

R. Rosenberg article

(Cover)

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Talmud Torah "Etz Chaim"

'Etz Chaim hi lamachazikim boh visomcheha miushar'. (Mishlei 3)

Nissan 5703 - Toronto, Canada

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Harav R. Yehudah (Yudel) Rosenberg z"l - N. Baumoil

Characteristic Evaluation of a Noteworthy Personality \* (\* in the house of Rabbi Rosenberg 27 years ago the Talmud Torah Etz Chaim was planned and organized. For the years that Rabbi Rosenberg was Rav in Toronto, the Talmud Torah (then still a small institution, aka Poilish'er Talmud Torah) was under his influence, with regard to curriculum, personnel and leadership.)

The various Zohar translations - Jewish mysticism and its influence on Jewish Thought - Kabbalah and belief in Moshiach in various epochs.

At the age of 75, in the year 1936 (26 Tishrei 5696), passed away in Montreal the well-known Rabbi, Rav R. Yehudah (Yudel) Rosenberg z"l, with whose passing the rabbinic world lost one of its prominent lomdim and the hassidic world one of its prominent experts, of its researchers and commentators. As the translator of the Zohar, the bible of Kabbalah and hassidism, he helped popularize and spread Kabbalah mysticism and hassidism.

Rav Yudel Rosenberg was born in the shtetl Skarshov (Skarshov, Radom area) in Poland in Cheshvan 5620 (October 1860)(According to Reines' encyclopedia he was born in 1865?). Even as a small child, he had a name as the 'Skarshov'er ilui' (prodigy from Skarshov). After being very involved in 'limudei kodesh' (traditional holy Jewish studies), delving deeply into 'gefes (acronym for gemara, Rashi and Tosefos), codes and such, he

devoted himself to learning Hebrew, the Jewish language that he loved strongly, and, at the age of fifteen, he was already found deeply engrossed in the well-known dramas of 'Layesharim Tehillah' and 'Migdal Oz' of Rav Moshe Chaim Luzatto. In the Skarshov'er shtibel (kloiz) this was held to be a great crime. When he was seventeen years old, he got married and moved to Tarlow (a small shtetl in Poland) and there he got semichah from the most prominent Rabbonim - from the Lublin'er Rav, haGaon Rav Shneur Zalman, author of 'Toras Chesed' ; from the famous Ostrovtzer Rav haGaon hatzaddik Rav Yechiel Meir haLevi, and from the famous Warsaw Rav, Rav Zainvil Klepfish. He then became Rav in the aforementioned shtetl, where he established a beis midrash, a small Yeshiva, learned two shiurim a day, and became known in Poland as Rav Yudel Tarlow'er. The aforementioned Tarlow had had, two hundred years previously, as its Rabbi, the famous 'Pnei Yehoshua', who was, in his time, one of the greatest geonim.

It was not however ordained for that great Rav to sit in tranquility in the small shtetl. It was not ordained for him to have rest to use his free time for literary endeavors. His whole life is full with redifos (instances of being pursued), machlokes (arguments), and moving from one town to another. His life was full of family tzoros with various annoyances. Pain and suffering were

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his steady companions. As Rav in Tarlow he had many opponents, as was usual in small shtetlach.

As a Rav in a small shtetl, he gained part of his income from the sale of yeast, candles and salt, but he was not bereft of trouble in business either. As a merchant he was not successful at all. Even before he took over his Rabbinic position he made a few attempts at business, as a leather merchant and an iron shop keeper, but unsuccessfully. The latter enterprise was done away with by a big fire in the aforementioned shtetl, so that from heaven he was led to a Rabbinic career.

In family matters it also went very bad for him. His first wife passed away, and it took some time till he married his second wife, who was descended from the line of R. Yisroel'tche Rizhin'er zt"l (the famous hassidic leader of Ruzhin).

Rav Rosenberg was a chasid who journeyed to Lublin to the well-known Rebbe R. Avrohom'ele Eiger (author of 'Shevet MiYehudah'), a great grandson of the famous Gaon Rav Akiva Eiger. There too his lot was to stand out with tzoros. Chassidim had complaints to press against him re why he was studying Russian and reading 'seforim chitzonim' (books outside the commonly read sacred literature).....

It once happened, hassidim relate, when he was diligently studying Russian regularly to pass the exams as a government accepted Rabbi ('Kozhoni Rabbiner'), that he was found

sleeping on a bench in the Lublin'er beis medrosh, with a (Russian language presumably) book in his hand and ....it was like the sky came down on him.....all the answers, that he was doing it because they were pressuring the Rabbonim to be able to speak and read Russian did not help him.....

Rav Rosenberg then settled in Warsaw, as moreh horaah (religious legal decisor) in the 'Skernovitzer shtiebl'. There too he did not want of worries, most of all the worry of earning a livelihood. Being in Warsaw he issued a monthly Rabbinic periodical called 'Kol Torah'. After Warsaw he went to Lodz, and from there to Canada, to the place of residence of the Polish Jews there - Toronto. In the year 5673 (1913) he arrived with his family in Toronto. He became Rav in the 'Poilisher Shul' that stood on Elm street, which was at that time the Jewish area of the city. But here too, in Toronto, in golden America, he had enough with which to stand out with. Not being able to adjust to life here, he suffered from need and want. As was told to me, there were times when he actually lacked bread in his home. He left Toronto for Montreal in the year 5679 (1919), where he stayed until his passing.

In all his difficult times, he was always 'Toroso Umnoso' (Torah was his main occupation), writing large and small works. His seforim and folk (popular) books had the merit / good fortune to be popularized among Jews. His first sefer, 'Yodos Nedorim', dedicated to explaining all the 'kilomar's' and difficult positions of the Ra"n (Rabbeinu Nissim) on that tractate, was studied in many Yeshivos and botei midroshim (houses of study). Also, his works 'Mikveh Yehudah' (on constructing a small kosher mikveh in every house), 'Maor hachashmal' (about electric lighting on Shabbos and Yom tov), 'Dorsho tzemer upishtim' (on the halochos of Shaatnez), and his sefer 'Kriah hakedosho' with observations and great

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Yiddish translation, were much used. Most of all, the sefer 'Zohar Torah', the translation of the Zohar into Hebrew in all parts, was accepted, not only by regular Jews and Rabbis, but also by maskilim and researchers. Also his commentary 'Ziv haZohar' is considered one of the best commentaries in such an area.

Even before him, there were those who translated the Zohar from Aramaic into Hebrew. In his commentary 'Derech Emes' on the Zohar, the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Chaim Vital brings a citation from a Hebrew sefer by the name of 'Zohar katan'. A Kabbalist by the name of R. Yisroel translated a number of pieces of Zohar on Tehillim under the title 'Tomim Yachdov', in 5352 (1592). Also, in the time of the Shala"h, one R. Yissochor Ber, author the 'Imrei Binah' commentary on the Zohar, translated selected pieces from the Zohar into Hebrew under the title 'Mekor chochmoh', arranged according to the parshios of the Torah.

Additionally, many believe that the 'Sefer habahir' (a prominent Kabbalistic work) in Hebrew is a translation from the Zohar, or perhaps it even is the authentic original Zohar, and the Aramaic Zohar that we have may be just a translation.

Just recently, the Rabbis R. Gershon Margolios and R. Moshe Gelernter issued translations of certain areas from the Zohar to popularize the greatest Kabbalistic work, but no one issued a complete translation.

Many attempts were made, but without success. It is hard, very hard to reveal the 'rozo dirozin' (secret[s] of secrets) of the Zohar in another language, even in loshon kodesh (Hebrew), the language of the Torah. Rozo derozin (the aramaic) is somewhat more mystical than the Hebrew equivalent of 'sod shebisodos' (secret of secrets), Ta chazi (aramaic for come and see) resounds better than 'bo ure'eih (the Hebrew equivalent). Dr. Zvi Cohen is correct with his theory (see Dr. Zvi Cohen - haRav Yehudah Rosenberg [for his 70 year jubilee] memorial book, Montreal 5691) that had the Zohar been written in Hebrew it would not have made as great an impact as in Aramaic. We would have had another midrash. With what would it stand higher than other midrashim ?

There were also various attempts made to translate the Zohar into other languages - Latin, French, German, and so on. The Latin translation was made in the beginning of the sixteenth century by the famous Italian cleric Enidia (?) of Viterba (?), a great knower and lover of Talmud and Kabbalah, who learned by the great midakdeik (Hebrew grammatical scholar) R. Eliyahu Levita (see Graetz, Jewish Folk History 6 : 113)).

In Latin were also translated large sections of the famous Kabbalistic work 'Eimek hamelech' from the famous Kabbalist 'R. Naftoli ben Yaakov Elchonon from Polonia', who resided in Eretz Yisroel together with 'the AR"l (R. Isaac Luria) and his circle' and transmitted his Kabbalistic teachings. In Latin the work is called 'Kabbala Deumdata'. The Kabbalists were opposed to transmitting the secrets of the Torah to outsiders (see Dr. Shimon Ginzburg - R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto and the people of his generation - collection of letters and documents, volume one, Tel Aviv 5696, letters 13, 19, notes 57-58 ; volume two 5697, citations and appendices 458).

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Subj: R. Rosenberg - p. 107 (p.4)

Rav Rosenberg therefore showed daring and boldness with his venture to translate the generally accepted Aramaic Zohar into Hebrew - a massive task - to transfer concepts and idioms into a different vessel to transmit the symbols and allegories of the Zohar...

Irrelevant of whether his translation was totally successful and accurate, his work is colossal and significant.

He encountered a strong opposition from the hassidim who saw in this a desecration (dishonoring ?) of the Zohar. It may well be that without the translation the Zohar is a

closed book, as the average man does not have a deep understanding of Aramaic and therefore they were happy for it to remain in that language.

The held that it is better if all the secrets are not understood by all. There is a statement in the Chida (Rabbi C.Y.D. Azulai, one of the greatest Kabbalists) according to which recitation of the Zohar alone, even without understanding it, is a tikkun (rectification) for the soul. Nu, hassidim didn't need more than that. That alone sufficed for them to oppose the author of the translation, even if he had the best and most honorable motivations, namely to disseminate the ideas of the Zohar.

And not only hassidim, but even rebbes at first displayed opposition ; they had enough evidence from the Talmud that the Tannaim and Amoraim (Mishnaic and Talmudic sages) were insistent that the secrets of the Torah should not be taught among the unrefined masses. The wise men of the Talmud were firm about 'maaseh b'reishis' (strictly speaking, certain topics re the creation of the world) being a concealed thing, which one is not allowed to contemplate. For that position Rabbi Yonah found support from the Torah as follows 'Why was the world created with the letter beis ? Because just like the beis is closed on all sides and only open in the direction proceeding ahead, so too a person does not have permission to explore what happened before creation, what is above, what is below and what is ahead, rather only from the time of creation and further. Bar Kappara found a source for this in the verse 'Lest you inquire about the early days that preceded you, from the day that G-d created man on earth...(Deuteronomy 4) - from the day that man was created you may inquire about - but not before that - and from the ends of the heavens to the end of the heavens' - that you may question and expound upon - but not beyond that (Midrash B'reishis Rabbah Chapter one).

They also felt strongly about the concealment of the secret of 'maaseh merkava' (matters related to the 'divine chariot', so to speak), and when one of the men of the Talmud wanted to be taught it, he was told that it is 'kivshono shel olom' (a divinely concealed matter) and that one is not allowed to reveal G-d's secrets to just any man. It is also related that a 'y'inuka' (beis midrash student) was once delving into the matter of 'Chashmal' (a term found in the prophets re the setup in heaven) and a fire emerged and consumed him (Talmud Chagiga 13a). There were people, that even if they felt that they were fit to study the 'maaseh merkava' of the prophet Yechezkel, they nevertheless feared to actually commence that course of study.

It is related that R. Yochanan said to R. Eliezer 'Come and I will teach you 'maaseh merkava', to which he answered 'I am not old enough'. When R. Yochanan died

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Subj: R. Rosenberg - p. 108 (p.5)

When R. Yochanan passed away, Rav Asi told him - come and I will teach you 'maaseh merkava' --- he responded : if would have merited it, I would have learned it from your teacher R. Yochanan. (Chagiga 13b).

Rav Yosef studied 'maaseh merkava' and the elders of Pumbedisa studied 'maaseh bereishis' - so they said to him : Will the gentleman please teach us 'maaseh merkava'. He responded - learn with me 'maaseh bereishis', so they studied with him. After studying, they again asked him 'Sir, please teach us 'maaseh merkava'. He responded : we learned 'honey and milk under your tongue' (Shir hashirim 4) - the things that are sweeter than honey and milk should be under your tongue (not expressed). Rav Avahu said from here - sheep to clothe you (Mishlei 27 - read not kivasim (sheep), but rather kivushim - the things that are 'kivshono shel olom' (hidden, held back things - secrets of the world) must be under your clothes (concealed). The Talmud expresses itself quite often that 'One does not give over hidden secrets of Torah only to one who has in him five certain exalted qualities (see gemara there for various interpretations of the terms) ; We do not expound on 'maaseh bereishis' in pairs nor in 'maaseh merkava' alone, except a wise man who understands matters on his own (Chagiga 11b ; 14a).

So we see that yet in very early times, in the time of the Talmud, they prohibited and feared entrance into and spreading of the G-dly secrets, the 'chochmas hanistar' (concealed wisdom), by the broad public entering the 'pardes' ('orchard' - term used for study of hidden Torah wisdom).

Speaking about Kabbalah and Zohar, it is worthwhile dwelling upon the fact that Jewish mysticism, which is as old as the Jewish nation, is an entity composed of its members and never severed the cord that ties it to the Jewish nation, both in good times and in bad, in its home and in exile, when the Jew dwelled in peace upon his land and in his wanderings from land to land - mysticism always accompanied the Jew in all his life paths and poses. The various events and epochs in Judaism caused it to take on various forms. Going on for generations, it had to take various forms, various branches and paths. Yet in early works we read of 'G-d sits on a fiery chair, angels with wings standing around him' 'G-d and his angels descending to earth and speaking to people as humans' ; Humans ascending to heaven alive ' the dead will rise up ' seas and rivers being dried up through humans and animals speaking like people.....

The basis is but one, which continues from generation to generation through the whole of Jewish history. Starting from Biblical days to hassidism that started spreading in the eighteenth century (C.E.). We found Jewish mysticism already in Tanach, by the Neviim (prophets). The last work of the Tanach, the book of Daniel, is totally a mystical book All the sparks of mystery found in the previous books of the Bible find a center in it. Here they show themselves more openly, apparently, than in any previous book. And the author of the book knows also that not every person is fit to understand G-d's secrets of creation, "for the matters are closed and sealed until the end". The prophet Daniel, just as the author of the book of Ezra, warns not to relate G-d's secrets openly, as later warned the sages of the Talmud and Kabbalists.\*

\*Re Hassidism and Kabbalah mysticism at length - at another opportunity.

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Subj: R. Rosenberg - p. 109 (p.6)

Through the years, there have been two recurring elements within Judaism. The whole of Jewish literature is full of these two contrasting streams : rationalism and mysticism. We find in Judaism Moshe (Rabbeinu) 's six hundred and thirteen mitzvos as chief basis of the faith, Rabbi Akiva's branched out explications of mounds and mounds of halochos from the crowns of the letters of the Torah, the way of Maimonides, the way of Nachmanides, the way of the Zohar, the way of Rav Yosef Karo, the Ram"a and the mysticism of the Ar"i and Rav Chaim Vital, the way of Rav Yaakov Emden and R. Yonoson Eibuschitz (author of 'urim vetumim'), the way of the Gaon of Vilna and the way of the Besht (founder of the modern hassidic movement) and the followers of hassidism.

One part spread the revealed Torah, of the rule of the intellect, and of logic, while the other side promoted the hidden side of the Torah, while not allowing open public discussion of secrets that stand 'at the top of the world'. So it was, from Philo of Alexandria to the time of the Besht (1698-1760), founder of the hassidic movement. The mystical way was broadly developed in Spain, where the two streams within Jewish life met : philosophy and mysticism. At the time when philosophy started to be absorbed in Jewish life through Rav Saadia Gaon, R. Shlomo ibn Gabirol, Ramba"m and others, who disseminated Jewish philosophy with the help of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers who held that recognition of G-d could only come about through logic and rationalistic basis, there started to emerge, develop and strengthen Jewish mysticism, the so called 'Kabbalah', which only sought to find within Judaism the 'spirituality', the supra-logical and secret holiness.....

The most important representative of the Sepharadic Kabbalists was Ramba"n (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman), founder and popularizer of the 'analytical Kabbalah', the so called 'Theoretical Kabbalah' (\* The Ramba"n lived at the end of the fifth millennium. He started to disseminate the wisdom of Kabbalah and came out against the dry philosophy way. If not for him, believe many, the Kabbalah would not have developed so swiftly in Spain.). The Spanish Kabbalists and mystics influenced the entire Jewish world, created significant Kabbalistic works and popularized the Zohar. Arab mystics who came into contact with Jews also took much from Jewish mysticism.

The Kabbalah found it's source in the Zohar. Although we do not know sufficiently, until this day, who its author was and when and where it was put together, it captured all Jewish houses and most of all, the mystics, who looked at it as a G-dly manifestation, and it became the authoritative work after the Bible (Tanach) and Talmud. It was held that the Zohar too was from Sinai (\* Ram"a in his work 'Toras haolah' part two, chapter one. The famous Kabbalist R. Moshe de Leon is considered to be revealer of the Zohar).

That work was publicized at the end of the 13th century and became the basis for the wisdom of Kabbalah for all later generations. It was accepted that the author of the Zohar is Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai. This belief is accepted until today.

The Zohar gave life to Jewry, injecting life into the letters of the Torah, lifting up man who was created 'in the form of G-d'

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R. Rosenberg - p. 110 (p.7)

'image of G-d', and proclaimed the 'ten sefiros' (Kabbalistic concepts)....about the creation of the world and all the secrets of G-d's creation.....how one can enter 'heichal hamelech penimah' (the inner courtyard of the King), all Jewish messianic mystics found in it a place where to hold on. The Zohar is naturally the basis of the religious-mystic way in Judaism. The Zohar first expressed the thought of 'leis asar panui minei', that there is no corner in the whole world where G-dliness does not rest.

The Kabbalah, which continued from generation to generation, went through different forms. The Kabbalah of Spain which was born in the thirteenth century was a deep thinking Kabbalah, that we call theosophy, opposed to the 'rule of the intellect' of Ramba"m (Maimonides). A Torah that could only be given over to 'yodei chein' (those knowledgeable in and worthy of that area).

The concealing of the hidden Torah brought about false Messiahs, who set forth with the power of Kabbalah, dazzled the masses and persuaded them that they were the Messiahs of whom the Jewish mystic works are so full. Jews had much to endure from the false Messiahs, most of all, from the last one, Jacob Frank, who also arrived with the power of Kabbalah and Zohar.

Then came the 'practical Kabbalah', which was born in the second half of the sixteenth century in the land of Israel, the way of the Ar"i (R. Yitzchok Luria Ashkenazi), of his student R. Chaim Vital, the leading representative of the practical Kabbalah with their many followers such as R. Yisrael Sarok (?), R. Eliyahu Vidas, R. Moshe Cordovero, etc. At the time when the prior 'analytical Kabbalah' strove to uncover the secret of the influence of the 'upper world' upon the 'lower world', the 'practical Kabbalah' searched for ways to influence the upper world, through various forms of asceticism, self-infliction, entreaties and all kinds of mortification of the flesh, to influence the kingdom of heaven. Through seclusion to rectify oneself and others. Through pain, to bring the redemption and Moshiach. These teachings made an impression on the masses and were a direct aid to all the eighteenth century last Messianic movements.

The last level of Kabbalah was Hassidism, which at first took on a folk character and was a folk movement. Hassidism let itself down from the heights, from the 'olam ha'atzilus' (a Kabbalistic term for a higher, heavenly world) to the 'lower world', to daily life. Foreign to it was theosophy, the 'analytical Kabbalah', as well as the asceticism of the 'practical

Kabbalah' ; it departed from the dry intellectualism of the former and the melancholy exaltation and Messianic romance of the latter - and adopted for itself the preaching of 'simple faith'. Instead of speculation in 'divine wisdom', hassidism prescribed praying with more Kavannah (concentration / intent) , with joy and not sadness.

Jewish history for the last 700-800 years is full of this unceasing conflict and clash between the mystics and rationalists. My present work is bounded and I will limit myself to focusing on several noteworthy moments in this conflict.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, two famous scholars from Italy fought the Kabbalah. They were : R. Yehudah ben Yechiel (in

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Italian, 'Messer Leon'). Born in Naeopol (Naples?) in the year 1450 (5211), he is well known from his work 'nofeth zufim' in which he transmits the high philosophical thoughts of Aristotle, Plato and other Greek philosophers ; the second is R. Eliyahu del Modino (in Spanish Cretenzenes - [sp.]) He was held to be the greatest Jewish intellect of his time. He was a great knower of languages, a great philosopher and scientist, and Professor in Padua and Florence universities. He went out in a public struggle against the Kabbalists, and dared to criticize the Zohar, arguing that R. Shimon ben Yochai did not write it. He published his work 'bechinath hadath', and based all his ideas on sharp sechel, in contrast to mysticism and Kabbalah, which place everything in a cloak of holiness.

In the epoch of 'Kabbalah maasis' ('practical Kabbalah', through which wonders were shown, sick healed, shedim ['demons'] and spirits [fore?]sworn, and so on), in that time, R. Azaria ben Moshe de Ross (born in Mantua, Italy 1514), came out with a sefer like 'Aristotle's letter to his brother Philokraece [sp.?' (appeared 1570), called in Hebrew 'Maor Einayim', and they almost excommunicated him, holding rationalism to be apikorsus ('heresy').

The campaign of Rav Yaakov Emden (1696-1776) against those of his time that utilized 'practical Kabbalah' is well known - especially against the rabbi of Prague, R. Yonoson (Eibuschitz), where his campaign had its highest penetration. When one objectively considers R. Yaakov Emden's campaign, it is seen that he was not entirely incorrect. Being himself very knowledgeable in Kabbalah and the writings of the Ar"i, he, in his time, battled 'kabbalah maasis' ('practical Kabbalah'), having the suspicion of those occupied with it that they were infected with the belief of Sabbetai Zevi. In his time, one must know, Jacob Frank and all his followers still ran rampant.....He therefore, in the sharpest way, fought those that he suspected of belonging to the Sabbatean sect, which at that time had brought a terrible destruction upon the Jewish people.

R. Yaakov Emden, in addition to his greatness in Torah scholarship, as he shows in his work (of responsa) 'She'eilas Yaavetz', was also a man who knew philosophy and languages, being especially distinguished in Hebrew.

He wrote a score of seforim, writing about this battle in the works 'eidus biYaakov' and 'Toras hakenaos'. He was a highly ethical man. He did not want to be part of the professional Rabbinate, making a blessing 'shelo asani eve"d (ab"d - av beis din) ; only in the year 1728, did he, without suitable alternative, assume the position in the city of Emden, which he held until 1733, after which he opened a printing business in Denmark.

It is to us not less well known the conflict between R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto and the rabbis of his generation. The campaign was led by the famous Rabbi Moshe ben Yaakov Hagiz (born 5432 / 1671, passed away in Tzefas 5498 / 1737), the greatest zealot and battler against the followers of Shabbetai Zevi, who excommunicated the Sabbatean Nechemiah Chivan (sp.?) and and later occupied himself with the sharp and zealous campaign against Ramcha"l (R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto).\*

\* He tells of his campaigns / battles in his works 'milchama laHashem vicherev laHashem' and 'kitvei cherem al sefer miheimnuta dekola vial Chivan'.

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R. Rosenberg - p. 112 (p.9)

Translators note - Not everything in this article is necessarily correct.

R. Moshe Hagiz, had, with the help of the 'Rabbis of Ashkenaz and Poland', with the strongest words forbidden the 'Kisvei Ramcha"l' (writings of Ramcha"l)(5 Cheshvan 5496) \*

\* see aformentioned work by Dr. Shimon Ginzburg, volume II, 7 (?), 325, also about how the ban was constructed, its effects and results.

The end was that Ramcha"l was forced to give an oath not to write any further writings 'al pi maggid, malach kadosh vinora' (from a heavenly messenger, a holy and awesome angel), and not to write any more the planned 'second Zohar'. A portion of his written works were sentenced 'to burning and burial', according to testimony of Rav Yaakov Kahane from Frankfurt.

The genius singer / poet, father of modern Hebrew poetry, held to the oath that was forced upon him, and taught others the secrets of Kabbalah no further. His last years he spent in Eretz Yisrael, where he passed away at the age of forty four years in 5507.

Regarding the conflict between misnagdim and hassidim in Poland, Lithuania and Russia, is known to all. It is only characteristic that the Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Eliyohu zt"l, being one of the greatest Kabbalists who was not less great in the 'hidden Torah' than in the 'revealed', He, the one who esteemed Ramcha"l, who supposedly expressed the feeling, that if Ramcha"l was still living he would have traveled to him to learn musar, he fought hassidism, and directed a pivotal (?) campaign against the followers of the Besh"t. His campaign was continued with the greatest intensivity by his students and followers, famous as the misnagdic greats.

Hassidism had also the full support of the Zohar, the source from which hassidism sprouts. \*\*

\*\* The word Chassidus (frumkeit) is an old Hebrew expression : "Shamra nafshi ki chosid ani (Tehillim 86:2). In Talmus 'Chassidim harishonim' and 'Chassidim veanshei maaseh' are mentioned. In the middle ages it (chasid) was a title for a virtuous Jew. Only in the eighteenth century was created the way of (modern) hassidism and hassidim.

Hassidism also held that only the 'yechidei segula' (special individuals) were supposed to study Zohar. For the unrefined it was enough to 'say' (read/recite) it, with which the redemption could be brought closer as well. If someone like R. Nachman of Bratzlav started disseminating and explaining the secrets of the Torah, R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (author of Tanya and Shulchan Aruch haRav), the founder of Haba"d, fought them. Hassidim also held that the Zohar contains within it more mystique and and appeals more in its original Aramaic language. This too when it is possible that the Zohar was written specifically in Aramaic, the language that 'the angels do not understand', so they should not be jealous of us, as the gemara explains re other things written in Aramaic, in the 'language that the ministering angels aren't involved with'.....

It was the famous wise Radziner rebbe, R. Mordechai Yosef Elozor Leiner z"l (5626-5689) who declined to give R. Rosenberg an approbation on his sefer, given him an explanation with a parable about translating the Hebrew title "Amud habarzel, patish hachazak, tzana malei safra.....in another language (iron pillar, strong hammer, ? with fruit) would it then have a taam (the proper, appropriate flavor) ? For this reason, many

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R. Rosenberg - p. 113 (p.10)

many Rabbis declined to give their approbation on the translation of the Zohar. Nevertheless, the then young Rabbi did not stop his great work. Following much toil, he was successful in gaining haskomos (approbations) from certian famous Rabbis and Rebbes, from the famous Sepharadic Rav R. Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini, known by the name Chacha"m (acronym for initials of Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini in Hebrew), author of 'Sedei Chemed', who was then Rav in Chevron, Eretz Yisrael. He was the first that gave him the best approbation on the 'Zohar Torah', agreeing there with the author that it is much better to understand the Zohar rather than reciting it without understanding a single word. Among those giving approbations were also found the Rabbis Rav Sholom

Mordechai haCohen (Brezhan'er Rav), Rav Chaim Berlin, Rav Eliyahu Chaim Meizel from Lodz, and Rav Yaakov Maazah, the famous Rav of Moscow.

It is also interesting to mention that the famous philologist and language researcher A. Harkavy writes (in a letter printed among the approbations) to the author : 'Behold, appeared before me his glorious published work "Zohar Torah" and I came today to scrutinize it and saw that glory and beauty is his work, charm was poured on his lips, everything he did beatifully with his pen, and, without flattering lips, I can tell him that it is an extraordinary achievement'.

It took him a full twenty years to finish the translation of the Zohar on the five chumoshim, Tehillim, Shir hashirim, Koheles and Mishlei, in seven volumes. \*

\* The last volumes appeared in later years, already in America.

So much effort and exertion did Rav Yudel Rosenberg give to make the study of Zohar easier so that even the 'beinonim' (middle level people) should understand it. He was certain, just like all Kabbalists, that this is a sign that the geulah (ultimate redemption) is already close, because, through the dissemination of the Zohar, he believed, Moshiach will come, as he says in his hakdomo (preface)....."for this is a sign that the redemption is near to be revealed. As the words of Eliyohu (haNovi) to R. Shimon z"l, Rebbi, Rebbi, how fortunate you are that from your group (chevra) are sustained many higher beings, until they are revealed to the lower ones at the end of days, and due to him each man shall return to his family holding, and man to his family shall return...'

R. Rosenberg also, to mollify the more extreme modest elements, did not translate the very deep areas, such as 1) sifra di'tzniusa 2) idra dimishkina 3) idra rabba 4) idra zuta 5) heicholos 6) inyonei gan eden 7) inyonei gehinnom 8) misisrei brias ho'olom klal 9) misisrei maasei bireishis bifrat 10) sisrei Torah 11) Tamtzis midrash hane'elam al divar haneelam, al divar taalumos chayei haneshomo vial divar taalumas inyonei techias hameisim.

All those things he looked over, wrote citations and added the commentary 'derech emes', but didn't translate into Hebrew. The very deep depths of the secrets of the Kabbalah he feared to lay out and publicize.

Just as in all mystic works, so too in the Zohar are stated prophecies about the 'great day' of Moshiach's arrival. The mystic placed much consideration upon that day, showing of great changes that would occur before the Jewish redemption and redemption of the shechinah. \*\*

\*\* About this I already wrote a series of articles published in various newspapers. Mostly in the Toronto 'Iddishen Zhurnal' and the Philadelphia 'Iddisher Velt'.

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The Zohar went even further and even showed the date of Moshiach's coming. When a time of trouble came, it was thought to be 'chevlei Moshiach' (pre-Moshiach birth pangs).

In the year 5408, Jews in Poland prepared themselves for the coming of Moshiach. They relied upon the (hint?) from the Zohar that in that year Moshiach would come: 'In the sixth millennium to the time of four hundred and eight - the Zohar prophesies - all who dwell in the earth will arise for tehiyas hameisim (resurrection). \*

\* Zohar part one, 139 (77?)

From there one hears very clear words, and who of the Kabbalists did not believe? In the year 5408 - says the Kabbalist R. Naftoli Katz, Moshiach will seize the kingdom of the Sultan \*\*

\*\*Eimek Hamelech 33, Amsterdam 1663.

In the year 5408 the dead will rise, says another.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Megilla Afa, at end.

The famous R. Shabsai Cohen (aka the Sha"ch) also hoped that that year would be a year of Moshiach\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*printed in 'Lekoros hagizeiros' (part two, of Cha"i Gurland)

and Rav Sheftel Horowitz, in the 'selicha' prayer on those martyred in 5408 wrote "(It was) 408 in the sixth millennium and I thought in my heart to go free (redeemed)'..... ~ ~It was then that the infamous Bogdan Chmelnitzki arose. In his rebellion against Poland he slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Jews, who were then left defenseless and hefker...

Moshiach did not come in the year 5408 - instead of Moshiach, great travails came upon the Jews of Poland. But that did not weaken the belief in the coming of Moshiach. People found other hints in the Zohar; people started calculating regarding the 'vision' Daniel saw regarding the 'end of days' in the thousand years of the holy Messianic kingdom, and the belief in Moshaich became even stronger. People hoped for him every day, that his coming was imminent, and therefore it is no wonder that the message of the false messiah Sabbetai Zevi (1626-1676) resonated in all the corners of Poland. ^

^ All believed that Moshiach's coming was imminent and that their dream was being realized. All believed that the chains by the gates of Rome were already RINGING, that the moshiach, who was seated already so long and absorbing Jewish life and suffering, had already emerged with his open wounds and prepared himself for 'milchemes gog umagog' of which the prophets prophesied.

Im hassidism there were already different paths regarding revealing dates for the coming of Moshiach. There were those who pointed to various hints that he would come in such and such year. There those, however, who held that the secret did not have to be revealed. Even more so, 'the Yud' (of Pshischa), the rebbe R. Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz, used to say very often regarding those who 'told the future', that 'the one who knows does not speak and the one who speaks does not know'... Many hassidic rebbes, however, awaited (expected?) Moshiach in their times. The Rebbe of Lublin, R. Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz, wanted, together with the Kozhnitz'er maggid and R. Mendele Rimanov'er, to bring Moshiach down in the year 5575 (1815) on tisha be"av, if not for the fact that he fell out the window. The hassidic legends about this fall, which caused his death, are known to all.

Another great portion of the rebbes believed that Moshiach would come in the year 5646 (1885-6) (in the time of the strikes).

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The Trisk'er maggid even found a hint for this in a comment in Rashi in the beginning of parshas Yisro where he asks 'ma shmuah shama uva, krias yam suf....' ? (what did Yisro hear...?). The roshei teivos (initial letters) of the first four words add up to 646 (corresponding to the Hebrew year 646 of the sixth millenium, that fell in 1885-1886 C.E.)(5646). As we know, from all these hints came nothing and Moshiach did not come at all. Jews still hope for him. Rabbi Rosenberg, as a kabbalist and hassid, believing in the hints of the Zohar, the book of R. Shimon ben Yochai, attempted to explain the Zohar's messianic prophecy.

Rabbi Rosenberg could not tolerate such a thing. As certain thinkers claim, that that passage was inserted in the Zohar (by someone other than R. Shimon ben Yochai) and he was not on target. Everything stated in the Zohar is true (according to them - translator) and will be fulfilled - we must only properly understand the Zohar and what it showed concerning the date of the arrival of Moshiach.

The truth is, that from the 'Raya Mehemna' (section of Zohar I believe) of parshas Pinchos, one can glean almost nothing and it is one of the complicated portions of the Zohar. According to the commentary of the author of 'Zohar Torah', the date of the arrival of Moshiach (the date set for his coming no matter what, if the Jews do not merit G-d's sending him earlier), is the year 272, 227 years before the advent of the seventh millenium, which is already a Sabbath year. The golus, he holds, can last no longer than 1900 years. The main golus, is the fifth millenium and an addition of the sixth millenium (the whole sixth millenium is called 'addition') nine hundred years of which would suffice to fit the Zohar's description of nineteen hundred years before the seventh millenium. As the churban was was one hundred seventy two years before the fifth millenium, the geulah (redemption) must be two hundred seventy two years before the seventh millenium, so the Zohar means, 'erev viyadata' (150 years [and?] six hours, corresponding to 'G-d's hours of the day' ) and so will end the 1900 in 728 (taf shin - kaf

ches) to the sixth millenium, and will remain seventy two years of the eighth century, corresponding to the figure (number) of 'uvichein tzaddikim yireu viyismochu' that the Zohar brings there. In the year 646, he holds, there was only a 'remembering' (not a full redemption?)...

So we see how the Kabbalists get involved with mysticism and believe that they truly know what will come to pass, and that they know what is going on in heaven.

With the same approach he interprets the 'Zohar chadash' of parshas Balak on the posuk 'erieniu vilo ata' ..that he means only two years later, in the year 274, 726, should be the year of Moshiach, and that there should be no clash / contradiction to the Zohar from the 'Raya mehemna' - the difference should only be two years - one holding that the geula (redemption) will come two years earlier, and the other, the 'Raya mehemna', speaking already about the 'gemar geula' (end/final part of the redemption), while 'eilu ve'eilu divrei Elokim chayim' (both are 'the words of the living G-d')... and he believed that the Zohar chadash stated that whole authentic redemption would not be 'biderech hateva' (according to the 'natural' way of things), 'at that time, Hashem will strengthen .....and appease with many appeasements.....and strengthen it and raise it from the dust' (some aramaic omitted).

In that time G-d will strengthen the Jews and raise them up from the ground.

That thought and explanation in the Zohar chadash that the redemption will come in the year 726 he reiterates several times in Shir hashirim parsha five, verse 'I have sworn you.....' and in the end of Koheles. He exerted himself strongly to reconcile (?) the various other explanations and most of all those that thought that in the year (5)274 of the sixth millenium would come the redemption, because we obviously see that it was not so, rather that must refer to the 274 years that will

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That was considered by him to be revealing the 'secret of the redemption'. He asked G-d to forgive him for revealing the secret, because he sincerely means (for) it to strengthen faith. (and all according to the accepted general principle, that with regard to G-d one thousand years is one day and that ""two hundred fifty years to the six hours of the night after midday and an additonal twenty two years before the time of the (end/setting?) of midday"...and that from 646 started the 'birthpangs of Moshiach'). He also believed that the resurrection would start forty years after the redemption of (5?)768 and would end in the year (5)800 of the sixth millenium when all the dead wil arise from their lengthy sleep - with which he wanted to reconcile the contradictions in the Zohar and Kabbalistic works. In the Zohar of parshas Vayeira of R. Shimon ben Yochai, it seems that the redemption must be in (between?) the year(s) (5)660 and (5)700 in the sixth millenium...According to his commentary, this means six times yud, six times 10 x 10 -

600 'yud' times 'vav' ten times 6 - 60 and 'vav' alone. Due to the churban 174-close to three hours means 660 in the sixth millenium.

The author of 'Zohar Torah' and the commentary 'Ziv haZohar' also wanted to answer this contradiction by saying that a 'pekidah' ('remembrance') was meant there, a beginning of the redemption which must begin eight hundred years after the destruction of the second Temple. All in the same way, with one approach, is answered the contradictions of the Zohar. The author is also certain that the Zohar was true. As proof, the wars, the (first) world war and all the difficulties that started in 5666 (?), that Rome which is mentioned there, which in (5)673 (1913) they will attack her there, "they will gather to the great city of Rome" means Constantinople which suffered in the war and lost the land of Israel, which was declared to be a national home for the Jews with the Arabs, etc.

It is interesting to mention the prophecy of R. Yosef ibn Yechia (254 [1494] -299[1539]) in his commentary to the book of Daniel, where, interpreting Daniel's 'ketz' (endtime), he concludes that the redemption will be at the end of the year 5700 (latter part of 1940 C.E.), or will stretch out a bit later. E.g. that our time is the time of Moshiach.

It is also interesting that one thousand years ago, in the year 4803 (1042 C.E.), after the terrifying pogrom on Jews in Granada, Spain, a sefer by the name 'zerubavel' appeared in which it is shown through various calculations that in the year 990 after the destruction of the second Temple (e.g in 1068 C.E.) Moshiach will come and free the Jews.

Rabbi Rosenberg produced works in three areas : 1) Halacha. Rabbinic literature ; 2) Drush (homiletic expositions) and Kabbalah and 3) Folk literature. From his drush and Kabbalah seforim the works 'ateres tiferes' on chumash 'al pi pardes' ; 'niflaos haZohar', a book(let?) containing all the stories of the Zohar 'yalkut Eliyohu' hanovi, stories about Eliyohu hanovi and 'hagadas Mahara"l miPrague' according to a manuscript from a library.

In the realm of folk-literature, he devoted himself to writing story books in Hebrew and Yiddish. He wrote the books 'refuos hanefesh urefuos haguf' (taken from the Ramba"m, with a short of biography of him) ; sefer 'refael hamaloch' (about 'segulos', kemeios ['amulets'] and medicine according to doctors) ; niflaos (wonder of) Mahara"l miPrague, tiferes mahara"l miShpola, 'divrei hayomim liShlomo hamelech' and so on. All these books he wrote in a naive folk-

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traditional style, in Yiddish. The sefer 'Refoel hamalach' contains eitzos (pieces of advice) and recipes from folk medicine and hygiene, and is, to this day, consulted by many hassidic rebbes.\*)

\*)The natural medicine created from various plants, juices, and spices, which we find in the Bible. In the Talmud certain natural cures and solutions are also mentioned.

The Golem contains a rich collection that supports itself on various legends about 'the Maharal's golem'. The group of golem legends became the source of the folklore mythology that has lately been so utilized in literature, both in poetry and fiction. In general, in all his work, the hassidic and the folk, he shows himself as a man with a poetic soul and strong mystic leaning.

And truly, when we think into the folk tales and legends that he recorded, they all have a relationship to his religiosity and mysticism. It is the same as the stories of R. Nnachman of Breslov and other hassidic and legendary stories about the holy rebbes and Rabbis.

The irrational, emotional, and romantic feeling of hassidism and Kabbalah, found in him new, deep, and mystic passions. By crystallizing itself, it found within him abstractions of more thought-of tales.

He, like the other devotees of hassidism, recorded and gathered its tales ; the difference is that the artists in their novels like 'dybbuk' and 'goldene kait' (golden chain) brought into hassidism their own form and content, and made from the traditional legends Jewish life ' for the artist it was literature, legend, dramatic considerations, just like Shakespeare's 'midsummer night's dream' with its summer night dream, and other legends that are created through folk myths and through which one becomes familiarized with the folk soul and life. \*)

\*)Through mysticism very great cultural figures lifted themselves up religiously and idealistically. The famous Russian writer L. Tolstoy created his great work after he was touched by the shallows (depression?). Dry culture became religious/mystic, seeing in religion the wide and deep world that has no boundary or bottom. It saw in religion the foundation of pure ethics, higher idealism with the power to lead humanity to the high ideals of freedom, justice, truth, equality, and brotherhood...

He, however, recorded simply the legends in the folk style because they were for him a reality because he believed in hassidism, himself was a bit of a 'Rebbe', himself bore the large long beard and 'peyes', encompassing frock coat and shtreimel. He himself believed in the Kabbalah and mysticism and not only saw, but also felt hassidism, the love of hassidus, and himself sang the Ar"i's songs of 'azamer bishvochin', 'asader liseudoso bitzafro diShabbso' and 'bnei heicholo dichsifin'.

He himself utilized the symbolic language of the Kabbalah, he himself sang forth with sweetness, he himself believed, 'with complete faith', hassidism beat in all his chambers, because for him they were sources of light, and therefore he also created a complete golem, that stands and moves.

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A golem without ornamentation, and without veiling, but an original, traditional, legendary golem, that will live on in Jewish legends, Jewish mysticism, and Jewish mythology...

Y.L. Peretz, the classic author of modern Jewish literature, also was overflowing with religion and mysticism and therefore dreamed in his greater works, of the free, religious, thinking Jewish man, that strives and yearns toward holiness, to 'yomtov'digkeit (a yomtov atmosphere). He sees that man 'at night, on the market(place)', he sees him in the 'golden chain', and even more he reveals for him, and 'if not, even higher'.

In such a way Peretz brings out the unique attributes of Yiddishkeit, of hassidism - an eternal striving for transcendence, striving higher and higher, to the heart of heaven ; to higher idealism that is based on the prophetic demand for unity, love, integrity, faith and trust.

In the year 5691 (1931), the Montreal Kehilla celebrated the seventy year jubilee of Rav Rosenberg. The jubilee committee consisted of the 'vaad hair', 'vaad haRabbonim' (haRav Tzvi Cohen, chairman) and the Shul 'Hadrass kodesh anshei Polin' (Pres. Sh. Greenfeld), whose Rav he was for several decades. For the occasion, was also published a 'sefer zikaron' of several assessment articles and greetings edited by the famous writer Dr. Zvi Cohen, with the assistance of Rabbi Yosef Fuchs.

The jubilee celebration took place in an imposing manner, Wednesday the second day of Rosh chodesh Adar 5691 (February 18,1931).

As can be seen from the local greetings, including the greeting from the 'vaad haRabbonim', Orthodox Montreal was proud of the fact that R. Rosenberg occupied a prominent place (as deputy head of the beis din) in the vaad haRabbonim of their Kehillah. The city of Montreal, as it can be seen, recognized the great accomplishments of the honored Rav and author, who enriched Jewish - Hebraic literature. In the greeting of the 'vaad haRabbonim', is stated, among other things : we take part in the celebration of the seventy year jubilee of our colleague, man of many accomplishments, whose fruit he gave forth with his pen (play on words), to merit the public with famous seforim, bringing forth and giving to drink from the wellspring of wisdom, revealed and hidden..."

Among the greetings and congratulations are also found a greeting from Talmud Torah 'Etz Chaim', signed by the then chairman, Nechemiah Kellerman, in name of the committee. Beside the greetings from Canada and the United States, there also came greetings from Europe and Asia. I will just mention a few. HaRav Shlomo Dovid Kahane, chairman of the vaad haRabbonim of the Edah of Warsaw, in his personal greeting writes among other things : "To the joy of my heart and exultation of my soul it became known to me that on the coming third day of Kislev, habo oleinu litova, it will be completed to his honored Torah personality, seventy years. And I am with this to bestow from far my blessing, a threefold priestly blessing...to enlighten and and understand in the Zohar (glory) eish das (fiery law -[Torah]) flame of Hashem..."

In the name of the famous Eiger mishpocho in Lublin, he was greeted by Rav Dovid Eiger shlit"a (son of the famous Rebbe R. Avrohom Eiger zt"l, author of 'shevet miYehudah', and brother of the famous admori"m (hassidic rebbes) R. Shlomo zt"l \*)

\*) That mentioned gaon, wise and holy one, fell, two years ago, 'al kiddush Hashem', through the brutal Nazi power in Poland.

and R. Ezriel Meir

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shlit"a). He writes among other things : "...Behold, truthfully, even those of his acquaintance in the country of Poland have what to say about him and his fruitful work for the good of the nation of Israel when he was still together with us here. And particularly us, men of the Eiger family who know the measure of his greatness and goodness from many years when he sat together with us in the 'shelter of faith' (in the courtyard of the rebbe ?). However, because of my great weakness in recent days, I cannot be lengthy in writing and thought, and am compelled to be brief, even in a place where length would be warranted...and we should all merit together, quickly, to his light, a new light, the light of the King Moshiach...with blessing of honor and love.

Dovid, son of my master R. Avrohom zt"l Eiger from Lublin.

From Eretz Yisroel greet him all three important Rabbis - R. Avrohom Yitzchok haCohen Kook, R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zichronom livrocho (their memories for blessing) ' and R. Ben Zion Meir Uziel. This is not the place to count all the greetings. I will only bring one more interesting greeting from Alexandria, Egypt, in name of the beis din tzedek (Rabbinical court) there, which reads as follows -

"I testify (state?) on the seventh day of Kislev 5691, that I come too today to take part in the simcha (joyous occasion) of my beloved and precious friend the famous Rabbi and gaon...our teacher and Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg, moreh tzedek (Rabbinic judge) in the city of Montreal (Canada) in the jubille holiday on his reaching seventy years. And from the depths of my heart I bless him that Hashem should lengthen his days with good and his years with pleasantness...as is the desire of his trustworthy friend, who recognizes and honors him according to his exalted value.

Alexandria, Egypt

The young one, David Prato, Samech"Tes (seifei tav [his end should be good]- sometimes misinterpreted as 'Sepharadi tahor' ['pure Sepharadi']).

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Subj: end of last page (p.119)

And Hashem made (Bereishis 1:25)

He fashioned them in their form and stature (Rash"i as translated by Artscroll).

All creations were created from the start in a mature, developed form. The first created animal (beheimo), from the outset, appeared as one developed over a long period of time, tall and perfect, and similarly all others.

From which is rebutted the the claims of the scientists that the world is older than 6000 years, based on their finding in the earth bones of creatures, or mineral deposits, which, according to present laws of development in nature, would require a development period of millions of years and they want to, based on that, deny our tradition with regard to the age of the world. Their mistake however, is a very large one, and stems from the fact that they calculate everything in accordance with its normal rate of development. Truthfully, however, the created things were created in in a completely / fully well-developed form, so we cannot at all know what type of size / measure this or that animal had at the time of its creation, or what kind of a form this mineral had at the time the world was created. We cannot compare the conditions / ways of development after the world's creation, with the conditions at the time of 'Berishis Boro' (the creation).

Harav R. Zalman Sender, Yerusholayim.