

Interview

Prof. Dr. Paul Silva, Editor-in-Chief, JAMMO, Talks to Adjunct Prof. Olen D. Rush, on *Resonance of Syncretic Kabbalah Today*

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INTRODUCTION

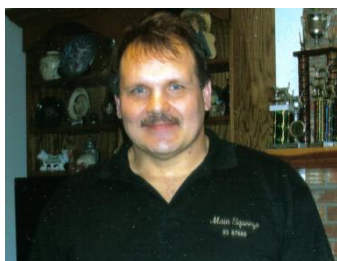
Kabbalah is regarded controversially by different religious groups; some even hold the view that it is evil and that it was originally taught to mankind by the “Watchers” or “fallen angels” which they claimed led to the “destruction of the Jews”, a pivotal reason they gave for the exiling of the Jews to Babylon.

In this interview, Prof. Dr. Paul Silva discusses these issues and many more with Dr. Olen D. Rush, who although a professional Naturopath, is a well-known and respected Kabbalistic scholar and a high ranking initiate in a number of western esoteric societies. He’s also a frequent contributor to the Hermetic Virtues Magazine, and has authored several books, recently contributing to Sandra Tabatha Cicero’s, *The Book of the Concourse of the Watchtowers*.

Olen Rush has been a student of the Mysteries, and an initiate in the Golden Dawn and Rosæ Rubeæ et Aureæ Crucis (R.R. et A.C.) traditions for more than three decades. He is one of the last living members of the *Chevrah Zerach Boqur Aur* (C.Z.B.A) and a Lodge Facilitator and *Oker Harim* (uprooter of mountains) of the Knights and Companions of St. John the Evangelist of Asia in Europe, often referred to as the Asiatic Brethren. He has been a participant in the *Neo-Sabbatian* movement of *Donmeh* West, as well as the Free Illuminist revolution.

Olen has great admiration for the *Neo-Sabbatean Kabbalah* of *Rebbe Yaqob Leib ha-Kohain-Kalidas* as well as more traditional teachings from such luminaries as Rabbi Yossi Markel. He is also involved in Sufism, and is an at large member of the Temple of Thelema (T.O.T.) Olen began studying Kabbalah in his teens and has instructed initiates in syncretic *Kabbalah* since the 1980s. He has studied with a number of *Kabbalists* from both traditional and non-traditional schools. Although highly controversial, Olen has been cited by the *Jewish Heritage Month* as well as *Torah this Week*. He has translated a variety of *Kabbalistic* texts from any number of languages.

Dr. Rush is descended maternally from an interesting group of Yiddish speaking Polish Catholics and he is a modern day *Frankist*.



PS: How would you introduce Syncretic *Kabbalah*, its tradition and history to a general reader?

ODR: I would attempt to explain that the creation is a product of the formulation of the Divine Will into thought-forms or proto-letters of the sacred alphabet whose very essence is Its Ineffable Nature. The Name of the Divinity has shattered *Itself* with *Its* own pronouncement, and the sparks given off as a result of the explosion have created reality as we know it. I would then emphasize that the stories of all peoples, of humanity, as well as of each individual, even those of our ancestors and the ancestors of our neighbors, are the lenses through which these scattered sparks can be found and returned to *G_d* by restoring the letters into words of Holiness. However, the “Forces of Confusion” have changed the letters around, and hidden the Holiness that lies concealed within the essence of these stories. The Syncretic *Kabbalah* is that message which is received from the Divinity when the letters and words of these stories are set aright and returned to Holiness. Only then can humanity (or Adam) see beyond the illusion that there is anything but *G_d*. Only our “Confused State” gives the misimpression that there is anything else. This is why the Hebrew Name for Deity, *Elohim*, has the same numerical value as *Hatevah* or Nature. This is also why the Ineffable Name *Itself*, simply denotes “being”. *G_d* is all that there is, or ever will be, period. Everything else, all separation, is an illusion created by the “Other Side” to confuse us. The job of the syncretic *Kabbalist* is to reveal the sparks of Holiness lying within these wonderfully poetic and sacred stories and restoring the feeling of kinship between all peoples and faiths. So, our history and tradition is the synthesis of all the stories, histories, and traditions in the entire world. Our job is to find the Holiness, the *G_dly* Essence within them uniting them in one body.

PS: What are the meta-concepts embedded in syncretic *Kabbalah*?

ODR:

- 1) There is only *G_d*. All else is Illusion.
- 2) The lives and stories of all of humanity contain sparks of the first Adam within them.
- 3) Israel is the personification or archetype that is capable of receiving from the Divinity, if it is truly embodied within a person’s consciousness. In a way, it represents the heart as we observe with Ali in Sufism, or the Sacred Heart of Christ in certain mystical Christian sects. So, the Story of the “Exile of the Children of Israel” applies to all those who awaken spiritually while exiled among a profane and seemingly corrupt world, no matter what religion they find *G_d* hiding behind.

PS: What does Israel as an archetype mean for the relationship between the Moslems and the Jews, or the Christians for that matter and between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine?

ODR: In the above question I am referencing Israel as one of the *Partzufim* or Countenances, literally personages. So, in that reference I am referring to the so-called Archetypal World of *Atzilut*. In that region there are really no such personages but we use this construct so the mind has something to grasp. I was not referencing the Jungian or Platonic archetypes, although there are certainly similarities to those paradigms. *Atzilut* actually means “nearness” and is the closest of the Worlds to Divinity. These personages are really the reconfigurations of the highest sparks of the shattered vessels in the Lurianic *mythos*. In *Kabbalah*, all the characters in the bible are species of *Partzufim*. This can be noted in the book, *Sha’ar HaGilgulim* of the ARIZAL. So, the “relationships” between the Countenances are very fascinating. The five fundamental *Partzufim* extend from the Primordial Adam (which is an overall *Partzuf* including all the others just as all the future souls were contained within it. These five (really six because it takes 2 to account for the highest level) *Partzufim* are:

- 1) *Atik Yomin* (Ancient of Days also called *Atiqa Qadisha* or the Holy Ancient One) and *Arik Anpin* (Long of Face or “Vast Countenance”)
- 2) *Abba* (Father)
- 3) *Imma* (Mother)
- 4) *Zaur Anpin* (Short of Face, he is the “Son”)
- 5) *Nukva* (The Female both sister and consort to *Zaur Anpin*) or *Shekinah* (Indwelling Presence)

It has a resemblance to the schema in Transactional Analysis but with an extended family. And these *Partzufim* can all be sub-divided and even partially configured from the varied combinations of the Ten Luminous Emanations or *Sefiroth*.

Within *Zaur Anpin* are the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the Matriarchs and other biblical figures are there as well but a full explanation might fill several volumes). And the *Partzuf Zaur Anpin* has a lower aspect called Jacob and a higher aspect called Israel. Likewise, *Shekinah* has two aspects called Rachel and Leah, being Jacobs’s wives, and representing inferior and superior aspects as well. These configurations are also representative of collective roots of the various souls that will manifest in the nether regions. So, the stories in the bible have an inner meaning. In this regard, Christianity is related to Jacob’s brother Esau, and Islam to Isaac’s brother Ishmael. They are all Holy personifications. They are also kinfolk and due to family quarrels have been divorced from each other over quite trivial matters (like many family relationships). So, the reconciliation of these families (i.e. the 3 Abrahamic faiths, the Children of Keturah, and the other descendants of Noah) also relates to the repair of the fallen Worlds. Not to mention the restoration of the Divinity to its true exalted place. In regards to them all, and in regards to Israel and Palestine, this is a keen example of family fighting kin. Genetic testing shows the closest match for Palestinians is with *Ashkenazi* Jews. Only these two populations carry a specific *Ashkenazi* gene that causes hereditary nerve deafness. Until recently, this gene was only thought to occur in *Ashkenazim* but it also exists with some prevalence in Palestinians (Shahin, Walsh, Sobe, Lynch, King, Avraham, Kanaan, 2002: 284-289). So, this concept does extend out from a mystical archetype to mundane reality.

- 4) All Holy Scriptures, even Folk Tales and Legends, and each individual's personal stories contain expressions of Divine Truth. But often the fruit is hidden within a bitter husk because the words have been "turned around" by the unbalanced forces. These unbalanced forces are sometimes called the "Mixed Multitude" or *Erev Rav*.

PS: Are not the characteristics of folk tales, legends and individualized stories which develop over time the very basis for imbalance and latitudinal mixing leading to more fragmentation and domination of the more fragmented people albeit in the form of what passes for equilibrium glitches in people's lives?

ODR: Folk tales and legends provide a great many things. George Starkey used the story of Mars' Trist with Venus to unlock the formula of an alloy called "the net". This is based upon Vulcan, who was Venus' husband, ensnaring Mars (Iron) and Venus (Copper) in his net. George Starkey felt that myths often hid chemical formulae. He concocted an alloy from Iron, Copper, and Antimony that was purple in color with a distinct webbed or net-like appearance. Sigmund Freud developed Psychoanalytic Theory from Mythic tales such as the Oedipus myth. It is that "other side" to the stories that causes the paradox you speak of. It is the emending of these stories to reveal the Holiness within them that is important. Without Holiness they are unbalanced and produce unbalanced results based on a false reality. Truly, there is naught else but *G_d*.

- 5) Both the shattering and repair of spiritual consciousness occurs when the mundane human being receives or accepts a name or label. One can see this in the damaging effects of stereotypes, or conversely, the receiving of an award or title. So, the use of words is both creative and destructive. One may pose the question, "How much more potent is the word of *G_d*?" Thus would I express the power of the sacred letters in the mind and thought of Deity.

PS: Your answers raise many more questions namely, are you saying all spiritually awakened human beings are spiritual Israel irrespective of their religions and nationalities?

ODR: Yes. The *Erev Rav* is described in Kabbalah as the "leaders" of the generations and these are among Israel. So, not all Jews, at least in my take on this, are of spiritual Israel but are of the "mixed multitude". And since the Holocaust when so many Jewish souls had no available bodies to incarnate within, there have been many true souls of spiritual Israel that have been exiled among the Nations, literally.

PS: Who is the Divinity you speak of, and what exactly is "the sacred alphabet, of which essence you say is the ineffable nature of Divinity?"

ODR: We can only attempt to describe the Highest Essence, but the *G_d* of Israel is the animating force of the Emanations or *Sefiroth*, and the *Partzufim*, and is different than the first cause which is entirely unreachable and beyond all names and descriptions. For to say the Divinity is all Merciful is also to say that *G_d* cannot be wrathful, etc. All descriptors fail for they are attempts to limit the Divinity to particular aspects and the Divinity is Itself *Ain Soph*, beyond Limit. The sacred alphabet is a metaphor for the "Will to Create". It is the subsequent and potential "Thought of Creation" that begins to engrave these thoughts into letters that then form names, words, stories, and all possible events and thoughts. The potential for everything that

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can ever be described.

PS: Is *G_D* a permutation from the word “God” and why is this rendering necessary and what purpose does it serve?

ODR: Some Names of the Divinity are not “erasable” and thus should not be written in certain venues. Since I personally consider all Names of the Divinity sacred, I acknowledge this by not fully spelling *G_d*. Some Hasidim do this as well but for more specifically Jewish reasons.

PS: In your understanding, what does the *Kabbalah* teach about the Created Worlds and the relationship with the Creator(s)?

ODR: The *Kabbalah* teaches that the Creator is deeply concealed¹ and the modus operandi of its revelation are called Created Worlds. It is the relationship between unbound desire and the limitations and inadequacies of verbal thought in attempting to describe *It*. Yet, it is within these very words that Holiness can be found by those who know how to work the letters. It is a mirror of the relationship between the mundane Torah and its two parts: Oral and Written (Nigosian, 1986), with the Spiritual *Torah* and its two parts, Concealed Thought² and Inscribed³.

PS: In the face and phases of severe persecutions of the Jews, being driven from one European country to another, one must ask in the light of the creation of the State of Israel if the Jews had never had a homeland prior to 1948.

ODR: The Jewish people had been international war refugees since the revolt against Roman rule in their traditional homeland, this caused their exile by Imperial Rome (Elazar, 1986). There were attempts to establish a Jewish homeland, one such attempt was made by Jacob Frank in Poland and this schema involved predictions about the Messiah arising from Poland made by his predecessors⁴. However, various factors prevented the success of such endeavors. The traditional Jewish homeland is the modern day country of Israel, and the initial modern impetus for this was the Napoleonic letter to the Holy Land to help reestablish the traditional Jewish homeland, and the later Dreyfus incident which occurred in 19th century France. After Dreyfus was framed as a traitor despite the government’s knowledge of his innocence, it became clear to many Jews that they would never achieve equal rights or even a safe place to raise their children in Europe⁵. The Holocaust simply proved the point. European country after European

¹ One such description of the higher regions occurs in the first chapter of the first gate of the Kitvei HaArizal when describing the term Eyn Sof or the “Infinite” we find “This name indicates that there is absolutely no way to comprehend it, either by thinking or by contemplation, because it is completely inconceivable and far removed from any kind of thought” - see Menzi, D. W. and Padeh, Z. (2008). *The Tree of Life, The Palace of Adam Kadmon*. New York: Arizal Publications, p6.

² There is actually a range to the “Concealment” some of it being even pre-Thought. A very good discussion and elaboration will be found in “Sha’ar Ha Yichud” by The Holy Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch as translated by Shimon Markel.

³ In the Zohar this is called (in Aramaic) “Gliph haGliphu” or “engraved an engraving”. This can be noted in the first section of the Zohar proper or section Bereshith A.

⁴ “One should know that the Messiah will come first to the kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, as said in the verse: *Awake, north wind! Come, south wind!* which means the redemption (*geula*) of Israel will come from the north, for *tsafon, polin* and *lita* have the same numerical value. And then the redemption will spread to the south.” - from “Kav Ha’Yasher of Tsvi Hirsh Koidanover”

⁵ Jewish Virtual Library entry for “Theodor Herzl”: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Herzl.html>

country refused to allow Jews fleeing the gas chambers a safe refuge⁶, and many even assisted the SS to round up Jews for the Death camps. Today there are only a little over a million Jews left in all of Europe, and almost none in Islamic countries. Approximately one half of Jews live in Israel and the other half in the U.S. And the world Jewish population has never reached pre-Holocaust numbers⁷.

PS: If the Jewish homeland is the present State of Israel, how would you explain the expansion of the land size of the Jewish State after the 1968 war?

ODR: That is a result of a great many factors ranging from Soviet meddling in the Middle East to the Pan-Islamist movement, to the strategies of defense and war on all sides⁸ and is a very complex topic to sum up in a brief interview on syncretic *Kabbalah*. Some of this expansion was for obvious security reasons such as the Golan Heights. Other events were for strict expansionist reasons. One should also note the negative results of giving back Sinai and the Gaza Strip for Israel. This resulted in new bases of operations for groups hurling rockets at villages in Israel. From this perspective, why would one hand back more? That is not to say I agree with the expansion of settlements. I frankly do not. However, it is important to try and understand the perspective.

PS: Also help me here with the time reference of the exiling of the Jewish people by the Imperial Rome. And even more precisely, what was the name of the traditional Jewish homeland before the exile?

ODR: The upheavals with Rome culminated with the Bar Kokhba Revolt 132-135 C.E. After this the Romans dominated and many Jews were sold into slavery and others forced to flee. However, there has been a continued presence despite this fact⁹. The traditional Jewish homeland was composed of two kingdoms called Judah and Israel. Later these names were Romanized/Hellenized to Judea and Samaria.

PS: How prominent is Lurianic *Kabbalah* within a broader syncretism?

ODS: Lurianic *Kabbalah* and the *Zohar* have a canonical status in Judaism and remain extremely esoteric despite the translation of a number of texts in recent years. It is the basis of nearly all modern schools of Jewish *Kabbalah*. In the broader Western Mystery Tradition which owes so much to the Order of the Golden Dawn, the entire basis and structure of the Order was

⁶ U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum "Refugees" - <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005139>

⁷ U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Jewish population of Europe in 1933 <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005161>; Jewish Virtual Library pre Holocaust population map - Europe <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/jewpop.html>; Jewish Population of the World <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>; Dawidowicz, L. (1986). *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*. New York: Bantam Books, p403; Edelheit, A. and Edelheit, H. (1994). *History of the Holocaust: A Handbook and Dictionary*. Boulder: Westview Press, p266. Gutman, I. (1990). *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*. New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA, p1799; Hilberg, H. (1985). *Destruction of European Jews*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, p1220.

⁸ Middle East Research and Information Project. The Six Day War http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/67-war-pal-isr-primer.html; Wilson Center. The Soviet Union and the Six Day War: Revelations from the Polish Archives <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/e-dossier-no-8-the-soviet-union-and-the-six-day-war-revelations-the-polish-archives>

⁹ Jewish Encyclopedia Academies in Palestine <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/711-academies-in-palestine>

based on the compilation of Lurianic texts translated by Christian Knorr Von Rosenroth¹⁰. Since so many organizations have utilized the Golden Dawn framework Lurianic *Kabbalah* is extremely prominent within the Western Mystery Tradition including many so-called Pagan (McColman, 2002: 79) organizations.

PS: How many *Torahs* are there and why are they relevant to the understanding of the relationship between humankind and Divinity?

ODR: The *Torah* is the Divine revelation and cosmic blueprint for reality. Since each *Kabbalistic* World represents a level of reality and consciousness, there is a *Torah* for each of these Worlds¹¹. On one hand, because there are five general Worlds or levels there are 5 *Torahs*, but there is also a primordial *Torah* that precedes them. On another level, there are as many *Torahs* as there are Souls to interpret them. (Mendes-Flohr and Scholem, 1994).

PS: Are these five general worlds only supernal or both supernal and mundane and where does reality separate from consciousness if at all?

ODR: Since there really is only *G_d*, all things are to an extent a reflection of the Divine. So, the five worlds are both supernal and mundane, and these worlds in each aspect may be sub-divided into five sub-worlds, and so on ad infinitum. Reality is not separable from consciousness. Consciousness may be said to be the prima material from which each level of reality is built.

PS: I suppose you're not only referring to the *Torah* revealed to Moses, but also stating categorically that revelation by Divinity is constant and ongoing; could you explain your revelatory concept a bit more practically with some basic exemplification, such as why there's no wrong or right interpretations, as you're implying in your "there are many *Torahs* as there are Souls to interpret them" for a better understanding of the 'seemingly revolutionized' idea you're positing?

ODR: In the text, *Gershom Scholem: The man and his work*, page 54 we find a synopsis of the Holy *ARIZAL* on the number of interpretations of *Torah*. Since there were 600, 000 souls who accompanied Moses out of Egypt; there are 600, 000 interpretations or "faces" to the *Torah*.

In *Kabbalah*, these 600, 000 are considered "Soul-Roots" and they sub-divide into smaller roots and sparks. Noting my belief in a "Spiritual Israel" as related to the Souls who have attained unto the "state of consciousness" called *Partzuf* Israel. One can see that these "interpretations" are associated with the revelation of the Divine in Holy Scripture to each collection of sparks and small roots comprising the 600, 000 basic Soul-Roots.

Scholem also mentions that the *Torah* is also associated with 70 faces. The same number associated with the *Sanhedron*, and just as we see in the number of nations. So, in my *Mytho-*

¹⁰ Rosenroth, C. K. (1912). *Kaballa Denudata*; Runyon, C. P. (1997). *Secrets of the Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscripts*; Mathers, S. L. M. (1887). *Unveiled*; Karr, D. *Kabbalah Resources in English*

¹¹ These associations regarding the *Torah* and Worlds are discussed in depth in the following texts by noted Kabbalistic researcher Scholem, G.: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*; *Kabbalah, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, *The Messianic idea in Judaism*.

poetic storyline, each person and each people have a share in the Divine revelation.

To further explain my position, I would quote Franz Joseph Molitor of the *Asiatic Brethren* on this topic. From writer's translation of his text, *The Philosophy of History or about the Tradition*:

... as they turn their gaze outward into the world's history, and desire to grasp the Divine Revelation, almost every nation on earth, pretends to be in the exclusive possession of the true revelation, and rejects the teachings of the others as illusion and error. That the human race has always existed and still to this day, there is a permanent lack of uniformity in reference to the nature and content of the Divine Revelation is indeed a most striking and depressing phenomenon, which has discouraged many researchers, and has shaken the faith in many of them to the reality of revelation. For here the reason will be evident: if God can actually be revealed to man in a positive way, among the many conflicting religious systems, each of which invokes a very specific divine Communication to direct themselves, but only one is actually true, while all the rest necessarily have to be based on deception and fraud. If, however, as supernaturalism teaches, that divine revelation is absolutely necessary for the salvation of man, then I think, how can the divine mercy turn its favor only toward a very small portion of the human race, and the great mass of people be left to error and self-deception?

PS: What is the exegesis on the authenticity and the relationship between the oral and written *Torahs*?

ODR: The Torah itself is written on a scroll using Letters decorated with ornamental crownlets. The Torah scroll does not contain vowel points or cantillation marks. However, these diacritical markings are necessary to properly "sing" the *Torah* during the Liturgy. These diacritical markings are contained in the *Chumash* or Pentateuch in book form, and are the recorded oral teachings without which the formal scroll cannot be read. This can be instantly observed by a visual comparison between the two. So, the Oral Torah is mandatory to the ability to utilize the written Torah. Also the oral discussions and debates regarding the Torah, as well as relevant oral stories, and various opinions of the great Rabbis are recorded in the *Talmud* (Nigosian, 1986) and the canonical text *Sefer HaZohar*¹² are all part of the Oral *Torah*. Many of these teachings are indeed very old and also reappear in the Holy Quran¹³ as well as the Christian New Testament¹⁴. The revelation from the Divinity is a very high aspect of the Oral *Torah*.

PS: Explain the concept of the Jewish Messiahs and redemption through syncretic *Kabbalah*.

ODR: I can only provide you with how this is revealed to me. I believe each soul contains a spark of the soul of the Messiah. Any one of us could potentially bring the redemption. However,

¹² Huss, B. (1998). *Sefer ha-Zohar as a Canonical, Sacred, and Holy Text: Changing Perspectives on the Book of Splendor between the Thirteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 7, p257-307; Nigosian, S. (1986). *Judaism The Way of Holiness*. Crucible, p116

¹³ A few such examples may be noted between the following Stories from *Talmud* adapted into the *Holy Quran*: 5:32 and *Mishnah Sanhedrin*: 4:5; *Surah* 31 in the *Holy Quran* and *Midrash Bereshith*: 38:13. There are many such adapted passages and thus we see this noted in the *Holy Quran*: 25:4-6.

¹⁴ One can note this in Christian scriptures as well. For example: *Matthew* 7:3-5 and *Talmud Arakin* 16b.

I believe the Messiah to be a spontaneous and all inclusive state of super-consciousness that will engulf all of humanity all at one time. Then the biblical families will be reunited Ishmael with Isaac, and Jacob with Esau, the Children of Keturah with the Children of Abraham, the Lost Tribes will be returned, etc. This will happen when our "Stories" are likewise reconciled.

PS: And the primordial Adam and Eve to the narratives that underpin the fall and the roles of *Samael* and the Serpent?

ODR: The first separation from the Divinity eventually manifests into Adam who has both male and female aspects called "Adam and Eve". These aspects have descended in degree and were separated from each other to accommodate the necessary polarity structure required to sustain Creation. At first these creatures were clad in garments of light. Because they were male and female they were able to "give and receive" the Divine influence and lived above the concept of Sin or shame. In these lofty regions, which are in some ways elevated above the Creation yet the basis of it, they enjoyed each other in their own nakedness but ever the thought and intent was to "receive in order to give". Later they were each consumed with lust for pleasure for their own self alone. Then they no longer held semblance to the Creator who is the Archetypal "giver" and not the Archetypal "receiver". When they lost this semblance to Divinity, they accepted shame at their own nakedness, and the garments of light were exchanged for coats of skin. However, since Adam is also the Primordial *Torah*, this is also the point where the letters become "turned around and inverted". For the Letters are Vessels, and the shattering is the breaking up of the words of the Higher *Torah*, where there is no sin and no prohibitions. Now, in the shattered stories, Adam and Eve have hidden themselves in serpent's skin. They are the primal humanity, as well as *Samael* and the "Serpent upon which he rideth". They are also called Lilit and the Serpent *Nogah*. Like everything in the nether region they have dual roles. As the Serpents they are the "forces of confusion" that distort the meanings of our thoughts and dreams by "inverting the letters" and forming words of "Unholiness" because their desire is "to receive for their own self alone". But the Holy Spirit and the sparks of the souls of the righteous may help restore their true meaning and elevate humanity above the dual world where there is both good and evil, reward and punishment. Above the Creation is *Atzilut* and the *Torah* of *Atzilut* has no mention of Sin. Here the desire is to receive "in order to give".

PS: What does it mean to receive in order to give and what is it that one receives to give?

ODR: One could receive a *G_d*-given talent, and choose to use it to help children, or the poor. One could receive the gift of expounding on scripture and provide it to those in dire need of *G_d* in their lives. This reception and what one receives is as unique and variable as the revelation itself. But any of these things would have an aspect of Holiness about them that is rather hard to qualify.

PS: Is the *Atzilut* a supernal world and by supernal worlds do you mean heavens upward in the sky as is commonly believed from the earth-standpoint?

ODR: When I describe the Supernal World of *Atzilut* it is a spiritual World and not associated with any physical "Heaven". The more physical Heavens would be termed "Firmaments". *Atzilut* comes from the word root for "Near". So, it is the spiritual realm or state of consciousness that is "closest" to the Divine.

PS: What do the Tree of Life and The Tree of Good and Evil represent in *Kabbalah*?

ODR: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the World of Duality, which is governed by reward and punishment. Good is mixed with evil. These are the two contending forces and either extreme is pernicious. But this state is necessary for the Lower Worlds to exist.

The Tree of Life is both beyond and between the contending forces, and leads to the World of *Atzilut*, where one is no longer ashamed at their own nakedness and receives in order to share, i.e. in emulation of the Divinity.

PS: Is there anything you can explain to remove the confusion and negative meaning surrounding the term, "Zionism" and is there a *Kabbalah* rendering for the battle of Megiddo or *Armageddon* as the Christians call it and the Messiah coming at the end time of the apocalyptic vision of John in the book of Revelation of the Bible to destroy the "Anti-Christ"?

ODR: In Judaism proper, Zion refers to Jerusalem¹⁵ and also to the Temple Mount, when the Temple was standing. Note the bible uses the term "Mount Zion" in this regard. Zion is also noted in the Islamic tradition which references the Arabic term for Zion¹⁶, *Sahyun*, at times as a place in or near Jerusalem. In *Kabbalah*, it is the innermost part of the Holy of Holies within the Temple and represents the Holiness out of which reality is formed¹⁷. The Holy Quran shows an affinity for Jewish Mystical tradition as *Sahyun* is at times attributed to Mecca and the "cornerstone of the Kaaba". Likewise in mystical Christianity Jesus is called the "cornerstone". The Hebrew word actually derives from the word for "exit" and refers to the "exit" from the mundane world and the associated state of consciousness.

The Jewish Messiah actually fights an Anti-Messianic figure called *Armilus* in Jewish tradition, thus mirroring the New Testament in some ways (or vice versa). We see something very similar in Islam with the Mahdi.

PS: Since as you said at the beginning of the interview "each soul contains a spark of the soul of the Messiah. Any one of us could potentially bring the redemption", how does this relate to the Jewish Messiah who fights *Armilus*, an anti-Messianic figure?

ODR: I believe all of us have an *Armilus* to fight, and if we could all defeat our own internal nemesis the redemption for ALL *G_d*'s children would come.

PS: Is Jesus the Jewish Messiah for all people?

ODR: I think we are all a species of redeemer and that we gravitate towards the culturally most

¹⁵ Longman, T. and Enns, P. (2008). *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings. Vol.3* (Illustrated ed.). Inter Varsity Press, p936; Briley, T. R. (2000). *Isaiah, Volume 1 - The College Press NIV commentary: Old Testament series*. College Press. p49.

¹⁶ *Palestine Exploration Fund* (1977). *Palestine exploration quarterly*. Published at the Fund's Office. p21; Gil, M. (1997). *A history of Palestine, 634-1099*. Cambridge University Press. p114; Freund, R. A. (2009). *Digging Through the Bible: Modern Archaeology and the Ancient Bible* (Reprint ed.). Rowman & Littlefield. p141; Wheeler, B. M. (2002). *Moses in the Quran and Islamic exegesis* (Illustrated, reprint ed.). Routledge. p89-92

¹⁷ Grossman, H. The Weekly Parsha: A New Dimension. Parshas Devarim Tisha B'Av.

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/dimension/archives/devarim.htm>

attractive external form. I do not believe there is any one human figure who is the redeemer for us all. But we may discover a way to connect with G_d through such folks, their stories, and their sayings. But the Redeemer in my perspective is a state of consciousness and not a personality per se.

PS: And Messiah meaning exit from the mundane world and its states of consciousness do I take it that the messianic fights are not physical, but tantamount to spiritual experience?

ODR: Yes. We all have our demons to battle whether as individuals, tribes, peoples, or nations. My *Jihad* is entirely spiritual.

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