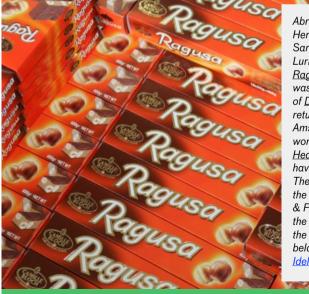


In the <u>GRA-version</u> of the 'tree of life' (etz chayim) there are 10 sefirot—let us call them substances—and 22 connections between them: they are units of volume, number and story. As you have heard, they come together in the human breath: in breathing, sounding and expression—musically in-1.

In the Genesis, creation is related through acts of calling: every time G-d calls/ cries something is brought to exist. G-d's name (HaShem) occurs 32 times in the Genesis: 10 times 'G-d says' and 22 times just 'G-d'. Hence the architecture of 10 nodes and 22 connections in the tree of life. 32 = Leb/Heart.



Abraham H-Cohen de Herrera met his teacher Sarug-an adept of Lurianic kabbalah—in Ragusa: which at the time was the name of the city of Dubrovnik. He later returned to Judaism in Amsterdam and wrote his work The Gates of Heaven there. It may have influenced Spinoza. The historical tracery of the kabbalah from Spain & Portugal, its impact on the Italian renaissance to the Baroque has been belaboured by e.g. Moshe Idel and Miguel Beltrán.

There's a whole branch of **Spinoza**-studies that has been tasked with determining the **influence** of the **kabbalistic** tradition on Spinoza's's philosophy, particularly <u>Abraham Cohen de Herrera</u>'s book **The Gates of Heaven**, which he published after **returning** to Judaism in Amsterdam. He was a <u>Marrano</u>.

At the core of these speculations is 'substance': the inconceivable yet necessary unity within the Cartesian notions of thought and extension. The question, left open by Spinoza in Ethica, of the relation between substance—its attributes—and G-d. The architecture of relay between G-d and Creation.

How are the in/finite connected? How does the higher connect with the lower [and back]? How does **thought** connect with **extension**? In the beginnings—Genesis—it is G-d's **breath** (Hebr. **ruach**) that hovers over the waters. The waters are the **torah**. It contains the world and everything that is in it (A-T).

It is G-d's reflection in the multiple. The conceptual determinations of G-d are always <u>negative</u>. In the kabbalistic cosmogony G-d retracted (tzimtzum) to give space to creation. For the rest, everything is in G-d's name: the ineffable name YKVK and the multiple name Elokim. They are separated by 4 letters.

These letters are **alef**, **lamed**, **mem** and **vav**. The 22 Hebrew letters are also numbers. The sum of <u>Alef (1) + Lamed (30) + Mem (40)</u> is **71**, which is the number of members in the **sanhedrin**: the **torah**'s assembly of 71 elders, or "supreme court". So, the mitigation of the **multiple** is through **judgement**.

The Vav is the 6th: in term of the 6th day of creation the promise of the shabbat—that connects heaven and earth—which is the messiah and the world-to-come. So, this is the radical unity aspect (1-in-1). The tetragramme (what Jews call Ha-Shem, the name) occurs throughout the torah.

But it was only revealed to Moshe/Moses. This is why it is said that Moses wrote the torah. Which is where the adventure with source-criticism—modern wissenschaft—begins. Most of what has been written on the history of the kabbalah belongs to that tradition: who owes which bit to whom.

The methodological problem I see at this point, is the **sealing** of written works by their **author**: i.e., there is a claim for **originality/originarity** in authorship; while, in the Jewish setting, the idea that something comes from Abraham—or, Moses—is that it **descends** from them, or their descendants descendants.

The rest is commentary and the work of time. So it is with the zohar, a major source of kabbalistic learning. Tradition ascribes its origin to an esoteric part of the talmud that was kept secret for 1000 years. This means that if ifs authorship is ascribed to Moses de Leon (~1291), its legacy is from the talmud.

In the Jewish tradition one <u>does not quote scripture</u>. The manifestation of earlier knowledge is a growth phenomenon: a new branch on the whole tree. The chances are that what is known as kabbalah occurs at an edgeland: between talmud and philosophy. Spinoza both teaches from and cuts off from it.