistic innovations of Israel Sarug which merit separate treatment.” (—page 13, n. 3)


While based primarily on the writings of Hayyim Vital (in particular Etz Hayyim), The Doctrine of Evil also draws on the works of Yosef Ibn Tabul (e.g., Drush Hafezi-Bab), whose writings are closer to Luria’s than Vital’s on many key points.

Moshe Yonah (fl. 1570-1590)


Klein offers a translation of Sha’ar ha-Kelaim (GATE OF PRINCIPLES), which serves as a preface to some printed editions of Vital’s Etz Hayyim, though it is almost certainly written by one of Luria’s other students, Moshe Yonah. According to the introduction, “It is obvious that The Gate of Principles is an abbreviated version of the original and complete unpublished manuscript of Moshe Jonah’s Kanfei Yonah…” (—page 23). The text presents a version of Luria’s system which was apparently formulated earlier than Vital’s magnum opus.

Israel Sarug (fl. 1590-1610)


Hertz, Naftali. Mystic Tales from the EMEK HAMELECH, with commentary by R. DovBer Pinson (Brooklyn: IYYUN Center for Jewish Spirituality, 2015).


_____. “Conceptualizations of Tzimtzum in Baroque Italian Kabbalah,” in The Value of the Particular: Lessons from Judaism and the Modern Jewish Experience [FESTSCHRIFT FOR STEVEN T. KATZ ON THE


______. “Italy in Safed, Safed in Italy: Toward an Interactive History of Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah,” in Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy, edited by David B. Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Sarug is discussed on pages 255-256.


Matt offers a brief excerpt from Sarug’s Limmudei Aṣilut called “TRACES” on page 97.


Analyzes two passages from Limmudei Aṣilut on God’s pre-creation “shaking” and “delight,” translating the second of these at length.
Menahem Azarya of Fano (1548-1620)


Matt offers a brief except from Fano’s “On the Tehiru” from the beginning of his Yonat Elen, titled SHATTERING AND GROWTH—page 96.


An annotated translation of Gikudei Nesamot, an account of the reincarnations of figures throughout Jewish history, presented alphabetically.


Sierka states that Azaria’s compilation/redaction of Kanfei Yonah “was part of Naftali Bacharach’s Kabbalistic library, and was intensively studied by the Italian branch of post-Lurianic kabbalists” (ibid, page 75).
Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591-1655)


Naftali Hertz Bacharach (fl. early-to-mid-1600s)

Bakhrakh, Rab Naftali. תنصر על הגל reactionary & ב: נס העמלת - שערים: [EMEQ HAMELEKH | The Depth of the King – Gates 1 & 2, A Lucid Translation by The Chief Magician of Mystery Babylon, Rab Ya’aqob Bar Ilah & Rab Yeshua Bar Sakhar [n.p.: independently published, 2021].


“Emek HaMelekh, besides being a profound work on Kabbalah, contains a wealth of spiritual stories embedded within the text, which the author utilizes to illustrate or animate a particular point of interest”—from the back cover.


Some brief passages from Emek ha-Melekh on evil (apparently influenced by Israel Sarug) appear on pages 81-82.


Isaiah Horowitz (ca. 1560-1630)


An introduction to Shnei Luhot Habrit.


Moshe Zacuto (fl. 1570-1590)


Zacuto, Moshe. Shorshei Ha-Shemot – Roots of the Names, five vols. (Tome 1 of 5, Tome 2 of 5, etc.) ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016/[n.p.]: eUniversity, 2018).

Abraham Cohen de Herrera (ca. 1570-ca.1635)


Shabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), the Shabbatean Movement & Its Aftermath


The original of this dramatization was likely in Yiddish.


Within this book about an eighteenth-century anti-heresy campaigner is a lot of material on the dispersal of Lurianic *kabbalah*.


The Amazon ad copy states, “Fully annotated and elucidated by Gershon Scholem,” though this is not mentioned in the book itself. The text, called *Treatise on the Dragons*, is given substantial treatment by Scholem in *Sabbatai Sevi*, pp. 297-325.

Oegema, Gerbern S. “Thomas Coenen’s ‘Ydele verwachtinge der Juden’ (Amsterdam, 1669) as an Important Source for the History of Sabbatai Sevi,” in *Jewish Studies Between Disciplines / Judaistik zwischen den Disziplinen* [PAPERS IN HONOR OF PETER SCHAER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY], edited by Klaus Herrmann, Margarete Schüter, and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003).


Also in Kabbalah concerning other figures, pro and con, around the Sabbatean movement:

- “Judah Leib Prossnitz,” pages 441-442.


CHAPTER 7, “The Sabbatian Movement” and CHAPTER 8, “Developments in Sabbatianism.”


**Jacob Frank (1726-1791)**

(variously Yakov, or Yaakov, Franck, Yankiel Leivitch)


The charlatans, or “false messiahs,” deals with are Wolf Eibeschütz (son of the famed Jonathan Eibeschütz) and Jacob Frank.


Joseph ben Immanuel Ergas (1685-1730)


Immanuel Hai Ricci (Ricchi, Riki, or Rikki) (1688-1743)


Fraenkel outlines points (pp. 63-71) and translates passages (pp. 228-263) re. Ergas vs Ricci on whether tzimtzum should be taken literally.


Jacob Koppel Lifschuetz (fl. early 1700s)


Jonathan Eibeschütz (1690-1764)


Hayyim ben Moshe ibn Attar (1696-1743)


Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1707-1746)

OVERTLY KABBALISTIC WORKS:
   The first full translation of Luzzatto’s summary of Lurianic Kabbalah, 138 Openings (or Gates) of Wisdom, from the Hebrew text of Rabbi Chaim Friedlander.
   _____, General Principles of the Kabbalah (Research Centre of Kabbalah, 1970; distributed by Samuel Weiser, New York).
   An abridged version of Luzzatto’s outline of Lurianic Kabbalah, i.e., Kelab Pitbei Hokhem.
   _____, The Kabbalah of the Ari Z’al according to the Rambal, Rabbi Moshe Hayim Luzzatto, translated and commented by Rabbi Raphael Affilalo (Montreal: Kabbalah Editions, 2004).
   The ten chapters of Luzzatto’s 17-page Kelalit ba-Ilan ba-Qadosh are the basis of this introduction to Lurianic Kabbalah of RaMaH.

OTHER WORKS IN ENGLISH:
   The ethical treatise for which Luzzatto is best known.
   _____, Secrets of the Future Temple, translated by Avraham Greenbaum (Jerusalem: Temple Institute / Azamra Institute, 1999).
   Secrets… offers a translation of Luzzatto’s Mishkney Elyon, DWELLINGS OF THE SUPREME, which “explains the inner meaning of the Temple services and their role of bringing Shefa to the souls on their level and to angels on theirs” (p. 44).

STUDIES:

Garb, Jonathan. “Mussar, Curriculum and Exegesis in the Circle of Ramhal” (working paper). The Tikvah Center for Law & Jewish Civilization (New York: NYU School of Law, 01/12).


CHAPTER TWELVE. “The Maggid of Rabbi Moses Hayyim Luzzatto,” contains a letter from Luzzatto regarding “mystical claims made on [his] behalf” (page 137).


An introduction to Luzzatto’s Kelach Pitkei Hukhmah.


______. LIKE IRON TO A MAGNET: MOSES HAYIM LUZZATTO’S QUEST FOR PROVIDENCE. Ph. D. diss. (New York: City University of New York, 2014).

This dissertation takes a close look at Mesillat Yesharim, “Luzzatto’s most enigmatic work.”


Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793)


Elijah ben Solomon, Gaon of Vilna, the GRA (1720-1797)


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“…Mithnagged worship is neither about personal needs [n]or experience, rather it is a cognitive act of adoration of the Divine.” (—page XXXII)


“In this paper, I will present three aspects of the Vilna Gaon’s own unique mystical path to God, that will evidence the need for the Gra’s writings to be addressed in scholarship. I will start with his innovation within the theory of Lurianic Kabbalah that pertain to his mysticism, then I will examine the nature of his mysticism, and finally, I will conclude with his relationship to the world of Hasidic spirituality.” (—pages 131-132)


“He viewed the knowledge of the Torah that he acquired by force of hard intellectual work as the most exalted expression of divine revelation…” (page 3)


“An exciting expansion of the Vilna Gaon’s powerful ideas on the purpose of Creation, the Jewish People and its history and destiny, and the coming of Mashiach.”—Feldheim’s description.


Teachings of the Vilna Gaon are referenced throughout; see in particular, volume 2, pp. 71-91.

“R. Eliyahu of Vilna and His School” (pp. 129-133) and “The Moderation of the Vilna Gaon’s School” (pp. 159-162).


Glotzer quotes and refers to the Gaon’s commentary on SY throughout.


Hofets Hayyim, or Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933), was the popular name of Yisrael Meir Kagan Poupko, a leader of the Musar movement. Martyr Elhanan (or Elchonon) Bunim Wasserman (1874-1941) was one of Hofets Hayyim’s principal followers.

In English, see Wasserman’s *Epoch of the Messiah* (Brooklyn: Ohr Elchonon Publications, n.d.) and *Reb Elchonon: The Life and Ideals of Rabbi Elchonon Bunim Wasserman of Baranovich*, by Aaron Sorasky (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1982).


Morgenstern’s book is “based on discoveries originating in hitherto unknown documents that were buried in archives across the former Soviet Union,” namely Poland. “These diverse collections … recount attempts by rabbis and kabbalists to reveal the timing of the messianic redemption by interpreting codes embedded in Scripture, and records their various mystical actions to hasten the redemption, using ‘practical Kabbala (mystical practices), searching for the ten lost tribes, and making ‘aliya’—immigrating to Erez Israel.” (from the PREFACE, page xi)


Nadler gives special attention to Phineas ben Judah, Maggid of Polotsk (fl. 1788-1820, d. 1823), as “A Paradigm of Mithnagdic Religion.”


Shaklover (or Shklober), Rabbi Hillel (Rabbi Hillel Rivlin of Shklov), *The Voice of the Turtledove: In the Footsteps of the Mashiach* [orig. *Kol haTor*]. A Digest of Seven Pirkei Ha-Geulah / Chapters on Redemption; principal translator, Rabbi Yechezkel Bar Lev (with K. Skaist) (Petach Tivka: [n.p.], [ca. 1994]; distributed by Feldheim, New York – Jerusalem).

Rabbi Hillel Shklober (1758-1838) was a grand-nephew and student of Rabbi Eliyahu, the Vilna Gaon, upon whose teachings *The Voice of the Turtledove* is based. Note, however, that this edition is incomplete; see above under “Bakst...The Secret Doctrine...”


“Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin ... reports some interesting details of his master’s life in his Introduction to the Gaon’s commentary on the Sifra de-Sen’atuba…” Werblowsky offers a condensed rendering.


The Gaon of Vilna (Elijah ben Solomon Zalman: 1720-97) is “cited to illustrate the linguistic process of God’s self-disclosure” through his comments on *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar*.


Wolfson discusses the Gaon of Vilna’s commentary on the *Sefer Yezirah*.

**Hayyim ben Isaac Volozhin, or Chaim Volozhin (1749-1821)**


Chapter 26, “Hayyim of Volozhin” (excerpts from *Nefesh baHayim*, Gate 4, pages 253-258.


The linguistic theory of discourse markers is used to analyze the Hasidic sayings of the BeShiT and his followers vs. R. Hayyim’s *Nefesh HaHayyim*. 

Commonly studied in *yeshivat*, *Nefesh HaChayim* Gate 4 (of four) concerns “Torah study.”


This edition has been described as “Rabbi Abraham Yaakov Finkel’s excerpted colloquial translation … [which] left out the translations of the many sections they deemed too sensitive” (Leonard Moskowitz’ introduction to *The Soul of Life*, page ix—listed below).

Finkel’s approach seems to reflect that taken by “those Yeshivot where [Nefesh Hachaim] is formally studied, [where] most only focus on specific sections … [u]sually just the Fourth Gateway and sometimes also the Second Gateway” avoiding “sensitive Kabbalistic subject matter” (—Avinoam Fraenkel’s introduction to *Nefesh HaTzimtzum*, page 29 and page 29, note 2—listed immediately below).


This edition provides the complete *Nefesh HaChaim* in English and Hebrew, along with a wealth of supplemental material, including a “deeply Kabbalistic” tract by Rabbi Yitzchak, Rabbi Chaim’s son, known by the title *Maamar BeTzeLeM*, DISCOURSE ON THE IMAGE.


**CHAPTER FIFTEEN, “The Mystical Experiences of the Gaon of Vilna,” offers a report on the GRA by R. Hayyim of Volozhin.**


Unterman’s collection contains numerous excerpts from *Nefesh Hachaim.*
Shneur Zalman of Lyady (1745-1812) & HaBaD


Annotated passages from the works of the early hasidim arranged by topic, scores from Shneur Zalman of Lyady, with extremely helpful introductions.


**Bet El:**


See Jonathan Meir, “Ariel Bension and the Imagined Decline…,” which is chapter 1 “The Last Kabbalists,” §1 (pages 1-3), in *Kabbalistic Circles in Jerusalem*, listed immediately below.


CHAPTER 2. “The Kabbalah Seminaries of Jerusalem.”

**Shalom Sharabi (1720-1777)**


“The Near Eastern Hegemony of R. Shalom Shar’abi” (pp. 123-129).


Giller’s book is the first and, so far, only full-length study of Shar’abi and *Bet El* in any language.


CHAPTER FOURTEEN, “The Mystical Meditations of Shalom Sharabi and the Kabbalists of Bet El.”

Yosef Hayyim b. Elijah al-Hakam of Baghdad—Ben Ish Hai (1835-1909)


Bratt, Yerachmiel (trans.) The Light of the Ben Ish Chai on Ras [Ruth] (Southfield: Targum Press, 2018).


Yehuda Fatiyah (1859-1942)


The second and third of these offer translated excerpts of Fatiya’s Minhat Yehudah.


Harari’s article gives an account of Yehudah Fatiyah’s involvement in the “Circle of Blood” incident of WWII (September 1942).

**Sha’ar ha-Shamayim**


CHAPTER 3. “Merging Traditions: The Sha’ar haShamayim Yeshiva.”

CHAPTER 4. “The Search for Lost Tribes”

Phineas Elijah Hurwitz (1765-1821)


Pinchas Hurwitz (1765-1821) touted *Book of the Covenant* (Sefer ha-Brit) as a commentary on Hayyim Vital’s *Sha’are Keduscha* (Gates of Holiness). More, it appears to be an attempt to reconcile kabbalah and science.

**Elyakim Getzel Hamilzahgi (1780-1854)**


**Yizhak Isik Haver Waldman (1789-1853)**


Haver’s ideas are discussed pp. 155-163.


**Shlomo Bar Heikel Eliashiv, “Leshem” (1841-1926)**


*Leshem* is cited and quoted throughout both of Baskt’s books.


Passages from *Leshem Shevo VeAchlama* on pp. 168-229.

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8 At the HASHKAFACIRCLE website ([http://www.hashkafacircle.com/](http://www.hashkafacircle.com/)) is a series of video *shuirim* (LESSONS) by Rabbi Trieberz, one of which is “Rabbi Trieberz’s introduction to the Leshem, and the Leshem’s introduction to the Hakdamos u-Shirim.”

Also find Joey Rosenfeld’s lecture series, “Leshem Shevo V’Achlama,” on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/user/joro230](https://www.youtube.com/user/joro230).


Eliashiv’s ideas are discussed pp. 136-144.

Rosenfeld, Joey. “A Tribute to Rav Shlomo Elyashiv, Author of Leshem Shevo v-Achloma: On his Ninetieth Yahrzeit,” at The Seforim Blog (Thursday, March 10, 2016); A Tribute to Rav Shlomo Elyashiv, Author of Leshem Shevo v-Achloma: On his Ninetieth Yahrzeit – The Seforim Blog

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Winston offers commentary on the weekly portions (Bereishis, Noah, Lech-Lecha, etc.) which are based on the teachings of Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv (1841-1926).


A collection of essays covering a wide range of subjects.


—. *A Tapestry for the Soul: The Introduction to the Zohar by Rabbi Yehuda Lev Ashlag.* Explanation of the text uses excerpts collated from Rabbi Ashlag’s other writings; includes suggestions for inner work, compiled by Yedidah Cohen (Safed: Nehora Press, 2010).

“This book is a study guide to a key text in Kabbalah, *The Introduction to the Zohar* by Rabbi Yehudah Ashlag, as published in English in *In the Shadow of the Ladder.*” (Preface, page ix.)

See the description of *In the Shadow of the Ladder,* below.

—. *And You Shall Choose Life: An Essay on Kabbalah, the Purpose of Life, and Our True Spiritual Work,* edited by Michael Berg (Los Angeles: The Kabbalah Centre International, 2011).

—. *Entrance to the Tree of Life* (*HAKDAMOT*, Part 2) (Jerusalem: Research Centre of Kabbalah, 1977).

—. *Entrance to the Zohar* (*HAKDAMOT*, Part 1) (Jerusalem: Research Centre of Kabbalah, 1974).

—. *In the Shadow of the Ladder: Introductions to the Kabbalah.* Translated from the Hebrew with additional explanatory chapters by Mark Cohen and Yedidah Cohen (Safed: Nehora Press, 2002).

This collection’s CHAPTER 3, “Introduction to the Zohar,” is a new translation of the text which appears as PART ONE of *Entrance to the Zohar,* “A Preface to the Zohar.” CHAPTER 4 is another substantial piece by Ashlag, “Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot.” “The Ladder” in the title refers to Ashlag’s Hebrew translation (with embedded commentary) of the Zohar, *Ha Sulam,* which has been translated into English and published by The Kabbalah Centre.


- Vol. II, *Introduction to the Book Zohar* includes “Preface to the Book of Zohar,” which is the same text as *An Entrance to the Zohar,* Part Two; AND “Introduction to the Book of Zohar,” which is the same text as *In the Shadow of the Ladder,* Chapter 3, and *An Entrance to the Zohar,* Part One. Laitman presents both with extensive commentary.


—. *Shamati (I Heard)* (Toronto – Brooklyn: Bnei Baruch/Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2008).

These volumes represent the first two parts of *Talmud Eser Sefirot: Tzimtzum and Kav and Igulim and Yosher.*

Parts 1-8 and 16 of *Talmud Eser Sefirot* in English are online at [Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Education & Research Institute](http://www.kabbalah.info/eng/content/view/frame/32695?/eng/content/view/full/32695&main), founded by Rabbi Michael Laitman:


*Wisdom of Truth* contains all the same essays as *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (noted above); *Wisdom…* includes the Hebrew on facing pages.


*Kabbalah for the Student* is a vast collection of articles (some quite lengthy), prefaces, excerpts, and explanations from R. Yehuda Ashlag, with additional material from Yehuda’s son Baruch, and Baruch’s personal assistant, Michael Laitman. Most of the writings presented in *Kabbalah for the Student* were previously published in the books listed above:

- “Hallan” (12 diagrams) = “Sefer Ha-Ilan” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005)
- “Introduction to the Book of Zohar” ≈ “Preface to the Zohar” which is PART ONE of *An Entrance to the Zohar* (1974); the same text is given piece by piece, surrounded by Laitman’s commentary as “Introduction to the Book of Zohar” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005)
- “Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot” is also Chapter 4 of *In the Shadow of the Ladder* (2002)
- “Preface to the Book of Zohar” ≈ “An Introduction to the Zohar” which is PART TWO of *An Entrance to the Zohar* (1974); the same text is given piece by piece, surrounded by Laitman’s commentary as “Preface to the Book of Zohar” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005)
- “Preface to the Wisdom of Kabbalah” = “The Preamble to the Wisdom of Kabbalah” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005), surrounded by Laitman’s commentary
- “This is for Judah” ≈ “This is for Yehuda” in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984); also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- Appendix C. “Diagrams of the Spiritual Worlds” ≈ “Album of Drawings” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005), except all of the drawings are in reverse, and *Kabbalah for the Student* adds nine diagrams

[22 volumes + index: 1 volume, 1993; completed, 2001; index, 2003]); see Kabbalah Centre’s website: [www.kabbalah.com](http://www.kabbalah.com)

The Zohar, paragraph by paragraph, is presented in the original Aramaic and in English. The English is a translation of Rabbi Ashlag’s *Ha Sulam* (THE LADDER), i.e., Ashlag’s Hebrew translation of the Zohar containing his “embedded commentary,” which, in the Kabbalah Centre’s edition, is shown in a different typeface from the Zohar text. (*Ha Sulam* was published in Jerusalem, 1945-1955.) Most chapters are introduced by short summaries, which, starting at volume 3, are headlined “A Synopsis.” Some chapters are further set up by additional paragraphs headlined “The Relevance of the Passage.” Each volume contains a glossary of Hebrew words, including biblical names and kabbalistic terms.

Ashlag’s commentary appositively identifies many of the Zohar’s widely (wildly) ranging referents with sefirot, parashiyot, and other features fundamental to Lurianic developments. Elsewhere the commentary fleshes out the Zohar’s apparent shorthand (often by simply identifying the antecedents of potentially ambiguous pronouns). In some paragraphs, the commentary overwhells the text; in others, no commentary at all appears.

Of the *Sulam* commentary, Isaiah Tishby (—*Wisdom of the Zohar*, p. 105) says, “The explanations follow the Lurianic system and are of little help in clarifying the literal meaning of the text.”


**Levi Isaac Krakovsky (1891-1966)**

A STUDENT OF ASHLAG


OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST


“In Jerusalem there is a kabbalist who dedicates his life to teaching others how to search for God where He can be found, namely, on the days of the Jewish calendar where a special Divine energy is available. This is Rabbi Rafael Moshe Luria, a descendant of the father of kabbalists, Rabbi Isaac Luria of sixteenth-century Sefad, (sic) who is known as the holy Ari.” (Living the Kabbalah, preface, page xiii)


 contains passages from Shelomoh Alkabetz, Yitzhak Luria, Shabbatean hymns, Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto, and Shneur Zalman, among many others.


Contains passages from Cordovero, Luria, Vital, Avraham Azulai, Shalom Sharabi, Luzzatto, the Vilna Gaon, Chaim Volozhin, Schneur Zalman, Ben Ish Hai, and Yehudah Ashlag, among many others.

Garb, Jonathan. “‘Alien’ Culture in the Circle of Rabbi Kook,” in Study and Knowledge in Jewish Thought, edited by Howard Kreisel (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2006), pages 253-264.


See in particular CHAPTER THREE, “Empowerment through Trance” (pages 47-74), which discusses, among others, Hayyim Vital and Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto.


Gutwirth, Israel. The Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism (New York: Philosophical Library, 1987).

Brief discussions of topics and personalities, including “The Holy City of Safed, Cradle of Kabbalah,” “Ari the Saint: A Star That Shone with a Light of Its Own,” “Rabbi Chaim Vital: The Faithful Disciple of the Ari Hakodosh,” “Rabbi Yeshayahu Halevi Horvitz: Shela the Saint” and “Rabbi Joseph Caro: Compiler of the Shulhan Arukh.”


“Contributors” of brief passages include Joseph Karo, Moses Cordovero, Chaim Vital, Judah Lowe, Shalom Sharabi, Moses Chaim Luzzatto, Elijah ben Solomon, Schneur Zalman, Chaim Volozhin, Ben Ish Hai, and Yehudah Ashlag, and many others.


______. Messianic Mystics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); see CHAPTER FIVE “From Italy to Safed and Back.”

______. “One from a Town, Two from a Clan”—The Diffusion of Lurianic Kabbala and Sabbateanism: A Re-Examination,” in Jewish History, Volume 7, Number 2 (Haifa: Haifa University Press, Fall 1993), pp. 79-104.

______. “Ta'amah: Erotic Delights from Kabbalah to Hasidism,” in Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism [ARIES BOOK SERIES, vol. 7], edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2008); see especially § DELIGHT IN ECSTATIC KABBALAH (pages 123-130).


The section on Jewish mysticism includes passages—with Jacob’s comments—from Cordovero, Vital de Vidas, Azikri, and several others.


Texts and introductions: Rabbi Joseph Karo, Rabbi Hayyim Vital, Rabbi Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, the Gaon of Vilna, Shalom Sharabi, along with many others.


Schwartz offers four models of the Jewish approach to the natural world: (1) the rational, (2) the biblical, (3) the “radical amazement model” highlighted by Abraham Joshua Heschel, and (4) the “holy sparks model” of Lurianic Kabbalah developed by later Hasidim.


“The Karaites sources for Kabbalistic influences are twofold. The first source was the surrounding Polish-Ashkenazi society, with its limitations and censorship imposed by the rabbinic establishment, which expressed apprehension over the allegedly pernicious mystical thought. Second, Karaites
corresponded with Turkish Karaites and even traveled to Turkey for the purposes of study. This blend of European-Ashkenazi and Turkish-Sephardic-Karaite mysticism is intriguing for future students of Karaism.” (p. 197)


“I have concentrated on the three main areas of Kabbalistic creativity: the literature of the Zohar, the Lurianic corpus as expressed by Chaim Vital and parts of the Chasidic mystical tradition.” (page xlii)

Thus, there are snippets not only of Vital, but of Moses Jonah, Joseph Irgas, Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, Abraham Azulai, Chaim of Volozhin, and others.


“Fifty-four charming and evocative tales… [which] form the important transitional link between the esoteric mystical teachings of the sixteenth-century kabbalists and the populist tales of the eighteenth-century European Hasidim.” (back cover)

Sources include Emek haMelekh (Naphtali Bacharach), Or haYashar (Meir Poppers), Reshith Hokhmah (Elijah de Vidas), Sefer Haredim (Eliezer Azikri), Shulhan Arukh shel baAri (Jacob Zemah), and many other works.


See CHAPTER 5, “The Decline of the Renaissance Era; Leo de Modena,” and CHAPTER 6, “Joseph Solomon Delmedigo.”