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Openings for humanization in modern health care practices

Visse, M.A.

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E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

promotoren: prof.dr. T.A. Abma
prof.dr. G.A.M. Widdershoven

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Cover image

Field of Sparks (fragment)
Ink and watercolor on paper
Donald Wijsenbek, 1982

The idea of the gathering of sparks and ‘uplifting’ them to a *Field of Sparks* at the Cosmic Beginning is a central element in the mystical thinking of Isaac Luria, who lived in Safed in the 16th century.

At this Cosmic Beginning, the One had created three perfect vessels, then withdrew and left the further creation of another seven vessels to the first three. In the overenthusiasm and excitement that ensued, the next step of creation was not faultless. Vessels cracked, some broke, some overflowed and their content (conceived as sparks) scattered.

Our world is through a cascade of stages connected to this Cosmic Beginning and hence not perfect (it is a relief to notice here that overenthusiasm and not sin is connected to the imperfections of the world).

According to Luria, the mystic’s goal is to collect the hidden sparks in everyday life, to kindle them into glowing by taking responsibility and being fully human. As we kindle those sparks, we ‘uplift’ them and our intention carries them to the Cosmic Beginning where they are collected in the *Field of Sparks* and a new cycle.

Luria’s thinking greatly influenced the Hasidic movement in 18th century Russia and Poland with its emphasis on inspired humanity and social responsibility.