As the righteous even in their passing are termed living (Brachot 18a) the Maharal lives for us in his writings taken to heart and integrated in the soul of each student.

In 1578 the Maharal published his first work the Gur Aryeh (The Lion Cub), a commentary on Rashi on the Humash. The title is not only a hint of the Maharal’s name (Loew) but also his first name “yehudah” from the blessing which Yakov bestowed on Yehudah (Bereishit 49:9). The term lion also evokes strength as the opening of the Tur cites Pirke Avot, “Be as strong as a lion, fleet as a deer, and graceful as a leopard to do Thy Father’s will in heaven.” Shlomo’s throne was adorned with a lion, ox, and eagle as the merkavah itself in the vision of Isaiah 6, Yehezkel 1, and Eliyahu haNavi going up in a fiery chariot, is said to have 4 wheels resembling a man (Avraham), lion (Yitchak), ox (Yakov), and Dovid HaMelekh (Eagle) [See Zohar Vaetchanan, based on gemarah raising question why isn’t Yosef the 4rth wheel, because Dovid HaMelekh saw and synthesized the whole (of Torah).”

In 1582 the Maharal published G’vurot (The Power of Hashem), discussing the original shibud mitzrayim and redemption for freedom for Torah and related themes.

In 1589 the Mahral published the pirush on Pirke Avot titled Derech Chaim (the way of Life), a tribute to his brother Chaim who passed on that year, as Rambam organized the Mishneh Torah (14 parts, yod= yod (10) + daleth (4)) or yad hazakah the numerical equivalent of Rambam’s brother Rabbi Dovid Maimon (Dovid= daleth (4) + vav (6) + daleth (4) =14) who supported the Rambam for 40 years to sit and learn.

In 1596 Maharal published Netivot Olam (Paths of the world) like Rambam’s Shemoneh Perakim on the topic of instilling ethical character traits (middot tovot).

In 1598 Maharal published Tiferet Yisrael (The splendor of Israel) and in the same ear the B’er HaGolah (The Wellspring of the Exile) which is a rebuttal of certain works of certain scholars who had attacked the Aggadah and exegetical sections of the oral torah. The Maharal was a strong advocate that gemarah exclusively should not be learned until a solid foundation in Tanakh with classical mephorshim be mastered and integrated in the soul along with dikduk (grammer). The Maharal was influenced by Pirke Avot’s note that at 5 years a child should master Tanakh, at 10 years the Mishnah, at 15 years begin life long study of gemarah. Maharal wrote against the method of pilpul learning which was prevalent in yeshivot. The Maharal introduced the systematic study of Mishnah (the basis of the torah) which influenced the Mishnah hevrot in the mystical city of Safed to this day. The Maharal’s student Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller wrote a most important commentary on the Mishnah (along with many other important works) known as the Tos’fot Yom Tov.

The Maharal also published works such as:

Netzah Yisrael (the eternity of Israel) - dealing with destruction in Tish b’av and exile in 1599.

Ohr Chadash (A New Light) - dealing with the festival and joy of Purim, published in 1599 or 1600

Ner Mitzvah (A Mitzvah candle) - dealing with the festival of Chanukah published in 1798. Ner Mitzvah was also the name of an index in the Shas serving to indicate where a topic is also dealt with in the gemarah (cross reference)

Chiddushei Aggadot (Novel interpretations of the Aggadata) published from 2006 on various tracates. The Maharal focused on these Aggadic strands (non-halakhci sections of torah) and elevated the study
of Aggadah to great heights by creating out of the apparently disconnected statements of sages a coherent, consistent, architectonic whereby every part is shown to fit together as an intricate clock in Torah Hashkafah.

Deroshot published for the first time in 1958

Pirush al ha-Tur (Yoreh De’ah published in 1775

Two Chasidic sects celebrated the Maharal’s thought particularly and revived study of the Maharal and ensured that the study of his works was taken up by the Musar movement and the religious Zionist movement.

The popular world knows the Maharal for the legend of the Golem. This artificial anthropoid was thought to protect the Jewish community and the Maharal had to put it out of commission when its wiring went bezerk. According to the gemarah Rav Ashi and Rava had made a Golem. Today the concept of a Golem is applied to stem cell research and cloning in bringing to life in some form, an apparent living being from inanimate or non synthesized matter. For more on the history of the golem legend see Dr. Shneur Leiman