**Chapter 8: Rabbi Hutner’s Thought in the Context of its Sources**

In this chapter, I will discuss several questions relating to Rabbi Hutner’s hidden sources and the character of his work as a thinker and exegete. I will not cover all of the sources and residual elements within his thought but will concentrate on several central ones whose imprint has been perceptible to one degree or another on our discussion so far: the Mussar thought from the Slobodka school, Hasidism (with an emphasis on Chabad), and Kabbalah. In addition, I will conclude with a comment on the minimalization of the irrational characterizing Rabbi Hutner’s thought: his tendency, on the one hand, to adopt the less rationalistic traditions in Jewish thought as the framework for his intellectual development and, on the other hand, to minimalize the irrational in the context of those traditions.

**8.1 Rabbi Hutner and the Mussar Movement: The Influence of Slobodka**

In the biographical chapter above we saw that the Alter of Slobodka was a key figure in Rabbi Hutner’s early life. Rabbi Hutner has been cited as saying: “A person’s consciousness is like a two-storied building. My lower floor, the foundation, is the Alter of Slobodka and my upper floor is Rabbi Kook”.[[1]](#footnote-1) This statement is profoundly reflected in Rabbi Hutner’s later life. In almost every aspect of Rabbi Hutner’s life, as an educational figure and a public figure, in the character of his Mussar talks, and his relationships with his students, we find profound similarities to the Alter. There is no question that this figure was a source of inspiration and the most significant role model in Rabbi Hutner’s life.[[2]](#footnote-2)

We should therefore assess the place of Slobodkan thought in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. The Alter is not mentioned even once in the *Pachad Yitzhak* books. Nor do his apocryphal writings contain references to the Alter’s philosophical sayings. In general, in the few places in which Rabbi Hutner makes explicit reference to the Mussar movement, the figures mentioned are the movement’s founder, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, and one of his closest students, Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer,[[3]](#footnote-3) whom Rabbi Hutner had the privilege to meet and study with in his youth. This is not as surprising as one might think because the Alter’s students do not typically quote him or reference him in their writings. Tikochinski argues that we should not deduce from this fact that he was not an important influence on them, but rather the opposite, we can infer that “his influence and total involvement in their [the students] intellectual world and, in more profound matters, the erasure of the boundary between his ideas and theirs”. [[4]](#footnote-4)

There is thus ample ground for comparing Rabbi Hutner’s thought to that of the Alter and identifying its influence upon him. Several key concepts fundamental to Rabbi Hutner’s intellectual infrastructure, more precisely those connected specifically to the anthropocentric purpose, are very predominant concepts in the Alter’s talks. The Alter strongly emphasizes the concept of *hessed* anddiscusses it extensively, as well as the concept of *oneg*, the idea that man was created to enjoy God’s beneficence, from whence comes the approach of the “obligation to enjoy” advanced by the Alter, in contrast to the ascetic tendency which characterized the Mussar movement in its early days. Another central concept in the Alter’s worldview is free will, which to him signified man’s supremacy over even the angels, for in his choices man can bring merit to himself and the whole world. In addition, we find several cases in which the Alter engages with themes present in Rabbi Hutner’s writings. Examples of these include the creation of man as an individual (especially in reference to personal providence); the correlation between humiliation and bloodshed; disregard for human worth leading to a contempt for life; the importance of renewal; a neutral, even positive, approach to the material world; emphasis upon man as the connection between body and soul, specifically in contradiction to those advocating the nullification of the material and augmentation of the spiritual; the idea that evil is, in essence, good; *imitatio dei*; and, in one case, the attribution of pleasure to wisdom and the comparison between the pleasure of Shabbat and the pleasure of studying the physical sciences.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In determining if the Alter of Slobodka’s thought had a significant influence on Rabbi Hutner, we must first define what we consider to be “significant influence”. The Alter’s thought, perhaps uniquely so, is characterized by the theosophical indifference typical of the first generations of the Mussar movement.[[6]](#footnote-6) Goldberg even suggested that the philosophical shallowness and the rejection of abstract inquiry at Slobodka were a source of dissatisfaction that Rabbi Hutner felt regarding the Alter.[[7]](#footnote-7) In any case, there is no basis for a real comparison between the aforementioned concepts, beneficence, pleasure, and free will, as they appear in the Alter’s talks and Rabbi Hutner’s thought. In the Alter’s thought, both beneficence and pleasure are general terms for positive things, sometimes with a blatant emphasis on worldly pleasures. The Alter does not bother with philosophical analysis in developing these concepts, and they are not woven into a larger theological framework purporting to explain the purpose of reality, the attributes of God, or the essence of man, as in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. In the Alter’s approach, these serve as a platform for an educational message: God is full of beneficence and thus man must also be so. The same applies to the concept of free will. The Alter’s remarks on free will are a central axis around which revolves his mantra that every deed performed by man has cardinal significance, for good or for bad, and thus man must ascribe supreme importance to his choices and act accordingly. However, his thought does not include a systematic discussion of the origin of free will or its limitations, nor does it form part of a systematic framework. The abstraction, conceptualization, and focus which characterize these concepts in Rabbi Hutner’s thought are absent from the Alter’s thought, at least as far as can be judged by that which is written in his name.

This last sentence takes us back to the basic problem in examining the Alter’s thought: he did not commit his thought to writing himself. All that we have from him are reconstructions based upon notes taken down by various students (this is often perceptible in the differences in style and emphasis between the talks published in the volumes of *Or Hatzafon*)*.* When I proposed the methodology of the intellectual infrastructure, as a foundational intellectual framework, delineating the inner logic and coherence of any given system of thought, I pointed out that the very existence of such an infrastructure differentiates between systematic and unsystematic thought. It seems to me that the effort to construct such an intellectual infrastructure from an analysis of the Alter of Slobodka’s talks would yield at best, a lean product comprised of obscure elements. Do these writings faithfully represent the full depth and breadth of the Alter’s thought? It cannot be taken for granted that they do. If we possessed only the volumes of *Reshimot Lev*, in which are gathered the notes taken during Rabbi Hutner’s talks, we would discover a very different thinker with a system of thought significantly less clear and less substantial than what we know from the *Pachad Yitzchak* books. In person, the Alter may have expounded a richer body of thought than that which has survived in writing, including developments similar to those of Rabbi Hutner, who was influenced by them and then adopted them. However, I tend toward accepting the *Or Hatzafon* volumes as basically faithful reflections of the Alter’s thought, because they reflect the indifference to theosophy which, according to evidence gathered by scholars, characterized his thought.

Therefore, when we discuss influences on Rabbi Hutner’s thought, it definitely must be said that the similarity between the salient concepts in the Alter’s talks and those prevalent in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books is not coincidental. The fact that Rabbi Hutner to a large extent built his thought upon concepts that were current in the Alter’s talks can certainly be attributed to a significant degree to their prevalence in his educational environment. (However, not to this alone, because the same concepts are prevalent also in the framework of Ramchal’s thought which deeply influenced Rabbi Hutner’s intellectual framework.) Similarly, the specific sayings, rabbinic or otherwise, that formed the basis for many of the Alter’s talks are often the starting points for ideas that Rabbi Hutner develops. However, regarding their essence, the substance of the concepts, and their functions, the connection is weak. The Alter’s general spirit can be detected within them but they include developments that he did not imagine.

In summary, the essence of the Alter of Slobodka’s influence on Rabbi Hutner can be identified in the ways in which he served as a role model, educator, pedagogue, and public figure. In everything pertaining to intellectual influence, the Alter’s thought and the fundamental concepts he engaged with should be regarded as a source of inspiration, a basic intellectual platform, and the default framework to which Rabbi Hutner turned when he developed the concepts with which he chose to formulate his thought. In this sense, the metaphor he used to describe the Alter’s place in his life is appropriate: a person’s consciousness is similar to a two-storied building, and his ground level was the Alter of Slobodka. The Alter’s concepts are the building material, but the content is a different matter.

**8.2 Rabbi Hutner and Hassidic Thought**

In the biographical section, we saw that throughout his life Rabbi Hutner consistently engaged with Hassidic thought. In particular, there are many indications of his intensive involvement with Chabad philosophy. Residual elements of Chabad thought can be perceived in several aspects of his work, but the most blatant is his use of the system of the two souls, the “divine” and the “natural”,[[8]](#footnote-8) which indicates a clear connection to this Chabad idea. Despite his reservations about the Chabad movement of his time, he continued to study the thought of its Grand Rabbis[[9]](#footnote-9) and there is evidence of his extensive knowledge of their works. Rabbi David Cohen (1887–1972), known as the Nazirite, in his discussion of the subject of the unity of God in his book *Kol Hanevuah*, cites the ideas of the medieval Jewish philosophers together with the “Admor Hazaken”, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Chabad Rebbe, as offering a contradictory approach to the ideas of the kabbalists and the Maharal of Prague. When Rabbi Hutner received a copy of the book (which belonged to his student), he wrote the following comment in its margin:

שקר ענה בזה שאמר כי יש כאן התנגדות בין בעל התניא ובין המהר"ל. וכל זה בא לו מפני שנשמטה ממנו ההגהה המפורשת בפרק שני מלקוטי אמרים. יעוין שם היטב. וכונת מהר"ל בההקדמה לגבורות היא דוקא למעלה מאצילות. ודברי המקובלים ודברי המהר"ל ודבריו של בעל התניא אחד הם.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The following example reveals further evidence of Rabbi Hutner’s expert knowledge of Chabad thought. In an early edition of the book *Piskei Dinim* by the Grand Rabbi “Tzemach Zedek”, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, appears the phrase, “The Vilna Gaon cited this […] and I have not merited to understand his holy words”. In a later printing (from 1949), the printers omitted these words and, in their place, wrote “and there is no answer”. Rabbi David Kamenetsky recounted that when Rabbi Hutner received a copy from the new printing, he noticed the change and complained about it in a letter that he wrote to the printers: “The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, in going over the book, noticed the change that was made, and wrote them a letter in 1954 to clarify why they changed the words of the “Tzemach Zedek” (this information comes from the family of the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, may the memory of the righteous be a blessing, who have the original letter – and I wonder why they omitted his name).”[[11]](#footnote-11)

These incidents demonstrate that Rabbi Hutner was very familiar with Chabad literature and thought, at least in its early forms. Traces of it are also apparent in his own thought.[[12]](#footnote-12) The system of the two souls that Rabbi Hutner uses demonstrates a connection to the thought of the Admor Hazaken. Although the more familiar Chabad terminology for the two souls is the “divine soul” and the “animal soul”, as they appear in *Tanya,* the animal soul has several terms in the framework of Chabad thought, among them the “natural soul”. The pair “divine soul” and “natural soul” are present already in the writings of the Mitteler Rebbe (Rabbi Dovber Schneuri) and the Tzemach Tzedek Rebbe, the second and third generations of Chabad Hassidism. One of the places in which this pair appears with the expression “natural soul” is the work *Hemshech Tarsav* of Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, the“Rebbe Rashab”.[[13]](#footnote-13) A letter written to Rabbi Hutner by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in which he assumes that the *Hemshech Tarsav* is in his possession, indicates that Rabbi Hutner studied this work.[[14]](#footnote-14) Chabad thought was clearly the source of Rabbi Hutner’s terminology. An examination of Rabbi Hutner’s use of the system of two souls reveals his attitude to his sources and toward Hassidism specifically. Rabbi Hutner draws ideas and concepts from various sources but does not refrain from appropriating them for himself and using them in a partial or even opposite sense from their function in the original sources. His use and adaptation of the system of two souls is a telling example of this, as the following description will show.

Chabad theology, as formulated by its founder, the Admor Hazaken in *Tanya* (and developed in several variations by his successors) is paradoxical at its core. This theology posits God’s infinitude while asserting his immanence, the belief that God is present in everything (an idea that is in effect inferred from God’s infinity). From here emerge two fundamental correlated problems: How can something distinct and finite exist alongside an infinite God who fills everything; and how can an infinite immanent God be be present within a finite material world? The proposed solution to this paradox is to deny that which “is”, the existing reality. Things as they appear to the human eye, including man himself, do not exist “in truth”. Opposite the “is” stands the “is not”, the conception of existence in which there is no creation or existing things, only the infinite totality of God. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi wrote in *Tanya*:

והנה אחרי הדברים והאמת האלה כל משכיל על דבר יבין לאשורו, איך שכל נברא ויש הוא באמת נחשב לאין ואפס ממש לגבי כח הפועל ורוח פיו שבנפעל המהוה אותו תמיד ומוציאו מאין ממש ליש. ומה שכל נברא ונפעל נראה לנו ליש וממשות זהו מחמת שאין אנו משיגים ורואים בעיני בשר את כח ה' ורוח פיו שבנברא, אבל אילו ניתנה רשות לעין לראות ולהשיג את החיות ורוחניות שבכל נברא השופע בו ממוצא פי ה' ורוח פיו לא היה גשמיות הנברא וחומרו וממשו נראה כלל לעינינו, כי הוא בטל במציאות ממש לגבי החיות והרוחניות שבו, מאחר שמבלעדי הרוחניות היה אין ואפס ממש כמו קודם ששת ימי בראשית ממש [...] וכדברים האלה ממש בדמותם כצלמם הם כל הברואים לגבי שפע האלהי מרוח פיו השופע עליהם ומהוה אותם והוא מקורם, והם עצמם אינם רק כמו אור וזיו מתפשט מן השפע ורוח ה' השופע ומתלבש בתוכם ומוציאם מאין ליש, ולכן הם בטלים במציאות לגבי מקורם, כמו אור השמש שבטל במציאות ונחשב לאין ואפס ממש ואינו נקרא בשם יש כלל כשהוא במקורו רק תחת השמים שאין שם מקורו, כך כל הברואים אין נופל עליהם שם יש כלל אלא לעיני בשר שלנו שאין אנו רואים ומשיגים כלל את המקור שהוא רוח ה' המהוה אותם.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Scholars of Chabad have taken two major directions in interpreting the nullification of reality in *Tanya*. Some interpret it as absolute negation: all the separate perceived reality is nothing but an epistemological illusion, because, in reality, nothing exists except God. This understanding is known as the acosmistic interpretation. Other scholars disagreed with this approach, criticized it for being too radical, and proposed that Chabad thought negates the ontological value of reality as an independent entity: the existence of reality is conditional upon the existence of God and is nothing in relation to him. Being is like a weak emanation of God; it exists separately but all substance of its real existence is God, and it has no real or worthwhile selfhood. Some have called this approach the panentheistic interpretation.[[16]](#footnote-16) Most significant for our purposes is the approach inferred from both interpretations, the attitude required from man toward his environment and especially toward himself. The tragedy of reality is the separation from God; its very existence (weak or bogus) is the tragedy. Man himself falls under this category: the fact that man exists as a separate being (whether only in his own mind or in some real sense) is a tragedy. Man is forced to wrestle with this tragedy because it is God’s will that he have the prospect of realization in the material world. This idea is referred to by the Admor Hazaken as “*dira batachtonim*” [literally “dwelling below”, meaning God’s manifestation in the world].[[17]](#footnote-17) Through Torah study and performing the commandments, man can drape the mantle of God’s will over his physical being and, by using the elements of reality to perform commandments, retrieve the divine spark hidden within them. The purpose of creation is to overcome the rupture and return to complete unity with God; the impetus for this process is man, who in his life can channel two movements of unity: a) from God to the world, by covering himself in God’s will through Torah study and observing the commandments incumbent upon the individual at all times; b) from the world to God, by observing the commandments within the mélange of entities in the world and thereby raise the sparks within them and return them to their source.[[18]](#footnote-18)

From here it seems that a person’s attitude to his own existence should fluctuate between an entirely negative attitude and one of diffidence, or at most, indifference. Man should have no desire to exist for himself, and, to whatever extent he accepts his existence, he should do so only because it is God’s will. In effect, man is in conflict regarding his existence. This conflict is rooted in the presence within him of two souls. Following Rabbi Chayim Vital, the Admor Hazaken states that:

 "לכל איש ישראל אחד צדיק ואחד רשע יש שתי נשמות דכתיב ונשמות אני עשיתי שהן שתי נפשות נפש אחת מצד הקליפה וסטרא אחרא [...] ונפש השנית בישראל היא חלק אלוה ממעל ממש."[[19]](#footnote-19)

 A Jew has two souls: a divine soul and an animal (or natural) soul. The divine soul is “part of God above”, literally divine. In effect, it embodies the correct approach to the existence of man. The divine soul aspires to return to complete unity with God and does not want to exist within a body. In contrast, the animal soul wants to see itself as a separate being and to continue to exist in this way. The Admor Hazaken wrote:

אך הנה כתיב ולאום מלאום יאמץ כי הגוף נקרא עיר קטנה וכמו ששני מלכים נלחמים על עיר אחת שכל אחד רוצה לכבשה ולמלוך עליה דהיינו להנהיג יושביה כרצונו ושיהיו סרים למשמעתו בכל אשר יגזור עליהם. כך שתי הנפשות האלהית והחיונית הבהמית שמהקליפה נלחמות זו עם זו על הגוף וכל אבריו שהאלהית חפצה ורצונה שתהא היא לבדה המושלת עליו ומנהיגתו וכל האברים יהיו סרים למשמעתה ובטלים אצלה לגמרי [...] אך נפש הבהמית שמהקליפה רצונה להפך ממש.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Throughout his life, man is immersed in a struggle between the two souls competing over him. Each of them aspires to rule the “small city”. Man is commanded to accept the divine soul as his ruler and to identify completely with it, until the point at which he has no desire for individual existence but aspires to return to unity with God, to be without a separate existence. This level is called in Chabad terminology “*mesirut nefesh*” [literally to give over one’s soul], man’s aspiration to give his soul back to his Creator. In other words, the man who identifies with the divine soul in effect wants the end of this life, he wants to be nullified. However, because of God’s will to have a “*dira batachtonim*”, man accepts upon himself, or even works up a subordinate desire, to exist in the world in order to realize the will of God. Chabad places at the center of the service of God practices through which man trains to strengthen his identification with the divine soul and reject the animal soul, called in Chabad terminology “*hitbonenut*” [contemplation], which includes focusing intellectual effort on the idea that there is nothing in the world except God, until reaching a state of deep self-persuasion. Through contemplation, a person must internalize that his existence is not real and acquire the aspiration that the disjunction between himself and God will disappear (in other words to give over his soul).[[21]](#footnote-21)

The antipode of the divine soul is the animal soul, which clings to its existence and refuses to let go. It wants to live forever and its greatest desire is for self-realization. The animal soul rejects the true reality, flees from unity with God, and believes in disunion. All aspects of man that are unique to him, that relate to his individuation and separate existence from God belong to the sphere of the animal soul. This includes his personality, connections with the world, the things he loves, his aspirations, and his very will to live. Subjectivity itself is an illusion of the animal soul and one must work hard to nullify it. The desire for individual existence is an expression of the animal soul and according to the degree of its presence in human life so is the degree of control that the animal soul has over him. Rabbi Shneur Zalman wrote that “"עיקר ושרש ע"ז [עבודה זרה] הוא מה [...ש]מחשיבים עצמם ליש ודבר בפני עצמו ובזה מפרידים את עצמם מקדושתו של מקום ב"ה [...] והרי זו כפירה באחדותו האמיתית דכולא קמיה כלא חשיב ובטל באמת לו ית' ולרצונו המחיה את כולם ומהוה אותם מאין ליש תמיד.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Dualism and other plural forms relating to the various elements of man and his soul have been present in Jewish thought from its origins in the early Rabbinic period. Traditionally, man’s various characteristics were attributed to his two different aspects. In a classic body-mind dichotomy, for example, the intellect or ratio was ascribed to the soul while carnal desires were assigned to the body, in a complete separation of powers. These distinctions appear also in the Admor Hazaken’s system, for example in the declaration that the source of all carnal desires is in the animal soul alone. Nonetheless, the significant innovation in Chabad thought is that both souls first and foremost belong to and compete for the same sphere within man: consciousness. The two souls represent two states or two psychological tendencies: the impulse toward nullification and lack of self-regard, from an aspiration to unite with God, which is the characteristic of the divine soul; and the impulse to self-affirmation and self-exaltation which is a characteristic of the animal soul. The former is clearly a positive trait to which one is drawn by the good inclination while the latter is a negative trait to which one is pulled by the evil inclination. Man is required to put the nullifying tendency in control of his consciousness and destroy the affirming tendency.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Chabad thought presents human existence as a conflict and continuous internal war, in which man lives his whole life in between opposite realities and truths abiding together, in a kind of intense dialectic tension. The combination of being and nothingness, giving over one’s soul while God dwells below, the divine and animal souls, all these combinations are paradoxical yet at the same time all are revelations of the same unity – the “unity of opposites”.[[24]](#footnote-24)

This aspiration to self-nullification is completely antithetical to Rabbi Hutner’s worldview, while the desire for existence negated in Chabad thought stands at the heart of his thought. In this sense, the Chabad doctrine of two souls is antithetical to Rabbi Hutner’s approach, and therefore, when integrating it into his own thought, he makes the relevant change: he reverses it.

In Rabbi Hutner’s thought, the two souls represent exactly the opposite of what they represent in the thought of the Admor Hazaken. The natural soul recognizes only what it encounters by physical means in the revealed world, a world that in itself has no importance or value – the world of scientism, materialism, and nihilism, which in his opinion form the ultimate heresy.[[25]](#footnote-25) In contrast, the divine soul recognizes the existence of *kavod*, the possibility of attributing importance to profane things. The encounter with the divine does not lead to the conclusion that man and reality are nothing – on the contrary, it leads to the conclusion that man truly exists. It is the divine soul that affirms man’s true eternal existence, while the natural soul lives in a world in which existence is false. Rabbi Hutner adopts the formal innovation of the Admor Hazaken’s two-soul doctrine, the idea that two souls represent competing conscious impulses and that man must choose the desired conscious state. He even adopts the Chabad terminology. However, he imbues the adopted system and its terminology with his own content, in this case, content that is the opposite of the original.[[26]](#footnote-26)

It is not only the conscious state represented by each type of soul that differentiates Rabbi Hutner from the Admor Hazaken; the relationship between the souls is also adapted in the transition to Rabbi Hutner’s thought. The Admor Hazaken maintains that both souls exist in a state of continual conflict and built-in disharmony. Rabbi Hutner however holds that although a conflict takes place within man about whether or not to choose to adopt the perspective of the divine soul, this choice does not come at the expense of the natural soul or in its place. Adopting the perspective of the natural soul exclusively is damaging because it leads to a loss of meaning and zest for life. However, implementing the perspective of the divine soul does not negate the content of the natural soul but rather adds to it a perspective that reverses its conclusions. From the moment that the divine perspective is adopted, the two souls exist together in harmony, as one serves as a basis for the other. It appears to me that it is this difference that leads Rabbi Hutner to prefer, from among the names given to the partner of the divine soul in Chabad thought, the term “natural soul”, which has a neutral connotation, unlike the term “animal soul”, which has a more negative connotation. These relationships between the two souls are a further reflection of Rabbi Hutner’s neutral dualistic perspective, which he acquired from Maharal of Prague’s separation paradigm (and which corresponds with the positive approach of his teacher, the Alter of Slobodka, toward the material world, as we saw above).

The Chabad doctrine of two souls introduced the idea of the two souls, divine and natural, which represent two conscious perspectives between which man must choose (in favor of the divine soul) and Rabbi Hutner adopted this idea. In its source in Chabad thought, the divine soul represents self-negation and self-nullification in favor of unity with God, while conversely, the natural soul represents self-affirmation as a separate being at the expense of unity with God, and both exist in constant struggle as long as a person lives. Rabbi Hutner, in contrast, in direct opposition to the Chabad source, maintains that the natural soul is that which understands the self as nothing and nil, empty and meaningless existence, while conversely, the divine soul affirms the self, and from the moment of decision in favor of the divine soul, both souls exist together in harmony.

There is further potential for comparing Rabbi Hutner’s thought with that of Chabad, and one who is interested can find several sources which reveal new similarities. However, I would surmise that these sources will elicit a pattern similar to that found in the case of the two souls. The basic intuitions informing the thought of Rabbi Hutner and Chabad thought are diametrical: the desire to unite with God (Chabad) in contrast to the yearning for individuation (Rabbi Hutner); the revelation of the illusion of reality (Chabad) in contrast to the desire to affirm existence (Rabbi Hutner), and further along the same lines. The place of Chabad thought in Rabbi Hutner’s thought is a perfect example of the creative exegetical pattern and the unfettered use of sources that characterize his thought: a formal or conceptual adoption along with a significant adaptation up to and including a reversal of the contents, emphases, outlooks, and principles expressed through them.

Chabad Hassidism is not the only Hassidism with which Rabbi Hutner engaged nor is it the only one reflected in his thought. He also engaged extensively with Polish Hasidic thought from the dynasties of Kotz, Lublin, Izhbitza-Radzin, and Ger. This subject, which exceeds the limitations of this study, has been examined by several scholars, although here too there remain many avenues to explore. My estimation is that also in this area, the findings will fit the pattern we found regarding Chabad thought. The belief in immanence, the acosmistic tendencies (in both their radical and moderate versions), the principles of equalizing and negation, and similar ideas that characterize Chassidic thought contradict the beliefs that characterize Rabbi Hutner’s thought. In summary, despite his significant engagement with Hassidism and the pseud-Hassidic practices that he adopted as his own, Rabbi Hutner was not a Hassid and Hassidic thought functioned for him as a source but not as a guide.

**8.3 What is Hidden? The Kabbalah in Rabbi Hutner’s Thought**

**“**We are engaged in creating a new apparel for words of Torah […] concealed form in revealed language” – so Rebbetzin David, Rabbi Hutner’s daughter, quoted the way he described his thought. On the same occasion she noted that “at this point he would explain his special attachment to Maharal – all of whose words were the secrets of the Torah in plain language.”[[27]](#footnote-27) In a similar manner she compared him with another thinker famous for formulating concealed ideas in revealed language: Ramchal. In 1930 Rabbi Hutner wrote in his diary:

תמיד כשאני לוקח לידי ספר מסילת ישרים, אני מוצא את עצמי תחת הרושם העז של מידת ה'הצנע לכת' של לוצאטו המתגלה לנו על ידי ספרו זה. כי הגע בעצמך, אדם שכל הויתו שקועה היתה בחכמת הנסתר, והקבלה והמיסתורין היו נשמת חייו ונשימת חייו, בה הגה והרגיש, בם חי את חייו, ובם עבד את אלקיו, והאדם הלז מחבר ספר הדן על נושאים כאלו, הם שהקבלה מהפכת ומהפכת בהם, והוא אחת החליט ללא לנגוע בהם... והוא דן על כל אותם הנושאים ומהפך בהם ומעמיק בהם – ובשעת מעשה הוא סותם את כל מעינות-המסתורין המפכים בנפשו פנימה לבל יפרצו החוצה – והדבר עולה בידו... לו יצוייר שהיו נעלמים כתבי הרמח"ל בח"ן, והיה נשאר לנו רק ספר מסילת ישרים – היו ההיסטוריונים מעידים בברירות שרמח"ל היה רציונליסט מושבע. כאן לפנינו חזיון של הצנע לכת במדרגת הנשגב שלה. [[28]](#footnote-28)

To this, his daughter added, “Our Rabbi, when formulating his words on matters of belief and the duties of the heart, in a concealed formula in revealed words, took care not to emphasize their inner-hidden content. He thus refrained from quoting the words of the *Zohar* or other kabbalistic works”.[[29]](#footnote-29)

In the historical section, we saw that Rabbi Hutner studied Kabbalah, and there is sufficient evidence of his considerable knowledge in the field, including mastery of its content and proficiency in its literature. We have even seen in the preceding chapters that his discourses include terminology and formulations that originate in the Kabbalah and additional examples of this are scattered in his writings.[[30]](#footnote-30) What then was the place of the Kabbalah in Rabbi Hutner’s thought?

Was Rabbi Hutner a kabbalist? Is his thought kabbalistic? To answer these questions, we must first answer fundamental, although complicated, questions such as who is a kabbalist and what is kabbalistic thought, questions that far exceed the scope and objectives of this study. In the following pages, I will attempt to outline an answer to a simpler question: what is the meaning of the phrase “a new form of the esoteric in exoteric language” in reference to Rabbi Hutner’s thought as it is presented in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books.

Elliot Wolfson has recently addressed this question, in a pioneering article on the Kabbalah in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. Wolfson writes that Rabbi Hutner’s esoteric writing is a paradoxical hermeneutical system of concealment for the sake of presentation. Wolfson’s theoretical argument is complex, and because of its length, I will not repeat it here. For our purposes I will summarize it as follows: at the beginning of the *Guide to the Perplexed* Maimonides suggests two motivations for writing in metaphors. The first is to prevent the revelation of certain knowledge to someone for whom it should not be revealed. The second reason is that the said knowledge is uncommunicable; a type of knowledge that is beyond human comprehension, when all that one can hope for is to understand certain aspects of this knowledge from up close. For practical-technical reasons, this type of knowledge cannot be spoken of directly, only metaphorically.[[31]](#footnote-31) Wolfson argues that Rabbi Hutner’s concealment is of the second type: the nature of the knowledge under discussion forced Rabbi Hutner to formulate his thoughts the way he did. Wolfson describes Rabbi Hutner’s method as an attempt to reveal that which cannot be known by concealing it in a way that points to the existence of something hidden, which is the fullest possible extent of its revelation through the instrument of language. This is by way of comparison to the Heideggerian method, which grapples with the same fundamental problem: the need to speak of something that cannot be spoken of, the ineffable, that which is hidden within all but cannot be conceptualized or grasped by human abilities. The analysis of Rabbi Hutner’s thought, in light of this understanding, leads Wolfson to conclude that "מטרת ההנחלה של הלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות היא לעורר את הדעת [...] אשר, בתורה, מאפשרת את האיחוד הרוחני בין היהודי והאלהי, את החיבור מחדש של הענף אל השורש." [[32]](#footnote-32)

Wolfson’s conclusions clash with the conclusions I have drawn from my analysis of Rabbi Hutner’s life and thought: Rabbi Hutner’s motivation for concealment derives from the content of the material, not its nature. I have even attempted to reconstruct a portion of this concealed content; the reconstruction did not produce content of a kabbalistic nature. In similarity to my conclusions, Wolfson identifies the centrality of the concept of connection and the idea of *da’at* as a connecting principle in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. However, he interprets it as relating to a unio-mystic connection between man and God, an interpretation that brings Rabbi Hutner’s idea close to the Chabad concept of integration within God and the negation of individuation, an affinity that I have refuted above. This contradicts my conclusion that the dynamic of connection in Rabbi Hutner’s thought relates to overcoming the dualistic chasm and the connecting of the upper and lower worlds by sanctifying *divrei reshut,* which for Rabbi Hutner means granting *chashivut* to something neutral. As we have seen, because of Rabbi Hutner’s unsystematic and esoteric writing, an analysis of his thought is by necessity interpretive and speculative. In my reconstruction of his intellectual infrastructure, I attempted to extract the correct key with which to read the thought presented in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, and I, therefore, prefer my conclusions to Wolfson’s.

I will now return to the question that I raised earlier, the question of the meaning of “a new form of the concealed in revealed language” in relation to Rabbi Hutner’s thought and attempt to advance the discussion on this matter. I believe that the key to answering this question is identifying the motivation behind this type of writing.

First, let us ask the opposite question: what is the motivation for writing in kabbalistic language, that is, compressed language, filled with technical details including names, divine aspects, phrases, and the other “professional” elements of kabbalistic thought? In general, we can identify two basic traditional motivations, at least in the context of Lurianic Kabbalah. The essence of Lurianic Kabbalah is the idea that the day of the creation of the world signifies a crisis within the Divinity, and from this point on it remains immersed in a process of movement from fracture to restoration. Within the framework of Lurianic Kabbalah, this movement occurs in the higher worlds, of which the movement in this world is only a reflection. This act of fracture created a situation of “dispersal of the sparks”, disunity within the Divinity, and the movement toward repair is a process of returning to the original unity. Man’s purpose is to advance and to complete the movement of repair by gathering the sparks, an action he performs through service of God, by observing the commandments and performing kabbalistic rites (“*yechudim*” and “*tikunim*”). The place of the world, man, and history in this outlook is marginal, because the essence of reality occurs in the higher worlds, while occurrences in the material world have no inherent meaning. The meaning of the act of studying Torah and Kabbalah in this framework is theosophic, knowing God, the performance of commandments, and service of God are theurgic, efforts to influence the higher worlds.[[33]](#footnote-33) Therefore, the basic initial motivation for kabbalistic writing is theosophic: the desire for knowledge of God and the upper worlds, not basic and sufficient knowledge, but the most complete and perfect knowledge attainable. This motivation is likely to lead to the desire to unite with God through knowledge of him, an aspiration for unio-mystica. The second motivation is theurgic: the desire, and feeling of obligation, to participate in the divine drama by means of practices including “*tikkun hashekina*”[recitation of special prayers], “*kavanot*” [specific focuses during prayer], and matchmaking, by which a person hastens *tikkun olam* [the repair of the world] and the *geulah* [redemption]. It is easy to think of several reasons for the desire to prevent this type of knowledge from falling into the hands of unworthy people; this explains the practice of studying Kabbalah in small secret groups, the prohibition of its study by young people not yet proficient in the revealed lore, the reluctance to commit kabbalistic ideas to writing, the destruction of certain texts, and so forth. It must be emphasized that anyone desirous of concealing esoteric knowledge had the obvious option of not publishing it or disseminating it at all, as many kabbalists had done throughout many generations.

In light of the above, we will return to our question: what could motivate the writing of kabbalistic content (or content from a kabbalistic source) in a non-kabbalistic way, in plain language, a style of writing that by its nature cuts to the core and sifts out most of its specialized and detailed content? We will answer this question in light of two famous examples of this type of writing, which are explicitly connected to Rabbi Hutner, as sources of influence on his thought, and by the very subject under discussion, writing about the concealed in revealed language: Maharal and Ramchal.

There is a long-standing argument between scholars and students of the Maharal on the question of his connection to Kabbalah and the Kabbalah’s connection to his thought; most agree that Maharal was influenced by kabbalistic teachings to some degree.[[34]](#footnote-34) In my opinion, the most convincing argument remains that of Jacobson, who wrote that “Maharal expressed great love for the Kabbalah, felt great respect and admiration for its intellectual attainments[…], and as an axiom, it can certainly be stated that the Kabbalah has more than an ornamental place in his books”, however, “ if Maharal is a kabbalist he is not a kabbalist in the usual sense […]. He assimilates the Kabbalah into his world and uses its ideas in his own way. Maharal is not a theosophist […]. Maharal’s primary interest is in man’s existence, his relationship with God, and his status in the world […]. Kabbalah is present in Maharal’s worldview to the same extent that philosophy is present in his thought […]. Its ideas and symbols do not reappear in their original contexts but are used by him to construct an intellectual framework of the philosophy of man."[[35]](#footnote-35) Maharal’s motivation in his use of Kabbalah is theological (by theology I mean here the religious equivalent of philosophy: a body of knowledge trying to explain to man his reality and supply him with ethical principles to act upon).

Ramchal was indisputably a kabbalist, in the full sense of the word. But we can ask what motivated his non-kabbalistic writing. In contrast to Maharal, Ramchal’s non-kabbalistic writings do not borrow from the Kabbalah nor integrate its elements into an independent philosophical framework; they are simply a formulation of kabbalistic content in non-kabbalistic language, as emerges clearly from comparing them to his kabbalistic works. It is accepted in the research literature that Ramchal’s non-kabbalistic writing is circumstantial, a necessity deriving from the polemics waged against him, as a result of which he agreed not to write any more works in kabbalistic language.[[36]](#footnote-36) If so, Ramchal’s systematic writings may be similar to the appearances of the Kabbalah in Maharal’s writings -- theology based, in this case totally, on kabbalist ideas. However, there are those among Ramchal’s commentators who argue that this was his choice ab initio, the continuation and perhaps consummation of the approach taken by Ramchal in his commentary on the Kabbalah, an approach which was among the most influential of those who promoted the Kabbalah: the concept that the Kabbalah should be interpreted as a metaphor.[[37]](#footnote-37) In this context, the words of Rabbi Yosef Spinner, in his introduction to an edition of *Derech Hashem* (*The Way of God*) are significant:

יש להעיר: שאין כוונת המחבר [רמח"ל] להסתיר את שפת הקבלה בשפת הנגלה, ולא בא בהסבריו כדי לקרב הדברים אל השכל. אלא לפי שיטת הרמח"ל, שפת הנגלה של אלו (הבנת הדברים מצד הנהגת ה' את עולמו), הם תוכיות ופנימיות הדברים, והן הן גופי תורה. וכמ"ש הרמב"ם בענין מראות הנבואה [...] ואין הבדל בין המראות המובאים בחכמת האמת, לבין מראות הנבואה. [[38]](#footnote-38)

Rabbi Spinner argues that revealed language itself is the inner essence of the words. The content itself does not get lost in translation to the non-kabbalistic language. The source from Maimonides’ writings to which Rabbi Spinner refers is in the *Mishneh Torah*, “Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah” (The Laws of the Fundamentals of the Torah), chapter 7, halacha 3, where Maimonides wrote: "הדברים שמודיעים לנביא במראה הנבואה דרך משל מודיעין לו ומיד יחקק בלבו פתרון המשל במראה הנבואה וידע מה הוא, כמו הסולם שראה יעקב אבינו ומלאכים עולים ויורדים בו והוא היה משל למלכיות ושעבודן [...] וכן שאר הנביאים מהם אומרים המשל ופתרונו כמו אלו." The vision seen by the seer, whether a prophet or a kabbalist, has no intrinsic importance; it is entirely a metaphor for content that is independent and clear in itself.

Rabbi Spinner’s words are significant because of a footnote he added: “It was heard from the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, may the memory of the righteous and holy be a blessing, that those great people who held differently in this matter, did so because they said that the prophetic visions are not similar to the visions attained by the Holy Spirit, which is a matter of the true wisdom.”[[39]](#footnote-39) As we saw above, Rabbi Hutner was involved in the early stages of a project to publish Ramchal’s works, which Rabbi Spinner and Rabbi Chaim Friedlander began together.[[40]](#footnote-40) This testimony, therefore, appears to me to be very reliable. It is not clear from here what Rabbi Hutner’s himself believed – whether he agreed with the position of those who maintained that the prophetical visions (according to Maimonides’s approach) and the kabbalistic visions are of the same Holy Spirit or the position of those who disagree with this. However, he agrees with Rabbi Spinner that this was the opinion of Ramchal and his followers.

At this point, it is appropriate to consider a question arising from an analysis of the intellectual infrastructure that we have not yet addressed: the fact that Ramchal’s name is almost completely absent from the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, and is never mentioned in contexts in which he is known to have a crucial influence on the content: the two purposes of creation and the concept of the negation of evil. The absence of Ramchal’s name is especially blatant given the numerous mentions of the name of the other principal thinker whose thought is embedded in Rabbi Hutner’s intellectual infrastructure: Maharal of Prague. I would like to turn now to this question.

As is well known, many controversies surrounded Ramchal during his lifetime. He was suspected of being a Sabbatean and forced to wander from place to place; his early works on Kabbalah were banned and some of them destroyed and he was forbidden to write further treatises in kabbalistic language. He wrote his non-kabbalist works, *Da’at Tevunot* (*The Knowing Heart*)*, Derech Hashem* (*The Way of God*), and *Messilat Yesharim* (*The Path of the Just*) later in life and some argue, as we have seen, that he wrote them as a means of disseminating kabbalistic ideas in a non-kabbalistic language, for lack of another option. His image began to undergo a process of rehabilitation thanks to his book *Messilat Yesharim* which became very popular and was widely disseminated in the years immediately following his death, and especially from the nineteenth century, thanks to the Vilna Gaon and Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the founder of the Mussar movement. By the twentieth century, Ramchal was already regarded as a cultural asset of the Orthodox tradition. However, until the end of the century, his kabbalistic works, and even his non-kabbalistic works, were almost entirely unpublished. They were preserved and studied within the circles of the students of the Vilna Gaon, from whence emerged the first and only wave of publication of his works until the second half of the twentieth century. Only from the1960s, were his works, other than *Messilat Yesharim,* disseminated widely; of these the most popular was *Derech* *Hashem*, which has since been published in many editions. The reason why Ramchal’s kabbalistic works as well as his systematic works based on his Kabbalah were not published or distributed widely for so long after the rehabilitation of his image is connected to the issue of interpreting the Kabbalah as a metaphor. Although the dark cloud of Sabbateanism over Ramchal’s head dissipated after the time of the Vilna Gaon, the ambiguity about his image made way for ambiguity over his kabbalistic teachings.

The gist of the matter is that the two most conspicuous principles of Ramchal’s Kabbalah, which influenced the Vilna Gaon and the generations after him, involve his interpretation of Lurianic Kabbalah as a metaphor.[[41]](#footnote-41) Already in the generation of the students of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (Ha’Ariz’l), some interpreted his teachings as a metaphor, and the kabbalists that followed them argued among themselves about the metaphor’s subject and meaning. One of the kabbalists who interpreted Lurianic Kabbalah as a metaphor was Ramchal. He maintained that the movement toward repair described by HaAriz’l is a metaphor for events happening in the physical world, and its subject is the movement of humanity from a lack of awareness of God to complete awareness of him as the ruler of the world, and from this to a state of devotion to him. According to this outlook, God’s primary interest is human history, and the advancement of history toward its goal is the object of His activity.[[42]](#footnote-42) This idea produces historiosophical thinking, the interpretation of historic occurrences as events directed by God, through which mankind should progress toward a state of awareness of God and devotion to Him.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The goal of the kabbalist, therefore, is to understand the subject to which the metaphor refers. In the radical version of this outlook, the expert engagement with the details (as Ramchal did also in his diverse writings) is intended to define the meaning of the metaphor as accurately as possible; however, once the subject of the metaphor is understood, that is enough. Therefore, the knowledge as it is formulated in the non-kabbalistic writings may be sufficient to attain the Kabbalah’s aims. The original motivation, therefore, remains intact. If so, the motivating factor in Ramchal’s writings, including the non-kabbalistic, is theurgic: the repair of the *shekhinah* [divine presence], the repair of the messiah, bringing redemption, and so forth.[[44]](#footnote-44) Knowing the meaning of the metaphor as it appears in the exoteric formulation is therefore sufficient to advance, at least to some extent, these aims, specifically bringing forward redemption by taking part in the historiosophical process. In effect, the historiosophical thinking of the Ramchal school of thought was accepted, to one degree or another, by the Vilna Gaon and his various groups of followers. However, they divided into two streams of thought about understanding the metaphor and its meaning in relation to Lurianic Kabbalah. This controversy did not relate to the question of understanding the metaphor itself, but rather the two possible conclusions to be derived from it. The first relates to the status of the metaphors or symbols -- the possibility that the elements of the Kabbalah (divine aspects, worlds, and so forth) do not have an ontological (real) existence but are merely symbols. The second conclusion relates to religious practice -- the possibility that actions outside the narrowly defined religious ritual (that is not part of the 613 commandments or the various kabbalistic rites) can be considered religious acts if they advance the purpose of history – recognition of God’s singularity. [[45]](#footnote-45)

One group of the Vilna Gaon’s students recoiled from these conclusions and sought to moderate the metaphorical understanding of Lurianic Kabbalah. They believed that the elements of the Lurianic Kabbalah have an ontological existence, and, although the movement toward repair occurring within history has meaning, it does not reduce the importance of the processes occurring in the upper worlds, but rather the opposite, it is subordinate to them. Correspondingly, the essential importance of serving God remains theurgic and only the narrowly defined religious ritual can be considered a true religious act.[[46]](#footnote-46) Mordechai Pechter suggested that this group has one important representative, Rabbi ShlomoElyashiv, known as the “Ba'al Haleshem” after the name of his book, *Leshem Shevo V’Achlama*.[[47]](#footnote-47) However, Eliezer Baumgarten, following Raphael Shochat, argued that Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin should also be considered a representative of this approach.[[48]](#footnote-48)

On the other side stand a succession of students, beginning with the Vilna Gaon’s student Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Shklov, continuing with his student Rabbi Yitzchak Isak Haber, and then his student Rabbi Naftali Hertz HaLevy. In their writings, these scholars put considerable emphasis on understanding the metaphors in Lurianic Kabbalah. Moreover, their writings are replete with ideas that give religious meaning to acts that are not part of the religious ritual yet bring reality closer to redemption.[[49]](#footnote-49)

The first and foremost of those who opposed this group was Rabbi Elyashiv, who, although influenced by Ramchal’s Kabbalah, and adopting several elements from it, sought to reduce its centrality and its connection to the Vilna Gaon, not out of real opposition to Ramchal himself but rather to the directions in which its Chasidic interpreters had taken his teachings, on the one hand, and the aforementioned students of the Vilna Gaon on the other hand.[[50]](#footnote-50) Rabbi Elyashiv’s activity had an impact and it appears that he succeeded in undermining the status of Ramchal’s Kabbalah (or perhaps in preventing the entrenchment of that status). One of the indications of this is the efforts of kabbalists of his generation and the next generation, devotees of Ramchal, to minimize and mitigate Rabbi Elyashiv’s criticism. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, although Ramchal’s image as a kabbalist was rehabilitated, his kabbalistic teaching itself stood at the center of a controversy about the interpretation of Lurianic Kabbalah and the identity of the authentic followers of the Vilna Gaon.

Given Rabbi Hutner’s patterns of behavior, this very ambivalence regarding Ramchal’s Kabbalah and the works representing its meaning according to his approach may have been sufficient to convince him to add them to the list of concealed sources. However, in his lifetime, although the bulk of his writing preceded the waves of publication of Ramchal’s work in the 1960s and 1970s and following, the process of the rehabilitation and acceptance of Ramchal and his thought among the followers of the Mussar movement in his generation was complete. Ramchal’s theological works are cited in the works of elder and senior rabbis among his colleagues in American Lithuanian Orthodoxy (including, for example, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, the founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, and Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch, the founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe in America) and were accepted as well by the senior rabbis in Israel.[[51]](#footnote-51) Furthermore, intensive engagement with the Maharal of Prague, although he was not a controversial figure, was not very common in the Lithuanian Orthodox world, while popular specifically in Hasidic circles, and it is rumored that Rabbi Hutner’s engagement with his thought brought him a certain amount of criticism.[[52]](#footnote-52) Therefore, it seems that if caution were the reason for the concealment of the influence of these works in Rabbi Hutner’s writings, this was very excessive caution. This hypothesis, therefore, does not seem probable to me.

It seems to me more plausible that the reason lies in the fact that Rabbi Hutner took a position in the controversy surrounding the Ramchal’s Kabbalah that leaned toward the opinion of HaRav Elyashiv. In this context, the testimony of Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, who was very close to Rabbi Hutner in his final years, is very important. The testimony is contained in a responsum that Rabbi Wolbe sent to someone who asked him a question regarding the controversial attribution of the book *Kol Hator* to the Vilna Gaon (the attribution has since been disproven by Emmanuel Etkes).[[53]](#footnote-53) Rabbi Wolbe answered that “The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, *shlita* [may he live a long and good life], says that the *Baal Haleshem*, who is the authority in the area of the Vilna Gaon’s kabbalistic writing, does not mention the book at all. He also attempted to publish the works of the Vilna Gaon, and if he believed that this work emerged from the Vilna Gaon’s *beit midrash*, he, without doubt, would have attempted to publish it, or at the least would have mentioned it. However, the Gaon Rabbi Kluft, *shlita* has told me that he believes that this work is authentic and, although there are things within it that astonish us, this is not proof that they were not taught in the Vilna Gaon’s *beit midrash*”.[[54]](#footnote-54) This passage testifies to Rabbi Hutner’s identification with Rabbi Elyashiv’s camp in everything relating to the controversy within the world of Lithuanian Kabbalah. First, he regarded Rabbi Elyashiv as the authority in all matters relating to the works of the Vilna Gaon.[[55]](#footnote-55) Second, the book *Kol Hator* is itself connected to this controversy. This work, a manifest calling for Aliyah [immigration] to the land of Israel to hasten the redemption, describes, among other things, agricultural activity and efforts to build the land as religious activities and a crucial aspect of divine service during that period. Baumgarten wrote that this book represents “the greatest most profound expansion” of Ramchal’s concept of the Kabbalah as a metaphor.[[56]](#footnote-56) In expressing his opinion, Rabbi Hutner is not merely stating a philological position, but also a theological position, within the framework of the internal dialogue of the Lithuanian Kabbalah.

The comment about Rabbi Kluft brings us to a further indication of Rabbi Hutner’s rejection of Ramchal’s Kabbalah-as-metaphor approach, as he understood it. At the end of the introduction to his edition of the book *Da’at Tevunot*, Rabbi Friedlander wrote: “I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and blessing to the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, *shlita*, the Gaon Rabbi Yoel Kluft, *shlita,* and the Gaon Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, *shlita*, for having read over my commentary and making instructive and useful comments and strengthening me and supporting me in this project.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Rabbi Friedlander’s edition is embellished with four letters of approval, from Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky and Elazar Menachem Man Shach, as well as Rabbis Wolbe and Kluft, whose names appear beside that of Rabbi Hutner in the author’s expressions of gratitude. The absence of a letter of approval from Rabbi Hutner next to theirs is glaring. I have been informed by members of the Friedlander family that Rabbi Hutner was also supposed to give his approval but, for some reason, this did not happen, perhaps because of the proximity to the period of the illness and death of his wife, Rebbetzin Masha Hutner. Rabbi Kluft, as we have seen, according to Rabbi Wolbe, believed that *Kol Hator* was authentic, as did Rabbi Friedlander. The previous publishing project in which Rabbi Friedlander had been involved, before he began printing Ramchal’s works, was the publication of *Kol Hator.[[58]](#footnote-58)* Rabbi Friedlander clearly identified himself with the circle of the students of the Vilna Gaon against whom Rabbi Elyashiv contended. Thus, in the preface to Ramchal’s *Sefer Haklalim*, he presented Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Shklov, Rabbi Yitzhak Haber, and Naftali Hertz HaLevy as the continuation of the Vilna Gaon’s way in Kabbalah.[[59]](#footnote-59) Rabbi Hutner therefore may have backed away from giving his approval because of his objection to this circle of radical interpreters of Ramchal. If this is true, Rabbi Hutner believed, on the one hand, that the radical interpretation of the Kabbalah-as-metaphor approach in Ramchal’s writings is the correct interpretation of Ramchal, but, at the same time, that this approach to the Kabbalah is too extreme and must be rejected. Evidence that corroborates this line of reasoning has reached me, from someone close to Rabbi Hutner who said that Rabbi Hutner told him that “Ramchal is not my portion of the Torah, and a word to the wise is sufficient.”

Thus, in the cases discussed above, we have found two lines of thought connected to the two motivations leading to the writing of kabbalistic content in non-kabbalistic language: the first is the reduction and theological adaptation of the Kabbalah. The term “theology” can include a very wide range of meanings, so I will clarify my use of it here. In the context of Kabbalah, I would like to contrast the terms “theology” and “theosophy”. Theosophy is an inquiry focused on the divine, aimed at knowing it in detail and understanding the divine mechanism. The matter may be comparable to an ontological inquiry in a philosophical framework. Theology, in contrast, is an array of beliefs and opinions aimed at explaining human existence and activity, similar to a worldview or ideology. By “theological reduction and adaptation of the Kabbalah”, I mean the use of the kabbalistic framework to develop and anchor religious thought, while removing from it its theosophic and theurgic baggage. This is the first motivation that I identify for the writing of kabbalistic content in non-kabbalistic language. The second is the popularization of esoteric content, from the premise that the essential content can be elucidated and is worthy of transmission, and as the way to realize the original theurgic motivation. As we have seen, Wolfson identified a third motivation, the formulation of content that cannot be elucidated, in a veneer of lucidity that conceals it, as a way to point to that which cannot be formulated in any other way.

In this matter, as in his thought, the primary model that inspired Rabbi Hutner was the Maharal. I believe that Jacobson’s comments on Maharal apply perfectly to Rabbi Hutner as well. He acquired a deep respect for Kabbalah and, in keeping with his character, could not resist attaining proficiency in it. He even discovered within it a fecund source of concepts and forms that could be used to develop his theology. However, he preserved the distinction between the two and compartmentalized them. The Kabbalah is esoteric knowledge containing theosophic and theurgic meanings. Theology, although it has its own esoteric dimensions, is a system of a different kind of knowledge with different focuses: the understanding of human reality and how to function within it. In his personal life, Rabbi Hutner was very involved in Kabbalah in its traditional sense. I do not know if he actually engaged in kabbalistic-theurgic practices, but he certainly studied and taught Kabbalah in its technical-professional format. However, within his own system of thought, he reassembled the Kabbalah that he had learned into a different format: its theologization, the use of its concepts and forms as a platform and anchor for non-kabbalist thought.

As a postscript to my remarks here, I would like to bring two additional pieces of evidence. First, the testimony of Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe: “Our teacher, the Gaon, Rabbi Yitzhak Hutner, may he rest in peace, was very strict regarding writing articles on kabbalistic subjects, and the words “honey and milk are under thy tongue” were always on his lips. Thus, in all the *Pachad Yitzchak* books there is not a single quote from the Zohar or other kabbalistic books, although most, if not all, the articles are based on the *Safra deTzniuta* [*The Concealed Book*] and others, although I have not heard him express any objection to the study of the writings of HaAriz”l [Rabbi Yitzchak Luria] within a certain circle of Torah scholars engaged in these matters”. Rabbi Wolbe tends, in general, to emphasize the place of the Kabbalah in Rabbi Hutner’s thought and it is possible perhaps to see in his statement support for Wolfson’s reading. [[60]](#footnote-60)

There is however other evidence, from Rabbi Yisrael Eliyahu Weintraub, a twentieth-century kabbalist who was a student of Rabbi Hutner. Rabbi Weintraub was deeply involved with interpreting the Kabbalah of the Vilna Gaon. It has been written in his name: “[Rabbi Weintraub] said that there was a manuscript of the book *Zecher Avraham* on the *Safra deTzniuta,* and the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, may his memory be a blessing, longed to see it and made efforts until he got hold of it and was very astonished by it, and Rabbi Hutner said that after the Basel Congress (the foundation of the Zionists) it is impossible that such a book could be written (because when the *Sitra Achra* [literally “the other side”, evil, impurity] increases so greatly it is impossible to bring such words of Torah down to the world). Here the account ends. And when they asked him about his words of Torah he said ‘this does not relate to me because the aforementioned book was written to be presented to the public, but my words of Torah are not written to be presented to the public, and therefore the outside world has no contact with them’.”[[61]](#footnote-61) I believe that this quote indicates that although Rabbi Hutner had kabbalistic insights and thoughts, he had no intention to publish them publicly, in either esoteric or exoteric writing.

To provide some additional support for this argument, let us return and reexamine what Rabbi Hutner wrote about *Messilat Yesharim*. In his description of amazement at Ramchal’s writing, he is not referring to the way in which he succeeds in expressing kabbalistic content in non-kabbalist wording, but rather to his quality of humility, emanating both from "שכל הויתו שקועה היתה בחכמת הנסתר, והקבלה והמיסתורין היו נשמת חייו ונשימת חייו" and that the subjects which he discussed in the work are "נושאים כאלו [...] שהקבלה מהפכת ומהפכת בהם [...] בשעת מעשה הוא סותם את כל מעינות-המסתורין המפכים בנפשו פנימה לבל יפרצו החוצה – והדבר עולה בידו." Ramchal’s greatness is not that he succeeds in integrating secret lore within his book, but that he succeeds in neutralizing the impulse to do so. It is however true that this praise is given to *Messilat Yesharim*, which, in contrast to the works *Da’at Tevunot* and *Derech Hashem,* is clearly not a kabbalistic work.[[62]](#footnote-62) Moreover, his use of Ramchal’s thought can be seen as an example of the process of theologization of the Kabbalah itself. He takes his kabbalistic approach, already worded in a non-kabbalistic form, and builds upon it his own thought, while neutralizing its kabbalistic meanings: theocentric purpose without singularity. In other words, he theologizes the meaning of the metaphor.

To summarize the question of the presence of Kabbalah in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, it can be said that the Kabbalah was very present in Rabbi Hutner’s life, but not significantly present in the thought that he chose to publish, beyond its theologization: the adoption of kabbalistic forms and concepts for the sake of engagement with revealed knowledge. In a certain way, Rabbi Hutner performs a process that is the reverse of what occurred in the Kabbalah: while the latter takes theological sources and reinvents them as theosophic and theurgic content, Rabbi Hutner takes theosophic and theurgic content and reinvents it as theology –- not as a metaphor and its explanation, but as two separate consequences and ramifications of the same framework, “concealed form in revealed language”.

**8.4 The Minimalization of the Irrational: Rabbi Hutner’s Religious Naturalism**

When I discussed Rabbi Hutner’s eschatological outlook, I characterized it as the most realistic formulation possible of the least realistic concept within the Jewish tradition.[[63]](#footnote-63) This tendency toward rational explanation, to the greatest extent possible, within the framework of an irrational system is a permanent characteristic of his thought. While within his eschatological outlook, this is expressed specifically by adopting an apocalyptic- minimalism, in general, Rabbi Hutner adopts the policy of minimalizing the irrational. This tendency is also expressed specifically and profoundly in his idea of being-toward-eternity. I am referring to Rabbi Hutner’s religious naturalist outlook, in the context of the question of the essence of religious activity.

In Jewish theology, two basic paradigms regarding religious activity can be identified: naturalism and nomism, distinct from each other in the way that each defines the reciprocal relations between religious activity and reality.[[64]](#footnote-64) The nomistic paradigm relates to the religious system as an artificial system expressing God’s will, and to the extent to which a religious action is known to have any influence or impact on reality, it is an indirect impact: man acts and God responds. Thus, if God chooses not to respond, the action will not influence reality at all. In this framework, religious laws are usually understood as commandments, God is usually compared to a king, and divine providence is perceived as active. In contrast, in the framework of the naturalist paradigm, the religious system is understood as a natural order, corresponding to reality and emanating from it. The performance or failure to perform actions has a direct and immediate impact on the surrounding reality. In this framework, religious laws are usually understood as guidelines, God is compared to a physician, and divine providence is perceived as passive and automatic, expressed in the fact that God formulated the regulatory system in such a way that actions impact reality.

In the Middle Ages, rationalistic-naturalistic approaches to religious law claimed that these laws are compatible with man’s physical, moral, social, and political welfare. The automatic-passive approach to providence also corresponded to more rationalist Jewish approaches, which were identified with the current philosophical approaches to God’s perfection. The nomistic outlook, in contrast, which necessitated a more personal perception of God was considered less rationalistic according to contemporary conceptions. The most prominent representative of rational religious naturalism was of course Maimonides. His approach is expressed, inter alia, in the way in which he understood the immortality of the soul and how man achieves life in the world to come. Influenced by Aristotelian philosophy, Maimonides described an almost mechanistic process explaining the immortality of the soul: through knowledge of the eternal truths, which Maimonides identified with what the Sages called *Ma'aseh Breishit*  (The work of creation) and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* (The Work of the Chariot), a unity was formed between man’s intellect and the active intellect, the transcendental dwelling of the eternal truths. Inevitably, even after the body expires, a person’s intellect, which is attached to the active intellect, continues to exist eternally. In this sense, the expression “to merit” the world to come in the framework of Maimondes' thought must be understood metaphorically. Here, there is no reciprocity in which the life in the world to come is granted to man as a reward or payment for his actions, as something external to the actions themselves, as the religious system functions within a nomistic framework -- but a necessary causal relationship

In the modern period, an additional nuance of the religious naturalist outlook developed, a spiritual rather than rationalistic naturalism, under the influence of the Kabbalah, principally through the ideas of Ramchal and Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, that became accepted in the framework of the Lithuanian Orthodox thought and within Rabbi Hutner’s environment. According to this outlook, reality is comprised of various layers – upper and lower, spiritual and material, concealed and revealed, abstract and concrete – but the common denominator of them all is that they are “natural” in the sense that they all are controlled by predetermined and unchanging laws established by the Creator at the time of creation. Just as God embedded within the material world physical laws, so too he embedded metaphysical laws in the higher metaphysical worlds, which determine their administration and necessitate certain results when acting within their framework. Accordingly, just as a specific event or action has known consequences on concrete reality, it has comparable consequences on abstract reality. However, in contrast to the laws of material reality, the laws of the higher reality cannot be revealed or exposed by man. Therefore, man by himself is unable to conduct himself in the world in a manner that benefits the world and himself. God’s commandments are given to man to redress this lacuna: they instruct him how to behave in the world in a way that will positively influence reality and his own life. In other words, God's commandments reflect the spiritual, celestial, and natural laws embedded in reality, emanating from them and corresponding to them.

This outlook has several theological and ideological ramifications. For example, it allows one to argue that the religious act has far more importance and significance than the tangible action, and thereby provides motivation for its observance and strengthens fidelity to the religious framework over the modern secular framework, which otherwise appears more effective in the tangible world. It is argued that actions influence the upper worlds differently than they appear to influence the lower worlds. Likewise, certain variables augment the influences of a given action in the upper worlds, which within tangible reality appear to be irrelevant. These are first and foremost intellectual variables such as opinions and learning, and variables in the circumstances accompanying the performance of actions, such as “intent” (the nature of the motivation), sincerity, concentration, degree of “effort” (the nature of the exertion), investment, difficulties, and other factors involved in the performance. In the material world, the impact of these variables on reality is insignificant (although they could have moral significance). When a person drops a fragile object on a hard floor, why he did it, or how much effort was involved in lifting the object in the first place do not affect the final result. However, according to this outlook, from the perspective of “truth”, and in contrast to what the person experienced, his intention and effort are no less real than the flexibility of the object and viscosity of the floor, and they are expressed in the upper levels of the occurrence. In the framework of the writings of Rabbi Hutner’s contemporaries, spiritual-naturalistic thinking tends to further the over-mystification of the religious act, in the sense of obscuring it and covering it in a mantle of secrecy and loftiness. For example, they emphasize that there are sins whose influence on the metaphysical dimensions of reality is so great that doing them by mistake can have more severe consequences than doing other sins intentionally; alternatively, they say that the same or similar deeds done by different people impact differentially, relative to the spiritual level and context of the people doing them; in general, they tend to separate the performance of a deed from the result that eventually develops from it.

It is important to mention that the Lithuanian Orthodox outlook does not hold that the religious system is exclusively naturalistic, but rather that naturalism and nomism both function within it jumbled together. Accordingly, God appears sometimes as one who allows reality to conduct itself by following the laws and sometimes as one who manages it actively according to His will. In effect, the Lithuanian Orthodox outlook revolves around two axes that express two aspects of the revelation of the Creator in the world: “law” and “divine will”. However, they do not enjoy the same status. The law is the primary axis, while the axis of divine will transforms the reality emerging from it into a more complex system. Thus, divine providence is in essence regulatory, with the possibility of volitional providence in which context God intervenes in reality. Similarly, God’s commandments are understood first and foremost as guidelines, although they are also in some respects edicts. The same ambivalence exists regarding the subject of reward and punishment. In the framework of the thought of Rabbi Hunter’s contemporaries, we can mention two parallel systems of reward and punishment: regulatory, relating to this world, and volitional, relating to ultimate reward and pertaining primarily to the world to come.

In the spiritual-naturalistic outlook, the system of reward and punishment in this world is characterized by direct causality: reward is not granted artificially but occurs naturally as a direct result of the laws governing reality. Reward and punishment are the consequences of deeds, not recompense for having performed them, and they are an expression of the benefit or damage accomplished in performing commandments and transgressions. These consequences are expressed in this world. Parallel to regulatory reward and punishment, there is a system of volitional reward and punishment, characterized by indirect causality. As a result of deeds performed in this world, positive or negative recompense accrues. This recompense is owed to the person who performed the deeds, and it is a function of his obedience or rebellion in the performance of commandments or transgressions. This recompense is given primarily in the world to come. Therefore, regarding the reciprocity between the religious act and reality, the Lithuanian Orthodox viewpoint maintains both a spiritual-naturalistic outlook that affirms a direct, albeit completely unexplained, causality between the deed and its results, which are not necessarily tangible, in this world and a nomistic outlook that affirms an indirect causality in everything relating to how a person is granted life in the world to come by virtue of his deeds in this world.

On this basis we can point to an exceptional naturalistic dimension embedded in Rabbi Hutner’s being-toward-eternity argument. Rabbi Hutner’s thought is built upon the understanding of layered reality lying at the foundation of the spiritual naturalism characterizing his contemporaries and reflected also in his own writings. For example, he wrote:

אין החידוש של שינוי הטבע של הנס מתיחס רק אל אותו הגוש אשר בו אנו רואים את שינוי הטבע, אלא שהחידוש של שינוי חוק הטבע, יש לו חידושים מקבילים בכל התכונות הרוחניות, המשתייכות אל החוק הזה [...] לעולם אין לנו להגדיר את אותו הגוש החמרי שבו אנחנו רואים את שינוי הטבע בתור מקומו היחידי של הנס; במקום זה עלינו לומר כי הגוש החמרי הזה אשר בו אנו רואים את שינוי הטבע הוא התחנה האחרונה בכל מערכת השינויים שנפעלו על ידי הנס. כלומר הנס הגיע עד הגוש החמרי, אלא שבדרכו עבר דרך כמה וכמה חקים רוחניים המשתייכים לאותו חוק הטבע שבו אנו רואים את פעולתו של הנס (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, מ/ג).

In contrast to his contemporaries, Rabbi Hutner applies spiritual-naturalistic thinking also to the immortality of the soul. Where others tend toward mystification, Rabbi Hutner develops a framework that explains, to the extent possible, how man merits life in the world to come. Like Maimonides, Rabbi Hutner describes an almost mechanistic process that results in the attainment of eternal life: man creates for himself *t’midut* linked to Torah study, which is itself connected to the absolute eternity, and thus merits becoming eternal, not as one receiving a gift, but as the outcome of his behavior.[[65]](#footnote-65) Although Rabbi Hutner explicitly criticizes Maimonides’ conception of the soul’s immortality, he preserves a significant, and very innovative, element of this idea, and was, therefore, clearly influenced by it. Another example of this naturalism can be found in the opposite direction, in how Rabbi Hutner explains why heretics do not have a share in the world to come, (and as Rabbi Hutner used to say, “the knowledge of opposites is one”(. He wrote in one of his notes:

רצון החיים הוא כמו שמן לאור-החיים, ובלי השמן נכבה האור. וכמו כן כפירה בתחיית המתים, הרי הוא איבוד-רצון-חיי-הנצח. וחייו של אדם מישראל אינם אלא חיי נצח בגוף כאן בעולם התחתון, שאי אפשר לזה רק על ידי אורו של אליהו המבשר על תחיית המתים. וכשם שהחיים הזמניים אי אפשר להם מבלי רצון-החיים, כמו כן חיי נצח אי אפשר להם בלי רצון זה. ומפני כך הוא כפר בתחיית המתים, לפיכך אין לו חלק בתחיית המתים.[[66]](#footnote-66)

The fact that someone who denies the resurrection of the dead does not merit life in the world to come is not a punishment, but a direct, even tragic, result of the circumstances. It is impossible to live without the will to live, and it is impossible to live forever without the will to live forever, which is dependent of course on belief in the existence of eternal life. This passage demonstrates an aspect of Rabbi Hutner’s naturalism worthy of emphasis: the ontological importance of beliefs. As we have seen, spiritual naturalism ascribes great ontological value, capable of influencing reality, to non-tangible things such as beliefs and intentions; however, the importance of these is usually ancillary to the act itself and they do not themselves constitute its primary value. To Rabbi Hutner, beliefs have acute significance; this correlates with the general approach lying at the core of his system of thought, which I have pointed out repeatedly: the preeminence of beliefs and the duties of the heart.[[67]](#footnote-67)

The structure of this argument is thus rationalistic thinking, to the extent possible, within the framework of an irrational paradigm. The same can be said about the Torah in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. The centrality, almost exclusivity, of Torah study is a common denominator of Lithuanian Orthodox thinking. However, in the case of Rabbi Hutner, we find a framework that provides a multi-dimensional explanation, in as much detail as possible, in concepts comprehensible to the human mind, of why the Torah is so central and its function so cardinal. This aspiration is embodied in an expression that appears often (in several variations) in Rabbi Hutner’s writings when he discusses important ideas built upon principles that appear to be beyond human understanding: "בודאי שאין לנו עסק בנסתרות אבל הסברת הדברים כפי ערכנו היא כנ"ל" (למשל פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, ח/יא). It would appear therefore that it is possible here to identify a pattern: similar to the apocalyptic minimalism that we pointed out in the context of the world to come, Rabbi Hutner’s thought is characterized in general by the minimalization of the irrational (such that the former is in effect the appearance of the latter), or alternatively, rationalist maximalism in a non-rationalist framework.

**8.5 Summary: Rabbi Hutner and his Sources**

Principles, ideas, and concepts from a variety of sources are embedded in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books; the common denominator among them is that their content goes through significant changes in the framework of Rabbi Hutner’s thought, sometimes very critical, up to and including the reversal of their original meaning. Rabbi Hutner is a multi-faceted exegete of Jewish sources: sometimes he adopts forms while developing them further, and sometimes he loads them with new meanings (as in Ramchal’s anthropocentric and theocentric purposes, respectively); sometimes he adopts thought selectively (as in Maharal’s separation paradigm, and Nachmanides’eschatology and his rejection of most of its apocalyptic dimension); sometimes he adopts concepts and ideas but adapts them acutely (as in Chabad and other Hassidic thought); and sometimes he focuses on obscure concepts in order to develop ideas (as in Slobodkan thought, and elsewhere). He transforms all these elements by introducing them into his own original synthesis in which each influences the other.

The unique character of Rabbi Hutner’s thought is profoundly expressed in three contexts: a) he derives from the world of Kabbalah abstract ideas for theological purposes that deviate from its framework, a process that I have termed the theological reduction and adaptation of the Kabbalah; b) he builds a complementary theological level on top of non-religious philosophical thought, which exhausts its potential in its terminology, while he discovers within it additional potential with the presentation of the theological element – what I have called post-existentialist theology; c) on the one hand, he functions at all times within a framework of the less rationalistic traditions in Jewish thought, yet strives to rationalize them by minimizing the unexplained and filtering out the unnecessary – what I have described as the minimalization of the irrational in his thought.

Rabbi Hutner, therefore, is an exegete who makes very free use of a variety of sources. He is not committed in advance to a specific philosophical framework. He absorbs ideas from a wide range of traditions, chooses from them selectively, adapts them to the ideas that he wants to develop, interprets them creatively, imbues their concepts with new meanings, and adds to them as he sees fit.

1. See p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See p.–61, 79–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See *Pachad Yitzchak: Rosh Hashana,* 18/1; *Purim*, 8/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Tikochinski, *Lamdanut,* 106-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See for example Finkel, *Or Hatzafon*, Vol 1, 16-17, 230-260; Vol. 2, 66-70, 106-117, 119-120, 122-127,190-193, 214-216; and many more. See also Tikochinski, *Lamdanut,*79-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See p.?. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See p.–70. In the archive of R. Chaim Liberman, the Rebbe's personal secretary, there are letters from R. Hutmer, in which he specifically requests books by the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. See Chaim Liberman archive in the Israeli national library, ref. ARC. 4\* 1562 1 63; ARC. 4\* 1562 1 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Dache,* No. 87, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See Kaminetzky, *Yeshurun*, Vol 20, 790-793. The Chabad publishers argued in response that the line about not understanding the Gra is a forgery. The fact that R. Hutner's family cenconred his name is of course no surprise at all, given what we have seen of his tendencies to conceal his ties to hassidi thought. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Kassirer, *Hateshuvah*, 188-191; Wolfson, "e pluribus unum", 331-337; Woflson, "Esotericism", 13 Fn 31, 46 Fn 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Rebbe Rashab, *Hemshech Tarsav,* 329, 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Dalfin, *Rabbi Hutner and Rebbe,* 102. In those years – the 1950s – this work was not yet widely ciculated in print, and only rare facsimile copies were available. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Tanya*, Shaar Hayichud Ve'Haemuna, Ch. 3. And see Elior, "Iyunim", 141 Fn. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For a survey of the differing schools, see Schwartz, *Chabad*, 23-30; Etkes, *Rashaz*, 300 Fn. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See *Tanya*, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See *Elior, Torat Achdut Ha'hafachim,* 45-47; Jacobson, "Ahavat Elohim". [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Tanya*, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Tanya*, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Tanya*, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See *Elior, Torat Achdut Ha'hafachim,* 97-107; Jacobson, "Torat Ha'Beria", 97-107/,. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. ראה *Elior, Torat Achdut Ha'hafachim*, עמ' 48–53, 92–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See p. 159–164, 168–174. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See also, with regards to R. Yisrael Salanter, p.? [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. David, "Zikhronot", 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. David, "Zikhronot", 122-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. David. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See fpr example *Pachad Yitzchak: Shabbat,* 2/4. And see Wolfson, "Esotericism", 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Maimonides, *Guide,* 8-14. See also Lawrence J. Kaplan, "Maimonides' theory of parables". [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Wolfson, “Esotericism”, 13, and in further detail, 17-26. See also Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah*. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Baumgarten, “Mencahem Mendel M’Shiklov”, 26-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For an exhaustive list of the different positions regarding Maharal and Kabbalah, see Gurfinkel, “Kitvie Maharal”, 261-266 Fn. 1-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Jacobson, “Tzelem Elohim”, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Garb, *Ramhal*, 85; Sclar, "Adaptation and acceptance”, 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Garb, *Ramhal,* 174-185; Jacobson, “Hahanhaga Haelohit”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ramhal, *Derech Hashem,* 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ramhal [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. On the relationship btweem the Kabbalah of Ramhal and the thought of the Gra, and the latter’s ambivelance towards the former, see Baumgarten, “Mencahem Mendel M’Shiklov”, 29 Fn. 30; Shuchat, *Olam Nistar,* 133-134; Tishbi, “Darchei Hafatzatam”, 153-154; Pechter, “Kabbalat HaGra”, 121-122; Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna,* 27-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Baumgarten, “Mencahem Mendel M’Shiklov”, 27-31; Shuchat, *Olam Nistar,* 117-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Garb, *Ramhal*, 202-203, and throughout the book. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Baumgarten, “Mencahem Mendel M’Shiklov”, 31-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 35-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Pechter, “Kabbalat HaGra”, 124-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Baumgarten, “Nefesh HaChaim”, 64-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 38-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 31; amd see Garb, *Ramhal*, 328-331. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Garb, *Ramhal,* 333. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Etkes, *Hatzionut Hameshichit*, 159-200. See also Shuchat, *Olam Nistar*; Morgensthern, *HaGaon M’Vilna*.

 Wolbe, *Igrot U’Ketavim*, 227; Shuvhat, *Olam Nistar*, 133 Fn. 94; Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Wolbe, *Igrot U’Ketavim*, 227; Shuvhat, *Olam Nistar*, 133 Fn. 94; Baumgarten, *Shlomo Elyashiv*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Steinberger, "Melech B'Veit Hamidrash"; but see David, "Zikhronot”, 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Baumgarten, “Mencahem Mendel M’Shiklov”, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot,* 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. See *Kol Hator* [Friedlander Edition], 7. See also Etkes, *Hatzionut Hameshichit*, 160-161; Shuchat, *Olam Nistar,* 281, 279 Fn. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot*, 337-338. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See Wolbe*, Igrot U’Ketavim,* 204; Wolbe, *Kol HaTorah*, 61; Wolbe, *Ali Shur*, Vol. 2, 12. See also Steiner, *Bechira VeHechrach*, 103 Fn. 199-200 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Weintraub, *Va’Yaal* Eliyahu, 18 Fn. 14. See also Garb, *Ramhal*, 344-345. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See Garb, *Ramhal*, 277-281. But see Hemnik, *Avnei Shlomo,* Vol. 2, 28. Hemnik relates how R. Wolbe stated in the name of R. Hutner that *Mesillay Yesharim* is themost extraordinary book, in that Ramhal succeded in infusing it with all the foundamentals of Kabbalah, but yet in a style which makes it accessible even to the most novice learner. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See p. 134–137. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See Silmam, *Lalechet Be'Derachav*; Wosner, *Shkop*, 88-219. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See p. 186–197. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Quoted in David, "Zikhronot", 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Shavuot,* 42/4; *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Succot,* 45/6-8, 65/10. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)