

The ARI

Innovative Mystic



History

Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, Eloki, Adoneinu, z'l ARIZ'l

By age 8, lost both parents, did business in Egypt...

Kabbalah la'Am, האר"י, <http://www.kab.co.il/heb/content/view/frame/45128>

At the age of 35 he appeared in Safed, shrouded by mystery and splendour. In the span of just two and a half years, until his sudden death, he changed the face of history, birthing a powerful shift in the wisdom of Kabbalah, a shift which opened it to us, the nation.

Normative background

He wrote on Zevachim with Rabbi Betzalel Ashkenazi, lost in fire in Izmir

He asked a question to Rav Yosef Karo

He studied under the Radvaz

He studied Zohar in Egypt

A question to Rabbi Karo

שו"ת אבקת רוכל סימן קלו

שאלה למהר"ר יצחק אשכנזי המקובל האלהי זצוק"ל

שאלה ילמדנו רבינו שמעון לקח מראובן מנה בתורת עיסקא וקנה בהם סחורה והוליכה בים ברשות ראובן ויהי בדרך מת שמעון (ח) והטילוהו אל הים וראובן לא נמצא עמו שם שתחזור לו העיסקא ואחרי כן טבעה הסחורה או נפסד' אם יגבה ראובן חצי העיסקא או הפחת מיורשי שמעון הואיל ומחציתה מלוה או נימא כיון שהדין הוא שמשעה שמת הדרא למרא אין על יורשי שמעון כלום משום דהרי שלו לפניו וכן אם לא נטבעה רק שהגיע אל ארץ נושבת ונמכרה הסחורה ועלה ריוח עשרים דינר מהו אם תפשוט לן דכשנטבעה אין על יורשי שמעון כלום משום דהדרא עיסקא והרי שלו לפניו אכתי תבעי אם ישומו את הסחורה כפי מה שיתנו בה הולכי הספינה והרי הוא חצי הקנייה ובפרט אם היתה הולכת הספינה מנמל אלכסנדרייא לקושטאנטינה או ויניציאה שהכל מלבישי בסחורה ולא ימצאו מעות כל עיקר ויגבה השאר מהיורשים או ישומו באומד כמה אדם רוצה לתת הסחורה זאת בארץ נושבת על מנת שיקבל אחריותה ממקום שמת והריוח או ההפסד יחלוקו ואם תפשוט לן דכשנטבעה יגבה ראובן מיורשי שמעון חלק המלוה א"כ נימא דיטלו יורשי שמעון גם מהריוח דאלת"ה אין דינם שוה

Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (Chida, 18th century Italy/Israel), Shem haGedolim 332 '

And in his youth he recorded a Shitah on Tractate Zevachim in the compilation of his mentor, Rabbi Betzalel... And through our great sins, it was burned in the fire in Izmir, with all of his books... And it is already known that his students asked why he did not compose books of his great Kabbalistic knowledge. He replied that he could not, for wellsprings of knowledge would suddenly open for him, and he lacked the strength to write it. Even speaking was difficult, to find a narrow channel with which to speak to them

Prof. Lawrence Fine, Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos, pp. 1-7

. Isaac Luria is one of the several most extraordinary and influential mystical personalities that the Jewish tradition has ever produced... Luria may be credited with having helped shape the course of Jewish mysticism in decisive and profound ways. Thus, even though Luria (also called the Ari) lived in the Galilean city of Safed for less than three years – from early 1570 until his death at the age of thirty-eight in August 1572 – his name is virtually synonymous with the great renaissance of mystical community that took place there between approximately 1530 and 1590... During these six decades, Safed spawned an astounding array of impressive religious personalities...

cont'd

Among the kabbalists, however, it was Isaac Luria whose powerful religious imagination and personal charisma served to arouse the most fervent enthusiasm. Not only did Luria's presence dominate the kabbalistic community in Safed during the relatively brief time that he lived there, but following his death, the impression his personality had made lived on, providing grist for a rich legendary tradition... Another consequential repercussion of Lurianic Kabbalah is associated with the Sabbatean movement in the middle of the seventeenth century. While there has been much debate about the precise nature of the relationship between Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabbateanism, there is no question that the writings of Nathan of Gaza, the central propagandist and religious ideologue of the Sabbatean movement, were thoroughly suffused with Lurianic teaching of a theosophical and mythological type...

Cont'd

A similar observation may be made with respect to the popular pietistic movement known as Hasidim, which swept through eastern Europe beginning in the eighteenth century. As with Sabbateanism, the exact relationship between Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidism continues to be the subject of considerable discussion... Another way in which Lurianic mysticism exerted influence was in the realm of religious devotion and practice. Here Lurianic teaching went far beyond limited scholarly circles and appealed to a much wider audience. A great many of the rituals and customs that Isaac Luria innovated, along with earlier kabbalistic rituals that he adapted and embellished, eventually found their way into Jewish practice in communities in many parts of the Jewish world... Besides their general diffusion, Lurianic devotional practices also became the central focus for various kabbalistic fellowships... These several examples provide some idea of the wide-ranging and diverse ways in which the life of Isaac Luria and his teachings influenced the religious culture of Jewry.

Sefirot

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th century Israel), Pardes Rimonim, Gate 1

It is well-known regarding the number of Sefirot, all who are involved with this hidden knowledge have agreed as one that there are ten. There is no debate in this at all. This is one of the matters in which the covenant has been executed regarding knowledge of the Sefirot. And we have the Book of Creation, which is ascribed to our patriarch Avraham, and some ascribe it to Rabbi Akiva, and it is not decided. The words of this book are so deep, so lofty, and they are hidden from the eyes of the intellect of those who examine it. And even though there are many different explanations, still, we require explanation of all of its parts. Therefore, we will explain its words as much as we can, to the extent of our weak intellect...

Rabbi Luria studied with him for 3 months/ Thanks to Rabbi Mordechai Torczykner

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th century Israel), Tomer Devorah 1

Man is suited to resemble his Creator, and then he achieves the secret of the higher form, tzelem and demut. If he were to resemble [his Creator] physically, but not in his actions, he would be making the form into a lie. They would say of him, “This is a pleasant form, but ugly deeds.” The essence of the higher tzelem and demut is in His actions, and of what good is it to be like the higher form, the form of His “limbs”, and to not resemble his Creator in his actions?

Innovations

Tzimtzum, Restriction

Rabbi Chaim Vital, Eitz haChaim, Anaf 1

Know that before the recipients received and the creations were created, there was higher light, simple, which filled all existence, and no space was empty... All was filled with that simple, infinite light. There was neither beginning nor end, but all was the simple light, all equal with total equality. This is what is called the Infinite Light. And when it arose in His simple will to create the worlds and to give to the recipients, to bring to light the completeness of His deeds and His Names and His kinnuyim, which was the cause for creation of the worlds, as is explained to us... Then He constricted (tzimtzem) Himself at a centre point within Him, in the actual centre. And He constricted that light, and it was distanced to the sides all around that centre point. What remained was an open space, and air, and empty space, from that actual centre point...

Drush Adam Kadmon

At first a simple light, ein sof and there was no
Empty space, and when He wanted to give to the
Recipients, then he restricted himself and his light
Went out to the surroundings and was left inside
A space that was open

It's an act of din, judgment

מתוך "דרוש אדם קדמון"

דע כי תחלת הכל היה

כל המציאות אור פשוט ונקרא

א"ס [אין סוף], ולא היה אז

שום מקום פנוי...

וכאשר עלה ברצון המאציל

להאציל הנאצלים...

ואז צמצם עצמו... ונתרחק אורו

אל הסביבות, ונשאר

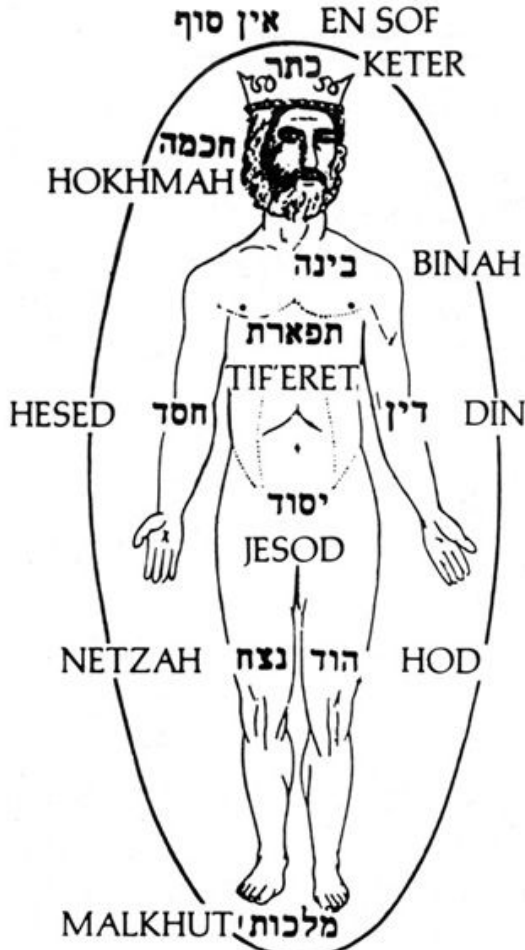
באמצע מקום פנוי חלל...

R. Chaim of Voloshin, Nefesh Hahayim iii 7

Know that everything that the Ariza”I wrote regarding these recondite topics are only metaphors, and the inner meaning of the matter of the Constraining and the Channel, the intention regarding these two contexts as mentioned above, is that they are, in essence, completely one context and one matter.

For the definition of the word “Constraining” here, is not a way of referring to leaving a space, or transporting from place to place, to cause Himself to enter and to cause Himself to connect to Himself (so to speak), to actualize a vacant space (heaven forefend). Rather the matter is as stated in *Bereshit Rabba*, at the end of *parsha* 45: “She constrained her presence⁸¹³ *Heb.:* *pa-neh-ha*—literally “her face” and she did not perceive the King”. And in *Eikha Rabbatee* at the beginning of the alphabetic section “*ah-nee ha-gevver*”: “She went and constrained her presence behind the column”, whose explanation there is: using the language of being hidden and covered (refer to the *Ahrookh* in the entry for *Tz-M-Tz-M*⁸¹⁴ *The four Hebrew letters tzaddik, mem, tzaddik, mem.*). So too here [is found] the word Constraining, namely, being hidden and covered.

Adam Kadmon



Shevirat Keilim, Broken Vessels

Although the *sefirot* of *Tohu* shattered and "died," nevertheless, a residue of the lights that were contained in the vessels remained clinging to the fragments of the vessels. These are referred to by the Arizal as the 288 *nitzotzin* (literally "sparks") - the initial number of fragments from the vessels that broke. The entire process is alluded to in Scripture in the first couple verses of Genesis: "In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth, when the earth was *tohu* and void, and darkness was on the surface of the depths, and the sovereignty of G-d *hovered* (in Hebrew "*merachefet*") above the surface of the waters...." The Arizal explains that the word "*merachefet*" is actually a compound of two words: "*met*" and "*rapach*" - signifying that 288 (the numerical value of *rapach*) fragments had *died* (in Hebrew, "*met*") - an allusion to the shattering of the vessels of *Tohu* into 288 initial sparks. (*Mevo She'arim, shaar 2, ch. 8*)

Light breaks the world like the experiment of the 7 worlds

It's like the birth of a child with afterbirth,

Based on Gershom Schoelem

As the emanations came down the first three levels could handle it but the lower sefirot, except for Malchut, could not, so they broke because it was too strong. Some light made its way to its source both others left, kelipot, evil. There are still some points of light in the vessels that can be redeemed.

chabad.org

Due to the intensity and exclusivity of the lights and the inability of their vessels to contain them, the vessels of the lower *sefirot* of *Tohu* shattered and the lights they contained remained above. The fragments of these vessels then fell to lower levels, becoming absorbed into the various worlds below the world of *Tohu*.

Partzufin, after the breaking, the sefirot reorganized...

The *sefirot* of *Tikun* were emanated in such a way that they work together interdependently and harmoniously, as *partzufim* (literally, "visages" - sing. "*partzuf*") - compound structures of the *sefirot*. A *partzuf* is a metaphorical figure of human likeness, used to represent the expansion of an individual *sefira* (or group of *sefirot*) into a configuration with ten *sefirot* of its own. *Partzufim* include *Atik Yomin*, *Arich Anpin*, *Abba*, *Imma*, *Zeir Anpin* (*ben*), *Nukva* (*bat*)]. As mentioned, the *partzufim* work as symbiotic harmonious systems instead of the discrete, independent, overpowering *nekudot* of *Tohu*.

- **Atik Yomin**- "Ancient of Days", supreme "earliest/oldest" inner dimension of **Keter** Will from Ein Sof)
- **Arich Anpin**- "Long Face/Extending Patience", infinitely extending downwards source of divine compassion in **Keter** Will. (Chesed)

Zeir Anpin- "Small Face/Short Patience", Son, 6 sefirot emotions that **shattered**, born from Imma on "left" side (Judgement)

- **Nukvah**- "Female **Abba**- "Father", **Chokhmah** illumination of Wisdom insight, root of intellect on the "right" of the sefirot (Revelation)
- **Imma**- "Mother", **Binah** intellectual Understanding nurturing pregnant emotions, on the "left" side of the sefirot (Internalisation)
- " of Zeir Anpin, Daughter, **Malkuth** reign in Feminine **Shekhinah**, born from Zeir Anpin on "left", man reunites

Sefirot----> Partzufin

Keter-> Arich anpin, Atika, Chesed

Chochma and Binah-> Abba and Imma

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Zeir Anpin<-6 lower sefirot=din, judgment

Malchut-> Nukva d'ze'er

-----> tikkun

Composed by the ARI, recited before Fri night dinner by
some

אַתְּקִינוּ סְעֻדַּתָּא

דְּחֻקֵּי תַפּוּחֵי קַדִּישִׁין (וְזַעִיר אַנְפִּין וְעֵתִיקָא קַדִּישָׁא אַתֵּן לְסְעֻדָּא בְּהַדָּה) ד

Tikkun

Moshe Hallamish, Intro to Kabbalah

In the teaching of the ARI, every individual is a participant in the active process of the world's tikkun by the very act of doing good this process is called clarifying the sparks, berur haniztoztot or raising the sparks, haalat hanitzoztot, the completion of the process takes place with the arrival of redemption itself which is a process....

Moshe Halbertal: The role of the religious person is to restore the G-dliness to what it was. When you fix your soul, you fix the whole world.

Kavanot

. Professor Meir Medan, החסידיים תפילות, Machanayim 46 (1960)
<http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/mahanaim/tfilat-2.htm>

The Kabbalah of the Ari requires kavvanot and yichudim with mitzvah deeds, and in each detail of those, and especially in prayers and blessings. The words, and even the letters and vowels, of each statement, are each directed toward a great tikkun in the sefirot and worlds, according to the secrets of the Torah of that which is hidden. All of them together combine to a complete array of tikkunim, and that completeness is essential for it, and any deviation or flaw in the specifics of the yichudim and kavvanot is like a flaw and corruption in the structure of the worlds. This is the reason for demanding extra care in details of mitzvot and the specifics of text [of prayer and blessings]. But these yichudim and kavvanot were, essentially, the province of individuals of special levels. Via the Ari and his group they became the province of groups and gatherings of elevated people. Chassidut, on the foundation of the Baal Shem Tov, came to establish the goals of Kabbalah as the province of the masses, and to convert the entire nation into a holy nation, which performs yichudim and repairs worlds with its deeds and prayers.

Moshe Halbertal: This is how you fix the sparks of G-d to return.

Each person has a redemptive role, not political but religious

Meditation and Kabbalah, Aryeh Kaplan, pg 225

Yichudim

"The lower soul (nefesh) is from the Universe of [Assiah](#), which is associated with the name Adonay ("Lord" the divine name associated with the Sefirah [Malkuth](#)). One should therefore meditate on the name Adony (ADNY) binding it to the name YHVH ([Tetragrammaton](#) name associated with the Sefirah [Tiferet](#)) in the Universe of Assiah. He should then bind this to the name Ehyeh (AHYH "I Am" associated with the Sefirah [Keter](#)) in the Universe of Assiah.

He should then meditate on this, elevating the name Ehyeh of Assiah, and binding it to Adonay of [Yetzirah](#). Adonay of Yetzirah should then be bound to YHVH of Yetzirah.

One proceeds in this manner step by step, until he reaches Ehyeh of [Atziluth](#). He should then bind Ehyeh of Atzilut to the very highest level, which is the Ein Sof."

Nusach Ari, Nusach Sphard

ARI prayers

וְיֵהָא רַעֲוֹא מִן קָדָם

ע

א דְּכָל קַדִּישִׁין. טְמִירָא דְּכָל טְמִירִין סְתִימָא דְּכָל דִּיתְמַשְׁךְ טַלָּא עֲלָא מִינָה לְמַלְיָא רִישִׁיה דְּזַעִיר אַנְפִּיּוֹת
וְלָהּ

. וַיְתִי לְנָא וּלְכָל נְפֻשְׁתָּנָא חֲנָא וְחֶסֶדָא וְחַיִּי אֲרִיכִי וּמְזוֹנֵי רוּיְחֵי וְרַחֲמֵי מִן קַדְמִיָּה אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן אָמֵן וְאָמֵן ט

Effects of ARI on life today

Tikun chatzot, tikkun leil hoshanah rabbah

Hineni muchan...

Lecha dodi...

Sepharadim

Chasidim

Mention of the ARI in the Chayay Adam, basic law book

1. A stringency, not to mention the angels names

חיי אדם חלק א כלל ה

ובענין שמות המלאכים, אף על פי שכתבו בשם האר"י ז"ל שאסור להזכירם, צריך לומר דזה דוקא שלא לצורך אלא שרוצה להזכיר שמותם, זה אסור. אבל בדרך תפלה ושבח כדמצינו בפיוטים, מותר להזכירם, דלא עדיף משמות הקדושים. וכן שמעתי מפי הגר"א שאמר הפיוטים כמו שנדפסו. אך בלק"ת מפורש להדיא לאיסור

2. Against trying to be like the ARI

חיי אדם חלק א כלל יח

ודע שכל מקום שנכתב צריך לכוין, רצה לומר שיכוין פירוש המלות, אבל לא יכוין כוונות ושמות, כי בעונותינו הרבים אנחנו מלוכלכים בחטא, ובלתי ספק המכוין מקצץ בנטיעות. ואפילו הלומדים כתבי האר"י אינו מבין רק המלות ולא הענין ואפילו אחד מאלף לא ימצא שבקי בזה, וה' יראה ופוק חזי מאן גברא רבא קא מסהיד, מהרש"ל בתשובה האריך בזה הרבה. וסוף דבריו, (ללבב לכן אהובי אל תלך בדרך אתם ואין לך עסק בנסתרות המתיהרים בחידושים

3. About Simcha

חיי אדם חלק א כלל סח

השמחה הגדולה במצוה, ופי' האר"י ז"ל שזה שכתוב [דברים כ"ח מ"ז] תחת אשר לא עבדת כו' בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל, רצה לומר שלא שמחת בעבודה יותר מאילו מצאת רוב כל תענוגים: ואבנים טובות ומרגליות, ואמרינן [ברכות ל"א א'] אלא מתוך שמחה של מצוה

4. Against students of the ARI

חיי אדם חלק ב-ג (הלכות שבת ומועדים) כלל קל

ודע שאין חילוק בין המרור שמברך עליו או זה שלוקח בכריכה, דלא כמו ששמעתי ממוקצת בני אדם בשם כתבי האר"י שהם ב' מינים, והם אינם יודעים בין ימינם לשמאלם, שהרי ה' מיני ירק שיוצאין בהם מצטרפין זה לזה אפי' לקט מכולן כזית יצא, אלא דהעולם נוהגים ליקח העלין של (חריין לברך עליו, שהוא נוח יותר לאכול וגם שהם הידור מצוה

5. Affirms the ARI's penance but...

חיי אדם חלק ב-ג (הלכות שבת ומועדים) כלל קלב

מי שעבר עבירות ידועים המבואר ברוקח ובכתבי האר"י כמה ימים צריך להתענות לכפרה, חייב להתענות, אף על גב דמצטער בזה הרבה. ואף על פי כן אם תלמיד חכם הוא ותורתו אומנתו, אפי' בזמן הזה לא יסגף עצמו כל כך, אפי' על עונות ידועים, רק שישוב לפני ה' בלב שלם, ויבכה מקירות הלב, וילמוד יותר ממה שהוא רגיל

6. Taking out a torah on Kol nidrei

חיי אדם חלק ב-ג (הלכות שבת ומועדים) כלל קמד

אחרי זה ילך לבית הכנסת באימה ורעדה. והמנהג בקהלתנו בכל בתי מדרשים להוציא ספר תורה מהיכל כמו שכתוב בכתבי האר"י ז"ל, וכבר נדפס בחמדת הימים התפלה שסידר. ואמנם לא כל אדם מבין הדברים רק מי שבא בסוד ה'. ומי שאינו יודע, הוא לו כדברי ספר החתום. ולכן העתקתי מספרים קדמונים תפלה בלשון קל, כי בלאו הכי לדעת הרבה פוסקים מצות וידוי היא סמוך ללילה דוקא וראוי לכל אדם, וזה נוסחתה, ואשרי מי שיאמר אותה גם בבשחרית:bbbbbbbbbb

7. Affirms ARI's prayers at night

נשמת אדם חלק א כלל ה

הרי דאפי' בנביאים מותר לחלק. וכן מוכח דעת המקובלים, האר"י והביאו בשל"ה בסידור שלו בק"ש שעל המטה שיאמר שיר של פגעים מן יושב בסתר עד ה' מחסי והוא ס' תיבות, והזהיר על זה שלא יאמר יותר, 'ומשמע דהכי הגירסא בגמרא בשבועות פרק ב

8. Affirms forbidden nights but not for everyone!

חכמת אדם שער בית הנשים כלל קכח

הזמנים שאסור לשמש על פי כתבי האר"י ז"ל כגון בליל פסח ועצרת וראש השנה ובחול כל זה אינו אלא לאדם שהוא מלא ביראה ולא יחטא חס ושלום אבל אלו שיצרם מתגבר עליהם והם חושבים שהוא כעין איסור תורה ועל ידי זה באים חס ושלום לידי כמה מכשולים מצוה גדולה לשמש אפילו בראש השנה ויטבול: למחר דמצד הדין אין איסור אלא ביום הכפורים ובתשעה באב ובימי אבלות שלו או שלה

Common thought



Gilgul Neshamot, from his student, Rav Chaim Vital

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

Problems

Is he messiah son of Joseph? He thought so...

Sabbateanism

Pantheism

Misinterpretation

Mysticism without religion

Tikkun without halacha