

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Preface. Shaul Magid	xi
Introduction	1
Problematica and Methodology	4
Review of Scholarship	14
Overview of Lurianic Metaphysics	37
Chapter 1. Sleep and Rebirth	51
The Anatomy of Sleep	52
Sleep and Dismemberment	59
Sleep and Dreams	63
Soul Rupture and Cosmic Union	67
Kavvanot for Bedtime Shema	71
The Female Waters	78
Swapping Soul-Parts	84
Chapter 2. Death and Resurrection	93
The Metaphysics of Death	95
Death and Rebirth	101
Anatomical Embodiment	107
The Radical Unity of Body and Soul	111
Human Sacrifice and Integral Monism	119
Resurrection and the Nullification of Hierarchy	136
Lurianic Kabbalah and Fastern Mysticism	143

viii Sleep, Death, and Rebirth

Conclusion	149
Appendix: The Complete <i>Kavvanah</i> Required for Expediting Rebirth	153
Selected Bibliography	161
Index	173

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Professors Eitan Fishbane and Ariel Mayse for their careful reading of the manuscript and thoughtful feedback and suggestions; the team at Academic Studies Press—especially Alessandra Anzani, Ilya Nikolaev, and Kira Nemirovsky—who, with professionalism and kindness, shepherded this project along and made the entire process smooth and enjoyable; Ben Notis and Stuart Allen, who helped prepare the book for submission, and for their astute editorial suggestions; Professors Arthur Green and Rachel Elior for their teaching, guidance, and care; and Rabbis Meshullem Fayish Segal-Lavi (of blessed memory) and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (of blessed memory) for encouraging my study of Kabbalah and for seeing that which is yet to be born.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Shaul Magid, without whom this book would not have been written. When I met Shaul in the summer of 1995 at Camp Ramah, I was a twenty-year-old yeshiva dropout seeking to reconcile the depth of the tradition in which I was raised with the changing reality maps before me. I instantly recognized him as a brother, friend, mentor, and role model. Shaul introduced me to my first text in the Lurianic tradition— Pitchei She'arim by R. Yitzchak Isaac Chaver. We spent nearly every day that summer studying this text, singing niggunim, building things in the woodworking shop, and discussing all things hidden and revealed. With him, I could seamlessly shift between the beis medrash and the academy, between the tischn of Boro Park and the satsangs of Boulder. A scholar and musician extraordinaire, gifted with a fecund mind, a prolific hand, and a depth of heart, Shaul inspired and encouraged me to complete my doctorate and publish my research in the form of this book. This volume therefore represents the fruition of an academic and personal journey that began twenty-six years ago at Camp Ramah, where I sat with him in the woods beside a river, being eaten alive by mosquitoes to the point that blood was dripping down my face, deeply absorbed in the wondrous world of Lurianic Kabbalah. Shaul opened up the gates for me, invited me into the garden, and then nudged me back out to share its fruits with the world.

Preface

In Sleep, Death, and Rebirth, Zvi Ish-Shalom offers us an intricately researched, expansively theorized, and elegantly constructed study of Lurianic cosmology and its interface with the praxis of contemplative practice focusing on death and re-birth as spiritual exercises toward human perfection.

The Lurianic corpus, constructed by his students over the course of decades following the untimely death of Isaac Luria in 1572, is arguably the most complex exemplar of kabbalistic metaphysics in the history of Jewish thought. Basing itself on the zoharic corpus but moving considerably beyond it, the Lurianic system – if we can call it that – combines a panoply of metaphysical templates with detailed instructions for their application in the performance of mitzvot and specifically the act of prayer. Never before in Jewish thought has mystical metaphysics so intimately been coupled with physical praxis and contemplation such that the very gnosis it promises is embedded in acts performed, envisioned through the nexus of human effort and agency, and subsequent divine effluence.

In many ways Lurianism defies what we normally call "mysticism." The term, itself highly contested, is often thought to apply to a unitive experience of oneness, access to a transcendence that reaches beyond the fragmentary nature of our world. In fact, the Lurianic system is quite the opposite; the more one reaches beyond material existence, the more fragmentary, more detailed, and more complex the cosmos become. Depending on the recension of the Lurianic system one engages, it can be more cacophonous than harmonious. Contemplation is not achieved through the emptying of self to experience the utter simplicity of transcendence, but rather the entrance into a dizzying hall of cosmic mirrors. Infinitude is presented as infinite regress rather the quiescence of repose. The cosmos, in Luria's system, is a noisy and busy place. This may be one reason why many Hasidic masters whose focus was an experience of devekut, or boundedness with the divine, often did not focus on the intricacies of Luria's system but accepted its basic premises and utilized them for their own purposes. And yet Ish-Shalom argues that in fact, the non-dualism sought in

many Hasidic texts is already at play dialectically in the Lurianic system itself, albeit concealed through the paradox of its opposite. This observation is not a novum but the way Ish-Shalom develops this through the praxis of death and re-birth sheds new light on that assumption, giving it a new series of refractions.

Ish-Shalom's book focuses on the relationship between cosmology and praxis, integral to the Lurianic schema, focusing specifically on two aspects of Lurianic contemplation, death and re-birth. This is all framed by the process of metempsychosis or reincarnation (gilgul neshamot) as a prism through which we can view the detailed daily fragmentation, and disembodiment, then reconstruction and embodiment, of the human soul by imaging and performing death as a spiritual praxis in the devotional life of the illuminati. Death, though, is not just imagined but is experienced through embodiment in the death of the body that is then enlivened through sex as an act one could liken to a kind of resurrection. Of the many contemplative practices available, Ish-Shalom focuses on two in particular, the bedtime Shma – the recitation of the Shma before sleep – and the supplicant prayers known as tahanun, recited immediately after the silent prayer morning and afternoon. Tahanun also known as nefilat apayim (falling on the face), is rendered kabbalistically as a performative enactment of death whereby the soul of the practitioner descends into a near-death experience only to rise up renewed.

Ish-Shalom brilliantly dissects these practices through the prism of their metaphysical foundations to explore what he calls the "integral monism" of the Lurianic system. That is, he argues that Lurianic Kabbala exhibits an "ontological dualism" and "epistemological non-dualism" simultaneously that permeates the entire system. The tension between dualism and non-dualism is for Ish-Shalom the theater of Lurianic practice. Ish-Shalom offers a new way of viewing the function and structure of the Lurianic system through the tension of dual and non-dual that is enhanced by his use of tantric and other practices that help contextualize the Lurianic corpus. Other scholars have utilized Hindu, Buddhist, and other systems and practices in studies in Jewish mysticism but Ish-Shalom does so with a practitioner's mentality, not in any apologetic sense, but rather with eyes to the way the embodiment of praxis brings to life the metaphysical insights therein.

In some way, the crux of this book is best expressed by Ish-Shalom in his conclusion:

Here the most paradoxical and excessive expressions of Lurianic mysticism come to fruition: it is ultimately through the fragmentation of the human soul and the death of the physical body that the cosmos can draw procreative life, while it is through the revivification of the human anatomy that the cosmos is erased of all hierarchical rank. This dialectical interplay reveals that Lurianic Kabbalah embraces a paradoxical mystical vision of total inclusivity that ultimately seeks to erase all hierarchical dualism while simultaneously upholding the reality of an ontological dualism. That is, distinct forms of manifested existence remain (ontological dualism) even while they are realized through the transformed gaze of the contemplative as equalized and neutralized of all hierarchical rank (hierarchical nondualism).

In some way there have been at least four genres of work being done in Lurianic Kabbalah. The first is the classical academic enterprise of deciphering, historicizing, and analyzing Luria's labyrinthine system and its aftermath. The second is the traditional exegetical enterprise of commentaries and annotated editions of Lurianic texts. The third comprises more popular studies meant for a non-academic audience of seekers and practitioners who want exposure to this cosmology as part of their spiritual toolkit. And the fourth comprises works of a comparative nature, looking at Lurianic teaching in relation to other traditions. Many studies combine two of these four genres. Sleep, Death, and Rebirth in some sense utilizes all four. The scholarship on primary and secondary literature is fully in conversation with the academic approach and a traditional reader will find Ish-Shalom's insights useful, if also provocative. Yet Ish-Shalom is attentive to the non-scholarly reader as well, and "translates" the intricate details in an accessible way.

Creating bridges between the purely academic (historical, contextual, analytic) and the more applied presentation of kabbalistic materials is no easy task. Ish-Shalom has been working in that area for some time, specifically in his The Kadumah Experience: The Primordial Torah. Sleep, Death and Rebirth is a more formally academic work but even here one senses Ish-Shalom's larger integrative project and his sensitivity to issues that lie outside the halls of academe.

> Shaul Magid Thetford, Vermont

Introduction

The doctrine of *gilgul* (the transmigration of the soul) has long been an important element of Jewish esoteric lore. From the very first kabbalistic literary expressions that appeared late in the twelfth century, the belief that human souls returned after death to inhabit new bodies was taken for granted. This idea developed in a number of different directions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and, although kabbalists differed widely with regard to its details, it eventually became one of the central and most widely accepted doctrines of the Kabbalah.¹

It was not until the sixteenth century, however, that this doctrine received its most articulate and comprehensive treatment. The esoteric school that formed in the Galilean town of Safed around the famous Kabbalah master Isaac Luria was particularly interested in the concept of metempsychosis, a topic that constitutes a major part of Lurianic teaching.² Luria not only significantly

¹ Gershom Scholem, "Gilgul: The Transmigration of Souls," in On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead (New York: Schocken, 1991), 197–228 and Lawrence Fine, Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 304–305.

² For sources that deal with the history and development of the concept of gilgul in sixteenth-century Kabbalah, and in Lurianic Kabbalah in particular, see Scholem, "Gilgul," 228 and idem, Origins of the Kabbalah, 188-198, 457-460; idem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 3rd rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Schocken Publishing House, 1941), 278-284 (henceforth MTJM); Lawrence Fine, "The Art of Metoposcopy: A Study in Isaac Luria's Charismatic Knowledge," in Essential Papers on Kabbalah, ed. Lawrence Fine (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 331 and 337n51; idem, Physician of the Soul, 304–305; Rachel Elior, "The Doctrine of Transmigration in Galya Raza," in Fine, Essential Papers on Kabbalah, 243; Yehudah Liebes, "Perakim be-Milon Shere ha-Zohar" (PhD diss., Israeli Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1982), 291-327; R. J. Z. Werblowsky, Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 234-256; Shaul Magid, From Metaphysics to Midrash: Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbalah (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2008), 53-74; Alexander Altmann, "Eternality of Punishment: A Theological Controversy within the Amsterdam Rabbinate in the Thirties of the Seventeenth Century," in Fine, Essential Papers on Kabbalah, 270–287; Moshe Hallamish, An Introduction to the Kabbalah (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 281-309; Pinhas Giller, Reading the

developed the theoretical aspects of the doctrine of gilgul by integrating it into his own intricate and innovative mythical system, but he also outlined practical meditative techniques to help shorten the duration of the transmigration process.

These specialized mystical techniques, which are to be performed when going to sleep at night and in the contemplative encounter with death, are designed to intentionally fragment the practitioner's soul into multiple parts. If performed properly, these practices not only grant the practitioner the possibility of total liberation in a single lifetime, but they also set the stage for the successful resurrection of the physical body, an event that marks the final stage in Luria's teleological goal of tiqun, the rectification of the cosmos.

The possibility of freeing oneself from reincarnation through intentionally fragmenting the soul has, to my knowledge, never been explored by scholars, despite the fact that it "appeals very strongly to the individual consciousness," as Scholem put it.3 Since gilgul is a central component of the greater Lurianic project of cosmic redemption, the meditation practices designed to hasten this process are also essential to fully understand his metaphysical system.

In this book, I will make these provocative esoteric practices accessible to the public for the very first time. I will translate and explicate these meditations as they are articulated in the writings of Hayyim Vital, the foremost disciple and chief archivist of the oral teachings of Isaac Luria. In the process of unpacking the soul-splitting mechanics of these esoteric practices, I will also demonstrate how the soul's fragmentation in the process of transmigration and its ultimate reintegration in the reconstitution of the physical body at resurrection reveals a radical mystical view at the heart of Lurianic Kabbalah—one that sees the total dissolution of hierarchical division between body, soul, and cosmos.

This nonhierarchical view—itself a radical display of mystical monism presents itself even more paradoxically in its simultaneous acknowledgment of the ontological reality of the distinct parts that make up the tapestry of existence. This integral expression of monism is marked by the inclusion of both

Zohar: The Sacred Text of the Kabbalah (New York: Oxford University Press 2001), 37–42; Dina Ripsman Elyon, Reincarnation in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism (Lewiston: Edwin Meller, 2003); Yigal Arikha, Reincarnation: Reality That Exceeds All Imagination [Hebrew] (Kefar Saba, Israel: Aryeh Nir, 2001); Rami Shekalim, Torat ha-Nefesh ve-ha-Gilgul b'reshit ha-Kabbala (Tel Aviv: Rubin Moss, 1998); Avraham Amos, Be-gilgul Hozer: Gilgul in Kabbalah and Other Sources [Hebrew] (Ashkelon: Pe'er Ha-Kodesh, 1997); Dov Ber Pinson, Reincarnation and Judaism: The Journey of the Soul (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1999).

³ Scholem, MTJM, 283.

dual and nondual elements that fundamentally coexist.⁴ Through this exploration, we will also come to appreciate how the metaphysical implications of these practices challenge long-held assumptions in the academic field of Jewish mysticism that view Lurianic Kabbalah as drawing sharp dualistic distinctions between the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality.

Two sets of contemplative practices will be examined in this book: the first derives from the kavvanot (intentional practices) for the shema prayer recited at bedtime and the second from the morning prayer called *nefilat apayim*. The remainder of this introduction will aim to provide the reader with an orientation to the various problematica associated with Lurianic texts and an overview of the methodology I will be employing in this study. In order to properly situate this book within the broader context of the academic study of Kabbalah, I will also provide a review of past and current scholarship on Lurianic Kabbalah in general and on Lurianic conceptions of the soul and reincarnation in particular. Finally, in order to establish the metaphysical background necessary to understand these esoteric practices, I will conclude this introduction with an overview of Lurianic metaphysics and categories of soul, with the aim of formulating a synopsis that is both academically rigorous as well as accessible to the general reader.

The remainder of this book will demonstrate how each of these aforementioned kavvanot serve to consciously dismember the practitioner's soul into dislocated parts in order to expedite the journey of rebirth. More poignantly, I will explore the implications of the soul's fragmentation and ultimate re-integration in the reconstitution of the physical body at the resurrection of the dead, emphasizing the paradoxical dialectic between dualism and nondualism implicit in Lurianic metaphysics and practice.

My central argument in this book is that Lurianic Kabbalah articulates a radical form of mysticism that includes within its purview both an ontological dualism and an epistemological nondualism that fundamentally coexist. I will demonstrate how this underlying metaphysical perspective of "integral monism" expresses itself in contemplative practices that seek to erase the boundaries separating life and death, body and soul, and human and cosmos. The tendency towards the fragmentation of the soul on the one hand, and the

⁴ Mark S. G. Dyczkowski coins the term "integral monism" to describe the metaphysical view of Kashmiri Shaivism, which includes both dual and nondual features that simultaneously coexist. See his book The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 33-57. Also, see my comparative discussion of Kashmir Shaivism and Lurianic Kabbalah below on pages 64 and 144ff.

4 Sleep, Death, and Rebirth

unification of the anatomical structure of the physical body on the other, will be explored in conjunction with the paradoxical interplay between these processes on the human plane and their parallel correspondences in the cosmic realms. Commensurate with the transgression of the limits of the physical body (through the intentional death of the practitioner) and the re-membering of the anatomical structure (in the resurrection of the dead), all hierarchical rank in the entire cosmos is simultaneously erased. This dialectical process of mystical deconstruction/reconstruction will be explored as the central underlying tension in Lurianic Kabbalah.

The specific contemplative exercises examined in this study provide us with an appropriate lens through which to examine this underlying tension between dualism and nondualism in Lurianic Kabbalah because they underscore in radical ways the tendency in Lurianic mysticism towards a dualistic metaphysics on the one hand, and a unitive vision of existence on the other. This dialectical tension has never been adequately addressed by scholars even though it represents the very heart of Lurianic mysticism. By examining how these two opposite poles of the spectrum express themselves in a specific set of practices, this study will further illuminate and clarify broader questions in our understanding of mysticism in general, and of Lurianic Kabbalah in particular.

PROBLEMATICA AND METHODOLOGY

The contemplative practices taught by Isaac Luria are performative expressions of what is widely recognized as the most intricate and complex cosmology in all of Jewish literature. Indeed, Luria's architectonic framework is so metaphysically elaborate and technically daunting that only a few scholars have ventured beyond a restating of what Scholem outlined in his cursory synopsis of Lurianic metaphysics articulated in his classic work *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. It is curious that despite being universally recognized as one the most significant

⁵ See, e.g., Lawrence Fine's statement: "The cosmological myth Isaac Luria taught is without doubt the most elaborate such story in all of Jewish tradition" (*Physician of the Soul*, 124). Also see Elliot Wolfson's comment positioning Lurianic Kabbalah as "unquestionably the most complex body of Jewish mystical literature" (published on the back cover of Magid, *Metaphysics*).

⁶ Scholem wrote very little on Lurianic metaphysics beyond his seminal chapter on the topic in *MTJM*. For a review of scholars who have addressed substantive issues in the study of Lurianic Kabbalah, see my discussion below on page 14ff.

and consequential kabbalistic system of all time, still very little has been published detailing its metaphysical perspective or performative features.

When we consider the unique character of Lurianic literature, such omissions make sense. Lurianic texts—particularly those penned by Vital—are organized such that any single pericope lacks a complete or thorough exposition of any one topic. Partial segments of teachings are dispersed across a vast collection of texts and treatises in a manner that excludes the possibility of pointing to any single source as authoritative or exhaustive. This compositional format demands that the scholar take into account not only a vast amount of information on any given topic, but also that they make sense of the fragmentary nature of each textual variant, synthesizing each passage with an enormous associative network of interrelated texts, many of which seem at first blush to contradict each other.

This situation presents the student with several significant challenges. The first challenge is that any exposition of his metaphysical system cannot be limited to one particular text or passage. Not only is there not a single introductory text in all of Lurianic literature—nor is there any text that provides an overview of his system—there is no single treatment of *any* topic that is comprehensive or exhaustive. The student of this system is thus compelled to study *all* of it in order to make sense out of even *some* of it.

A second challenge is that any attempt at explicating a particular facet of Lurianic metaphysics requires an intertextual approach that ties together associative threads from diverse and scattered textual segments. In other words, developing a thesis by plucking statements out of context—and out of its intertextual matrix of associated textual references—can be misleading and unfaithful to the integrated purview of the Lurianic textual tradition. It also means that no particular feature of Luria's system can be properly understood if it is dissociated both from the totality of his metaphysical system as well as from the constellation of texts that interconnect to form the foundation of its literary expression.

A third challenge pertains to the self-enclosed nature of Lurianic metaphysical and performative symbolism and terminology. The way that Luria conceptualized and articulated his myths of cosmogenesis through the categories of withdrawal, rupture and reparation (*tzimtzum*, *shevirat ha-kelim* and *tiqun*) are unparalleled in the intellectual history of Judaism. This much has already been adequately demonstrated by Scholem's limited synopsis in *MTJM*. But the rub lies in Luria's unprecedented and unsurpassed stratification, classification, and categorization of the multidimensional cosmic dynamics that account

for the textured fabric of both the ontological makeup of reality as well as its phenomenological and epistemological manifestations in the human soul, primarily through the performance of the *kavvanot* of prayer. These speculations constitute the majority of the literary formulations penned by Vital, and also represent a completely encapsulated metaphysical system in its own right, neither sprouting as an outcropping of earlier mystical ruminations on the one hand, nor synthesizing various strands of esoteric transmissions on the other.

If we take these three challenges to heart, we can better understand the primary unaccounted for oddity in the history of the academic study of Jewish mysticism: the lack of scholarly attention granted to Lurianic Kabbalah compared to other Jewish mystical schools. This makes sense when we appreciate the challenge of piecing together details of a completely self-enclosed metaphysical system. The scholar can thus be left with the sense that she cannot say anything about Lurianic metaphysics without saying everything about it, and it is difficult to say everything about it without getting lost in the seemingly endless minutiae that constitute the bulk of Vital's literary expressions.

To say it another way, the Lurianic literary corpus is a complex maze that is not conducive to explication or interpretation in any symbolic language other than its own. Therefore, when the scholar attempts to translate this system through the prism of another symbolic medium or methodology—such as that of the Western academic tradition—the nuances of this esoteric lore are easily lost or displaced from their conceptual ground. Conversely, when the details of its system are furnished and unpacked for the uninitiated reader, they can present themselves as a bewildering and unwieldy display of unrelated confabulations, irrelevant to the contemporary mindset, or to any conventional mindset whatsoever.

This dynamic is even more pronounced when we consider the contemplative and performative dimensions of Lurianic practice. While few scholars have grappled with Lurianic metaphysics in any detailed or comprehensive way, even fewer have ventured into an explication of the Lurianic practices of the kavvanot of prayer. In fact, only Menachem Kallus has attempted a comprehensive study of this facet of Lurianic lore in his doctoral dissertation dedicated to the topic.⁷ However, only someone already thoroughly saturated in the particular

⁷ Menachem Kallus, "The Theurgy of Prayer in Lurianic Kabbalah" (PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2003). Kallus's dissertation, henceforth cited as "Theurgy," will be discussed in more detail below. Lawrence Fine also discusses the kavvanot of prayer in chapter seven of his important biographical study of Isaac Luria (see Physician of the Soul, 220-258), but

conceptual universe of Vital will understand Kallus's intertextual methodology, which is more an expression of that self-enclosed reality than it is of the hermeneutic tools of Western academia.

In light of these challenges, in this book I will aim to integrate the intertextual sensitivity of Kallus's approach while at the same time rendering the material more accessible and relevant for scholars and students of Kabbalah and of mysticism more broadly. To this end, the methodology I will employ in this study will seek to bridge the gap between the esoteric labyrinth of Lurianic texts on the one hand, and some of the current trends in the academic field of religious studies on the other.

This approach is perhaps best articulated as an hybridization of a classical model of phenomenological exegesis on the one hand, and an application of postmodern philosophical tools of interpretation on the other. The phenomenological aspect of this approach is reflected in my attempt to understand the esoteric meaning of Lurianic metaphysics and its contemplative practices through an in-depth analysis of primary texts, interpreted through its own intertextual and metaphysical frame of reference.

This phenomenological methodology is based on models of study articulated by scholars such as Chantepie de la Saussaye and William Brede Kristensen, who emphasized that religious thought is best understood by taking into account both the theoretical perspective and religious practices of the practitioners themselves. The essence of this approach is succinctly stated by Kristensen, who defines his methodology as investigating "what religion meant for them (i.e. the practitioners). It is their religion that we want to understand, and not our own" (emphasis his).8 The fundamentals of this approach, although developed in different directions by figures such as Gerardus Van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade, nevertheless remain consistent and very influential in the academic study of religion to this day.9

explicates them in considerably less detail than does Kallus. Fine's book will also be discussed at greater length below.

⁸ W. Brede Kristensen, The Meaning of Religion: Lectures in the Phenomenology of Religion, trans. John B. Carman (The Haugue: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 13. On Kristensen's methodology in general, see George James, Interpreting Religion: The Phenomenological Approaches of Pierre Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye, W. Brede Kristensen, and Gerardus van der Leeuw (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), especially 98ff.

⁹ See, e.g., Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology, 2 vols., trans. J. E. Turner (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); on Van de Leeuw in general, see Jacques Waardenburg, Reflections on the Study of Religion: Including an Essay on the Work of Gerardus van der Leeuw (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978). While much has

This orientation is reflected in my attention to situating Lurianic contemplative practice within his larger metaphysical framework and in my inclusion of extensive cross-references (in the footnotes) to the multivalent associations implicit in the Lurianic literature. The heuristic objective of such extensive reference material is not exclusively academic; it is also designed to mirror in a contemporary work of scholarship a similar frame of mind that the subject of our investigation (i.e. Lurianic texts) itself assumes. Approaching it in this way allows the reader the opportunity to grasp more intuitively the interrelated constellations of concepts that inform and constitute the consciousness of the Lurianic practitioner.

This method can be best summed up as an embodied neo-narrative application of Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber's model of Verstehen, which (in my adaptation of this method) uses the structure, format, and writing style of the book itself as devices to help place the reader more squarely inside the shoes of the Lurianic practitioner. 10 This method, which I will term "embodied Verstehen," is reflected throughout this book in the anatomical structure of the document itself, in my extensive use of footnotes to highlight the intertextual matrix of the literature under investigation, and in my literary style. In this manner, I seek to embody in the text of this study the flesh and bones of Lurianic literature, even as I seek to simultaneously deconstruct the tradition through the prism of a postmodern hermeneutic.

This postmodern hermeneutic reflects a second facet of my methodological approach, which superimposes a deconstructive interpretive lens over the classical phenomenological model of textual analysis. That is to say that while attempting to appreciate Lurianic practice and metaphysics on its own terms, I am also simultaneously suggesting a radical revisioning, or resurrection, of

been written by and about Mircea Eliade, one of his most important formulations of methodology is to be found in Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, trans. Willard R. Trask (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1987).

¹⁰ The essential objective of the interpretive model of Verstehen is to provide a means for the scholar to enter more squarely into the conceptual and experiential context of the society, person, text, or phenomenon under investigation. On Wilhelm Dilthey's use of the method of Verstehen, see Michael Ermarth, Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 241-321 and Theodore Plantinga, Historical Understanding in the Thought of Wilhelm Dilthey (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) and especially 6-7 where he distinguishes between Dilthey's use of the term in his earlier and later writings and suggests a similarity with Eliade's methodological approach. On Weber's method of Verstehen, and how it differs from that of Dilthey, see Max Weber, Collected Methodological Writings, ed. Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster, trans. Hans Henrik Bruun (New York: Routledge, 2012), xxvii-xxviii.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. Приобрести книгу можно в интернет-магазине «Электронный универс» e-Univers.ru