

BREAKING THE BOUNDARIES OF TIME AND SPACE IN KABBALISTIC APOCALYPTICISM

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The Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492 uprooted and dispersed large numbers of Jews and left traumatic impressions on the following generations of the Jewish people throughout the course of the sixteenth century. Similarly, the expulsion engendered many queries into the religious significance surrounding the tragic event.¹

The banishment was perceived neither as a mere historical incident nor as an arbitrary political decision of the secular powers. In other words, these events could not be compensated or accounted for within the stipulations of realistic-historical circumstance. The catastrophe was interpreted in religious terms as part of an all encompassing and predetermined apocalyptic process signifying the End of Days. Therefore, the Expulsion was perceived as an initial manifestation of approaching events.²

Consequently, at the turn of the sixteenth century, many Jewish communities were living a twofold existence. The majority of exiles rehabilitated themselves by pursuing a normal life, conducted according to usual mundane considerations. However, there also lived certain mystically-orientated individuals and small groups of Kabbalists

¹ Yitzhak F. Baer, *Galut* (Berlin: Dvir, 1936) pp. 49–69; Hayim Hillel Ben Sasson, "Exile and Redemption Through the Eyes of the Spanish Exiles", in *Yitzhak Baer Festschrift* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1960) pp. 216–227; Joseph Hacker, "New Chronicles on the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain", in *Yitzhak F. Baer Memorial Volume*, *Zion* 44, 1–4, (1979) pp. 201–228; Gershom Scholem, *Shabbatai Zvi* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1967) I: pp. 9–18; Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1967) pp. 244–251.

² In 1495, Joseph, the son of Shaltiel HaCohen, wrote, "I suppose that the troubles that happened to the Jews in the Christian world from 1490 to 1495 are the pre-messianic tribulations" (Ms. Vatican 187, *Sefer Ha-Piiah*, last page); see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974) pp. 67–79; Joseph Hacker, "A New Letter on Messianic Resurgence in The Land of Israel in the Beginning of the 16th century", *Shalem* 2 (1976) pp. 355–360; Rivkah Schaz, "Kavim LeDmutah shel Hir'orerut Politit-Meshihit LeAhar Gerush Sefarad", *Daat* 11 (1983) pp. 53–66; Isaiah Tishby, *Messianism in the Time of the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1985).

who sought apocalyptic justification for their trauma, fashioning a mystical reconstruction to resolve the dire consequences. These mystical circles expressed various degrees of detachment from mundane life, but all were yearning for redemption while attempting to decipher the hidden meaning of a dramatic and divinely ordained end of all things.³

The traditional dialectic connection between catastrophe and redemption—encapsulated in a legend recalling the Messiah's birth on the day the Temple was destroyed—was applied time and again after the expulsion from Spain.⁴ It was generally accepted that the widespread hardship and the great tribulations suffered by Jews—should be interpreted as messianic birthpangs which would culminate alternatively in the birth of the Messiah, his revelation within history, or in the coming of imminent redemption and the end of all things. Various signs and omens of the end were enumerated by the apocalyptic circles (*mehashvey kitzin*), such as, omens in the heavens, signs upon the earth, portentous events in surrounding society, and in the contemporary world. In their view, these phenomena all pointed toward imminent redemption.⁵ Repentance, ecstatic devotion, self-mortification, mystical intention in contemplative prayer, and intensive messianic expectation were coupled together in an effort to hasten the coming of the Messiah. His imminent appearance and intervention in history were irrefutable in the consciousness of many members of the exilic and post-exilic generations. When the apocalyptic visions for immediate messianic redemption *did not* materialize, and the severe constraints of reality became apparent, the acute messianic-apocalyptic expectations were gradually transformed into long-term eschatological schemes. Broad cosmic mystical interpretations and apocalyptic metahistorical beliefs replaced all concern for earthly expectations for imminent redemption. This trans-

³ See the introduction of Yehudah Hayat, *Minhat Yehudah, Ma'arechet ha'Elohit* (Mantowa, 1558). One of the leading Kabbalists of the period stated, "Behold, scripture in its entirety is filled with covert allusion to the future redemption". See Abraham Ben Eliezer HaLevi, *Mishra Kitrin* (Constantinople, 1510) p. 12; Gershon Scholem, "Ha-Mekubal R. Abraham Ben Eliezer HaLevi", *Kiryat Sefer* 2 (1925) pp. 101-104, 119-124; 269-273; *Kiryat Sefer* 7 (1930) pp. 149-165, 440-456; Shlomo Molcho, *Sefer HaMefoar* (Saloniki, 1529). *Idem*, *Hayat Kane*, (Amsterdam 1660?; Paris: 1938); Shimon Eben Lavi, *Ketem Paz* (Jerbah, 1940) f. 12a; Aharon Zeev Aescoly, *Jewish Messianic Movements* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1956) pp. 266-280.

⁴ *Eichah Rabati* (Jerusalem, 1979) Section A, p. 51.

⁵ See sources mentioned in note 3 above.

formation took place in three independent mystical directions and in three separate historical stages.

In the first stage, beginning in the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, eschatological expectations became mystical and inverted in their focus. In the second stage, in the mid-sixteenth century, apocalyptic expectations became a predetermined nihilistic divine plan, transcending all borders of time and place, transforming history into metahistory. In the third stage, in the last third of that century, a comprehensive spiritual revolution was presented, replacing the traditional curriculum with a Kabbalistic alternative, generating a new mystical apocalyptic plan.

The first direction, that of *mystical inversion*, emerges within the consciousness and teachings of Joseph Karo (1488–1575) at the beginning of the fourth decade of the sixteenth century. In his autobiography, Karo wrote his mystical visions and angelical inspired teachings from 1532 onwards. His writings were collected posthumously and later published in the book entitled *Maggid Meisharim*.⁶

The second direction, that of *predetermined annihilation*, is expressed in the anonymously authored mystical book *Galia Raza*, written between 1552 and 1558. These mystical teachings were inspired by the dualistic tradition of the *Zohar* and the cosmic perceptions of *Sefer HaTemunah*. The author perceived the Spanish Expulsion as an apocalyptic turning point and focused on mystical transmigration occurring within seven cosmic cycles.⁷ The third stage, that of the Kabbalistic alternative, introduced Kabbalah as the new messianic Torah of Redemption. This development took place in the later part of the sixteenth century and culminated with Hayim Vital's introduction to the Lurianic Magnum Opus *Etz Hayim*.⁸

⁶ See Refael Jehudah Zvi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo Lawyer and Mystic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). Joseph Karo, *Maggid Meisharim* (Lublin, 1648) and recent editions (Jerusalem: Orah Press, 1960) and ed. Yehiel Bar Lev (Petah Tikva, 1990).

⁷ See my introduction to *Galia Raza: Critical Edition of Oxford Ms. Opp. 104*, (Research Projects of the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Publication Series 1: Jerusalem, 1981), Rachel Elior, "The Doctrine of Transmigration in Galia-Raza", in ed. Lawrence Fine, *Essential Papers on Kabbalah* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1995) pp. 243–269; Tishby, *Messianism in the Time*, pp. 150–153.

⁸ Hayim Vital, *Etz-Hayyim* (Warsaw, 1890), Introduction to the Gate of Introductions, pp. 1–11. On *Etz Hayyim* see Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 254, 409–414; Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, "Le Role de la Kabbale dans la Tradition Juive selon Hayyim Vital", *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, 168 (1965) pp. 177–196; Rachel Elior, "Messianic Expectations and Spiritualization of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century", *Revue des études Juives*, 145 (1986) pp. 1–2, 35–49.

In order to elaborate on some of the diversified forms of apocalyptic time, we will introduce and discuss varieties of the innovative dialectical potential that apocalyptic perspective can provoke in regard to fundamental religious questions. In the following discussion we will focus on three mystical teachings relating to medieval Kabbalistic dualistic tradition, illustrating the above mentioned three directions.

The Kabbalistic tradition, as formulated by the author of the *Zohar* and his followers, proposed a dualistic perception of the universe in which good and evil, or holiness and defilement, were cosmic powers related to redemption and exile. The *Shekhinah* was the embodiment of holiness and the yearning for redemption, whereas the *Keliphah* represented defilement, evil, and the prevailing exile. The ongoing exile was delineated as the calamitous victory of the *Keliphah* (forces of evil and also known as *Sitra Ahra*) over holiness, the imprisonment of the *Shekhinah* by the *Keliphah*.⁹

Joseph Karo, the renowned Halakhic scholar, was a kabbalist who was profoundly influenced by Zoharic tradition vis-à-vis the *Shekhinah*. He was also greatly influenced by the martyrdom of Shlomo Molcho, a brave and tragic messianic figure, who was burned at the stake in Mantua in November 1532.¹⁰ Following Molcho's death, Karo was possessed by divine revelation, a nocturnal visitation in which he heard the voice of the exiled *Shekhinah*.¹¹ In these visitations, the *Shekhinah* described her exile, humiliation and captivity. Through Karo's mouth, the *Shekhinah* was said to have proclaimed:

My friends, my beloved, peace be with you, blessed are you . . . both in this world and blessed are you in the world to come, that you have undertaken to crown me tonight, for it is now several years since the crown fell from my head, I have no one to comfort me and I am cast into the dust, embracing dunghills. But now you have restored the crown to its former glory . . . therefore, my sons, be strong, resolute and joyful in my love, my Torah and my reverence; and if you could surmise the minutest part of the grief that is my lot . . . therefore, be strong and resolute and desist not from study . . . therefore, stand upon your feet and exalt me . . . and (s)he repeated, blessed are you, resume

⁹ On dualism in the *Zohar*, see Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 235–243; Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, translated by David Goldstein, (Oxford: Littman Library, 1989) volume II.

¹⁰ On Molcho's tragic death, see Aeskoly, *Jewish Messianic Movements*, pp. 266–280. On his imminent role in Karo's mystical life, see Rachel Elior, "R. Israel Baal Shem Tov and R. Yossef Karo", *Tarbiz* 65 (1996/7), pp. 671–709.

¹¹ See Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo Lawyer*.

your studies and desist not for one instant . . . and through *you* I have been exalted tonight.¹²

This visitation, dated the eve of *Shavu'ot* in 1533, was witnessed by Karo's Kabbalist circle in Turkey. In this visitation, the *Shekhinah* is not depicted according to common Kabbalistic tradition, that is, as a glowing bride preparing for her wedding night on the night of *Shavu'ot*. Conversely, she is portrayed here as being in captivity, suffering in exile, and praying for redemption. Humankind, portrayed as her redeemer, must focus its thoughts on the upper worlds by means of ecstatic prayer, mystical intention, uplifting love, and persistent study. The *Shekhinah* will be rescued from captivity and restored to her accustomed place only if humankind wills her return.

The *Shekhinah*—who speaks through the words of the *Book of Lamentations* and epitomizes in this testimony the painful experience of exile and catastrophe—is *no longer the redeeming entity for the Jewish Nation*. Humankind is not the object of redemption, but rather the redeeming agent who responds to the pleading of the *Shekhinah* for rescue from captivity as well as to *her* yearning for redemption.¹³

Karo and the members of his mystical circle were driven by the divine voice to abandon passive expectation for salvation. They opted for active and passionate exertion in order to redeem the fallen *Shekhinah* from the captivity of the *Keliphah*, and thereby hasten the course of the heavenly scheme for exile and redemption. Further, the divine voice urged Karo and his circle to leave their residence in Turkey and move to the Land of Israel to hasten and bring about the salvation of the *Shekhinah*. Members of the Kabbalistic circles responded to the celestial decree by organizing their passage to *Eretz Israel* and avowing themselves to the mystical elevation of the *Shekhinah* within visionary reality. These people left behind their passive apocalyptic expectations in exchange for an active mystical way of life. They concentrated on the spiritual elevation of the *Shekhinah*, and in turn created the renowned mystical community of Safed.¹⁴ Mystical

¹² See the introduction to *Maggid Meisharim* (Jerusalem: Ora, 1960). On *Tikkun Leyl Shavuot* in the Zohar, see Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3: 1318–1319.

¹³ See Elior, "R. Israel Baal Shem Tov and R. Yossef Karo".

¹⁴ On the mystical community of Safed, see Solomon Schechter, "Safed in the Sixteenth Century", *Studies in Judaism, Second Series* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1908) pp. 202–306; Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 252–258; Lawrence Fine, *Safed Spirituality* (New York, 1984).

redemption, in the eyes of Karo and his circle, no longer relates to the mundane world, but to divinity. The heavenly world is undergoing a process of eschatological restitution, entirely dependent upon human action. The transformation of the Jewish nation from passive exiles into active redeemers accompanied the transformation of the divine presence from a hoped-for redeemer into an entity which must be constantly redeemed. The traditional order is thereby reversed: No longer awaiting redemption from above, humankind not only becomes the redeemer of the divine presence, but rather constitutes an indispensable part of the mystical cycle of exile and redemption. The radical change in the order of the religious universe and the mystical implications of the teachings and actions of Karo, Shlomo Alkabetz, Moshe Kordovero and their disciples, accompanied by the detailed transformation of daily divine-worship, together had an immense effect on the new Jewish self-perception. The ongoing development of Safed Kabbalah and its widespread dissemination by means of manuscripts, books, rituals and mystical interpretation, later profoundly influenced Jewish thought from the early modern period until the beginning of this century.

Another innovative apocalyptic approach was expressed in the writings of the anonymous author of the book *Galia Raza*,¹⁵ which appeared somewhat later towards the middle of the sixteenth century, after Karo's visionary revolution. The unknown author, who presumably lived in the Ottoman Empire, was influenced by the cyclic perception of time in Kabbalistic tradition, specifically the sevenfold cyclic system proposed in the fourteenth century-mystical text known as *Sefer HaTmunah*.¹⁶ This kabbalistic tradition viewed time as a predetermined process of change and offered a framework for the deterministic perception of a divinely inspired rhythm of history. This rhythm was constituted within seven *Shemiotot*, that is, seven consecutive time cycles of seven thousand years, the elements forming the "divine week". This structure encompassed all time from the very beginning of the first millennium until the catastrophic end of the sixth millennium—the one in which contemporary history is taking place. The seven *Shemiotot* represent seven *Sephirot*; each *Shemitah* is the

¹⁵ See note 7 above.

¹⁶ See Gershom Scholem, *Ha-Kabbalah Shel Sefer ha-Temunah ve-shel Abraham Abulafia* (Jerusalem: Akademon, 1965).

unfolding of a separate *Sephirah* within time. The author, writing in 1552, graphically describes the end of days based on the transition of righteous people from one cycle to the next, thus moving from history into metahistory. According to the author of *Galia Raza*, at the end of the Jewish year 5760, that is, after the fulfillment of six cycles of 960 years, some 240 years before the end of the present sixth cycle, the order of creation will change. This change is also marked by the successful culmination of the war between the powers of holiness and evil and the purification of souls through a process of ongoing transmigration. The world will be covered with water, and only the Land of Israel will remain, floating upon the water and passing into the seventh millennium through a river of fire known as *Nahar Dinur*. Those righteous individuals who have completed their religious obligations as spiritual soldiers in the cosmic dualistic war between the two eternal powers of holiness and evil will transcend the borders of time and space and will rise to the rank of angels, entering the Garden of Eden. The end of the process represents the end of history and the ultimate victory of holiness over the *Sitra Ahra*. This victory is expressed in the rescue and release of the Jewish people from the dominion of the *Keliphah* and signifies the transition from exile to eternity. This also denotes a transition from *Shemitat Din*, the six thousand year cycle of severe judgement and harsh exile on earth, to that of *Shemitat Hesed*—the seventh cycle of mercy, eternal redemptive metahistorical existence beyond time and place. The passage from the sixth millennium to the seventh millennium is the passage from history to metahistory, from human life in this world into an angelic existence within eternity, or from exile to redemption. In the eschatological vision of *Galia Raza*, (which refers to the liturgical Jewish years of 5760–6000; 1760–2000 C.E.), the righteous few were chosen to surpass historical reality, a reality which was approaching its destined end. These righteous persons were to enter into a metahistorical existence transcending both time and place:

in those last two hundred forty years there is no being fruitful and multiplying, no plowing and harvesting and no one will be left except for absolutely righteous people . . . for in those 240 years the lower waters will rise and cover the whole mundane world and only the Land of Israel alone will remain, and its borders will be four hundred leagues by four hundred leagues, and it will float upon the water like Noah's Ark, and go close to the earthly Garden of Eden . . . and they, the righteous people, will plunge into the Dinur River and enter the

Seventh Millennium, which is the Great Sabbath and they rise up to the degree of Angels. And they are called the Hosts of the Lord and they stand in the earthly garden immersed in delights and pleasures within the earthly Garden of Eden, and they are not separated from the lower Shekhinah, which is the Lord, and they are Her hosts.¹⁷

An impaired sense of continuity, along with profound fears and acute anxieties about a total abolition of the Jewish nation, prevailed in broad circles after the expulsion.¹⁸ In contrast, the author of *Galia Raza* reinforces a sense of immortality by abolishing death, constituting a 'leap' beyond time into a totally new world with the promise for a predestined alternative existence. In an effort to end the ongoing chaotic experience of exile, the despair and hopelessness generated by historical reality, the eschatological kabbalist engendered mythological determinism. He and his followers believed that this deterministic approach could nullify experience through an annihilation of history and exilic existence, replacing it with an eternal redemptive apocalyptic reality.

The third approach, the dissemination of Kabbalah as a vital precondition for the messianic era, was first presented in the fourteenth century. The underlying conception of the mystical-eschatological tradition was formulated in *Tikkunei Zohar*, a late-Medieval pseudepigraphic text written about 1300, though ascribed to Rabbi Simeon Bar Yohai, a sage living in the Late Mishnaic period.¹⁹ The eschatological tone of the text is quite clear:

Elijah of blessed memory said to Rabbi Simeon Bar Yohai, may he rest in peace, how privileged are you in that from this book of yours elevated people will be sustained, *until this book is revealed to those below in the last generation in the end of days*, and because of it you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants . . . each of you shall return to his dwelling and each of you shall return to his family (Lev. 25:10), and therefore it is explained that *through the book of the Zohar they will go out of exile*.²⁰

¹⁷ Elior, ed., *Galia Raza*, p. 56.

¹⁸ See Joseph Hacker, "Pride and Despair—The Poles of Spiritual and Social Experience in the Life of the Spanish and Portuguese Exiles in the Ottoman Empire", in *Culture and Society in Jewish History in Medieval Time, Memorial Book for Hayim Hillel Ben Sasson*, (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1989) pp. 541–586.

¹⁹ See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, I: 5.

²⁰ *Tikkunei Zohar*, ed. Reuben Margalio (Jerusalem: Mosad haRav Kook, 1978) pp. 23b–24a; *Raaya Mehemna, Zohar Vaykra* (Jerusalem: Mosad haRav Kook, 1978²) p. 124b.

According to the *Zoharic* tradition, the secrets of the Kabbalah, presumably written by the *Tannaim* in the second century, were to be hidden for a thousand years and were destined to be revealed only at the End of Days. Their revelation at the end of the thirteenth century, and dissemination in the following period, signified the emergence of the messianic era. These ideas were echoed by many Kabbalistic writers in the generation of the expulsion and throughout the sixteenth century. Kabbalistic circles inferred from this assertion that by virtue of those who study the *Zohar*, redemption shall come in the near future. The direct connection between the *Zohar* and the hastening of redemption promoted the study of the *Zohar* as an eschatological text. Similarly, the coming of the Messiah was exclusively preconditioned by the dissemination of Kabbalah.

Thus, a twofold strategy was adopted: first the revelation of the *Zohar* attests that the End of Days is near. However, only by studying this book's mystical content and spreading its message will the fulfillment of the hidden eschatological plan for redemption be assured.²¹ The beliefs of Yehuda Hayat, published in *Minhat Yehudah* in 1498 shortly after the expulsion, were well known:

Hence it is explained that the *Zohar* was destined to be hidden until the last generation when it shall be revealed unto man; by virtue of its students the Messiah will come, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord and that will be the reason for his coming.²²

The vital connection between the revelation of kabbalistic secrets through the propagation of the *Zohar* and the attempts to hasten the coming of the Messiah, was candidly argued by Hayim Vital, in his comprehensive introduction to *Etz Hayim*.²³ Vital not only described the mutual relations between messianic expectations and Kabbalah study, but also contended that the Kabbalah is the *Torat Etz Hayim*, the new Messianic *Torah* of redemption. Vital stated that *Halakhah*, the *Mishnah* and the *Peshat*, are *Torat Etz Ha-Da'at*, signifying the *Torah* of exile. He argued that the Kabbalah is the "Messianic *Torah* and the *Torah* of the world to come". Vital claimed that the prevailing

²¹ See Isaiah Tishby, "The Controversy on the Printing of the Zohar in 16th Century Italy", in *idem*, *Studies in Kabbalah and its Branches* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982) pp. 79-182; Rachel Elijor, "The Dispute on the Position of the Kabbalah in the 16th Century", *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1, (1981) pp. 177-190.

²² See Yehudah Hayat's introduction to *Minhat Yehudah*.

²³ See Elijor, "Messianic Expectations and Spiritualism of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century".

Torah and *Halakhah*, as currently applied to in aspects of daily life, express the era of exile. Vital concluded that the Kabbalah is the expression of the new messianic era and argued forcefully that the coming of the redemption depends primarily on the study of Kabbalah and the acknowledgment of its overriding authority, validity and priority. He boldly stated,

Regarding the *Torah* in its literal sense, which is the *Torah* of the mundane world, it is worthless when compared to the Messianic *Torah* and the *Torah* of the world to come . . . Regarding the *Mishnah*, there can be no doubt that the *Mishnah's* literal aspects are but veils, shells and outer wrappings when compared to the hidden mysteries which are inherent and insinuated in its inner aspects (i.e. Kabbalah).²⁴

Vital dismissed the relevance of a rational, legal interpretation of Scriptures, arguing for a concealed spiritual perception of the *Torah* and *Mishnah*. He contended that both of these texts were filled with hidden divine significance and messianic vocation, and that this inner meaning was to be found in the Kabbalah of the *Zohar* and in the mystical writings of its followers. Thus, the literal interpretation of the law, as a direct contradiction to the foundation of mysticism, was rejected and contested by Vital. The mystical interpretation of the law with its eschatological component was offered as a spiritual alternative to the prevailing *Halakhic* tradition and to its major proponents. In the introduction to *Etz Hayim* Vital argued:

The major scholars of *Torah* have degenerated into the heresy of denying the validity of the truth while insisting that the only meaning of *Torah* is the *peshat* . . . the situation is desperate since it is only by means of the Kabbalah that redemption can be brought about while to refrain from it would delay the restoration of our Temple and our Glory.²⁵

Vital's aggressive tone reflects the acute controversy which raged over the position of the Kabbalah between those who believed in its fundamental role in the eschatological process and those who held to the traditional order.²⁶ Clearly, the eschatological orientation of this generation brought about the daring criticism of the rabbinical

²⁴ See the introduction to *Etz Hayim*, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁶ See note 21 above and Jacob Katz, "Halakha and Kabbalah as Competing Subjects of Study", *Da'at* 7, (1981) pp. 61-63.

establishment as well as the literal legal system. Overall, Messianism changed the perception of spiritual priorities and religious hierarchy.

In the course of the sixteenth century Kabbalah, Messianism and Apocalypticism came together in an unprecedented manner. *Halakhah*, traditionally perceived as the ruling authority, gave way to a mystically orientated Apocalypticism, based on Kabbalah and Messianic Torah. The teachings of Karo, Vital, and the anonymous author of *Galia Raza* reflect the comprehensive breaking of constraints which was motivated by apocalyptic orientation: Karo broke the borders of divine-human relations, reversing the traditional order; "*Galia Raza*" transcended the borders of time and space, restructured both history and metahistory; and Vital broke the confines of tradition by favoring Messianic Torah and Kabbalah over *Halakhah*.

The Apocalyptic vision, which was drawn from Kabbalistic tradition and Messianic perspectives of history, was shaped by the profound experience of exile. This view created a fundamental change in religious norms which was characterized by the detachment from confinements of reality and traditional considerations. This messianic perspective of history formulated a new inner meaning for external events, thereby transforming the confinements of existence into mystical reality beyond time and place.