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Eugene B. Borowitz

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the volunteer teachers in out-of-school religious education programs. As a preliminary presentation of the CBTE model, this study merits the careful analysis of program designers.

Professional educators should give serious consideration to the impact of CBTE on the training of religion teachers. The two studies cited here indicate that work has begun in proposing CBTE as a method of defining and designing effective teacher behaviors for the teaching of or about religion. If CBTE continues with the momentum now in evidence at local, state, and national levels, it is pertinent that the professionals in religious education make themselves knowledgeable as to the possible applications of CBTE to their own programs in teacher education.

V

TZIMTZUM: A Mystic Model for Contemporary Leadership

Eugene B. Borowitz

*Professor of Education and Jewish Religious Thought,
Hebrew Union College and Jewish Institute of Religion,
New York City*

If sex was another generation's "dirty little secret," as D. H. Lawrence termed it, surely ours is power. Now that we can admit we bear this primal lust, we see it operating everywhere, often more decisively than money, class, conditioning, genetics or the other usual determinants of behavior. The "purest" relationships reveal a political structure. In sex and not only between parents and children, in education and not only in political dealing, in religion, art, literature and culture and not only in business strategy, most decisions are made on the basis of power. So our hope of accomplishment in most fields rests largely on how power is organized there or what can be done to change that arrangement.

Perhaps we should not have been shocked to discover the extent to which power determines most human affairs. It is more than a century now that Nietzsche proclaimed man's will to power as his dominant characteristic. Yet what has moved many in our generation to despair is neither the ubiquity nor the decisiveness of

power but rather the recognition that almost everywhere we see power in action we see it abused. Ethically we may be far more relativistic and contextual than our fathers were. But even if we have given up ethical absolutes and moral rules many of us still cling to the notion that each of us is a person, not merely an animal, and that, a la Buber, we ought to be treated by others as persons and not as things. Hence we retain a strong ethical sense, though it often pits us against the forms which once claimed to make the dignity of persons explicit but today only operate to demean it, e.g. children should be seen and not heard. In an imperfect world, we could probably tolerate the fact that most relationships are inevitably hierarchical, particularly when more than a few people are involved for more than a few months. So we would not mind some people having power if they used it much of the time to enable us and others to be persons, that is, to be true to the self we know we ought to be. But they don't. Again and again, people — parents, lovers, teachers, politicians, chairmen, bosses, nurses, bureaucrats, scoutmasters, friends, therapists, children, hosts — force us to be something other than what we know we are. We despair because the abuse of power seems endemic.

Our constant experience is that we have not been consulted, or have not been listened to, or have not really had a voice in matters which deeply affect our lives. In short, we exist in the continuing consciousness of being the object of someone else's power rather than being a person in our own right though we are involved with people of greater status than ours.

Modern times brought democracy into human relationships. This change may properly be called a revolution for, despite the varying forms in which it was effectuated, it gave those of little power some significant power. By contrast, the best previous generations had been able to do to humanize man's will to power was to appeal to his better nature, to beg the mighty to act with mercy. Thus, in the Bible's classic formulation, the test of the Covenant Community's faithfulness to its gracious Partner-God is its treatment of the widow, the orphan and the stranger, the figures who epitomize social powerlessness. Much remains to be said for inculcating compassion in the possessors of power, that is, all of us. Yet the sad truth is that despite their occasional acts of charity, truly benevolent tyrants are rare. Rather than rely on a sovereign's good will we prefer to share his power. So today almost every social ar-

rangement we know is under pressure to transform itself in the direction of more effective democracy.

I

The problems involved in moralizing the use of power are so great that any contribution to their mitigation should be welcome. While I believe that our best hope in this direction lies in giving ever greater power to the people, it also seems clear to me that we are nowhere near the stage where we can have leaderless associations. I therefore want to make a suggestion which might help ethicize the leader's role and which does so by going a step further on the road which turned the benevolent tyrant into the responsive chairman-executive. I believe we can find a fresh model for contemporary leadership in the mystic speculations about God of Isaac Luria (1534-1572) of Safed in the Holy Land. The reasons for utilizing Luria's extraordinary teaching will, I trust, become clear below. Here a word is needed about the methodological validity of transposing images of transcendent being into a purely human dimension. I herely follow Ludwig Feuerbach's insight that statements about God are, in fact, projections of our sense of what it is to be a person. Hence to Feuerbach, concepts of God are essentially concepts of man and theses about the way God relates to his creatures are implicitly theses about the way people ought to relate to each other. Feuerbach, of course, thought that theological assertions were assertions only about humankind. I think that aspect of Feuerbach's thinking is wrong, but surely it is not the only case in intellectual history of a useful idea being turned into an all-embracing absolute by its enraptured creator. Hence I propose to bracket the question of what God-talk says about God while still utilizing a Feuerbachian analysis to determine what Luria's visions of God say about us.

Luria's doctrine centers about two themes rarely treated so directly in traditional Jewish literature yet of intense concern to us today: God as creator and man as co-creator. Though creation grandly opens the book of Genesis, it and all the later texts are extraordinarily reticent, for ancient documents, of what was involved in God's creating. This anti-mythological bent became law, for the Mishnah (compiled about 200 of the common era) decrees that one may not publicly teach *Maaseh Bereshit*, The Work of Creation. So we can find only hints of this esoteric doctrine until, centuries later, mystic writings begin to record some of the possibilities, reaching a

spectacular climax in Luria's rather detailed description of the process.

What appeals to our generation in the focus on God as creator is that his power is used to bring others into being. By contrast, the normal Biblical/liturgical terms for him, Lord and King, speak of his status and power. This sense of God's power is modified by images which envision him as using it lovingly, e.g. God as Father, Husband or Lover. Yet remembering the realities of Near Eastern life and the continuing tradition of male dominance in Jewish life, even these symbols speak strongly of sovereignty and obedience.

Luria's teaching about God is appealing because it makes man, quite literally, his co-creator. His teaching involves so complete a shift to human activism that scholars can even speak of God becoming passive in the process.

The Luriamic doctrine is most conveniently discussed around three major terms: *tzimtzum*, *shevirah*, *tikkun*. Since these are three stages in the Work of Creation it will be best to explain the theory as a whole first and then draw its implications for leadership. (In the description which follows I work largely from the analyses of Gershom Scholem, the pioneering master of the modern study of Jewish mysticism.)

Creation is commonly thought of in spatial terms and is envisioned as a movement of externalization: what was God's will now is turned, by an application of his power, into a reality "outside" him. Think for a moment of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel depiction of the creation of man. The mighty God stretches forth the full length of his arm to one fingertip and thus brings man into being. For us humans, creation is normally an act in extension of ourselves, of producing something "there" that was previously only within us.

Something of this picture is to be seen in the Biblical texts despite their apparent efforts to avoid the gross anthropomorphism of Near Eastern creation stories. Thus, in the first version, Genesis 1, God utters words in order to let the light be and, if some modern translators are correct ("When God began to create the heaven and the earth — the earth being unformed and void . . ."), there already was material external to him to shape. The story in Genesis 2 simply begins with the dry ground and then, with explicit externality, has God mold man out of the dust of the earth before putting the breath of life into him. Creation as externalization is fully explicit in the neo-Platonic teaching (from the first century

of the common era on) and thus in the Jewish mystic tradition which often borrowed from it (from the early Middle Ages on). Here creation is generally spoken of as emanation, the gentle but efficacious spilling over of the plenteous being of God. The usual image is of a fountain which, out of its fullness, pours water over its basin, thus creating new pools. God has such plenitude of reality that some of it emerges in a lesser form, which, in turn, makes possible an emergence in even lesser form, and so on, down a series of variously interpreted gradations, until our world exists. The neo Platonists and mystics thought in this way to ease the problem of the infinite God creating finite beings. To us it seems reasonably clear that the very first movement from infinity to finitude — no matter how extensive the finite is thought to be — is as difficult to understand as the Universal God creating ants or pebbles. In any case, the doctrine of emanation, though it links all creatures to God by an unbroken progression of being, is a clear expression of our usual sense that creation is a species of externalization.

II

Luria felt otherwise. I cannot say to what extent his radical shift of creation images was due to the memories and continuing effects of the mass expulsion of the Jewish community of Spain in 1492. The fact is, Isaac Luria alone created a radically new mystic theory of creation. It will be simplest then to limit ourselves to his intellectual trail and we may best prepare ourselves for his ideas by confronting a logical issue with regard to creation. If God is everywhere, how can there be any place outside him for him to create in? Michelangelo, for example, had to limit God to one majestic sized human figure if he was to leave room to paint an Adam. But God is not a man and we are taught that he fills all space. If that way of speaking about God is unsatisfactory because spatiality is a poor metaphor for God, consider the question in ontological form; if God is fundamental being, fully realized, how can there be secondary being, that is, being only partly realized? Or, if God is all-in-all, how can the partial or the transitory, which must depend upon him for their being, ever come to exist?

One response might be to deny the reality of creation as much Hindu thought has done (and as, from the Divine perspective, the later Jewish mystic, Shneur Zalman of Lyady, 1747-1813, would do). Luria is too much under the influence of classic Jewish creation theory for that. Instead he boldly suggests that creation begins

with an act of contraction, *tzimtzum*. God does not initiate the existence of other things by extending himself. There would be no place for them then to be, no area of non-being or partial being in which they might exist. Hence to create, he must first withdraw into himself. God must, so to speak, make himself less than he is so that other things could come into being. So great, says Luria, is God's will to create; so great is his love for creation.

It is not without interest that Luria has utterly reversed the older meaning of the term *tzimtzum*. In the rabbinic usage from which he almost certainly took the term, the verb form means "to concentrate" but in an externalizing way. The reference there is to God being especially present between the cherubim atop the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. And the comment is made that the God of all universes "concentrates" himself particularly at that point in space. For Luria, *tzimtzum* is the exact opposite. God concentrates himself not out there, at a point in the world, but within himself. By this act he leaves a void in which his creatures can come into being.

Tzimtzum, then, is not itself creation but the necessary prelude to it. Now the externalizing act can occur, but with certain ultimately troublesome consequences derived from its taking place in a realm from which God has withdrawn. Of course, he could not have removed himself completely for without something of his being present nothing at all could exist. Luria says he leaves behind, in the creation-space, a residue of his reality, something like the oil or wine, he nicely notes, that is always still there after we think we have emptied the jug.

The positive externalizing movement of creation begins with God sending forth a beam of light into the void he has left. From this light, in various extraordinary stages, the creation we know eventually took form. For Luria, then, creating is a two-fold process, a contraction which leads to an expansion. More, it is a continuing double movement, for God continues the work of Creation each day, continuously, and hence all existence as we know it pulsates to the divine regression and egression. Here Luria's sense of time and the opportune moves in a mystic realm no fine-tuned atomic instrument can ever hope to clock.

Perhaps we should already be prepared by the doctrine of *tzimtzum* for the next major stage in creation but most people find it not only dramatic but somewhat disturbing. Luria teaches that the creative act speedily results in a cosmic catastrophe, that creation

begins with a calamity. Luria describes it in metaphors which today could easily be taken from our experiments to harness thermonuclear energy, specifically to find "containers" for the enormous heat of the plasma gases involved in the fusion process. As the divine beam of created light comes into the void, it goes through various transformations. Ultimately it produces certain "vessels" which are to come to full existence when they are filled with the creating light. But now, as God's great power fills some of the lesser vessels, it proves too mighty for them and they are shattered, the *shevirah* mentioned above. The result is an imperfect creation, one in which things are not as they ought to be or were intended by God to be, a cosmos which from almost its very beginning is alienated from itself, a created order where evil abounds instead of good.

Luria, however, is not a pessimist. Once again his sense of the dialectic implicit in all things reasserts itself and he turns the doctrine of a flawed creation into the basis of man's having cosmic significance. To begin with, the *shevirah* does not mean that the creation collapses into nothingness. It cannot, for God's energy was poured into it. True, what we see around us today is largely the "shells" or "husks" of what should have been, without their proper kernels of God's energizing light. But by their very existence we know that something of God's power is in them. Thus Luria speaks of the divine sparks which are to be found everywhere in creation. If all these sparks were lifted up from the husks and restored to their proper place in God's spiritual order for creation, then all things would become what they were intended to be. Creation can be restored and *tikkun* means restoration, the reintegration of the organic wholeness of creation, the reestablishment of the world in the full graciousness of God's primal intent.

What astonishes us here is Luria's bold insistence that *tikkun* is primarily humanity's work, not God's. In everything one faces, in every situation one finds oneself in, one should realize that there is a fallen spark of God's light waiting to be returned to its designated spiritual place. Hence, as People do the good moment by moment and give their acts of goodness a proper, inner, mystic intention — more specifically, as the Jew practices Jewish law and manifests Jewish virtues with full concentration of the soul on the task of uplifting the Divine sparks — the shattered creation is brought into repair. The ailing cosmos is healed. The Messiah is brought near. People do that, each person by each act. And if

enough people did that enough of the time, Luria teaches, God would send the Messiah. Or, to put it with more appropriate divine passivity, if people, by their acts, restored the creation to what God had hoped it would be, then all the benefits of his gracious goodness would be available to them. Such a messianic estimate of human initiative is unique — so much so that some scholars have argued that Luria's ideas, transmitted by Christian Cabbalists and transformed by late Renaissance and early rationalist humanism, were influential in producing the heady confidence in humankind of the 18th century enlightenment. But I do not think we need carry Luria's ideas any further.

III

The excitement of the Lurianic teaching arises from its radical shift in the application and hence the structure of cosmic power. Traditional creation theories focus on God and the effectuation of his will. God is understood in a transitive mode. In such an approach, the creatures are, so to speak, only the objects of God's activity. So, by Feuerbachian inversion, leadership comes to mean using power to achieve one's ends. The greatest leaders, then, are the people who mobilized massive energies to accomplish vast projects. And since, until recently, social power has been political-military, most of the great figures of world history were warriors or warrior-kings. Though today we might add executives or administrators to the list of those eligible for adulation, our ideal leader remains the achiever, the person who imposes designs upon reality.

The Lurianic God moves in radically other ways. He is understood in a reflexive mode. From the very beginning, thinking of him involves consideration of his creatures; how can their independent existence be assured? where will they find sufficient emptiness of being to make their limited reality significant? With this in mind, the exercise of God's power is drastically re-directed. It must first be applied to itself, to the extent of constricting its all-encompassing quality. Only when God withdraws can he create — if his creatures are to have full dignity.

This readily translates into contemporary human terms. We seek a leadership construed not primarily in terms of the accomplishment of plans but equally in terms of its humanizing effect on the people being led. Our ethics demand a leader who uses power to enable people to be persons while they work together. Such a leader, as against the stereotype of the cruel general or ruthless executive is

not essentially goal oriented, but recognizes that people are always as important if not more important than the current undertaking.

The extension and the withdrawal visions of creation retain something in common. Even tyrants know that people can be pushed only so far and the biblical God, who by his unlimited power could have been the greatest of tyrants, nonetheless creates a man independent enough to resist him. On the other hand, in the Lurianic theory, though the creatures are given initial consideration, the creation is not oriented to their satisfaction but by the divine will. Yet though these creation visions overlap, they assign quite different status to those of lesser power and so must be considered alternative models for exercising leadership. Think of the sort of leadership we all have known in groups of small to moderate size, the family, the classroom, the church or synagogue. (One could easily expand the list.) These institutions have goals to accomplish. Yet in being part of them, it has made all the difference in the world to us whether we felt our parents or teachers or clergy were using us to accomplish their purposes or helping us grow as we labored for our common ends. I suggest that the ability to practice *tzimtzum* can sharply distinguish accomplishment-directed from person-fostering leadership.

Leaders, by their power, have a greater field of presence than most people do. When they move into a room they seem to fill the space around them. We say they radiate power. Hence the greater the people we meet the more reduced we feel — though as in fascist or fantasy adulation we may hope that by utterly identifying ourselves with our hero, we can gain the fullest sort of existence. So in the presence of the mighty we are silent and respectful, we await their directions and are fearful of their judgments. Who we are is defined by what they think of us. Like God the pre-eminent have true existence and we, their creatures, exist only in part. In such a system the activists strive for the day when they will be god and others will have to serve them. Professors, who suffered through the indignities of the old Ph.D. apprenticeship system and have finally made it to full rank and tenure, today face students who increasingly demand to be treated as persons, that is, as partners whose independent reality is respected in the relationship. But the professors, having finally become Number One in the academic hierarchy, want to realize the benefits of that status, not the least as a compensation for the pain of achieving it. They want to rule as they were ruled — and that is only one of the many vari-

eties of refusing to make room for others so neatly summarized in the term "ego-trip."

The Lurianic model of leadership has, as its first step, contraction. The leader withholds presence and power so that the followers may have some place in which to be. Take the case of a parent who has the power to insist upon a given decision and a good deal of experience upon which to base his judgment. In such an instance, the urge to compel is almost irresistible. Yet if it is a matter the parent feels the child can handle — better, if making this decision and taking responsibility for it will help the child grow as a person — then the mature parent withdraws and makes it possible for the child to choose and thus come more fully into his own. *Tzimtzum* here means not only not telling the child what to do but not manipulating the decision by hinting or "sharing" experience or "only" giving some advice. Leaving room for the other means just that, including allowing the child sometimes to make a foolish choice. Not ever to be permitted to choose the wrong thing means not truly to be free. Parents, like all other leaders, should seek to emulate God's maturity. He gives his children their freedom even though they may use it against him because he knows his dignity cannot be satisfied in the long run with anything less than a relationship in which we come to him freely rather than in servility.

Tzimtzum operates in a similar way in the leadership of teachers and clergy. Normally both are so busy doing things for us that they leave us little opportunity to do things on our own and thus find some personal independence. Both talk too much — so much so, that when they stop talking for a moment and ask for questions or honest comments, we don't believe them. We know if we stay quiet for a moment they will start talking again. We realize that their professional roles have been built around creation by extension of the self, so they will have to prove to us by a rigorous practice of *tzimtzum* that they really want us to be persons in our own right.

One common misinterpretation of this approach is to think it calls for a swing from dominance to abandonment, a sort of petulant declaration that if one's lessers do not want one's guidance then they should get no help at all and suffer the consequences of being on their own. There are many parents who vacillate between enforcing a harsh law and granting complete license. In school or church situations, withdrawal to give others freedom easily becomes a rationalization for indolence, the refusal to plan, or pro-

vide resources, or make proper demands upon the community. Luria's God does not indulge in *tzimtzum* to sulk or feel sorry for himself. He bears no resemblance to Aristotle's self-centered god who was not only pure thought, thinking, but did his thinking about the purest of things, himself. *Tzimtzum* is rather the first of a two-part rhythm, for it is always followed by sending the creative beam of light into the just-vacated void. The withdrawal is for the sake of later using one's power properly. Contraction without a following expansion, regression without subsequent egression does not produce creation. But once room has been made for an other, even simple applications of power can prove effective. How often it has been the seemingly casual word, the side comment, the quizzical look we got which, coming from someone we knew respected us, powerfully affected us. So in the classroom, though the teacher's summary of the data or interpretation of the material is regularly needed, it is also the good question, the challenge of stimulating options, the pause which is receptive that is the most effective means of educating. Indeed, perhaps the greatest effect one can have on someone seeking to become a person is to provide him with a model. Here the exercise of power is, directly speaking, all on oneself and only indirectly on the other. Yet in creating persons, the effectiveness of a good example, particularly as contrasted to laying down rules or verbalizing ideals, is immeasurable.

Leadership in the Lurianic style is particularly difficult, then, because it requires a continuing alternation of the application of our power. Now we hold back; now we act. To do either in the right way, is difficult enough. To develop a sense when to stop one and do the other and then reverse that in due turn, is to involve one in endless inner conflict. An example will make this clearer. In a seminar, though the teacher may have spent a lifetime on a topic, the teacher elects to sit silently so as to give the student an opportunity to speak. If the teacher does not keep still, allowing, say, slight errors of fact or misinterpretations to pass by uncontested, but regularly interrupts, the student's presentation, and his self, are as good as destroyed. At the same time, incompetence can be tolerated only so far. If the student is well on the way to ruining an important topic for the class or making such major misstatements that all which follows will be false, the teacher must interrupt. Danger lurks equally in action and inaction. Premature or too frequent intervention is as fateful as missing danger signs or giving insufficient aid. And with all this, we cannot help but realize that

our judgment to intervene may only be a power-grab while our decision to stay silent may really mean we are unwilling to take the responsibility for interrupting.

The seminar situation illustrates well the complexities of functioning as a Lurianic leader. No wonder then that the call for a modern style of leadership throws many people into great anxiety. Their masters did not use their power this way and no one now can give them a rule as to when and how they ought to step back or step in. So failures in trying to exert the new leadership abound and examples of successful leadership are rare even in face to face associations, much less the giant organizations of which our society is so largely composed.

IV

Some implications for leadership of the ideas of *shevirah* and *tikkun* also deserve mention, though they are perhaps at greater distance from Luria's teaching than the ones mentioned above. Those who lead by *tzimtzum* must quickly reconcile themselves to the fact that leaving room for others to act is likely to mean their own purposes will be accomplished only in blemished form. The student will, in terms of the content presented or material covered, not lead the seminar as well as the teacher could. The children who write their own college application biographies or seek out summer jobs themselves are not likely to do as expert a job as the parent. The congregants who read or create a service will probably not reach the level of expression nor educe the religious traditions in a way the clergy might have. *Shevirah*, imperfect creation, is the logical consequence of leadership by *tzimtzum*. Hence, if our eyes are only on what has been accomplished in our plans and we cannot see what has happened in the creation of persons, we are likely to be deeply disturbed. The next step is to take over ourselves. It is, indeed, often easier to get things done by doing them oneself rather than allowing others to do so, particularly in their way. But to seize power from others is to deprive them of the possibility of significant action and thus of dignity. We must learn to trust them if they are to be given a chance to be persons and that means learning to "put up" with their stumbling ways. Of God we say that he "bears" with us. Without his forgiveness for our sins, we would not be able to continue as real shapers of history. The graciousness implicit in *tzimtzum* is not only the grant of space in which we might have being but the will to forgive the faults we may com-

mit once we have that independent being. Anyone who would lead by *tzimtzum*, then, must know that *shevirah* is likely if not inevitable. Thus Lurianic leadership depends not only on an exquisite sense of inter-personal rhythm but a capacity to forgive and go on working with those whose need for independence is a major cause of the frustration of our plans.

The strength to persist in so frustrating a role can come from recognizing that the leader's *tzimtzum* and the resulting *shevirah* are the occasion for the followers' work of *tikkun*, restoration and completion. The group's objectives may not have been accomplished now but the leader may be confident that the effort will go on. Its continuation no longer depends upon the presence of the present leader. By the act of *tzimtzum*, confirmed in bearing with the *shevirah*, the leader has taught the disciples to work out of their own initiative and not by coercion from above. The painful process has created a new generation to carry on the work. And it, in turn, following the leader's model, will create another generation of workers, *ad infinitum*, until the goal has been accomplished. This is as much messianism as we are entitled to in human endeavors. So the parents who see their children able to make their own decisions maturely, though they choose a peculiar life-style; so the teachers who see their students become competent scholars, though they reach conclusions at variance from what they were taught; so the clergy who develop laymen committed to living religiously, come what may, though they transform the traditions they received; such leaders by *tzimtzum* know they have done as much as men can do to save a troublesome and treacherous world. Their hope, then, arises from seeing the present and the future as two parts of a whole. They are patient during the *shevirah* and endure the self-denial of their *tzimtzum* to create an indomitable commitment to *tikkun*. Leadership with so long a view is not muscular enough for Michelangelo's God, or his heroes, Moses and David. The great Florentine was a Renaissance man and believed power meant lordship, not person-making. We can still learn much from Michelangelo's sense of grandeur but we must move beyond it to implement our new sense of humanity.

Did Isaac Luria himself see, far before Feuerbach, that his vision of a withdrawing creator could be a model for personal leadership? We cannot quite tell. In some respects he seems to have been unassertive beyond the customary humility of the pious. Thus, we are told that he usually allowed one of his disciples to walk

ahead of him — an act firmly prohibited in the etiquette of respect for a master — because the student considered it a special honor. He is also reported never to have bargained over the price asked for any object he needed for religious purposes nor questioned his wife's requests with regard to household or personal expenses. So too, he emphasized to his followers that they were all parts of one organism and therefore needed to care and pray for each other. And he was quite uncommunicative about his deepest mystical doctrines, not only refusing to write anything down but apparently instructing his most trusted adepts only by hints and allusions.

But we dare not press this interpretation further. In most respects Luria seems to have exercised authority in the typical kingly fashion of one who is recognized as wearing the crown of the Torah. He organized his disciples into a group called The Lion's Whelps (a pun made on the initials of his title, Rabbi Isaac, gave him the title The Lion) and he set high admission standards which were stringently enforced. He then divided them into two categories, apparently according to how much mystic knowledge he felt he could share with them. The extent of his dominance of the group may perhaps be gauged from the fact that he refused Joseph Karo, the greatest authority on Jewish law of that time, permission to be part of the inner circle. Another intriguing fact gives us some indication that Luria's leadership had limited effectiveness. He arranged to have all his followers live together in a sort of commune, but within a few months there was considerable difficulty among them. The texts say, typically enough, that the wives began to quarrel among themselves and this caused the disturbances among the adepts. Yet, if this seems to compromise Luria's stature somewhat, we should also keep in mind that his career as a mystic teacher in Safed comprised just three years, after which he died. In that short time he changed the course of Jewish mysticism and did so, apparently, by imbuing his disciples with so deep a commitment to his doctrine that they, and their followers in turn, spread it throughout the Jewish world. More, they brought it into the thought and life-style of much of Jewry, the first time that mysticism, which had always been an elitist interest, became part of mass Jewish living. So if we cannot know whether Luria led by *tzimtzum* we can nonetheless say that his leadership had an extraordinary effect in his day and his teaching retains a powerful message for our time.