



If human being is a partner to creation—a main tenet of the cabalistic tradition—what is the relationship between human *creativity* and *desire*? If human beings spend their lives living in the *chasm* between what their *thoughts* enfold and the *extension* of life lived unfolds? Desire is that gap.

Moreover, *that* desire will evolve from the compound—of thought and extension—and will be *marked*: both in the way s/he has got with life, and the way life has got with him/her. To what extent is the drive within the sexual drive sexual? Or, how is the libido marked and changed by life?

How are these markings readable if indeed they are located in the cross-pressure between internal and external forces? These are questions that emerge as soon as human being is a player in creation: or, in different terminology, a partner to creation. These are questions of the *anthropocene*.



When Rabbi Loew of Prague held that in taking stock of an *hypothesis* one needs to have an understanding of its *underlying* premise, he was speaking in the language of Aristotelian philosophy. However, as the reality of the premise had to be revealed, he focussed on the fact of its being *hidden*.

In Hebrew, *Olam* (the *world*) also writes *Elem* (the *hidden*). The Rabbi—whose technical inside-name is *MaHaRaL*—stood by a Cabalistic tradition and method of study, aiming at understanding *reality as it is*. As such, its objective lies not with miracles and wonder-making, but in *knowledge*.

The oldest known kabbalistic volume *Sefer yetzira*—the book of creation—makes a point of human being as a partner to creation. In his life and practice, *MaHaRaL* insists that what may look like magic, actually are linked to paths that opened as the Torah (*Pentateuch*) became part of the world.

The act of prayer invokes this relationship. It is as naturally for a Jew to pray as the brook to flow, the sea to roar and the wind to blow. The books that are in this league—Scripture—are *not* dealing with reality in a theoretical fashion. Or, rather, they are added directly to the real (part of the real).

There are a number of entailments of this basic premise—if ethics includes levelling with reality—that at first appear tricky to get around. It has stirred the interest of bright philosophical minds over the years: Baruch Spinoza, Arne Næss, Gilles Deleuze, François Laruelle, Pierre Victor & J.P. Sartre.

Some of these entered quite toxic diatribes with one another. Evidently, if they entered the *same* kitchen—to use a figure from Nachman of Breslov (Ukraine)—they came out with *different* dishes. The closest call is likely François Laruelle's bid for a First Science: before science & philosophy.

*MaHaRaL* was quite clear in articulating the difference between *cabbala* and *philosophy*: *clearly* distinguishing the former from the latter (while being on board the philosophical discussions of his time). Yet, Spinoza—who lived 100 years after *MaHaRaL*—made a note that is very much to the point.

Namely, that—in order to really understand something—we must first *create* it. That is, we must bring it from the *darkness* (*Alum*) into the *light* (*Olam*). This is, of course, no secret to makers. Since there are always aspects of what they have *conceived* in *thought*, that *making* reformulates in *extension*.

In *MaHaRaL*'s systems there is *no way around* extension: his approach to Cabbala is not systematic, but follows the windy trail of the Talmud. The work, labour or exertion laid in the process of study, is an integral part of the DNA of understanding. The idea conceived in thought is but one aspect.

The unity of reality is located between **1) the uncreated** and **2) creation**. Given the nature of humans as co-creators the question of what, how and why to create would seem as unavoidable as it is spiky. Yet, the task of our journey also is to find rest in the unstable equilibrium between **1) and 2)**.