

Notes on the Study of Later Kabbalah in English

THE SAFED PERIOD & LURIANIC KABBALAH

Don Karr

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Email: dk0618@yahoo.com

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by D. Karr (Ithaca: KoM #6, 1985): pp. 23-31.

THE SMALL GALILEAN TOWN of Safed (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 become 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*, is authoritative to this day, and Elijah de Vidas, author of the popular kabbalistic ethical treatise, *Reshith Hokhmah*. 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 Hayim 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 still a woeful lack of translated material from this period. For example, we have seen but fragments of Cordovero's *Elimah Rabbati* in English; however, a full translation of *Pardes Rimmonim* from Providence University (translator: Elyakim Getz) is well underway. Some Lurianic works, such as those compiled by Hayim Vital, have found their way into English in recent years, but these renderings are far from complete.

OVERVIEWS & PRE-LURIANIC

Safed

Bension, Ariel. "The Centres of Sepharadi Mysticism after Leaving Spain" = CHAPTER XIV, in *The Zohar in Moslem & Christian Spain* (New York: Hermon Press, 1974).

Biale, David. "Jewish Mysticism in the Sixteenth Century," in *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe*, edited by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

Dan, Joseph. "Mystical Ethics in Sixteenth-Century Safed" = CHAPTER 4 of *Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Ethics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986.

Elior, Rachel. "Messianic Expectations and Spiritualization of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century," in *Revue des Études juives*, CXLV (1-2) (janv.-juin 1986); reprinted in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, edited by David Ruderman. New York – London: New York University Press, 1992.

Faierstein, Morris M. "Safed Kabbalah and the Sephardic Heritage," in *Sephardic & Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times*, edited by Zion Zohar. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

Fine, Lawrence. "New Approaches to the Study of Kabbalistic Life in 16th-Century Safed," in *Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah: New Insights and Scholarship*, edited by Frederick E. Greenspahn. New York – London: New York University Press, 2011.

_____. *Safed Spirituality. The Rules of Mystical Piety: The Beginning of Wisdom* [THE CLASSICS OF WESTERN SPIRITUALITY]. Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984.

Fine's introduction gives historical and religious background to his presentation of "The Rules of Mystical Piety" as codified by Cordovero, Luria, Karo, and others, and practiced by Safed mystics.

Giller, Pinchas. "Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee: The Veneration of Relics in Classical Kabbalah," in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 4 (Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1994).

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*."

Hoffman, Lawrence A. (ed.) *My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, volume 8: KABBALAT SHABBAT (WELCOMING SHABBAT IN THE SYNAGOGUE). Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005.

Idel, Moshe. "On Mobility, Individuals and Groups: Prolegomenon for a Sociological Approach to Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Three (1998), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

_____. "Revelation and the 'Crisis of Tradition' in Kabbalah," in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, edited by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden – Boston: Brill: 2010).

§ 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.

_____. *Meditation and the Bible*. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978.

Kaplan includes quotes from Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim* and Vital's *Sha'arei Qedusha* shedding light on biblical techniques of meditation.

Pachter, Mordechai. "Kabbalistic Ethical Literature in Sixteenth-Century Safed," in *Binah*, vol. 3: JEWISH INTELLECTUAL HISTORY IN THE MIDDLE AGES, edited by Joseph Dan (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1994).

Rossoff, Dovid. *Safed – The Mystical City*. Jerusalem: Sha'ar Books, 1991.

Schechter, Solomon. "Safed in the Sixteenth Century—A City of Legalists and Mystics," in *Studies in Judaism*, SECOND SERIES (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1908); and (*idem*) *Studies in Judaism*, A SELECTION (Cleveland: Jewish Publication Society, and The World Publishing Company, 1958).

Schechter's article is considered a classic.

Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah* (articles from *ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA*). Jerusalem and New York: Keter Publishing House and Times Books, 1974; rpt. New York: Meridian, 1978; rpt. New York: Dorset Press, 1987.

pp. 67-79: "The Kabbalah after the Expulsion from Spain and the New Center in Safed"

Shamir, Yehudah. *The Spider and the Raven: Six Kabbalists of Sixteenth Century Safed*. Austin: I. D. A. Press, 1971.

Source material from Solomon Alkabez, Moses Cordovero, Moses Alshekh, Abraham Galante, Hayim Vital, and Israel ben Moses Najara.

Silberman, Neil Asher. "A Mystical City" = CHAPTER 5 of *Heavenly Powers: Unraveling the Secret History of the Kabbalah*. New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1998.

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

Twersky, Isadore. "Talmudists, Philosophers, Kabbalists: The Quest for Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century," in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Bernard Cooperman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Werblowsky, R. J. Zwi. "The Safed Revival and Its Aftermath," in *Jewish Spirituality II: FROM THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY REVIVAL TO THE PRESENT* [Volume 14: WORLD

SPIRITUALITY], edited by Arthur Green (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987); hereafter *Jewish Spirituality II*.

NOTE: *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 nationalist, who “served as a deputy in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey” and “a professor at the University of Istanbul.”

Joseph Karo

Alexander, Philip S. *Textual Sources for the Study of Judaism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

§ 5.2 THE *SHULHAN ARUKH* (pages 90-95)—translated excerpts: § 5.2.1. *Hoshen Mishpat* 26:1-6 – Prohibition against resorting to non-Jewish courts; § 5.2.2. *Yoreh De'ab* 335:1-10 – Laws regarding visiting the sick; § 5.2.3. *Qizzur Shulhan Arukh* 36:1-28 – Laws regarding the salting of meat.

Gaster, Moses. “The Origin and Sources of the Shulchan Arukh,” in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology*. London: Maggs Brothers, 1928; rpt, New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971.

Gordon, Hirsch Loeb. *The Maggid of Caro: The Mystic Life of the Eminent Codifier Joseph Caro as Revealed in his Secret Diary* BASED ON UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS. New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc./The Shoulson Press, 1949.

Idel, Moshe. “Revelation and the ‘Crisis of Tradition’ in Kabbalah,” in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, edited by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden – Boston: Brill: 2010).

§ 5. R. *Joseph Karo and the Revelation of the Feminine Divine Powers*

Jacobs, Louis. “The Communication of the Heavenly Mentor to Rabbi Joseph Karo” = CHAPTER 10 of *Jewish Mystical Testimonies*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.

Six passages from *Maggid Mesharim*.

Karo, Rabbi Yosef. *A Maggid [Preacher] of Righteousness*. Edited by Rabbi Yechiel Bar Lev; translated by K. Skaist. Petach Tikva: Rabbi Yechiel Bar Lev [Yedid Nefesh], n.d. [released June 2009].

An English translation of *Maggid Mesharim*.

Werblowsky, R.J. Zwi. *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (at the Clarendon Press), 1962 [SCRIPTA JUDAICA • IV] / Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962; rpt. JPS 1977.

Karo not only wrote *Shulhan Arukh* (THE SET TABLE) but also kept a diary of his conversations with a celestial mentor. This diary, *Maggid Mesharim*, is the focus of Werblowsky’s study.

Chapter 4 of *Joseph Karo* is a particularly good survey of ideas and practices in pre-Lurianic Safed. This chapter was printed separately as “Mystical and Magical Contemplation: The Kabbalists in Sixteenth-Century Safed,” in *History of Religions*, vol. 1, no. 1 (University of Chicago Press, Summer 1961.)

Moses Cordovero

Ben-Shlomo, J. § “Moses Cordovero,” in Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* [articles from *ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA*] (Jerusalem – New York: Keter Publishing House and Times Books, 1974; rpt. New York: Meridian, 1978; rpt. New York: Dorset Press, 1987), pp. 401-4.

Bland, Kalman. “Neoplatonic and Gnostic Themes in R. Moses Cordovero’s Doctrine of Evil,” in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies*, volume III (1975). London: Institute of Jewish Studies.

Bokser, Ben Zion. *The Jewish Mystical Tradition*. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981.

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

Cordovero, Moses. *Moses Cordovero’s Introduction to Kabbalah: An Annotated Translation of His OR NE’ERAV* [SOURCES AND STUDIES IN KABBALAH, HASIDISM, AND JEWISH THOUGHT, vol. III]. Translated and annotated by Ira Robinson. New York: The Michael Sharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press, 1994.

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

_____. *The Palm Tree of Deborah* [*Tomer Debborah*] translated by Louis Jacobs. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1960; rpt. New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1974.

_____. *The Palm Tree of Deborah* [A TARGUM TORAH CLASSIC] translated and annotated by Rabbi Moshe Miller. Jerusalem – Spring Valley: Targum Press/ Feldheim Publishers, 1993.

Tomer Deborah is a kabbalistic ethical treatise on the doctrine of the imitation of God as expressed in the ten *sefirot*. The edition from Targum Press/Feldheim Publishers shows the Hebrew and English on facing pages. *The Palm Tree of Deborah* also appears in *An Anthology of Jewish Mysticism* by Raphael Ben Zion (New York: The Judaica Press, 1981; originally published as *The Way of the Faithful* in 1945).

_____. *Pardes Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 1-4*. Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Translated by Elyakim Getz. Belize City: Providence University, 2007.

_____. *Pardes Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 5-8:5*. Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Translated by Elyakim Getz. Belize City: Providence University, 2010.

_____. *Pardes Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 8:6-26*. Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Translated by Elyakim Getz. Belize City: Providence University, 2010.

_____. *Pardes Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 9-12*. Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Translated by Elyakim Getz. Belize City: Providence University, 2010.

Dan, Joseph. “‘No Evil Descends from Heaven’: Sixteenth-Century Concepts of Evil,” in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by B. Cooperman (Cambridge: Harvard

University Press, 1983); and in Dan's *Jewish Mysticism*, Volume III [THE MODERN PERIOD] (Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1999).

Idel, Moshe. "Ascensions, Gender and Pillars in Safedian Kabbalah," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 25, edited by D. Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2011).

_____. "R. Moses ben Jacob Cordovero's View" = Chapter 12 of *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

_____. "Revelation and the 'Crisis of Tradition' in Kabbalah," in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, edited by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden – Boston: Brill: 2010).

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

Raviv, Zohar. *Decoding the Dogma within the Enigma: The Life, Works, Mystical Piety and Systematic Thought of Rabbi Moses Cordoeiro (aka Cordovero; Safed, Israel, 1522-1570)* Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008 [= FATHOMING THE HEIGHTS, ASCENDING THE DEPTHS—DECODING THE DOGMA WITHIN THE ENIGMA: THE LIFE, WORKS AND SPECULATIVE PIETY OF RABBI MOSES CORDOEIRO (SAFED 1522-1570). PhD dissertation. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2007]

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. "[J]osef Ben Shlomo... (1965)" refers to Ben-Shlomo's *Mystical Theology of Moses Cordovero* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik); "[B]racha 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.

Robinson, Ira. "Moses Cordovero and Kabbalistic Education in the Sixteenth Century," in *Judaism*, vol. 39 (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1990).

Sack, Bracha. "The Influence of Cordovero on Seventeenth-Century Jewish Thought," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus [CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES HARVARD JUDAIC STUDIES, VI] (Cambridge - London: Harvard University Press, 1987).

_____. "Some Remarks on Rabbi Moses Cordovero's *Shemu'ah be-Inyan ha Gilgul*," in *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism*, edited by A. Ivry. E. Wolfson, A. Arkush (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998).

Elijah de Vidas – *Reshith Hokhmah*

Benyosef, Simhah H. (trans.) *The Beginning of Wisdom*. Unabridged Translation of the GATE OF LOVE from Rabbi Eliahu de Vidas' *RESHIT CHOCHMAH*. Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 2002.

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

Fine, Lawrence. *Safed Spirituality. The Rules of Mystical Piety: The Beginning of Wisdom* [THE CLASSICS OF WESTERN SPIRITUALITY]. Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984.

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

LURIANIC KABBALAH¹

On pages 143-4 of *Kabbalah*, Gershom Scholem lists notable works in which “the basic tenets of Lurianic *kabbalah* are systematically and originally presented”:

- Joseph Solomon Delmedigo’s *Novelot Hokhmab* (Basle, actually Hanau: 1631)
- *Ma’amar Adam de-Azilut*, included in Moses Pareger’s *Va-Yakbel Moshe* (Dessau: 1699)
- Moses Hayim Luzzatto’s *Keleb Pitbei Hokhmab* (Koretz: 1785)
- Jacob Meir Spielmann’s *Tal Orot* (Lvov: 1876-83)
- Isaac Eisik Haver’s *Pitbei She’arim* (1888)
- Solomon Eliashov’s *LeShem Shevo ve-Ablamah* (1912-48)
- Yehudah Lev Ashlag’s *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (1955-67)

The word “originally” in the quote should evoke caution; Scholem gives no indication here of the variations and layers upon Lurianic *kabbalah* which these works represent.²

Scholem adds (*Kabbalah*, page 144), “Well-known expositions of Lurianic Kabbalah by Abraham Herrera and Joseph Ergas were greatly influenced by their tendency to reconcile or at least correlate the Lurianic system with the teachings of Cordovero, as can be seen in Ergas’ allegorization of the Lurianic doctrine of *tzimtzum*.” Scholem allows that Luria was mixed with Cordovero but does not mention the many other stresses and influences on Ergas and, especially, Herrera.³

¹ My sincere thanks to David Solomon (University College London), whose helpful comments prompted this summary.

² Of these, only Luzzatto’s and Ashlag’s have been translated into English. For complete information on books and articles in English mentioned in this section, refer to the bibliography which follows below.

³ Herrera’s “well-known exposition,” *Puerto del Cielo*, has been translated into English; see below.

WHICH LURIANIC KABBALAH?

Defining Lurianic *kabbalah* presents several problems, not the least of which is that Luria wrote very little and did not leave a systematic exposition of his own teachings. Among the first—and certainly the most important—to do so was Luria’s student in Safed, Hayim Vital (1542-1620), a kabbalist and occultist of some experience and reputation before becoming Luria’s pupil.⁴

Vital based his major work, *Etz Hayim* (TREE OF LIFE), largely on the notes which he took during his direct contact with Luria. These teachings were later arranged into *Shemonah She’arim* (EIGHT GATES), which were eventually re-edited and expanded after Hayim’s death by his son Shmuel. These works remained in the possession of Shmuel Vital and were not copied or distributed to any extent before 1660. No part was printed until 1850.⁵

Hayim Vital did not intend to spread—let alone print—Luria’s teachings, but rather to preserve them for a small *elite*. The story goes, however, that while Vital lay seriously ill and unconscious, members of his family were bribed into allowing his manuscripts—which he kept under his bed—to be copied. These copies were, purportedly, hurried off to Europe (perhaps *via* Palestine) as *Etz Hayim* to become the basis of the *European* stream of Lurianic *kabbalah*—as opposed to the *Safed*, or Eastern, stream of Vital and Luria’s other actual disciples.⁶

Even among first-hand students of Luria in Safed, accounts of Lurianic *kabbalah* differ on some critical points. Joseph ibn Tabul, “whose writings arguably reflect a closer summary of Luria’s activity [than Vital’s],”⁷ discusses aspects of *tzimtzum*, such as the “doctrine of infinity,” which Vital does not. In contrast, another of Luria’s pupils, Moses Yonah, rejected the idea of *tzimtzum* altogether and, hence, left it out of his summary of Luria’s teachings, *Kanfei Yonah*, WINGS OF THE DOVE, 1582), which reached Europe in manuscript much earlier than Vital’s works did.

⁴ The abstract to Orna Triguboff’s paper, “Who Contributed More to Lurianic Cosmology: Isaac Luria or Hayyim Vital?” (proposed for, but not delivered at, the 36th Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Studies, Chicago, 2004), begins: “It is generally opined amongst Kabbalistic scholars that Isaac Luria was the main fountain-head of the ideas of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Lurianic Kabbalah. Scholem makes regular reference to Luria and Lurianic Kabbalah even though the works quoted were actually mainly written by Vital. Examination of the writings of Luria and the work of his disciples suggests that in fact the greatest contribution came from Hayim Vital who was not ‘restricted to a post mortem revelation of Luria’s teachings’ but contributed mightily with his own ideas. The extent of Vital’s contribution is not yet fully established but it appears that it might be more substantial than Luria’s.”

The paper which Triguboff actually delivered at the AJS Conference in 2004 was “The Kings of Edom and the *Parzufim* in Hayyim Vital’s *Sha’ar ha-Hakdamot*.”

⁵ For details of the organization of *Etz Hayim* and *Shemonah She’arim*, see Fine, *Physician of the Soul...*, pages 391-392, note 3.

⁶ There are a few versions of this story. One version names Hayim Vital’s main pupil, Rabbi Yehoshua, as the one who paid Hayim’s younger brother Moshe 500 gold coins to borrow the MSS while Hayim lay ill. R. Yehoshua then purportedly hired one hundred scribes to work for three days, resulting in over six hundred pages being copied.

For biographical sketches of both Luria and Hayim Vital, see Morris M. Faierstein, “Charisma and Anti-Charisma in Safed: Isaac Luria and Hayyim Vital,” in *The Journal for the Study of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (Oct-Nov 2007), edited by Zion Zohar, on-line at <http://sephardic.fiu.edu/journal/>.

⁷ Pinchas Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, page 25.

Israel Sarug (*or* Saruq, *fl.* 1590-1610) claimed to have been a pupil of Luria's, though there is some debate as to whether he ever met Luria in person. During the 1590s, he spread his version of Lurianic *kabbalah* (based on the pirated copies *or* on what Luria had taught him) in Palestine (which school eventually expanded along the Eastern Mediterranean—called by Ronit Meroz “the Eastern branch”) and Italy (beginning what Scholem refers to as “the Italian tradition”). Sarug's version of Luria's mythic *kabbalah* was blended with Cordovero's more speculative *kabbalah*. Indeed, Sarug's pupil, Menahem Azarya of Fano (1548-1620), considered himself a student of Cordovero before his encounter with Sarug.

The differences between Vital and Sarug are numerous. Vital taught that *Adam Qadmon* was the highest level which could be comprehended; thus, his version of Lurianic *kabbalah* develops from *Adam Qadmon* down through the worlds below him. Sarug dealt with realms above *Adam Qadmon* and so covered topics (*e.g.*, the concept of the *malbush*, the GARMENT found between *eyn sof* and *azilut*) and techniques which do not appear in Vital's works.

Sarug, whether yielding to the influence of Cordovero or to the atmosphere of Neoplatonism in Europe, added qualifying expressions (*e.g.*, “as it were”) into his accounts of such fundamental Lurianic concepts as *tzimtzum* and the “death of the kings,” suggesting a non-literal reading. Ronit Meroz states (in “Contrasting Opinions among the Founders of R. Israel Saruq's School,” page 197),

We therefore see that already in the first generation of Luria's disciples there were those who had reservations concerning the literal understanding of Luria's ideas about *simsum* [= *tzimtzum*]. These were disciples of Luria who joined the school of Saruq. This is particularly true of members of the Eastern branch which seem, for all we know—to have had some predilection for arguing philosophical points, although it cannot be argued that they presented their Qabbalah philosophically, as Scholem thought.⁸

This generally assumed division is a point of some dispute. In his PhD dissertation, *THE THEURGY OF PRAYER IN LURIANIC KABBALAH* (Hebrew University, 2002), Menachem Kallus presents texts (cited in his CHAPTER 2, § C) which “argue strongly for a non-literal understanding of Lurianic Kabbalah as a whole” (page 24). In a paper delivered at the AJS Conference of 2003⁹, Kallus states

The Lurianic *kabbalah* is most often characterized in the scholarly literature as mythical. I would say in point of fact that, inasmuch as it is based on exegesis of the *Zohar*, it is in the narrative voices of the *zoharic* genre that we may be misled to find characteristics of first order myth, and that, in general, Lurianic *Zohar* interpretations tend to be in the case of Hayim Vital structuralist and abstract, and in the case of Rabbi Isaac Luria, or the ARI, teleological and with special interests of theodicy. For both of these Lurianic authors, the metaphoric element is prominent. Indeed, in their writings, the ARI as well as each of his direct disciples who recorded his discourses have all stated on various occasions the mythic images are not to be taken literally but are to be understood by means of close metaphorical and allegorical correspondence.

Kallus cites specific writings of Luria and his followers to support his claim. One example from Luria himself,

⁸ The odd grammar and punctuation appear in Meroz' article.

⁹ “Forms of Hermeneutic Creativity in Lurianic Kabbalah and Its Research,” in Session 4.9 – POST-ZOHARIC KABBALAH: MYSTICISM, AUTOBIOGRAPHY, LURIANIC HERMENEUTICS, AND SHALOM SHARABI at the Association for Jewish Studies 35th Annual Conference, December 21-23, 2003, Boston.

In the ARI's commentary on the *Sifre d'Tzenniuta*, where he discusses the zoharic mystical symbolism of color, we read, "Let not the proud, those destined for damnation, entice you into saying that the emanated divine realms are comprised of colors, for the waters of iniquity have washed upon them who force words of description upon the Lord of Lords, for there is no color or visual representation there that refer to Him who is exalted over all the proud, Who sees and is not seen." Such damning language regarding anthropomorphic literalism was used by the ARI precisely because his kabbalah, following the *Zohar*, which also issues strong warnings against literalism, is so rich in this type of descriptive invocational symbolism—and nowhere does the ARI retract this exhortation.

Regarding Sarug and his version of Lurianic *kabbalah*, Sharron Shatil notes

In fact, Sarugian kabbalah is a distinct phenomenon within the kabbalah of the last four hundred years and is highly influential on the history of kabbalah and Jewish theology during this period, particularly in Europe. The line of Sarugian kabbalists continues up to the present day, with kabbalists who use Sarug's writings or those of his immediate students as primary sources. Moreover, the influence of Sarugian kabbalah can be easily discerned in many of the prominent spiritual movements within rabbinic Judaism in the modern era, including the Sabbatean movement, the school of the GRA, and the Hassidic movement, in particular within Chabad's unique strand of kabbalistic speculation.¹⁰

Some European Kabbalists, while generally accepting Lurianic teachings, continued older traditions not taken up by Luria, such as the doctrine of the *shemittot*.¹¹ Many, including Sarug and his followers, made far greater use of *gematria* than did Vital (and, for that matter, Cordovero), possibly influenced by trends in Christian Cabala.

Complicating matters even more, in the mid-seventeenth century, through the spread of Vital's more "purely" Lurianic manuscripts, the Safed school met up with the more eclectic European school. Representative of this merger is *Emek ha-Melekh* (THE VALLEY OF THE KING, 1648) by Naphtali Bacharach of Amsterdam. While this work leans more toward Sarug than toward Vital, it retains what is generally presumed to be the Safedian literal view of *tzimtzum* from which Sarug seemed to back away.¹² It is interesting to note that selections from *Emek ha-Melekh* appeared in Latin translation in Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* (TOME I, 1677, and TOME II, 1684).

There is yet another chain which leads from Safed to Europe, *via* Jerusalem. Marrano physician Jacob Zemech, a pupil of Vital's, codified Lurianic observances in *Shulhan Arukh ha-Ari* (1660). Zemech's student, Meir Poppers (d. 1662), not only arranged a major edition of Vital's *Etz Hayim* (called *Peri Etz Hayim*) but also redacted *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, which was printed in Frankfort, 1684—the same place and year that Latin translations from it were printed in TOME II of Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*. The first half of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* is similar in content to Vital's *Sba'ar ha Gilgulim* (*i.e.*, the eighth gate of *Shemonah*

¹⁰ "The Kabbalah of R. Israel Sarug: A Lurianic-Cordoverian Encounter," in *the Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 14 (2011).

¹¹ "... Cordovero and Luria rejected it [*i.e.*, the doctrine of the *shemittot*] as a mistaken or unnecessary hypothesis, at least in the version found in the *Sefer ha-Temunah*..."—Gershon Scholem, *Kabbalah*, page 122.

¹² In *Kabbalah* (page 394) Scholem states, "While Delmedigo's interest lay in the abstract philosophical aspect of Kabbalah ... Bacharach appears as an enthusiastic and fanatical kabbalist with a special flair for the mystical and non-philosophical traits of Kabbalah..." Does "mystical and non-philosophical" imply "literal"? Menachem Kallus writes (in a note from June 30, 2006), "Bacharach, being a scion of that [Sarug's] school, did not slip into literalism."

She'arim); the second half includes material which is not Lurianic. Poppers also composed a series of diagrams depicting the unfolding of creation according to Lurianic doctrine, titled *Ilan ha-Gadol* [TREE OF GREATNESS] (printed Warsaw: 1893); these diagrams, for the most part, match those in *Pars quarta* of *Kabbala denudata*, TOME I, though they are set in a somewhat different order.¹³

It is beyond the scope of this paper and the resources of its author to detail all of the paths which Lurianic *kabbalah* took from the sixteenth century to the twentieth. Offered here are brief descriptions of a handful of exemplars; the selection is biased toward representative sources in English.

ISAIAH HOROWITZ (157?-1626—probably born in Prague) served as the rabbi of several important communities (among them Dubno, Frankfort-on-Main, and Prague), eventually ascending to the position of Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi of Jerusalem. His major work, *Shney Luchot Habrit* (TWO TABLETS OF THE COVENANT, 1620-30) is a classic of Eastern European kabbalistic ethical literature. Horowitz mixed traditional rabbinic sources with the *Zohar*, Karo, de Vidas, Cordovero, and Luria, though he only occasionally put Lurianic teachings into writing, considering them too esoteric and powerful to be directly revealed. Horowitz incorporated *kabbalah* into every-day practice.

ABRAHAM HERRERA (157?-1639) was born in Florence to Spanish, likely Marrano, parents. Herrera merged, or attempted to reconcile, the Lurianic *kabbalah* of Israel Sarug with Neoplatonic philosophy in his major work, *Puerto del Cielo*.¹⁴ This work became best known through Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*, which included a Latin version of *Puerto del Cielo* from its Hebrew version, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (the original having been in Spanish). Rosenroth's rendition is far from a fair representation of Herrera's original work, for "[Isaac] Aboab [da Fonseca, who executed the Hebrew translation,] did not just translate [Herrera's works] but also radically altered the texts according to his own interpretation."¹⁵ Rosenroth further condensed the work in the process of putting it into Latin, emphasizing its philosophical passages.

Messianic sparks within the Lurianic complex ignited into the movement behind SHABBATAI ZEVI (1626-1676). The Shabbatean dogma and myth were shaped by Nathan of Gaza (164?-1680) and Abraham Miguel Cardozo (1626-1706), both of whom drew on Lurianic doctrine and terminology. Some kabbalists, influenced by Shabbateanism but wishing to hide the fact, held traditional Lurianic *kabbalah* separate from the "new revelation"—as if the two were distinct from each other. Jacob Koppel Lifschuetz was one such "secret Shabbatean"; his

¹³ Refer to my *Study of Christian Cabala in English*, ADDENDUM C, at <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/ccineb.pdf>, for an outline comparing Poppers' "great tree" and the figures in *Kabbala denudata*.

¹⁴ Eisig Silberschlag's formula goes, "One of them [*i.e.*, one of the followers of Luria—DK], Hayyim Vital, systematized Luria's oral flashes in a massive work *The Tree of Life*; another, Joseph Ibn Tabul, propagandized them; a third, Israel Sarug, transmitted them to Italian Jewry especially; a fourth, Abraham Cohen Hererra of Florence, invented an eclectic mysticism which was a combination of Neoplatonism and pseudo-Lurianism." —*From Renaissance to Renaissance: Hebrew Literature from 1492-1970* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1973): page 50.

¹⁵ Krabbenhoft, *The Mystic Tradition*, page 21, noted below. See *The Mystic Tradition*, page 23, for a comparison of Aboab's Hebrew version and Herrera's Spanish original.

Sha'arei Gan Eden (GATES OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN), written in the early 1700s, gives a full summary of Shabbatean theology while denouncing it as heresy in the preface.

In the early 1700s, more debate emerged over the doctrine of *tzimtzum*. Should it be taken literally or symbolically (allegorically, philosophically)? Bacharach's *Emek ha-Melekh* took *tzimtzum* literally, as the Safed school did; this view was taken up by Shabbateans.¹⁶ On the other side was Joseph Ergas (*Shomer Emunim*, 1736), who, like Abraham Herrera, held that *tzimtzum* was to be understood non-literally (metaphorically, philosophically); this latter view was taken up by three figures given notice here: Moses Hayim Luzzatto (RaMHaL), Elijah ben Solomon (the Gaon of Vilna), and Shneur Zalman of Lyady.

Padua-born poet, ethicist, and mystic, MOSES HAYIM LUZZATTO, or RaMHaL (1707-1747) is of special importance: He combined a knowledge of Luria (*via* the European stream, Herrera in particular), the influence of Shabbatean doctrines (though he publicly deemed them heretical¹⁷), and revelations from a personal *maggid*. RaMHaL's aim was to codify *kabbalah* and incorporate it into every-day thought and practice. However, in most of his writings—at the insistence of the leading rabbis of his day—*kabbalah* is not discussed overtly. His purely kabbalistic works, *Kelalut ha-Ilan* (ESSENTIALS OF THE TREE) and *Kelab Pithei Hokhmah* (138 GATES OF WISDOM), condense and systematize his “hermeneutical/visionary” interpretation of Lurianic teachings.¹⁸

EZEKIEL LANDAU (1713-1793) was the chief rabbi of Prague, a position he held for nearly forty years. He was head of the Jewish court; his hundreds of *responsa* remain an authoritative source of Jewish law, collected and published as *Nado bijehudab*. Known for both his vast knowledge of rabbinic literature and his skill as a community leader, he was referred to as the “rabbi of the Diaspora” (—Flatto, *Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth Century Prague*, pages 9-10). Despite his frequent denials of being involved with *kabbalah*, Landau drew upon a mix of *Zohar*, Cordovero, and Luria (by way of *Derekh etz hayim* and *Peri ets hayim*, both compiled and edited by Meir Poppers) for his writings and sermons. Despite his kabbalistic interests, Landau saw the rise of the “new Hasidism” as a threat to the “traditional rabbinic hierarchy of values” (—Flatto, *Kabbalistic Culture...*, page 89).

Another esteemed figure, Lithuanian ELIJAH BEN SOLOMON, the Gaon of Vilna, known as the GRA (1720-1797), while a kabbalist, also rejected the emerging Hasidic movement as a

¹⁶ Upon considering his dissertation and article (both cited above) and statements *via* email (see notes 10 and 11), I asked Menachem Kallus, “Can we conclude that the first Lurianic literalists were the Shabbateans?” His response (in the note of June 30, 2006): “It may well be that the Sabateans were the first ... it served their mythical/antinomian agenda” (Kallus’ ellipsis).

The more conventional view is indicated in the first note in Shaul Magid’s article “Origin and Overcoming the Beginning: *Zimzum* as a Trope of Reading in Post-Lurianic Kabbala” (in *Beginning/Again: Toward a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts*, ed. A. Cohen and S. Magid, New York: Seven Bridges, 2002), which states, “The metaphorical rather than literal understandings of *zimzum* began in the Renaissance with such Kabbalists as R. Menahem Azaria da Fano and later R. Abraham Ha-Kohen Herrera,” adding, “The three Kabbalists discussed in this study, R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto, R. Yizhak Isik Haver Waldman, and R. Dov Baer Schneurson, are all influenced by this metaphorical rendering of *zimzum*” (pages 195-6).

¹⁷ “[I]t is clear from what Luzzatto says that Nathan of Gaza’s activity and innovations occupied his mind and that their inner meaning was disclosed to him by the *maggid*.” ... “[A]lthough his [Luzzatto’s] writings avoid direct mention of Shabbateanism, they conceal evidence of a certain positive evaluation of the Shabbatean system.” —Isaiah Tishby, *Messianic Mysticism...*, pages 227 and 256 (see bibliographic details below).

¹⁸ The term “hermeneutical/visionary” is derived from Zvia Rubin’s article, “The Mystical Vision and its Interpretation: R. Moses Hayyim Luzzatto’s Qabbalistic Hermeneutics.” See the full listing in the bibliography below.

pantheistic heresy. His vehement call for the ex-communication of Hasidic proselytizers, in particular those from the school of Shneur Zalman of Lyady, seems to contradict his otherwise humble and withdrawn existence. The GRA's kabbalistic commentaries are characterized by their comparative academic approach, or, put another way, eclectic allegorical approach, which draws on the entire kabbalistic compass from the *Sefer Yetzirah* to RaMHaL's rendition of Lurianic *kabbalah*.

A full analysis of the paths of Luria's teachings through various Hasidic movements cannot be dealt with here, save to quote Rachel Elior on the relationship between *kabbalah* and Hasidism (—*The Paradoxical Ascent to God*, pages 5-6):

One must not be misled by the common terminology and mistake it for identity in meaning or conceptual unity. The Hasidic movement made extensive use of the framework of the Kabbalistic tradition as a basis for the legitimization of its freedom to innovate in religious thought and as grounds for permission to formulate new spiritual priorities. ... The deep change in patterns of mystical thought in the light of the charismatic reawakening gave rise to new religious creativity occasionally disguised in the language of older prevailing Kabbalistic concepts. The connection of Hasidism with Kabbalistic sources is not one of simple continuity or merely of shared terminology. Their complex relationship includes changes in principle with regard to the Kabbalistic tradition and the power of a new religious interest.

SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LYADY (1745-1813), a descendant of Rabbi Yehuda Loew (The *Maharal* of Prague), was the founder of HABAD Hasidism (for *Hokhmah-Binah-Da'at*, also called Lubavitch Hasidism after the Lithuanian town where the movement flourished for some years in the nineteenth century). Shneur Zalman was a pupil of Dov Baer, the *Maggid* of Mezritch (1704-1772), who, in turn, was a disciple of Israel ben Eliezer, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* (1700-1760), founder of the Hasidic movement. As mentioned, Shneur Zalman was a prime target of the anti-hasidic objections of the Gaon of Vilna.¹⁹ Shneur Zalman's most influential writings are gathered in the five sections of *Likkutei Amarim* (COLLECTED DISCOURSES, 1796), called *Tanya* (for the first word of the text). *Tanya* condenses Lurianic *kabbalah* and the Hasidic interpretations of it into a systematic theosophy and ethics “that we must teach...to the many” (Shneur Zalman, cited by Rachel Elior in *The Paradoxical Ascent to God*, page 21).

Yemenite SHALOM MIZRAHI SHARABI, called the RaShaSh (1720-1777), and his school, *Bet El*, stuck closely to Vital's *Shemonah She'arim*. Building on this, Sharabi composed *Sidur Rehovot ha-Nabar*, a kabbalistic prayer book nicknamed “*Etz Hayim 3*,” which emphasizes

¹⁹ In his review of Immanuel Etkes' book, *The Gaon of Vilna: The Man and His Image* (noted in detail in the bibliography below), “The Posthumous Gaon of Vilna and the History of Ideas” (in *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 2, December 2005; pages 253-9), David Katz writes

A careful study of the life's work of the founder of Habad, Shneur-Zalman of Lyadi (Shnéyer-Zálmen Lyáder), reveals his conscious and unrelenting demolition of the more extreme tendencies within Hasidism. He developed his brand of Hasidism partly in response to what he regarded as the justified attacks by the Gaon (and the Misnagdim) on those more extreme tendencies, while arguing that the Gaon's application of sanctions against the Hasidic movement generally was in his view wholly unjustified. In short: the Misnagdic movement played a major role in shaping moderate (Lithuanian) Hasidism, and it is that kind of Hasidism that comes into focus in Etkes's book. (—page 255)

kavvanot and mystical contemplation. Unlike the Hasidic movement and RaMHaL, *Bet El* withdrew into pietistic practice separated from the community.²⁰

The most important figure of *Bet El* in the nineteenth century was YOSEF HAYIM B. ELIJAH of Baghdad (1832-1909), known as *Ben Ish Hai*, which is the title of his best known work. *Ben Ish Hai*, which remains an authoritative reference among the Sephardim, combines *halakha* with *kabbalah*, drawing on a range of authorities, including doctrines and practices of the Safed followers of Luria.

Earlier in the nineteenth century flourished the Lithuanian kabbalist YITSHAK AYZIK HAVER, AKA Yizhak Isaac Haver Wildmann, sometimes Waldman (1789-1853). Shaul Magid writes that Haver was “trained in the tradition of the GRA, writing an extensive commentary to Luria’s *Etz Hayyim* entitled *Pithei Shearim* [which is on Scholem’s list, shown at the beginning of this article], one of the most comprehensive and systematic kabbalistic texts in Lithuanian Kabbala.”²¹ “As a student of the GRA (*via* R. Mendel of Sklov) Haver’s Kabbala is largely drawn from the Ramhal’s writings.”²² Haver’s *Pithei Shearim* was first published in

²⁰ In “Doctrinal Distinctions in Late Lurianic Prayer,” presented at the 36th Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Studies (Chicago: December 2004), Pinchas Giller makes the following points in a discussion of mystical prayer in the school of Shalom Sharabi (or Shara’abi):

For the Ba’al ha-Leshem [R. Shlomo Eliashov, *or* Solomon Eliashov, 1841-1924, author of *LeShev Shevo ve-Ablamab*—which is on Scholem’s list at the beginning of this section, above, page 8], the names were a more appropriate object of prayer than the images of the myth, and when contemplating the names the Ba’al ha-Leshem warned that the only appropriate version of *kavvanot*, then, was the version of Shalom Shara’abi because of his erudition in the use of the letters. For study, one could use the anthropomorphic images, and this view was echoed by the Hasidic scholastic R. Zevi Hirsch of Zhidachov [1763-1831], who permitted people to learn in terms of countenances [*parzufim*] for, and I quote, “Everything that a man imagines is corporeal.”

The Ba’al ha-Leshem and R. Zevi Hirsch of Zhidachov may have been influenced by a similar discussion about the very nature of the uses of kabbalistic symbolism in the generations preceding them, namely the distinction between literal and figurative theorists. The figurative theorists tended to view the processes described in the Lurianic system as metaphors for processes too ineffable to explain; a few such theorists would include R. Avram Herrera’s *Puerto del cielo*, R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto, and the Gaon of Vilna. On the other side were absolutists who believed in the empirical existence of the characters of the Lurianic myth, including the divine countenances; among such thinkers were Emanuel Hai Ricci, Shneur Zalman, and Shneur Zalman of Lyadi. Now, this topic has been addressed so far by Rachel Elijor, Elliot Wolfson, and Nisim Yosha, but certainly the idea of absolutism *vs* figurativism in the study of Kabbalah in general, I think, has some overlap into the realm of names *vs* countenances in *Beth El*.

Now, Shara’abi may be viewed as standing between the two schools. He was a figurativist, on the one hand; on the other hand, he was also the recipient of *giluey Eliyahu*, a vision from the prophet Elijah, and so he was a participant in the kabbalistic mythos. He concluded that both names and the mythos were substitutions for processes too ineffable to recount, opining as follows—and this is in his work *Nabar Shalom*: “May God forgive me, for these things are not as they simply seem, for I have used the language of the Rav (Luria) but the reality of the matter is not as it seems. But of the essential thing do we not know that no thought can attach itself to it? And were it possible to even understand, there would be not room to even ask the question.”

Refer to the similar passages in Giller’s *Shalom Shar’abi and the Kabbalists of Beit El*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pages 49-53, § A RETREAT INTO PURE THEORY.

That Shneur Zalman of Lyady “believed in the empirical existence of the characters of the Lurianic myth” is not the impression one gets from other sources cited in the present article. Hasidic and late kabbalistic approaches (i.e., literal *vs* metaphoric) to the *parzufim* are discussed far less than those to *tzimtzum*, but one would expect these to run parallel. See, for example, CHAPTER 16, “The Doctrine of *Tzimtzum*,” in Rachel Elijor’s *Paradoxical Ascent to God: Following Joseph Ergas (or Yosef Irgas)*, “Rabbi Shneur Zalman completely denied the possibility of understanding *tzimtzum* literally...” (page 82).

²¹ “Origin and Overcoming the Beginning: *Zimzum* as a Trope of Reading in Post-Lurianic Kabbala,” in *Beginning/ Again: Toward a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts*, ed. A. Cohen and S. Magid, New York: Seven Bridges, 2002—page 187.

²² Magid, page 211, note 137.

1888 and more recently republished (in Hebrew), Jerusalem: 2006. Magid notes, however, “Almost no scholarly work has been done on Haver.”²³

Lithuanian-born kabbalist SHLOMO ELIASHEV, Solomon Eliashov, or Rav Shlomo of Shavel (1841-1924), was the author of *LeShem Shevo ve-Ablamah*, which is on Scholem’s list of works in which “the basic tenets of Lurianic Kabbalah are systematically and originally presented” (see above). As indicated (in note 19), Eliashev built on Lurianic *kabbalah* from Vital through RaShaSh; however, in the manner of his Lithuanian forebear, the GRA, he drew upon Cordovero and the Sarug stream as well. Eliashev was the kabbalistic mentor to Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935).

The teachings of Polish-born YEHUDA LEV ASHLAG (1886-1955) are generally considered Lurianic, but they contain numerous variations and themes not from Luria (*e.g.*, “the will to bestow/receive,” “the bread of shame”). Ashlag is notable for having been the first to translate the entire Zohar into Hebrew, embedding into it his Luria-based commentary: *Ha Sulam* (THE LADDER). His other major work, *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (STUDY OF THE TEN SEFIROT, 1955), is an extensive commentary on Vital’s *Etz Hayim* (TREE OF LIFE).

Several schools which are active today base their teachings on the writings of Ashlag. The two most prominent are (1) BNEI BARUCH WORLD CENTER FOR KABBALAH STUDIES headed by Michael Laitman, who was a pupil of and assistant to Rabbi Baruch Ashlag (1907-1991), son of Yehuda, and (2) THE KABBALAH CENTRE founded by Phillip S. Berg, who was a student of Yehuda Brandwein (1903-1969), considered to be Yehuda Ashlag’s “successor.” Both groups have published Ashlag’s writings along with numerous topical and explanatory works by their current leaders, Michael Laitman of BNEI BARUCH; and Philip Berg, Phillip’s wife Karen Berg, Phillip’s sons Yehuda and Michael Berg of THE KABBALAH CENTRE. Both organizations have extensive, multilingual websites: www.kabbalah.info and www.kabbalah.com respectively.²⁴

This all lands us in the latter half of the twentieth century, with its flood of books on *kabbalah* and *Chassidus*, Ashlag’s, Laitman’s and Berg’s among them. Two books at the end of this chain of developments, layers, and schisms are heartily recommended by contemporary *Haredi* teachers for their summaries of Lurianic *kabbalah*—which, to these adherents, is *the kabbalah*—:

- Kaplan, R. Aryeh. *Inner Space: Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy*. Brooklyn: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 1990.

²³ Magid, page 211, note 136.

²⁴ Refer to Boaz Huss, “The New Age of Kabbalah,” in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2 (Basingstoke, Hants. : Carfax Publishing / Taylor & Francis, 2007); Jody Myers, *Kabbalah and the Spiritual Quest: The Kabbalah Centre in America* [RELIGION, HEALTH, AND HEALING series] (Westport – London: Praeger, 2007); and Myers’ “Marriage and Sexual Behavior in the Teachings of the Kabbalah Centre” in *Kabbalah and Modernity: Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations*, edited by Boaz Huss, Marco Pasi, and Kocku von Stuckrad (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010).

Online, find David Rowan’s articles (1) from the *Evening Standard*, “The Kabbalah Centre Exposed: Investigation” (2002) <http://www.davidrowan.com/2002/10/evening-standard-kabbalah-centre.html>, and (2) from *The Times*, “Strings Attached – The Kabbalah Centre Exposed” (2004) <http://www.davidrowan.com/2004/04/times-strings-attached-kabbalah-centre.html>

- Bar-Lev, R. Yechiel. *Song of the Soul: Introduction to Kabbalah* [Hebrew original: *Yedid Nefesh* (1988)]; English translation, Petach Tikva: Petach Tikva (distributed by Moznaim), 1994

American-born ARYEH KAPLAN (1934-1983), known for advocating a return to Jewish observance, is one of the most popular writers on Jewish spirituality in English. His many books cover a range of subjects. Any well-stocked Jewish bookstore carries as many as two dozen titles by Kaplan, the best-known being *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation* (Kaplan bases his commentary on the “GRA version,” *i.e.*, the version set by the Gaon of Vilna), *Meditation and the Bible*, *Meditation and Kabbalah*, and *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide*.

YECHIEL ABRAHAM BAR-LEV (b. 1943, Tel Aviv) has written commentaries on the Zohar and the Jerusalem Talmud, and he has translated and edited Karo’s *Maggid Mesbarim*. Despite being something of an anti-academic, Bar-Lev’s works are inspired by Cordovero, Luria, Luzzatto, the Gaon of Vilna, and Shneur Zalman. See the YEDID NEFESH (*lit.* “song of the soul”) website, which is devoted to Rav Yechiel Bar-Lev: www.yedidnefesh.com. The site offers excerpts of *Song of the Soul*, which is based on Luzzatto’s *Kelab Pitbei Hokhmah*.

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_____. TECHNIQUES OF MYSTICAL MEDITATION FOR ACHIEVING PROPHECY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE TEACHINGS OF ISAAC LURIA AND HAYYIM VITAL. Ph.D. dissertation, Waltham: Brandeis University, 1976.

Freedman, Daphne. *Man and the Theogony in the Lurianic Cabala*. [GORGAS DISSERTATIONS 12 / JEWISH STUDIES 2]. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006.

“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.” (p. 13, n. 3)

Giller, Pinchas. *Reading the Zohar: The Sacred Text of the Kabbalah*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

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*.

Glotzer, Leonard R. *The Kabbalistic System of The Ari: The Hidden Meaning, Symbolism and Sexuality of Lurianic Mysticism*. Denver: Outskirts Press, Inc., 2007.

“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)

Goldish, Matt. (ed.) *Spirit Possession in Judaism: Cases and Contexts from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 2003

§ 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 Hayim Vital.

Idel, Moshe. Idel, Moshe. “Ascensions, Gender and Pillars in Safedian Kabbalah,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 25, edited by D. Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2011).

_____. “On Mobility, Individuals and Groups: Prolegomenon for a Sociological Approach to Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Three (1998), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

_____. “Revelation and the ‘Crisis of Tradition’ in Kabbalah,” in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, edited by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden – Boston: Brill: 2010).

§ 6. R. Isaac Luria *Ashkenazi: Revelation as Source of Kabbalah*

Jacobs, Louis. “Uplifting the Sparks in Later Jewish Mysticism,” in *Jewish Spirituality II*, edited by Arthur Green (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987).

Jacobson, Yoram. “The Aspect of the ‘Feminine’ in Lurianic Kabbalah,” in *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After* [PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF JEWISH MYSTICISM], edited by Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993).

Kallus, Menachem. THE THEURGY OF PRAYER IN THE LURIANIC KABBALAH. PhD dissertation. Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2002.

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

Ch. 6. “The Ari” (passages from Vital’s *Sha’ar Ruah ha-Kodesh*, GATE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT)

Klein, Aaron; and Klein, Jenny Machlowitz (translators). *Tales in Praise of the ARI*. Drawings by Moshe Raviv. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1970.

“Wonder tales” from *Sefer Shivchai ha-Ari* with tired drawings imitative of Picasso.

Klein, Eliahu (trans/comm). *Kabbalah of Creation. Isaac Luria’s Earlier Mysticism*. Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 2000.

A translation of *Sha’ar ha-Kelalim* (GATES OF PRINCIPLES), which serves as a preface to some printed editions of Vital’s *Etz Hayim*, though it is likely written by one of Luria’s other students, Moshe Yonah. The text offers a version of Luria’s system which was apparently formulated earlier than Vital’s *magnum opus*.

Krassen, Miles. “Visiting Graves” (including Vital at Abbaye’s Grave) and “The Lurianic Adam,” in *Kabbalah: A Newsletter of Current Research in Jewish Mysticism*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Fall, 1988); online at <http://www.queensu.ca/jewishstudies/kabbalah.html>

Krassen translates and comments on two passages from Vital’s *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim* (GATE OF TRANSMIGRATIONS). Also in this issue of *Kabbalah* is a segment of *Sefer Etz Hayim* on the ascent of saints translated by Eliyahu Klein.

Lenowitz Harris. *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998: CHAPTER 6. “The Messiahs of Safed: Isaac Luria and Hayim Vital”

Magid, Shaul. “Conjugal Union, Mourning and *Talmud Torah* in R. Isaac Luria’s *Tikkun Haẓot*,” in *Daat: A Journal of Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah*, Number 36 (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1996).

_____. *From Metaphysics to Midrash: Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbala*. Bloomington – Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 2008.

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.” (—INTRODUCTION, page 1)

_____. “From Theosophy to Midrash: Lurianic Exegesis and the Garden of Eden,” in *AJS Review*, Volume XXII, Number 1 (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1997).

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

_____. “Kabbalah and Postmodern Jewish Philosophy. From Theosophy to Midrash: Lurianic Exegesis on Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden,” in *Journal of Textual Reasoning*, vol. 4, no. 2 (June 1995), at

http://etext.virginia.edu/journals/tr/archive/pmjp/pmjp4_2.html or
http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/tr/archive/pmjp/pmjp4_2.html

“The corpus of Lurianic literature is highly complex and disorganized. Luria himself wrote almost nothing during his brief time in Safed. Most of what exists from the Safed circle is the product of various students, the most prolific and prominent being R. Hayyim Vital and R. Hayyim Ya’akov Zemah. The foundational texts in the Lurianic corpus are *Etz Hayyim* and the *Shemonah She’arim*, written by R. Hayyim Vital and edited by his son R. Shmuel Vital in Damascus. Most of Lurianic literature bearing the word *Sha’ar* in the title comes from the Vitalian school. Other texts, some of which bear the title *Sefer*, come from other members of the circle, the most prominent being R. Meir Poppers, R. Ya’akov Hayyim Zemah, R. Nathan Shapira, R. Joseph Ibn Tabul, R. Moshe Zakuto, and R. Israel Sarug. The texts presented here come from three collections, *Sha’ar Ha-Pesukim*, *Sefer Ha-Likkutim*, and *Likkutei Torah*, all of which are running commentaries to the Torah. *Sha’ar Ha-Pesukim* is one of the Vitalian *Shemonah She’arim*. R. Meir Poppers, in his *Derekh Etz Hayyim*, called *Sefer Ha-Likkutim* (and *Sefer Derushim*) 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. *Likkutei Torah*, first printed in Zolkeiw 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 *Ozrot Hayyim*, *Adam Yashar*, and *Sefer Derushim*.” (¶7)

_____. “Lurianic Kabbalah and Its Literary Form: Myth, Fiction, History,” in *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*, Volume 29, Number 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, Fall 2009).

Matt, Daniel C. *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

Matt includes excerpts from various Lurianic writings.

Menzi, Donald Wilder; and Padeh, Zve. *The Tree of Life. Chayyim Vital’s Introduction to the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria* [ETZ HAYIM, Volume 1: THE PALACE OF ADAM KADMON]. Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1999.

Meroz Ronit. “Faithful Transmission vs Innovation: Luria and His Disciples,” in *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After* [PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF JEWISH MYSTICISM], edited by Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993).

Pachter, Mordechai. *Roots of Faith and Devequt: Studies in the History of Kabbalistic Ideas*. Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004.

“[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 anpin* (the Short Countenance) and *nuqva* (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. *devequt*.”
(—Cherub Press : <http://cherub-press.com/>)

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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.

_____. from *Shivbe ha-Ari*, “On Safed Kabbalists,” in *Gates to the Old City. A Book of Jewish Legends* (New York: Avon Books, 1980): pp. 504-511.

Pinson, DovBer. *Reincarnation and Judaism: The Journey of the Soul*. Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1999.

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Rossoff, Dovid. “Arizal and His Disciples” = CHAPTER 6 of *Safed – The Mystical City*. Jerusalem: Sha’ar Books, 1991.

Samuel, Michael. “FROM MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD”: THE EMPIRICAL METHOD IN LURIANIC KABBALAH. M.A. thesis, Montreal: Concordia University, 1990.

Schneider, Sarah. “The Small Light to Rule by Night: The Seven Stages of Feminine Development—excerpt from *The Diminished Moon* by R. Isaac Luria,” in (*idem*) *Kabbalistic Writings on the Nature of Masculine and Feminine*. Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 2001.

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pp. 128-44: “The Doctrine of Creation in Lurianic Kabbalah”

pp. 420-8: “Isaac Luria”

pp. 443-8: “Hayyim Vital.”

_____. “Isaac Luria and His School” = LECTURE SEVEN in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Jerusalem: Schocken Publishing House, 1941; reprinted frequently by Schocken Books, New York.

_____. *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1965.
pp. 108-17: in § “Kabbalah and Myth”
pp. 149-53: in § “Tradition and New Creation in the Ritual of the Kabbalists”

_____. *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*. New York: Schocken Books, 1991.
pp. 228-41: in § “Gilgul: The Transmigration of Souls”

_____. *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
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”

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

Silberman, Neil Asher. *Heavenly Powers: Unraveling the Secret History of the Kabbalah*. New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1998.

CHAPTER 6. “Lifting the Sparks”

Sonsino, Rifat; and Syme, Daniel B. “The Mysticism of Luria” =chapter 5 of *Finding God: Ten Jewish Responses* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1986).

Tishby, Isaiah. *The Doctrine of Evil in Lurianic Kabbalah*, translated by David Solomon, with a foreword by Professor Yoram Jacobson. London: Kegan Paul (PERPETUALLY FORTHCOMING).

“... 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

_____. “Gnostic Doctrines in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Mysticism,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 6 (1955)

Tishby's brief article deals with the Lurianic ideas of the “breaking of the vessels” and the “falling of the sparks.”

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- pp. 12-13: from *Etz Hayim*, Hayim Vital (*Etz Hayim*, Ch.1, translated from the Hebrew by Shani Stanley Babin.
- pp. 28-30: from *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, Hayim Vital (translation from the German by Jack Hirschman)
- pp. 160-4: from *Sba'arei Qedusha* (Part 3, Gates 4 and 5), Hayim Vital (translated by Zalman Schachter).

Vital, Chaim. *Ktavim Chasidim / New Writings: Brit Menucha – COVENANT OF REST / Shaarei Kedusha – GATES OF HOLINESS*, translated by Yaron Ever Hadani and Elyakim Getz. Monfalcone: Providence University, 2006.

Ktavim Chasidim contains Vital's commentary on *Brit Menucha*, 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 immediately below.

_____. *Shaarei Kedusha: Gates of Holiness*, translated by Yaron Ever Hadani. Belize City: Providence University, 2006.

"*Shaarei Kedusha* 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 (*Ruah 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 *Ktavim Chadashim* (THE NEW WRITINGS). We will publish its translation separately."—from the Preface by Fabrizio Lanza, page viii

Wexelman, David M. *The Jewish Concept of Reincarnation and Creation*, based on the writings of Rabbi Chaim Vital. Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 1999.

"...adapted and translated for the English reader directly from the original text, *Gateway to Reincarnation*, written by Rabbi Chaim Vital, ז"ל, as taught to him by the Arizal."

Wineman, Aryeh. "The Dialectic of *Tikkun* in the Legends of Ari," in *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

The legends of Luria's "wondrous knowledge," *i.e.*, unlimited access to truth.

Wisnefsky, Moshe (trans. & comm.) *Apples from the Orchard: Gleanings from the Mystical Teachings of Rabbi Yitzhach Luria—the Arizal on the Weekly Torah Portion*. Malibu: Thirty Seven Books, 2006.

"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)

Wolfson, Elliot R. "Divine Suffering and the Hermeneutics of Reading: Philosophical Reflections on Lurianic Mythology," in *Suffering Religion*, eds. Robert Gibbs and Elliot Wolfson (London – New York: Routledge, 2002), and in Wolfson's *Pathways: Philosophic and Poetic Reflections on the Hermeneutics of Time & Language* (Barrytown: Station Hill, 2004).

_____. "Weeping, Death, and Spiritual Ascent in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Mysticism," in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, edited by J. Collins and M. Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York, 1995).

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Work of the Chariot [W.C. #6] *Tree of Life* (BRANCHES I – X). Los Angeles: Work of the Chariot, 1970.

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Other writings by Vital

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Faienstein, Morris M. (trans) *Jewish Mystical Autobiographies: BOOK OF VISIONS and BOOK OF SECRETS*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999.

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

Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Mystical Testimonies*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977

Chapter 11. "The Visions of Hayyim Vital" (five selections from *Sefer ha-Hezyonot* [BOOK OF VISIONS]).

Patai, Raphael. *The Jewish Alchemists. A History and Source Book*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Ch. 28. "Hayyim Vital, Alchemist" (page 341: "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").

Vital, Chaim. *Sefer Ha-Goralot: The Book of Oracles*, translated by Elyakim Getz. Belize City: Providence University, 2007.

Israel Sarug

Idel, Moshe. "Ascensions, Gender and Pillars in Safedian Kabbalah," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 25, edited by D. Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2011).

_____. §§ R. ISRAEL SARUG AND HIS SOURCES [VII], THE SOURCES OF SARUG [VIII], and OTHER SARUGIAN TEXTS [IX] in Chapter 10 ("Theosophical Interpretations of the Golem") of *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

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Matt offers a brief excerpt from Sarug's *Limmudei Atsilut* called TRACES on page 97.

Meroz, Ronit. "Contrasting Opinions among the Founders of R. Israel Saruq's School," in *Experience et Ecriture Mystiques dans les Religions du Livre*, edited by Paul Fenton and Roland Goetschel [ETUDES SUR LE JUDAISME MEDIEVAL, tome xxii] (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

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Shatil, Sharron. “The Kabbalah of R. Israel Sarug: A Lurianic-Cordoverian Encounter,” in *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 14 (Leiden: Brill: 2011), pages 158-187.

Menahem Azarya of Fano

Bonfil, Robert. “Halakhah, Kabbalah and Society: Some Insights into Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano’s Inner World,” in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1987).

Busi, Giulio. *Mantua e la qabbalah / Mantua and the Kabbalah*. Milano: Skira editore, 2001. Catalogue for the exhibition of Mantuan kabbalistic manuscripts, Mantova: Palazzo della Ragione (September 2001), and New York: Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò Center for Jewish History (March 2002), in Italian and English.

See especially “The Mantuan Kabbalistic Workshop,” § 5. EZRA AND MENACHEM AZARYAH FANO: THE DISCOVERY OF THE LURIANIC KABBALAH.

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Matt offers a brief excerpt from Fano’s “On the *Tebir*” from the beginning of his *Yonat Elem*, titled SHATTERING AND GROWTH—page 96.

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_____. *Shney Luchot Habrit*, translated and annotated by Eliyahu Munk, 3 volumes. Brooklyn: Lambda Publishers, Inc., 1999

Newman, Rabbi Dr. Eugene. *Life & Teachings of Isaiah Horowitz*. London: G. J. George & Co. Ltd., 1972.

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_____. THE MYSTIC TRADITION. ABRAHAM COHEN HERRERA AND PLATONIC THEOLOGY. Ph.D. dissertation: New York: New York University, 1982.

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Bali, Rifat N. “Another Enemy: The Dönme or Crypto-Jews,” *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Nine (2003), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

Barnai, Jacob. “The Sabbatean Movement in Smyrna: The Social Background,” in *Jewish Sects, Religious Movements, and Political Parties* [PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE PHILIP M. AND ETHEL KLUTZNICK CHAIR IN JEWISH CIVILIZATION HELD ON SUNDAY-MONDAY, OCTOBER 14-15, 1990] edited by Menachem Mor. Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1992.

Bessemer, Paul F. “Recent Turkish Works on the Dönmes,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Thirteen (2005), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

_____. “Who is a Crypto-Jew? A Historical Survey of the Sabbatean Debate in Turkey,” *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Nine (2003), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

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Moses Hayim Luzzatto

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Elijah ben Solomon, Gaon of Vilna

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For more information, go to www.cityofluz.com.

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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.

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Yehuda Lev Ashlag

Ashlag, R. Yehuda. *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, and 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.

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

A preface and introduction to *Etz Hayim*.

_____. *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.

_____. (Laitman, Rav Michael, comm.) *Introduction to the Book of Zohar: Original Texts of Rav Yehuda Ashlag in Hebrew and English*. Toronto: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2005.

- *Vol. I, The Science of Kabbalah (Pticha)* includes "The Preamble to the Wisdom of Kabbalah," and "Preface to the Commentary of 'The Sulam.'"
- *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.

_____. *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible*. Jerusalem: Research Centre of Kabbalah, 1984.

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These volumes represent the first two parts of *Talmud Eser Sefirot*: TZIMTZUM AND KAV and IGULIM AND YOSHER.

_____. *The Wisdom of Truth: 12 Essays by the Holy Kabbalist Rav Yehuda Ashlag*, edited by Michael Berg. Los Angeles: The Kabbalah Centre International, Inc., 2008.

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

Ashlag, Rav Yehuda; Ashlag, Rav Baruch; and Laitman, Michael. *Kabbalah for the Student*. Toronto – Brooklyn: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2008.

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. Many of the writings presented in *Kabbalah for the Student* have been published elsewhere before. Some examples:

- "Disclosing a Portion, Covering Two" ≈ "Revealing a Handbreadth and Concealing Two" in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- "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 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)
- "Matan Torah" ≈ "The Giving of the Torah" in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- "Matter and Form in the Wisdom of Kabbalah" ≈ "Substance and Form in Kabbalah" in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)

- “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 commentary as “Preface to the Book of Zohar” in Laitman’s *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* (2005)
- “Preface to the Sulam Commentary” = “The Preface to the Commentary of “The Sulam” 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
- “The Arvut” = “Mutual Responsibility” in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- “The Essence of Religion and Its Purpose” ≈ “The Quality and Goal of Religion” in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- “The Essence of the Wisdom of the Kabbalah” ≈ “The Essence of Kabbalistic Wisdom” in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- “The Peace” ≈ “Peace” in *Kabbalah: A Gift of the Bible* (1984)—also in *The Wisdom of Truth* (2008)
- “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

Berg, Rabbi Michael (ed/comp). *The Zohar by Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai with THE SULAM Commentary of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag. THE FIRST EVER UNABRIDGED ENGLISH TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY.* Tel Aviv – New York – Los Angeles: Yeshivat Kol Yehudah, The Kabbalah Centre International, [22 volumes + index: 1 volume, 1993; completed, 2001; index, 2003]; see Kabbalah Centre’s website: 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, 1945-55.) 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*, *parzufim*, 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 overwhelms 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.”

Garb, Jonathan. *The Chosen Will Become Herds: Studies in Twentieth-Century Kabbalah* [= *Yebide ha-segulot yihyu la-‘adarim* (Jerusalem: 2005)], translated by Yaffah Berkovits-Murciano. New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2009: CHAPTER 4, “Psychological Notions of Power,” § THE ASHLAG CIRCLE, pages 52-58.

Hansel, David. “The Origin in the Thought of Rabbi Yehuda Halevy Ashlag: *Simsum* [= TZIMTZUM] of God or *Simsum* of the World?” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Seven (2002), edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles: Cherub Press.

Laitman, Rav Michael. *The Zohar. Annotations to the Ashlag Commentary*. Toronto – Brooklyn: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2009.

“This book offers a semantic translation of *The Zohar* itself, Rabbi Ashlag’s *The Sulam* commentary, and my own explanations. The book also contains the first part of *The Book of Zohar—Hakdamat Sefer Sefer HaZohar (Introduction of The Book of Zohar)*.” —*The Zohar*, page 18.

BASED ON ASHLAG:

Krakovsky, Rabbi Levi Isaac. *Kabbalah: The Light of Redemption*. Brooklyn: The Kabbalah Foundation, 1950; rpt. Jerusalem/New York: Research Centre of Kabbalah (Yeshivat Kol Yehuda), 1970.

Krakovsky, a student of R. Yehuda Ashlag, presents a detailed summary.

Krakovsky, Rabbi Levi I. *The Omnipotent Light Revealed: Wisdom of the Kabbalah*. Hollywood: Kabbalah Culture Society of America, 1939; rpt. Brooklyn: Yesod Publishers, n.d. (ca. 1970).

Schneider, Sarah. “Constriction Precedes Expanse: The Woodgatherer Was Tslafchad – R. Yehuda Ashlag’s Commentary on *Zohar* 3:157a,” in *Kabbalistic Writings on the Nature of Masculine and Feminine*. (Northvale – Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 2001).

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See, in particular, “The Mantuan Kabbalistic Workshop,” § 5. EZRA AND MENACHEM AZARYAH FANO: THE DISCOVERY OF THE LURIANIC KABBALAH, and “The Visual Kabbalah,” § 3. THE MANTUAN MYSTICAL DIAGRAMS.

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Eichenstein, Zevi Hirsch. *Turn Aside from Evil and Do Good. An Introduction and a Way to the Tree of Life [SUR ME-RA’ VA-’ASEH TOV*, originally published in 1832, a year after the author’s death], translated, introduced, and annotated by Louis Jacobs. London – Washington: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1995.

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